

# Focus

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A BLIND BROOK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PUBLICATION

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Congratulations to Dr. Jonathan Ross on being named Superintendent of Schools

Donate used gowns to Samantha Kaye's charity, Princess Project, to support women of all ages (contact samkaye@aol.com)

Wear red clothing or pajamas on February 12th and donate to support the American Heart Association



Photo/Leah Kratochvil  
Three high school students congregate by the Blind Brook Marketplace.

## Blind Brook Marketplace Opens for Business

By Emma DePaola

The Blind Brook Marketplace opened on December 21, selling various food items and school supplies to students. Located next to the lunchroom in the Commons, the Marketplace has had a successful start over the past few weeks, with many students coming by each day to purchase a myriad of items. Founder and chief executive officer Bryan Weintraub came up with the idea for the school store, and his plans and considerations for it have proven to be profitable overall.

When Weintraub, a junior, was in middle school, he and some of his classmates created the Middle School Store. However, the Store had few sales because it was never made into something that students could use on a daily basis, and therefore never became a part of Blind Brook. The Blind Brook Marketplace is something that Weintraub hopes to turn into an integral piece of the school community.

"As we [the club founders] entered high school, we brought the club with us, and continued the work we had been doing. For about a year, we weren't able to get much done, but things finally took off last year, and have been going great ever since!" said Weintraub.

The location of the school store was created by dividing the cafeteria office into two separate rooms, made possible with custodial help. Because of its easy-access location, students are able to stop by during their lunch periods, frees, or whenever they are in the commons to get the food and supplies that they need.

"The overall success of the store will be determined by their ability to continue to be energized by it, to be committed to it, so its all about persistence and perseverance. Now the challenge will be to continuously look for items that will benefit the store and help it meet the needs of students," said Principal Patricia Lambert.

## STEAM Initiative Hits Blind Brook

By Hannah Brady

Many teachers at Blind Brook assert that critical thinking is one of the most important skills to be learned in high school. This is because critical thinking is not only necessary for every type of career path, but also for regular tasks that all adults must perform, such as paying bills and making life decisions. Although these skills are crucial for life after high school, they are often overlooked in a standard classroom environment, where learning is based more on lectures and test taking.

As a result, Blind Brook has turned to the STEAM initiative. The goal of STEAM education is to incorporate the arts into science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) classes.

Integrating the arts into STEM has been proven to have extremely

The Marketplace sells items that students would find useful to them on a daily basis. Current school supplies for sale include pens, pencils, staplers and paperclips, while food products include popcorn, candy, chips, and other snacks.

All food items are sold for \$1 and school supplies are sold for prices ranging from \$0.50 cents to \$4. These affordable prices attract students to purchase snacks and school supplies that they need for the school day, which benefits the Marketplace and enables them to make more improvements to both its physical store and its available merchandise.

In terms of construction, students in charge of the Blind Brook Marketplace plan on installing more shelving, better displays, and a broader range of merchandise. Although no long-term goals have been set thus far, the Marketplace hopes to integrate itself into the daily life of students over the course of the school year.

Students have become aware of the school store and it is very common to see a plethora of students purchasing snacks after school if they have a sports practice, a club meeting, or another after school activity.

"The school store is really helpful when I have a club or my Driver's Ed class right after school because I don't have to worry about bringing a snack from home, and it's also helpful if I run out of pencils or pens during the school day," said junior Sydney Goodman.

Students currently work at the school store during periods five through eight. Two students work at the store during each of those periods and earn community service hours for the amount of time that they work.

"Working at the school store is great because I get to experience the marketing, advertising, and management skills that go into making a store run," said Marketplace staff member Allison Gelfarb.

Although the physical expansion of the store is not possible at this point in time, the Blind Brook Marketplace staff has plans to expand their range of products to include Blind Brook apparel and water bottles. Additionally, those involved with the store are planning a visit to the New York Gift Show in order to inspire new merchandise for the store.

"While we are looking to sell more products in the future, we've been doing really well thus far, and I hope our success continues," said Weintraub.

positive effects on students. For example, it can cause more students to express interest in technological fields, which is important because technology is growing at one of the fastest rates in history. Also, it makes mastering STEM easier for kinesthetic learners, who prefer a more hands-on, project-based approach to learning.

Blind Brook first began the STEAM initiative in the middle school, with classes like robotics for the sixth and seventh graders, along with transitioning all computer classes to be more project-based. It has now reached the high school, as demonstrated by the new class Principles of Engineering.

*Continued on page 2*

## We Future Cycle: The Future of Recycling

By Sam Gibbs

After being introduced at the elementary school in April, the We Future Cycle lunchroom recycling and composting program was introduced in the middle and high school on December 1, 2015.

Elementary schools with 600 students produce about ten gallons of excess fluids per day, which is about 15,500 lbs. per year.

"The method is interesting and, at times, confusing but I think that by taking a couple of extra seconds each day it could make a big impact on our community in the long run," said junior Daniel Copland.

In order to do recycle effectively, "source separation" is used. This is the process by which students sort their leftovers into liquids, commingled products, and compost, before being mixed together and becoming trash. The first step is emptying liquids, by pouring milk and juice down the drain. Thus, trash weight is reduced and "good bacteria" is fed at the wastewater treatment plant.

The next step is commingled, which includes plastics labeled one through seven, as well as milk cartons. Westchester County makes \$600,000 per month by reselling commingled material, therefore, increasing the amount of recyclables increases revenue.

The next step is compost, which includes all food and paper products. Compost is important because 600 students on average create on 150 pounds of food waste per day, which is sixty-five percent of lunchroom waste.

The next step is trash, which is composed all items that did not fall under any of the other categories.

The intended result is that there is very little left to put in the trash after recycling and composting.



The final step is to stack the compostable lunch trays next to the row of bins.

High school students were educated about this new program with a video made by the elementary school to show the importance of each step of the recycling process and to show how easy the process is.

Parents are also encouraged to participate in the recycling program by urging their children to pack only food that they want to eat and using reusable or recyclable packaging products. This way, students will throw out less, which is an effective way to minimize the high school's waste. Using plastic bags and other non-reusable products everyday consumes a lot of natural resources and is not sustainable.

"I think that reusable containers help clean the community because the container can be used multiple times, which helps make the Earth as a whole cleaner and healthier," said sophomore Lee Price.

The recycling video presentation showed that when schools are exclusively using disposables in the lunchroom, students mindlessly throw everything away, costing the district an enormous amount of money annually on waste removal, waste transportation and

reduced need for garbage pickups... and to extend learning about environmental responsibility into the classroom." According to the presentation, this model is proven in assisting schools to "implement a comprehensive resource recovery program that meets its environmental, social, and financial goals."

The recycling program was presented to and endorsed by the Westchester Municipal Officials Association and Westchester Board of Legislators.

The presentation also offered information on where each of the specific sorted items would go. Liquids would go down the drain, juice pouches would go to Terracycle, milk cartons to an unspecified recycling center, commingled to municipal recycling, and the rest of the products would be composted.

Although statistics highlight the new recycling program's success, remarks from custodians at the high school would indicate otherwise.

"I don't think the recycling program is working at all. The students are not using the correct cans to throw out their garbage [and] they're mixing [the different types of garbage together]. They're leaving garbage on the tables, on the floors, [and] on the seats so nobody can see the garbage, [in order] to make it look like the tables are clean," said custodian Andy Bruno.

"There's a lot more garbage now than before the recycling program started, and also the company that picks up the garbage is not even taking the garbage because the compost bags are being contaminated with the regular garbage. We end up taking [the contaminants] from the bins and throwing them into the regular garbage cans, so [the new recycling program] is really useless," said Bruno.

## STEAM Initiative Hits Blind Brook

Continued from page 1

"Students are given a number of materials and a task. One example of something they might do is create a hovercraft that can travel the distance of the table without any scientific background in order to do it. It is much more of a hands-on, integrated approach," said Principal Patricia Lambert.

The purpose of conducting activities in this manner is to allow students to practice problem solving openly and with less restrictions on creativity.

Thomas Glickman, who teaches Principles of Engineering, shares Lambert's enthusiasm and believes STEAM to be a positive program to be implemented at Blind Brook.

"I think the engineering side of things is really important and valuable because I've watched students fail terribly at engineering challenges and go back at it again, and again, and again until they finally got it," said Glickman.

Glickman initially became involved with STEAM through the high school robotics program.

"When I was working on robotics with students, I really liked that there was a problem based approach to the course. It was nice to see students of all backgrounds come together, learn from each other, and become motivated by the problems. I first proposed STEAM at the high school and [Steven] Giglio proposed it at the middle school. I'm excited about the fact that there seems to be a commitment at all levels to try to make this happen," said Glickman.

Despite all the excitement, there have been some difficulties with initiating the STEAM program.

"There are a lot of challenges with STEAM. For example, breaking down the barriers between different subjects and getting people to understand that it is a totally different approach than what we have traditionally done, where you go into one room for your math instruction, and another for your English, and science. The arts really would incorporate the language and everything else that is a part of the learning that occurs, so there is a place for all disciplines within this approach," said Lambert.

"This can make people uneasy, including students, who want to be taught something that they can learn, memorize, and give back on the test very neatly. They have been conditioned over many years in a traditional work environment and that is what they are comfortable with. Making the shift in the way that you approach teaching and learning is probably the biggest obstacle, because it is not like you can do this in addition to what you are already doing," she added.

Some students have expressed reservations because of the large emphasis on project-based learning.

"I'd say that it definitely depends on the class, and many teachers already incorporate both project based and lecture-style [methods] into their teaching. For example, practical learning can be great for a class like [AP] Psychology, and [the teacher, Julie] Hensley, makes great use of real life demonstrations and examples to help us grasp the topics. But for a class like [AP] Biology, while you may be able to do some labs every now and then, it's not always feasible since there are a lot of abstract concepts and experiments that require expensive equipment," said senior Luke Nadell.

## Course Offerings Multiply for Next Year

By Paul Soden

As course selection meetings with guidance counselors rapidly approach, students are beginning to think about what classes they want to take for the 2016-2017 school year. With so many options, many students have difficulty deciding which courses will best fit their personal needs.

With the influx of new classes that are being offered, it can seem even more daunting for students to try and fit all of the classes that they want to take into a nine-period schedule. Although such an inundation of classes can make it more difficult for students to decide on their schedules, the array of new course offerings and alterations of existing courses each contribute differently to a student's academic identity and learning opportunities.

After years of deliberation, Advanced Placement (AP) Chemistry will finally run as a yearlong course with alternating laboratory periods next year. The course is being offered to motivated juniors and seniors who have a passion for chemical sciences, and will be taught by science teacher Dr. Michele Sugantino.

"I want to take AP Chemistry because I really enjoyed High School Chemistry and am looking forward to continuing my education on this subject at the college level," said junior Bryan Weintraub.

This rigorous course prepares students for the College Board's Advanced Placement Exam in May. It covers complex ideas relative to the Six Big Ideas of Chemistry: the Structure of Matter, Bonding and Intermolecular Forces, Chemical Reactions, Chemical Kinetics,

Thermodynamics, and Chemical Equilibrium.

"I think that AP Chemistry affords Blind Brook students who are interested in science a great opportunity to continue their chemistry careers while potentially earning college credit," said junior Allison Gelfarb.

Also joining the Blind Brook Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Program, AP Computer Science A will build off of this year's new Honors Computer Science class. Based upon this year's high enrollment in the Honors Computer Science course, many students must decide whether or not they wish to join the 48,994 students around the country who are continuing their computer science education at the college, or AP, level.

The highly advanced curriculum of AP Computer Science includes Program Implementation, Program Analysis, Standard Data Structures, Standard Algorithms, as well as Computing in Context. This course also culminates with the College Board's Advanced Placement Exam in April.

AP Computer Science A has been met with satisfaction among the student body and proves to challenge even the most technologically inclined.

"Although I personally do not have much interest in computer science, I know that a lot of people do, and I think it is great that the school is offering everyone a well-rounded STEM education," said junior Petal Samrow.

Additionally, the Blind Brook Music Department is changing its band courses for the first time since 2013. Current-

ly, there are two high school bands: the Concert Band and the Wind Ensemble.

In order to create greater incentives for students to practice and hone their musical skills, the traditional two-band course offering is now being divided into three separate sections: Concert Band, which is offered to all students; Honors Wind Ensemble, which is available to all students wishing to challenge themselves with a high-level collection of compositions; and Honors College Wind Ensemble, which is an advanced class that offers college credit to dedicated juniors and seniors through the State University of New York and Westchester Community College Advanced College Experience Program.

The same divisions are being made to the chorus classes at Blind Brook, forming both the Chorus and the Honors College Chorus, each with similar prerequisites to their respective courses.

The Social Studies department is also introducing a new elective, American Pop Culture, which is open to all juniors and seniors. This full year course will study the development of American popular culture throughout the twentieth century in relation to American history.

Through audiovisual and multimedia sources, students will learn about the critical factors that have affected the American identity. By the end of the year, students will use their knowledge to form opinions regarding the development of popular culture in the context of American history.

The course guarantees to provide students with a thorough understand-

ing of what it means to be an American and has attracted a great deal of interest.

"This promises to be an extremely interesting and engaging course. I am considering taking [this course] because I love sports, media, current events, and music and look forward to understanding how these factors caused modern American popular culture to develop," said Gelfarb.

In addition, the world language department is offering two new Spanish and Italian classes to seniors known as SUPA Spanish 201 and SUPA Italian 201.

Spanish 5 at the honors and regular level will no longer be offered, so seniors will be left to decide whether they want to take Advanced Placement Spanish, Advanced Placement Italian, or the new college level language courses.

Both Spanish and Italian classes will allow seniors to obtain course credits once they enter college. However, Spanish and Italian at the AP level is more rigorous and is recommended only for those who are seriously committed to learning Spanish and Italian.

"I think that this will be a great opportunity for students who are not interested in the Advanced Placement course to continue their sequence in language and also gain college credit," said World Language Co-Coordinator Christine Sabatella.

Lastly, AP Literature and Composition will return as a senior course and AP Language and Composition will be open only to juniors. Creative Writing and Journalism will also return as electives.

## Dubin Gives Her Final Adieu

By Lily Werlinich

Guidance Counselor Deborah Dubin departed Blind Brook High School for Greenwich High School on January 28. In the interim, her role will be taken over by William Herzog. The administration will spend the remainder of the school year and summer searching for a permanent replacement for the 2016-17 school year.

**Q:** Your departure surprised many in the community. What led to your decision to leave?

Thinking of what is best for my young family and the quality time that I spend with them, the energy levels that I have for them at night, [made the job] very compelling. I wasn't interviewing, I wasn't out searching for a new job. [It] kind of landed in my lap very seamlessly.... When I weighed the pros and cons and the amount of work this office takes on, the amount of work and time the counselors spend for the students, it just felt like I was giving more to other people's children and less to my own.

**Q:** What most excites you about your new job?

Certainly the diversity. I've always loved working with all different types of people [and] people from all over the world are at Greenwich High School. It will be nice to work with a population that is really disadvantaged and helping them [will be] very

rewarding, as well.

I'm very excited to maintain high-achieving students and working with those families to get them to their goals, but there is another part of the world that needs help in those ways, too. I'm excited to get to work with those types of students again.

**Q:** What has been your overall impression of the Blind Brook community during the six years that you have worked here?

Family and education are the most important [here] and I've always respected that. I think that in this community you don't have to feel bad about being smart. In some more traditional high schools, sometimes that does happen [where] the "less smart, jock-y" kind of people are the cool kids. Here, being smart and achieving good grades is encouraged; it's celebrated. And I think that is awesome.

**Q:** What have been the most rewarding aspects of working in the Blind Brook community?

The rewarding part for me... is seeing students meet their goals, whether that is going to a very elite, top-tier school, or going to a school that is not, but still perfect for them. I think that the excitement and joy that people feel, regardless of the school they get into, is genuine. And as a counselor, it is very rewarding to see a student who has worked very hard, at any level, decide on the next place they go and to

be very excited about that.

**Q:** What have been the most challenging aspects of working in the Blind Brook community?

The most challenging aspect certainly has been the high expectations in terms of college admissions and the high need for [attention to] mental health. I think that they are two huge things that are happening more globally, but Blind Brook has felt [their impact]. As a counselor, where there are only two other [guidance counselors], and really only one psychologist and one social worker, I think that there needs to be more resources so that we can [focus] well on both of those issues.

**Q:** Can you expand upon the mental health issues?

Not all of [the students] have mental health issues, but there are a lot of students that feel a high level of stress and anxiety from the academic, social, and college pressures... whether [that anxiety] is a documented medical issue or students just feel it. This emotional component is frequently addressed [by counselors]. It is a priority in this office to ensure [that] students do not feel overwhelmed... we want students to be happy.

**Q:** At the time of this interview, there are two days remaining before your departure. What have you been doing to prepare?

I have been making notes on every student to share with my replacement [Mr. Herzog] so he has some awareness... and can reflect back on my notes when a student comes to him. I've been meeting with any student or parent that wants to come in. I want to do whatever I can to smooth the transition. I hope to maintain all the relationships that I've made and [have a chance] to see the students and say goodbye.

**Q:** What will you miss most about the faculty and students here at Blind Brook?

I'll miss working with the staff, in terms of their dedication to the students and the partnerships that I've established with them. Sometimes you don't get to work in such an environment that is really focused on educating students at a high level.

The students and the families have really been wonderful. Deep down, these kids are amazing. They're sweet, they're smart, [and] they're genuinely kind. I can have mature conversations with them, [grades] nine through twelve. I have loved watching some of these students grow up. And then when they are seniors, they are in my office, and we're talking about things that are happening in the real world. I'm really going to miss that. I don't think that a larger high school is really going to afford me the opportunity to get to know those students quite like that.



## @EIC\_Turns\_Eighteen

In just two days, I will be ushered into that grand echelon known as adulthood. Yes, dear readers, your Editor-in-Chief is turning eighteen just as twenty-two monstrosities large men attempt to better pummel each other in order to hoist a seven pound sterling silver football. And it will be marvelous.

Originally, I was going to dedicate this editorial to the biggest boon that comes from turning eighteen: the ability to vote in the presidential election.

But then I started to really *think* about the candidates that are currently in the running—Ted Cruz, the frightening fundamentalist, Donald Trump, the tasteless tycoon, Hillary Clinton, the suspicious stateswoman, Bernie Sanders, the socialist senator—and was overcome with visions of apocalyptic terror. We're talking abortion clinic wars and earthquakes on Wall Street.

So, I've decided to hold off on writing a presidential editorial until either Bruce Springsteen or Beyoncé announces their candidacy. Michael Bloomberg would work, too.

Instead, I wanted to share with all of you some exciting news: I have been Instagram-free for twelve days now. I *should* have been Snapchat-free for the same amount

of time, but I suffered a humiliating relapse around the two-day mark.

Nevertheless, with a titanic surge of willpower, and the support of my friends and family, I have hitched myself back onto the wagon. Since then, no snapstories have crossed my glazed eyes nor have my triple chins graced a single person's phone.

I'm feeling pretty good at the moment, but it has been a harrowing journey to reach this point.

Within hours of deleting the two apps, I was besieged by an immense restlessness. My fingers, so accustomed to dancing that twitchy tango of typing, scrolling, and tapping, felt painfully disused. My brain began to meander through the forest of possibilities that had sprung from my newfound freedom. Since I was no longer going to spend time looking for the perfect lighting that would accentuate my eyes while downplaying my nose, no longer going to lust after tiny waists and hourglass curves that my body could never sustain, no longer going to search for the perfect picture to post only to delete it later on, I had hours to fill.

What should I do? I could read a book. You know, my "to-read" list has only been getting longer and longer. I really should make a dent in that. I could watch some Netflix. Eh, their selection has really been boring me lately. I wonder what my friends are doing. Did those guys go into the city? I wonder if they've posted anything. I hope they're having fun. I wish I were having fun. No, no, I am! Right, I was about to bake some cookies. That girl shared some really awesome chocolate chip ones on Instagram the other day. Maybe I should log in—just to look at the cookies. Did my phone just buzz? Wait, it's on silent. But maybe I have a notification anyway...

Pause.

That much-hated cliché proclaims that the first step in fixing a problem is acknowledging that that one exists. Well, here it goes: I'm addicted to my cell phone—and so are the majority of my peers.

Take a passing glance at the hallways of this school and you will see dozens of drones—sorry, students—mindlessly tapping their screens as they stumble along. It is bumper cars come to life, except that knocking into other people is not the intention, but the result of a hopeless dependency upon our endless array of gadgets.

This isn't even the scariest part, though. That comes when we try to interact with each other sans cellular devices and find ourselves incorrigibly bamboozled. It has reached the point where little tricks have been devised to keep phones from interfering with normal activities.

There's the "phone stack," where friends must place their devices on top of each other in the middle of the table. First person to check theirs has to pick up the tab. (Or, if you're anything like my group of friends, that person would be sarcastically taunted for approximately twelve years to ensure that such a slip-up would never happen again.)

Some, like my parents, have banned cellphones at the dinner table, which requires us to actually speak and make eye contact. Others have assigned digital curfews, after which devices must be put to bed, or have created lockboxes to keep their phones out of sight.

In the past month or so, I have started to put my phone on "Do Not Disturb" mode, which keeps it blessedly silent at all times.

But even strategies like these are often not enough to dampen our dependency on our phones, especially when social media is taken into consideration.

In a PEW Research Center study, 76% of teens stated that they use social media, with nearly three-quarters of respondents saying that they are involved with more than one site. This is hardly surprising, given the vast variety of sites at our fingertips, from Twitter and Facebook to Instagram and Snapchat. It's unrealistic now to *not* be associated with these applications, which makes it nearly impossible to cut ties with sites once you've become enmeshed within them.

I used to brag about how little I needed my phone compared to my peers—I go camping and live in the wilderness, *clearly* I don't need my phone!—but my blustering bravado has proven itself to be embarrassingly baseless.

Even now, severing the links (excuse the pun) that I've made with social media has been incredibly difficult. I find myself flipping through the apps on my phone, brainlessly searching for entertainment until I remember that I deleted Snapchat and Instagram. Or I'll be in a group of people, watching them all snap selfies, and I'll feel a rush of desire flood my veins, as if I had just passed by my usual drug spot and was jonesing for a hit.

But I'm trying. Truly, I am. I don't want to find myself at seventy-five, living friendless and alone in my mansion (hey, just because I'm unloved doesn't mean I'm not successful), with just my forty-three virtual cats to keep me company.

So yes, I'll probably download Instagram this weekend so that I can post a flawless photo of myself as a newly crowned adult. After that, though, I hope that I can refrain, because I would rather live my life for me than live it for the insta, for the snapchat, or for the tweet.

*Lily Werlinick*

Editor-in-Chief, *Focus*

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## The Sexting Controversy

### Seniors Melissa Blum and Lucila Goldfeld

Our Ethical Issues class has been the source of many heated debates this school year, but none escalated to the level of the sexting discussion.

While exploring the topic of social media, we came across a scenario where images of a girl were posted in a Facebook group, and we had to decide what to do with the information. When the conversation veered to sexting, many believed that it was the girl's fault for sending the picture in the first place.

From a legal standpoint, both the person who sends a nude and the person who receives or disseminates it can be legally prosecuted because teen sexting falls under child pornography laws.

There are a lot of problems with this, of course, one of them being that the penalty for being caught sexting can be as severe as having to register as a sex offender, which definitely discourages teens from reporting it when their photos are being passed around without their consent.

Also, many legal professionals argue that the laws are being misinterpreted when teens are indicted for child pornography, even in cases where the sexting was consensual. These legal professionals argue that the original intent of the law—to protect adolescents from exposure to pornographic material—has recently been used to penalize them for sexual exploration.

The most interesting and saddening part of this is that the slut-shaming and victim-blaming that surfaced in our Ethics class are actually entrenched in the legal system as well.

There are those who argue that this

ated with rape?

And why is it that the same reluctance shown by the female half of the class was not present in the boys, with many more than three of them participating in the debate?

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**“The most interesting and saddening part of this is that the slut-shaming and victim-blaming that surfaced in our Ethics class are actually entrenched in the legal system as well.”**

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is not an issue of sexism.

To them, we would say two things: if it is not an issue of sexism, why is it that only three girls—in our class of twenty-six students—felt comfortable arguing that disseminating a nude photograph, without explicit permission of the sender, constitutes a violation of consent comparable with the physical violation of consent associ-

The MTV Associated Press poll found in 2011 that of teens who sext, approximately 65% of girls send nude photographs, while only 35% of boys do so, illustrating that any legal prosecution of teen sexting will disproportionately affect girls.

Polling data from The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy shows that of the

girls who sext, 51% of them cite pressure from the opposite sex as the reason that they choose to send promiscuous messages and/or photos, while the same is true for only 18% of boys.

Not to mention that the social ramifications of having a nude photograph spread are much more severe for girls. If a guy sends a nude, there is often not much of a reaction, if any. But when a girl does this, not only is she deemed a slut, fully deserving of the blame in the situation, but she is also publically humiliated and ostracized. In many occasions people assume that she has low self-esteem and is doing it for attention or validation, which is extremely degrading.

We see the same headlines again and again: “Teenager commits suicide after ‘sexting’ a nude photo to her boyfriend made her life a misery.” “‘Sexting’ bullying cited in teen’s (13 year old Hope Witsell) suicide,” etc.

It is vitally important that people understand that even though nothing this severe has happened at Blind Brook, this is not just an issue of polite, hypothetical debate. There are lives at stake.

So next time you think about blaming a girl for sending a nude in the first place, make sure you ask yourself whether it would be fair to blame the victim of a rape. Make sure you think about the consequences, because sometimes, there's no going back.

## Current Events (or Lack Thereof) at Blind Brook

### Senior Marly Suesserman

After the November Paris attacks, anger and confusion amongst many students circulated through the school over the fact that there was close to zero discussion of the event and its effects on the nation. We witnessed the attacks and the world's responses on the news, in the paper, on Facebook, and even on Snapchat. But there was little to no discussion of the state of our country and the rest of the world in school on the Monday following the attacks.

Walking out of school on Monday, November 16—the Monday after the Paris attacks—I felt empty, disappointed, and actually quite angry. And I was not the only one. What kind of education system do we live in where we value memorizing the formula for an arithmetic sequence for the fifth day in a row, or scribbling verbatim the teacher's words on loose leaf, more than we value the state of our world?

My anger with the lack of discussion over the biggest news story of the season spurred my thoughts regarding the lack of current events we learn and know at Blind Brook. Yes, I understand the importance of our other core curriculum classes. If implementing a required mandatory current events class (as we had in eighth

grade with Mr. Dakers) was so easy, Blind Brook would have done it already. But a mandatory current events class would impede the education of the math, English, history, and more, that we are required to learn by federal and New York State law.

That being said, a class discussion—especially in a history class itself—regarding our world does not impede on our basic education; rather, it would enhance it.

In school, most of us sit through a forty-minute social studies class each day, learning about and memorizing the events of our world. A fair number of students could probably recite the causes, outcomes, major battles, and important figureheads of World War I. But could they recite so much as a simple cause of the war we are living through today?

I do not mean to minimize the importance of learning history. However, one of the biggest aspects of learning about the past is to understand how our history is linked with the current events of today.

On that Monday, the only class I was in where Paris was brought up was Mrs. Goett's twelfth grade AP Language and Composition class. We did not just recite what

happened and who was killed; we had a meaningful discussion over the causes, ISIS's motives, the controversy over Syrian refugees, and how the media strategically uses bias to cover the stories. It was a class discussion, where we all shared our opinions and built off of one another's thoughts. I was amazed by this new insight over our world.

When I can remember what we did two months ago more than I can remember what I learned in some of my classes yesterday, I think that shows that the discussion over the Paris attacks was more valuable to my education than another discussion over the different structures of a rhetorically effective essay.

Regardless of whether or not students and faculty want current events to be a required course during their high school experience, being aware of such news will always be an integral part of a student's education.

Students become more globally conscious with the knowledge of current events. It helps to develop lifelong skills and a better understanding of politics, and their own human and natural rights. Holding meaningful opinion and factual-based discussions of current

events in school translates to our intelligence outside of the classroom.

Going back to the lack of discussion over the Paris attacks, I want to end with another thought. My extended family was over only a week or two after the attacks for Thanksgiving. Over turkey, gravy, and the annual discussions over how our society needs a wakeup call, I told everyone how there was only one class where any teacher even said word about the attacks.

Many of my relatives were astonished, for the same reason that I am.

But my aunt said something that made me see this whole perspective in a different light. She said that with all of the terrorist attacks, wars, and violence that we experience in our society, discussion over each and every big story would give students no time to actually learn the mandatory core curricula. It would make school become a current events class.

With that inquiry, I began to wonder. Is the lack of current events education at Blind Brook a matter of faculty putting heavy value on completing the state requirements, or a matter of the overwhelming amount of violence and horrors that we live in today?

# Student Viewpoints

A Blind Brook High School Student Publication

February 2016

## Your "Typical" High School Junior Harrison Lawrence

All high school students have different experiences in their education because each individual holds their own beliefs, values, and identities.

At Blind Brook, it may seem as though that is untrue because of the apparent homogeneity, but in truth, the social aspects are no different than the average high school.

The homogeneous society that people at Blind Brook seem to be part of is a farce. In reality, every single student has a little quirk, but the fear of being an outcast has led people to keep their differences to themselves.

But even though people keep their differences to themselves, they have no trouble calling others out on the differences they see.

Talk of other people's differences is very common in Blind Brook, with offensive words being tossed around like nothing. Sure, a person is allowed to be facetious, but is something really that funny if it offends someone else, especially if they are right in front of you?

It may seem like there is no one that can feel offended by a joke, but very few people find it funny when a student calls another student "faggot," "retard," or other such disgusting slurs.

One thing that the majority of people in Blind Brook—including myself—possess is a sense of overconfidence and entitlement. The fact that people in Rye Brook were raised with a sense of economic superiority gives many of us the feeling that we, in fact, are better than others.

The ironic thing about this overconfidence is that the people who often convey this feeling the most are the ones who have their own insecurities. There is no reason for people to hide behind a mask, especially when preparing to face the real world.

Whether that means having a unique fear, a non-heteronormative identity, a mental illness, or even liking something that others would find weird, no one should ever, ever have to feel so insecure that they have to put on a persona that will only do harm to others.

This lack of self-identity has led to people in Blind Brook having a very critical mindset.

Reputation has been, and always will be, a very important aspect of high school. At Blind Brook, the rules of reputation have been set in stone, starting in the elementary school.

Anyone seen as eccentric, out of the ordinary, or even just a little quirky usually finds himself or herself ostracized just for being who they are.

It saddens me that people are afraid to do things that do not coincide with other students' impressions of them.

It seems as though once someone is an outcast, he or she will always be an outcast, no matter what amount of effort he or she puts into fitting in. Just being acquainted with someone who is not in the "in crowd," can cost anyone their reputation.

Reputation goes beyond school property in Rye Brook. Think about social media.

Initially meant to be for connecting with people and developing friendships, people are using it now to flaunt how much better their lives are in comparison to the people they are around, usually with a pre-planned, witty caption.

This is all for the goal of getting likes. People at Blind Brook are so consumed with wanting the instant gratification from others that they forget about doing things for their own enjoyment.

Everyone is aware of the hypothetical "Blind Brook Bubble," where everyone knows everything about everybody. At Blind Brook, we seem to be in the know about every single thing that is going on around us, as it will keep us from becoming left out.

Living in such a small community can actually be very harmful to students' relationships and wellbeing. Rumors and gossip spread at the blink of an eye (or at the tap of a send button), which means that one student can ruin another's reputation in such a short time.

As a community, we at Blind Brook must be more conscientious with how we speak, act, and overall portray ourselves, as these four or less years are our transition into the real world, where our actions really do come back with repercussions.

In order for Blind Brook to become a place for people to become more accommodating, self-expression and individualism should be embraced.

If people are willing to overcome the stigmas of high school social pressures, these stigmas can be destroyed, and a new, accepting Blind Brook society will be born.

## Common Core: A Round Peg for a Square Hole Freshman Carly Kabot

Standardized testing and the Common Core curriculum have been in the hot seat for years, as they often stand in the way of learning. There has been endless debate over the pros and cons of such a fast-paced, vigorous, and demanding learning structure.

Not only does it change the way that a course is taught, but it also impacts both the lives of students and teachers in a negative way, with teachers trying to rush through material and students sprinting to catch up.

I would love for our communities to begin to challenge this ethic and for our generation to ultimately change the face of education and the learning process.

Common Core was created to ensure that all students, despite where they live, would be given an education strong enough for them to be fully equipped for college, a career, and life.

The initial implementation of the Common Core and other programs like it all started with good intentions.

So, how did it become one of the most controversial and negative facets of education?

For one, the pace is always ridiculed for being too fast for the general public. Even from as young as third grade, I remember learning a new concept each day. Common Core hadn't even been installed at this point, and yet it still took me awhile for my brain to wrap around

concepts.

Though I have become used to this, I fear for younger children who are continuously being penalized and edged away from the enjoyment of what school can offer.

All schools, classes, and students learn differently, with individual styles and needs. I learn differently from the student to my right and I deserve to be treated like that.

I often find myself wanting to

know more, wanting to explore more deeply my interests and topics that I think I could pursue in a meaningful way.

Other times, there are concepts that I struggle to grasp and feel that I need more specialized attention to reach a full level of comprehension.

Despite this, children are being forced to learn in a way that can be compared to shoving a round peg into a square hole: there is no way to make it a perfect fit. Common Core eradicates the ability to eas-

ily receive specific and individualized attention, leaving some kids lost in an ever-flowing sea of new concepts.

Last year, I took the Algebra Regents Exam and it is fair to say that taking that test was one of the most stressful experiences of my academic career. I was able to work through it fine, but it didn't reflect my skills or display problems that were even slightly similar to the

curriculum.

Yes, it is important to be able to handle stressful situations, and high-stakes tests do present that immense level of stress really beneficial for students? And do such impersonal examinations really demonstrate how well a student has grown and advanced in a subject?

Despite all of this, the worst part of the Common Core is the vast array of standardized tests that it requires. I am the type of person that no matter how long I have studied, I will be nervous.

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**"Life is not measured by numbers, but in substance. Shouldn't this be the lesson that is taught from the moment we can read, write, and learn?"**

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The fact that I'm only a freshman and school will only get harder scares me, but I know there are plenty others who feel the same way. I want to work to the best of my ability, but the fact that each grade seems like a mini representation of my intelligence infuriates me.

A standardized test doesn't reflect my personality or my creativity. Not everything that can prepare me for life is written in a textbook. Answers aren't found in the span of three minutes and life certainly doesn't come with a bubble sheet.

If life were as simple as choosing letter A, B, C, or D, Common Core would certainly be on the right track! But at the rate it's going, an inevitable crash seems more likely.

Life is not measured by numbers, but in substance. Shouldn't this be the lesson that is taught from the moment we can read, write, and learn?

The biggest thing that the Common Core curriculum has changed is not students' grades, but the reason why they are at school. School has transformed from a place in which students can mature into a competitive community driven by a need for superior grades.

Today I am a student, but tomorrow I am the future. I want to be prepared for life, not an exam. When grades become more important than learning, there's a clear problem at hand.



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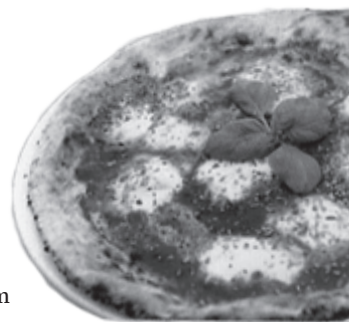
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## Pray for the President's Gun Control

*an opinion*

By Sammy Landino

America has a mourning process. After Sandy Hook, after San Bernardino, after Charleston, and after Aurora, it's always the same. First, we cry, clinging to our loved ones, thanking God and circumstance for their kindness, while the luck we feel in being safe starts to breed guilt and self-resentment. Then come the vengeful, self-affirming oaths we vow through teary veils of anger. We impulsively churn out our meaningless elegies, telling each other how horrific it was and how deeply sad we are, believing that we have paid our due diligence through a funnel of empty will power. We shoot out our, "Pray for (insert any city here)," not realizing that everything—all of this anger and all of these trenchant indictments—will become, before long, no more than forgotten Facebook posts.

Now, hopefully, this might begin to change.

On January 5, President Barack Obama issued an executive order overhauling the present system of background checks, and reinvigorating the enforcement of previously installed gun laws. According to the Center for Disease Control, guns kill approximately 30,000 Americans every year. Thus, such an overhaul seems to be well deserved.

As stated in a White House press release, President Obama's executive order centers around three main facets: the gun show loophole, changing the background check system, and mental health treatment. Specifically, President Obama plans to enforce stricter laws to prevent buyers and sellers from taking advantage of the gun show loophole and to appropriate funds for 230 new FBI background check staff (a 50% increase).

President Obama also details that 200 new Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) employees will be appointed to enforce already existing gun laws. Moreover, he plans to invest \$500 million in mental healthcare treatment, effectively allowing for increased access to care. Finally, in President Obama's executive order, he confirms a rule that would compel dealers who ship firearms to notify law enforcement if any guns are not accounted for in transit.

In his *New York Times* OP-ED about the executive order, President Obama stated that, "We all have a responsibility." And while unity is what America usually needs in the face of issues of this gravity, it would be naive to ignore the partisan ties to the American gun epidemic.

The main cries against this no-brainer executive order come from those who sleep with the Second Amendment under their pillow, and AK-47's under their mattresses—also known as the National Rifle

Association (NRA). The "education" group complains that President Obama is overstepping his constitutional rights, while they themselves are petitioning for the right of all Americans to carry firearms.

First of all, in no way has President Obama even remotely overstepped his constitutional rights. Indeed, Attorney General Loretta Lynch has already affirmed the legality of his executive action.

Second of all, not a whit of President Obama's order entails coming for Americans' guns. The National Rifle Association is, once again, attempting to cast aspersions on the President by equating his safety precautions with some sort of Mephistophelean autocrat that is entering poor, law-abiding Americans' houses and stealing their firearms.

The second main—and more infuriating—cry against President Obama's order comes from America's most loving friends, conservative Republicans. Conservatives decry Obama's order completely because, as they say, if a determined person with a gun *really* wants to kill someone, no executive order will stop them.

So, in other words, we should simply capitulate to these violent gun-toting individuals, cease to lock our doors, and arm every grandmother, toddler and teacher with their own firearm? No legislation can stop a person from killing if that is his or her intention, but it is ludicrous to assume, like many conservatives do, that just because legislation cannot entirely fix the problem means it is not worth having at all.

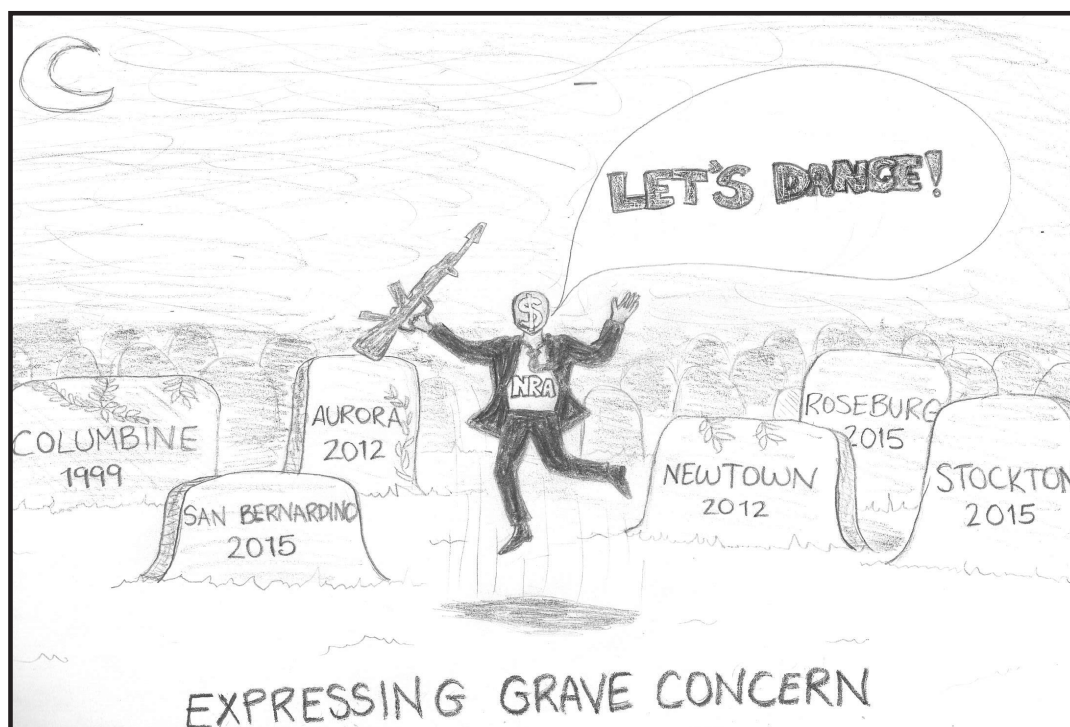
In fact, a Gallup poll showed that 55% of Americans feel that the laws covering the sale of firearms should be made more strict and 54% believe that gun control is a vital issue to consider when voting candidates into office. Lastly, 86% would favor "a law that required universal background checks for all guns purchased in the U.S. using a centralized database across all 50 states."

Yet we are still faced with the majority of conservative Republicans who stubbornly denounce any piece of legislation that President Obama puts forth, even if its very purpose is to save lives.

And so I ask, why?

Why are we opposing legislation that would help to ameliorate the American gun epidemic? Why are we opposing legislation that would keep American children, like those of Sandy Hook Elementary School, safe?

America has become too comfortable with her cycle of mourning. It is time for that to change, before the bodies of innocent victims become too heavy for her to bear.



Cartoon/Jeremy Weingarten

## I'll Never Be "Ready for Hillary" *an opinion*

By Lauren Rothmann

According to her Instagram biography, Hillary Clinton is simply a "doting grandmother, among other things." But I'm sure when she says "other things," she really means liar, manipulator, and cheater. Clinton truly is the worst person for the presidency, or really any job for that matter. Whenever she can, she lies, and every decision that she makes is for political expediency and career advancement.

Clinton's political career has been riddled with scandal. There's Whitewater, Filegate, and Travelgate, just to name a few. Not to mention the scandal with her private email server. And Benghazi. Google "Hillary Clinton scandals," read a few of the articles that come up, and then tell me that you think she should be president.

She has fired government officials and filled their positions with her friends (a little thing called nepotism). She has personally requested folders from the FBI on her opponents and was involved in countless cover-ups. She has even stooped so low as to steal furniture from the White House! I would not feel comfortable with a president who has such a history of immoral and unethical actions, and I can't understand how anyone else would, either.

One grand Clinton irony can be found on her website, where she states, "We have to end the flood of secret, unaccountable money that is distorting our elections, corrupting our political system, and drowning out the voices of too many everyday Americans. Our democracy should be about expanding the franchise, not charging an entrance fee."

This is despite the numerous campaign finance laws that she has violated since her bid for United States Senate

in 2000, one example of which is Clinton's allotment of millions of dollars in federal assistance to those who donate to her campaigns.

To top it off, she's also accepted money from foreign nations. How's that for influencing foreign policy? The Clinton Foundation has received many controversial contributions from places abroad, prominently among them, Saudi Arabia, from which Clinton's foundation has received millions of dollars.

Just a reminder: Saudi Arabia is a nation where women lack power, are their husbands' property, and are stoned to death on a regular basis. Yet, Clinton flaunts herself as a women's rights advocate.

With regard to women's rights, Clinton is a walking contradiction. While at the Women's Economic Forum in December, the American Broadcasting Company quoted Clinton asserting,

"Every survivor of sexual assault [has] the right to be believed."

Yet back when her husband, Former

President Bill Clinton, had multiple sexual misconduct allegations filed against him, Hillary immediately refuted those women's claims as false.

So essentially, based off of the claims that she has made, victims of sexual assault are always telling the truth—except when

their claims apply to her husband? Right, because that just makes perfect sense.

I'm also convinced that Clinton is as popular as she is simply because she is a woman. There's not a doubt in my mind that during my lifetime a woman will be president. But does that mean that the time is now? A woman should be president when there is a woman running who is qualified enough for the position. I believe that we are still waiting for that woman to come along.

Many people, however, say that Clinton should be president because she is the most qualified. During the one of

the Democratic debates Clinton boasted "a long history of getting things done." Yet looking back at her eight years as the Senator of New York, she accomplished absolutely nothing of value. Only three bills that she sponsored ever came to pass, one being the creation of a historic site in New York, another being the naming of a post office, and the third being the naming of a highway.

The same holds true for her four years as Secretary of State. The only thing notable about Clinton's time in the Obama administration was the attack on Benghazi. Clinton neglected requests to improve security conditions on the U.S. Embassy in Benghazi, Libya, and later, a terrorist attack on the embassy resulted in the deaths of four Americans.

Despite Clinton's failure to protect American lives, she got away with it all unscathed. I wouldn't call that an accomplishment, but I'm sure she would.

Clinton's actions are abhorrent, and she is too much of a coward to fairly compete against her opponents for the Democratic nomination. She makes a mockery of the idea of democracy. For every day her involvement in the presidential race continues, the possibility for an unbiased election season diminishes. Hillary Clinton is Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth come to life: she has absolutely zero qualms toward unethical behavior, and will stop at nothing to gain power. I only hope that voters will see through Clinton's fraud and recognize her as a despicable human being. But manipulator that she is, I'm sure that all she comes across as to some Americans is "a doting grandmother, among other things."



Courtesy of PolitiChick

## The Separation Integration of Church and State *an opinion*

By Noah Lubin

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution reads, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." Thomas Jefferson wrote this to establish "a wall of separation between Church and State." Unfortunately, this wall of separation has been breached for the past twenty years.

Religion has poisoned the American political system. These toxins, infiltrating government and saturating the Republican Party, have taken the form of extremist fundamentalism based on biblical literalism. The results of this ideology are a conservative base that only supports radical policy positions, which ultimately leads to legislative breakdown. This radical nature can be seen in the majority of Republican positions, most prominently regarding scientific advancement and gay rights.

It is no shock that the Republican Party is one of the only major political parties in the world that refuses to acknowledge global climate change and evolution because their science comes from the Bible. Considering that a large portion of the scientific community has acknowledged the existence of global climate change, this is pure ignorance. If this example is not enough to display the lunacy of the Republican Party,

then their refusal to support civil rights should be.

In November 2015, Republican presidential candidates Mike Huckabee, Bobby Jindal, and Ted Cruz attended an anti-homosexual rally. During the rally, the pastor repeatedly said, "Kill the Gays."

They are not alone.

Marco Rubio, another presidential candidate, has stated he would reverse the Supreme Court's June decision to grant marriage equality to same-sex couples. This is a hindrance to the significant progress that the LGBTQ community has fought for over multiple decades.

What is the result of these far-right policy positions? Political gridlock.

Republicans have taken such radical positions that they are unwilling to compromise on any of major political issues—it is their way, or the highway. If you don't believe me, look no further than the government shutdown of 2013, caused by the Republicans' refusal to negotiate on the federal budget.

Although Republicans have failed to pass radical legislation at the national level, they have succeeded in doing so at the state level. There are two categories of Religious Inclusion Laws—Religious Laws and Public Schools and Religious

Freedom Restoration Acts—by which Republicans have been able to promote their Bible-based legislation. Between 1995 and 2009, a total of 87 Religious Inclusion Laws have changed the interpretation of the role of religion in everyday life.

The first type of Religious Inclusion Law deals with public schools. Seventeen states have passed legislation that provides state funding for religious education. Moreover, Arizona, Texas, Louisiana and five other states have passed Religious Liberty Acts, which state, "There should be no restriction in public schools of religious teachings or discussions by teachers and students."

These laws have allowed for creationism to be taught as a substitute to evolution in high schools. Since these teachings take place in public schools, Republicans have created government-sponsored promotion of religion.

The second type of Religious Inclusion Law is Religious Freedom Restoration Acts or RFRA. RFRA protect citizen expression of their religion. The problem with these laws is that it provides an unnecessary layer of protection over religious actors and their actions. They allow religious groups too much power to discriminate in decisions such as hiring, housing, and providing

services.

States that host ideologically conservative legislators, fundamental right-wing influences, and evangelical congregations have passed far more Religious Inclusion Laws than other states. This has resulted in a transformation in many states, causing a new regime of church-state relations, and enabling incredible political power for evangelicals.

Many conservative Republicans have a firm belief in the Bible, making it the basis for many of their policy positions. Ted Cruz flaunts this reality: "A president who does not begin their day on their knees to pray to the Lord is not fit to serve as president," he once said.

This extremist fundamentalism has led to Republican politicians who are often either uninformed or ignorant, neither better than the other, both of which serve to bring gridlock to Washington.

By no means whatsoever am I arguing that any individual should be bereft of their right to believe in any religion. Believe whatever you want. I am not arguing against religion. I am arguing against using the American government as a tool for the imposition of religion.

Our Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution to create a beacon of democracy, not a pulpit from which fundamentalists could preach.

## College: Admit None?

By Joanna Goodman

We are all too familiar with the college process.

The challenge of navigating the online Common Application, of which our parents' have little understanding, is rather easy to conquer for the Millennium generation. The more stressful challenges include: choosing a standardized test, scoring well on that standardized test, keeping up our grades, requesting recommendations, and of course, essays and more essays and supplemental essays. Then we wait for the email, or the letter (from the rare school that still uses mail), and hope for good news.

But what exactly is the admissions committee looking at to make their student body? Outside of grades and essays, what comes next?

One issue that doesn't always come up in a conversation is the admissions department's consideration of minority. This policy is called affirmative action (favoring members of a disadvantaged group) and this issue—what some call reverse discrimination—is currently pending before the Supreme Court of the United States.

Affirmative action and racial quota cases have been in the courts for decades, as schools struggle with how heavily to weigh race in the admissions process. In 2003, the landmark case *Grutter v. Bollinger* provided more definitive guidelines for affirmative action policies.

In this case, Barbara Grutter sued the University of Michigan Law School for denying her admission because she was Caucasian. She alleged that the School of Law used race as a predominant factor and gave minorities a greater chance of admissions.

The Supreme Court ruled against her in a 5-4 decision, upholding the policy of affirmative action and deeming that race had an appropriate but limited role in the admissions policies of public universities so schools could obtain a diverse student body.

Now, twelve years later, the Supreme Court is dealing with a similar argument in the case *Fisher v. University of Texas*. Abigail Fisher, a Caucasian female, was denied admissions to University of Texas and argued that the University of Texas at Austin's race-conscious admissions process was in violation of the precedent set by *Grutter v. Bollinger*.

With the Court decision still pending, the Justices have questioned whether the small increase in diversity that the university reaped was worth "the extraordinary power to consider race."

The University of Texas argued that regardless of race, Fisher would not have been accepted, and that the use of race was "a narrowly tailored means of pursuing greater diversity."

Regardless of how the Court decides, both private and public colleges have proudly made it a point to create a socio-economically diverse student body. For example, Duke University shared that of their Early Decision admissions for their

incoming class, 37% are students of color: 66%, 70 are Latinos, 158 are Asian, five are Native American.

Similarly, 44 percent of the University of Pennsylvania's incoming ED class is made up of minority groups and 11 percent of the admitted pool is international. Few can argue against these institutions' efforts to create a diverse community.

Regardless of whether affirmative action will be allowed to continue in public universities, the fact is that the numbers of applications colleges are receiving from all races, genders and ethnic classes, as well as internationally, are skyrocketing. This means acceptance rates decrease. (For context: *U.S. News & World Report* stated that in 1988, the acceptance rate at Columbia University in New York was 65%. Today it lies below 7%.)

With this new surge in applications, many believe that admissions councils have done a great job in working to understand everything about a person's background in order to ascertain how a seventeen- or eighteen-year-old arrived at where he or she is today. Admissions committees also pride themselves in their "holistic review" processes, which take into consideration affirmative action and the whole of the application.

But how much of this reviewing process is actually in our control? What can we, at Blind Brook, do to give ourselves the best chance at attending a university? Instead of entertaining the idea to change the system, how can we work within it?

Since I can remember, grades have been stressed. Doing well on a test was a measure of intelligence. Students are told by schools, review courses and guides what scores and grades they need to qualify for a college.

But we are now learning that high grades and excellent test scores are not necessarily all that colleges are looking for. My experience with the system has led me to believe that there is much more we need in our applications and what may be equally important is what we do outside of the classroom.

Perhaps our school (and other high schools) should consider offering opportunities for students to stand out. It seems that we should be spending our free time doing something in addition to the traditional clubs or sport. I know, there's only so much time in a day, but grades, scores, sports and school clubs are not enough to demonstrate our full potential.

They don't seem to be showing admissions counselors what we can offer and they don't seem to be convincing them that we are a wanted member of their student body. Maybe it is the colleges themselves who should work more closely with our guidance departments to advise them on what a student needs to do to ensure the best chances of admittance outside.

In a changing world with increased applicants and a focus on intangibles, we need help understanding how to navigate the college system, and possibly how to adjust our priorities.



Courtesy of Joanna Goodman

## Flying High with the Math Department



Photo/Leah Kratochvil

The High Flyers pose for a group snapshot.

By Sydney Goodman

The High Flyers, the high school's new math team, embarked on their journey several months ago, when Mathematics Coordinator Michael McCarvill initiated a club for juniors and seniors seeking to solve difficult, creative problems. Approximately twenty students are in the club, though only a small fraction of them keep up with the math problems due to their time-consuming, arduous nature.

As word got out about the club, freshmen and sophomores began expressing interest in doing their own math meet-ups. Thus, Little Flyers was created for the underclassmen.

Mr. McCarvill started the club after receiving an email containing a difficult problem that he thought his students would be interested in solving.

"After sending out the problem I saw so many students trying to solve it, and decided to turn it into a recurring thing," said McCarvill.

Every few days, Mr. McCarvill posts a new problem through Google Classroom and the students try to find the correct answer as soon as possible. Before posting, Mr. McCarvill sends out a notification saying that he will be uploading an activity, thus allowing all of the students in the club to prepare.

As soon as a student solves the problem, he or she posts the answer on Mr. McCarvill's Google Classroom site so that he can grade the results. The first student to correctly answer the problem gets ten points, the second student gets nine points, and so on.

If a student answers the problem incorrectly, Mr. McCarvill informs them and allows them to resubmit their answer, with a one-point penalty. Mr. McCarvill keeps a record of each club member's points so that he and all members can view the definitive rankings of math genius.

Mr. McCarvill's High Flyers problems are reminiscent of the weekly problem sets he gives out in his Honors Pre-Calculus class-

es. Each problem set contains six short answer questions that require out-of-the-box thinking to solve. Many demand knowledge of numerous kinds of math, ranging from calculus to geometry to algebra and more. Mr. McCarvill either writes the challenge problems himself or collects them from an undisclosed source.

"I've really enjoyed working on the High Flyers problems throughout the year. I think they give students a great opportunity to challenge themselves to think creatively in a way that regular math classes don't always require. The club also encourages an element of friendly competition which keeps the participants motivated," said senior BC Calculus student Melissa Blum.

The most active participants in the club are Rowan Reddy, Bryan Weintraub, Sammy Landino, and Owen Xie, all juniors in McCarvill's Honors Pre-Calculus course. Not only are these students most dedicated to the club, but they are also consistently the highest scoring members. These students relish the opportunity to test themselves and strengthen their mathematical problem solving skills.

"It's a great opportunity for us to be challenged outside of class, and it's also a fun competition," said Weintraub.

"The High Flyers Club exemplifies how fundamental concepts learned in class can be applied to even the most bizarre scenarios, supporting the notion that math is ubiquitous in everyday life," said Reddy.

Pop quiz! See if you can solve the first problem that McCarvill sent out to his students:

A 20 foot ladder is placed in a straight alleyway from the lower left corner and leaning on the right wall. One ladder-width further down the alleyway, a 30-foot ladder is placed from the lower right corner and leaning on the left wall. The point where the two ladders cross is 10 feet above the ground. How wide is the alleyway?





## Spotlight Students

### • Sanika Mehta •



Photos/Rebecca Regueira  
Sanika Mehta draws an elegant ballerina in the school's art room.



By Eleni Kohilakis

Senior Sanika Mehta is currently thrilling students and faculty alike with her compelling artwork. Mehta's work often draws upon themes of family and love, which is inspired, in part, by her cultural heritage. This year, she is enrolled in AP Art and will submit her portfolio to the AP Board at the end of the school year.

**Q:** When did you realize you had a passion for art?

**A:** I never really realized that I really loved art but in my childhood I would do a lot of artwork. I was very creative with things. I loved drawing in coloring books. As I was growing up I [took] art classes that caused my interest to grow.

**Q:** Do you use art to relieve your stress?

**A:** Definitely...Whenever I do it I don't do anything else but art and I don't think about anything else. It helps me take my mind off of school work... I don't think about my schoolwork or my problems outside of school, like friend problems.

**Q:** Have you created an art portfolio for college?

**A:** I created a portfolio that I submitted to all of my colleges. I have been creating that for at least three years. Out of all of the works that I have done in the past three years, I have put my best works in that portfolio and I have about 25-30 pieces... This summer I did a pre-college course at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) [in New York City]. A lot of my things in my portfolio were from the precollege course... Figure drawings, observational drawings, stuff like that... I also have pieces that relate to my

culture since I am from two completely different cultures. I also have an abstract self-portrait in there and I have many different mediums. I have acrylic, oil, graphite pencil, charcoal, and pastel pencil.

**Q:** Have you taken art classes in school/out of school?

**A:** I took Studio Art I and II and then I took Advanced Art, then after that there [was] Portfolio Development and AP Art. AP Art is more of a commitment than Portfolio Development. I took that course because it interested me more. [AP Art] was focused more on the artistic side, whereas the other is the development. For AP Art you need twenty-four pieces in total: twelve are breadth pieces, which are just random, and the twelve concentration pieces focus on a specific theme or idea. My theme, or idea, is telling the story of an Indian wedding, which connects to my background and culture.

**Q:** Who are your favorite artists?

**A:** I love Andy Warhol... I love anything that is abstract but isn't too abstract... It needs to be unique but I also need to be able to tell what it is by looking at it. I don't get the point of an artist with a plain canvas. It needs to tell a story, something about the artist.

**Q:** How does art help you combine your two distinct cultures?

**A:** My mom and my dad are from India. I was born here and raised here but I still go to India every year [to] see my family. I am very connected to that culture and still live the lifestyle that a typical American lives, but I am still connected to my roots back there and I think that art helps me make that connection.

### • Ryan Vogt •

By Eleni Kohilakis

Freshman Ryan Vogt has been dancing since he can remember. Classically trained in many different forms, Vogt can barely keep his toes from tapping during school. Although still learning, he hopes to pursue his dancing career on the bright lights of Broadway.

**Q:** How large a part of your life is dance?

**A:** I am a member of New York Performing Arts Center in Harrison. I dance seven days a week. It is my life, my entire life; I don't have a life outside of it.

**Q:** At what age did you start to dance and when did you realize that you had a true passion for it?

**A:** I started to dance when I was, I think, seven... [I realized] I had a true passion for it when I was nine. So for two years I was like, I'll go in and out of this, but then at nine I decided I would stick with it since I love it so much.

**Q:** What types of dance have you been taught? Which are you best at?

**A:** I am trained in ballet, tap, jazz, hip-hop, contemporary, and ballroom. And, I think I am best at jazz and tap but I really, really, really love contemporary - I feel like it is so elegant and beautiful, so that is my favorite style of dance.

**Q:** What does your future look like with respect to dance?

**A:** I have thought so much about this. I want to go to NYU, Carnegie Mellon, [or] Julliard... And my goal is to perform on Broadway in multiple shows, so I am hoping to get there. This summer I am doing Broadway's Artists Alliance, which prepares you for Broadway. You train in [dancing], singing and acting and then at the

end you showcase it and a bunch of agents come to sign you there... The agents sign you for an acting or dancing company and then they go out and see what auditions are good for you and what coaches you can work better with. So, basically, they train you and find you paid jobs.

**Q:** What has it been like competing in different dance competitions? How far have you traveled for competitions?

**A:** I have traveled a lot, mostly in the tri-state area. The biggest performance that I did was at Symphony Space in New York City, which is basically Broadway. I went to a convention and while we were taking classes, people were scouting people to perform a dance that night and I was one of the people picked. So after classes, we went to Symphony Space and we had a three-hour rehearsal and that night we went on to perform. It was the best experience that I have ever had. It was so much fun, but it wasn't like competing... At a competition it is typical a grade out of 100 and then you can either get bronze, silver, high silver, gold, high gold, or platinum, which is a near-perfect score.

**Q:** Why did you start dancing?

**A:** The entire reason why I started dancing was because it is a place where I can just forget about everything in the outside world and can just focus on the things I am doing there. If I'm having trouble at school, or if I get a bad grade, or if I'm having family issues, it's a place where I just walk into my studio and all of that is left behind. My mind becomes clear on what I'm doing and I just forget about everything. When I am studying for a test I am always tapping my feet underneath the table, and it bothers my family so much, but I can't not do it. I don't know, my feet just never stop moving.



Photos/Rebecca Regueira  
Ryan Vogt slides into a split on the floor outside of the cafeteria.



# ANYTHING GOES



## Bringing Back Traditional Broadway

By Alana Applebaum and Alexa Limb

This year's spring production, *Anything Goes*, features traditional music and dancing that will undoubtedly resonate with audience members of all ages. The student actors and actresses in the show are working hard to put their own personal touches on both the songs and dances. "I would say [the music] is classical Broadway music. It's kind of standard as well, with songs such as 'I Got a Kick Out of You' and 'You're the Top,' which are very well known in terms of the American Songbook," said Director Christina Colangelo. "The music should appeal to all generations even though it's old fashioned."

Compared to last year's show, *West Side Story*, Colangelo finds that the music in *Anything Goes* is somewhat less difficult for students to learn. However, there are distinct obstacles that come along with every different musical.

"All of the shows are very different. When you're doing traditional Broadway, it's a little bit different than when you're doing *West Side Story* or *Sweeney*," [Anything Goes] has its own challenges in terms of more legitimate singing as opposed to more modern singing," said Colangelo.

Regarding the dancing in the show, jazz is one of the main styles that is featured. Uniquely, *Anything Goes* also has a few numbers that involve tap dancing. This type of dancing is not typically found in Blind Brook musicals, and is a new style that cast members will have to learn.

"It is the first time in a while we've done tap dancing so I think it'll be pretty good," said Colangelo, but we have a lot of kids with good experience with tap, so I think it'll be pretty good," said Colangelo.

Fortunately, the dedicated cast members of the show are putting in their maximum effort to master the types of dancing required for the show. Skilled instructors Tracy and TJ O'Sullivan work with the students weekly to help them learn and perfect the dance routines that will be in the production.

This process serves as an excellent learning experience for all of the students who are not familiar with tap dancing. In addition to the guidance offered by the O'Sullivans, the actors and actresses in the show who are now to tap dancing get to learn from their talented peers.

At rehearsals, it is not uncommon for cast members to practice their dance routines with one another during their free time. This gives them more opportunity to refine some of the more complicated moves that are included in the dance numbers so that the actual performances are as flawless as can be.

Photo/Rebecca Reguerra  
The cast gathers to rehearse musicals.



## Behind the Scenes

By Isabella Lazar and Danielle Barsby

Excitement is brewing for the spring musical as the cast and crew are hard at work behind the scenes to make *Anything Goes* come to life. Christina Colangelo has been the director of all Blind Brook High School theatre performances for several years. Affectionately referred to as "Chrissy" by her casts, she is the driving force behind *Anything Goes*. This year, she will also be aided by Assistant Student Director Jessica Bender, a senior who is replacing the long-time Assistant Director Sarah Haber.

"I'm kind of like the overseer of all of the technical aspects of the production. I pick kids that I know are responsible enough to handle very specific jobs," said Colangelo.

According to Colangelo, rehearsals are organized by scene and the corresponding music. Choreography is generally practiced in separate rehearsals. Only necessary actors are called to rehearsal, removing inefficiency caused by distractions. Students with lead roles are typically called for rehearsal more often than students with roles in the ensemble.

Outside of rehearsals, cast members are instructed to practice as much as possible on their own by reviewing their lines and studying songs and choreography. This year, an "Anything Goes" Facebook group was established so that cast and crew members can coordinate and communicate. Another primary function of the group is to post videos of rehearsals so cast members can practice dances that they learned even weeks ago.

In addition, there are about twenty to forty students who dedicate their time and effort to participating in stage crew. Crew members can participate in various areas of the production, including costume-fitting, prop design, hair and makeup, set-building, lighting and backstage running crew. Usually one or two crew members work in the sound booth, one of them being the Assistant Student Director.

Members of the stage crew are not limited to just one job. Many participants choose to help out with many different aspects of the performance.

"I've been part of artistic design, I've worked backstage and I've worked lights," said junior Miranda Rasch, who has been a crew member in various Blind Brook High School productions.

During "Hell Week," truly anything goes for the cast and crew. Hell Week is the extremely chaotic and stressful week before the show that is dedicated to running through the musical, as well as perfecting and tweaking elements of the production.

"[During Hell Week] there are much longer hours, and there is more pressure to do everything correctly. We have to learn to work with actors both on and off the stage," said Rasch. All cast and crew members are required to attend rehearsals every day until as late as 10:30 pm to prepare for the upcoming performance. Devoted parents usually provide dinner for cast and crew members for a set fee during Hell Week to make things easier and more efficient.

Despite the substantial amount of time and hard work Hell Week requires, this period of time is when the show is pulled together. The technical aspects of the show are fully integrated into the performance and are constantly assessed to ensure that they are just right.

Most of the cast and crew members understand the necessity of such an intense week of preparation, and are simply grateful that they get to participate in such a professional environment.

"Even though preparing for the show can be stressful at times, the musical always turns out amazing. Everyone's hard work is clearly reflected in every Blind Brook production," said Lara Thomas, a junior who has acted in several of the high school productions and is a crew member for *Anything Goes*.

*Ben voyage* to the cast and crew, on route to a great performance!

## Faces Between the Curtains

By Alana Applebaum and Alexa Limb

For students in the cast, being able to connect with and relate to their characters is essential for success. Unsurprisingly, the cast members of this year's performance already have this down. Junior Emily Kitchin, playing the role of Bonnie, says she shares many of the same qualities and values as her character. This not only allows her to fully embody her role, but also makes it enjoyable for her to be able to express her true self on stage.

"My character and I are both quirky. It'll be fun to portray a trait that I have on stage," says Kitchin.

Over the years, Emily has had numerous roles in Blind Brook productions, such as Consuela in *West Side Story* and Bonnet in *Little Shop of Horrors*. She also has participated in theater outside of school, and was the first high school student ever to play Molly in Peter and the Starcatcher - a feat she recently accomplished in the production with Stephanie High School.

Like Kitchin, junior Sammy Landino, who plays the role of Billy Crocker, also connects with his character on a personal level.

"Billy is one of those characters who knows what he wants, and knows how to get it," which is something that I can really relate to," Landino said.

Landino has also participated in several other Blind Brook productions. His roles have included Sky Masterson in *Gypsy* and Dollie Orn Scivello in *Little Shop of Horrors*, Riff in *West Side Story*, and Lou in *Leader of the Pack*.

Landino "love[s]" the seniors who are part of the program, and is "excited to be working and connecting with them for the last time on stage."

One of these seniors, Rebecca Reguerra, is preparing for her final performance on the Blind Brook stage. Though said that she will not be in another one of the school's productions, she is excited to be a part of *Anything Goes*.

Playing Mrs. Harcourt, Reguerra describes her character as a "motherly figure" similar to Anita in *West Side Story*, but a bit more playful. "I have a lot of younger friends, so playing my role as Mrs. Harcourt reminds me of my relationship with them," she said.

Her previous roles include Cindy Lou Who in *Southern Dr. Spivak* in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, General Cartwright in *Gypsy* and Dollie Bonnet in *Little Shop of Horrors*, and Anita in *West Side Story*.

Tickets are sure to sell out fast, so make sure to buy them as soon as possible so you can see these and other talented students perform on Thursday, March 10 at 7:00 p.m., Friday, March 11 at 7:30 p.m., or Saturday, March 12 at 7:30.

Photo/Rebecca Reguerra  
Members of *Anything Goes* break out a line in the LCI.





## Popular Movies and TV Shows Filmed Close to Home

By Allison Chien and Hannah Marrow

New York City, known to be one of the greatest cities in the world, is often featured in films and TV shows. It is usually thought of as a busy, yet romantic locale that is filled with diversity and opportunity. However, not all films and TV shows require such an urban setting. Just outside of the city is our very own Westchester County, famous for its tranquility and suburban feel. It is no surprise that scenes filmed in Westchester pop up in several productions, stealing some of the spotlight away from NYC. A few of these scenes have even been filmed minutes away in Rye or Port Chester.

*Orange is the New Black*: This binge worthy Netflix original series instantly gained a lot of recognition with its release in 2013. Its unique prison setting as well as its variety of diverse actors and characters earned *Orange* is the New Black 33 prestigious awards, including both Golden Globes and Emmys. The plot follows the main character Piper Chapman (Taylor Schilling) as she adapts to life in jail after being sentenced for a crime committed ten years prior. While most of the show is filmed at the abandoned Rockland

Children's Psychiatric Center in Orangeburg, New York, a few scenes from season three take place at the Spectators Sports Pub on North Avenue in New Rochelle.

*Zoolander*: *Zoolander* is a comedy classic that features the city of Yonkers in a few of its scenes. This film documents the hilarious escapades of Derek Zoolander (Ben Stiller), after he is defeated by his enemy Hansel (Owen Wilson) for the Male Model of the Year award. Sensing his vulnerability, fashion tycoon Jacobim Mugatu (Will Ferrell) signs Zoolander onto one of his fashion shows and then proceeds to brainwash the oblivious Zoolander into involving himself in a number of harebrained schemes, including a plot to assassinate the Malaysian prime minister. Starring some of the comedy world's most notable, *Zoolander* is the perfect lighthearted film for people of all ages. Be on the lookout for its sequel, *Zoolander 2*, which premieres on February 12.

*Wolf of Wall Street*: This highly acclaimed 2013 film tells the true story of Jordan Belfort (Leonardo DiCaprio), a worker at a Wall Street brokerage firm, who, along with his most trusted lieutenant (Jonah Hill)

defrauds millions of dollars from wealthy investors. The plot thickens once the FBI and the U.S. Security and Exchange Committee (SEC) begin to close in on his successful empire. Interestingly enough, parts of this Academy Award nominated movie were filmed nearby in Addyman Square in Ardsley.

*Elementary*: *Elementary* is a TV show that captures the life of a modern day Sherlock Holmes (Jonny Lee Miller), and his trusty sidekick, Joan Watson (Lucy Liu). The producers of the show have made the casting much encompassing than the original book series. For example, an Asian-American woman plays the originally white male character of John Watson. Along with the increased diversity in the series, the excitement that goes along with Sherlock's brilliant deductions is not to be missed. While *Elementary* is centered in New York City, several scenes have been filmed in Westchester County, typically in private homes that are the unfortunate locations of fictional murders and various other crimes.

*Person of Interest*: This popular CBS TV show also has several scenes that were filmed in Westches-

ter, particularly in New Rochelle and White Plains. The show focuses on former CIA Agent John Reese (Jim Caviezel), who joins forces with software genius billionaire Finch (Michael Emerson) to create a vigilante team. Using one of Finch's programs, they are able to determine the identities of people who will be involved in future crimes. Using this knowledge, the pair works tirelessly to prevent these crimes from ever happening. The catch? They don't know if the people found by the program are the victims or the criminals. Prepare to be on the edge of your seat as Reese and Finch race against the clock to figure out who's who before it is too late.

*Blindspot*: NBC's newest drama tells the thrilling story of a Jane Doe (Jaimie Alexander) found in Times Square with no memory and covered in cryptic tattoos. She is assigned to FBI agent Kurt Weller (Sullivan Stapleton) who discovers that each inking on her skin is a crime to solve that creates a map leading to finding her identity as well as more mysteries. An episode of this show was filmed in Mount Vernon at the old bank on the bridge that separates South 4th Avenue and Gramatan Avenue.

## A Policy Locked in Place

By Arianna Kohilakis

Every locker in the high school has one thing in common: it is kept safe by a school-issued lock. A student purchases their lock from Blind Brook upon entering middle school and keeps it (or buys another if theirs is misplaced) until senior year.

School-issued locks are used primarily because they give access to each student's locker, should it be necessary for an administrator to open it. Not only are all the combinations known, but a master key can also be used to unlock anyone's locker with no damage.

School-issued locks beg the question: to what extent is a student's property their own when in school?

The school's search and interrogation rights are dictated in the *Blind Brook High School Student and Family Guidebook* and *Abridged Code of Conduct*. This handbook states the level of access that faculty, administration and police have to students' belongings.

The code asserts that anything stored in student lockers, desks or other locations in school has no reasonable expectation of privacy: "A member of the school administration may search a student's locker, clothing and/or possessions."

School officials, therefore, reserve complete control over these areas and do not need student consent to search them. With reasonable suspicion that a wrongdoing has occurred, any and all things stored in student lockers can be searched legally.

Requiring school-issued locks merely simplifies the process of student questioning. Blind Brook holds all rights to any belongings on school property, and

therefore the requirement of school issued locks eases administration's ability to access the possessions of a student in question.

Many students feel that their possessions should remain their own, even on school property. Junior Harris Grodin believes that the locks are used "to protect the students' personal items and property. Locks give us privacy and a sense of protection." Along with some of his peers, Grodin feels that the high school should not require the use of school-issued locks, as some students feel that their rights are being infringed upon. Additionally, Grodin believes that students are forced to sacrifice their ownership of personal belongings.

In addition to disliking the access that these locks provide to personal items, some students have voiced their aversion towards the identical nature of the locks. Every grade has a designated color, making the locker area completely uniform. Some students feel that this makes identification of their locker harder because they all look virtually the same.

On the other hand, school-issued locks can also benefit students. They often provide a safety cushion because administration and security can easily access a locker, whether a lock is damaged, a student forgets his or her combination, or another issue arises.

High schools across the country, including Blind Brook, strictly enforce policies of students only utilizing school-issued locks. The purpose of these locks is to ensure proper use of school property and place control in the hands of administration. These rules are in place to ensure safety and security within the Blind Brook community.



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## Best Valentine's Day Movies

By Eliana Rosenzweig and  
Olivia Morrissey

No Valentine's Day should be spent without watching a romantic movie by yourself or with loved ones. These well-known Valentine's Day movies are full of heart, wit, and of course, romance. Nothing compares to the tradition of watching romantic movies on Valentine's Day, and these award-winning films with captivating plotlines are perfect for the holiday.

### VALENTINE'S DAY

This rom-com intertwines the stories of many Los Angeles residents on Valentine's Day. Each character endures an important or life-changing event while falling in love, out of love, or somewhere in-between. A florist (Ashton Kutcher), a pilot (Jennifer Garner), a teacher (Emma Roberts), and a babysitter (Liam Neeson), along with many other characters, are featured in this movie that will be an excellent addition to your Valentine's Day. From proposals, to crushes, to an "I Hate Valentine's Day" party, *"I Hate Valentine's Day"* is the perfect film that shows every different side of the holiday.

### CRAZY, STUPID, LOVE

In this film, Cal and Emily Weaver are living the American dream until Emily cheats on her husband and demands a divorce after twenty-five years of marriage. After a chance reconnection, Cal has no idea how to meet a romantic partner. But after a chance meeting with bachelor Jacob Palmer, everything changes. Jacob takes on the challenge of bringing women into Cal's life, and soon enough, Cal is picking up girls every night. Both he and Jacob soon question how long they can go on with their schemes of meeting new women every night and never calling them back without repercussions. Starring Steve Carell as Cal Weaver, Ryan Gosling as Emily Palmer, and Julianne Moore as Jacob Palmer, *Crazy, Stupid, Love* will not disappoint.

### THE NOTEBOOK

In this romantic drama, Noah Calhoun (Ryan Gosling), a poor mill worker, and rich seventeen-year old Allie Hamilton (Rachel McAdams) fall deeply in love even though they come from two completely different worlds. After Noah goes off to serve in World War II, he comes back to find that his relationship with Allie has changed. Though she marries someone her family deems more "suitable" for her, her love for Noah never falters. This tug-at-the-heartstrings film is the perfect movie to cozy up with the people you love. Not only will you cry for hours after this emotional whirlwind romance, but you will also learn to appreciate your loved ones.



### THE VOW

This heart-wrenching film starring Rachel McAdams and Channing Tatum is the perfect movie to watch on the day of love. Paige (McAdams) and Leo (Tatum) are a happily married couple, but this all changes drastically when Paige falls into a coma after a car accident. Although she does not remember him, Leo vows to win back Paige's love after the devastating incident. He must overcome many obstacles, such as Paige's parents and her previous fiancé, who attempts to renew his affection with Paige. This movie, based off of a true story is a tear-jerker, but it will definitely put you in the Valentine's Day mood.

### THE PROPOSAL

Sandra Bullock and Ryan Reynolds star in this hilarious romantic comedy that is perfect to watch on Valentine's Day. Margaret Tate (Bullock) is a Canadian book editor living in the United States. When her visa expires and she faces deportation, Margaret convinces her assistant, Andrew Paxton (Reynolds), to pretend that they are engaged in order to help her stay in the country. The movie follows their journey back to Alaska to meet Andrew's family before the "wedding", during which the pair must avoid the Immigration and Naturalization Services to prevent Margaret from being deported. This story of love and laughter one you do not want to miss this Valentine's Day.

## Leonardo DiCaprio's Manufactured Moment

By Jordan Kotler

Every awards season, there is that one actor that steals the spotlight; one actor that everyone knows is going to win the storied gold trophy. In 1994 it was Tommy Lee Jones for *The Fugitive*, in 2005 it was Jaime Foxx for *Ray*, in 2007 it was Forest Whitaker for *The Last King of Scotland*, and in 2014 it was Matthew McConaughey for *Dallas Buyers Club*.

In each of these years, Leonardo DiCaprio was nominated as well. His performance was not poor in these movies—otherwise he would not have received nominations—so why has the most gifted actor of our generation not been awarded the prestigious trophy?

Although it may be hard to believe, the awards system is very difficult for an actor like DiCaprio. The Academy loves comeback stories, underdogs, surprises, and heartwarming stories that lead to Oscar glory.

For example, in 2014, *The Wolf of Wall Street* and *Dallas Buyers Club* were both deemed Oscar frontrunners, with big stars headlining the picture, but McConaughey ended up taking home the gold—not because his performance was superior to DiCaprio's, but since it was his return to prestige drama after almost a decade of meaningless romantic comedies.

When we watch DiCaprio doing his thing as Jordan Belfort, we aren't surprised because that level of excellence is what we expect out of him. Because we expect DiCaprio to go all out in his portrayals, he isn't awarded for his efforts.

Oftentimes, it is a flawed system, with the best campaign winning the award. That is why Sylvester Stallone will likely win the Oscar for Best Supporting Actor this year for his role in *Creed*. It may not be his most incredible performance, but the role completes the heartwarming story of Stallone coming back to his Rocky franchise that he created 40 years ago, an arc that Academy voters love.

But it is the actual performance that should be getting the awards.

After four swings and misses, it is finally looking like DiCaprio will collect an Academy award, as *The Revenant* surges into the Oscars backed by twelve nominations, three Golden Globes, and massive box office returns.

I am a huge fan of DiCaprio's and am psyched that he might win his first Oscar, but I wish it were for a different film. This is not because the film was bad, because *The Revenant* was one of my favorite films of the year. It is because of what this means for the future.

To prepare for his role, Leonardo DiCaprio ate raw bison liver (even

though he's a vegetarian), learned how to shoot a musket and build a fire, studied two different Native American languages, and analyzed ancient healing techniques.

It is fitting for DiCaprio to be awarded for such a difficult role, but what will actors have to go through next to win an Oscar? If the best actor alive cannot win an Oscar without eating a raw slab of bison liver, I cannot even imagine what will come next.

*The Revenant* will be remembered as the most difficult movie of Leonardo Di-

Caprio's career. But will Hugh Glass be remembered as one of DiCaprio's most compelling characters? Did you even remember that Hugh Glass was his character's name?

The Academy is going to reward DiCaprio with his first Oscar because his career deserves it, but he is going to be remembered for characters like Jordan Belfort in *The Wolf of Wall Street*, Billy Costigan in *The Departed*, Howard Hughes in *The Aviator*, and Frank Abagnale in *Catch Me if You Can*.

I don't mean to bash on the possibility of DiCaprio winning his first Oscar this year by claiming he does not deserve it, because that wouldn't be true. However, I am bashing on the Academy for not awarding him earlier.

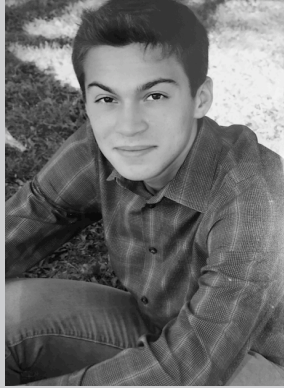
DiCaprio is the Clark Gable, Marlon Brando, and Harrison Ford of this generation. We wait for his films to open like they are Christmas morning because we know he is going to give each his all. He is the beating heart of each movie, each scene, and each frame he is in because he demands your attention like no other actor.

There is a reason DiCaprio has worked with the likes of Martin Scorsese (five times and counting), Steven Spielberg, Christopher Nolan, Ridley Scott, Quentin Tarrantino, Clint Eastwood, and, most recently, Alejandro Iñárritu: he is the most daring, committed, and talented actor in the world.

If DiCaprio does bring home the Oscar on February 28, his quest for gold is finally complete. His heavy-duty dramatic roles of late have made it fairly obvious how badly he yearns for an Oscar. But, once he wins, what will the next phase of his career look like?

Hopefully, DiCaprio can loosen up and play some lighter characters in not-so-serious movies because we have not seen much of that side of him in his career.

We know he can be funny like in *The Wolf of Wall Street*, but I want to see him act goofy. If he can pull off a character like Brad Pitt in *Burn After Reading* or Robert Downey Jr. in *Tropic Thunder*, then we can finally say DiCaprio can do it all.



Courtesy of Jordan Kotler

## Students Get Jazzy

By Paul Soden

Now an integral component of Blind Brook's music department, the Blind Brook High School Jazz Ensemble had humble beginnings. Since its formation 25 years ago, the jazz band has developed into an outlet for gifted students to develop their musical talents. Led by High School Band Director Howard Levy, the group has become a major part of the lives of many students.

Levy initially started the Ensemble with the intent of educating dedicated music students about jazz, one of the most influential styles of music in American history. Levy is a well-rounded musician, but his expertise in this genre is particularly impressive. He often draws inspiration for the jazz band from his own jazz group, Slide Attack.

"[Jazz] was an integral part of American music and the development of contemporary variations. It is a very valuable asset to a student's musical education," said Levy.

The group samples a wide array of jazz variations that familiarize musicians with the history and style of the genre.

"We play swing jazz, bebop, cool jazz, Latin jazz, and jazz rock, providing students with a well-rounded jazz musical education," he said.

This unique experience allows many Blind Brook students to step outside of their musical comfort zones and express themselves in an open environment. The improvisational aspect of jazz provides students with the opportunity to improve their musical confidence and overall performance abilities on a much more intimate level than they could in a regular school band.

"The freedom to improvise that [the ensemble] gives to students and the excitement that can be seen in their expression is truly inspirational as a music director," said Levy.

Although the Ensemble is offered for musical course credit at Blind Brook, the jazz band meets only once a week for an hour and a half on Tuesday nights. This differs largely from the Wind Ensemble and Concert Band music courses that are also offered in the high school, which each meet for one class period every other "letter" day. Due to this minimal class time, Jazz Ensemble members are responsible for learning the group's music outside of class.

Additionally, the band lacks the six-day sectional lesson schedule that the regular band classes have come to rely on. These more intimate rehearsals allow Levy to help members of the same instrumental section fine-tune their performances.

"Despite the lack of lessons offered to jazz students, some students do occasionally seek out my academic assistance during their free periods in order to work on their parts. I always make it a point to help out my students who are having difficulty to make sure that they succeed," said Levy.

The group celebrates the culmination of their hard work in both the Winter and Spring High School concerts, which also feature the Wind Ensemble and the Concert Band. The ensemble also typically participates in the Tarrytown New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) festival annually.

Unfortunately, due to the conflicts of some ensemble members, the band will not be able to participate in the festival this year. Despite this, the group has begun intense preparation for their spring concert to make up for the missed performance.

No matter what performances the jazz band is involved in, Levy is always proud of the hard work and dedication that the students put into the group.

"The inspiration that I draw from observing my students grow and improve as jazz musicians through the years is an unparalleled experience," he said.



Photo/Leah Kratochvil

The Jazz Ensemble grooves to a tune on a Tuesday night rehearsal.



## BuzzFeed



## What's the Buzz?

Gabby Applebaum



Photo/Noah Zeitlin

"What Kind of Girl Scout Cookie Are You?"

"The Hydrogen Fuel Cell Giant You've Been Ignoring is Waking Up"

"17 Struggles Everyone Who Hates Shopping Will Understand"

"Standoff" at Oregon Wildlife Refuge is Costing about \$100,000 a Week"

What do all of the questions or statements above have in common? Each are titles of articles featured on BuzzFeed.

Founded in 2006, BuzzFeed has risen to unsurpassable levels of popularity amongst teenagers and young adults. Though BuzzFeed is also a website, the app, which features the same content, is more accessible for people on the go. Self-described as a "social news and entertainment company," BuzzFeed is constantly updated with the latest headlines, and is also filled with hilarious and entertaining articles, quizzes, and videos.

One of the most appealing qualities of BuzzFeed is its versatility and wide range of coverage. An article could be written on Obama's latest speech, or, just as likely, about what the first lady wore to the event. If a celebrity tweets something controversial, BuzzFeed will have an article up about it within the hour. Most teenagers don't find themselves reading the New York Times or watching CNN, but BuzzFeed combines the perfect amount of seriousness and lightheartedness for high schoolers to stay updated with what is going on in the world around them.

"BuzzFeed is a one stop shop for all things entertainment, food, news and so much more. I think it is a really innovative way to get across information different from your typical news show or app," said sophomore Ethan Richard.

Another feature unique to BuzzFeed is a section devoted entirely to community posts. Anyone can make a BuzzFeed account and submit an article to be reviewed by editors. Often these are personal anecdotes, but community posts also sometimes prompt responses from readers. Previous posts have encouraged users to upload pictures of their dogs, comment about their worst birthday presents, and talk about their Friday the 13th experiences. Community posts makes the site more relatable and fun than typical news and gossip sites.

"I like the BuzzFeed community section because I feel it gives the opportunity for people to speak their minds when they wouldn't have gotten the chance elsewhere," said sophomore Maya Finkman.

Much of BuzzFeed's content comes from popular social media platforms such as Tumblr, Instagram, and Reddit. Using these sources, BuzzFeed is able to stay up-to-date with current fads and trends. Last February, when controversy erupted on Reddit over the color of "#thedress" - the infamous black-and-blue or white-and-gold garment - BuzzFeed readers were informed almost immediately. In fact, BuzzFeed's post about the dress became the site's most viewed article of all time.

In addition, BuzzFeed has offices all around the world, making the content on the site extremely diverse. BuzzFeed community contributors are also from a wider range of countries, allowing readers from around the globe to connect with one another and learn about the viewpoints of people from a variety of cultures.

"I think that BuzzFeed is such an amazing company to be sharing ideas, beliefs, and cultures from all different nations to people worldwide," said sophomore Caroline Levine.

It's easy to see how BuzzFeed is an ideal destresser and relaxation mechanism for students, but don't worry about getting off task for too long. After scrolling through BuzzFeed for a few hours, you'll be sure to come across an article about how to reduce your procrastination.

## Laugh, Cry, and Say Goodbye to *Idol*

By Jamie Kerner

Though the Times Square New Year's Ball may have just dropped, signalling the start of a new year, 2016 also brings out the end of an era: the era of Fox's hit singing competition, *American Idol*.

For the past fourteen seasons, Americans have been gleefully rooting and voting for their favorite contestants each week, in hope of saving them from elimination, and hopefully helping them to be crowned as that year's "American Idol."

Now, as they enter their 15th and final season, it is time to reflect on the impact *American Idol* has not only made on the music industry, but as well as the world.

*Idol*'s popularity began to dwindle as new singing competitions began to pop up on television networks. *American Idol* had created a winning formula for its contests and others to imitate this. Many people began to lose interest in *Idol* as it started to become a little stale, as all shows do after long runs on TV.

Viewers soon took up the newer shows, such as *The Voice* and *The X Factor USA*, where the concepts were a little fresher. Though these shows' ratings were higher in recent years, the singers who came off of the *Idol* stage have had more success and held longer lasting careers than contestants from other shows. *American Idol* alumni, such as Kelly Clarkson, Carrie Underwood, Jennifer Hudson, and Chris Daughtry, have topped the charts with hit after hit, leaving impactful marks on the music industry.

*American Idol* brought something new to TV and music world as it allowed all of America to get involved. Through the voting process and live television, Americans were always able to be up to date on all of the contestants and any emotional battles they went through.

I think that this really made *American Idol*, and all other singing competitions to follow, shine. Americans were able to connect with contestants through the voting to show their approval and disapproval. They were able to get their voice heard.

Currently, *The Voice* is dominating the TV ratings as far as singing competitions go, due to

their unique audition and competition process.

*The Voice* created "blind auditions," where the judges, called coaches on this show, were unable to see each contestant as they auditioned and could only pick who they wanted to be on their team based on the voice they heard.

Yes, this is a very creative audition process, but as the rest of each season continues, *The Voice* follows

the same voting system made famous by *Idol*. Without *American Idol*, shows like *The Voice* would not be on TV today.

I am not here to criticize the reality singing competitions that followed *Idol*. In fact, I myself am a huge fan of *The Voice*. I am truly here to emphasize the importance and impact *American Idol* has made on the reality TV and music worlds we all know and love today.

Reality music competitions have truly been a huge step in a great direction towards bringing Americans together. These shows have been able to unite our country each week as they voted and rooted for their favorite singers.

Not only that, reality music competitions have allowed so many Americans to achieve their own dreams and take one step further towards having a career doing what they love, and in this case, that is singing.

Fifteen seasons and thirteen-and-a-half years later, *American Idol* is closing its doors for auditions and saying goodbye to television. As I have watched the show for the past eleven years, I have had the pleasure of laughing, crying, and enjoying the show as the contestants grew as both people and artists, and as *American Idol* changed the world.

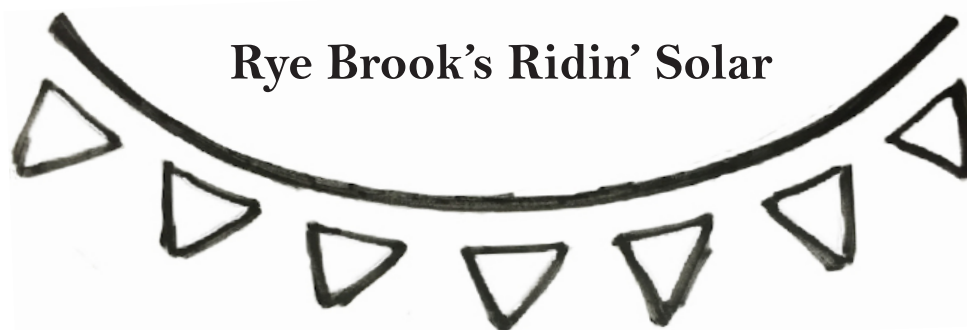
While my friends started to give up watching because certain judges were leaving the show, I remained an avid fan. I was watching for the talent, not the judges, as I listened to performance after performance of the incredibly gifted singers on-stage each week.

Whether you would like to admit it or not, *American Idol* has left a positive mark on the world and truly was a game changer in the worlds of music and reality TV.



Courtesy of Jamie Kerner





By Rachel Goodman

Rye Brook has been working extensively on a new town-wide initiative called Solarize Rye Brook. The Village is working with Solarize Westchester to bring an alternative form of energy, solar power, that will benefit both the town and the environment. This energy not only will be a cleaner form of electricity usage, but also will lighten the load on the town's electrical grid. The program has already begun installing solar panels on homes, and Blind Brook Congress has been looking to implement them into our schools.

The process for incorporating solar-power into Blind Brook began last year.

"We were contacted last year by SolarCity with them offering to do installations at Blind Brook under the NYS K-Solar program. Their claim was the installations would reduce our electricity bills substantially enough to offset the upfront costs over a twenty-year period," says Jonathan Ross, Blind Brook's Interim Superintendent.

Over the past years Blind Brook has been trying to further develop this solar-power initiative.

"We are in the final phase of completing the work in our Energy Performance Contract. Over the last two years Blind Brook has made improvements to lighting, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning), and replaced old boilers, among other things," says Jeff Diamond, President of the Board of Education.

Although many have been pushing for the district to be able to participate in this solar power initiative, there are certain roofing requirements that either the middle/high school or the elementary school would need to meet in order for that to happen.

"With roof-mounted solar panels one of the important considerations is the age of our roof structures. By their own admission, SolarCity acknowledges that installing solar panels on a flat roof that is older than six years is not advisable given expected life considerations and costs thereafter to replace them. In the case of all of our flat roof surfaces at both campuses where SolarCity proposes installing solar panels, the roofing was done six or more years ago with the MS and HS auditorium now at 14 years old," says Dr. Ross.

In order for Blind Brook to be able to successfully adopt these solar roof-mounted solar panels, some changes would have to be made to the school buildings.

"Currently, there are not any plans to use solar power in any of the existing school buildings. Perhaps if the district were to begin new construction in the future, then that might present an opportunity," says Diamond.

But the possibility of installing these solar panels has not been completely ruled out yet.

"One thing we may consider in the future is if we do major construction at BMRSS

and add a new wing it may be an opportunity to incorporate a solar panel roof system at that time, not only to save on electricity costs but also to help us educate children about sustainable energy," Ross says.

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, which sponsors the solar programs in Rye Brook, is helping to subsidize the solar panels and installation.

The Solarize program does all the vetting and research on installation companies to make sure they are reputable, reliable, honest, and have the right types of insurance in attempt to ease the process of installation. "I have solar panels on my house. I did it about two and half years ago, it wasn't through this program, and it's a big investment with a lot of research to do; it's incredibly complicated. I wish that the solarize program had existed when I did my solar panels because it would have taken out the research and made it a lot easier for the residence," says Mayor of Rye Brook Paul Rosenberg.

The Solarize program definitely has its benefits for the community even if solar panels may not be able to be implemented into our schools.

"I honestly think, being a family that has solar panels on their roof anyway, that going solar is a great thing. It's good for the environment and it certainly has been good for my electric bill because it reduced my electric bill significantly," says Rosenberg.

## New Year Renewal: Health Curriculum

By Joie Ng

A person's health, to an extent, affects their overall quality of life. In order for people to make educated decisions that will impact their own health as well as the health of others, it is important that they are well versed in the subject.

At Blind Brook High School, this subject, health, is taught by seventh and tenth grade physical education teacher, Christina Collins. Collins believes her main goal as a health teacher is to "give students the functional knowledge and skills to lead a healthy lifestyle, today, and for many years to come."

She further described the current health curriculum as practical and creative; it covers a wide range of health topics, from nutrition to community and environmental health. Other units include physical fitness and exercise, human sexuality, mental health, and disease.

When it comes to health, Collins considers every decision to be equally important. Therefore, she believes that no health unit takes precedence over the others. When teaching, Collins implements various hands-on activities, including games and stations, to make topics more interesting and fun. Her students take part in role-plays and art projects. These methods of teaching provide her students with ways to absorb new information that differ from those of most other formalized class structures at Blind Brook. In this way, Collins ironically provides students with a sort of break, "living what she

preaches."

One health topic that Collins believes necessitates more attention than it's been getting, from both her students and society, is stress. More specifically, she believes in increased focus on stress-management techniques. This is especially important around this time of

year, when students may feel more stressed than usual due to midterms and the start of another semester.

According to a survey by Statistic Brain Research Institute, of people with jobs, 77% regularly experience physical symptoms caused by stress and 73% regularly experience psychological symptoms. Techniques to relieve stress focus on relaxing a person's mind and body. Some methods include the practice of meditation or yoga.

It has been shown that stress in the body can lead to an oxygen deficiency. Therefore, for those that may be feeling overwhelmed, Collins recommends taking five deep breaths, breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth.

"Aim for full, eight count inhalations and exhalations to get as much oxygen to the brain as possible," she said.

The most important thing Collins hopes that her students take away from health class is that a person cannot enjoy anything else in their life to its fullest capacity if their health is compromised.

"You only have one place to live and it's your body so you have to take care of it."



Photo/Noah Zeitlin  
Students meditate in health class.

## Adjusting to the 21st Century (and Computer Science)

By Joanna Goodman

Last year, the high school added Honors Computer Science to the curriculum for any interested students in an effort to keep up with the modern world's need for innovative technology and computer programming.

The idea to make this addition to Blind Brook came from the student body. Alumni such as Blake Kaplan and Brian Becker, currently enrolled in Duke University and Cornell University, respectively, impressed the faculty by learning computers on their own and encouraging the school to start up a course.

Principal Patricia Lambert was on board with the idea from the beginning, and math teacher Elise Kraeger, Technology Staff Developer Charles Von Hollen, and Director of Technology Colin Byrne took it upon themselves to implement it.

The success of the course was dependent upon the level of interest the three received after introducing the course at the end of last year. Luckily, an astounding 138 students enrolled. To accommodate such a large volume of students, there are five classes of computer science divided between Von Hollen and Kraeger, with aid from students who already took computer science courses.

When asking Kraeger how she first got involved in computer science, she shared that she took a summer course for teachers called "Mobile Computer Science Principles." Within this, she worked closely with a teaching assistant to learn how to program. She also shared that she has since implemented some of the tasks from her summer course in her own classes.

"The students appear to be really interested in the class material and have been great at working independently to sift through the often-difficult programming concepts, yet have also been readily helping their peers," said Kraeger.

"I was really excited that our school was offering Computer Science this year. I think it is a really relevant class because technology is advancing at lightning speed and to be able to grasp even just a small understanding of how some of that technology works and operates has been very rewarding," said senior Grant Alter.

Kraeger informed that next year, Blind Brook will also be offering AP Computer Science A to teach kids how to operate Java. The Honors class in place now is preparing students to take that next level course, should they choose to do so.

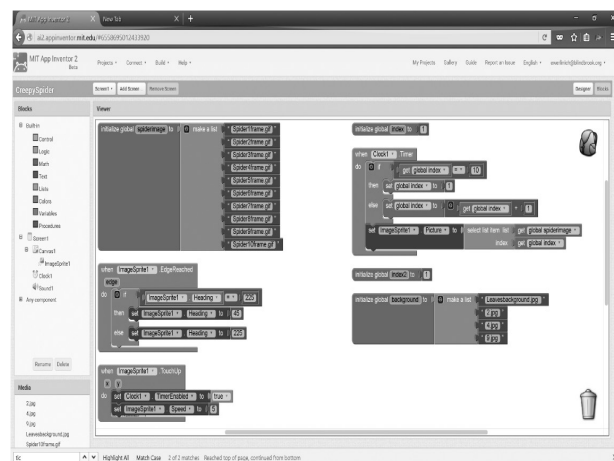
This year, students participated in the Verizon Innovative App Challenge, a competition where middle and high school students form teams and develop an original mobile app concept that aims to help a real-world issue in the school setting, environment, or community.

For about a week, Blind Brook students worked in teams to create original ideas and film videos explaining their apps as part of the application process. Some examples of apps were "Turning Up to Turn Off," an app that would time one's water usage to help conserve water, and "The Doctor Center," an app where one could list medical illnesses and get suggested treatment recommendations.

Thus far, the class has covered a wide range of apps, from creating the Blind Brook's own personal version of "Whack a Mole" to listing multiplication tables.

Senior Justin DiCiano shared that his favorite app was Excuse Generator, an app that generated a wide range of excuses to get you out of an unfavorable situation.

"I feel I have been able to grasp the programming on MIT App Inventor (the website we have been using so far to learn the basic programming concept) and I am excited to start working with Java in February," said senior Justin DiCiano.



Courtesy of Ezra Werlinich

Werlinich shows the busy screen of an app developer.

## My Top 5 from CES 2016

By Jacob Zeitlin

The Consumer Electronics Show, or CES, is an annual event held in Las Vegas, in which companies at the

forefront of cutting-edge technological innovation can share their new concepts with the industry. This year's event, which took place from January 6 to January 9, featured many new astounding technologies. Here are five of my favorites:

1. Samsung's "smart fridge"

These days, it seems as if the word "smart" can be added to

the beginning of any household object, as technology continues to pervade every aspect of our everyday lives. Well, the refrigerator is no exception.

At CES, Samsung revealed its first-ever "smart fridge." The touchscreen that covers the exterior of the fridge contains a complete operating system that can run applications, allowing users to complete such tasks as viewing recipes and ordering groceries.

It even has a camera for viewing what is inside the fridge while you are at the grocery store, and its whiteboard software allows kids to "draw" on the fridge's screen. Some anticipate that prices will range in the vicinity of \$5,000 once it is released.

2. ROBO 3D Prosthetic Print Kits

In a partnership with charitable company e-NABLE, the 3D printing company ROBO 3D will now be printing with a purpose. The partnership has revealed its mission to provide people with missing limbs "a helping hand."

Through e-NABLE's community partnerships, every single prosthetic hand and limb that is printed will be donated to people with missing limbs. In addition, every single ROBO 3D printer that is sold will now include the kit to print prosthetic limbs, encouraging people to give back to their communities.

The kit includes 3D print files that can be printed at home, all of the necessary hardware, assembly instructions, and links that inform consumers how to send their prosthetics to children in need. This combination of revolutionary technology and an altruistic cause is truly inspiring.

3. Rollable OLED displays

Organic light-emitting diode (OLED) displays have been prevalent in TVs for a number of years now. The screens, which work without

backlights, are able to display deep black levels, can generally be thinner than LCD displays, and have higher contrast ratios than LCD displays.

The displays that companies such as LG revealed at CES were as thin as 0.18 mm—yes, millimeters—and are as flexible as paper. They can be rolled and bent in a variety of ways, with the on-screen image remaining intact.

This functionality increases portability, as people can simply roll up the screen and take it wherever they want. Currently, there are no prototypes that are larger than eighteen inches, but that is likely to change promptly, arriving alongside an upgrade in the resolution from its current value of 810x1,200.

4. EHang 184 passenger drone

This is one of the more science-fiction-y innovations that was presented at CES in January. The new drone, created by Chinese manufacturer EHang, can maintain one-passenger flights for up to twenty-three minutes in the air.

The vehicle is autonomous, meaning the passenger selects a destination from the on-board tablet display, and then sits back and relaxes as the drone travels to the intended destination.

There have already been over one hundred successful test flights in the EHang 184. The vehicle can travel up to 62 miles per hour and folds up nicely to fit in a standard parking space, so this might just be how people travel to work in the future—if it can work its way around FAA regulations.

5. FF Zero1 car

Faraday Future is an American company focused on designing and developing electric cars that will compete with companies such as Tesla. While the Zero1 is not intended to directly compete with Tesla, it aims for a different target audience.

The racecar, which is simply a concept, meaning it will not go into production, is a 1,000-hp electric vehicle with a top speed of 200 mph. Executives of the company say they expect to have a car commercially available within the next few years.

Some have speculated that this company is Apple's covert move to enter the car industry, but I doubt that. If Apple had anything to do with this company, it would not be revealing any concepts or designs so early in the production process.



Courtesy of Jacob Zeitlin

## Staying Fit: The Importance of Fitting in After-School Exercise

By Nicole Axelrod

At around 3:00 pm, Blind Brook students must make a decision about how they want to structure the rest of their day. Some spend their precious free time napping, watching TV, or completing their homework, but some of the wisest students are the ones who take some time out of their busy schedules to take care of their physical health and exercise.

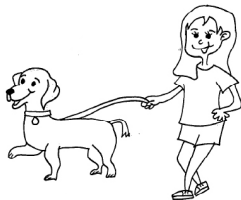
The benefits of exercise on teenagers cover a wide range of areas, from weight control, mood improvement, and stress release to clearer skin and stronger bones. According to WebMD Teen Health, exercise can even help reduce the symptoms of the common cold, which frequently seems to pop up around this time of year.

One of the best ways to find time to exercise is to manage your workload. If you are proactive and complete long-term assignments before the night before they are due, you may find yourself with a few extra stress-free hours during the week where you can squeeze

in even a 15-minute workout. Additionally, getting a good night's sleep and eating properly are key to exercise; the extra energy provided can motivate students to get out and exercise more than just their minds.

Another option for staying active during the school year is playing a school-associated sport. This not only ensures daily exercise, but allows for participation in a community of student-athletes who help each other live healthier lives. Senior Talia Bruckman noted, "I play a sport after school which is good because it's social and it's exercise. Plus, I feel part of the community and a true sense of school spirit." Since this is not always a viable option for students, playing a sport even outside of school is a great way to stay active while having fun.

Ready to kickstart your exercise regimen? Here are a few ways to do it:



1

Go for a one-mile walk, whether it be inside on a treadmill or outside. You can bring a friend, a parent, or your dog if you're outside. It's a short distance that can be completed quickly, and even that little bit can get you motivated and healthier.



2

Do something that fits your interests. If you love the outdoors, for example, try to find a way to go hiking, camping, or walking through a nature preserve. If you're someone who likes more physical and fight-style exercise, you can try boxing, kickboxing, or martial arts. According to WebMD for teens, students will be far more motivated to exercise if they're doing something that truly interests them.



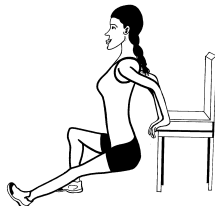
3

Download an exercise app. For example, "Power 20" is a free app that provides 20-minute workouts at varying levels of difficulty. There are tons of apps that have 15-, 20-, or 30-minute workouts that can be completed outside or right in your house.



4

Play a TV workout game. If you google them, lots of popular TV shows have "workout guides" that you can follow along with as you watch the show. They include funny and clever ideas to do a certain move each time a character does something or something appears on the show, for example. Another take on this is to do a different move for each commercial that comes on during a commercial break. This lets you work out and enjoy your daily TV binge at the same time!



5

Do a living room workout using your furniture! There are tons of different workouts all over the Internet that simply require your couch, a chair, or pillows to work out in the comfort of your own home. Walking down the stairs to your living room is certainly a lot easier than getting over to the gym.



6

That being said, joining a gym is a great idea. Almost all gyms have great promotions during this time of year for the new year. There are also some places that offer specific classes that you can book in advance; these kinds of classes usually have great instructors and great music. Some great gyms and exercise classes nearby include Lifetime Fitness, Crunch, Blink Fitness, Soul-Cycle, SLT, Ripped Fitness, The Gym, and Equinox.



## Cycling for the Soul

By Lily Koenig

SoulCycle, a stationary cycling workout class, is one of the top exercise classes that people everywhere are taking to get into shape since its establishment in 2006 by Julie Rice and Ruth Zuckerman.

From there the company exploded and now possess over thirty different locations. Rice and Zuckerman envisioned a company that could "create an alternative to the fitness routine which typically felt like work" by "have instructors guide riders through an inspirational meditative fitness experience that's designed to benefit the body, mind, and soul," according to SoulCycle's mission statement.

Many people use Soul Cycle as a type of workout method, and the fact that it is fun is just a plus. The class is forty-five minutes long and is high energy throughout the whole workout.

"I like it because you get to listen to good music and you feel good after. You get your workout over in forty-five minutes and at the gym it usually takes longer to accomplish the same things," said senior Allison Abrutyn.

Throughout the entire class, lively music is playing and the

mood of the class is extremely enthusiastic. The goal is to keep customers moving throughout the duration of the class, which is aided by group motivation.

"Personally, I think it's more effective than going to the gym because you are forced to actually workout. When I go to the gym I pretty much just sit on a mat. It is also really fun as you go more often and are able to ride along to the music," said senior Caylee Drangel.

Some consider the SoulCycle experience to be life changing because the instructors urge their customers to become a better version of themselves.

"Two-and-a-half years after my first SoulCycle class, I can honestly say Soul has changed my life. I have grown to be a better person, as the instructors have instilled positivity and inspiration in me throughout every class. In the last year, I have become close with an instructor, Nicky B. Nicky has pushed me to be the best version of myself I can be and I look forward to taking his class multiple times a week. SoulCycle does not just change bodies, it changes lives," said senior Jamie Kerner.

The company often strives

to reach beyond simply being a workout class to tap into the emotional aspect of the people involved in the class by positive empowerment.

Although many people believe that SoulCycle is a great workout class, others see its downsides. One of the complaints is that the class is not cheap, costing \$34 per session.

"Although I do take the class from time to time and I think it's a fun way to get exercise, I find it to be extremely expensive. I also find that the class doesn't show the results that many think it does," said senior Olivia Steinberg.

Others find that the atmosphere of SoulCycle is uncomfortable, especially compared to the gym, or even similar programs.

"I've been to SoulCycle a few times and although I always have fun working out, I feel that it is not a great way to exercise. The room is really hot which makes you feel like you are working out harder than you actually are. Personally I prefer Flywheel over SoulCycle," said junior Sarah Simon.

A SoulCycle studio can be found nearby in the Rye Ridge

Shopping Center, replete with men's and women's locker rooms and showers, a retail boutique, a signature SoulCycle Polaroid Wall, and a custom SoulCycle Listening Bar. The schedule for upcoming classes can be found online, as can many health-related articles, such as "35 Inspiring Winter Reads" and "6 Doctor-Approved Strategies To Get More Sleep."

Along with healthful articles, the SoulCycle's website includes beauty tips, new foods to try, and selected workout playlists.

The company also considers community involvement a crucial part of its values. One chapter of SoulCycle is devoted to philanthropy, with SoulScholarships provided for "underserved adolescents" that seek "the opportunity to experience the transformative impact that exercise can bring to the body, mind, and soul while charting a course for a healthier, happier life." It also sponsors Charity Rides for various fundraising causes, along with SoulService, which involves employees giving back to local communities.

## Dance: Team or Club?



By Hannah Schaenman

When the winter sports season comes around, varsity basketball players take to the court, members of the Varsity Ski Team head to the slopes, and the Varsity Cheerleading Team grabs its pompoms. But before the students of the Dance Team are allowed to step to the beat, the administration first must decide whether or not the club should continue to receive the same benefits as other varsity sports teams.

The Dance Team performs the halftime shows for both Boys' and Girls' Varsity Basketball games. One of the reasons for the controversy surrounding the team is that outside of these performances, the team does not compete in any dance competitions.

In recognition of their high level of performance, athletes on varsity teams are often given varsity letters to acknowledge their hard work and devoted time. Due to the

Dance Team's lack of competition, many wonder if the dancers are truly deserving of this letter.

Unlike many high school clubs, where members meet on a specific day every week for only a minimal amount of time, the Dance Team devotes about an hour-and-a-half

to practice every school day.

"I understand that it is out of our control now to make dance team considered a team," said senior Jessica Gallagher. "But we have long practices like every other team and should not be considered a club."

Although the team is committed and dedicated by putting in the long, hard practice hours, the New York State Public High School Athletic Association does not recognize dance as a varsity sport.

One of the most significant changes to the Dance Team as of late has been that this year constituted the first that the group did not make cuts after try-outs.

"As this year was the first year cuts were not made on the team, I was uneasy...and was nervous for a different environment than I was used to. Having twenty-two girls on the team, not ten, startled me at first, but has definitely been a positive experience. The team has

looked great so far into the season and I'm glad that I've gotten to meet so many more people," said senior captain Amanda Hurwitz.

Many other members of the Dance Team agree that the added numbers have made the team much more enjoyable.

"...Having a larger team makes it so much more fun and it is great that so many girls now have the opportunity to experience the Dance Team," said sophomore Ayden Bauer.

Although the Dance Team does not physically compete against dance teams from other schools, the team competes against themselves for perfection. In a way, the team is competing against their previous performances to better themselves, eliminate future mistakes and create a better routine.

It is very challenging for the dancers to achieve the literal classification of a team, since there are no interscholastic athletic competitions available for high school dance teams in New York State. In order to achieve the definition, there would need to be a statewide organization to form interscholastic athletic competitions for dance teams in the different classes.

Even though the New York State Public High School Athletic Association does not consider dance to be a varsity sport, Blind Brook does recognize the dance team by classifying them as a varsity team. Although there have been opposing viewpoints to the controversial question of whether or not the dance team should be recognized as a varsity team or a club, the Dance Team members have been invited to the winter athletic banquet along with the other winter varsity teams to receive their varsity letters.

Similarly to the seniors of other varsity sports, the Dance Team seniors have been exempt from physical education class for the winter season.

Whether or not the Dance Team will be treated as a varsity sport or a club is still up for discussion in the coming years.



Photos courtesy of Alexis Lynch

## A New Side to Hockey

By Kayla Lynch

Sophomores Max Chalfin and Clay Korpi have teamed up with the New York Raptors, an ice hockey team that teaches ice hockey to children with disabilities. The pair, both of whom are players on the Rye-Town Titans hockey team, have partnered with the organization in order to use their love of hockey to the benefit others. The majority of the child participants are unable or ineligible to participate in many other organized hockey programs because of their disabilities.

The New York Raptors are one of fifty United States teams that are affiliated with Special Hockey International and the USA Hockey/American Special Hockey Association. The team was founded

in 1996 by Mike Dwyer when he moved from Toronto to Larchmont.

His son, born with disabilities, was an avid hockey player in Toronto, but to Dwyer's disappointment, there was no hockey team that his son was eligible to play for in Larchmont. This gave Dwyer incentive to create the New York Raptors, so that he could provide a safe and fun environment for his son. With a little help from the press and the local Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) office, Dwyer made history.

Max Chalfin first heard about the Raptors from his two older brothers, both Blind Brook alumni. Chalfin now coaches for the Raptors every Sunday, teaching the players about the dynamics

of hockey.

"The Raptors has helped me with my own game by reminding me of the basics of the game. Additionally it has made me appreciate how lucky I am to play the game," said Chalfin.

Korpi had a similar response when speaking about the organization. He first heard about the team from a family friend that had a son with autism who had played on the team and enjoyed it.

"The focus when volunteering with the Raptors is really on the players and helping them to better their game," said Korpi.

Both Korpi and Chalfin have put a lot of time and effort into helping the children and have benefited the organization by putting the children before them-

selves.

The team skates at the Westchester Skating Academy in Elmsford on Sunday afternoons in the fall and winter. In addition to practicing every week, the team hosts a Thanksgiving tournament each year and is able to travel to several other tournaments throughout the season.

The New York Raptors is a fun, intriguing, and safe place for children to discover who they are or who they want to become. Through hands-on experience and artful coaching, children can truly learn the game and understand what it means to be part of a team.

The Raptors logo encourages individuals who are inspired by the sport: "Hockey is for everyone, and everyone is a star."

## Blind Brook Brigade Brings the Fans

By Michael Discolo and Allison Abrutyn

One of the newest additions to the high school winter sports season is the Blind Brook Brigade, a student section at sports games created to revamp the school's spirit. Seniors Nadav Neuman and Matthew Streichler, with the support of first-year Athletic Director Mr. Goldman, devised the Brigade after noticing that attendance at Blind Brook sporting events was rather weak.

Coordinated by Neuman and Streichler, the Brigade hopes to attract a much larger student fan base for the winter sports seasons, which consists predominantly of Girls' and Boys' Varsity Basketball.

"The Trojan Brigade was created because I feel that spirit at our school is inconsistent. Students at Blind Brook are not necessarily devoted to attending sports events, and if they do the atmosphere at home games is not loud and fun to take part in," said Neuman.

One of the main goals of the Brigade is to create a spirited and high-energy atmosphere at all of the home games, which will ultimately improve the records for teams. The emergence of the Brigade has also created a fun activity for non-athletes to do in the winter and has helped bring the Blind Brook sports fans together.

"My intent...was to make home basketball games have an atmosphere that the players could enjoy, feed off, and also [to] create an environment that is tough to play in for opposing teams. Our hope is to create this or-

ganized student section so that people will become loyal to their teams and want to come out, get loud, and support their teams," said Neuman.

court a much more comfortable place to play in for the Trojans.

"The Brigade was a great idea from the students that all of us on the team

action.

This month, the Boys' Varsity Basketball team will be competing for a section title. A home game packed with a loud and crazy fan base may be just the thing that helps carry the team to victory.

Although the Brigade has found success with the Boys' Varsity Basketball team, the large turnout did not often carry into the Lady Trojans' games.

"I don't really know why there is less of a turnout to the girls basketball games. I think they are just as enjoyable as the boys games," said Streichler.

When the difference in fan base attendance became noticeable, it was brought to the attention of Athletic Director Goldman.

"Early in the season I noticed that there were more people, not just students, showing up the boys' games and I feel like it is just the culture here and needs to be changed."

Goldman has participated actively with the leaders of the Brigade to rectify this issue, urging them to "make sure that they were supporting as many programs as possible."

"Title IX has tried to even the playing field. However, getting students to come to boy's games is already difficult enough so it seems that getting them to go to girls' games is unlikely. This is unfortunate because both teams deserve equal support. My goal in creating the Brigade was to provide support for both the boys' and the girls' teams but I can't do it alone," said Neuman.



Photo/Alexis Lynch  
Brigade fans bring the noise.

A second objective of the Brigade is to establish a stable and larger fan base for all Blind Brook sports throughout the year, one that will show up to most of the home games, not just homecoming. The hope is that this will benefit all of athletes and make sports games at Blind Brook an event that students and other members of the community will not want to miss.

The growth of the Boys' Varsity Basketball fan base has made home

love. Having our friends there helps distract the opposing team, but they also give an extra boost of motivation that helps push us to the final buzzer," said sophomore Varsity Boys' Basketball player Hudson Powell.

One of the ways the Brigade is attracting fans is through its active Twitter page, @TrojansBrigade, which also posts stats and scores of the Basketball teams' games for anyone that may have missed out on the

### • BLIND BROOK SPORTS STATISTICS •

**LADY TROJANS (4-13)**  
**TROJANS (13-3)**

**JV BOYS' BASKETBALL (12-2)**  
**JV GIRLS' BASKETBALL (12-3)**  
**SWIM TEAM (5-3)**

**SKI TEAM (0-3)**  
**HOCKEY (14-4)**

STATS BY EVAN KETCHUMBAK (AS OF 2/9/16)

## Fifty Years of Sunday Night Lights

By Sam Masters

The 50th Super Bowl in the storied history of the NFL will be held in Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California on February 7. This will be only the second time that the San Francisco area will host the Super Bowl. In the city's previous time as host, Joe Montana's 49ers crushed Dan Marino's Dolphins in Super Bowl XIX in 1985.

This year's contest, similar to Super Bowl XIX, pits a veteran future Hall of Fame quarterback against an ambitious young star. This time, it will be thirty-nine year old Peyton Manning versus twenty-six year old Cam Newton.

The team that survived on the NFC side of the bracket is the Carolina Panthers. After boasting an impressive 15-1 record led by quarterback Cam Newton, the odds-on favorite to win the league MVP award, they breezed through their two playoff games.

Against two-time defending NFC champions, the Seattle Seahawks, the Panthers jumped out to a 31-0 lead before eventually winning 31-24.

Then, in the NFC Championship game, the stout Panthers' defense shut down the explosive Arizona Cardinals'

offense—one that featured quarterback Carson Palmer, running back David Johnson, and star wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald—forcing them to turn the ball over seven times. Meanwhile, Cam Newton and his offense put up 49 points as the Panthers cruised to the Super Bowl 49-15.

Due to their superb offense and top-ranked defense, the Carolina Panthers are the 3.5-point favorite over the Denver Broncos.

Here at Blind Brook, the Panthers also appear to be most students' favored team.

"I don't see how anyone could beat the Panthers," said sophomore Chad Minick.

Looking over to the AFC, the Denver Broncos are led by the NFL's all-time leader in passing yards and touchdowns, Peyton Manning. Yet this Broncos team does not rely solely on the impressive arm of Manning, instead putting a large emphasis on their accomplished defense, which led the NFL regular season in sacks and total yards allowed.

In their first playoff game, the Broncos had won a tough battle over the

Pittsburgh Steelers with the score ending at 23-16. This game punched the team's ticket to the AFC Championship game.

Now, the Broncos are coming off of an impressive victory against the defending Super Bowl champions New England Patriots. The AFC Championship game came down to the final play, when Denver's defense was able to stop the Patriots' attempt at a two-point conversion to win 20-18.

The Denver team returns to the Super Bowl looking to avenge their Super Bowl XLVIII embarrassment to the Seattle Seahawks, a game that boasted a final score of 43-8.

On paper, Super Bowl 50 looks to be a great game. This is likely Peyton Manning's last Super Bowl against Cam Newton's first.

Will Manning be able to end his career with a storybook finish, or will Newton's ability to beat teams with both his legs and his arm prove too much for him? Who will win in the battle of the strength: the immovable object of the Denver defense or the unstoppable force of the Carolina offense?

Annually, the Super Bowl is one of

the most watched events worldwide, rivaled only by the UEFA Champions final and El Clasico in Spain, which garnered over 114.4 million viewers last year.

People will be tuning in for more than just the football.

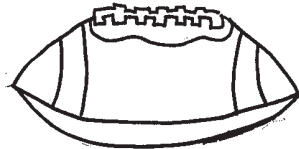
"Honestly, I don't know anything about it [the Super Bowl], but I love Coldplay and am very excited about seeing them," said sophomore Ayden Bauer.

In addition to Coldplay's halftime performance, there will be the always anticipated and much discussed commercials. More than that, the Super Bowl has transcended its status as just a game. In fact, many argue that Super Bowl Sunday is akin to a holiday, complete with parties and traditions.

The Super Bowl is not easy to win (forgetting the aforementioned blow-out that was Super Bowl XLVIII), but it is always exciting, complete with last second finishes and upsets.

Regardless of who takes home the Lombardi trophy, Super Bowl Sunday will be the most anticipated weekend of the NFL season.

## STUDENTS PREDICT SUPER BOWL 50



V. Numme

Broncos  
37-26

M. Goldfarb

Broncos  
30-28

S. Kaye

Panthers  
34-22

F. Heller

Panthers  
31-17

J. Popper

Broncos  
17-13

J. Mendelsohn

Broncos  
27-23

R. Bedell

Broncos  
20-17

R. Penn

Panthers  
28-14

J. Simon

Panthers  
34-17

A. Silverstein

Panthers  
34-24

Drawings/Alexa Goldstein and Jessie Scher



# Sports

## Game Changers

### • Katy Comstock •

By Gabriella Lynch

Katy Comstock was first drawn to cheer because of her love for dance, but has since become an integral part of the Varsity Girls' Cheerleading Team. Cheerleading is a unique sport at Blind Brook that runs through the fall and winter seasons, though with variations in the students that participate from season to season.

Lead by Coach Cher Treacy, Comstock has been faithfully cheering her way through high school since the winter of her freshman year. Comstock joined the spirited squad a season late because she had originally played tennis during the fall season.

At first, joining the cheer squad intimidated Comstock because of the serious attitude of the then-senior girls. This apprehension soon transformed into gratitude, as the older cheerleaders taught her to truly appreciate the team.

"The two captains my freshman year were Tammy Kadmon and Jordan Singer. During the tryout process, we had to do two cheers and a dance. I was very nervous that I was not going to make it because I had not done any type of cheerleading at that point. But it turned out to be very fun and I learned so much from them," said Comstock.

Since then, her years of experience and vast knowledge of the sport earned her the title of junior captain, along with now-graduated students Sarah Dashow and Lexi Tannenbaum. Comstock was then guaranteed a position as one of the two senior captains for this school year's

fall season.

During that time, she led the Varsity Girls' Cheerleading Team with fellow senior Amanda Hurwitz and junior Erica Wels. For the Fall Homecoming, Comstock and Hurwitz were given the leadership reigns by Coach Treacy and devised the entire routine on their own.

"I think this opportunity really helped my leadership skills, because I had to think of the group as a whole instead of what was best for a few individuals. It was important that we made sure everyone was hitting their moves perfectly, while also critiquing them if they made mistakes. It took a lot of time and we had to think on our toes and change things as we went along. I really think that this helped us earn a level of respect from our team," Comstock said.

Comstock's leadership streak continued into the winter, where she became the first student to be selected as a captain for both the fall and winter cheer seasons.

"I was honored and incredibly happy. I felt that all of my hard work had truly paid off and I was grateful to have another shot at being captain, especially with one of my closest friends [Chloe]," said Comstock.

"Katy is very reliable, easy to work with, and an all around great leader. I think the whole team looks up to her, including me, because of her enthusiasm and dedication to the team," said fellow senior captain Chloe Greenwald.

Comstock believes that "being a good role model for everyone on my team and keeping the team's best [interests] in mind" are her most important responsibilities as captain. Her goals have been to lead the girls to success in both their homecoming and competition routines, which prove rigorous and advanced.

Recently, the Varsity Girls' Cheerleading Team competed at the Nanuet High School First Annual Cheerfest. Six teams participated in the competition, with divisions for junior varsity, co-ed, large varsity, and small varsity. Blind Brook's cheerleading squad placed second after performing a modified version of their routine from Winter Homecoming.

"In the fall we went to a scrimmage competition where we were given critiques that helped us fix our routine. We took all of those ideas and put them into our routine for the winter. It was very nerve-wracking, as only the seniors had

competed in a cheerleading competition. But it was a lot of fun, especially watching and supporting the other teams," said Comstock.

Comstock said that the fan base is the most important part of cheering. As a result, the team spends a majority of their practices rehearsing their routines and running through the list of cheers. This list has evolved over the years, depending on which the crowd responds to most favorably.

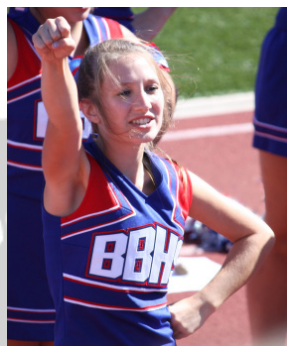
"Cheerleading is a very spirit-driven sport because it is our job to get the crowd engaged and spirited. Motivation is important during games, especially because we have to constantly be motivated and spirited to set a good example for the crowd," said Comstock.

The Blind Brook Brigade, a student-run fan section that attends games to support the teams, has really helped the cheerleaders to rouse the crowd, Comstock said.

The Brigade has boosted the confidence of the Varsity Girls' Cheerleading Team, as they are incredibly responsive to the team's cheers, said Comstock.

Cheering, added Comstock, often inspires a domino effect that fuels players' determination, which in turn encourages the crowd to participate more.

"Working towards the same goal of perfecting our routines, as well as motivating the players and fans, has created a lasting bond between me and my teammates. This has definitely been one of the most rewarding parts about being on the cheer team," said Comstock.



Photo/Meghan Comstock

### • Joey Livornese •

By Max Chalfin

Joey Livornese has played a critical role on the Rye Town/Harrison Titans hockey team ever since he joined the team as a freshman in 2012. Now, as the starting senior goalie, he continues to be a key player that consistently contributes to the team's success.

Livornese led the Titans to the Section I finals last season, making it the most successful season in Titan history.

"My goal for my final varsity season is to go further than ever before. We were very proud of our ability to reach the sectional finals last year; however we are a very talented team and I believe we have what it takes to finish even higher," said Livornese.

"Joey is a great player and an unbelievable teammate on and off the ice. He is a major part of this team's success. Every time he is between the pipes he gives us a chance to win," said Titans Head Coach, Coach Head.

Livornese is an extremely reliable goalie and his experience in the net has helped him to gain the trust of his teammates.

"He's our leader. He's our goalie. We rely on him in every situation. In every game that we have been down he is able to make the save that brings us right back into it," said Jackson Shultz, a junior at Harrison High School and Livornese's co-captain.

Livornese's work ethic also makes him an excellent role model for all the players on the team.

"My best assets as a player are my focus and my love for the game. The most significant part of goaltending, even more so than physical aspect, is the mental aspect," said Livornese. His superb mental focus on and off the ice allows him to improve, perform, and helps the team to succeed.

He has a hard work and effort Livornese puts forth each time he steps out on the ice is reflected in his performance this season. He currently has a save

percentage of 87.4% with 166 total saves.

Between the pipes, Livornese has an eye for the puck and a quick reaction time, though he believes that he still has room to grow as a player.

"I strongly believe that there is always room for improvement in every aspect of my game. With every practice and game I want to improve my performance in goal and my mental focus," said the senior goalie.

"Being captain has shaped me a lot as a player. It's extremely encouraging to be trusted with such a key role on the team.

On the ice, I find it more rewarding to perform well when in the position of a role model, and off the ice, I feel my responsibilities as captain have allowed me to grow as a leader," said Livornese.

Livornese was named captain at the end of the 2014-2015 season for his senior year.

Livornese was honored to have the 'C' on his jersey that so many great players and leaders wore.

The senior goalie has created an atmosphere on the Titans where hard work is valued and makes every player want to preform their best.

"He is the rock of this team. We know that we could not go anywhere without him and that's what makes such a great leader. I have never had a better captain," said Sam Adler, a junior at Harrison High School.

Although Livornese has played in many impactful games as an RTH Titan, there are a few that stick out.

"Last year's playoff run was especially memorable for me, since it was the far-

thest the team has gone in its history. On top of that, the majority of those games were played at home, and the overwhelming support of the school made each game one to remember. As an individual, my most meaningful career highlight, which I undoubtedly credit to the team in front of me, was my seven shutouts during the twenty game regular season, four of which were in a row early on," said Livornese.

"Hockey will definitely be big part of my future, as I'm playing college hockey, as well as continuing to play for my junior team during the summer," said Livornese.

"I hope to leave behind a sense of dedication and support for the hockey team. Over the past few years I've had the privilege of watching the team grow, and the work done by the players and coaches on and off the ice to better the program is something that I know will continue," he said.

Although Livornese's time as a Titan is coming to an end, he has made a significant impact on the program and on each of the players he has skated with.

"My experience playing varsity hockey with Blind Brook has certainly been a memorable one. With our team's combination with both Harrison and Rye Neck High Schools, and the recent solidification of our coaching positions, playing and growing with the team over the past four years has been a rewarding and enjoyable highlight of my high school career," said Livornese.



Courtesy of Joey Livornese