

F O C U S

BB Honors Late Security Monitor Dave Centofanti

By Eliana Rosenzweig

Since the passing of beloved security monitor Dave Centofanti, students and faculty have been wanting to do something to commemorate his lasting impact on the community.

What started as a senior class officer idea to design and dedicate a bench to honor his contributions, has become a schoolwide effort to honor the dedication and love he brought to the school. The bench will be placed at the baseball field in time for the coming school year. A dedication ceremony will take place in the fall.

After working for fifteen years at the High School, Centofanti's sudden leave shook students and faculty. He was an avid golfer who was looking forward to his retirement in Florida where he spent his days playing golf and seeing his family, including his grandchildren.

Centofanti was a man who took his job with utmost seriousness and was wholeheartedly committed to

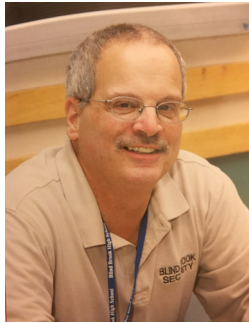


A close up of the memorial bench dedicated to former security monitor Dave Centofanti. The bench arrived on June 19 and is being readied for the dedication ceremony in the fall.

ensuring the security and wellbeing of the students and staff.

Business Education teacher Charlene Decker and Teaching Assistant Rita Gianfrancesco, have worked with the class officers of grades 9-12 to install the bench.

"Dave had a love for sports and baseball," Ms. Decker, who ordered and designed the bench, said. "He was a large supporter of the Blind



Brook sports. "[The baseball field] was the best place for the bench because it was his passion."

Security monitor Don Ahrenburg had known Centofanti for fifty years. In addition to the bench, he and Centofanti's lifelong friend, Frank Sampogna, have organized the First Annual Dave Centofanti Golf Outing to be held on October 9.

The golf outing will honor

Centofanti as well as raise funds for the Dave Centofanti Scholarship Fund. The scholarship will honor one male and one female athlete beginning 2018. All proceeds from the event will fund the scholarship.

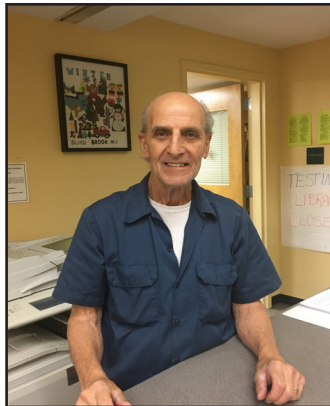
"[Centofanti] was a big golfer. I've played golf with him for thirty years. If he wasn't here, he was on a golf course," Ahrenburg said.

"He was one of my best friends and every time I step on a golf course I will think of him."

"I just always remember the smile on his face, no matter what," said Ms. Gianfrancesco. "Even if he was frustrated he would always come into my room, always sighing, going, 'You're not going to believe this one, Ms. G!'"

"He was kind, had a great sense of humor, and was compassionate. Even this morning when the bench arrived, tears came to my eyes because he's such a great guy," said Decker.

Blind Brook Bids Farewell to Retiring Faculty



By Allison Chien and Jack Wells

For faculty members Martine Curto, Jean Follansbee, Elvira Morse, Frank Lubelli and Nancy Garretto, June is the end of their time at Blind Brook, and the beginning of their retirement years, meaning the beginning of a future filled with relaxation, doing things they love, and hard-earned family time.

"These retirements will be a great loss for the high school. Together these individuals represent almost a century of service to the students and families of Blind Brook. I celebrate their accomplishments and wish them good health, sunny days, and great companionship every day of this next leg of their jour-

neys," said principal Patricia Lambert.

This was the 31st and last year at Blind Brook for Global History, AP European History, and Criminal Law teacher, Martine Curto. Her total of 35 years of teaching will not be forgotten by her students. Curto started at Blind Brook after briefly teaching at three schools on Long Island.

She has taught 9th and 10th grade Global History, Criminal & Civil Law, Academic Intervention Services, AP European History, French, and Psychology. Curto has truly taught it all. Year after year, she has proven to be a favorite among many at Blind Brook.

"I had the honor of having Mrs.

Curto as a teacher and not one day went by where I was not fully engaged and interested in her class. It is not easy to get a class of high schoolers interested in global history but, Mrs. Curto made it impossible not to. As upset as I am about Mrs. Curto's retirement, I feel humbled that I had the opportunity to be taught by such an intelligent and overall outstanding teacher!" said sophomore Chloe Bittelman.

Reflecting on her teaching career, Curto says, "I think I brought integrity, I think kids knew that when they earned an A it was theirs to earn, and when they failed, it was their failure, that they had to work to get something. I tried to

make learning real and fun, I worked to bring relevance to the classroom which allowed for the kids to understand why it was important to learn a particular topic."

"The compassion Mrs. Curto has for all of her students and her genuine love of teaching about both art and history made coming to her class everyday not only a pleasure, but a privilege. Through taking her classes in high school, I learned that perseverance and a strong work ethic will always lead to success. I will miss Mrs. Curto so much; she is an incredible teacher," said senior Lauren Rothmann.

Continued on Page 14

<p>Politics</p> <p>Find out the results of student elections. See page 5.</p>	<p>Features</p> <p>What's all the hype about Fidget Spinners? Freshman Abe Baker-Butler explores the phenomenon on page 21.</p>	<p>Sports</p> <p>Find out what awards athletes took home at the Inaugural Senior Athlete Banquet. See page 23.</p>	<p>Inside Focus</p> <p>News.....1 Viewpoints.....6 Features.....14 Arts and Entertainment.....18 Politics.....19 Health and Science.....20 Sports.....23</p>
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Seniors Honored for Achievements

By Stacy Gerchick

At the end of their time at Blind Brook, members of the senior class are honored for their dedication to their studies, extracurricular activities, and community service. This year, 58 seniors took home awards presented by administrators and faculty members from each academic department.

- ★ *Steven J. Piccolo Memorial Award*: Ethan Finkelstein
- ★ *Dr. Carlos A. Lithgow Memorial Scholarship Award*: Egzon Balidemaj
- ★ *Geraldine and Charles Gevertz Human Relations Memorial Award*: William Hartman and Samantha Kaye
- ★ *Bruno M. Ponterio Award for Excellence in the Humanities*: Mindy Leder
- ★ *Valerie Weimer Memorial Award for Poetry*: Elise Yockelson
- ★ *Excellence in English Award*: Jeffery D' Ambrosio
- ★ *Pati Sherlock Creative Writing Award*: Rachel Goodman
- ★ *Journalism Award*: Stacy Gerchick
- ★ *The American Association of University Women Writing Award Outstanding Student Award*: Hannah Brady
- ★ *The American Association of University Women Writing Excellence in Writing Award*: Lauren Rothmann
- ★ *Thespian Award for Outstanding Senior Performance*: Danielle Goz and Samuel Landino
- ★ *Thespian Participation Award*: Emma DePaola, Samantha Gibbs, William Hartman, Emily Kitchin, and Jeremy Weingarten
- ★ *Theatrical Renaissance Award*: Adam Fleishaker and Julia Mullaly
- ★ *Portfolio Excellence Award in Photography*: Ryan Bedell and Mindy Leder
- ★ *Excellence in Photography Award*: Kaveri Reddy
- ★ *Excellence in Art Award*: Heather Melvin
- ★ *Outstanding Achievement in Instrumental Music*: Adam Fleishaker and Conor Vogt
- ★ *Dedication to Instrumental Music Award*: Julia Mullaly and Anthony Provenzano
- ★ *Dedication to Chorus Award*: Meredith Berger
- ★ *Outstanding Achievement in Choral Music*: Emma DePaola
- ★ *George Trautwein PTA Memorial Scholarship*: Emma DePaola and Conor Vogt
- ★ *Kyle Frand Award*: Samuel Landino
- ★ *U.S. Marine Corps Semper Fidelis Award for Musical Excellence*: Conor Vogt
- ★ *Senior Science Award*: Paul Soden
- ★ *Mad Scientist Award*: Owen Xie
- ★ *NY Microscopes Co, LTD High School Science Award*: Claire Rothmann
- ★ *Theory of Mind Award*: Michael Malley and Petal Samrow
- ★ *Math Department Tom Reitstetter Award*: Rowan Reddy
- ★ *Excellence in Business Education Award*: Ethan Finkelstein and Rebecca Kimmel
- ★ *Excellence in History Award*: Spencer Kaplan
- ★ *Bruno M. Ponterio Award for Excellence & Creativity in Social Studies*: Kaveri Reddy
- ★ *Jean Hurley Memorial Award for Citizenship*: Sydney Goodman
- ★ *Excellence in Spanish Award*: Rebecca Kimmel, Lauren Rothmann, and Spencer Kaplan
- ★ *Excellence in Italian Award*: Elise Yockelson, Jonah Glick, Sammy Landino
- ★ *U.S. Marine Corps Distinguished Athlete Award*: Socrates Espinal and Lauren Santarsiero
- ★ *Ted Reed Memorial Scholarship Award*: Jamie Broitman and David Levy
- ★ *James F. Spano Scholarship Award*: Kaveri Reddy and Robert Giuliano
- ★ *Faculty Participation Award*: Justin John, David Levy, and Angela McSpedon
- ★ *Faculty Leadership Award*: Jake Cohen, Kaveri Reddy, and Erica Wels
- ★ *Faculty Service Award*: Samantha Gibbs, Ike Murov, and Miranda Rasch
- ★ *Certificate for Special Congressional Recognition from Nita Lowey*: Allison Gelfarb
- ★ *Community Service in Memory of B. Sitner Award*: Alana Applebaum and Sydney Goodman
- ★ *Senator George Latimer Certificate of Merit Outstanding Community Service Award*: Jake Cohen, Spencer Kaplan, and Alexa Limb
- ★ *Blind Brook Community Service Award*: Jamie Broitman, Carlie Fern, Erica Wels, and Emily Wexler
- ★ *Prudential Spirit of Community Award*: Zoe Kansler and Rowan Reddy
- ★ *Victor A. Ridder Scholarship*: Lauren Rothmann
- ★ *National Merit Semifinalists*: Jonah Glick, Rowan Reddy, and Bryan Weintraub
- ★ *National Merit Scholarship Winner*: Bryan Weintraub
- ★ *40/40 Club Scholarship*: Jackie Broderick
- ★ *PTA Scholarship Award for Character Development*: Mary Alice Saliba and Michael Lobel
- ★ *Blind Brook Enrichment Program Scholarship*: Hannah Brady and Adam Fleishaker
- ★ *Port Chester Teacher's Federal Credit Union for General Excellence in Education Award*: Ali Hamburger
- ★ *Rye Brook PBA Criminal Justice Memorial Scholarship Award*: Nikolina Cuk and Haley Feuerman
- ★ *Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendent's Achievement Award*: Stacy Gerchick and Rowan Reddy
- ★ *U.S. Marine Corps Scholastic Excellence Award*: Ryan Bedell
- ★ *Blind Brook-Rye Federation of Teachers Mike Dockwiler Award*: Jake Cohen
- 2★ *New York State Scholarship for Academic Excellence Award*: Stacy Gerchick, Alexandra Limb, Rowan Reddy, Paul Soden, and Owen Xie



We applaud the Class of 2017,
and everyone at Blind Brook HS
who believes in building
a strong foundation.



Kingfield is a new high-end, 100,000 sq ft luxury residential development in the heart of the city. The project will include a 100,000 sq ft building with a 100,000 sq ft pool and a 100,000 sq ft building. The project is a collaboration between the City of New York and the City of New York. The project is a collaboration between the City of New York and the City of New York. The project is a collaboration between the City of New York and the City of New York.

NEW YORK

KINGFIELD

NEW YORK

Kingfield is a new

Junior Book Awards

By Stacy Gerchick

Each May, the Blind Brook administration honors members of the junior class for their academic achievements. This year, twenty students took home prizes ranging from books to college scholarships. All of these individuals have dedicated countless hours of their time toward their studies and giving back to the community.

"After three full years of pursuing academic achievement, it is incredibly rewarding to have been chosen to be this year's recipient of the Yale University Book Award. My performance in school has always been guided by my own personal ambitions to achieve a higher degree of education and to give back to the community around us." -Jared Bassett

"It feels great to be recognized for our hard work. The teachers at Blind Brook do a great job, so getting recognition from them means a lot." -Christine Argentino

"I am extremely honored to have received the RPI Medal for Math and Science. I would like to thank my teachers, friends, and family for helping me reach this academic achievement!" -Spencer Van Gelder

"It was great receiving recognition from my teachers and counselors and it showed me that all my hard work was appreciated." -Karen Bender

"Winning a junior book award is a great way of allowing the teachers and administration that have gotten to know me over the years to show their recognition of my hard work and dedication." -Russell Scharf

Alex Golden

Columbia University Book Award is presented to a junior who is intellectually curious and one who has demonstrated a high level of achievement in Social Studies.

Arianna Kohilakis

University of Rochester George Eastman Young Leaders Award honors a junior who has demonstrated strong leadership in school and in the community. This student demonstrates extensive involvement in extracurricular activities while maintaining high grades and taking challenging courses.

Caroline Levine

University of Rochester Bausch & Lomb Honorary Science Award recognizes a high-achieving student who takes rigorous science classes and has received a high PSAT and/or SAT math score.

Claire Wieser

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

Christine Argentino

Harvard-Radcliffe Book Award is given to an outstanding student in Blind Brook High School who displays "excellence in scholarship" and demonstrates "exemplary character".

Sarah Rogers

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

Eliana Rosenzweig

Oberlin College Alumni Book Award for Achievement in Science recognizes a student who has shown a strong commitment to science throughout his/her high school career.

Spencer Van Gelder

The Rensselaer Medal is awarded to a student in the top 10% of his/her class. This student also excels in advanced math and science courses and has significant involvement in extracurricular activities.

Hannah Marrow

Wellesley College Book Award is presented to a female student in the junior class whose academic record and character are exceptional and who has also made significant personal contributions to her school and/or community.

Russell Scharf

University of Pennsylvania Book Award is presented to a junior who ranks in the top 5% of his/her class. This student of the following areas: student government, music, drama, athletics, journalism, or community service. This student demonstrates high personal and academic integrity and is highly respected by peers and faculty.

Jacob Zarkower
Hannah Steintal

Saint Michael's College Book Award for Scholarship and Service recognizes students who demonstrate a sustained and sincere commitment to community service and concern for others. These students have also demonstrated a high level of academic achievement.

Zhizhou (Orsen) Way

University of Rochester Xerox Award is presented to a student with a strong interest in innovation and/or information technology. This student shows leadership to other students to new approaches to old problems; business plans for fundraising; and community service.

Jared Bassett

Yale University Book Award is presented to an outstanding student who displays excellence in scholarship and exemplary character. This recipient also demonstrates involvement in extracurricular activities.

Samuel George

University of Rochester Frederick Douglass & Susan B. Anthony Award is presented to a junior who has demonstrated commitment to understanding and addressing difficult social issues. This student also demonstrates leadership and a dedication to community action while maintaining strong grades and rigorous courses in the humanities and social sciences.

Matthew Greenwald
Olivia Morrisey

Dartmouth College Book Award is presented to one male and one female student who are both in the top 10% of their class, demonstrate exemplary character, and excel in at least one non-academic area.

Karen Bender

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

Julia Levine

Brandeis University Book Award honors a high school junior who is in the top 10% of his/her class and demonstrates a commitment to civic engagement, community service, political activism, social justice, or volunteer work.

Jonathan Egol

Cornell University Book Award is given to a high school junior who has achieved general academic excellence. This student has also demonstrated an above-average involvement in extracurricular activities as well as a meaningful participation in community service.

Science Extravaganza

By Hannah Marrow

Juniors in Advanced Placement science classes hosted the fifth graders from the Bruno M. Ponterio Ridge Street School on June 6 for the annual Science Extravaganza. After the seniors began to pursue their Senior Options projects following the completion of AP exams, the remaining students in AP Biology, AP Psychology, and AP Chemistry stayed in class to work on science presentations that would be engaging, interactive, informative, and most importantly, fun, for their fifth grade audience.



1



5



2



3



4

1: Fifth graders find their Blind Spot while learning about the structure of the human eye.

2: Students discover the role of carbohydrates in different blood types.

3: Maya Finkman and Ethan Richard use proprioception goggles to learn about plasticity in the brain.

4: Zoe Cohen and Julia Levine explain the structure and function of the cell membrane.

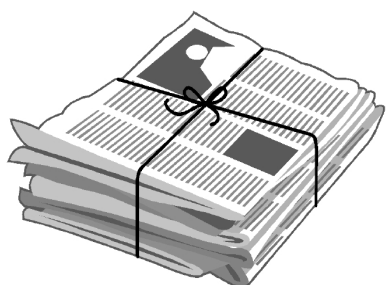
5: Hudson Powell and Spencer Van Gelder engage their student audience.

Thank You, Dr. Kenyon

Dr. Julie Kenyon, the *Focus* adviser for over ten years, is stepping down from her position at the close of this school year. Dr. Kenyon has dedicated countless hours of her time to helping the Focus staff and editorial board produce a high-quality publication that serves as Blind Brook High School's main platform for students to share information and ideas.

Dr. Kenyon, we are going to miss you so much next year and will never forget all that you have done for us during your time as adviser.

-The 2016-17 Focus Staff and Editorial Board



Congratulations to the Blind Brook High School

Class of 2017!

From the Blind Brook-Rye School Related Professionals

- ★ Bus Drivers
- ★ Nurses
- ★ Custodians
- ★ Teacher Aides
- ★ Clericals
- ★ Security Guards



Stacy Gerchick: Editor-in-Chief

Today, I am no longer a Blind Brook Student. Thirteen years of the same faces, the same buildings, and the same experiences, are now all but a memory. Although I knew that this day would eventually come, it always seemed so far in the future. It still doesn't seem real- the fact that a place that I've called my home for so long is no longer mine.

For many years, I took our community for granted. I thought that a small school district meant that I was stuck in a world of dullness and predictability. And I wasn't completely wrong. Living in Rye Brook means that you're pressured to look, dress, and act a certain way. Many of us get so lost in trying to fit in that we overlook the person who we're supposed to become. I spent way too much time trying to conform to an

image that I would never live up to. But all of my failed attempts led to something much greater. I gave up on trying to do what was expected of me and started to focus on what was important to me.

At Blind Brook, the mentality is that certain classes, clubs, and activities are the gateway to success. As a freshman, I tried out for a Model UN trip even though the club didn't interest me in the slightest. I hated public speaking, didn't understand the procedures, and was presenting on behalf of a country that I had never even heard of. All the while I was praying that I would make it through the tryout so that my classmates would think highly of me. When I didn't make the cut, I gave up

on Model UN. But that didn't stop me from trying out for Mock Trial the following year, even though I wasn't really interested in becoming a lawyer. And unsurprisingly, I didn't make the team. I thought that there was something wrong with me. I was being rejected from the most "prestigious" clubs at our school even though I was smart and getting good grades. But the whole time, I failed to see the only real problem that stood in my way. I was trying to force myself to be exactly like everyone else at Blind Brook when I didn't fit that image at all.

All along, there was one club that I stuck with regardless of the challenges that I faced. I stayed a member because I was passionate about what I was doing, not because I wanted to put it on my resume. As you may have already guessed, that club is Focus. When I first started writing for Focus as a freshman, I didn't expect to like it. But by the end of the year, I had my Arts and Entertainment editor application filled out and ready to go. And after an interview, writing test, and days spent waiting for a phone call from the editor-in-chief, I didn't get the position. But with this rejection, I didn't feel any relief or resentment. I was genuinely upset. I wanted the position because I loved writing, loved learning about my classmates and my community, and loved the way it felt to see my name in the paper after hours of hard work. This passion motivated me to work even harder to be chosen as Arts and Entertainment editor the next year.

Fast forward to the end of my senior year, and my time as editor-in-chief of Focus is quickly running out. I couldn't be more thankful for this amazing opportunity that allowed me to realize just how important it is to put your own interests and goals first. Writing for Focus has honestly changed the direction of my life. My visions of the future were always very narrow- I would be a doctor, lawyer, or engineer, because those professions were lucrative and well-respected. I never considered choosing a profession focused on writing and language. Admittedly, I'm not fully certain what I want my college major to be or what career path I'm going to take. While some people may fear this uncertainty, I'm excited to explore all of the possibilities that are open to me. As Meg Whitman, CEO of Hewlett Packard, once said, "Do what you love and success will follow. Passion is the fuel behind a successful career."

With this being my final editorial in Focus, there are so many people that I need to thank for helping me throughout my high school years.

Mom and Dad, thank you for always believing in me and supporting my goals. You will always be my biggest role models, and you are the best parents that any daughter could ever ask for. I can't possibly express how much I love you and how much I'm going to miss you next year.

Brooke, even though we sometimes don't get along, I know that you'll always be there for me. When-

ever I need someone to talk to, you're always eager to listen. You will forever be my best friend, and as you enter high school I want you to know that no matter where we are in our lives, I will always be someone that you can count on.

Thank you to all of my teachers, Ms. Lambert. Mr. Schuelein, and Ms. Jacobs. During my time at Blind Brook, you all encouraged me and my classmates to work hard and always try our best. We all owe our achievements to the great lengths that you have gone to help us succeed.

To my amazing group of friends, know that I could never live without you. Thank you for always making me laugh even in the most difficult of times. I don't think that I'll ever be able to have such strong relationships with anyone else. I hope you're not sick of me yet, because I'm anticipating that our friendships will last forever.

Thank you to all of the Focus staff and editorial board. This publication would not be possible without all of your hard-work and dedication. I especially need to recognize managing editor Lauren Rothmann, layout editor Hannah Marrow, and design editor Julia Mendelsohn. The level of commitment that the three of you have put into Focus is more than I ever could have asked for. Even though we would always dread the late nights spent in the Mac Lab, I can't deny that a small part of me looked forward to spending time with all of you.

An extra special thank you has to go out to Dr. Julie Kenyon, Focus adviser and my sophomore year English teacher. Dr. Kenyon, you are one of the most devoted individuals that I have ever had the privilege of working with. You have given up countless hours of your time to ensuring that every issue of Focus is of the utmost quality, and you always put my needs and those of my staff above your own. I truly don't know what I'm going to do without your guidance next year.

Finally, a huge thank you has to go out to the Blind Brook community and all of our readers. Without you, hundreds of students would lack a platform to share information as well as their own thoughts and ideas. I really am going to miss being a part of such a vibrant and supportive community.

No matter where I go in life, Focus will always hold a special place in my heart. Thank you to this amazing publication for giving the past four years of my life a purpose.

Stacy Gerchick
Stacy Gerchick
Editor-in-Chief



Focus

Editor-in-Chief Stacy Gerchick

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Matthew Pariser

Rachel Penn

Ethan Richard

David Rosenberg

Drew Rosenberg

Julia Rosenberg

Nicole Rosenzweig

Scott Rosson

Sabrina Rubinshteyn

Ben Sachs

Mitchell Saunders

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

Lauren Rothmann: Managing Editor

As my twelve years at Blind Brook come to an end, I know that I have a lot to be thankful for. I owe a lot to this district; it has shaped me into becoming the person that I am today. I met my best friends here, the people whose friendships I know I will cherish in the years to come. I have been challenged by Focus, a publication that I am honored to have been a member of for the past four years. I have been inspired by teachers who instilled in me a love of learning, and encouraged me to work to my fullest potential. As I enter college with plans to study English, I have also been greatly influenced by the English classes that I have taken throughout my high school career. So, I wanted to take this opportunity to reflect upon the impact that some of the books that my classmates and I have read in these classes have had on my life.

As freshman, we tackled Homer's *The Odyssey* while embarking on our very own journey of adventures in high school. While the halls of Blind Brook are far from the Aegean Seas of Ancient Greece, I came to understand that Odysseus's efforts at trying to make it back to his home in Greece alive are a lot like trying to endure high school—nearly impossible, but with perseverance and determination, definitely achievable.

As sophomore year quickly arrived, we were introduced to the first line of Charles Dickens'

A Tale of Two Cities: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times". Looking back, I'm convinced that literary analysts are wrong in their interpretation of that sentence. I think that any one of my classmates can agree with my saying that Dickens was writing about high school during the twenty-first century, rather than London and Paris during the 1700s.

During junior year, while *Jay Gatsby* crossed the bay to East Egg, we spent our time at both the literal and archetypal Blind Brook, crossing into the period of being upperclassmen while cleansing ourselves of the immaturities and insecurities that are tied to starting high school.

When we became seniors, Dickens again re-entered our lives with *Great Expectations*, where we learned of a poor English boy's expectations for his life. His hopes for the future, and the realities that ensued, made me think about life outside of the literature I had been reading. The mindset of expectations that Dickens wrote about, I came to realize, can be applied in very similar ways to our lives, atti-



tudes, and the ways in which we think—about our own personal expectations of life, and of what is to follow for us after high school. I know that many of us have ideas for what we hope to accomplish in the future, which can range from having a successful career and making a lot of money, to traveling the world.

But sometimes, we get so caught up in these ideas and faraway notions, these illusions that we are so absorbed

by like those in our favorite works of fiction, that we fail to take advantage of the reality that is the present. There's a significance to the proverb "seize the day." This saying highlights the importance of taking advantage of all that the present has to offer. We are at such an incredible time in our lives—in just a couple of short months our eyes will be opened to a whole new world of people, places, and opportunities. We are about to embark upon what I'm sure my fellow classmates have been told is supposed to be the best years of our lives.

So with that being said, now is the time to figure out what we love, and to pursue it with all

of our hearts, and in all of our endeavours. Now is the time to make mistakes—we're young, we'll bounce back. As one of my favorite authors F. Scott Fitzgerald once wrote, "we beat on, boats against the current". Now is the time to face new challenges head on, and embrace the change that will come along with it. I am a firm believer in the fact that we can accomplish anything we set our minds to, and those accomplishments begin with the work we put in leading up to today. Our expectations for our future selves will not become reality unless we work for it at school, unless we channel our energies, our passions, and determinations into our dreams—and what better time to do that, than now, as we commence into this new stage of our lives?

It's important that we all pursue what we love, and follow our hearts. Each and every time we do that is key, because we only get one chance to give it our all. As we graduate, starting right now, let's begin to live life to its fullest. So to my fellow peers in the Class of 2017, I challenge you to seize the day, each, and every day, so that your dreams will one day become a part of your reality. Thank you so much to all of my teachers and friends who have helped me to form my own dreams throughout my time at Blind Brook. I know that my years in high school will always be cherished, and will never be forgotten.

Emma DePaola: News Editor

My high school experience has been filled with countless memories and unforgettable moments that have shaped my time at Blind Brook High School. While everyone has had their ups and downs, I can graduate with confidence in myself because of the experiences I have had at Blind Brook that have made me the person that I am today.

Walking through the halls, I always felt a sense of comfort recognizing every face that I saw on a daily basis. At Blind Brook, there really is a sense of community that we as students may not realize until we are no longer spending seven hours a day, five days a week for ten months there. Every face that I see is a familiar one, which is something extremely unique about Blind Brook. Because of our small size, I have friends almost everywhere I go.

But at the same time, this has prohib-

ited me from branching out and trying to make new friends aside from the ones that I was already sitting next to. Unless I happened to be in a class with people whom I wasn't really friends with, there wouldn't be a motivation to socialize with different people.

While I have had pretty much the same friends since freshman year, I have learned to branch out and meet new people through clubs, sports, and theater. By doing activities outside of the classroom, I have been forced to interact and bond with people of different ages, classes, or friend groups. For example, participat-



ing in the musicals for four years has allowed me to gain so many friends, both seniors and underclassmen, who I have had the pleasure of performing with during my high school years.

I am also forever grateful for my high school teachers. Be-

cause of their guidance, I was able to achieve all that I wanted to academically, and I owe my work ethic and my passion for learning to them. The teachers at Blind Brook truly care about their students. They want them to succeed and thrive in every way that they can. Giving up time after school, working individu-

ally with students, and communicating through Remind or Google Classroom are just a few of the many ways that teachers show they care for their students.

Overall, my years as a student at BBHS have been unforgettable. The memories I have made here will always hold a special place in my heart, as well as the people that I have come to know and love. It is bittersweet how everyone who has been a part of my life for years will soon be hundreds of miles away from me, but as we grow and develop into independent young adults, the lessons we have learned during high school will forever have an impact on who we are as people. I am so thankful to have made such wonderful friends and memories over the years. To my fellow seniors, I know that we will all go on to do great things. Congratulations to the Class of 2017!

Hannah Brady: Viewpoints Editor

The day that I always knew would come, but somehow never fully wrapped my mind around: graduation. Even in my final months as a Blind Brook student, I paid little attention to the frantic organization of prom, the constant reminder of how few days we had left, or the subtle, more important changes in the way that the student body interacted with one another.

It wasn't until late April, when I was walking home from a meeting about the campus newspaper at the college that I will be attending in the fall, that everything came crashing down on me. It was dark out and I was headed back to my host's dorm, full of pride because after a day of getting lost and meeting what seemed like hundreds of people, I realized that I knew my way back perfectly. I was feeling pretty official, all decked out in my college gear, and thought about whether or not I would join the newspaper and make this the first of many late night walks back from editing meetings. That's when it hit me—I was going back to Rye Brook the next day, I was still in high school, I still had homework and classes that I needed to pass at home.

I couldn't help but feel ashamed of how quickly I had immersed myself in all of these new experiences without so much of a glance at what I was leaving behind. Walking across the quad that night, my life at Blind Brook seemed so far away, and I could hardly believe that I had been home just yesterday. I was overcome with homesickness as I remembered the comfort of movie nights with my parents, relaxing in the commons with friends, listening to teachers' interesting life stories, and the general feeling of connection to all of the things that had been with me for as long as I could remember.

I couldn't help but panic a little as I realized all that I would be leaving behind. I had spent the weeks leading up to preview days terrified that I would not be satisfied with the opportunities that the future held, but ended more terrified of losing everything that the present



currently holds.

And those fears are valid. Each time we come home, things will be different. Houses on our streets will have been repainted, we won't recognize everyone at Blind Brook when we go back to visit, and we will grow apart from certain people, only to be re-

mindful of them later when we hear about them through friends and neighbors. This community will exist even when we are not there. Sometimes, just like me at preview days, we will get so wrapped up in our new experiences that we won't even think to remember Blind Brook—but that's okay.

It's part of getting older. As we grow up, we will learn that the world is simply too full of the things that we love for us to experience all of them at once. As much as it hurts, every moment we choose to be in one place doing one thing, we will have to sacrifice time in

other places, doing other things. Time doesn't stop for anyone, no matter how much we may want it to.

And as I've thought about this issue more and more, I've come to decide that it's the best possible problem to have. Loving different places so much that choosing between them is difficult just means that we are embracing different opportunities, and allowing ourselves to branch out and explore. As we get older, the world will continue to grow bigger, and though not being everywhere that we want to be will be difficult, the multiple places that we love will define our lives and who we are.

Blind Brook will always be a part of us, just like all the other places we will go in life. Even though we won't always be here anymore, we will get the chance to explore the rest of the world, while always retaining our ability to come home. Leaving Blind Brook is not an end, but a beginning to so many other joyous things that will also help shape who we are. It is important that we never forget to embrace life as it comes our way, and to appreciate every single moment of it.

Sydney Goodman: Features Editor

When I think back on my past four years at Blind Brook High School, I can confidently say that I have had a conversation with every single student in the grade. This is an experience that I hope most students here have had, but I know that at most schools, it is unrealistic. Going to a school with less than 130 students in a graduating class obviously has its downfalls, but I am lucky to have grown up in a such a close-knit environment.

Growing up, going to classmates' birthday parties or seeing them at the few shops in town has fostered a community unparalleled to most school districts. Group projects, extracurriculars, and free periods have truly enabled me to meet each and every student in the class, and I am excited to be graduating with my friends, not just a "bunch of kids that I have maybe seen in the hallway once".

Yes, a small school district has its drawbacks. I can remember countless times where I felt frustrated about the grade's social dynamic, or was annoyed about how everyone knew everything about everyone. However, I can't really imagine going to high school somewhere else. I can't imagine not knowing the grade gossip or being able to recognize each student instantly as I passed by them in the hall.

Blind Brook has academically prepared me for college, and socially, I am excited to leave the bubble and meet new people. Yes, I'm scared that it will be difficult and overwhelming, especially when there will



be times where I will be walking on campus and not seeing one recognizable face on the way to class. Yet, I think that I am ready to leave Blind Brook's halls and move on.

Because of our small size, we are also able to participate in traditions a bigger school would be unable to accommodate.

The many traditions throughout this past year have really brought the senior class closer together. Painting the rock, standing in the front during fall homecoming, dressing up for Halloween, college day, and the assassin game are some of the many traditions that come to mind as I reflect on this past year. While a bigger school may

have some of these traditions as well, I feel as though they would seem more impersonal. Could a larger grade really all stand together in front of the bleachers and cheer the sports teams on? Would a larger grade really be able to play assassin if not everyone in the grade knew each other?

As I get ready to see some of my classmates for probably the last time, I feel weird, but also satisfied with the fact that I will be ending high school with a majority of the same kids that I started kindergarten with. In other towns, there are multiple schools in one district, so every few years the students from different schools come together into one, but we have all been together for 13 years now, and many of us were even in preschool together. While I am scared to leave my comfort zone, I know that Blind Brook has prepared me to graduate and find new familiar faces wherever I end up.

Rachel Goodman: Arts and Entertainment Editor

The summer after 11th grade, I did a summer program at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and lived on campus for four weeks. I matured so much in those short few weeks and loved every second of it. I learned valuable lessons and gained crucial experience in a totally different environment than what I was used to. When I came home, I was incredibly sad and upset. It was a complete shock to me after basically becoming a college student to go back to high school to finish my last year. I remember saying to my friends on the first day, "Why am I here? I was just in college, now I have to come back to this?!" The transition was excruciatingly difficult. I remember finally breaking down crying in the hallway confused, frustrated, and overwhelmed. I had no idea about the new experiences, thrills, and changes that were awaiting me. In actuality, I wasn't quite ready for college after 11th grade. Senior year was the year I truly matured into an adult.

With the pressure of school and getting into college off my shoulders after I was accepted into NYU Tisch on December 15, I had six months left to reflect on who I was, who I needed to be, who I could trust,

what I regretted, what I missed, and what life I wanted to live. My senior quote sums up those vital six months perfectly: "You ought to spend a little more time trying to make something of yourself and a little less time trying to impress people." I cared less and less about what people thought of me and focused on my well-being and what I wanted to accomplish. I learned lessons of who I should surround myself with, who I could trust, and who loved me unconditionally. I wanted good energy and genuine people to surround me instead of faking my way through high school. I didn't want to suck up to those who claimed they were above me anymore. In truth, I was always above them, and senior year helped me figure that out.

I didn't do a lot of schoolwork senior year, but for the first time I felt like I was having real life experiences. I wandered around the Audubon every other week,



spent the holidays with my best friend in Toronto, spontaneously bought tickets to go to random concerts, danced like a maniac at a Bat Mitzvah I'm too old for, traveled to Italy, took many road trips to the beach, befriended strangers at a music festival, and partied at the prom. And

although sometimes I would feel really down through this crazy journey I call senior year, I learned so much about myself and the world around me in such a short span of time. There were times life really had me down, and for the first time it wasn't the stress of schoolwork; it was trying to navigate my own existence. At times I was more than overwhelmed, frustrated, scared, and annoyed, but these experiences were the most important experiences I could ever have had before entering the "real world" and moving into college. All the times I told my parents I thought I was going crazy, cried hysterically in my room,

and sat in class feeling completely numb and useless all amounted to something: life. A bulletproof Blind Brook bubble no longer sheltered me. The old days where the only thing I had to worry about was getting an A+ in all of my classes were over. I was finally growing into an adult and participating in the world around me.

I learned I didn't need the validation of others, or a Blind Brook award to tell me I was good at something. I didn't need my every move to be checked, accepted, and approved by my peers or faculty. I needed confidence in myself; I needed to enjoy my life. I realized it wasn't too late. I could take initiative and write my own ending to this story.

I feel more inspired than I ever had in terms of my writing; I bullet note my experiences on my laptop every other night, flooding it with material for screenplays and scripts. I think of ideas, characters, conflicts, and plots that seem bizarre, but they are all based on real life experiences. Often times my friends turn to me after we all experienced a crazy event and say, "Rachel, you have to write this into a script." And I will. I promise I will.

Paul Soden: Politics Editor

I have learned a lot in my time at Blind Brook. I figured out how to take the area under a curve, explored the archetypal nuances of *The Kite Runner*, grappled to understand torques and rotational motion, experienced the pure bewilderment that accompanies differential equations, investigated the effect of neuropsychological disorders on daily life, the list goes on. Despite all that I have come to know here, I often struggled along the way to identify a purpose behind everything I was learning; I failed to see how my different classes connected and did not see a point in studying topics that I did not plan pursue in the future as a career. For this reason, the beginning of my high school experience was plagued with frustration as I tried desperately to find fulfillment in what I was learning. It was not until my junior year that I made an important realization: knowledge can not be contained within one discipline.

It was in my junior year that, mentored by my English teacher, Ms. Goett, I set out to research the susceptibility factors for terrorism that have propagated the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis. Trying to find the global panacea for terrorism was already a daunting and presumptuous task, but my research process was made much more difficult by my

academic mindset at the time. For months I only researched articles narrowly focused on my area of inquiry, which yielded very sparse results. I quickly realized that I needed to take a more flexible and holistic perspective and look for a more diverse array of resources to aid my research and I.

Analyzing the institution of terrorism through psychological, socioeconomic, and political critical lenses, I was able to relate the mental health of modern terrorist conglomerates to their physical and social environments. Through this, I deduced that Syrian terrorism is actively expanding due to the displacement of the region's inhabitants, which is highly indicative of other vulnerability factors that compelled many of them to radicalize. By approaching terrorism through different, seemingly unrelated disciplines, I was able to deduce much more concrete conclusions and find solid albeit tentative answers to my questions. Along with other resources, this project helped me



to discover the art of contextualization.

Soon after, I began to blur the lines that separated all of my classes and linked topics from across my multidisciplinary curriculum. Chemistry concepts suddenly made sense against the backdrop of statistical correlations. Bacterial conjugation now clicked as a sort of cultural blending,

with its DNA transfers so closely resembling the cultural exchanges that made Hellenistic society so richly diverse. I did this with my extracurricular activities as well, using my accounting responsibilities for the Blind Brook Marketplace to help me work through Precalculus problem sets and recalling my science research work with auditory stimuli on the witness stand at the Mock Trial County Semifinals.

I began to find purpose and meaning in everything I was learning in every area of my life. I could now visualize where each concept fit into the broader tapestry of human knowledge and realized how important it was to have been immersed in such

an enriching multidisciplinary curriculum at Blind Brook. This interdisciplinary academic approach provided me with inspiration while catalyzing my creativity and ingenuity. I have come to realize that the boundaries between disciplines is the site where true learning takes place, and that a well-rounded education is key to success in the professional world. Equipped with this knowledge, I was able to achieve the academic fulfillment that I craved while at Blind Brook and know that I am ready to take on whatever challenges that may lie in my future.

Now that I am graduating and moving on to college, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the entire Rye Brook community for supporting me in my academic journey over these past four years. Your guidance has helped me in ways that you will never know. I would also like to thank Focus and its staff for giving me a voice over the past four years. Thank you for giving me a platform to communicate and share my ideas. Lastly, I would like to congratulate and thank the Blind Brook High School Class of 2017. It has been a pleasure to share the memories, laughs, and lessons that we have shared over the years, and I sincerely wish you all the best for the future.

Spencer Kaplan: Web Editor

I had not realized until a few weeks ago why the Hulk is one of my favorite superheroes. It turns out that I held a deep appreciation for his ability to show how he truly felt.

From the first time we set foot in Ridge Street, we have experienced all types of emotions, starting with awestruck at the vastness of the hallways in our elementary school, and finishing with jubilation when we exited our last class at the high school. However, in between these two endpoints, we've worn an incredible range of emotional masks, both positive and negative.

After our initial amazement at Ridge Street, we experienced another emotion: terror. Many of us entered elementary school with few to no friends, and even for those of us who went to preschool together, we had never really experienced regularly being without our parents for a long time. As five and six year olds in kindergarten, our teachers had to deal with their fair share of tantrums and fits because we were scared and lonely.

Over the years at Ridge Street, our emotions didn't change much. We learned, we played, and we smiled, but what we didn't understand was how to put up an artificial mask. In

this sense, we were innocent, but we always showed who we were. We would have playdates with our friends who were decided for us by our parents and we would have fun. Or we didn't have fun, but we would make absolutely sure our parents knew. We were honest because we didn't know how to wear a mask that was other than how we truly felt.

In the purgatory that is middle school, we started wearing expressive masks. For example, we wore polite grins to cover up the despair of seeing crowds wearing sweat-shirts from bar mitzvahs we weren't invited to. While the number and intricacy of the masks grew, so did our ability to manipulate them. When we started becoming who we are today and crafting our identities in middle school, we started to hide who we truly may have been in favor of masks.

It was at this critical time that we learned how to smile even if we may



not have been happy. We started laughing along at the jokes our friends made about us, even if we were devastated by them. In this sense, our masks were a form of self-defense.

Surprisingly, the masks didn't change at the high school, but our ability to see through people's masks evolved. Since we have known each other for so long, we are able to see past

emotional facades and sense how our friends truly feel. For better or for worse, we are so accustomed to each other, that we can mostly tell when someone's smile is contrived, or when someone's laugh is defensive.

Now though, at the culmination of high school, we have a tremendous opportunity. In the years to come, when we are not burdened by the social pressures of conformity, we can decide what masks to put on, which faces to show, and hopefully display what we truly feel. We no longer have to hide behind emotional armor.

In college and beyond, many individuals struggle with anxiety and other mental health issues, but do not seek the professional help that they need. Unfortunately, those affected by mental health conditions wake up every day and put a smile on their face, masking their true state of mind. When they put on a mask, just as many of us have done in high school, they implicitly reject the help that is available to them. That is not to say it is easy to take off our masks, but I call on my fellow classmates to consider that if they ever need help and can't muster the strength to ask for it, to take off their masks and let others help them.

In Rye Brook, there has always been a mentality that we have to fit in; that is, that we have to do everything our classmates are doing and nothing else. Deviation is heresy. The masks we wore were a way for us to conform. But I challenge my classmates to do the opposite. I challenge them to fit out. We should celebrate our individuality. The vast ocean of life lies right outside the "Rye Brook Bubble". I urge my classmates to traverse it like an elementary school student. Take off your masks!

Rachel Sarch: Multimedia Editor

About two years ago, in my search for community service hours, I came across the Coachman Family Center, a homeless shelter for families in Westchester County. When I found out that they needed tutors to help the children at the shelter with their homework, I mustered up some confidence in my long division skills and made my way over to give my best assistance. When I arrived, I was greeted by dozens of children working on an array of different subjects and assignments. As I walked down the line of tables, a little girl staring blankly at a piece of paper caught my eye, and when I asked her if she needed help, she told me that her assignment was to define the words on the page. The teacher had given each one of the students a dictionary to take home with them so that they could define each of the words on their worksheet. I sat down next to the girl and asked her if she knew how to find the words in the dictionary, and she told me that she

didn't because she had never asked. When her teacher handed out the dictionaries to the class, none of her classmates asked the question, "What is this book and what do I do with it?", so she continued without knowing. Because no one had asked.

How many experiences have we missed out on because we did not ask the right questions? How many problems on a test could we have gotten right if in class we had simply just raised our hands? As we move onto the daunting challenge that is before us, college, we must make sure to always ask the right questions.

I'm sure you have all heard of what we call the "Rye Brook Bubble". The Rye Brook Bubble is a nickname for something that encompasses every stu-



dent who lives in our tiny village with the safety of repetition and routine. In a town where we rode the same bus with the same friends since we were five years old, and the biggest change was turning right after entering the building instead of left upon middle school graduation, we don't have a ton of room for questions. While we have had the privilege to go to a school with great teachers and undoubtedly learned and challenged ourselves to a great degree, how much did we learn about what is around us? In a school with such a uniform demographic, we were never really exposed to people who are much different than all of us.

As we begin this journey into the unknown and begin to piece our future together the best that we know how, we will come

across people of all different races, financial backgrounds, and sexual orientations, so it is important to challenge ourselves to continue to learn and grow every day. Never settle for ignorance. Ask the question, no matter how stupid you may think it sounds, and challenge your peers to do the same. Without the initiative to act and the courage to stare fear right in the eye and turn your back against it, no one can grow or learn at their highest potential. Challenge yourself, but never lose faith in your ideas, no matter how much strife you may face. Just remember that if no one ever dared to ask that one question that challenged the status quo, we would still believe that the planets orbit around the earth, we would have never known that dinosaurs existed, and we would be in constant fear that if we drove too far and too fast we would fly right off the face of the earth. Congratulations to the class of 2017, I can't believe we made it.

Rachel Brown: Photography Editor

Writing my first and last article for Focus is bittersweet. This means my time on Focus is now coming to an end. I remember when I first signed up to be a part of the photography staff. During my freshman, sophomore and junior years of high school, I took many photos for Focus. This helped me practice all different kinds of photography: still photography, headshots, action shots, etc. For my senior year, I was elected to be the photography editor. I was so excited to be part of the leadership staff of Focus

after three years of being on staff. Being the photography editor for Focus has taught me leadership skills, management skills and how to work better with others. It was my job to communicate to all of the photo staff what assignments they could choose from, and then what their assignment



actually was. Also, it was my job to answer any and all questions that they had. Additionally, I had to keep track of who had which assignment and which pictures people sent to me and which I still needed. Once all of the photos were sent to me, I had to

pick the best ones, edit them (if needed), and then put them into the shared drive with all of the other editors. Having the ability to work with others is crucial for Focus because each section works together to make Focus successful. It is like a domino effect. If one section cannot meet a deadline, another section cannot either and then Focus cannot be published on time. Overall, I enjoyed my time on Focus a lot both as staff and as an editor. I hope Focus continues to thrive and be successful in the future.

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Viewpoints

A Blind Brook High School Student Publication

June 2017

Senior Sam Navaran

My best advice to anyone who wants to succeed in high school is to always seek out extra help. When I was just starting, I struggled in my classes because of the transition from middle school to high school. The work in high school was more challenging than the work in middle school, especially with the tough transition. I learned that managing your time will benefit you in high school. When I managed my time, I was able to get all of my assignments in on time. I continued to try harder and I never kept myself down.

All of my teachers that I have had throughout these years have played an important role in my life that led me to getting accepted into college. One memory

that will always stick with me since it was very helpful is when I was able to go to my teacher, Ms. Maksym, and get help on the subjects that I was struggling in. I keep this memory with me because when I went to her, I was able to understand my work better and since I have known her all throughout high school,

Ms. Maksym understands many teaching strategies, and since I have known her all throughout high school, she knew the



way that was most helpful to teach me so I could learn the new information.

Once I got to senior year, I was surprised by how fast high school flew by. Enjoy your time in high school because it will fly by in a blink of an eye. No matter what happens, enjoy life to the fullest. Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "You

gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say

to yourself, 'I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.'" Face the biggest challenges in life and overcome them.

I would like to thank all of the teachers that helped me succeed and excel in school and in life. I would like to give a special thanks to the advisor of the school newspaper, Dr. Kenyon, for encouraging me to be a part of Focus and for all of the hard work that she puts into helping me throughout the past few years. I would also like to thank my family for encouraging me to keep going. Lastly, I would like to thank all of my friends who were always there for me when I seemed down and was struggling in school.

Senior Sam Gibbs

As the class of 2017, we stand here on the edge of our high school lives, only moments from leaping into our prospective futures. And while many of us have chosen different paths and are heading off in different directions, we all know we got here together, and it would not have been the same journey without each and every one of us being there along the way.

I'd like to use this opportunity to share a story from the first day of seventh grade in Ms. Schwitek's class, a day that has stuck with me until now. Attendance was being taken at the beginning of the day, as per usual, and all of the names were being called aloud. As Ms. Schwitek got to my name, she paused for a moment, saying "Samantha Gibbs," almost as if she was thinking about what to call me. Well, the attendance was also on the Smart Board and right next to my name was my school username, sgibbs. Suddenly, Jonah Glick excitedly yelled "Sgibbs!",

as if he had made an amazing discovery. Ms. Schwitek then decided that from that day on, she would refer to me as Sgibbs and only Sgibbs. This nickname soon became what everyone called me, even some high school teachers use it now because everyone still says it. Sgibbs started as a middle school nickname, but it gradually

became who I was and allowed me to explore my identity and come into myself. Now, don't get me wrong, people calling me Sgibbs sometimes annoyed me, but as I look back on my time in high school, I'm glad I had a nickname. It was almost a universal term, and everyone knew what "Sgibbs" meant, no matter what grade. It caused me to be more confident, more outgoing,



and more courageous in my decisions, and opened my mind to new perspectives. All of this just because of that fateful first day of seventh grade.

While not everyone has a nickname, everyone has left their mark on Blind Brook in countless ways. A school as small as ours allows people to make bigger waves and more greatly influence others. As a class, we were given the opportunity to leave imprints on this school forever, and that doesn't just mean the senior rock. We continued senior traditions, even starting some of our own, we set examples for the underclassmen, we lead the school through the year, and we continued on the legacy that was left before us. We leave Blind Brook

knowing we changed it for the better, and even if that change was small, it will still make a big impact on the school in years to come. If what I leave behind at Blind Brook is my nickname, I'm okay with that, because it represents who I am now because of my classmates and my school.

We stand here on the edge, ready to take that leap and continue the journey we started four short years ago. And we stand here together, as the class of 2017, one last time, leaving our last footprint on Blind Brook.

It has been quite a journey to this final moment, and none of us would have gotten here without the support from the faculty, our friends, and our families. I'd like to personally thank my fellow classmates for being right by my side through all of it. Without all of you, I would have never been the person I am today, and I never would have been called Sgibbs. Congratulations to the class of 2017, we finally made it!

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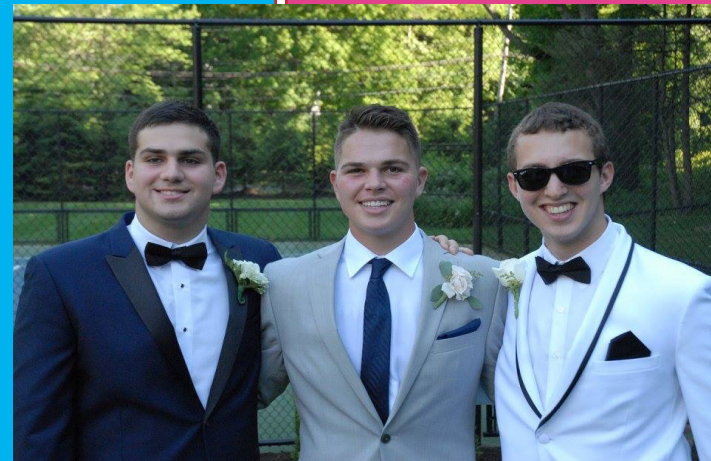
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The Night of Our Lives

By Jeffrey D'Ambrosio

Prom has always stood to be the last formal dance of the year for seniors, as many are excited to enjoy both the event itself and the parties that follow it. Over the

school year, seniors meticulously plan their proposals, chose their dresses and tuxedos, and research the many available methods of transportation for the perfect night out.

On the day of the event, the fun begins a few hours before prom. Since many groups ride together, they usually meet at a designated household to take photos and as a prelude to the night. Many other group-specific pre-prom socializing events occur, as some girls may choose to do hair and makeup together. Many appreciate the traditional corsages worn at the dance, usually given by one date to the other during one of the pre-prom events.

Once the bus arrives, the trip to prom truly begins. The dance itself is a night as mystical as it is memorable. And that it was, as prom took place near the shore at Mamaroneck Beach and Yacht Club. Excitement was in the air as students danced, talked, and ate food. Senior Katie Blinderman said, "I thought the venue was amazing and we had a great night for it! The cocktail hour was held outside right on the water and we were able to watch the sun set and it was beautiful!"

Students also hung out with the chaperones and cherished some of their last moments as seniors at Blind Brook High School. Senior David Levy's highlight of prom included, "When the DJ put on 'Teach Me How to Dougie' our entire grade made a circle for people to go in and dougie. It was cool because this song was

a hit when we were having our bar and bat mitzvahs and everyone would do the dougie to the song." Other fun dance floor activities of the night included Senior Zach Selby "crowd surfing" by jumping on top of groups of people and was carried through the dance floor.

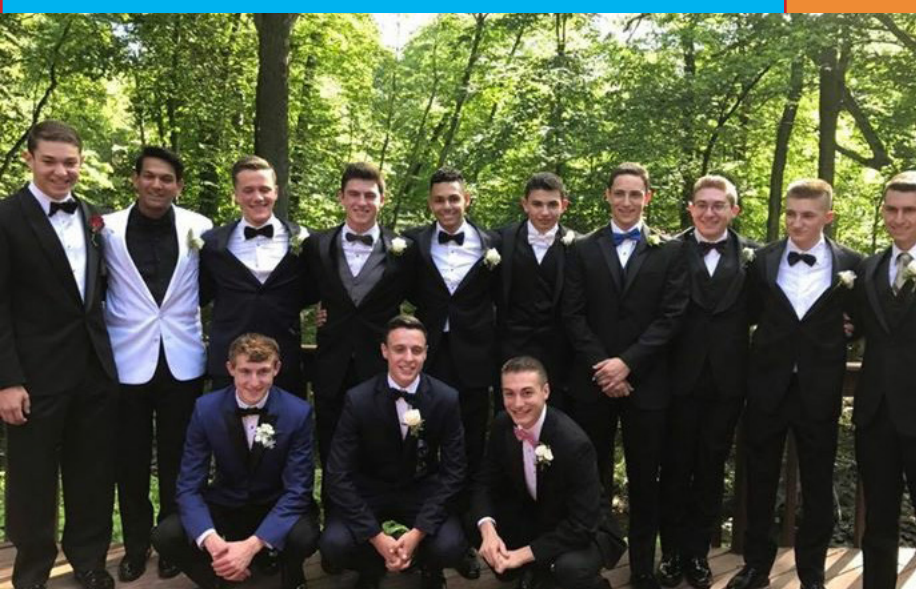
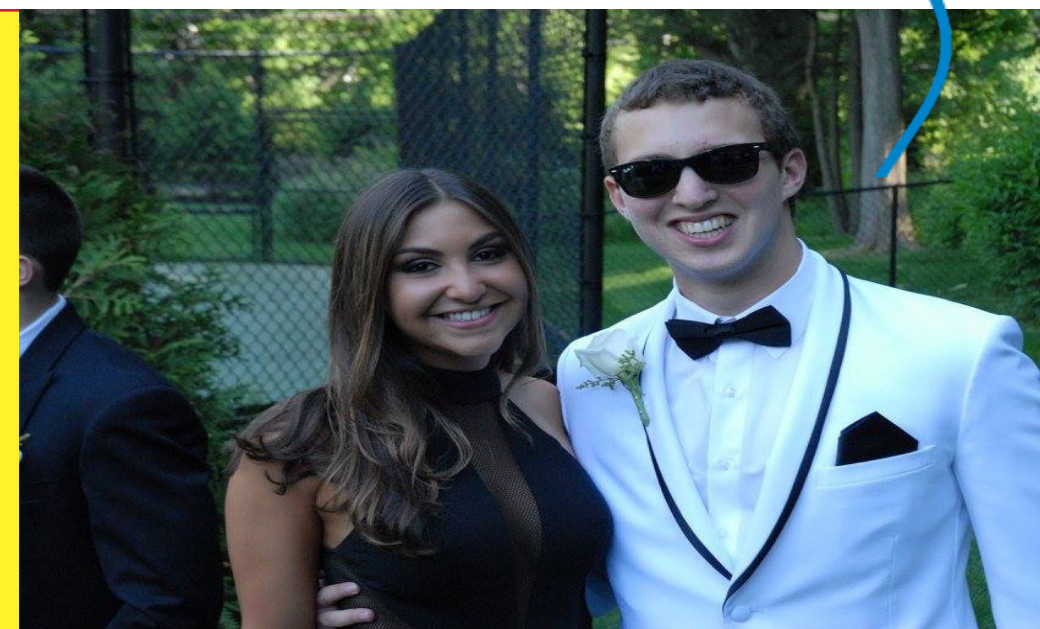
"Prom is a once in a lifetime experience. We've all grown up together as a grade and prom is just really one last dance to let all the joy and emotion out and have one last night with your friends," said Levy.

After the dance to remember, many looked forward to the most endearing part of the night. Organized by a few seniors and their respective parents, the "after-prom" is an organized party in the early morning hours after the night of the prom at a separate location. Some seniors, even after the after-prom, sleepover at their friends' houses, or stay up through the night to experience the morning sunrise.

No matter how it's spent, prom, the century-old tradition, has grown to be a much-anticipated evening filled with festivities that compose most seniors' greatest memories before graduation and the summer ahead. As Petal Samrow puts it, "Our school does prom like no other. Everything with corsages, to the Facebook page for dresses, to fighting your way onto a bus is way over the top. I really don't think all of that is required, but I guess that in its own ways it makes the whole thing a little more special."



Blind Brook PROM



Halfway There

By Carly Kabot

If all the sophomores were to think back to the thoughts that were going through their minds the night before freshman year began, we would probably laugh at the absurdity of our fears. Though we didn't change buildings or classmates, the idea of starting high school still felt daunting and the older kids, though we knew many of them already, seemed intimidating. The idea that suddenly everything counted felt overwhelming and made school all that much more serious, that first day feeling as if we were entering treacherous waters. Slowly and surely we became accustomed to the water and were able to swim out into the current, without the fear of being pulled under. After two years, there is a speck in the distance, a reminder that we have made it to the halfway point, the shore on the other side finally coming into view.

For most sophomores, the time since 8th grade graduation feels like a mere blink, but the reality is that's all we have left. It's a scientific phenomenon known as time compression, that time seems to move faster as we get older. Maybe it's the non-stop schedules we have all created for ourselves these past two years, trying to balance tougher classes and extracurriculars, while maintaining mental sanity and a social life. Though the past two years have gone by incredibly fast, nearly all of us feel that we have changed drastically from the person we once were. We often don't notice the small changes in ourselves until we are face to face with a challenge or experience that tests our maturity.

As the past two years come to an end, some sophomores have taken a moment to step back from the chaos and take in the fact that we have made it this far. "The fact that we are now halfway through high school is crazy. It is both scary and exciting in that our time here is really flying by," said Zach Kornblum, echoing the sentiments of countless others. He is absolutely right; it is scary how quickly the time has whizzed by, but what is scarier is that many of us haven't taken the time to acknowledge it. If we fail to let these moments slip away now, we will never get them back again. We often take this time in our lives for granted, always wishing we were older instead of immersing ourselves in the present. When we are freshmen and sophomores all we want to do is be upperclassmen, but we forget that in only a bat of an eye we will be there.

High school is a unique period in our lives designed for self-exploration and advancement. It's the first time we really have to take responsibility for ourselves, our work, and our actions. However, we do this in an environment that is within our comfort zone, while being surrounded by peers and supportive staff that act as a safety net.

We often forget that in a few years we will be thrown into a completely new setting, one where we will have get a feel for the water all over again. It's important that we take advantage of these four years to cultivate our interests and improve ourselves, instead of wishing the clock on the wall would tick a little faster.

Until this year, many of us didn't realize how rapidly time moves. Perhaps this can be explained by the etymology of sophomore, as it means "wise fool" in Greek. While we have all developed tremendously since the start of freshman year, we still have a long way to go and a lot of room to grow.

For most sophomores, the prospect of junior year seems like an ominous storm that will reverse the current of the water they have finally gotten used to. Junior year comes with new responsibilities, challenges, opportunities, and for most, new sources of stress. Not only is course rigor amplified for those taking AP classes, but now students have to get a start on standardized testing and the college process. The college process seems overwhelming and nerve racking to the majority of students, especially at a school with such a competitive atmosphere. Everyone has a strong yearning to do well and succeed, which adds a tremendous amount of needless pressure.

However, just like starting high school, once the year gets rolling, students will realign their priorities and habits to adapt to the new demand of junior year. Isn't it ironic that we wanted to be upperclassman for so long, but now that we are almost there most people wish they could turn around?

Some students have a more optimistic outlook on the next two years, such as Rebecca Weiss, who stated, "It's kind of crazy knowing that in two years I won't be seeing the same people I've known since kindergarten considering we grew up together, but at the same time high school has been an amazing experience for me so far and I know the best is yet to come." No matter how difficult the following year is, it's important to keep it in perspective and remember to enjoy the little things along the way.

Before we know it we will be back at Suny Purchase, standing on the stage one last time. There is a special bond that forms between classmates who have spent thirteen years together, one that isn't broken once the diplomas are handed out. That is the last time we will be one grade. "It's a weird feeling, these past two years have gone by so quickly and it feels like we just started," said Gabby Egol.

Soon enough, we will reach another halfway point and be saying the same thing once again. So while we can't make the hands on the clock move any slower, we can learn to relish and appreciate each year, each moment, and each second a little bit more.



Photo Courtesy of Carly Kabot

BB Bids Farewell

Continued from page 1

"I want to spend more time with my kids and travel not during school vacations. I also do charity work, like Hudson Links which provides educational programs for prisons, so when the men get out, they have skills. I am also a part of a Learning to Look program, I teach art to young kids. I do a lot of different programs. And I have been tapped by the Metropolitan Museum of Art to continue my program I do here. I really want to give back," said Curto.

Another member of the Blind Brook faculty who will be missed is Library Media Specialist, Jean Follansbee. She has helped students from both the middle and high schools for the past eleven years. From the research projects in the beginning of sixth grade to help during free periods in high school, Follansbee was there. She often gathered materials to help students find an independent reading book, as well as assist in research projects.

"Working with students and teachers to improve their research skills is something I will forever cherish," said Follansbee.

In just one year, library clerk Marnita Brown has gained a vast amount of experience from her. "I have learned just how important the library is in a school. As well as all of the opportunities [Ms. Follansbee] can give students with their research and citations and such. I will miss all of the knowledge she brings," said Brown.

Head night custodian, Frank Lubelli, known as just Frank to many, is truly the heart of Blind Brook. After school lets out at 2:40 in the afternoon, Lubelli is in charge. He is quite the jack of all trades; he began working as a special effects artist and cameraman in the 1950s, but then went on to fight in the Korean War and later on to various professions.

Lubelli started at Blind Brook in 2002 as a part time summer employee. His outstanding work ethic was noticed by then Assistant Superintendent Dr. Jonathan Ross who offered him a full time job. Every day, Mr. Lubelli arrives at school at 2:30 and leaves at 11:00 pm. After working for over half a century, including fifteen years at Blind Brook, Lubelli decided it was time to retire.

"I will miss everyone, especially chatting with the other custodians, teachers and students. Working at Blind Brook has been a great experience," Lubelli said.

After ten years in teaching and many more in administrative roles, Dr. Elvira Morse will be saying goodbye to her role as a Spanish teacher at Blind Brook. Morse has worked to expose her students to a variety of different cultures through her lessons in her AP, Honors, and regular Spanish class.

"I believe my greatest contribution has been that I have created an awareness of the importance of learning a world language by having high expectations, balancing rigor with joyful learning, and nurturing students' need to become globally competent citizens," said Morse.

Having invested so much into her students, she will invariably miss them in her retirement years: "I will miss the daily interactions with my students. I will miss their enthusiasm, energy, and willingness to participate in the many and varied strategies I have tried to incorpo-

rate' in my teachings over the years," said Morse.

Fellow foreign language teachers Madeleine Salvatore and Christine Sabatella will remember her "love of Juanes" and her "singing along to Spanish songs with earbuds at her desk" in the faculty room.

"Her infinite wisdom and her experience that she brought to our department, as well as her humor and her presence," said Salvatore.

However, retirement isn't looking bad at all for Morse. "After almost four decades in education, I want to spend more time with family, see the places on my bucket list, and continue to teach a new generation of teachers as an adjunct professor. I also plan to walk the Long Beach boardwalk on a regular basis," she said.

This June, we must also to bid adieu to another favorite, school nurse, Nancy Garretto. She has played an important part in both students' and faculty's lives, making sure they are well and healthy, and even being a great listening ear for many.

"I truly love the kids that I take care of. I'll help them with anything, any problem they have, whether or not it's school related. They know they can always come to me. I've always gone the extra mile for the children, before, during, and after school," said Garretto.

That powerful passion for her job is what endears Garretto to so many. Secretary Joanne Connor, who works across the hall from Garretto, said, "I will miss looking for her keys, and her bringing me coffee. I will miss her infectious laugh. I'll miss having a bunch of kids directly across the hall. I like seeing how they love her as much as we love her."

Garretto has had a significant impact on many students' lives as the school nurse. "One time, I had an allergic reaction when someone fed me a cookie made of almond paste and told me it didn't have nuts and Mrs. Garretto calmed me down. I didn't die and I will forever remember her for that," said junior Oliver Kleban.

As for her retirement, Garretto has a pretty good idea of what she wants to do: "I have four beautiful grandchildren, so I plan on spending more time with them. I'd like to travel. I'd like to make the most out of every day that I can. And I will," she said.

The affection she has for the people at Blind Brook is something that she'll cherish. "I'll miss my kids. I'll miss seeing you all every day. I'll also miss the staff and the faculty. But first, my kids," said Garretto.

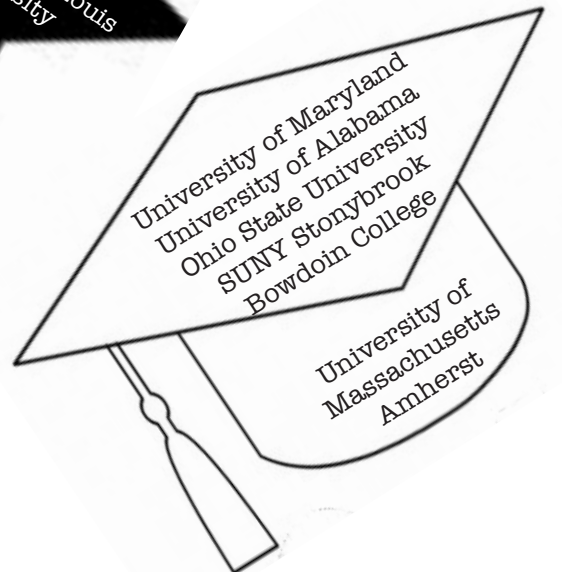
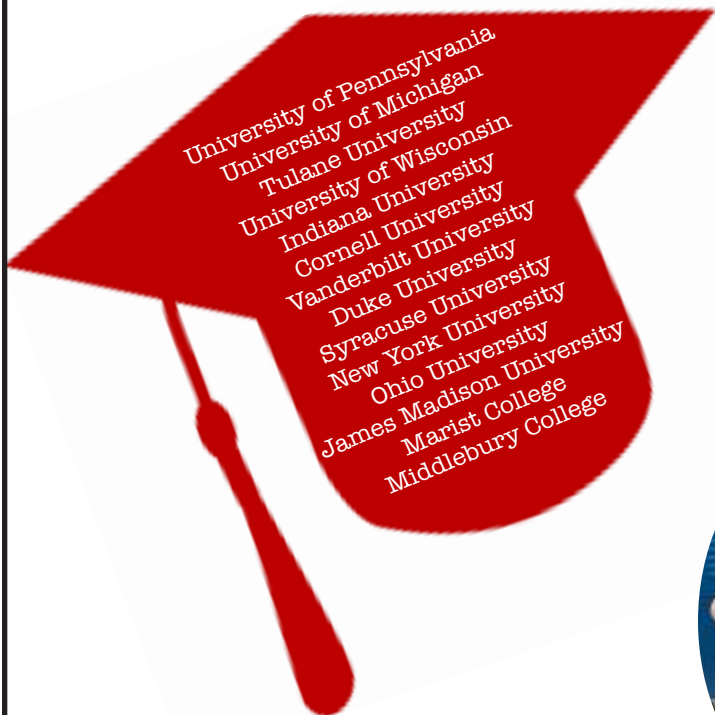
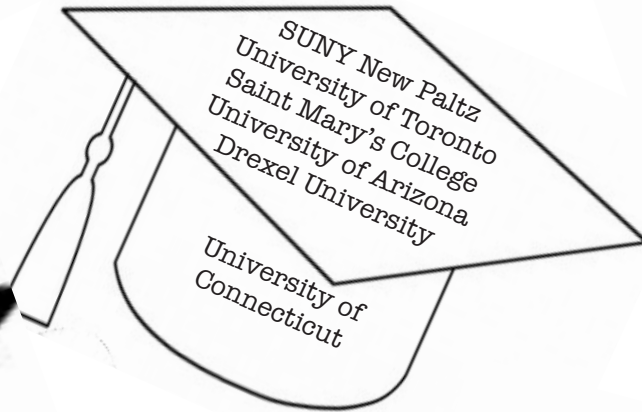
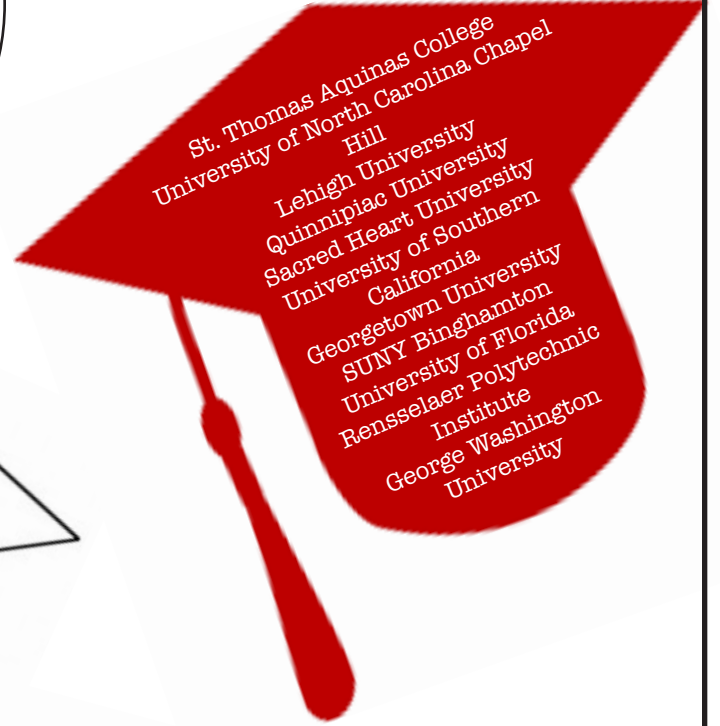
"To all of them, their presence will be sorely missed. It's a change of an era. Doctora Morse was here for ten years and Curto and Garretto were here for so long. It'll be different without them. They've seen the school go through so much," said Salvatore.

To all of the retirees, they will be missed greatly, and their time at Blind Brook will be remembered fondly.

"I wish them relaxation, and hope they get the time with their families that they don't get time to do during the school years, get to take trips they haven't been able to take, have more freedom to enjoy what they love, and hope they come back to visit," said Sabatella.

Features

Hats off to the Class of 2017!



A Reflection of Junior Year

By Arianna Kohilakis

Whenever I hear the words “junior” and “year” in succession, I feel as if the horror movie cliché “dun dun dun” should follow. However, this feeling didn’t arrive recently, as I approach the final culmination of junior year. It is one that has been cultivated since I entered high school, one that has been contributed to and propagated by teachers, peers, siblings, parents, tutors and even community members you would not expect to hear participating in on the conversation. Of course, before you read the rest of this article it is necessary to acknowledge that, as every year of high school, each individual student perceives it differently and whether one perceives the year as the hardest or easiest will obviously vary based on who you talk to. For this article, not only did I include my thoughts and reflections on the year but, also those of other members of the class of 2018 who have sat alongside me since Kindergarten and will be moving into senior year alongside me in September.

The first, and perhaps most obvious in my opinion, was the introduction of APs. Having never taken AP classes before this point, taking these classes



Photo courtesy of Arianna Kohilakis

seemed to be moving us one step farther down the path to college. Taking three APs this year introduced me to so much more than just mounds of information. AP Language and Composition became a thought-provoking research class. AP Biology, a life skills and study habits course, supplemented with study guides that seemed to go on for eternity. AP Macroeconomics created more tech savvy students, capable of conversing about the economy and its many philosophies. Nevertheless, each of these classes also brought hours of work. Junior Melanie Stiler offered that, “Junior year was definitely tough but I managed to get through it. In the end, I learned a lot and was able to get prepared for harder classes that I will eventually have to take in college.” For most of us it was the first year we were allowed to create a rigorous schedule with hard yet interesting classes. Being exposed to these classes for the first time allowed me, as well as other students, to be challenged as students and intellectual thinkers more than we had ever been in the past. From the perspective that AP classes are college level that certainly makes any junior year strife worth it in the long run.

Extracurriculars are the other key determinant of one’s junior year experience. For some, junior year will consist of opportunities for leadership and responsibilities not previously available. “If you keep yourself organized and stay focused, junior year is manageable,” said

current junior Madison Goldberg. “While at some times it seems impossible, it was not the worst year of high school, it was one of the best. It taught me how to manage my time, a lot of work, and extracurriculars. Junior year is essential for a student to grow as a person,” she said.

Another factor which comes into play during the discussion of junior year is standardized testing. Whether it be the ACT, SAT or SATIIs, a fair portion of each student’s time is occupied by these tests. While for some students these tests merely take up the three hours on test day, for others they consist of countless hours of studying and practice tests on top of the already plentiful work junior year provides. The stress and reward of these tests both can be taken in stride, especially if you can get them over with earlier on in the year.

The APs and heightened responsibility in extracurriculars is a double edged sword. Yes, there are many cons but not understanding the multitude of pros would be unfair. Guidance carefully instructs students regarding which classes they feel are a good fit for the student both in interest and rigor. This, coupled with the students’ own knowl-

edge of themselves, enables each of us to make educated decisions about what our junior year should consist of. Whether or not we pick the classes and extracurriculars that are right for us or throw in the extra ones to challenge ourselves a bit more or bring us closer to a dream college is ultimately up to us.

Another member of the class of 2018, Hudson Powell, chimed in about how he felt junior year was for him personally and why it is so important each student makes the most of it: “Coming into the year I expected the worst, as everyone talked about how horrible junior year would be. In actuality, there’s not much more work that needs to be done compared to sophomore year, it’s really just about keeping yourself organized and paying attention because the concepts are harder and the information is more detailed.”

To the incoming class of juniors, it is important to remember a few things. First, do not get overwhelmed by the classes or responsibility. Remember that you have control over what you are taking on and can always work with teachers and peers to regain control over your load of work. Second, take advantage of all the classes and opportunities that arise throughout the year; you never know which could translate into your passion or fascinate you. Finally, while it may be hard in the thick of it, enjoy your junior year because before you know it, it’ll be over and you will be a senior.

Seniors Explore Options Outside of the Classroom

By Amanda Capelli and Alexis Anello

As the end of the Seniors’ career at BBHS approaches, they are required to complete their Senior Options, a project where the students have the ability to learn and participate in the “real life” working world. The Seniors search for a wide variety of internships and projects to participate in that allow them to explore their area of interest. Senior Options is the beginning of the large adjustment Seniors will make as they graduate from high school and begin college.

Each senior has a calendar where they are required to log a minimum of twenty five hours a week with their daily activities signed off by their supervisor. In addition, there are weekly meetings where groups of seniors discuss and evaluate their progress with their teacher supervisor. At the end of their internship or project, they are required to write a four page paper and create a presentation that discusses and reflects on their experience.

Several seniors found that their experience was worthwhile due to the great amount of exposure they encountered in their field of interest. Bryan Weintraub has been working as a front desk agent at the Residence Inn in White Plains, where his responsibilities include check ins, check outs, phone calls, and requests from guests.

Weintraub described: “Working full eight hour shifts can be somewhat tiring, especially since I’m not used to that.”

Bryan is one of the few students who has known what his career path at a very young age; He aspires to be a hotel manager in the future. His internship has led him in the appropriate direction for his career and has allowed his passion for the hotel industry to grow.

He reflected on his Senior Options experience, “I’m enjoying it immensely! The experience I’m receiving is priceless, and I really love my position.”

Another senior, Jackie Broderick was interning with Jeannine Comstock at JMC Creative interiors.

She described her experience: “The goal of senior options is to do something that can pique or deepen your interest in a particular major or career while giving you the experience of a real work environment and my senior options is doing just that... I could not be happier with my intern-

ship.”

Jackie is looking forward to the next four years at the University of Michigan and “the independence it brings,” but finds graduation bittersweet.

She stated: “I hate the idea of not seeing everyone in the commons everyday or at my locker next year.”

Senior options are slowly immersing the students into an environment where they don’t see their friends everyday, which can have it’s positives and negatives.

Adam Fleishaker chose to do an independent study after considering local internships as his project can be applied while he completes his major in college. He created his own independent app, Planneasy, which is a planner app available on the Google Play Store.

Although Adam is very passionate about the app and enjoyed his Senior Options, he says: “I miss the extracurriculars, my teachers, and my friends. I’m incredibly excited to graduate and attend Brandeis University, but I will really miss Robotics/Comp Sci club, theater, and Congress. But I am extremely happy doing this.”

Carlos Morales completed a medical internship for Dr. James Gordon, who works at Westchester Eye Associates. His medical internship had flexible hours and was one of the most important factors in his decision.

He said: “I get to choose when I work at 11am or 11pm, my job can be completed on any computer and the typed-up reports are added to his official website.” Carlos is passionate about his internship because, “I feel like what I am doing is necessary and important... I prefer doing senior options than being in school, there is more freedom and I don’t feel like I am going through the motions, unlike school at times.”

Senior options are clearly worthwhile for the students in advancing their skills both socially and academically.

Sam Gibbs is interning for a Broadway producing company called 321 Theatrical Management. Her favorite part about her internship is learning how a Broadway show is produced, rather than performed.

Gibbs reflected on the difficulties of Senior Options: “I think the most difficult part is getting adjusted to working in a professional environment where there aren’t many people close to my age.”



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Lessons Learned: Gov Ball

By Allison Chien

Earlier in June, I attended Governor's Ball for the first time. I went on Saturday, June 3 with my younger brother, Nicolas, because my friends were either unavailable or just did not want to spend the money. The experience led me to realize several things that I imagine will make my next music festival better. For those of you who are planning on going to a summer music festival, like Panorama NYC in July, or perhaps are planning on attending Governor's Ball next year, I now share with you what I learned from my time.

1. Go with people you like or have similar music taste.

I learned this one very quickly when my brother refused to dance to Saint Motel, one of my favorite bands. This lesson was also reiterated when I spent an hour and a half waiting, I repeat, WAITING, not singing along to or dancing, but just waiting, for Childish Gambino. I like Childish Gambino a lot, but the time I spent being shoved and almost decapitated by elbows before the music even started was simply not worth it. Do you know who I would've rather been listening to? Phoenix. On the nice big green lawn. Nicolas spent three hours on his phone playing Clash of Clans. So yes, I would strongly recommend going with a person or group that you imagine would be a good time and likes the same music.

2. Manage your expectations. Nicolas and I spent most of our time on the green lawn in front of the Gov Ball NYC stage and only ventured to the Honda stage for Childish Gambino. I was quite shocked when we made the transition. The Gov Ball NYC stage had people who walked around carrying trash bags, picking up garbage, whereas the Honda stage did not. Hence, the Honda stage was littered with infinite numbers of drink cans, napkins, water bottles, and other refuse. The lesson to be learned here is to not think that every part of the festival will be picture perfect and beautiful. In addition, one must plan and research the sets they want to see, but still maintain flexibility with the schedule. It's optimal to have two to three major artists you want to see in a day, as you might want to actually sit down, chill, and eat for a while between each set.

3. Eat during "off times", or not mealtimes, for shorter

lines. Speaking of eating, my brother and I love food, so when we got to the festival at three in the afternoon, we went to half of Saint Motel's set and then ate for basically two hours. We bought our feast at 3:50 or 4, and waited for a minimal amount of time in the lines. At 7, Nicolas, unsurprisingly, got hungry again, and we tried to get more food, only to realize that there were 15+ minute long lines at every place. You definitely don't have to adhere to normal eating times, especially if you go early and stay late at the festival.

4. Dress accordingly.

This is a pretty fundamental rule, but decide your outfit based on the weather, your usual amount of movement, and the amount of walking you plan on doing. I can't even fathom the pain one would endure in heels all day while walking extensively on grass. Also, for shoes, I would urge you to wear closed toe sneakers, as I don't think anyone would particularly enjoy the sensation of a spilt drinks sloshing between their toes. Don't wear fancy shoes either. My old, already beat-up Creepers served me quite well.

5. You don't need to stay in the crowd for all sets.

For some of the smaller sets, there is usually way more room on the sides of the stage. You'll have more of an area to dance and move around than in the midst of a huge crowd.

6. Be aggressive in crowded areas.

When you do elect to enter the masses, never be afraid to assert yourself. While it is a bit rude sometimes, if everyone else is shoving, why not join in? Otherwise, you'll never get closer to the stage and you will end up being trampled by everyone else. Also, keep track of your companions. Getting closer to the artist is really only fun if you still get to experience it next to friends.

7. Enjoy yourself!

Even though you may be overwhelmed with disgust at the trash everywhere and the people trying to crush you, remember that you are there for the music and to enjoy it. Listening to your favorite artists live is an amazing privilege that you probably paid big bucks for. Be responsive: sing along, shout callbacks, dance a little. Both you and the performer will probably be more hyped because of it. Your experience can only get better with a positive attitude.



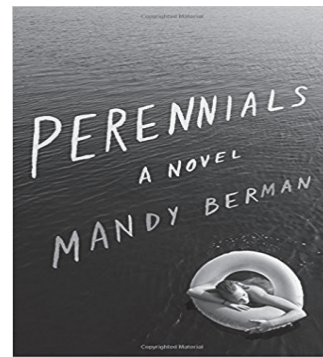
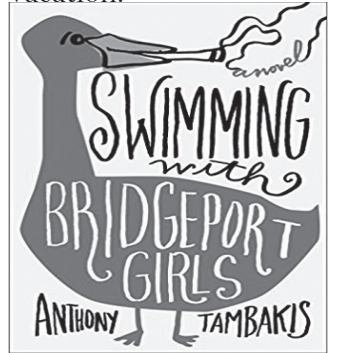
Photo courtesy of Allison Chien

Hottest Summer Reads

By Julia Levine

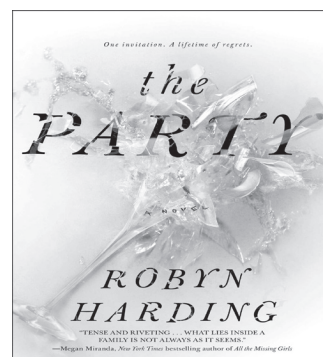
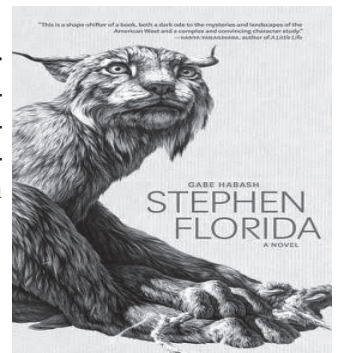
With the stress of school behind us and the entire summer ahead, we have a lot of free time on our hands. Rather than sleeping the day away or stalking your classmates on social media for hours, we've got you covered with a list of some of the best summer reads. Bring them to the pool, the beach, on a car ride, and make the most of your vacation.

Swimming with Bridgeport Girls by Anthony Tamakis tells the tale of Ray Parisi, a disgraced ESPN anchor whose life is in ruins. He is being chased by the New York State Police Department while simultaneously being followed by someone determined to kill him. Meanwhile, his ex-wife is bent on marrying a new man. Parisi ends up concocting a harebrained scheme to win back her affection and get his life in order.



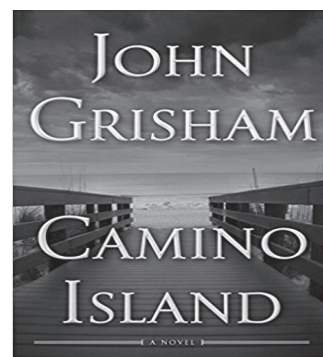
Perennials by first-time novelist Mandy Berman is another quintessential summer read. It is a coming-of-age story set in a summer camp in the Berkshires. The plot follows two girls from vastly different backgrounds who become friends despite their differences. Now in college, the former campers are returning as counselors and beginning to keep secrets from each other.

Stephen Florida by Gabe Habash is another coming-of-age story told from the perspective of a college wrestler intent on becoming a champion, even if it means losing his sanity. The novel maintains a grim and intense mood as it includes themes of loneliness and obsession.



Robyn Harding's *The Party* depicts the ugly repercussions of a sweet sixteen party sleepover gone terribly wrong, as a tragic accident leads to the destruction of a wealthy family. The plot grapples with issues of bullying, drug use, and underage drinking.

New Boy by Tracy Chevalier is modern retelling of *Othello* set Washington, D.C. during the 1970s. The entire novel takes place on the first day of school for the son of a Ghanian diplomat. His budding relationship with a popular girl sends shockwaves through the sixth-grade class in the otherwise all-white school, leading to jealousy and betrayal.



John Grisham has a lawyer-less new thriller coming out, *Camino Island*, which unfolds over a long hot summer after thieves steal handwritten F. Scott Fitzgerald manuscripts from the Princeton Library.

With both the FBI and a secret agency following their trail, a young writer also enters the fray, investigating a bookseller believed to have taken possession of the stolen works.

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Student Elections

By Paul Soden and Alexis Anello

Students voted for their new grade-level representatives on May 30. For the first time ever, the Technology Department implemented a paperless ballot initiative pioneered by Mr. Charles Von Hollen to facilitate the election process. Each student was emailed a link to a Google form that contained each candidate's speech and an electronic ballot. The school then voted during their ninth period classes and the results were compiled online and announced the next morning. The winners of the Congress, Senate, and Class Officer elections are as follows:

Congress

Freshman: Zach Berger, Melanie Klein, Anna Leland, Chloe Ng, Abby Ochs, Justin Schuster
Sophomore: Abe Baker-Butler*, Sean Keilman, Nicole Rosenzweig, Ben Simon, Shivani Thaneer, Alex Weiss*
Junior: Amanda Cappelli, Daniel Jablon, Carly Kabot*, Eric Wagner, Bryan Wei, Rebecca Weiss
Senior: Jared Bassett*, Sam George, Emma Seguljic, Julia Sunshine, Jacob Zarkower

*Stars denote Board Positions

President: Carly Kabot
Vice President: Jared Bassett
Secretary: Abe Baker-Butler
Parliamentarian: Alex Weiss
Advisor: Mr. Derek Schuelein

Senate

Freshman: Nicolas Chien, Laura Penn, Sydney Savage, Lindsay Schwartzman, Lauren Wexler
Sophomore: Emily Faustino, Lily Janjigian, Joe Kohn, Michael Lieberman, Matthew Pariser
Junior: Kayla Axelrod, Hannah Bailey, Julia Morlino, Rachel Penn, Jack Wells
Senior: Christine Argentino*, Madison Goldberg*, Matthew Greenwald*, Arianna Kohilakis, Justin Levine*

*Stars denote Board Positions

President: Madison Goldberg
Vice President: Matthew Greenwald
Treasurer: Christine Argentino
Secretary: Justin Levine
Advisor: Ms. Stephanie Jacobs

Class Officers

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Sophomore: Evan Dogus, Matthew Rose, Amanda Weinberg, Lauren Weintraub
Junior: Chloe Bittleman, Gabby Egol, Spencer Gladstone, Evan Ketchaw
Senior: Jonathan Egol, Alex Golden, Lily Kamin, Lily Koenig, Chad Minick

Advisor: Ms. Cindy Zahl



Baseball and Bipartisanship That Needs to Last *An Opinion*

By Lauren Rothmann and Alexis Anello

On the night of Thursday, June 15, the United States Congress played a baseball game for charity at Nationals Park in Washington, D.C, where a record breaking 24,549 people were in attendance. Merely days beforehand, a shooter targeted Republican congressmen in Alexandria, Virginia while practicing for this event. The Majority Whip of the House of Representatives, Steve Scalise, was critically injured, along with several staffers who were shot in the chaos that ensued at the practice. At the game last Thursday, members of Congress—on both sides of party lines—wore Louisiana State University apparel in order to honor Scalise, who represents the state in the House.

The Democrats won the game 11-2, but bipartisanship was the main focus of the event, as members of both parties in Congress were able to come together to fundraise for local D.C. charities. Although it took a tragedy to finally bring about such unity among members of Congress, this bipartisanship is long overdue. It is time for the members of Congress to work together off of the baseball field and in the Capitol building, so that they can focus on helping improve the lives of American citizens.

Since Donald Trump assumed his role as President of the United States in January, discord in Congress has only worsened, and gridlock on Capitol Hill has hindered the possibility of any progress to be made by the country's legislature. Members of Congress need to prioritize the needs of our country over their own political agendas. The very same congressmen and women that complimented each other on the playing field, publicly criticize and condemn each other on the streets of Washington, all for the sake of attracting attention and garnering more votes for when election season comes around. They were able to get along and work together during the baseball game, so why can't they do the same on the floors of the House and Senate?

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Make the World Great Again

By Joie Ng

On June 1, President Donald Trump boldly declared that the United States will be withdrawing from the Paris Climate Agreement. By fulfilling one of his largest and most controversial campaign promises, he aims to emphasize his dedication to the America First policy and to strengthen his focus on domestic affairs. However, seeing how he is the president of the second largest polluting country in the world, his decision strikes a major blow against the global effort to combat climate change.

The landmark Paris Agreement was established in 2015 and 195 nations around the world signed onto this pact, pledging to reduce emissions to slow rapidly rising global temperatures. Currently, the only nations that do not participate in the Paris Climate Agreement besides the United States are Nicaragua and Syria. According to the United Nations, this agreement is a global effort to prevent temperature increases from raising more than 1.5 degrees Celsius. The agreement also collectively works to strengthen the ability of nations to combat climate change.

Despite intense opposition to the withdrawal from environmental activists, corporate executives, world leaders, and even his own daughter, Ivanka Trump, President Trump maintained his stance against U.S. involvement in the climate pact, claiming that the deal threatened the American economy and its workers.

Trump's pronouncement has received widespread backlash from other countries, including his own. According to CNN, his decision predicts major consequences for America's image as a major global power as well as for his foreign policy objectives. Specifically, America is turning its back on a major international agreement and potential danger may arise in the future with regard to European willingness to support the U.S. in the coming years.

According to Reuters, Trump stated that he was willing to renegotiate an entrance back into the agreement under more agreeable terms. However, Italy, France, and Germany made a

joint statement declaring that they "deem the momentum generated in Paris in December 2015 irreversible and [they] firmly believe that the Paris Agreement cannot be renegotiated since it is a vital instrument for our planet, societies, and economies."

The full implementation of the Paris Agreement is absolutely necessary for the world to collectively take the first steps to effectively battle the causes and effects of climate change. Trump cited a study that was conducted at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) called "How much of a difference will the Paris Agreement make?" to justify the withdrawal of the United States from the climate deal. However, MIT officials reported that he had misinterpreted their research results.

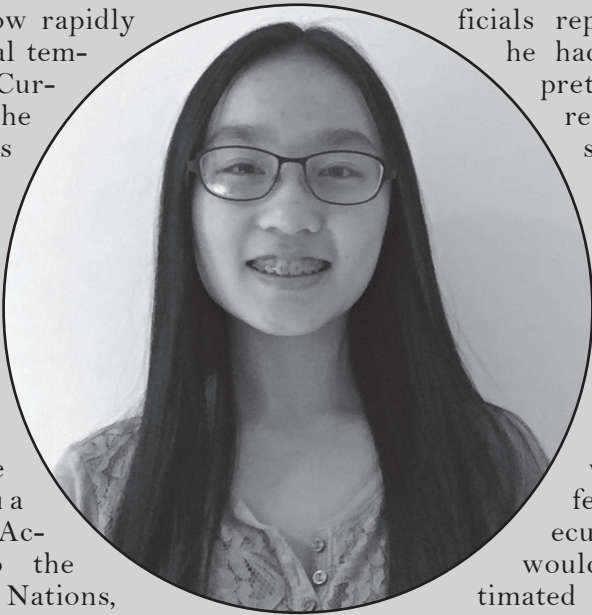


Photo courtesy of Joie Ng

The MIT study found that if the Paris Agreement conditions were effectively executed, there would be an estimated reduction in global temperatures between 0.6 and 1.1 degrees Celsius by 2100. The President deemed this to be an insignificant shift in temperature and failed to understand that even that seemingly small amount was an incredibly important starting point in order to take the next step forward in reducing climate change. If nothing is done, we could experience a dramatic increase in global temperature of 5 degrees or more.

Contrary to what Trump has claimed, climate change is not a hoax created by the Chinese to hurt American businesses. It is a serious issue that affects the entire world and the consequences have become increasingly severe. The weather has become more and more extreme with violent storm surges and longer droughts. Recently, the rapid melting of ice has flooded the world's Arctic stronghold of seeds. Moreover, ocean acidification is destroying the Great Barrier reefs to extents that may be irreversible.

In the wake of Trump's decision to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Climate Agreement, now, more than ever, the world must work together to fulfill the conditions of the pact and to protect the one Earth that we have.

Students Share Research Findings at Annual Science Symposium

By Alexis Anello

The Honors Science Research Program held its annual Science Symposium on May 31.

The symposium is a student-run event in which students from all grade levels in the science research program present their research findings in an area of their choosing. The student host introductions were made by juniors Sarah Rogers, Caroline Levine and Julia Levine.

The symposium began in the George C. Trautwein Theater, where seniors Oxen Xie, Divya Kumaran, Petal Samrow, and Paul Soden displayed their original research to the community, their subject areas ranging from computer science to child behavior.

These students have presented their research at multiple competitions throughout the year and have been recognized for their excellence in research at both the Westchester-Rockland Junior Science and Humanities Symposium and the Westchester Science and Engineering Fair.

After the seniors' presentations, the event continued in the Monroe E. Haas Instructional Media Center and the Commons where science research students of all grade levels presented a poster session, a short overview of their research along with a corresponding poster which displayed their process and findings.

Audience members had the opportunity to ask questions and chat with the students about their research.

"The highlight of the symposium, for me," said Dr. Michele Sugantino, Science Research teacher, "is that every year [I see] some of the students I've had from ninth grade...and just to see the growth of [these] students that used to stand up at the podium and couldn't speak at all, even for one minute, are now standing up in front of auditoriums filled with people, answering questions from judges at competitions...is just really amazing."

Freshman students presented different laboratory experiments that they had conducted during their Introduction to Science Research class. Several freshmen from the Introduction to Sci-

ence Research class will be enrolled in the Honors Science Research Program in the fall.

Sophomore students presented the findings of different research papers that they read throughout the course of the year. These papers are related to the students' original research that will begin this summer.

"Science Research has been a big adjustment this year as I had to learn how to manage my time to complete all of my work," said Matias Goldfeld, a sophomore.

"Although I [do] find this course to be very rewarding as I have strengthened my research and presentation skills. I am very excited to continue my research about machine learning and neuroevolution in the summer, and see my hard work pay off!"

Junior students presented their original research that they have been conducting since the summer of 2016 and will complete by the fall. The research topics ranged from environmental to behavioral to biochemistry.

Julia Levine, who is conducting research about the gynecological health of women with cerebral palsy, said, "I am extremely grateful for the opportunity that this program has allocated to me as I have been able to find my passion: working with children with disabilities. I have been fortunate enough to have the most wonderful mentors throughout the year. I will never regret my decision to be in this class."

"The science research program has greatly enriched my high school experience by affording me the opportunity to explore my interests in a unique and hands-on way," said senior Paul Soden.

"Being able to collaborate with others on original research has stretched the limits of my creativity and has instilled within me an unfettered curiosity that will continue to inspire me well beyond my high school career," Soden said.

"I thought the symposium was fantastic, it went without a hitch, as usual. Everybody I think had a very good time [and] I thought everybody in science research did a great job," said Sugantino.

Senior Projects and Awards

Petal Samrow: *Mutation Screening in CRYAA Gene in Congenital Cataract Cases from North India*

- 3rd in category for Cell Biology at the Westchester Science and Engineering Fair
- Completion of the University at Albany Science Research in the High School Courses

Divya Kumaran: *Can Auditory Stimulation Reduce Preoperative Anxiety?*

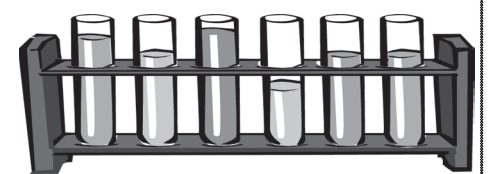
- 3rd in category for Health and Medicine at the Westchester-Rockland Junior Science and Humanities Symposium
- American Psychological Association Award
- Completion of the University at Albany Science Research in the High School Courses

Owen Xie: *Apriori-Like Real Time Concept Relation for E-Learning Applications*

- Completion of the University at Albany Science Research in the High School Courses

Paul Soden: *The Effect of Stimulant Medications on the Academic Behaviors of Children and Adolescents with ADHD*

- 1st in category for Behavior at the Westchester-Rockland Junior Science and Humanities Symposium
- Completion of the University at Albany Science Research in the High School Courses



'Tis the Season for Exercise

By Margot Schwartz

With the sun out and fleeces away, excitement is in the air as summer approaches. The days of school work and long nights of studying are coming to an end and everyone is preparing for their fun summer plans.

Now is the time to relax and enjoy a stress free vacation. Summer simply would not reach its greatest potential without fun physical activities to fill up free time. From slow walks on the beach to rigorous mountain biking, there are a variety of physical activities to take part in.

New York City is only a train ride away, offering an endless range of engaging activities available to all age groups. On a nice summer day, one can simply visit Central Park to walk around, all while embracing the natural beauty of the season.

Located in the heart of Manhattan, it is a calming and serene getaway from the surrounding skyscrapers and boisterous traffic. Lending to either a slow stroll or intense run, this park is an ide-

al spot to enjoy physical activity. Luckily, for those who are not particularly interested in the typical run or walk around a park, New York City presents so many other unique options for exercise. Some of these activities include outdoor paintball or bubble ball soccer.

Bubble ball soccer is a newly popular sport in which people go inside gigantic, individual plastic balls and act as the actual soccer ball in a game of extreme soccer. Any number of people can play, making it perfect for any size friend-group or family to have an exciting, active day.

If one chooses to venture outside of New York for the summer, activities both thrilling and unconventional are available nationwide to provide once in a lifetime experiences.

Mountain biking remains a popular choice because it is a physical challenge for the thrill-seekers and generally adaptable to any mountain. It is the pure combination of the physical pleasure of the experience and the scenery which comes along with it that makes

this activity truly worthwhile.

Hiking is another great summertime activity that can be done nearby or miles away. It provides an excellent opportunity to get some exercise and bond with fellow hikers, whether it may be family or friends.

Hiking can also act as a great outlet for individuals who are stressed or going through a hard time. Some of the best workouts, and certainly the greatest views of nature, are found through hiking. This activity is also accessible to people of different levels of physical strength, with trails that are flat, steep, short or long.

Some summer fun activities do not take place on land. On the hottest of summer days, when the summer breeze isn't even enough to cool down, sometimes the ocean is the best medicine. Since the weather is nice and the oceans are warmer, activities like scuba diving can present amazing opportunities for having the best summer yet.

In addition, for people who are not comfortable physically being in the

ocean, one can always try kayaking, canoeing, or even waterskiing.

These are just a few of the many options that summer provides with regards to exercise. It is extremely beneficial and crucial to do physical activity, as it encourages a happy and healthy life.

Studies have shown that exercise not only leads to short-term happiness, but also prevents long-term depression. Exercise has also been found to relieve anxiety-ridden people of inappropriate anxious episodes when faced with a fight-or-flight situation.

Exercise also improves mental health by facilitating overall better clarity, focus, and a more serene state of mind.

During the school year, many have experienced the relief that physical activity can bring, and it is important not to forget that over the summer. Take advantage of the beautiful weather and try out new activities.



Photo courtesy of Buckeye Bubble Sports

Bubble ball soccer, in which players are enclosed in giant, inflatable plastic balls, is a fun and unique way to get some exercise with friends this summer.

Fidget Toy Frenzy

By Abe Baker-Butler

The spring season has brought many things: rainy days, beautiful nature, sports, and fidget toys. It has been hard not to notice the fidget cubes and spinners that have quickly appeared in the classrooms and hallways. With fidget toys coming in numerous colors and designs, they have become a favorite pastime of many Blind Brook students. Although these little fidget toys may not seem controversial, there is large debate about whether they are a distraction or a toy that can help students focus and improve their mental health.

Although most students have heard that fidget spinners were originally created to help students with attention disorders like ADD, the fidget spinner actually has a very different story of how it came to be. According to Time, the fidget spinner was created more than twenty years ago when Catherine Hettinger, a Florida native, heard about children throwing rocks at police officers while visiting her sister in Israel. This event sparked the idea to create a soothing toy that would keep children off the streets and away from violence by occupying their minds and hands. While



her first idea, a soft rock, failed to satisfy this goal, Hettinger eventually designed what is now called the fidget spinner.

Today, many companies manufacture fidget spinners and cubes, and each has its own claim about their health benefits. Some say they combat stress and anxiety, while others claim that fidget toys have the potential to help those suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). There are also many theories on the idea that fidget spinners help students focus. According to Forbes magazine, one theory is that fidgeting may occupy parts of your brain that otherwise would distract the rest of your brain with random thoughts. Some believe that physical activity,

similar to doodling, can actually aid thinking.

Although very few scientific studies have been performed, a few have found that fidgeting does benefit students with ADHD. One study at the University of California, Davis found that physical movement is correlated with higher scores on attention tests for students with ADHD, and another study found that memory is improved. According to Time, this is likely the case because movement stimulates the prefrontal cortex, which is the part of the brain involved in attention span.

Although fidget toys may have the potential to help students with certain disorders, more research needs to be done on the science behind fidget toys and their health benefits before they can be declared a distraction or an aid to help students focus in class.

"There's absolutely no science... fidget spinners are a distraction and all the things about them being marketed to help you with ADHD and autism are not true and not backed by science," said freshman Sean Keilman.

Freshman Kate Brown says, "If you actually have ADHD then it can

be helpful, but if you don't, then it's just a distraction, something to do when you're bored in class."

"[Fidget spinners] are a distraction in class. They are not allowed in my classroom," said English teacher Mackenzie Gasparini. "The first time I saw a student use it, all eyes were on the fidget spinner, not only that individual child...but everybody was looking at what he was doing and it totally took away from the focus of the lesson."

"I hope I don't have to have a policy [next year]. I have signs up that I'll take down in September, and if it becomes an issue then I'll reinstate the policy," said Gasparini.



Photos courtesy of Sophia Anello

Hey, Blind Brook!

**HOSTING A
PARTY
WITH
UNDERAGE
DRINKING
DOESN'T MAKE
IT SAFER.
IT MAKES IT
ILLEGAL.**



Did you know? **HOSTING A PARTY WITH UNDERAGE DRINKING ISN'T GOOD FOR ANYONE.** Some parents mistakenly believe that allowing underage drinking in their home is no big thing. They may think they can keep youth safe if they drink at home. Underage consumption can lead to further risky behavior including sexual assaults and rape as well as cause a range of physical consequences including alcohol poisoning, suicide, and traffic crashes. We also know that alcohol can have lasting negative effects on the developing teenage brain. As for the adults, allowing underage drinking to occur is illegal. Period. There are plenty of activities for our kids that do not include drinking. Don't be a party to underage consumption. **WHAT YOU PERMIT, YOU PROMOTE.**

We are your local community coalition, here to provide tips and resources to families, centered around youth substance-use and underage drinking. Please visit our website and join our mailing list:

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Anabolic Steroids Compromising Sports Players and the Teams

By Michael Discolo

When it comes to the usage of anabolic steroids in sports, there has been an ongoing controversy between fans, players, coaches, and most importantly, league commissioners, that has lasted for the better part of the 21st century. Steroids are sometimes used by athletes to improve their talents and achieve greater success in their respective sport by enhancing muscle growth, stamina, and recovery time. While anabolic steroids may seem useful to an athlete in their career endeavors, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), they are also commonly known to have extremely severe side effects including bad acne, weak tendons, and emotional stress through frequent fits of anger and depression. Despite this, millions of athletes in the U.S. today are still abusing these toxic substances to obtain an extra boost they need in order to play at a high level.

There are numerous incentives for athletes to take steroids, but the most obvious and popular one is to receive an advantage that other athletes will not have availability to. Consequently, steroid abusers are on a different playing field than their opponents, giving them an edge not through hard work and practice, but simply by purchasing and injecting a drug. Many high school athletes will choose to take steroids as they want to be recruited for college and need a quick way to stand out among the crowd. Others begin to use steroids simply because they are in danger of not making a team or receiving little play time so they use these substances with the hopes of receiving the physical strength and physique that coaches will likely notice.

Because steroids have the most dangerous effects at the teenage level, it is imperative that steroids be eliminated from usage at the collegiate and high school leagues. According to the FDA, teens who use steroids are more at risk of "roid rages", hallucinations, and a premature halt in physical growth than any other age group above them. It is also extremely easy for high school athletes today to take steroids as some doctors will often prescribe steroids to patients for legitimate medical purposes but

they can land in the wrong hands. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the most common way steroids become prevalent in our society is through smugglings into the United States from other countries such as Mexico and European countries. Smuggling from these areas is common because a prescription is not required for the purchase of steroids and they are sold for a relatively cheap price. Steroids have become widely used today among professional athletes because it provides them with benefits they would never receive by naturally enhancing their talents.

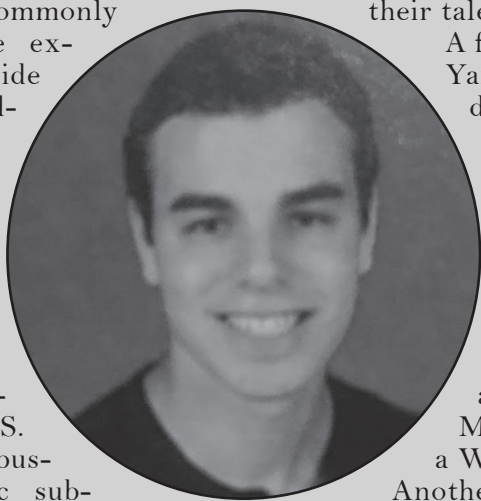


Photo courtesy of Michael Discolo

A former New York Yankee, Alex Rodriguez is one of the most famous anabolic steroid abusers and he was able to earn over \$400 million throughout his playing career and won several MVP awards and a World Series ring.

Another well known steroid user in Major

League Baseball (MLB), Barry Bonds, used enhancement drugs to his advantage, rewriting history books by hitting the most home runs of all time in a single career. Additionally, Bonds was never suspended by the MLB for his actions though it was commonly known by others in the sports world that he was a drug abuser for several years.

Professional sports leagues must to do a better job at cracking down on athletes who abuse drugs, such as steroids, as it is the most unsportsmanlike act any athlete can perform. It not only takes away validity from that athletes career, but it also takes away credibility from the sport in its entirety. It is no secret that the popularity for baseball has sharply declined in the 21st century and the rise of steroid users is definitely the primary reason for it. No fans want to watch players who have unrealistic physical abilities who cheated their way to fame and success. While the MLB has attempted to crack down on abusers in the past few years by giving them fairly short suspensions (usually half of a season or an entire season), they continue to use steroids as an unfair aid after they return. Without stopping steroid use, the usage of enhancement drugs will continue to spread and will eventually destroy the sports world all together.

From Varsity to Collegiate Athletics

By Scott Rosson

This year, Blind Brook High School is sending off an astounding five seniors to continue their athletic endeavors at the college level. This is quite a feat for the school and certainly something for the athletes and the school to be proud of.

As they make their transition from being a high school athlete to a college-level athlete, the seniors reflected on their experiences and thoughts for the upcoming school year at their respective universities.

Harris Grodin and Cate Smith will both be competing on Division I crew teams at George Washington University in the nation's capital and Clemson University in South Carolina, respectively.

Grodin has been a part of RowAmerica Rye since his sophomore year, and Smith joined the Greenwich Crew Team during her freshman year. Both Grodin and Smith received scholarships to pursue rowing at the collegiate level.

Grodin knows that the collegiate level of competition is much higher than anything he has ever experienced.

"In order to succeed at school I need to work on my time management skills and increase the effort I put into everything," Grodin said.

Smith is excited to compete in college. Reflecting on her rowing experience, she says, "I have not given it much thought but, after I have graduated from college, I will have rowed for a combined eight years."

The other Division I athlete of the bunch is Lauren Santarsiero, who is going to Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, to play tennis.

"I've played tennis since I was

five, and ever since then, my dream has been to join a Division I team," Santarsiero said. "I cannot wait to start this next chapter of my life, and I will put my whole heart into my team and my training."

Santarsiero has been a member of the Girls Varsity Tennis squad since her middle school years. She also played in tournaments outside of Blind Brook in the tri-state area.

At the Division III level, Ryan Bedell will be swimming at Colby College in Waterville, Maine, and Robert Giuliano will be playing football at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Bedell has been swimming competitively for many years, and spent his high school career as a member of Rye/Blind Brook Boys Varsity Swim Team. He knows that swimming in college will be a challenge, but also knows what it will take to succeed.

"I need to take all of the lessons I learned from my high school teachers and coaches and apply them in the world. I have to work harder than I did in high school and refuse to accept anything but my best," Bedell said.

Giuliano was a dual sport athlete at Blind Brook, playing varsity football since his sophomore year and varsity baseball since his junior year.

Giuliano credits his success on the field to his work ethic and strong understanding of the game.

"Coaches notice hard work," Giuliano said.

Giuliano was captain of the Blind Brook Varsity Football team as well as the star running back and was recently named All-Conference and All-League athlete after his senior year.



Photo courtesy of Mrs. Smith

From left to right: Athletic Director Douglas Goldman, and seniors Ryan Bedell, Robert Giuliano, Harris Grodin, Lauren Santarsiero, and Cate Smith.



Senior Athletes Honored at Inaugural Athlete Banquet

By Abby Strauzer

As senior athletes' seasons come to a close, they were honored for their participation and dedication to their sports teams on June 1 at the Inaugural Senior Athlete Banquet. The banquet was held at Hampshire Country Club in Mamaroneck. This was the first year that the athletic department got rid of the seasonal Varsity Banquets held in the gym and moved it to a different venue. Instead of honoring all student athletes participating in varsity sports as in past years, this year athletes were recognized for all years of sports they played.

All were acknowledged for their attendance and careers in Blind Brook athletics. "I did not even know they had special awards at the event so I was super shocked that I had won. I was very honored and grateful," said Kaveri Reddy, winner of the Outstanding Senior Sportsperson Award for female athletes. While she was shocked that she won, she also went into detail about how the event was set up for the best possible night that the seniors will remember. Kaveri added, "It was so pretty and special as it was in an amazing place and specifically for seniors. It was nice to be with all my friends and have everybody be recognized for their participation and accomplishments in athletics."

Robert Giuliano won the counterpart Outstanding Senior Sportsperson Award for the male athletes. "[Giuliano's award] recognizes leadership on and off the field along with individual accomplishments. The event was very well put together and well organized," Giuliano said. "There isn't one sole special memory from the event to point out but I would say the event itself was special in that it was kind of like a closing chapter in my high school sports career and I got to enjoy some of my last moments with my senior teammates and friends," Giuliano added.

Among Reddy and Giuliano, Jamie Broitman and Sam Brandeis won the Outstanding Athlete Award that night as well.

According to the Athletic Director Coach Goldman, the athletes as well as their friends and family were invited to the banquet. "Overall, the night was a success," said Goldman.

"This event was special because only seniors were there and it really allowed all seniors to have that last moment with all of their classmates and, essentially, it accumulated to a graduation for senior athletes. In my opinion I think commemorating seniors for the sports they played was a good change because it meant more and more people were able to be memorialized as a senior athlete for Blind Brook," Goldman said.



Photo courtesy of Kaveri Reddy

Jamie Broitman and Kaveri Reddy display their Outstanding Female Athlete Award and Outstanding Female Sportsperson Award



Photo courtesy of Sam Brandeis

Sam Brandeis and Robert Giuliano display their Outstanding Male Athlete Award and Outstanding Male Sportsperson Award.

Blind Brook Student Athletes Win Big Awards

By Michael Abrutyn

As the academic year wraps up, many people look forward to what the summer has in store: sleepaway camps, teen tours, and treasured time spent with family and friends. However, with the year's end approaching it also gives students, faculty, and coaches time to reflect on the past year in terms of both athletics and academics.

Achievements in athletics and the pursuit of excellence is highlighted through all-league, all-section, and all-conference awards presented to the individuals on their respective sports teams that exhibited a high level of skill, perseverance, effort, and improvement both on and off the field. For the 2016-2017 school year, Varsity football had four senior award recipients, all of whom were team captains: Robert Giuliano, Jake Wynn, Vivek Maholtra, and Sam Brandeis.

"[Winning the award] showed how far I had come from sophomore year to this year," said Jake Wynn.

Vivek Malhotra, also a recipient of an All-League award, said, "Winning all league was great for me because it was a great way to end my career as a Blind Brook Football Player."

"Being named to all of these awards (All-Section, State Honorable Mention, and Class B Defensive Lineman of the Year) was a

great achievement to end my football career. I was proud that all of the hard work I put in paid off."

Robert Giuliano, recipient of the All-Conference award, said, "it was an honor to be recognized for all the hard work that I put into football this year, but the individual achievements were never my goal. I wanted to win games and more importantly make the playoffs to help in the process of the Blind Brook Varsity Football team becoming a more elite program in the future."

When the recipients were asked what they suggest for the football team in future years to continue their success, all of the recipients highlighted two common themes: working hard in the offseason and teammates coming together as a team. "My suggestions to the team," Giuliano said, "would be to put in hard work during the off-season in preparation for the fall and to enjoy their time playing the sport with the teammates because team chemistry is just as important as hard work."

"I would suggest that everybody works hard in the offseason and come together as one unit for the team to be successful," Jake Wynn said.

"I would tell them to lift as much as possible and workout together. All of the hard work put in during the offseason is what determines the success of the upcoming season," Sam Brandeis said.