

‘50% Rule’ Leads to Inconsistencies and Frustration among Many Teachers

by Ziv Golan ‘26

The MCPS “50% rule” has been a hot topic for debate since students have returned from virtual learning, prompting increasing frustration among teachers, including many at Sherwood. Due to concerns over a lack of consistency in how teachers implemented the 50% rule, Principal Tim Britton instituted a clearer policy at Sherwood that went into effect on January 30. Now, Sherwood students cannot receive a grade of less than 50 percent on any All Tasks assignments. Students may still receive a zero for work they do not complete in the Completion/Participation category.

In 2006, MCPS created the original 50% rule where students could get a minimum of 50 percent if they put in at least a minimal effort into the assignment. If a student didn’t give any effort or didn’t complete the assignment or assessment at all by a designated time period, the student would receive a zero. As students returned to in-person learning after being virtual, MCPS made the decision to revise its grading policies. This included implementing a new 50% rule which allowed students to be able to receive a minimum of 50 percent on any assignment even if they did nothing. In its explanation of the new policy, MCPS stated that teachers should

“grade with grace” that erred on the side of the students “to be mindful of the extreme challenges that students faced during the pandemic and will continue to face during the recovery period,” according to MCPS’s ‘Secondary Grading and Reporting: Guidance and Best Practices’, updated in April of 2022.

“It is important to remember the impetus behind the [50%] rule is for students who are underperforming to not be so overwhelmed by the trench they have dug for themselves, to begin to put forth the effort in order to turn things around and earn a passing grade or better,” said general/choral music teacher Johnathan Dunn, who is also the resource teacher of the Music and World Languages departments.

Engineering and computer teacher Jason Daigle, the head of the CTE department, believes students who have hardships should get support, but the current 50% rule as a policy for all students has consequences on students’ learning. “I’ve observed that giving students credit for something they never did or for work even though they don’t attend school, reinforces the idea that you will be given something for nothing,” said Daigle. “I’ve observed that [the 50% rule] decreases the motivation of many students to complete all work and to complete

quality work.”

A number of teachers worry that such lenient grading policies hurt students in later endeavors. “By having the 50% rule, it’s unfair to students because it shortcuts their efforts and it makes them work less when in reality it sets them up for failure later on,” said special education teacher Donovan Clark.

Katie Ross, another special education teacher, doesn’t think that the 50% rule promotes good academic habits for students; however, she said that if it is MCPS’s policy, the rule needs to be followed consistently by teachers. “As a resource room teacher, I see teachers who don’t do the 50% rule and teachers who do, so I see a schoolwide policy as the most equitable way to do it. Personally, I don’t think [the 50% rule] really helps kids in the long term, but it needs to be consistent and the same no matter what class you’re in,” said Ross.

Science teacher Britani Greco has also seen changes to how the 50% rule has impacted student’s post Covid-19. “I have seen big changes. Students have been less attentive, not as motivated, very addicted to phones, severe attitude problems, and for some students, lack of maturity and responsibility,” said Greco.

see 50%, pg. 4



Teacher Stephen Wright interacts with small groups of APES students.

Popularity of National Teaching Certification Grows at Sherwood

by Nick Schade ‘23

A record number of teachers at Sherwood are voluntarily attempting to become Nationally Board Certified this school year, improving the way they teach students and interact with them in their classrooms. National Board Certification, done by the nonprofit National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, examines a teacher’s instructional practices and knowledge of their subject matter through a series of tests and projects.

“[It] is an excellent way for teachers to develop professionally by reflecting on their teaching and considering new ways to adjust instruction to raise student achievement,” said Anne Taylor, the school’s new staff development teacher. The certification comes with a hefty benefit besides professional development: it provides a \$10,000 bonus each year to those in classroom positions, and a \$2,000 increase to those in non-classroom positions.

A total of 18 teachers are currently already certified at Sherwood. This school year, Ashley Barber-Strunk, Rebecca Byerly, Gina Fera, Glenn Gerhardt, Christopher Goodrich, Nathan Hilburger, Elizabeth Kominski, Kristina Orange, Karen Sinclair, Angelic Searles-Thompson, Michele Spangle, Tania Barbera and Stephen Wright are all applying for certification, as well as Michele Harriger, who is applying for recertification.

There are four steps in the National Board Certification process, which teachers may complete in any order in 1-3 years. The first component has teachers demonstrate their knowledge on their content area in a computer-based assessment. The second and third components create noticeable changes in classroom in-

struction, as they require teachers to videotape their lesson, analyze the footage, and make adjustments to their teaching methods accordingly. “I have made many changes that are exciting to me, at least. The main types of changes are to rely less on classroom discussion ... I am incorporating more group discussions and projects as I prepare class lessons,” explained science teacher Stephen Wright. For the fourth and final component, teachers must interact with their colleagues and families of students to improve outcomes on assessments.

The increase in National Board Certifications this school year can be partially attributed to Taylor’s support for candidates and all Sherwood teachers in general. Taylor previously worked to expand resources for the certification process at Rockville in 2009, and saw significant improvement in all academic measures as more teachers became certified. “In my role as staff development teacher, I observe classes, model instructional strategies, help teachers reflect on their lessons, and encourage them to share best practices across content areas. I deliver ongoing workshops to help teachers consider research-based strategies for differentiating instruction, fostering critical thinking, and expanding student-to-student discourse,” explained Taylor.

National Board Certification is meant to inspire permanent improvement in a teacher’s methods. Thus, teachers must renew their certification every five years. “In 2017, the recertification process solidified my purpose as an educator: my long-standing commitment to teaching and learning,” said English teacher Alexandra Green, “I strive to know my students’ learning needs, [and] exercise fairness and equity so that all students can access knowledge.”



“Rock n’ Roll Revival 51: Kaleidoscope” took place across two weekends in March. The show consisted of 40 songs, back up from the 34 chosen in last year’s show, “Timeless.”

What’s Inside: News 1-4, Features 5-7, Opinions 8-9, Spotlight 10-14, Pulse 15, Humor 16-17, Entertainment 18-20, Sports 21-24



Spotlight

Read about the ways that AI is revolutionizing the world today.
Page 10-14

Sports

Read about Boys Basketball making it to the state semifinals.
Page 21



news brief

current events

MCPS Struggling To Respond to Antisemitic Incidents

by Justin Lakso '25

An increase in antisemitism has been popping up all over Montgomery County. Many are familiar with the “Jews Not Welcome” graffiti at Walt Whitman High School, but Whitman isn’t the only school that has had such incidents. Recent antisemitic activity has been present in at least five schools in MCPS. There have been swastika drawings in and around B-CC, white nationalist vandalism at Walter Johnson, and two cases of Pro-Nazi flyers appearing at Northwood. “We certainly are seeing a spike. And I think the why of it is less important to me than the what we do in response,” said County Councilman Will Jawando in a conference with the WUSA9 news network.

According to an MCPS statement, Superintendent Monifa McKnight and the Board of Education will “condemn all acts of antisemitism in any form.” The staff team has worked to “immediately” remove all drawings, flyers, and other forms of antisemitic propaganda whenever they occur. To the Board, this is not enough. “We must do more, and we will.” The school district plans to collaborate with the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) to further educate the students about antisemitism.

Since then, there has been criticism that MCPS has made little progress. Guila Franklin Siegel, JCRC’s associate director, stated in The Washington Post that the organization has “lost confidence in the the school system’s handling of the antisemitic incidents,” and “there is more work to be done.” The JCRC is concerned that the school system doesn’t even make students sufficiently apologize. “There needs to be stronger penalties to try to break this cycle that we’re seeing of incidents,” said Franklin Siegel.

MoCo Council Bill Would Limit Traffic Stops

by Dylan Sondike '24

A recently introduced bill would limit the permitted reasons for police traffic stops in Montgomery County. The Safety and Traffic Equity Act (STEP) hopes to force police officers to address more severe crimes and attempt to limit racial disparities in who is pulled over for violations. The STEP act would prevent police officers from stopping people for vehicle violations related to registration, tinted windows, insurance issues and faulty headlights or tail lights, among other reasons.

“The STEP Act shifts enforcement for low-level traffic violations to allow law enforcement the ability to focus on serious crime while addressing disparities,” said County Councilman Will Jawando in a statement. Jawando and co-sponsor Kristin Mink argued that law enforcement must direct their attention to more urgent needs in Montgomery County than minor violations, which they stated disproportionately impact drivers of color.

Jawando and Mink are attempting to rally support for their bill despite strong opposition from the police department. Police Chief Marcus Jones publicly complained that the bill will make the roads and communities in the county more dangerous. Jones added that this bill is too restrictive on the police and is limiting them from doing their jobs effectively. A public hearing is planned for July 19.

Fate of College Debt Relief To Be Decided by Court

by Liam Trump '24

After promising to tackle students’ college debt on the campaign trail, President Joe Biden announced on August 24, 2022 a plan that would ensure \$10,000 in federal student debt relief may be offered to borrowers whose income in 2020 or 2021 was less than \$125,000, or \$250,000 for households. Biden’s plan is now in limbo after the Supreme Court stated last December that it would hear a challenge to the program, putting the plan on hold for millions of people awaiting a decision. As a result, dozens of civil rights groups and labor unions filed amicus briefs with the Court. The Supreme Court is most likely to reach a decision during the last week of June, before the end of the Court’s session.

The case before the Court was spurred when six Republican-led states--Nebraska, Missouri, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, and South Carolina--filed a lawsuit, stating that the debt relief plan violated the Administrative Procedure Act when Biden avoided Congress’s authority, which, in their view, goes against the Constitutional principle of separation of powers. The states’ attorneys general argued that the plan unfairly excluded Americans who never took out a student loan and that certain loan services would lose money over it.

School Locks Bathrooms To Address Persistence of Student Misbehavior

by Bryan Kim '23

Throughout the school year, Sherwood, like many other schools in MCPS, has been experiencing issues regarding inappropriate student behavior in school restrooms. Bathrooms are the only places in the school without regular adult supervision, making them a hot spot for such misbehavior as loitering, vandalism and property destruction, vaping, smoking marijuana, and other drug use. In response, many restrooms in the school building have been locked during certain times of the school day. The boys restroom in the upper C-hall has been blocked by a wooden plank for more than a year after students caused damage to it.

“We occasionally have caught students using Juuls or vape pens,” said Principal Tim Britton. “Our security finds large groups of students in restrooms, rough housing or just hanging out. We clear the area and sometimes lock it up if it becomes a huge problem.”

In the past year, a number of troubling incidents at high schools in Montgomery County have been reported by school newspapers as well as the Washington Post, MoCo 360, and local TV news affiliates. Students have been found drunk and unconscious in bathrooms at



Security team leader Dominique Dixon locks a bathroom in the F-hall.

B-CC, three Richard Montgomery students were caught robbing students in Gaithersburg High School bathrooms, and in the most well known incident, a student was shot by another student in front of others in a bathroom at Magruder High School last winter.

Last month, MCPS released a county-wide safety plan and directly acknowledged ongoing issues in school bathrooms. The safety plan asks schools to increase monitoring of bathrooms, reduce the frequency of how often students can go to the bathroom, and install latches on bathroom doors. Many of these policies have been adopted by Sherwood administration in an attempt to prevent dangerous behavior from occurring in the bathrooms.

“Our security staff are scanning restrooms based on how

many times they have checked those areas in the AM and PM. We would like to eventually get doors on all our restrooms,” said Britton. Sherwood has already locked many bathrooms throughout the school building, especially at certain times of the school day.

However, Sherwood’s attempts to help mitigate inappropriate behavior in bathrooms presents another issue for students who actually need to use restrooms. One day earlier this month, only four of the ten boys bathrooms in the school building were unlocked. Students are frustrated that they have to wander hallways to find restrooms that are open to use. “I hate searching for bathrooms that are unlocked,” said senior Abriha Kesetebrhan. “When you gotta go, you gotta go.”

Skilled Trades Overlooked as Career Pathway

by Payton Seppala '23

As the school year rolls into the fourth quarter, many seniors have begun committing to colleges around the country, looking to begin the next four years of their life preparing for their future career. For much of their life, they’ve been encouraged by teachers, parents, friends, and family to excel in academics, outclass in athletics, and be unequaled in extracurricular activities, all with the end goal of getting into the best college they can upon graduation.

What has often been looked over, or perhaps even forgotten are the skilled trade jobs of autoworkers, plumbers, welders, construction workers, and the many other trades that help keep our communities running smoothly. Because more and more high school graduates are seeking college degrees over a trade job, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce reports a “massive shortage of skilled workers” for this year, which, left unchecked, will cause detrimental effects for the American economy.

The root of this problem may stem from the lack of exposure high school students have in skilled areas of work. Vocational classes have been disappearing from high schools for the past 20 years, meaning fewer students are learning different skills such as carpentry or construction. Shop and automotive classes of past years have been replaced

by a growing number of honors and AP courses as schools focus their attention on preparing all students for college. Here at Sherwood a shop class once was located in the current engineering room, E151, in which a cabinet of old tools still stands as a reminder of its former days.

Today, most students in MCPS looking to pursue a career in a trade must take extra steps to find the best education for their needs. “Going to Edison and doing their trade programs is a great option, as there are many different fields of study there,” said counselor Bill Sartori. “Internships are another good option.”

Using outside resources such as these, however, means the process for students is more complicated, and takes more commitment. Although these options include classes that may even be better than what was offered in the past, the required travel and time means less students are willing to try them if they aren’t sure about what they want to do as a career.

However, students enrolled in the Edison program are able to travel to Edison in Silver Spring from different MCPS high schools for the second half of the school day to take vocational courses ranging from automotive to construction management to hospitality and tourism and even law enforcement courses. All of these classes are offered in career-specific pathways with many ending in an internship

opportunity with a local business. Many courses also grant certifications and awards upon completion, allowing students to enter the workforce directly after graduation, or be better prepared for trade school. Around 15-20 students from Sherwood attend Edison each year. Seneca Valley, which completed construction of its new building in 2021, now offers an extensive list of vocational courses available to students from surrounding high schools as well. Programs like these from such a new school building could signal a shift in MCPS in preparing students for their future careers, moving the focus from college-only to the students’ own exploration of the many different career pathways available after high school.

“I think in the past 5-10 years [MCPS] has begun to swing back in the other direction,” said Resource Counselor Kelly Singleton. “They are beginning to focus on opening up and informing students of more opportunities outside of the traditional 4 year college pathway. Seneca Valley is a good example of this since they have begun offering vocational classes like Edison.”

With more students being able to get to know the trades without the extra steps that are involved today, many students may find skilled work to be worth considering as a career choice, and it could be possible to curb the skilled worker shortage the country is facing now.

AP Class Caught in Middle of Culture Wars

by Alexis Booker '23

The College Board, which creates and administers courses and exams, has recently been embroiled in a conflict with Florida Governor Ron DeSantis over its new AP African American Studies curriculum. DeSantis, who last April banned “critical race theory” in Florida middle and high schools, spoke out against the AP course this past January, claiming it “pushed an agenda.” Shortly thereafter on February 1, College Board released a revised curriculum for the course but stated that complaints from DeSantis did not influence the changes.

However, many were skeptical of this claim after the Florida Department of Education released information regarding a set of emails between it and the College Board in which Florida officials criticized multiple aspects of the proposed curriculum for the AP African American course. At the time, it had been piloted at a few high schools around the country. College Board later followed with a statement at the end of January saying the alterations were not because of DeSantis’s threats against not allowing AP African American Studies to be taught in schools in his state. Ultimately, DeSantis will decide whether to approve the course to be taught in Florida schools.

The College Board has since released the changes to the course, which primarily makes certain parts of the curriculum optional, such as readings and lessons about Black Lives Matter Movement, black queer history, reparations, and mass incarceration. The changes have also removed primary source material by black authors like Bell Hooks, Angela Davis, Roderick Ferguson, T Coates, and Leslie Kay Jones. Since College Board has

What College Board Changed about African American Studies class	
Before	After
The reasons behind the Black Lives Matter movement and its origins is a part of class instruction	Not required as a part of class instruction; instead an optional project that can be included based on state or district
A unit on “The Black Feminist Movement and Womanism” showcasing notable black female writers like Bell Hooks	The unit has been renamed “Black Women and Movements in the 20th Century” and no longer features black female writers as sources
The issue of reparation highlighting the discourse surrounding it and the history behind why it is debated	Reparations are only briefly mentioned with an optional project
A unit on “Black Queer Studies” featuring prominent writers such as Cathy Cohen and Roderick Ferguson	No longer focuses on general black queer studies, but only briefly highlights black lesbian exclusion
The 13th Amendment and its later consequence into the prison industrial complex	Briefly mentions the topic of incarceration and instead focuses on the treatment of imprisoned African Americans in the 1900s

made these alterations, the Florida government has become more receptive towards the course. “We proudly require the teaching of African American history. We do not accept woke indoctrination masquerading as education,” said Manny Diaz Jr., Florida commissioner of education in a statement.

“It’s Jim Crow education. These [authors] are the major thinkers in the 21st century,” said Ohio State University Professor Hasan Kwame Jeffries in response to Florida’s arguments against featuring different topics and authors, in a New York Times interview. “They are not optional for understanding the Black experience and the American experience, past and present. They are foundational. They are some of the best thinkers we have. And they should be front and center.” Jeffries goes on to say that the content of the original course is good; however, making certain parts optional creates a disconnect between past and present issues. He claims that by watering down the curriculum, the message loses its impact and minimizes its importance.

DeSantis has since escalated the situation, threatening to no longer offer any AP course in the state of Florida. This angered

many students and their families. AP courses add rigor to a student’s education, making them a more competitive applicant for college. Along with that, if students score well on their AP exams, they can opt out of certain college courses and use their AP credits from their tests instead. This can save up to thousands of dollars spent on a college education, and without it, Florida families would have to pay more.

The situation between DeSantis and the College Board continues to simmer, and other Republican-led states are looking to join the fight. Many Virginia and Texas students now worry that the African American Studies course will not be offered in their states. Virginia education officials have begun reviewing the curriculum, and students in Texas worry that governor Gregg Abbott will consider a ban as well. Progressive groups believe that College Board has bowed to political pressure with more than 30 LGBTQ+ organizations calling for the CEO of College Board David Coleman’s resignation for a lack of transparency during the controversy. As of now, the course is set to be available in the majority of U.S. high schools as early as the 2024 school year.

Demands Growing To Ban TikTok App in U.S.

by Cliff Vacin '25

TikTok being banned in the United States is increasingly looking like a real possibility. Last week, the Biden administration demanded that the Chinese company that owns the app must sell it, or they will face a ban. TikTok responded it was weighing its options and was disappointed by the Biden administration’s decision. However, the United States is not alone in its actions, and The New York Times reported that Britain became the latest Western country to prohibit the use of TikTok on government devices because of security and privacy concerns.

These latest actions follow a measure passed by Congress last December to ban TikTok on all federal government devices. Since then, tensions between the United States and China have increased after a Chinese spy balloon was shot down over U.S. airspace.

That incident has intensified calls from members of Congress to go even further and ban TikTok for all American users. Earlier this month, a bipartisan bill, led by Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA), would empower the Secretary of Commerce to ban foreign technologies and companies from operating in the United States if they present a threat to national security. The bill is aimed at TikTok. A few countries have threatened to ban or have banned TikTok use on government devices.

The Biden Administration faces a complex problem in which TikTok poses a risk to national security but is the most popular viral app and is used by two-thirds of American teens. TikTok has tried to head off any

ban and denies sharing any information with the Chinese government, stating that it has distanced itself from the parent company based in China. Recently, a TikTok official presented a keynote speech detailing Project Texas, the company’s most substantial effort to address foreign threats to U.S. data. The proposal would wall off most of TikTok’s U.S. operations from ByteDance, its Chinese parent company. In such a deal, TikTok could be sold to an American company.

U.S. states are also taking action against TikTok, going so far as to limit access to non-government users, with more than 30 states voting to restrict TikTok in some way. In December, Alabama and Utah joined at least eight other states in banning the app on government devices and apps. Alabama has taken the additional step of blocking the app on the WiFi of the state’s public universities and colleges, but students can still access the app on personal devices.

Some organizations are mounting opposition to the bans on the grounds that they violate the First Amendment right to free speech for TikTok users. “Congress must not censor entire platforms and strip Americans of their constitutional right to freedom of speech and expression,” said Jenna Leventoff, senior policy counsel at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), in a press statement. “Whether we’re discussing the news of the day, live streaming protests, or even watching cat videos, we have a right to use TikTok and other platforms to exchange our thoughts, ideas, and opinions with people around the country and around the world.”

MCPS Capital Improvement Plan Neglects Aging Sherwood for Near Future

by Joon Baek '23

Sherwood’s primary building was built in 1950 and received a major renovation in 1991 that relocated students to a holding building for a year during the construction. Although there were the J and K hall additions in 2007, the rest of the Sherwood building with the majority of classrooms has not received structural improvements in more than 30 years. With a number of new MCPS high schools opening in the past two decades along with older high schools having received or being scheduled to receive significant upgrades, Sherwood’s building and facilities are being left behind compared to other MCPS high schools.

MCPS states that its published Capital Improvement Plan “includes current and projected school enrollments and capacities, and an assessment of space availability.” A capital improvement plan basically is a short-range plan which identifies construction projects and provides a planning schedule as well as

identifies options for financing the plan. In its FY 2024 Capital Budget that includes more than 100 pages of capital improvement plans for 2023-2029, Sherwood is absent from the list for construction/renovation or even planning studies for possible projects.

Sherwood has also missed out on a generation of 21st Century technology and equipment advancements. The only school along with Sherwood that has not received major building improvements in the past three decades is Watkins Mill. Whitman, renovated in 1992, received an addition in 2021, and Quince Orchard, built in 1988, is undergoing a plan to be completed by 2027. Though Sherwood also has comparable conditions and ages to schools such as Damascus, Magruder, and Poolesville, those schools are cited on the MCPS Capital Improvement Plan as schools with current or future plans, addressed for “various system and programmatic needs.” These needs include deficiencies in components, needs, or resources to enable student success.



Seneca Valley opened in 1974. The new building began construction in 2017 and was completed in 2020.

Additionally, newly built schools and recent renovations will continue to increase the disparities among the schools of the county. Seneca Valley and Gaithersburg both have newly constructed buildings in the past decade, and these vertically impressive buildings have further worsened the disparities among schools. Seneca Valley consists of four floors and Gaithersburg three, allowing for a larger quantity of programs. The space saved by the vertical building also al-

lows the schools to dedicate more space toward surrounding facilities. Seneca Valley has seven tennis courts and four basketball courts, and Gaithersburg contains therapy rooms, a TV studio, a vocational training classroom, and other features which are not available at Sherwood. Crown High School, with five levels, is scheduled to open in 2027 and is under a \$180 million budget. Northwood will also get a new building, planned to reopen in 2026 for 2,700 students and staff

with a \$200 million budget. Sherwood’s sprawling horizontal design, along with its relatively low enrollment capacity, hinders diverse programming and student resources. Sherwood offers 19 different programs for students while Seneca Valley offers 25 and Gaithersburg 30, with Crown and Northwood’s new buildings most likely to follow the trend. Each of those schools has or will have an enrollment capacity of at least 2,500 students, compared to Sherwood’s 2,100.

Students Tuning Out Homeroom

by Timaya Pulliam '23

During the 2019-2020 school year, MCPS began Be Well 365, a comprehensive program that focuses on the social, psychological, and physical well-being of students. This concern for students’ mental health and well-being became even more of a point of emphasis when students went through a year of virtual learning during the pandemic.

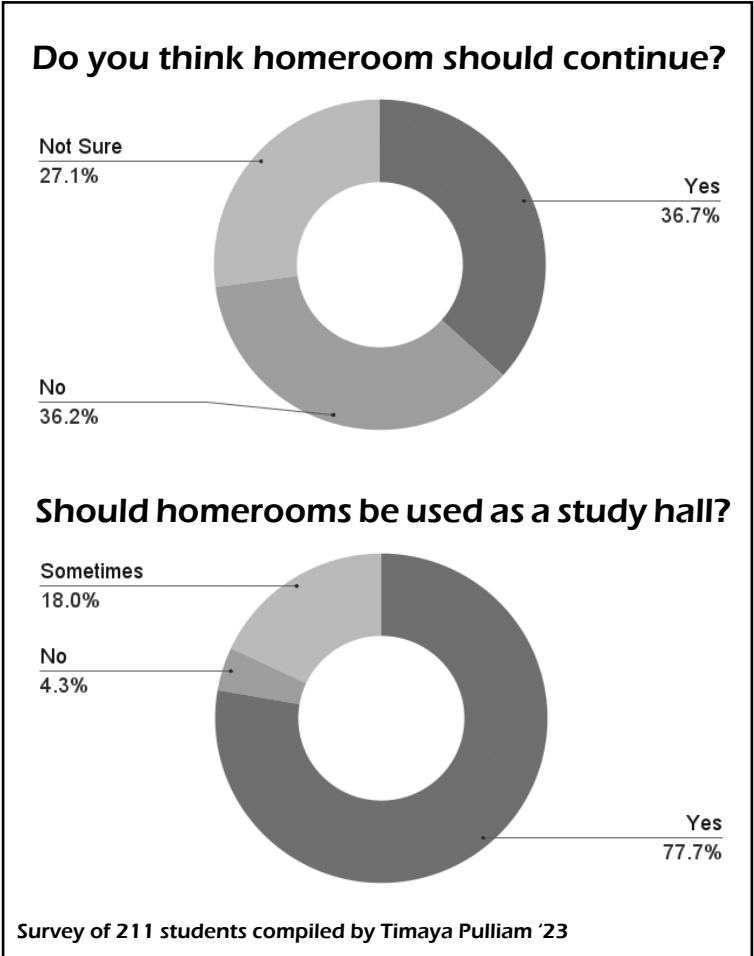
As a way to fulfill the Be Well 365 initiative, Sherwood schedules planned instruction during a homeroom period every other Thursday that largely is intended to help students learn more about working towards being a better person for themselves, others, and the community. Although these homerooms clearly are well intended, many students find them overall ineffective and have stopped paying attention to the lessons. A Warrior survey of 210 Sherwood students through their English classes found that more than 60 percent report that they never or not often pay attention during homeroom period.

“I usually use my phone or talk to my friends. Sometimes, it seems like a waste of time to have a homeroom lesson that doesn’t change anything,” said junior Andrew Papalia. Freshman Lucy Crompton agrees and, though she usually does what is asked of her in homeroom period, she “puts little effort into it.”

Many of the lessons in homeroom are required with some content produced by MCPS and some created by Sherwood’s counseling department, according to counselor Kelly Singleton.

“The counseling department [is] required to do grade-level Naviance lessons, personal body safety lessons, signs of suicide, and other county-mandated lessons,” said Singleton. “For the Signs of Suicide and Personal Body Safety lessons, we are given the lessons by the county. For the Naviance lessons, we create our own presentations but the Naviance tasks are required.” Singleton says that the counseling department works together to tweak lessons provided by Central Office as long as the lessons still fit the intended parameters set forth by MCPS.

In addition to topics presented by counseling, Media Specialist Stephanie Flaherty and the school administration create lessons for topics mandated by MCPS to show students. Flaherty must “fa-



cilitate” three lessons to all grades about digital citizenship. Each year, the information given by the county does not change, making the lessons seem repetitive. “It is ‘strongly recommended’ that I use the pre-built lessons developed by Common Sense Media. I do not. I have been able to develop my own materials based ... around the topics they expect to be taught,” said Flaherty. “It’s not easy to re-work some of the material because the topics themselves for the most part do not change.”

The important topics discussed in the homeroom period are ignored by a significant number of students who are on their phones, sleeping, or walking aimlessly through the hallways. Several students agree that homeroom is not engaging to them, especially when they have other work that occupies their time. “Classes can be annoying because they assign so much homework, which can be stress-inducing ... That is why I think homeroom should be used as a study hall,” said senior Thomas Robinson.

Social Studies teacher Caitlin Thompson wishes that homeroom was taken more seriously but is not able to always gauge why students are not participating in homeroom lessons as she cannot create relationships by only seeing students once every few weeks. “Personally, it is much more challenging to monitor [stu-

dent] behavior in homeroom ... [because] I don’t know them the same way as the students that I see every day,” explained Thompson. “I feel it is much harder to stop those behaviors [even though] they are bad for the climate of the school.”

Singleton recognizes that the way homeroom lessons are presented is not ideal, but still believes that they may be necessary for those students who need them. “I understand that students may find it repetitive, but if it helps connect even one student with resources that could help them, then I believe it is worthwhile,” she said. Singleton and the rest of the counseling department are open to feedback and ideas for homeroom presentations.

Thompson also believes that input from students is essential for encouraging students to participate in homeroom and meet the aims of Be Well 365. “This is a great opportunity for student leadership like the countywide SGA or individual student leaders to come in and make updates,” said Thompson. “Maybe seniors’ activities on homeroom days are adding or making a video so that each year the presentation is a little bit different and has voices from [Sherwood’s] building ... This will ensure that [students] will still get the information but will also give kids direct investment.”

Administration Implements New Testing Day Schedule

by Kobi Gyan '24

At the beginning of the third quarter, Principal Tim Britton implemented a new testing day schedule that is intended to relieve the stress on students from having multiple tests on the same day. The new test day calendar assigns subjects to different days of the week to prevent overlap of major assessments on the same day.

“All four of my own children have gone through college and they have never, ever had a situation where all their professors have had a test scheduled on the same day,” said Britton. “So I feel as though if colleges can work out their schedules, why can’t a high school?”

Although the new testing schedule has been in place for nearly two months, many students don’t know about it. “I wasn’t aware of a test day calendar until I heard about it from another student,” said junior Martin Karadimov. “I don’t think the calendar is too helpful for me personally because I still have multiple tests on the same day.”

Without wide publicity about the testing calendar, it has been left up to teachers to follow it for the benefit of their students. “The testing day calendar has not made it more difficult for me to schedule tests,” said social stud-

ies teacher Becky Taylor. “Occasionally, I have seen that I need to shift a topic around in class so that I am able to test on the appropriate days and still cover all the required information. But this type of switching around of lessons happens every year because of snow days, state testing, etc. It just means teachers need to plan ahead and be mindful of their schedules a bit.”

The idea for a testing calendar originated in the fall when the Principal’s Advisory Committee (PAC), a group of students from different grade levels, met with Britton to discuss issues within the school. In one meeting, some students shared how overwhelming having 3-4 tests on one day can be. Britton brought up the plan to the school’s Instructional Leadership Team to install it at the beginning of the second semester. The only exception to the testing calendar is math, because the department’s teachers believed that they needed the flexibility to align assessments to the pacing that students are learning material.

“You get students that take four AP classes, two honors classes and it’s like, what are they going to study for; what are they going to prioritize?” said Britton. “With the schedule students at least know that on any given week, things will be spread out.”

Monday	Art Career and Technical Education
Tuesday	Science Social Studies
Wednesday	English Music World Languages
Thursday	Art Career and Technical Education Science Social Studies
Friday	English Music

Inconsistencies over 50% Rule from 50%, p.1

Christine McKeldin, the head of the Social Studies department, also believes there has to be consistency among teachers across Sherwood. However, McKeldin noted that the 50% rule is problematic in that a student can pick and choose which assignments to do. “The way the rule affects things is that in a required class like U.S. History or Government, for example, students can do one or two assignments and pass the class,” said McKeldin.

The growing outrage among teachers about the 50% rule has rippled across MCPS. The Council on Teaching and Learning (CTL) is an advisory body of MCPS teachers who work with MCPS and MCEA, which is the MCPS teachers union, on issues of curriculum, assessment, instruction, and staff development.

Recently, members of CTL representing HS English teachers have recommended changes to the 50% rule based on teacher feedback.

“As we strive towards an equitable result, MCPS and its students alike share the same goal of finding a mutually beneficial compromise,” said Tia Butts, a representative for HS English teachers on CTL. “We seek to arrive at a solution that would both promote academic integrity while avoiding dangerously high grades due to inflated scores or skewed data. Toward this end, we are hoping for either lowered percentages in terms of the current 50% rule or allowing zero points after using up the 50% rule after two assessments.” Butts noted that thus far there hasn’t been a response or indication from MCPS of whether its grading policies will change based on teachers’ concerns.

The Warrior thanks its many wonderful patrons:

Abel family, Bair family, Bang family, Booker family, Braun family, Bray family, Broughton family, Cosca family, Costolo family, Cronise family, Fenner family, Frank family, Gough family, Haas family, Jagannathan family, Janet Frensilli, John Falls, Joseph family, Kauffman family, Kelly family, Kuhlmann family, Panapitiya family, Peake family Pulliam family, Rooney family, Rosenthal family, Russell family, Schade family, Seppala family, Sondike family, Sorkin family, Trump family, Wilbur family, Williams family, Wiser family, Woods family

Interest Grows for Higher Level Math Courses

by Katie Gough '23

In a survey given to AP Calculus BC students, 16 juniors across the two classes expressed interest in taking a multivariable calculus course their senior year. The higher-level math classes currently offered at Sherwood are AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, and AP Statistics. Many Sherwood students who were placed on an accelerated math track in elementary or middle school choose to take an AP calculus course their junior year after finishing pre-calculus their sophomore year. These students, especially those who take BC, can feel at a loss for options their senior year to fulfill their math requirement.

“If a student is a junior taking BC Calculus, the only other option they have at Sherwood is AP Statistics. That could be a good track for some students but it’s not

the right track for all students,” said Heather Baxter, who teaches BC Calculus at Sherwood. Especially for students who want to major in a STEM field, including engineering, missing a year of calculus could mean forgetting skills that they need for advanced college math courses.

While Sherwood students have the opportunity to take a multivariable calculus class at Montgomery College (MC) their senior year, many choose not to because they either cannot find transportation to an MC campus or do not want to deal with the difficulties of taking a virtual course. Having a multivariable class at Sherwood would allow students to take a full schedule of classes here their senior year.

Arjun Sharma, a senior who took Multivariable Calculus at MC, agrees that there should be a multivariable class offered at

Sherwood. “I feel like when you have the availability in person, more people will go to the class,” said Arjun.

For Sherwood to offer a multivariable class, demand would need to continue to grow over the next few years, meaning that more students would need to become comfortable enough with calculus to want to pursue it at a higher level.

Taking a higher-level math course in high school provides students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with difficult concepts while having access to one-on-one support from their teachers. Offering a multivariable calculus class at Sherwood would make college level calculus accessible and convenient for students, helping them prepare for their future education and career while taking a full schedule of high school classes.



Tony Zagami poses with President Joe Biden and First Lady Dr. Jill Biden.

Beyond Blue & Red: Maryland Third Parties Attempt To Change the Game

by Seph Fischer '25

In July of 2022, Suffolk University conducted a poll which revealed that only 25 percent of American voters are satisfied with current political party offerings. This number shrinks further when one begins focusing on younger voters. It’s clear that a third option is badly needed.

Maryland is consistently Democratic, and Montgomery County is even more so. Every single elected county executive since 1978 has been a member of the party, and all seatholders in the County Council are, too. In the most populous county of a state six million strong, why should one party represent them all?

At least, that’s the argument of the Working Class Party, a minor far-left party claiming to fight for working Americans. Cathy White was the Working Class Party’s candidate for Maryland lieutenant governor in the last election, along with running mate David Harding, who ran for governor. “We think ordinary workers can run and hold office. Dave and I are not professional politicians. We have jobs,” remarked White. “Neither the Democrats nor the Greens even pretend to represent workers ... [Democrats] are busy saying everything is fine. But hard-working people are suffering.”

The party’s dedication to the labor movement is certainly admirable. However, White and Harding still came in a distant fourth in last year’s gubernatorial election, receiving a meager 0.9 percent of the vote. Voters might start to wonder what the Working Class Party is doing to enfranchise itself with them. But according to White, her and Harding’s race wasn’t about winning. Rather, it was about sending a message. “Of course, we knew Wes Moore would win ... But we ran to put the idea forward that workers need their own voice,”



Both the Libertarian and Working Class Party have their own symbols.

said White.

The Working Class Party isn’t the only party attempting to make a splash in Maryland politics. The Libertarian Party remains the third most popular political party -- nationally, statewide, and in Montgomery County itself. The Libertarian Party prides itself as a champion of freedom. “We try to keep the Libertarian Party a big tent, welcoming to everyone who wishes to prioritize liberty,” said Eric Blitz, chairman of the Libertarian Party of Maryland. “We try to appeal to younger voters by demonstrating the value of liberty in their lives; that liberty protects their power to choose for themselves how to best live their lives.”

Favoring minimizing the role of government, a Libertarian politician would likely support both a deregulated economy as well as police reform, a highly unusual combination of positions for any standard Republican or Democrat politician. These policies seem to have resonated with some Maryland voters. In last year’s

governor’s race, David Lashar and running mate Christiana Logansmith raked in 1.5 percent of the vote, coming in third. While a relatively impressive result for a third party, elections still cannot be won with less than two percent of the vote.

Blitz believes the Party’s strategy for increasing its vote share should hinge on communication and reaching younger voters. “Honest and open in-person conversations are the most effective way to exchange ideas. Younger voters play a large role in building our base in Montgomery County and throughout the state. We work hard to help them register to vote as Libertarians (which they can do when they are 16),” said Blitz.

Both parties are dedicated to their specific causes and are thereby enticing current Maryland voters. Whether the ideas of parties like the Working Class Party or the Libertarian Party appeal more to Generation Z voters will determine the parties’ relevance in the coming years.

A Sub’s Life! From the Senate Chamber To Our Classrooms

by Aidan Therrien '23

Anthony “Tony” Zagami, a frequent substitute teacher at Sherwood and other public schools in and around Olney, had a lengthy career in the federal government and public service. A testament to his impressive professional life, Zagami has photographs of him with former vice president Hubert Humphrey, Maryland senator Chris Van Hollen, and even President Joe Biden, to name a few.

During the 1960s, Zagami started his career of public service as a young page for the United States Senate where he got to know the Vice President, Hubert Humphrey. In 1968, when Humphrey announced his bid for the Presidency, Zagami decided to work for his candidacy. “I was just a teenager at that time, so my duties were pretty much limited to answering phones, opening mail, stuffing envelopes with campaign literature to be mailed out to constituents, and licking a lot of stamps,” said Zagami.

He remained in Washington D.C., working in a number of positions while attending college and law school. “My parents couldn’t afford to send me to college, so I served in several ‘patronage jobs’ in the Senate in order to pay for my college and law school tuition,” said Zagami.

Throughout his 25 years on Capitol Hill, Zagami had a variety of jobs. He worked as a Legislative Assistant to the Senate

Majority Leader Robert Byrd and later the Staff Assistant to the Secretary of the Senate and to the Chief Reporter of Debates. In this position, he was on the senate floor in the well, the section between the senators and the vice president. “The Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Reporter of Debates have enough responsibility,” Zagami said. “They were there very seldom. I was their representative there to keep track of everything that was going on and to report back to him.”

Later, Zagami became the longest serving general counsel of the U.S. Government Publishing Office. He is the first and only person to be named the General Counsel Emeritus of the U.S. Government Publishing Office. After his retirement in 2007, he began to support his community by working for non-profits such as the Make A Wish Foundation. He recently co-founded the National Association of Senior Advocates, an organization that protects vulnerable seniors from scams.

Wanting “to give back to society,” Zagami acted on a suggestion from his wife Erin, a longtime school teacher, to be a substitute in MCPS. “It’s something I enjoy,” said Zagami. He feels especially connected to Sherwood, where his three children Dino, Helana, and Nia graduated. “A lot of these teachers that I sub for taught my kids,” remarked Zagami.

Can't get enough of The Warrior?

thewarrioronline.com

for weekly news updates, sports coverage, and more!

for weekly news updates, sports coverage, and more!

Intersectionality Comes to Forefront of the Feminist Movement

by Lauren Frank ‘23

During Women’s History Month, people celebrate the several advancements in women’s rights, recognizing the numerous achievements of women in all areas of life and their impact in the past and throughout society today. Whether it’s through important legislation such as the Title IX or pionering political moments like electing Kamaala Harris as the United States’s first female Vice President, the experiences and lives of women have dramatically changed since the start of the Women’s Rights Movement. Now more than ever, women have the opportunities and resources to reach their goals and advocate for more, including additional protections under the law, which once was viewed as impossible.

While feminism has worked to become more inclusive over the years, there is still room for improvement. Gaps within the movement stem back to its early beginning which divided feminists and historically excluded the views and perspectives of a

1st wave (1848-1920)	2nd wave (1963 -1980s)	3rd wave (1990s-)	4th wave (present day)
<p>Suffragettes fought for the right to vote and ultimately succeeded in 1920. Black women and other women of color were largely excluded from the movement, facing continued obstacles until passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.</p> <p>The Declaration of Sentiments was signed at the Seneca Falls Convention, marking the first organized women's rights movement.</p>	<p>Concurrent with the civil rights movement, feminism during this time revolved around sexuality and reproductive rights, calling for the re-evaluation of traditional gender roles. The movement drew criticism for centering it around privileged, cis-gendered white women.</p> <p>Feminist liberation in politics; landmark SCOTUS case Roe v. Wade.</p>	<p>Feminism also sought to be more inclusive when it came to race and gender.</p> <p>Movement started to focus on tackling issues that still existed in professional settings, like the shortage of women in higher up positions.</p> <p>Many shied away from the word "feminist" because of its exclusionary connotation.</p>	<p>Continued emphasis on intersectionality from the 3rd wave. Activists grapple with reproductive rights, and hold discussions about societal issues including rape on college campuses, sexual harrasment in the workforce, unfair pay, discrimination of LGBTQ+</p> <p>Largely fueled by social media and the internet. #MeToo held powerful well-known figures accountable.</p>

This timeline, compiled by Lauren Frank, breaks down the four stages of the American Feminist Movement.

huge portion of women including POC, LGBTQ+, and those of a lower socioeconomic status. For far too long women from historically marginalized communities bought into the false promises of

equality and have been alienated from the mainstream movement. Mainstream feminism in the United States traces back to a traditional view of womanhood based on the normative model

of a white, cisgendered, middle-class, straight, women’s experiences. The assumption that this type of women’s experiences represent all women’s experiences, skews the ideas of feminism

and truly doesn’t encapsulate all. Now, feminists are continuously working to address these disparities through activism. There is also more representation through social media, face-to-face conversations and protests.

During the third wave of feminism in the ‘90s, activist and scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the concept of “intersectionality” which is how types of oppression (race, class, gender, etc.) intersect. This concept considers the various ways that women can experience multiple kinds of discrimination. It introduces new ideas that explain how systemic issues are deeply instilled in U.S. culture. Without the concept of “intersectionality” modern feminism would not have begun evolving to become more inclusive.

Feminism has only recently begun evolving to recognize diversity and intersectionality, but is not complete or fully inclusive without the continued commitment to making institutional changes in schools, healthcare, and in the government.

Sherwood Addresses the Mental Health Crisis

by Sydney Wiser ‘23

This winter, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the findings from their 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The survey gathers data on behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems in American youth including poor mental health and substance abuse. The CDC noted alarming increases in the percentage of students who felt persistently sad or hopeless (42 percent) and students who seriously considered committing suicide (22 percent). These numbers are considerably higher for certain groups like girls and members of the LGBQ+ community. The CDC did not gather data on transgender youth.

At Sherwood, staff and students are experiencing the rise in poor mental health firsthand. Sherwood’s mental health specialist, Knychole Brock, recently put out an optional survey capturing students’ mental well-being. Of the 41 student respondents, 66 percent identified depression and anxiety as issues that Sherwood students are facing. Counselor Jamii Avery has worked at Sherwood for seventeen years. In the last several years, she’s noticed an increase in the number of students who come to her office with a wider scope of concerns. “At first, it was mostly LGBTQ+ [students] then it turned into a lot of anxiety with the high performers who were pushing themselves and didn’t need to as much as they were, and now it’s everybody,” explained Avery.

There isn’t one cause for the rising rates of poor mental health. Avery, Brock, and the student leaders of Sherwood’s mental health club, Warrior Minds Matter, identified a number of different causes

Nationally, the pandemic has been considered a major contributor to poor youth mental health. In 2021, the U.S. Surgeon General declared a youth mental health crisis as a result of the pandemic. Brock, who was brought on in October as a part of Montgomery County’s Bridge to Wellness program, explained that the program was born out of MCPS’s need for additional ways to support students’ mental health after the pandemic. “When you’re in a pandemic, problems arise that you knew you had before but you didn’t know how to address. So [Montgomery County] came up with Bridge to Wellness, to bridge this gap,” explained Brock.

Having difficulty connecting with peers about mental health is another factor. The president of Warrior Minds Matter, junior Eric Ishekwene, said it can be difficult to connect with peers when discussing mental health. “In Sherwood, it’s very hard to get participation from students because people don’t feel like they can be heard,” said Ishekwene.

Avery also attributed the increase in poor mental health to the rise in social media usage by students. “They’re watching a lot of people they don’t know but they’re not realizing that these people doctor their photos. They only post the good things. They don’t post the bad things. So it makes [students] feel bad about themselves because they’re only looking at all of these positive things that everyone else is posting,” said Avery.

While these new numbers of poor mental health are alarming, Brock did acknowledge the possibility that poor mental health was likely a larger problem in the past than was reported because there was more reluctance to discuss mental health. “Students may not have the right words for it, but

they’re slapping labels on things now. These feelings have probably been there for years, but now people are more comfortable with [discussing mental health],” said Brock. “Sherwood students are starting to ask for help.”

While the student leaders of the Warrior Minds Matter club agree that more students have an openness to discuss their mental health than in the past, they still see room for improvement, especially for certain groups of students. “As a man, it’s very hard to find someone who is open to talking about mental health. And if you talk about mental health, a lot of times you’re viewed as weak,” said Ishekwene. “People are scared to talk about [men’s mental health struggles] because they think that it’s something that you have to deal with yourself.”

Club secretary senior Caroline Hartman and student representative sophomore Paloma Illanes also noted that not all students have the privilege to seek resources outside of school like therapy, which can make it difficult for them to treat and address their mental health.

At school, Brock, Avery, and the student leaders of Warrior Minds Matter stressed the importance of finding a community and utilizing available resources. Avery encouraged students to find trusted adults and reach out to their counselors. Brock is available in room 265S in the upper C hall as an additional trusted adult that students can turn to for counseling, financial assistance, and mentoring. Warrior Minds Matter hosts meetings that are open to all students to talk with their peers about mental health.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis call or text 988, the Montgomery County 24/7 Hotline.



The teacher volunteers pose after being pied in the face by students.

Pi Week Celebration Succeeds

by Devin Kosiorowski ‘24

On March 13, Sherwood embarked on its 2nd year celebrating Pi Week. The event was hosted by Math Honors Society sponsor Rebekah Byerly and the school’s math department. The event celebrated the digit of pi through a series of competitions that all revolved around the number. Students who won the competitions were given a free pass to “pie” a teacher on Friday. Those who didn’t win one of the competitions paid \$3 to participate.

Pi week began on Monday with its “Pizza Pi Eating Contest.” Tuesday, competitors were asked to jump an amount of distance that remained undisclosed until after the competition. The distance was 3.14 of a certain amount of units, tying back to the pi week theme. On Wednesday, those interested were asked to turn in a tangible presentation that created a story using the digits of pie. For instance, the first word had to use three letters, the next had to use one, then four, and so on. The presentation that created a coherent story using the most words won and was given a free pass for Friday’s competition. Thursday’s competition was different as the top three winners were given a gift card. Dubbed “Masters of Pi,” competitors were

asked to recite the most digits of pi. First place was given a \$100 gift card, 2nd place a \$75 card, and 3rd place a \$50 one. The final day of Pi Week was on Friday where volunteering teachers were presented with a pie in the face by multiple students. Among the staff members pied were Ms. Har-riger, Ms. Byerly, Mr. King, Ms. Petralia, Mr. Goodrich, Ms. Ager, Ms. Peralta, Mr. Miehl, Ms. Greco, Ms. Baldwin, Ms. Lynch, Security Guard AJ, and Mr. Britton.

Despite most of Pi Week being for fun, the event does serve a purpose for students. “I like to see kids get involved in things other than sitting in a classroom or wandering the halls. I think it’s a good outlet for recognizing that you can enjoy math in some way even if it’s playing silly games,” said Byerly. Typically when students think of math, they feel stressed out by the complexity of the subject. Pi Week acts as a stress reliever in this case by associating math with fun activities that everyone can participate in.

This year’s Pi Week was a success as it got more student participation than it did last year. The event will be back next year, but it’s still unclear which events will stay and which will be replaced. “It really just depends on participation,” said Byerly.

Chess Experiences a Revival with Help from Chess.com

Is The Pandemic Actually Over?

by Brian Wilbur '24

In past months, Chess.com has become a household name in online chess. Available as a website or an app, Chess.com allows people to play chess online against friends, other random people, and AI. The popularity of Chess.com has been on the rise, and according to Kotaku.com, “Chess.com set a site record of 31,700,000 games played on January 20.” Although teachers might get irritated about it, numerous students are among those playing Chess.com throughout the school day.

In January 2022, Lionel Messi posted a video on TikTok of himself playing chess on Chess.com, with the caption “Chess is my new favorite hobby!” The video quickly went viral, garnering more than 2.5 million likes. Later in November 2022, Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo posted a photo on Instagram of them playing chess against each other. The post received over 33 million likes and generated significant buzz around chess.

Students believe chess is not only a recreational activity, but also an intellectual pursuit that improves cognitive skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making. “I just enjoy chess because even though it’s a game I feel like it definitely

helps develop some key mental skills,” said junior Fabrizio Bernal. He also believes that, along with social media, a huge part of the buzz is the fact that chess is often associated with a player’s intelligence, along with the competition of testing one’s chess skills against others.

Students also love the intense competition that chess brings to the table. “My favorite thing about chess is thinking about variations of how to outsmart and trap my opponent,” said junior Astawaye Seyoum. He also thinks that chess is a game that can teach a huge amount of responsibility because every move is your decision and when you make mistakes all you can do is blame yourself.

While Chess.com may help develop a student’s cognitive abilities, many students have taken advantage of its online format to sneak games in during classes. English teacher Elizabeth Kominski has seen some students playing chess on their phones as she’s walking around the class telling students to put their phones away. She would like students to play at the appropriate times, but she sees how the game has benefits for students. “It is certainly a thinking game and involves a ton of strategy. However, it would be great if you played only during downtime or after school,” said Kominski.

by John Castle '25

On January 30, the Biden Administration announced that it plans to terminate all current Covid-19 pandemic related public health and national emergencies on May 11. These emergencies were first set in place by former President Trump in March of 2020 in response to the growing number of Covid-19 cases worldwide. Now three years after the start of the pandemic, it has largely retreated from the public’s attention. Most recently, Johns Hopkins University announced that it intends to shut down its renowned covid tracking data website that it first began in the earliest days of the pandemic. The lack of urgency about Covid-19 is noticeable in public spaces, including at Sherwood where very few students continue to wear masks, and where MCPS preventative measures are no longer in place. This all is cause for celebration, but is the covid pandemic actually over? Forever?

This is difficult to answer, especially when it is extremely likely that new boosters will be given out annually, much like a flu shot, each fall. With new strains likely appearing each year, The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) already has stated that each annual booster will be specifically focused on fighting the strains that are most prominent during that time.



Lauren Frank '23

Although MCPS doesn’t regularly distribute tests and masks to students anymore, the main office keeps COVID supplies and PPE in

As Covid-19 tests continue to be available by purchasing at-home kits or visiting health centers and pharmaceutical facilities, the Biden Administration plans to stop offering free tests through federal government programs. If states and local governments follow suit, that will mark the end of the distribution of free tests to students in MCPS throughout the school year.

The challenge with proclaiming that the pandemic is over is that there is always a chance that the virus will mutate in an unexpected way. In mid-December of 2022, a new strain of Omicron officially titled XBB 1.5 and nicknamed the “Kraken” began to brew in covid hotspots and populated countries all over the world due to the relaxed precautions.

In just over a month, the Kraken was 50 percent of all covid cases within the United States. This has led scientists to conclude that the XBB 1.5 subservient is the most transmissible strain of Covid-19 the world has seen so far.

Although scientists know what this particular strain does, the highly contagious strain shows the possibility of future strains being even more dangerous. With Covid-19 precautions and restrictions becoming practically non-existent, this possibility of newer strains does pose a threat. With Covid-19 slowly coming to an “end” and life returning back to normal, it might seem fine to disregard the danger of Covid-19. However, are we getting ahead of ourselves?

Forensics Talks Its Way to Second Place Finish

by Gaby Caballero '23

On March 2, eight finalists from the Sherwood forensics team filed into the Paint Branch auditorium for the Forensics award ceremony where students from all over the county received honors for being the best orators in the county because despite the name, the forensics team does not collect evidence from crime scenes. Instead, it focuses on performing speeches from a number of different categories including prose, poetry, informative, and original works. Students compete at a county level, with judges ranking them based on their pacing, content, and presence as a speaker, and with the help of many new team members, Sherwood received a well-deserved second place.

“I think it’s mostly about confidence, believing that you have a right to say what you’re saying,” said English teacher Christopher Goodrich, who coaches the forensics team. “Once that seed is planted in someone’s head, the rest follows. So performative skills, gesturing, rootedness on stage, clarity, intonation, all of that follows this idea of confidence.”

Every competition season, students have three opportunities to make it to the finals, with the qualifying rounds occurring in October, November, and January. Before each competition, students come in for lunch to Goodrich’s room to practice their



Gaby Caballero '23

Students come up on stage to receive awards at the end of the competition.

piece and receive feedback and critiques from him and other team members.

For the qualifiers throughout the season, the Sherwood team arrives in the morning at 7:45 a.m., toting bags full of treats in preparation for the long day ahead. The events consist of four rounds, with judges being rotated each round to watch the students perform their pieces. At the Honors Competition on February 10, competitors performed for three to five judges at once. Senior Mary Crompton, who advanced to Poetry semi-finals, said she worked on “looking the judge in the eye and expressing myself more dynamically.”

Forensics is a half-solo, half-team effort. Students gain points for their team competing in different categories which are then added up into the collective team’s score. Last year, Sherwood took first place for the third year in a row with many talented seniors

who have since graduated. “When you have a bigger team you get more points. If there are students who are lacking motivation or are really busy, it shrinks the team,” said Goodrich. At the end of the ceremony B-CC took first place, amassing over 360 points

Students who placed include: sophomore Ace Haase who placed fifth in Children’s Literature and Poetry; junior Hannah Jeong who placed sixth in Informative, fifth in Dramatic Interpretation, and third in Humor; junior Milo Dowling who placed fourth in Prose; junior Eric Ishekwe who placed fifth in Informative, third in Persuasive, and second in Extemporaneous; junior Caroline Sullivan who placed fifth in Original Works; senior Katie Gough who placed second in Original Works; sophomore Georgia Kontoyianis who placed third in Prose and sixth in Readers’ Theatre; and Gaby Caballero who placed fourth in Persuasive.

ADVERTISE IN THE WARRIOR!

The Warrior is published 4-5 times per school year and each issue of the 11x17 paper is printed on high-quality ground wood white paper stock. Warrior issues are distributed to 1,600 students, 150 school staff members, and 200 patrons who are members of the Olney/-Shady Grove/Ashton/Brookeville communities.

Online Advertising Rates:
--On Bottom Right Corner of Homepage-- (run time for five weeks)

Linked Tagline.....\$30
Photo w/ Logo and Address.....\$50
Linked Website + Photo.....\$60

Print Advertising Rates:
--Start Planning Your Advertising for the 2023-24 School Year

1/16th page ad.....\$20
1/8th page ad.....\$40
1/4th page ad.....\$60
1/2 page ad.....\$90
Full page ad.....\$150

☑ Special deals ☑
Buy three 1/4th page ads, get one free
Buy two 1/2 page ads, get a 1/4 page ad free

Contact Information
Peter Huck (Newspaper Advisor)
Email: peter_j_huck@mcpsmd.org

STAFF

Managing Content Editor Sydney Wiser ‘23
Print Managing Editor Dylan Sondike ‘24

Online

Managing Online Editors Nia Peake ‘23
Timaya Pulliam ‘23

Print

News Matt Kauffman ‘23
Features Alex Braun ‘23
Opinions Nicholas Schade ‘23
Spotlight Naomi Bang ‘23
Lizzy Hermosilla ‘23
Humor Ben Schoenberg ‘24
Pulse Audrey Farris ‘25
Entertainment Liam Trump ‘24
Sports Carter Braun ‘23

Copy and Content

Copy and Content Editors Alexis Booker ‘23
Anna Haas ‘23
Tatiana Rodriguez ‘23

Photography

Director of Photography Lauren Frank ‘23
Contributing Photographers Ari Packer ‘23
Payton Seppala ‘23

Advertising and Social Media

Directors of Advertising and Social Media Gabi Admi ‘23
Perri Williams ‘23

Senior Sports Writer

Senior Sports Writer Evan Joseph ‘23

Staff Writers

Joon Baek ‘23, Noah Bair ‘24, Gaby Caballero ‘23,
John Castle ‘25, Jordan Costolo ‘25, Thomas Fenner ‘24,
Ziv Golan ‘26, Justin Lakso ‘25, Alex Lacey ‘24,
Seph Fischer ‘25, Katie Gough ‘23, Kobi Gyan ‘24, Solaiman
Hassanin ‘23, Bryan Kim ‘23, Devin Kosiorowski ‘24,
Genevieve Mayle ‘23, Dasun Panapitiya ‘24, Connor Pugh ‘24,
Maggie Reese ‘24, Declan Rooney ‘25, Briana Sisler ‘24,
Aidan Therrien ‘23, Cliff Vacin ‘25, Brian Wilbur ‘24

The Warrior serves as Sherwood’s primary news source, receiving numerous state and national honors over the 45 years it has been in circulation. With a staff of over 40 students under the guidance of Peter Huck, The Warrior keeps the Sherwood community informed about local and national events. All opinion articles represent the viewpoint of the writer, and the unsigned staff editorial solely reflects the opinions of the newspaper staff.



How Netflix Destroys Its Own Shows

by Connor Pugh ‘24

Close viewers of their favorite Netflix shows may have noticed a recent trend of frequent cancellations of in-house original content after only one or two seasons, leaving the story unresolved or ending on an unsatisfying note. Netflix original shows like *Inside Job* and *1899* have been cancelled despite substantial audience and critic praise, leaving many fans frustrated and confused as to why Netflix cancels certain shows but renews others seemingly at random. A recent investigation by Forbes into Netflix’s cancellation policies singles out completion rate as the biggest factor in deciding what shows Netflix cancels and renews. Forbes determined that an acceptable completion rate is around 50 percent of those who watched the show completing it, as evidenced by a strong correlation between shows under the 50 percent completion rate being cancelled and renewals for those above 50 percent.

In prioritizing what keeps the

majority of viewers’ attention for the longest time, creators are directed towards making shows that appeal to an established norm, disincentivizing experimentation and trying out new ideas. Additionally, shows that may take a bit to get going and find their audiences are cancelled before they even get an opportunity, in turn hurting Netflix itself in the long run as potential chances for successful shows are squandered. Shows such as *Breaking Bad* and *The Office* took a couple of seasons to finally find their audiences, but are now monoliths of the television medium, becoming pop culture phenomena in their own right and making major money for their creators. By canceling shows early on, Netflix prevents their own productions from reaching the right audience, alienates potential new customers, and wastes time and money.

Netflix’s policies towards canceling shows are harming more than helping, but numerous things can be done to im-

prove the situation. Instead of taking a quantity over quality approach and throwing money at everything and axing anything that doesn’t meet their specific requirements, Netflix could be more selective in their original content production, creating less content overall, but guaranteeing each individual show’s quality to a greater extent. With less space filled by excess original content, Netflix can spend more time on marketing so their shows could reach their appropriate audiences. This would mean the platform would not be stuffed with repetitive content designed only to attract as many people as possible and Netflix would have a greater quality assurance for their original content.

Netflix’s current attitude towards cancellations on their platform is actively harming its artists and viewers, which they must rectify if they are to keep hold of their position as the top creator of original content in the bloated industry of streaming services.

Missed Chance To Shine a Spotlight on Sustainability

by Briana Sisler ‘24

Fashion Week is a week-long event taking place in the “Big Four” fashion capitals of New York, Milan, Paris, and London. Artists and companies show off their latest collections and lines to millions of people around the world, who watch in person or follow the trends after the fact, in hopes of selling them to collectors and fans alike. New York Fashion Week (NYFW) took place February 10-15 and the London Fashion Week (LFW) occurred the following week. Many breakout artists displayed their works for the first time during these events, but many returning brands and designers also took to

the runway. Behind the meticulously crafted designs lie the imperfections of Fashion Week. The lack of attention to sustainability from the larger brands is proving detrimental to the environment.

The problems of Fashion Week include the thousands of viewers that travel typically in planes with large carbon footprints, the products and outfits being thrown away after shows after months of designing and crafting, and the wastefulness of the venues who utilize plastic water bottles for numerous guests. Fashion Week has seen changes on a smaller scale; cities like Copenhagen have instituted restrictions on fashion designers and

companies to limit their carbon footprint and increase sustainability, but the Big Four have not made any major changes.

The main drawback of Fashion Week lies in the materials used in these lavish clothing items. Companies typically use cheap, synthetic, and unsustainable materials in order to save money and produce profit. Leather serves as a prime example. The tanning process to make leather suitable for clothing involves numerous chemicals that if handled improperly can produce water pollutants. Several brands, such as SIMKHAI, Brandon Maxwell and Altuzarra, showed off long leather dresses on the runways

and created trends. These brands opted to use faux leather, which is made with chemicals and plastics. The different plastics used in the making of faux leather are made from fossil fuels and produce dangerous toxins.

Another example is fur. Brands like AKNVAS and Colin LoCascio displayed some fur coats, spurring a trend. But fur is riddled with controversies surrounding sustainability. If companies use faux fur, the synthetic plastics could end up contributing to the growing problem of microplastics in the ocean. On the other hand if companies use real fur they contribute to factory farms and their numerous negative ef-

fects on the environment. Better choices than either of these are several alternatives like denim or hemp fur. Cheap, synthetic, and unsustainable materials are rampant at Fashion Week. The many “alternatives” to products are equally as harmful to the environment as the originals, like faux fur and faux leather. Clothing is the basis for Fashion Week, and selling and trending pieces are the driving force. With how many eyes and dollars go to Fashion Week, sustainability deserves more attention and effort. The Fashion Week runway should shine more light on using sustainable products in the making of their thousand-dollar pieces.

UMD’s Many Programs Divide Rather than Unify Students

by Alex Braun ‘23

Most college acceptance letters are very similar. They start out by congratulating you on being offered admission to the university, detail how you stood out among the tens of thousands of applications they received this year, and try to list some of their school’s opportunities to “sell” you on accepting their offer of admission. If you are lucky, you may get invited to their Honors College program. However, the University of Maryland at College Park (UMD) takes accepting students into honors a step further and creates 3 different honors-resembling programs. This unique practice, although well-intentioned, is unnecessary and over complicates the process of admitting students.

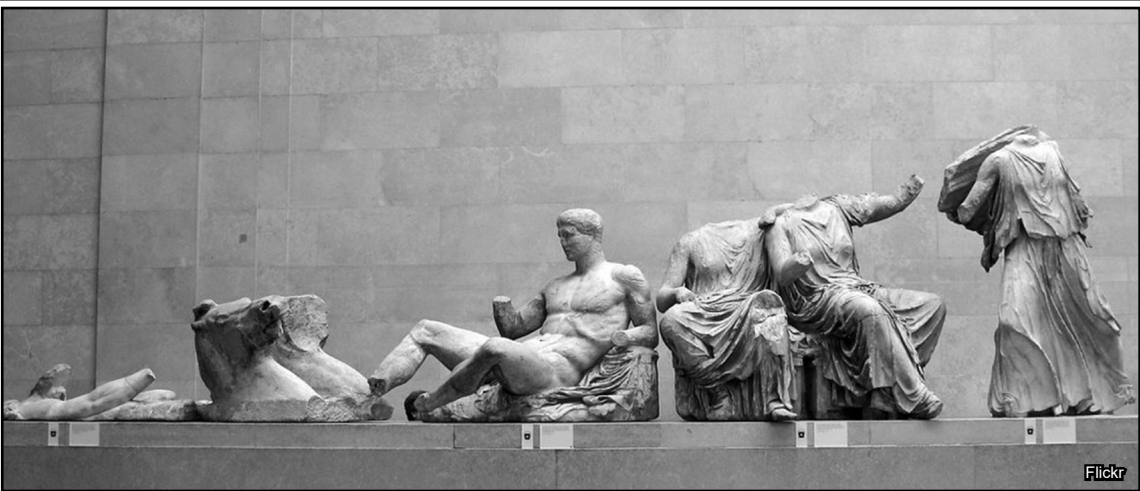
For many students who have been admitted, their acceptance letter invites them to enroll in 1 of 3 university-wide programs: Carillon Communities, College Park Scholars, and the Honors College. All of them are Living Learning Programs (LLPs), all of them range from 1 to 2 years, all of them have students look at “the big questions of the world,” and all of them have a focus on interdisciplinary studies. While there are some differences like where members of each program live and the specialty classes that students may take, these programs seem to all have the same elements and goals. All of them have between 8-12 distinct programs within the LLP. In total, there are about 31 different programs between the 3 main LLPs. Confusing, isn’t it?

While the intention of these LLPs, and the subdivisions of programs within them is to make

a big college seem small and allow students to easily meet people and form relationships with students in their same program, it seems equally possible that it divides students. Two of the most common ways new college students make friends is by meeting people in their dorms and meeting people in their classes. However, in many of these programs, those two groups are the same.

While certain programs like University Honors and certain programs under Scholars have nicer and newer dorms, the residence halls for the programs are usually smaller than the dorms that regular students live in and can cut down social interaction because students enrolled in these programs are exposed to a smaller variety of students. Especially during freshman year, it is desirable for students to meet as many people as they can, not just people they share interests with. Although LLPs provide extra opportunities for every student enrolled in them, the programs may not be for everyone. For some students, the cons to being in an LLP outweigh the pros, and as a result they choose to decline the invitation they receive in their acceptance letter.

Being a public state school, a lot of in-state students go into their freshman year already knowing some of their peers and may want to live with them. However, if a student is in a different program than their friend, it is next to impossible to dorm with them. A system that has the purpose of uniting students with similar interests seems to also hinder the opportunities to embrace and experience the overall diversity that UMD offers.



It’s Time to Repatriate Historical Artifacts

by Solaiman Hassanin ‘23

It’s no secret that many museums worldwide depend on artifacts from other places. For example, the British Museum in London boasts a collection of 8 million different artifacts from nearly all corners of the globe. Two of the museum’s main attractions, the world-famous Parthenon Sculptures and the Rosetta Stone, originate in Ancient Greece and Egypt respectively. For these large museums, there is a simple reason to have such a diverse and, according to some in fact, a looted collection: they have global significance as carriers of history from civilization everywhere, not just their home nation. Yet still, the diversity of these collections raises the issue of repatriation, the act of returning artifacts to their land of origin. Despite the arguments that Museums are doing their duty to preserve history, repatriation is a crucial step in true cultural appreciation and preservation.

The first big flaw in the argument surrounding historic preservation is that it assumes that the lack of repatriation in prominent museums, notably the world-famous British Museum in London, is historically based on preserva-

tion. In reality, the British Museum does not have a history of repatriation to anyone; for example, the Parthenon Marbles have been demanded by the Greek Government for quite some time. Despite no threat of destruction in Greece and widespread international pressure, the Museum has retained the Parthenon Marbles as part of its massive collection. Keeping artifacts continues centuries of justifiable mistrust, as assuming that there is a need to “protect” such massive symbols of culture and heritage essentially means that museums see themselves as better protectors of the culture of other lands more than the owners of the land themselves.

The symbolic reality is that artifacts, for all intents and purposes, have become synonymous with a nation’s identity and standing. Artifact repatriation is not just a matter of whether history is safe, it is a fundamental representation of a whole people’s culture, pride, and hope. To return these artifacts is a representation of trust being built between different cultures and nations, a reassurance that the days of cultural supremacy are past history. The last few centuries of colo-

nialism have meant that many of the world’s nations have often not been in complete control of their historical monuments and artifacts, many of whom were studied in the genuine interest of history and many more studied for the entertainment of European societies. It is both a mockery of independence and a nation’s development to continue to peddle the idea that people should not be in charge of their history because it is better in the hands of others. It is also a mockery of modern history to insinuate that Europeans were acting only with pure intentions as the unaware and uneducated others overlooked their own history.

What we should realize is that artifact repatriation is a well-rounded need, it is sewn together with an array of issues. Artifact repatriation is a statement on the moment as much as the past; it reaffirms that the world all agrees that the people today own the land that they live and their ancestors lived in, that there is no mistake in how they developed, and there is no one who knows them more than themselves. Their existence is correct and real, and they should not and do not need to be forced into change.



MCPS Bathroom Policy Fails

by Audrey Farris ‘25

After many parents came out with concerns about student drug use in the bathrooms, MCPS implemented new steps to ensure bathrooms are being used only for their intended purpose. MCPS explained that restrooms will be checked regularly and monitored throughout the day and that during unstructured periods of time, like before school and during lunch, schools are permitted to limit access to designated restrooms. Staff will also be increasing the frequency of checks inside restrooms throughout the school day. In Sherwood, it’s evident that these steps have already been implemented.

During lunch periods, the majority of restrooms are locked, making it difficult for students to find the few that aren’t. It can be challenging to find an empty stall in between class periods, meaning more times than not you will need to wait in a line for a chance get an open stall. In classes, teachers are seemingly apprehensive to let students leave. This leaves unstructured periods like lunch as the only chance to use the restroom, which is now being impeded by this policy. While the sentiment is there, MCPS is only creating more problems with these steps that will negatively impact the school community as a whole.

TN Ban Isn’t Protecting Kids

by Sydney Wiser ‘23

On March 2, Tennessee became the first state to ban drag performances in public spaces and in the presence of minors. Those who break this new law could face a \$2,500 fine or up to a year in jail. Governor Bill Lee justified the bill’s passage by claiming it protected children from witnessing “obscene, sexualized entertainment.” That same day, Lee also passed a bill barring transgender youth from receiving gender-affirming care like hormone treatments. If Lee was actually invested in protecting the children of his state he would be investigating why, according to the Trevor Project, 48 percent of LGBTQ+ youth in his state have reported considering suicide in the past year.

Restricting the activities that make queer youth feel validated and safe in a society where they are so often expected to repress parts of themselves is dangerous. Preventing transgender youth from having access to gender-affirming treatment forces them to live longer in a body that feels like it is in constant conflict with their true identity. Anti-LGBTQ+ legislation hurts LGBTQ+ youth. Lee doesn’t get to pick and choose which children he wants to protect and he should not use children as a way to further his own political agenda.

Dilbert Deflects and Dodges

by Connor Pugh ‘24

Scott Adams, the creator of the comic strip Dilbert, has recently come under fire for spouting bigoted beliefs, such as labeling Black Americans as a hate group. This has led to his strip being dropped by many newspapers and other comics artists denouncing Adams entirely. Adams claimed that he was being “canceled”, stating his right to free speech had been infringed. The defense used by Adams demonstrates how the idea of “cancel culture” is used as a shield by celebrities accused of bigotry to deflect criticism and avoid taking responsibility for their actions.

People like Adams twist their constitutional right to freedom of speech to exempt themselves from taking responsibility for what they say. They implicitly claim this freedom absolves them from any criticism, implying that it only applies to them and not to their detractors. The claim that they are being attacked by “cancel culture” offers a perfect justification, characterizing their critics as a mob to discredit their voices. Although there are issues with how the internet creates echo chambers and collective dogpiling for minor offenses, celebrities like Adams manipulate this idea in order to make themselves look better and avoid responsibility for their own actions.

AI’s Rapid Rise Leaves Questions Unanswered

by Solaiman Hassanin ‘23

Even as Artificial Intelligence (AI) penetrates into everyday activity, many still ask: what is it exactly? In general terms, Artificial Intelligence is a machine involved in a human-like

decision-making process, sifting through data and information to play games, recommend certain results, solve complex problems, and learn from itself. AI had its beginning in the mid-20th century, as computer programs

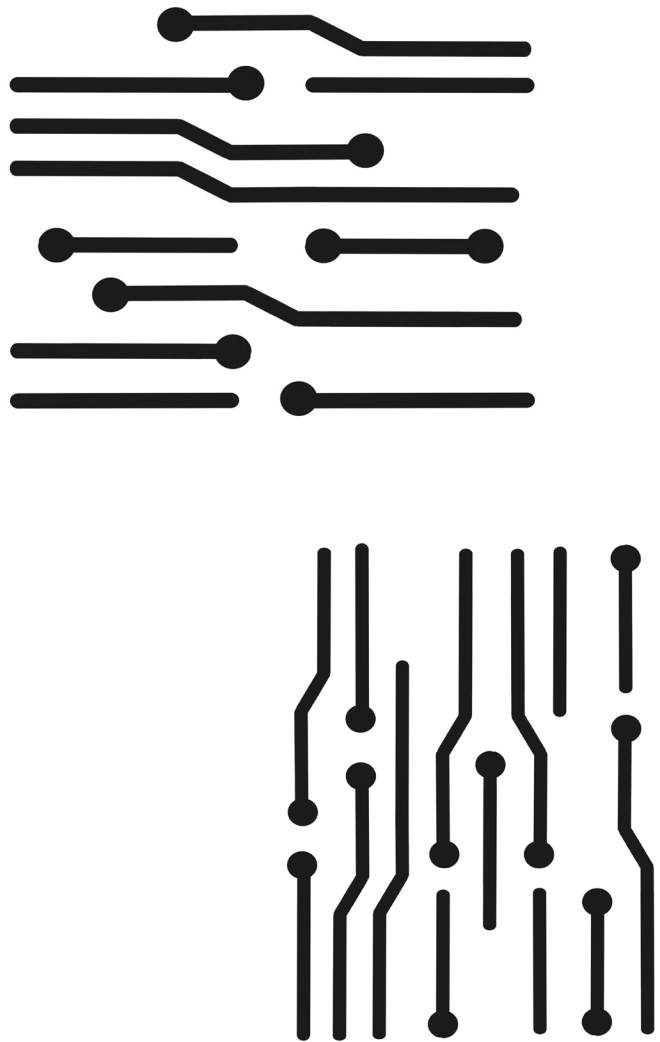
to play board games, solve mazes, and prove mathematical theorems were developed. In the 21st century, tasks have become increasingly automated, and despite its humble beginnings, AI has grown to be a massive field.

Under the large umbrella of AI, there are plentiful subfields such as Machine Learning, Neural Networks, Deep Learning, Cognitive Computing, Natural Language Processing, and Computer Vision. Machine learning, for one, is the arm of the AI world where machines can improve and change based on experience. Neural Networks represent the repetitive analysis of data as a means of finding meaning in the data, while Deep Learning attempts to copy human neural networks, learning what to do through positive or negative reinforcement. Cognitive Computing focuses on copying the human way of thinking, allowing for the analysis of text or images, as Natural Language Processing fixates on language, with programs being developed to properly understand language the way humans do. Finally, Computer Vision is concerned with the artificial interpretation of images, allowing a program to recognize things it sees such as road signs, buildings, or roads.

Just how far-reaching and transformative AI is and will be is not universally agreed upon. Previous technologies that changed the world such as cell phones or the internet brought the world together like never before; they facilitated new ways to communicate, work, and interact. Is AI, then, currently advanced enough to change humanity the same way those technologies changed humanity?

Deeper than the question of just how transformative AI will be, the question of whether the success of AI itself is good or not is being debated by everyone from futurists to ethicists. Will AI be simply a helpful addition to human civilization, an added tool in the toolbox for humanity’s advancement, or will it hijack human civilization, transcend humanity itself and steal from humans the virtues that make them unique in the world? The thoughts of human creativity in art, ingenuity in writing, and rebellious nature being threatened by some robots depress many AI skeptics. The thought of AI replacing the majority of working-class jobs or AI being advanced enough to supersede humans and essentially start its own civilization disturbs many more.

But even if AI falls short of conquering the world, many wonder if the prevalence of essay-writing AI can threaten education, or if voice-editing AI can lead to dangerous fakes. Or will deep fakes become a dangerous political tool used to swing elections and public opinion? Or is AI used in law enforcement a massive help to justice or an even more unempathetic way to treat potential crime? Can AI create real art or is that power reserved only for the imaginative minds of humans? Is it lifesaving technology in therapy or a representative of how distant and cold the modern world is? The controversies that surround AI are the natural aftershocks of rapid change, regardless of whether people are ready for it all or not. The articles throughout The Warrior’s Spotlight section will hopefully serve to aid readers in understanding at least some of the issues.



ChatGPT vs School: How AI Writing Programs Affect Education

by Audrey Farris ‘25

Over the past few months, new AI programs, like OpenAI’s ChatGPT, launched for public use. Immediately, ChatGPT garnered the most attention because of its ability to produce astonishingly human-like pieces of text, a capability that hasn’t been seen by the public thus far. Whether a poem, an editorial essay, or a press release, ChatGPT can produce a prompt-accurate piece in a matter of seconds. With programs like these being free and publicly accessible, concerns are emerging that they could have a negative impact on education. English teachers are among those wondering what impact ChatGPT might have on student learning in the short- and long-term.

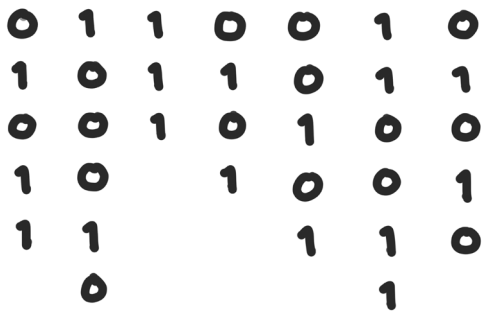
Programs like ChatGPT that are able to produce just about any type of written piece for anyone, inherently make cheating easier. Since these programs are publical-

ly accessible and fast at their jobs, as well as having the ability to create grammatically flawless text, they pose a challenge for teachers in being able to detect when a student is passing off an AI-generated work as their own. “I see [student use of AI] as an issue but not necessarily an immediate one,” explained Lynnette Evans-Williams, the head of the English department and who teaches AP Lang and Honors English 10. “The more you write, your teachers begin to pick up on your style or voice and so if a student has been writing one way the whole semester, and then this one assignment isn’t in that voice, it’s obvious that it wasn’t written by that student.” Some teachers already are increasingly transitioning to paper-only and in-class writing, which both further

eliminate the possibility that ChatGPT could be used by students. “In AP classes we are on paper only to try and combat and work around [use of AI],” said Patty Jasnow, who teaches AP Lit and Honors English 10. Utilizing AI detection software, like GPTZero, is another way to prevent students from passing off AI-generated work as their own. Similar to plagiarism detection software, GPTZero is able to detect the percentage of text that was written by AI writing programs. This could

theoretically turn students off from using ChatGPT to complete their work because it is far more likely that they will be caught. When students use AI writing programs they aren’t completing the work on their own. This means that students aren’t learning what they were intended to from the assignment. “Students are fundamentally missing out on skills they are going to need at one point,” stressed Jansow. “It’s stunting those skills that are necessary throughout life.” The ability to plug in a prompt causing a program to generate a response harms the intellectualism, curiosity, and creativity students gain from writing. However, is there a possibility that the emergence of these programs can enrich and deepen English ed-

ucation and the student’s understanding of the world? English teacher Christopher Goodrich sees a possible silver lining of technologies such as ChatGPT. “It would force teachers to do more with their time, to ask very deep, rich questions that AI can not ascertain,” said Goodrich. “It challenges teaching which is ultimately a really good thing.” When new pieces of technology emerge like ChatGPT and other AI writing programs, it is normal for there to be an air of fear or anxiety surrounding them. There isn’t one ‘correct’ way to feel about how programs will influence and change our lives, especially when it comes to education. “It’s so easy to use, I think that’s part of the drawback and part of the thrill. The world will keep progressing technologically,” Goodrich added. “We can’t unsee it. It’s just there now. We have to adapt to use it to the benefit of everyone involved.”



AI Technology Joins the Living and the Dead

by Anna Haas '23

As the world of artificial intelligence (AI) continues to advance, another breakthrough has occurred with the newfound ability for AI to “talk” with the dead. As the technology stands now, there seem to be two types of ways AI can enable people to recreate the deceased.

The first is where AI gathers information directly from the subject before their death through interviews and ques-

tionnaires. After their death, grieving family members will be able to talk with the AI impersonation. This type will only be able to regurgitate the information given to it in the interviews from the deceased. For example, if the relatives asked the AI version of the deceased about their first memory and that had been addressed in the interviews, the AI would repeat what was said in the interview. If the relatives asked a question that was not ad-

ressed in the interviews, the AI would not have an answer for them.

The other type is similar in that it still requires in-depth information about the deceased in order to impersonate them accurately. This form of AI can take it a step further. This time, if the AI version of the deceased was asked a question that was not addressed in the interviews, the AI would simply begin making up answers. However, just because they are made up does not mean that they are inaccurate. If given the proper amount of time to observe the mannerisms, expressions and diction of the now-deceased, the AI would be able to emulate them in such a way that it would make it seem like the relatives were actually talking to their loved one.

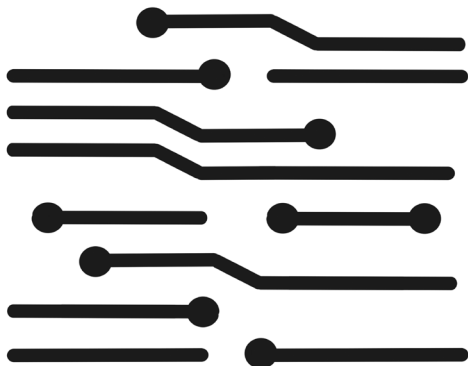
There are several ways this technology can work. The most accessible way is

through the use of the app HereAfter AI which takes examples of a person’s character, preferences, tone, and vocabulary and mimics it through a virtual version of the person. As a result, the AI would be able to respond to a question accurately and give the impression that people were speaking with a loved one. For this to work, one must actively interact with the app while alive, recording answers to the questions posed by an automated chatbot. While this first step is free, sharing the recorded memories with others starts at a cost of about \$49 a year.

Another way to converse with the dead is through Re;memory, a software that uses machine learning to create a digital twin of the deceased based on photos and videos of the person. This twin can interact with loved ones as if it were truly the deceased on a video call. For

this to be accurate and realistic, an at least seven-hour interview with the subject before their death is required. However, this particular form of communication is not as accessible due to its cost, which is between \$12,000 and \$24,000 with an additional \$1,200 every time a person wants to have a conversation with the clone.

As this technology develops and becomes more popular, many people have expressed differing opinions about how healthy this is for people. Some claim that it has helped them immensely with the grieving process and allowed closure while others are adamant in their belief that this will only cause more depression, dwelling, and a lost sense of reality. Ultimately, the technology is present and rapidly developing leaving many to wonder how far they will go to keep loved ones alive in their minds.



AI Development Impacts the Mental Health Care Industry

by Nia Peake '23

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has taken the world by storm with tech like Siri, Amazon Alexa, and the Google Assistant. Customer service has also become primarily “bot-driven.” Most times a person comes in contact with a bot before a human representative. This ever-growing change in how people interact is present in many other people-driven professions, including mental health.

Therapists are beginning to be replaced by AI through mental health apps like Wysa and Youper, and concerns are being raised about the use of chatbots to counsel users. Previously the main purpose of these apps was to monitor someone’s moods or send out scheduled motivational messages to keep the person going through the day. However, the focus has shifted to providing users with the option to have private chats with a bot. Many AI chatbot applications adhere to the same format: a general “How are you feeling?” question will allow the user to respond with any mental health struggles they are going through, and the bot will then use its programmed database to provide programmed phrases and guided prevention routines reviewed by mental health specialists that are

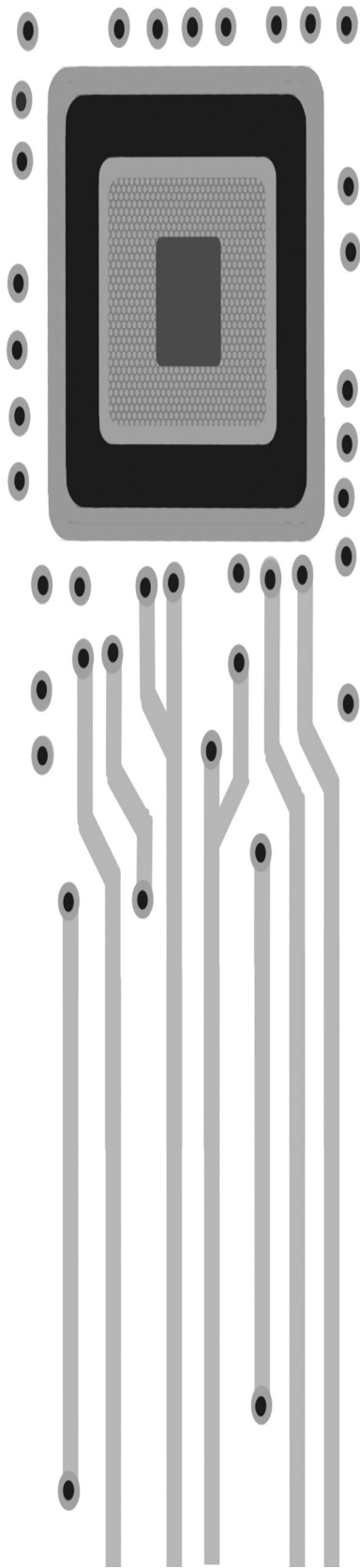
geared to assist that specific user. Many AI therapy apps make use of AI technology tools such as Natural Language Understanding (NLS), which enhances the meaning of text and speech and enables the computer to understand human language.

Many of the creators of these apps built programs that use AI chatbots with the intention of making mental health treatment accessible for all. The ability to talk about feelings at any time with the convenience of doing so on a phone is definitely a plus for users to help with sleepless nights. Also, with the mental health chatbot component, almost all of these apps ensure anonymity, addressing a common resistance to therapy in which people fear being judged when having to open up to a stranger. In addition, AI chatbots are a significantly cheaper option than in person therapy, with most of them being free.

Greater accessibility and lower cost: so what’s wrong with chatbots being our therapists of the future? It all comes down to practicality. On paper, AI mental health apps look promising with all of their advantages over traditional therapy, but there isn’t enough data yet that points to a clear correlation between AI therapy apps and the improvement of one’s

mental health, especially when comparing it to regular therapy which has years of data showing how beneficial it is. A lot of the apprehension about these apps stems from users expecting empathy from a robot. While AI can be programmed to counsel more concrete-based therapy, it’s much more difficult for it to replicate person-to-person therapy and hold a continuation of conversations throughout different sessions with a user. AI apps’ current state of development also raises concerns about how it actually performs compared to a human therapist, including assessing high-risk situations. If the chatbots were to malfunction or give an inappropriate response to a user, there isn’t any human oversight to pick up on detrimental signs. While human therapists are mental health professionals, they are, first and foremost, human with the natural ability to understand others’ emotions.

Modern technology will inevitably infiltrate almost every human interaction service due to the rise of AI. The accessibility of mental health services may benefit significantly from AI that mimics therapists, but there are also drawbacks. As AI advances, it is essential to embrace this new technology with caution and responsibility.



Can you spot the difference between an AI-generated article and a Warrior staff member's? We fed the AI program, ChatGPT, an editorial prompt and gave two of our staff members the same prompt. Read the articles and see if you can guess who wrote what. Find the answers on page 14.

AP Classes Are Good in Moderation

As May creeps closer, students around the world are preparing for AP exams. College Board's AP exams have existed since the 1950s and have steadily risen in prominence since then. According to the College Board, as of 2021, nearly 35 percent of U.S. public high school graduates have taken at least one AP exam.

At first glance, AP classes seem like the perfect option for advanced students preparing for college. These classes are set at a college-level pace and require higher-level thinking that other classes can't always provide. If students score at least a three on their exams they can often be placed out of intro-level college classes, saving time and money. Students taking AP classes also have an advantage over those who don't since, in many schools, AP classes are weighted heavier than honors and on-level classes. However, in a society that prioritizes academic rigor over mental health, AP classes have become another way for students to overexert themselves in the name of being the "best."

In a time where the CDC reports that nearly one-third of students experience poor mental health, there is no need for students to push themselves to take more APs than they can handle. These classes are rigorous and most college students don't take more than three or four college classes in a day. Before students go to college, it's important they learn how to manage their time effectively and know when enough is enough. Piling on APs to boost a GPA doesn't accomplish that.

Taking AP Courses Should Be a Personal Choice

The question of whether AP classes are worth taking is a complex one that requires consideration of both the potential benefits and drawbacks. On the one hand, AP classes offer a rigorous curriculum that challenges students and helps them develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and time-management skills. By exposing students to college-level material and challenging them with rigorous assignments and exams, AP classes prepare students for the academic rigors of college. Additionally, by scoring well on the AP exams, students can earn college credit and even place out of introductory courses, allowing them to save time and money on their college education.

On the other hand, AP classes can also have drawbacks. The demanding workload of AP classes can lead to stress and burnout, particularly for students who are already struggling with their regular coursework. Additionally, some students may find that the pressure to perform well on AP exams detracts from their overall learning experience, leading them to focus more on memorization and test-taking strategies rather than deep understanding of the material. Furthermore, the costs associated with AP exams and other related expenses can make AP classes inaccessible for some students.

In conclusion, the decision of whether or not to take AP classes should be made on an individual basis, taking into consideration the potential benefits and drawbacks. While AP classes can offer a challenging and rewarding academic experience, they can also be demanding and costly, and may not be the best fit for every student. Ultimately, students should weigh the potential benefits against the potential drawbacks and make an informed decision based on their own goals, abilities, and resources.

AP Classes Offer Multiple Benefits

In determining schedules for their next year, one question high school students often ask themselves is whether or not they should take the AP version of their classes. AP classes are almost always worth taking, unless the workload in a student's schedule becomes unmanageable.

One of AP classes' biggest benefits is the opportunity to take a final exam at the end of the year that counts for college credit at many universities. Because an AP course covers college-level material, someone who passes the test and proves their knowledge of the course is able to essentially skip a full class in college, thus potentially saving both time and money.

Regardless of whether the final exam is taken or not, an AP class also prepares students for college better than any other class at high school. Students learn how to deal with tight deadlines, complex material, and most importantly, how to study for big midterm and final exams. Furthermore, a transcript with AP classes shows colleges that a student is challenging themselves and strives for a quality education.

In deciding to take an AP class, it's important to remember that they often have a higher workload than on-level courses, and so it is crucial that a student doesn't take more AP classes than they can handle. Time for studying must also be balanced with extracurriculars and time to relax, and no class is worth taking if it causes more pain than gain. That said, AP classes are almost always worth taking for the benefits that they provide.

AI Generators Spark Debate Over “Real Art”

by Genevieve Moyle '23

The winning submission in the Colorado State Fair's annual digital art competition, an AI-generated art piece called "Théâtre D'opéra Spatial," triggered a fierce debate over whether AI-generated art should be considered real art. The release of popular AI text-to-image art generators such as Midjourney, Stable Diffusion, and DALL-E have expanded the traction of AI art in today's society.

Cosmopolitan, a monthly fashion and entertainment magazine for women, published the first AI-generated magazine cover in June 2022. An exhibit titled "Artificial Imagination" was set up at bitforms gallery, in San Francisco, to display featured works created with or inspired by generative AI systems. There is no universally accepted definition of art, so the validity of AI art has become a messy debate involving the amount of skill required to create art, the involvement of human consciousness, and the originality of the piece.

Both sides of the debate agree that art

involves some human creative skills. AI art supporters consider writing a prompt that accurately conveys a person's desire to AI art generators as a learned skill. AI art critics claim that AI art requires no skill since the process of constructing and composing the final art piece is done by AI. Critics insist that human experience and imagination play a vital role in creating art. They claim that AI agents generate imagery using algorithms that have no consciousness from which to draw personal experiences.

"There is something about a human being ... you have different experiences: you might speak three languages, you might have lived in a different country," explained AP Studio Art teacher Michele Spangle. "Everybody processes stuff differently; we literally see differently than other people, so I don't think there is any algorithm that could reflect that level of individual experience and perception."

Despite arguments that generating AI art lacks human creativity, supporters assert that imagination is required to provide AI with a

concept. Based on its information-gathering process, AI will naturally have human influence because the "human experience" is embedded in the text which with the AI works. "All art is borrowed," said renowned backdrop painter, Sarah Oliphant. "Every single thing that's ever done in art—we're all just mimicking and forging and copying the human experience."

Critics of AI art share a common belief that AI agents replicate art rather than create it, essentially plagiarizing a human's art work without crediting the artist. AI art supporters, on the contrary, maintain that AI training is no different from how traditional artists incorporate elements of other artists' art styles to develop their own.

Alternatively, some proponents contend that people should pay more attention to how AI art generators produce works that are aesthetically attractive and focus less on the emotional depth of art. While it is debatable whether AI art is legitimate, it undeniably represents a new frontier in the art world.



AI Reveals Its Potential for Harmful Bias

by Naomi Bang '23

Amazon found itself in deep water after its new AI-based hiring tool discriminated against female applicants. The system placed resumes with the word "women's" below other applications, giving women a lower chance of scoring the job. Despite hopes to increase equity and diversity in the workforce, Amazon chose to shut down the project in 2018.

AI uses machine learning to identify patterns in data and produce conclusive outputs. While this method speeds up tedious or time-consuming tasks for humans to complete, the downside is that a computer program can not distinguish how completing its job may impact real people. Surrounded by the systemic biases built into society, AI can pick up on trends that hurt disadvantaged groups.

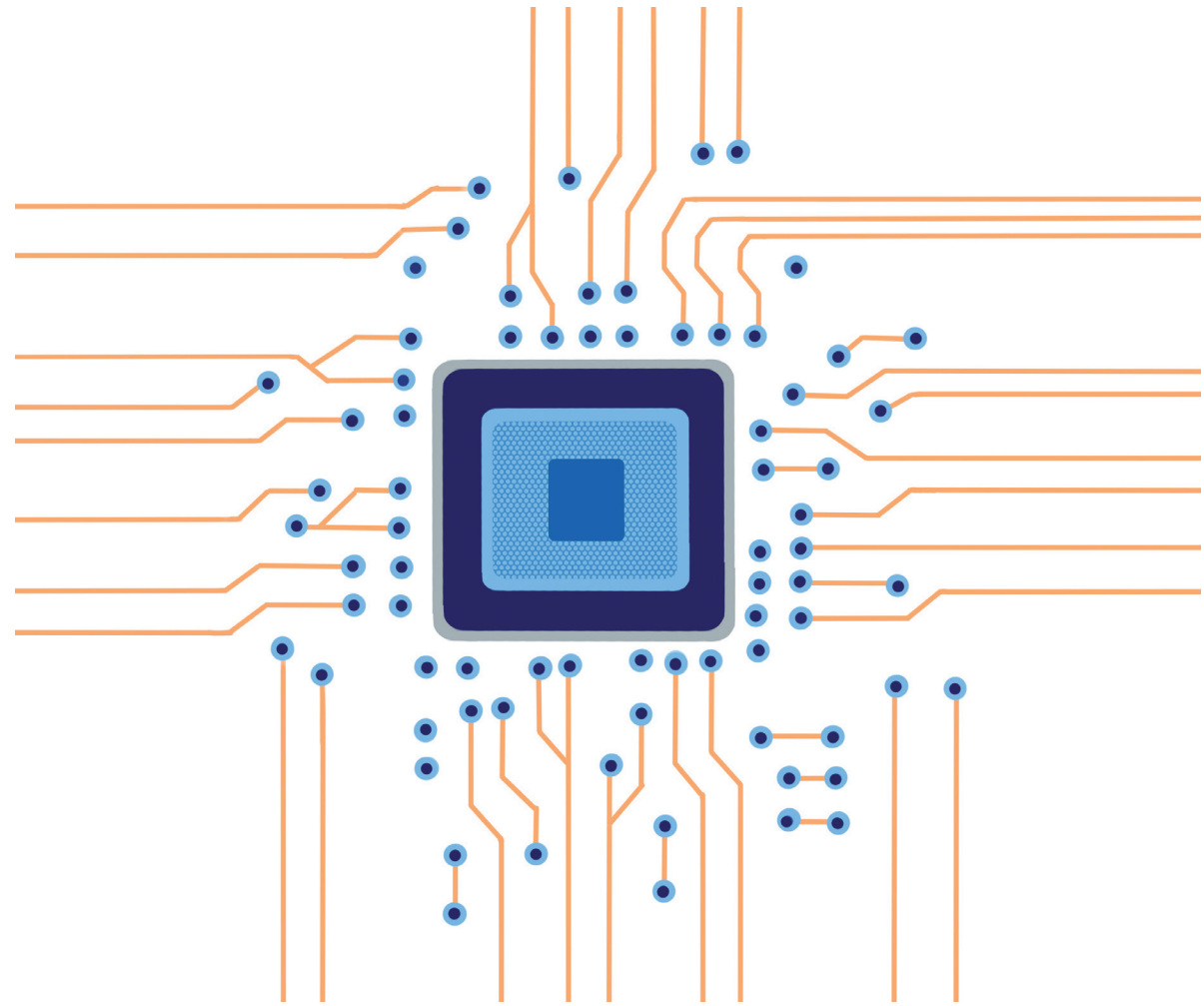
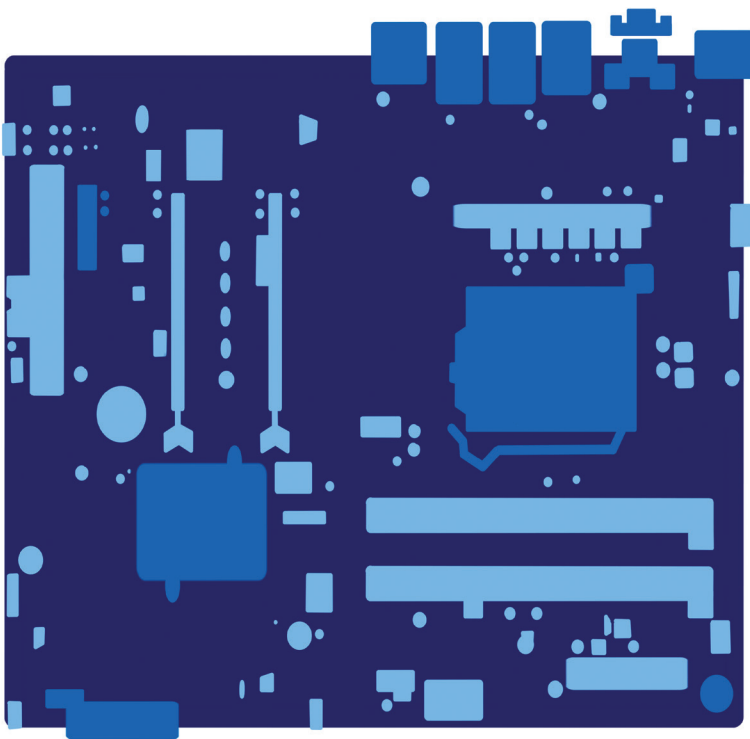
In Amazon's scenario, the software was trained by analyzing ten years of company hiring history, and one of the trends it discovered was an overwhelming majority of hired male applicants. According to the available evidence, the algorithm concluded male applicants were more likely to receive a job and subsequently placed female applicants lower. From a programmer's standpoint, the algorithm performed correctly and would use similar methods under other criteria like college degree and previous work experience, but from a gender-equality perspective, the algorithm was sexist.

A recent Guardian investigation on AI image censoring

found similar results of discrimination against women. The study showed that a common tool used to filter inappropriate content across platforms like Instagram and Google scored images of women as more "racy" or sexually explicit than those of men. The AI tool blocked photos from explore pages or completely removed posts of women working out or wearing a swimsuit while allowing photos of men in the same activities. Again, the AI picked up stereotypes and objectification of women from its training within systemic biases.

Although AI is ideally a software free of human prejudice, it can end up recreating societal biases. In other words, marginalized groups become even more marginalized. The technology itself is not biased, but the programmer and the people labeling datasets are.

Aside from job screening and image censoring, bias is also a major concern in high stake fields like banking and law enforcement. On a more immediate level, high schoolers are constantly surrounded by implicit and explicit biases on race, age, gender, and sexuality. Because AI is so readily accessible in the form of social media, search engines, and chatbots, it is critical that this rising generation of advanced technology does not perpetuate harmful prejudice. Programmers are simultaneously forming solutions to keep up with the rapid development of AI, but trial and error is their most effective path to improvement. In the meantime, transparency is key in providing users with a helpful and trustworthy experience.



U.S. Reckons with Prevalence of Deepfakes

by Matt Kauffman '23

Recently, deepfakes (a combination of "deep learning" and "fake") have become widespread on the Internet, often with comedic intent. Deepfakes have existed for years, but the modern, sophisticated versions that are prevalent now were pioneered by computer scientist Ian Goodfellow with the use of generative adversarial networks and artificial intelligence to essentially recreate the image and/or voice of a high-profile person and superimpose it onto another person or a digital canvas.

Many of these have gone viral, including a startlingly accurate deepfake of Tom Cruise and Paris Hilton; Kendrick Lamar also used deepfake technology to assume the likeness of Nipsey Hussle, Kanye West, and others in his music video for "The Heart Part 5." Edited videos of presidential debates between former President Trump and President Biden have become prevalent on Instagram and TikTok, with realistic voices discussing absurd, clearly false topics.

Outside of the relatively harmless comedies

and entertainment purposes, the U.S. Government has had to reckon with the potential security risk deepfakes pose. In order to prepare for this possibility, the Air Force announced a partnership with DeepMedia with the goal of creating technology capable of detecting deepfakes. Last year, a deepfake of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced a surrender of his defense against invading Russia. Although the video was quickly debunked, it brought to light the potential danger deepfake technology could cause.

Another, relatively new facet of the technology is creating realistic avatars that are not based on real people. Deepfake screencasters purported to be from Wolf News discussed the lack of action against gun violence in the United States and heralded China's role in geopolitical relations; the news organization turned out to be nothing but a tool from a pro-China disinformation campaign.

"This is the first time we've seen this in the wild," said Jack Stubbs, the vice president of intelligence at Graphika, a firm that studies disinformation and discovered this campaign. This incident was particularly unique because

of the nature of how these news presenters were created. Most deepfakes are based off of a well-renowned person using artificial intelligence to replicate their face and voice, however, the Wolf News presenters were based on hired actors for Synthesia, a London-based software company. The technology replicates the actors' faces and voices, creating a hyper-realistic image that can be programmed to say anything that a programmer decides.

Synthesia's CEO, Victor Riparbelli, predicted that Deepfakes will only continue to get better. "It's very difficult to ascertain that this is misinformation," he said. "The Air Force's partnership with Deepmedia will seek to find and expose deepfakes like the Wolf News one in order to ensure information security in the nation."

Hany Farid, a deepfake expert and professor at the University of California Berkeley, explained that deepfake quality is improving at a concerning rate. "In January 2019, deepfakes were buggy and flickery...I've never seen anything like how fast they're going. This is the tip of the iceberg."

AI Revolutionizes Museum Education and Outreach

by Lauren Frank '23

As artificial intelligence (AI) technology becomes increasingly prevalent in many areas of life, there is a growing concern that this technology will take over the world and cause public outcry and backlash. However, such worries overlook how AI will revolutionize educational settings through enhancing learning experiences in ways that are new and engaging. While the use of AI in an educational setting is still very new, it has proven extremely valuable in making learning more appealing, especially for children and teenagers who are constantly surrounded by modern technology. Museums specifically have worked to improve the overall learning experience, hoping to provide a high quality immersive experience

that allows visitors to interact more directly while learning information. Several museums have utilized this innovative technology in the hopes of attracting visitors and keeping them engaged throughout the space. The Smithsonian is using an AI robot called “Pepper” in some of its museums, like the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The robot is programmed to answer any visitor’s questions in order to personalize their learning experience. Museums in other parts of the world are incorporating similar chatbot technology. In Rio De Janeiro, the Museum of Tomorrow uses “IRIS+,” allowing each visitor to use a chipped card in order to personalize their experience throughout different exhibitions. The robot gath-

ers data from these visitor interactions which allows them to detect emotion, thus understanding how visitors feel while viewing information in the museum. Other than making one’s museum experience more personalized, AI technology has also brought exhibits to life, making them more interactive and realistic than ever before. This technology has aided in preserving history and presenting it back to audiences for generations to come. The University of Southern California Shoah

Foundation is just one of the many organizations using AI technology to record and memorialize the stories of Holocaust survivors well after they pass away. It took several weeks of filming to get answers to the hundreds of thousands of questions that someone could ask, so now people can ask questions that prompt responses in real-time from these pre-recorded interviews. This new technology is now available in several Holocaust museums across the world. The Shoah Foundation used several camer-

as, display technologies, and filming techniques to create these hologram projections of the survivors in order to create an interactive for visitors at the museums. There have already been significant results from integrating AI into educational settings. This is especially apparent for younger generations who connect to their world through technologies. There is far more that AI will do in making learning more interactive and memorable, as technology revolutionizes the way people learn.

AI Is Racing Towards the Future

by Lizzy Hermosilla '23

At the forefront of technological innovation is artificial intelligence (AI), and there is still much more to accomplish. AI finds its first steps towards its next major stage of development. Despite the emergence of self-driving cars, virtual reality, and voice assistants that seem to be part of every aspect of daily life, the true AI revolution has yet to start. Major tech companies have emerged as key players to develop the first AI chatbot, hoping to monopolize and pave the way for this new and revolutionary piece of technology.

from its user, it is simply an ML AI-based chatbot. The other data analysis pattern is called Natural Language Processing (NLP). The concept of NLP has fed the science fiction industry for years, as NLP is the closest that AI has come to replicating human thought patterns. NLP enables AI to more accurately understand and respond to human counterparts. Currently, this is done through the extraction of keywords and linguistics. The most obvious example of NLP AI is the Spam folder for emails; however, it is also the most rudimentary.

sumers. Microsoft is the first company to make progress toward this goal; as of the beginning of this month, preliminary tests for their Bing chatbot have been publicized. Similar to the 1960s space race, all of the other tech companies are learning from Microsoft’s failed attempt at an NPL AI chatbot. Many people in the test group have reported the AI saying disturbing things, like commenting on their weight, or professing their love for the user. However alarming the application of the chatbot was, it is still one big step for AI and the big tech industry.

Because NPL has become the new goal for AI chatbots, a 21st century version of the space race in the 1960s between major tech companies like Google, Microsoft, and Amazon has formed. All of these big companies are fighting to be the first to create a successful NLP AI powered chatbot that is able to interact with all types of con-

In lieu of the Bing chatbot, many other companies have unveiled their plans for an NPL AI chatbot, including Snapchat, Google and Facebook parent company, Meta. While the release of the Microsoft Bing chatbot may have raised some concerns, this failed attempt has not dissuaded tech developers from the NPL AI chatbot cause.

AI Enhancing Security

by Alex Braun '23

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes more advanced and prevalent in a number of job fields, the common response to this development is that AI will have a harmful effect on many professions and its integration into industries will be to the detriment of humans. However, in the law enforcement and security sector, AI is becoming a very useful tool for humans to utilize.

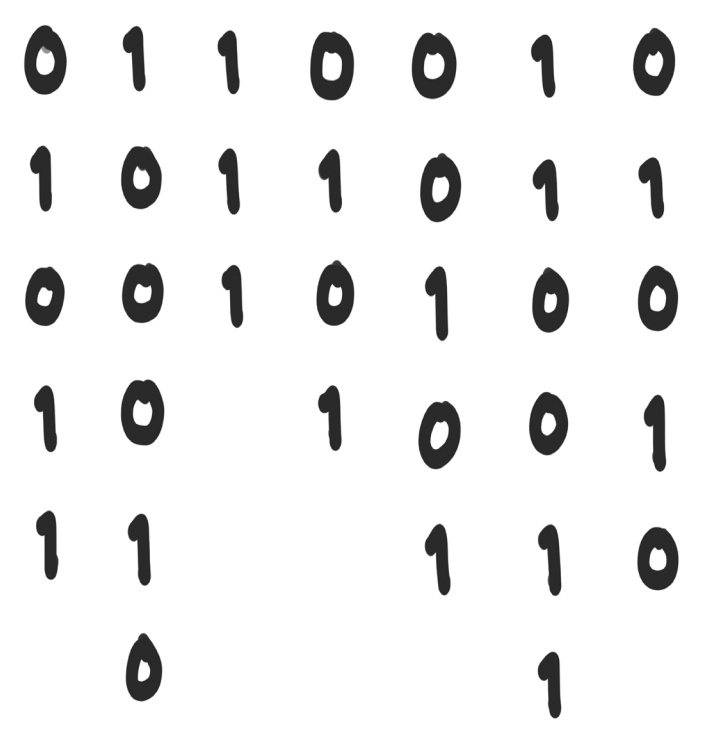
handle. One of the more helpful ways AI has proved useful is in school protection. In the aftermath of a string of mass shootings this year, many school districts across the country are using an AI software called ZeroEyes, which integrates with the school security cameras and can detect firearms. Within three seconds of detecting a firearm, the software sends an alert and image to a company control room where humans verify if it is a real threat or not and act accordingly, notifying police if necessary. The software allows the police to be contacted within 10 seconds of the camera getting a glimpse of the firearm.

AI is particularly helpful in Real-Time Intelligence Centers (RTIC). These centers gather intelligence and data from every source imaginable, including security cameras, police radios, and social media. With this data, the RTICs are able to track crime patterns across entire cities and be used for evidence by law enforcement. However, the data can take weeks to be organized and compiled into a report by the human analysts working there, and as a result, police investigations can take longer. Thanks to AI, the compilation of data into reports can now be done in mere hours. An AI software called HxGN Connect can bring together data from sheriffs offices, fire stations, and even federal agencies. After quickly compiling the intel, the software can send real-time messages to law enforcement, advising how to act on the situation at hand. This makes time sensitive cases--like robberies or abductions--easier to quickly


Another AI software being used in schools is Scylla, which can detect guns as well as other suspicious activity around the school, like students getting in fights or being in possession of illegal substances and items. The software sends an alert directly to school officials after detecting hazards, and can lock the doors to schools if the danger is outside the building. No human can watch every security monitor 24/7, but the AI can and does and with great accuracy. The creator of Scylla asserts that the software is “99.9 percent accurate--with a whole lot of nines” in detecting firearms. Such impressive advances in AI can make schools, offices, and nearly every public space safer.

A chatbot is not a new idea in the tech industry. When people shop online, they often get those pesky pop ups at the bottom of their screen. These pop ups, offering customer support, are one of the first practical uses of chatbots. Chatbots are used for more than just online shopping; many companies use them in tech support roles, customer service, and internal affairs. These rule-based bots are based on predefined conversational paths, which use keywords and other language identifiers to trigger pre-written responses. The new goal of the chatbot is to make one powered by AI.

AI-powered bots use two different data analysis patterns. The most recent AI-powered bots to emerge use Machine Learning (ML) processing. These bots recognize patterns from the user’s inputs to adapt to and better suit the consumer. For example, the recommendations that Netflix and Spotify give are powered by ML AI bots. ChatGPT is also an example of ML AI; despite the AI producing human-like essays, and seemingly “learning”

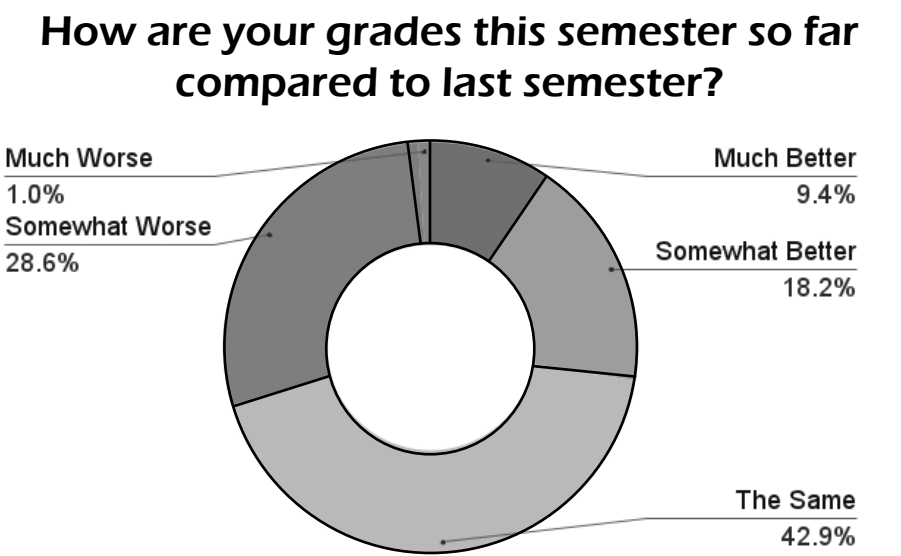


Answer to page 12 (top to bottom): Sydney Wiser '23, ChatGPT, Payton Seppala '23



The Pulse

As we enter into the Spring we also shift from third quarter to fourth quarter, meaning we are halfway through semester two. As the year progresses, it can be common to feel some type of academic burn-out, especially considering the lack of breaks during the winter months. This edition of The Pulse will focus on how Sherwood students are dealing with second semester burnout.



How are you dealing with second semester burnout?

“Staying involved in the community. Whether it’s helping with Rock ‘n’ Roll, being involved in clubs, or doing volunteer work.”

-Andrew Tegeler ‘23

“Throughout my high school career, I always put a lot of pressure on myself to get perfect grades. As a senior that already got into college, I am instead approaching school in a way that prioritizes my learning instead of grades. I still turn in all my assignments on time and ensure that I get decent grades on them, but I consistently make sure I get a good amount of sleep and eat well. At this point, it’s essential to take of ourselves first so we can do well in all other aspects of our lives.”

-Safiya Alam ‘23

“I’m forcing myself through the burnout. I always keep in mind the fact that graduation is only a couple months away. That’s the only thing that keeps me sane.”

-Marie-Claude Melige ‘23

“I have to do a lot of preparation for the AP Exam now that I’m in the second semester, but also continue to work on classwork and extracurriculars.”

-Shenal Ediriweera ‘26

“I’m not really dealing with it. I have a lot of things on my plate and I am overworking myself so I don’t really have time to be tired or sick.”

-Kate Griffin ‘23

“I think with it being second semester and having a lot of after school activities going on and college stuff, it can just be a lot to handle. I get so tired after awhile because it feels as if there aren’t breaks.”

-Jordan Goodman ‘23

“I prioritize my needs before grades and take some time to myself even if that means an assignment will be late.”

-Sudhiksha Godavarty ‘25

“I am trying to motivate myself moving forward from last semester. I feel as though last semester it had not hit me that this is my last year of high school and the one that counts the most. This semester I have a much better mindset and although I am very busy outside of school often more than others, I am motivated to get through this last semester of my high school career.”

-Kelsey Estes ‘23

“Honestly I’m not dealing. Though I’ve partly brought this on myself, it’s extremely stressful, especially because I have to work straight after school until 7 p.m. I think most teachers should have more compassion towards students who work, whether it be after school or on the weekends.”

-Elle Stenger ‘25

“I already know where I’m going to for college, and I just want to graduate - not excel.”

-Arya Sharma ‘23

“I have zero motivation and my brain isn’t absorbing nearly as much information because it’s jam packed with so much already.”

-Isabelle Andrews ‘23

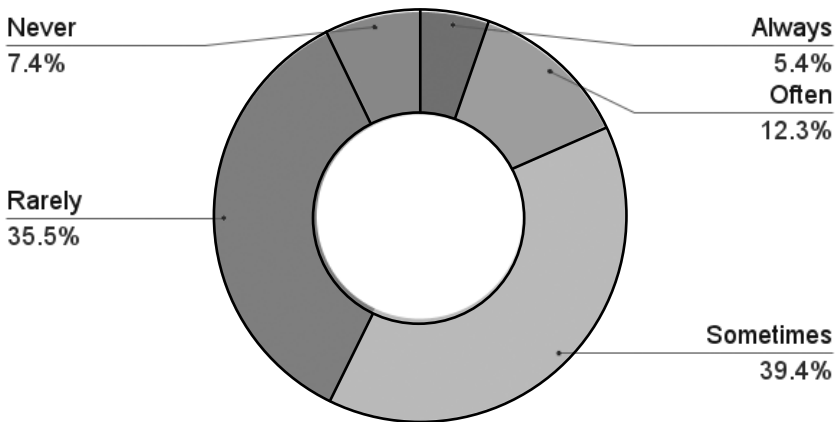
“I am very burned out this semester because I just don’t receive nearly as much work as I get done. I am able to get work done fast. What I often do if I am suffering from burnout is dragging assignments on and working slower so that I can still stay engaged, or at least engaged as much as I can.”

-Thomas Robinson ‘23

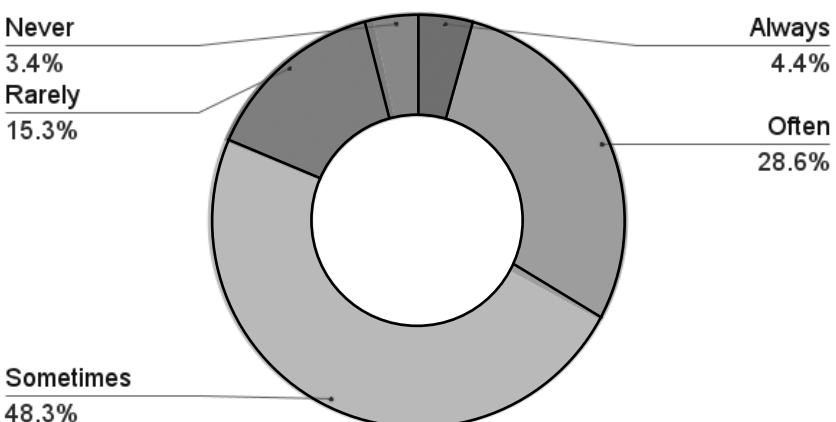
“Having to do so much work everyday and knowing that I have to keep this up for another 15 weeks gets to be a lot. Especially with our outside lives, sometimes students just feel overwhelmed with everything.”

-Cara Hairston ‘26

How often do you feel fully motivated when it comes to completing school work?



How often to you feel engaged throughout the majority of your classes?



HUMOR DISCLAIMER: This section is intended as satire and uses the tools of exaggeration, irony, or ridicule in the context of politics, current trends, recent school events, and other topical issues.

(not) exactly news

by Ella Scher '23

Orwellian-Styled Dystopia
Accidentally Created

After a successful series of petitions to ban inappropriate books in Florida and other states, senators are now considering an even more unprecedented move of banning books entirely, from every single classroom in the United States. Over 40 percent of parents are highly in agreement with this proposal: after all, what parent wouldn't want to be completely and totally in control of exactly how much their child knows? This also eliminates multiple challenging problems for teachers, such as asking children to consider problems outside the scope of their limited worldviews.

"I think this is going to be good for the kids," said one senator. "They deserve to think a little less in general. It makes them much more likely to listen to all types of information, even the false kind." Also, state legislators in at least eleven states also are now looking at transitioning to a completely audiovisual curriculum, lest students somehow get their hands on any copy of a book that may inspire them to question authority.

Man Considers Being Nice To
Women Just For a Month

Waking up on March 1, hobby misogynist and Olney native Patrick McMahononey noted a change in the air: it seemed that something called Women's History Month had begun. Confused and irate, the young man instantly set about being as antagonistic as possible to every woman in his life, of which, admittedly, there are scant few. "I have no idea what any woman has done to deserve an entire month," McMahononey told a reporter. "There's barely any record of women doing anything notable in history."

Upon being told that, yes, that was kind of the point, there was a distinctive and definite cracking sound as the entire fragile foundation of McMahononey's existence began to crumble. "You mean, the natural superiority of men is a learned concept and not inherent?" At press time, McMahononey confirmed that he would be taking a two-week break from obsessively consuming antifeminist doctrine--at least until April begins.

Marvel Decides To Completely
Computerize Their Actors

In a bold new step for the franchise built entirely on CIA propaganda and bad greenscreen backgrounds, Marvel has decided to eliminate physical human actors entirely from the sets of the movies and begin completely digital production. "It was a natural step," the head artistic director explained. "First, it was the SFX, then the backgrounds. Soon we were just sticking LED lights and green-screen suits on the actors. Heck, we barely even costumed them anymore. It was cheaper to do it digitally. Then Stan Lee died, and we started putting his face in digitally so he could still cameo postmortem. Horrifying? A little. So then we thought, do we even really need these people anymore?"

It's true. For Marvel movies, which rely on the tried-and-true formula of 'People in commercial costumes beat up the bad guy in movies with horrific color grading and obvious product placement,' there is absolutely no reason to waste money on actors which enhance the near-zero emotional value of the formulaic films. Unfortunately, this means that the various middle-aged white men who have built their entire acting brand on these movies might have to develop real talent soon.

Abnormal Advice: A Lot On My Mind

by Ben Schoenberg '24

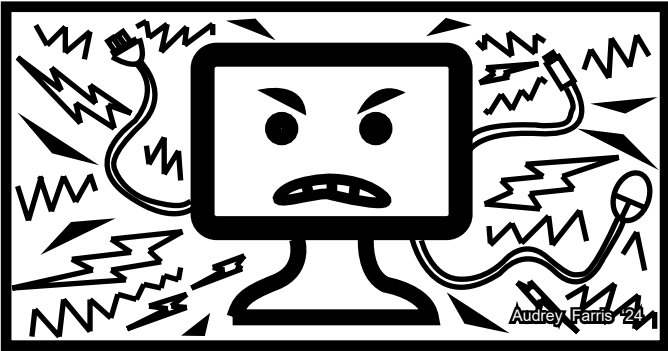
Dear Benjamin

I hate doing my homework and I found a website that will let a robot do my homework for me! It was going great until the robot took over my computer. Now it does all of my assignments completely wrong and submits them to my teachers. My grades are going down fast. How do I get my computer back??

Signed, Hacked

Dear Hacked

Technology and specifically AI can be a really tricky issue to handle but for your sake, you probably need to completely



ly cut yourself off from society. By moving into the woods and surviving off only a handful of essentials, you will escape your homework and evil computer. Animals have been doing it for years and they are extremely productive, case in point is the whole movie Zootopia. The only issue you could possibly run into by cutting yourself off from society is that I'm pretty sure it would be an unexcused absence and would not look good on your record.

The REAL Résumé of George Santos

Meet George Santos, but who knows if that's even his name? The résumé he submitted to the Nassau County Republican Committee was nothing short of a complete lie, rivaling that of the moon landing or how birds aren't government drones. Since then, the document has been deleted and replaced with a free, unchanged template from Novoresume.com.

Normally the original résumé would be completely lost, cast away, irrecoverable. HOWEVER, my experience as a Licenced Internet Archivist for the Republicans (LIAR for short) has allowed me to find a copy of such a document. Here it is.

Sincerely, Justin Lakso '25

George A. Devolder Santos

Summary	
Business Development Professional with extensive experience in fighting for the rights of constituents. 6'3, 195 pounds, goes to the gym every week. Enthusiastic leader of the high school drama club who will be the first openly-gay republican representative of New York's third district. Unbiased hater of the left wing and their entire ideology, and stalwart Trump supporter.	
Skills	
-Account management	-Customer and Investor Relations
-Sales	-Activism
-Leadership	-Trash-Talking Mitt Romney on Twitter
-Call of Duty Trickshots	-Maturity
-Volleyball (Middle Blocker)	-"Memory of an Elephant"
-Real Estate	-Public Speaking
-Public Speaking	-Training and Mentoring
-Publicly Speaking about Real Estate	-Undeniable Rizz
-Budget Oversight	-Making Promises
-Freestyle Rapping	-Deception
-Fashion Sense	-Currency Counting/Gambling

Experience	
Devolder Organization	
Sole managing member of a family-owned company managing over \$80 million in assets	
-Lost in early 2022 because our accountant was an idiot	
-Served more clients than any branch of McDonalds	
Ran Campaign in 2020 against Thomas Suozzi	
-Lost because the system was RIGGED	
-I was more qualified	
-He won because of incumbency advantage	
Smooth Criminal	
-Illegally gambled in Brazil because I live life on the edge	
-They still haven't found me hahaha	
-I haven't paid rent since 2014	
Education and Training	
New York University	
Business administration	
-Valedictorian (trust me)	
-Perfect GMAT score	
Barrack State College (however it's spelled)	
Bachelor Economics/Finance	
-Best volleyball player there	

Fl. Governor Bans Bathrooms in School To Protect Children

by Declan Rooney '25

Bathrooms are the most filthy spaces in the whole school. Have you ever nervously needed to use the toilet while five guys in the stall next to you vape? Have you ever stood at the urinal but you can't go because two idiots skipping class are brawling right behind you? Have you ever wanted to wash your hands but you couldn't because someone decided to clog the sink with toilet paper? My friends, all these gross and disgusting incidents are a product of the degenerate Left's attempt to make your children gay, and glorious governor of Florida Ron Desantis is the only one willing to stop them.

This week Desantis introduced a bill that would ban all bathrooms in the Florida school system. The bill is similar to the rest of the Desantis administration's laws that expand freedom and patriotism into schools, such as removing Africa from world maps and forbidding any mention of the role of women in history. Your kids will have never loved their country more knowing America has never done anything wrong. Ever.

The new bill targets all of the



very real things your parents have seen on Facebook that are being put in bathrooms such as litter boxes and drag queens or M&Ms wearing high heels. This is clearly a liberal ploy to make kids gay, because nobody just likes a person of the same sex without being tortured by the CIA, SJWs, or whoever else makes up the Deep State. Only true patriots are enlightened enough to realize that.

With all these plots to turn your kids gay without first consulting you by allowing them to "use the bathroom" (liberal code-word for indoctrination) it's more important than ever to praise glorious leader DeSantis so that he may continue to save our children. With those nasty and disgusting indoctrination rooms out of schools, it's time to turn our attention to other pressing issues; like the wokeism that's creeping into math textbooks.

Students have a responsibility to be dressed and groomed for school, in accordance with the community standards for dress and grooming addressed by the local school discipline policy.

Student's Rights and Responsibilities Handbook.

Spring has arrived and as the weather gets warmer, the administration and staff is sending this reminder that there is a dress code at Sherwood. We expect students to use their good judgment and common sense to determine if clothing is appropriate or if it would be distracting or insensitive to others. This does not mean our dress code is changing, and we will be just as strict as ever in ensuring that students dress in a way that represents Sherwood's culture of respect and learning.

Below is further clarification of what is considered appropriate dress in a school environment

- Crop tops, which should cover at least 1 inch of human skin
- Pants, regardless of how baggy or tight fitting.
- T-shirts with somewhat grotesque or suggestively violent imagery
- Pajama pants
- Baseball hats worn in any direction or pulled down over the face to obscure identity of student
- Short shorts long enough and worn properly to cover some part of undergarments.
- Shoes or sandals of some kind

Not abiding by the dress code will result in a strong talking-to and maybe even a finger waving, if school security is not busy with other violations of school rules.

As for what is explicitly NOT permitted, we rely on students to use their judgment.

Reported by Jordan Costolo '25

Across

1. A popular D.C. attraction that is currently in bloom.
13. A popular Sherwood sport currently in season.
14. Moving your shoulders up and down.
16. Fee fi ____ fum.
17. A Freudian concept ____ fixation.
18. Library of Congress (abbr.)
19. For baking and cooking.
21. An appendage coming out of your torso.
23. An alternative texting app: ____ sapp.
25. To ____ up an engine.
27. An 80s band: ____ Speed Wagon.
28. English as an International Language (abbr.)
29. A SHS winter sport with recent a state title winner.
32. How you used to listen to music.
33. An exercise that works your hamstrings.
34. What happens in the sun to many skin tones.
35. An online game taking the school by storm.
36. Red-breasted birds.
39. An animal getting out of hibernation right now.
40. Gosh ____ it!
41. Punxsutawney Phil's day.
43. An old cloth.
44. Most common type of battery.
46. Short for pictures.
48. Hawks basketball star ____ Young.
50. Outpatient Visit (abbr.)

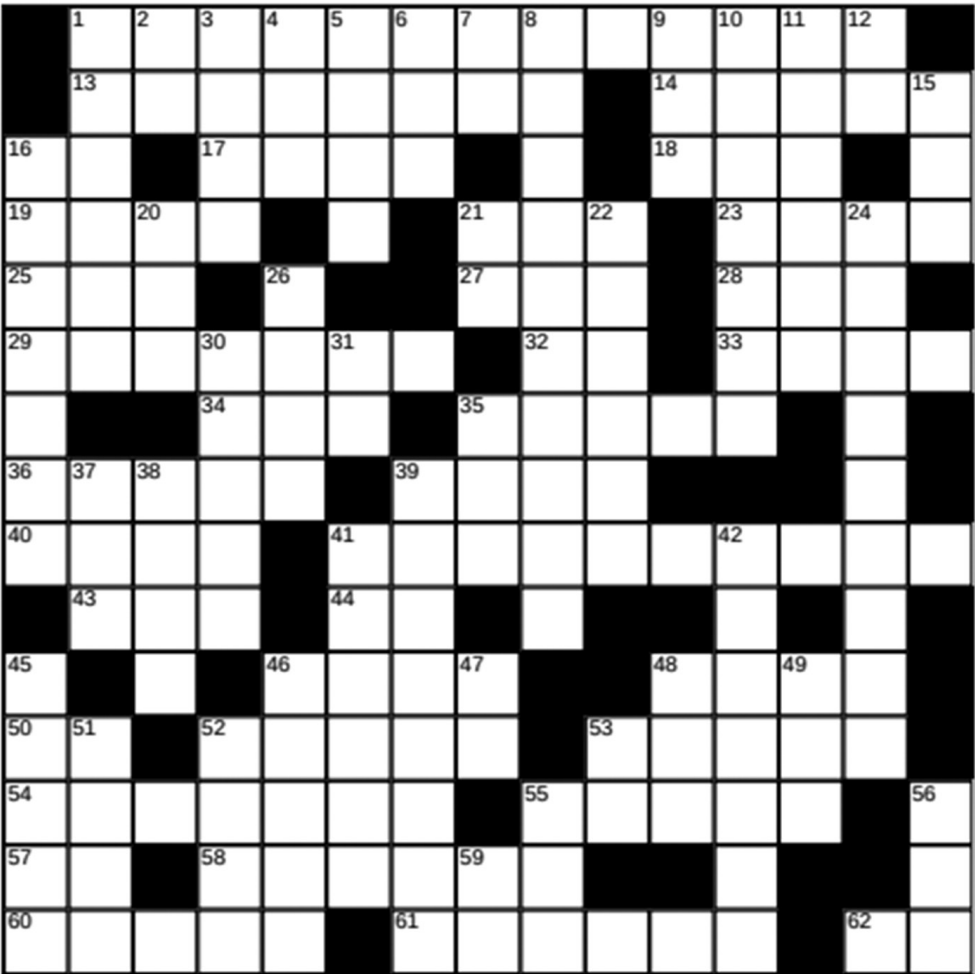
52. A Netflix show set in North Carolina Outer ____.
53. One of the locations for Fashion Week.
54. An extraordinary event.
55. What flowers do in the spring.
57. Elementary School (abbr.)
58. A small English football club.
60. What you might get done for prom.
61. The last name of a deceitful politician from New York.
62. The first name of the 2023 best supporting actor.

Down:

1. With four leaves they're lucky.
2. A laugh.
3. A college major.
4. Rock and Roll Revival!
5. Something fun to do over spring break: ____ trip.
6. A luxury fashion brand.
7. A card game.
8. A mischievous creature in Irish folklore.
9. Student Service Learning (abbr.)
10. April ____ bring May flowers!
11. A flower that blooms from January to March.
12. Twelfth letter of the Greek alphabet.
15. An AI program Chat ____
16. Spring ____ fall back.
20. Adam and ____.
21. The chemical element argon.
22. The opposite of ancient.
24. With pollen comes ____.
26. Internet slang for fan.

by Alexis Booker, Gaby Caballero, Katie Gough, Sydney Wiser '23, and Ben Schoenberg '24

Spring Cleaning



30. Beware of bees, they ____!
31. Natural log.
35. The boss.
37. What you might use to row with.
38. To boast.
39. Something people make for March Madness.
41. Graceful and pleasing.
42. The spring musical: Little Shop of ____.

45. This month is focused on the history of ____.
46. A distance runner ____ themselves.
47. Screen shot (abbr.)
48. The natural order of the universe in Chinese philosophy.
49. What an athlete must do when they throw.
51. Related to U.S. travel.

52. Basket, soft, base, etc.
53. Amanda Gorman's role (abbr.)
55. Breaking News Network (abbr.)
56. The main character of the popular Netflix show "You."
59. A two season Netflix show.

Visit thewarrioronline.com for answers.

Spider-Verse Effect Changes Animation

by Dasun Panapitiya '24

Animation is a revolutionary medium, first popularized by Disney animated shorts and films like *Steamboat Willie* (1928) and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). In comparison to the very limited creativity of live action at the time, animation represented a fantastical experience capable of allowing entertainment to bloom. Then, the growth of 3D animation through Pixar's iconic *Toy Story* (1995) revolutionized entertainment once again. Later on, the increased use of computer-generated imagery (CGI) in live action films would influence animation to strive towards realism, forging its previous exaggerated elements.

The 2010s shifted away from this trend of hyperrealism with the release of the Disney short, *Paperman* (2012), and Sony's hit feature film, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* (2018). The animation style shared by these films blend traditional hand-drawn animation with computer-based 3D animation. Not only did *Spider-Verse* introduce this experimental and obscure method of animation to the public eye, but it was also executed in a memorable manner, incorporating elements such as frame-rate changes and Ben-Day dots to make the movie resemble a comic book. Animation previously strived toward hyperrealism, but this movie reminded people of what animation really was: exaggerative and entertaining art.

Spider-Verse's popularity allowed it to be renewed for a sequel, *Spider-Man: Across The Spider-Verse*, which comes out this year on June 2. Recently, its influential art style has been seen in movies like *The Mitchells vs. the Machines* (2021), Kid Cudi's *Entergalactic* (2022), and Dreamworks' *Puss in Boots: The Last*



Wish (2022). Chris Miller and Phil Lord are the founders of this "Spider-Verse" effect, as many reviewers call it. In an interview with Vulture, Danny Dimain, a visual effects (VFX) supervisor, explained how Miller and Lord "wanted to find a new visual language with which to tell superhero stories." They ensured that the animation was out-there, but not so much that it became disconnected from the story. Lord and Miller previously worked on 2014's *The Lego Movie* and were the minds behind its entirely Lego based world, from the water to the sky. It was one of the aspects that made that movie so special, so they have some credibility when it comes to making a world come to life.

Many argue that *Spider-Verse* didn't just change animation, it

saved it. Fans of animated movies and critics alike have started getting tired of multimedia conglomerates like Disney using 3D animation and hyper realistic environments. In an interview with Polygon, Pierre Perifel, director of 2022's *The Bad Guys*, said, "Because I find [usual CGI] ... 'boring' is probably excessive, but I want to see something different" when explaining his deviation from standard animation in his film. While realism may have worked to obtain positive reception decades ago, it now feels overused and formulaic. Whereas Disney movies moved toward utilizing life-like animation, Lord and Miller made animation come to life. *Spider-Verse* made the animation landscape aware that everything does not need to look realistic in order to be good.

Daisy Jones Is a Strong Adaptation of the Book

by Gabi Admi '23

Daisy Jones & The Six started as a 2019 novel by best-selling author Taylor Jenkins-Reid. In that same year, Reese Witherspoon's production company, Hello Sunshine, obtained the rights to bring the novel to life on the screen. Now streaming on Amazon Prime as a 10-episode series, the narrative is depicted in the form of a documentary in which the 1970s rock band Daisy Jones & The Six recount their memories of how the band formed and later tragically split. Riley Keogh stars as Daisy Jones, a reckless and free-spirited girl, and Sam Claflin stars as Billy Dunne, the uptight and controlling leader of the fictional band The Six. Both Daisy and Billy struggle with addiction and childhood trauma, which both simultaneously connect them and put a strain on their relationship. Reportedly, the fictional relationship between Daisy and Billy is loosely based on Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham's romance as members of Fleetwood Mac.

Some aspects of the novel that were altered, added, and left behind in the adaptation. Nevertheless, the series manages to capture all of the complicated feelings the bandmates felt toward themselves and each other. Traditionally, books tend to be better than their on-screen adaptations, likely because the show or movie never quite matches how the reader envisioned the characters or settings in the book. And yet in this show, I personally was astounded at how well the show's creators captured the vibe of the novel. I also love how the show performs the band's songs and makes them impressive and enjoyable enough that they seem

like *real* songs for an actual 1970s band.

While I loved the first six episodes, there were things I would do differently. Straight off the bat, the actor Claflin is noticeably older than his character in the book. I also had concerns regarding how they depicted Billy's relationship with his wife, Camilla. The book focuses a lot on Camilla's feelings toward Billy and their family and while they have issues, they seem to understand one another. In the series, however, there is a disconnect between them when it's that sense of understanding that made their relationship so powerful in the book. I hope in the remaining four episodes, Camilla's and Billy's relationship is depicted with more complexity than thus far. In the book, the documentary takes place some 20 years after the band broke up, from 2012-2020. It's never said in the series when the documentary takes place, but the actors in the series look like they have hardly aged when they should be in their 50s when they're being interviewed. Lastly, the series is missing an entire band member: Pete. It's understandable why they didn't include Pete in the series because he didn't have a big storyline. But, it still makes it confusing since the band is "The Six" and there are five members.

Despite these flaws, the first half of *Daisy Jones & The Six* is emotional and intense. It tells a story of heartbreak, addiction, and the importance of family. If you like complex relationships and 70s rock and roll, first read the novel and then watch the series of *Daisy Jones & The Six*.

Grade: B+

The Last of Us Lives Up to Game's Lofty Reputation

by Jordan Costolo '25

In 2013 the video game producers Naughty Dog created *The Last of Us*, an action-adventure game that went on to win numerous awards not only for its gameplay but also for the story and character development of its main cast. On January 15, a TV show based and named off of *The Last of Us* premiered on HBO Max. Both the game and show are about a world ravaged by zombies, and the plot follows Joel Baker (Pedro Pascal) escorting a teenage girl named Ellie (Bella Ramsey) through the wasteland, protecting her from infected and humans alike, as she may be the only way to find a cure. Along the way they encounter not only deadly zombies but also other hostile humans.

The show pays homage to the original game, partly because the original producer of the game Neil Druckmann co-created the series with Craig Mazin, producer on the series *Chernobyl*. The series is so similar to the point



where some shots are almost completely the same as cutscenes in the game. Both Pascal and Ramsey navigate their characters well, creating a sense of realism in their emoting and their growing father-daughter like relationship. The strong emotion viewers start to feel for the characters helps get across the pain and sadness which are common in the world of both the game and show. Almost every

character in the show is realistically portrayed, making it hard to not feel a full range of emotions about each of them, including even the antagonists.

In a world where zombies seem like they would be the main focus, *The Last of Us* follows the human aspects of survival. The desperation created by these circumstances brings out both the worst and best in the people,

creating enemies not only in the form of zombies, as well as raiders and savages. Another thing that is different from most other shows involving the apocalypse is that *The Last of Us* shows the process of how the world decays over time. Other shows or movies just show the post apocalyptic landscape, while this show presents how the world itself would crumble step by step, making the

world feel bigger and more realistic, differentiating itself from other zombie media.

Speaking of the world around the characters, the effects and landscape throughout the show create a beautiful backdrop for the characters to travel through. The show is full of wide sweeping shots to show off the beautiful and sometimes eerie, abandoned landscapes. The infected look disgusting, just as they should, either decaying or being without most of their former human features.

The Last of Us combines positive aspects from the game and a cast that really does care about the story they're depicting. Video game movies have been common in the past with often extremely low, or at best, mediocre reviews. This newer format of a streaming show based on a video game offers the way to more freely adapt more interactive stories.

Grade: A

New Paramore Album Showcases Band's Maturity

by Katie Gough '23

Paramore came storming back after a five-year hiatus this February with their new album, *This is Why*. With 10 tracks that explore themes like mental health, mass media, and aging against a post-pandemic backdrop, the project is a complex look into lead singer Hayley Williams' mindset: what's changed over the years and what's stayed the same. While the new album feels unmistakably Paramore—their iconic pop punk sound rings through on most songs—the band takes *This is Why* as an opportunity to redefine itself lyrically.

The past few years have seen a resurgence in popularity of Paramore's classic sound from the mid-2000's and 2010's, with many young artists drawing influence from its music. Olivia Rodrigo's hit "Good 4 U" even gives a writer's credit to Paramore for its similarity to "Misery Business," a song Williams wrote at 17 and now refuses to play on tour due to sexist themes in the lyrics.

Now 34 years old, Williams' growth as a songwriter shines through on *This is Why* which feels uniquely adult in its reflection on life and the world as a whole. Its title track is a force

of an opener, setting the album's tone with its rock feel and catchy chorus. Especially in its first half, the album does not shy away from getting political. Williams wrote the song "The News," for instance, in response to the current war in Ukraine, including the lyric "I worry and I give money and I feel useless behind this computer," which feels especially relatable in a world where it is easy to feel powerless and overwhelmed by negative headlines.

While the lyrics are completely different thematically from any of the band's previous works, most of the songs' production still sounds like old Paramore, with strong guitars throughout. Though the album is far from boring, many tracks do lack the catchy hooks and melodies that made Paramore such a force in its first few albums, with lyrics that feel repetitive, monotonous, and a little on-the-nose in moments. "Running out of Time" for instance, falls somewhat flat, standing as a very literal description of Williams being late to things.

The album finds solid ground in the second half, though, coming to a particularly vulnerable moment in "Liar," a soft look into



Williams' insecurities. The following track "Crave" is a bitter-sweet acceptance of the singer's mistakes and triumphs in the form of a promise that she wouldn't change a thing about her journey.

Paramore's iconic place among the trailblazers of 2000's

and 2010's pop punk and alternative rock gave *This is Why* a lot to live up to. With a strong backing production and lyrics that, for the most part, offer an insightful look into Williams' mindset about navigating getting older in today's world, "This is Why" is a trium-

phant redirection of Paramore's classic rage towards new themes that match their new stage of life. It's graceful aging and it's worth a listen.

Grade: B+



Quantumania Is a Tangled Mess of Setups

by Liam Trump '24

Following up two far smaller scale films—*Ant-Man* (2015) and *Ant-Man and the Wasp* (2018), *Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania* promises to widen the horizons of the franchise and be the first step into Marvel Studios' Phase 5, the next chapter in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU). With an introduction of the next Avengers movie's title villain, Kang (Jonathan Majors) to the silver screen, a more thorough exploration of the previously touched on Quantum Realm, and a better look into Scott Lang's (Paul Rudd) relationship with his daughter Cassie (Kathryn Newton) AKA Stature, *Quantumania* had a considerable amount of ground to cover. With so many vital story beats for the greater universe mixed in with smaller character moments, the film sadly comes across as a balancing act that fails to properly explore any one of these aspects with any real depth.

The story follows Scott as

he and his family get sucked into the Quantum Realm, a universe that exists at the microscopic level. There, they meet the brutal dictator Kang, who, after being banished to the Quantum Realm, has created an empire that has stripped the freedom of its inhabitants. This eventually leads to a revolution against Kang where Scott, Cassie, Hope (Evangeline Lilly), Janet (Michelle Pfeiffer), and Hank (Michael Douglas) fight alongside a band of freedom fighters to liberate the Quantum Realm.

Seemingly a simple plot progression, *Quantumania* struggles to adequately develop its core cast of characters. With the exception of Kang, who is portrayed by an extremely competent Majors, the five main protagonists come across as one note, lacking much nuance and behaving more as cogs to wheel the plot forward than anything substantial. The performances aren't too special either, with Newton, a newcomer to the MCU, sticking out as the most awkward in her line deliv-

ery, hampered by the near constant green-screen backgrounds and CGI effects she has to interact with.

The Quantum Realm itself has such little personality, and is yet another example of the typical modern sci-fi fare that's more focused on grand-scale effects and eye-catching creature designs than giving the world its own identity. Outside of a fairly entertaining heist scene toward the middle of the film, most of the sequences are bland and forgettable.

The previous two *Ant-Man* movies, even with their flaws, weren't bogged down with endless setup for the future. And even with an undoubtedly well-written main villain, *Quantumania* is still a bloated mess that's more interested in preparing audiences for the upcoming projects than telling a compelling story on its own.

Grade: C-

Cracker Island Struggles To Meet High Expectations

by Audrey Farris '25

This February, alternative-rock band Gorillaz released their eighth studio album, *Cracker Island*, a considerably more mellow effort than their previous albums and also lacking the variety that is commonplace in Gorillaz' discography. Gorillaz is known for frequent use of featured artists throughout their various albums, and typically they are able to sufficiently incorporate different artists' sounds or feels. This being said, Gorillaz left much to be desired with the incredibly uniform-sounding *Cracker Island*.

The album has a prominent guest list, including features from Stevie Nicks, Tame Impala, and Bad Bunny. Unfortunately, the songs with featured artists tend to be the album's weak points. "Oil" featuring Nicks is full of predictable synth progressions and discordant harmonies between Nicks and Damon Albarn, the band's lead singer. "Tormenta" featuring Bad Bunny feels out of place and disrupts the little flow the album did have. But by far the biggest letdown was the last song on the album, "Possession Island" featuring Beck, that without Beck would sound exactly the same.

The fact that Gorillaz fails to deliver on their songs with featured artists is surprising, considering that their last album, *Song Machine, Season One: Strange Timez* was entirely songs with featured artists and is incredible. The main difference between *Song Machine* and *Cracker Island* is that the features on *Cracker Island* barely feel like features,

they lack a prominent part or feel from each featured artist.

Though the majority of the album falls flat, there are some highlights. The album's lead single "Cracker Island" featuring Thundercat is one of the better songs and showcases characteristic Thundercat bass lines throughout the whole song. "New Gold" featuring Tame Impala and Bootie Brown is easily the best song on the album, combining the indie feel of Tame Impala with fitting rap verses from Bootie Brown. It has the familiar, alternative Gorillaz sound that is missing from the rest of the album.

Nothing is more disappointing than a band releasing an album that barely feels like the band, but *Cracker Island* is a prime example of this. While it doesn't not sound like Gorillaz, it sounds closer to if someone tried to recreate a Gorillaz-esque album only based on "Melancholy Hill" (a song off of their album *Plastic Beach*) and seriously failed. Gorillaz has fleshed out their own universe of sound where they could make anything they wanted to, and this time they played it safe, ultimately leading to the downfall of the album. The routine drum beats, chord progressions, and synth patterns, combined with the utterly disappointing feature songs, make *Cracker Island* into an album not worth writing home about.

Grade: D

Ticketmaster Under Fire for Mishaps and Bullying

by Tatiana Rodriguez '23

The entertainment company Ticketmaster continues to face fallout from its miscues for Taylor Swift’s “Eras Tour” last summer when the general sale of tickets had to be canceled since the event sold out during the presale. The general sale was the only opportunity for most fans to get tickets because they already were locked out of the presale. As a result of the fiasco, a group of fans banded together to sue Ticketmaster’s parent company, Live Nation Entertainment.

Swift fans argue that Ticketmaster and Live Nation Entertainment are lying about their ability to satisfy high demands, charging extremely high fees, and violating antitrust laws because they have no other competition. This final allegation centers on the belief that Ticketmaster and Live Nation Entertainment never should have merged since they essentially have become a monopoly in the live music industry.

The ticket sales debacle for Swift’s tour is not the only time Ticketmaster has let artists and their fans down. Ticketmaster had problems during Bad Bunny’s concert in Mexico City last December when hundreds of legitimate tickets were refused at the gate. Ticketmaster claimed that it was due to the excess number of fake tickets that were being bought, especially in Mexico, that caused the website to malfunction

and ruin the valid tickets that people bought for the show. In this case, Ticketmaster reimbursed fans with an extra 20-percent compensation fee for the inconvenience.

Ticketmaster’s problems caught the attention of U.S. senators who called witnesses to a hearing to explore whether the merger of Ticketmaster and Live Nation Entertainment constitutes a monopoly. During the hearing, senators also questioned whether the company is bullying venue companies into working with them. This line of questioning was supported after Justice Department investigators found that Live Nation threatened venues with withholding tours if they didn’t sign up with Ticketmaster. Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) brought up the point that such actions constitute a monopoly in which the promoter of a concert (Live Nation) is requiring that a venue use one ticket company (Ticketmaster).

Live Nation representatives argued that the company does in fact have competition from rivals like SeatGeek. They also constantly tried to blame bots for ticket malfunctions, to which senators asked if a huge company should have a code or procedure to determine whether it was a bot or a real person trying to buy tickets. Senators warned Ticketmaster that they will carefully watch how Ticketmaster handles Beyonce’s upcoming tour.



After Four Seasons, *You* Is Feeling Repetitive

by Maggie Reese '24

The character Joe Goldberg (Penn Badgley) isn’t the only one who likes to change his identity. Netflix’s *You* shifts each season, too, transforming to a setting in a new city with a different cast of characters each time. But whether he’s surrounded by LA hipsters or suburban Momfluencers, Joe’s own refusal to change makes each season less exciting than the last. How many times can Goldberg get away with murder before viewers grow tired of his endless luck and privilege? Through its first three seasons, *You* had been an obsessive show to watch—and just like Joe, the show was also smart enough to adopt new disguises to pull in viewers. Even with new twists, Season 4 of *You* still feels like a show that is getting old.

In season 4, Joe, now going by “Professor Jonathan Moore” and lecturing unsuspecting students at a British university, has convinced himself that he has turned over a new, less murderous leaf. Joe doesn’t think of himself

as a murderer, in spite of the objective fact that he is one. With Marianne (Tati Gabrille) from last season now out of Joe’s grasp and presumably living a safer life with her daughter in Paris, Joe’s attention seems to be shifting more and more onto his wealthy new neighbor Kate (Charlotte Ritchie). Joe’s new apartment just so happens to provide the perfect viewing spot to spy on her more intimate moments. But he’s looking away, mostly, and trying to prove that he’s a better person now.

Joe finds himself unexpectedly obligated to spend time with Kate after he saves her from being mugged and is introduced to her insufferable friends at a very exclusive club. He predictably hates them all with the exception of Rhys (Ed Speleers), who isn’t a beneficiary of generational wealth. A night gets out of control after some shots of absinthe and when Joe wakes up, he discovers a body on his kitchen table. He has a stalker of his own, a “you” sending him menacing, anony-

mous texts and trying to frame him for various crimes--someone who knows his real identity and all the dirty secrets from his past.

Joe tries to weed out the culprit after receiving some wisdom from one of his students about the mystery genre. *You* make its “eat the rich” themes clear with a literal Eat the Rich killer who rises to infamy after killing off a few members of Joe’s affluent clique.

With the last few episodes of *You*, the viewer could cling to the hope that Joe Goldberg was someone besides the murderer/stalker at the heart of the season. The finale of Season 4 answers a lot of questions, leaving some characters dead, some in prison, and others on the run. And to its credit, there also is a twist that shocks viewers. Joe is no longer running from his past and is in a seemingly happy relationship, but does this mean happily ever-after for the murderer?

Grade: C+

Olney Car Care

AUTO REPAIR AND SERVICE

www.Olneycarcare.com

in Business for 50+ years!

501 Olney Sandy Spring Rd

Maryland State Inspection location

Family Owned and Operated



240-342-2528

Boys Basketball Ends Season with a Trip to State Semifinals

by Evan Joseph '23

The boys basketball team's season came to its end with a 58-51 loss to Meade in the 4A State Semifinals on March 9. In the game, the Warriors rallied after facing a large deficit for most of the game, but it was too little, too late. The appearance in a state semi-final capped off an excellent season for the Warriors in which they picked up 10 more regular season wins than the previous year, topped off with a much deeper playoff run ending with them one game from making the State Championship.

Prior to the State Semifinals, Sherwood had been building momentum from finally edging out rival Blake 64-52 in their third match-up of the year and beating Bowie 62-46 in the State Quarterfinals. But it was a lack of rebounding and experience that eventually led to the loss to Meade, who lost 72-56 in the finals to Parkville.

"We knew Meade had great experience, and they were a great rebounding team," said Coach Thomas Sheahin "We wanted to



Sophomore guard Evin Thompson sizes up defender in 62-46 victory over Bowie in the State Quarterfinals.

be physical and keep them off the boards. That did not happen in our game, and it led them to get second shots on almost every possession. Meade missed a lot of their first shots, but you can't give a good team second chances to score."

Even with the loss, the Warriors got to walk away knowing they were the first Sherwood team to make it to the State Semifinals

in basketball since 2012. "Winning the region is hard to do, and nobody can ever take that away from our team. It will be placed on the banner in the gym, and our team will see it every time we are in the gym," said Sheahin.

The Warriors began the season loaded with potential but with a number of unknowns. "I really think as a team, we learned what it took to win. We learned what it

meant to be winners," said sophomore Evin Thompson. "It was awesome. Through our coaches' experiences, we were able to just learn from them what it really meant to win."

Sherwood had a season where they thrived by strengthening their press defense which caused a lot of turnovers. By using a more aggressive defensive strategy and working stronger as

a team, they improved regular season statistics to only allow 51.7 points per game (ppg) this season from 67.3 last season

"As a team at first, we weren't one; we weren't close together," continued Thompson. "But as the season went on and games started happening, guys started going to IHOP together, doing different activities outside of basketball. Our team really started to grow because it's not just the players on the court but the guys on the bench too who support and help us too, and I think that really helped us this season."

This chemistry contributed to them becoming an unselfish team and made them a much more cohesive unit on both ends. The Warriors plan to take this year as a learning experience and hope to get themselves a State Championship next season when they will play in the 3A Division.

"Our team worked extremely hard in the off-season, and it was the reason we got to this point; we will work even harder to win the state championship next year," added Sheahin.

Sherwood's Corollary Sports Offer More Accessibility and Community

by Katie Gough '23

Most MCPS schools including Sherwood offer three interscholastic corollary sports: handball in the fall, bocce in the winter, and applied softball in the spring. Each is a co-ed varsity sport that ranges from around 12-20 players and offers the same competitive schedule as other MCPS sports, with playoffs and a championship game towards the end of the season.

The function of these programs is to make athletics more accessible to students of all ability levels. Because these sports do not receive as much community attention as other Sherwood varsity teams, it is a common misconception that the corollary sports are only for disabled and special-ed students. In reality, students of all abilities choose corollary sports because they are less demanding and more inclusive than other MCPS sports. Especially at schools like Sherwood, it can be very difficult for students to make their first-choice sports team.

"What I tell all my students is that, due to the caliber of athletes at Sherwood high school, they could be starting varsity athletes at other schools and not even make our JV team," said special educator Katie Ross, who has been coaching all three teams at Sherwood for the past fifteen years. "The whole point of this is to increase athletic participation. My team ends up being kids that typically have jobs, are in the play, are in Rock 'n' Roll and want to do more than one thing so they get to have a three to four day a week commitment instead of a six day a week commitment and still get a varsity letter."



Sophomore captain Colin Laich tosses bocce in a match vs. Watkins Mill.

While some students do all three, many students choose one or two corollary sports a year. Fall handball is the most fast-paced and competitive sport of the three, while bocce is the most easily accessible to all players, including students in wheelchairs and non-verbal students. Allied softball falls somewhere in the middle.

Founded in 2011 by former MCPS athletics director and Olney local Duke Beattie, the corollary sports program has been helping students of all ability levels find an athletic community for over a decade. Because the point is to make athletic participation available to everyone, students cannot join the teams once they have played on a non-corollary MCPS varsity team. Other than that, the corollary sports have the same requirements for grades, age, and physical forms as any other sport.

Across her years coaching, Ross has found that watching friendship and maturity develop among her players has been an extremely rewarding experience. "These kids come in trying to find themselves and find a place to

belong which is the same as any other sport or team and by the end they're like family," said Ross "Even when kids leave and make other sports, they come back and manage for me or help in other capacities."

The corollary sports have created tight-knit groups of athletes that stay in touch even after they graduate. "My corollary sports crew still goes out to dinners together, still does outings," said Ross. "I just got married and some of them came to my wedding."

The strength of the Sherwood corollaries is not only reflected by its community bond, but its performance in competitions. "We're good," said Ross "If you look at our banners in the gym you can see we have several division championships, state championships for bocce, and we're reigning county champions for co-ed softball."

It will be exciting to track the allied softball team's performance this Spring. Next year, MCPS will change the Fall corollary sport from handball to either pickleball, allied tennis, or floor hockey.

The Rumors Are True: Sherwood Moves from 4A to 3A Starting Next Year

by Perri Williams '23

Due to decline in Sherwood's overall enrollment over the past few years, Sherwood's athletic teams will move from state classification 4A to 3A beginning next school year. The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) states in its handbook that, "For the purpose of parity in competition in meets and tournaments administered by the MPSSAA, member schools shall be divided into classifications based on enrollment."

The impact of the change in classification will be most noticeable when the playoffs come around next fall. "In terms of state tournament play, this means that we will now compete in the playoffs against other 3A schools; however, it does not mean that the traditional rivalries, (even those with 4A schools) will be eliminated from our schedules," said Sherwood Athletic Director Jason Woodward. "When the county creates athletic schedules, they consider school size, location, and rivalries. We play out of division teams in all sports"

The MPSSAA regions are created based on strict school size and enrollment guidelines. Those classifications are created by the state of Maryland, while divisions are controlled by each individual county. According to Woodward, the makeup of countywide divisions tend to be subject to change every two years, depending on the sport and its overall involvement at each school. Teams such as Sherwood's Poms and Cheer squads will not be affected by the new 3A classification and will stay in whatever division they

have competed in the past. Football, which had been competing in a 3A/4A state playoff bracket the past few seasons, will switch to the 3A state playoff bracket.

Woodward said that MCPS Athletics tries to maintain sports rivalries between schools. "MCPS always asks about rivalries in their scheduling request forms," explained Woodward. "MCPS athletics knows the value of competitive games that school communities are invested in. Individual sports can identify "rivals" and whenever possible, MCPS creates a schedule that sees those schools competing. Hopefully that means we will continue to see those rivals in upcoming regular season games' we just may not see them anymore in the state playoffs."

Schedules are still being created and finalized for next school year. What will be interesting to see is how players, coaches, and parents feel about the changes, especially when some seem confused about how the state tournament brackets work. However, some Sherwood athletes already are thinking about who they might face in the regular season and in the playoffs, with speculation that the 3A classification actually will be more challenging than 4A for some sports. On the other hand, 3A could present new rivalries.

"I'm super excited for next year's soccer season and I know next year's [girls soccer] team will be ready to see new competition. Of course, I still hope we will get to see our old 4A rivals like Blake and Blair in the regular season next year," said junior defender Marley Hillman.

Off-the-Field Turmoil Complicates Top Women’s Teams’ Chances in World Cup

by Sydney Wiser ‘24

It has been 95 days since the men’s World Cup ended in a thrilling penalty kick shootout, and soccer fans are now gearing up for another high-profile tournament, the Women’s World Cup (WWC). The success of the 2019 WWC, where global viewership was 1.12 billion and the level of competition was deep, showed the growth of the women’s game. In response to the 2019 success, FIFA expanded the number of teams that can compete in this year’s WWC from 24 to 32, which is the number of teams that compete in the men’s World Cup. This change brought excitement to fans who are ready to see the top women’s teams compete at the highest level.

However, as the WWC approaches, many of the top teams face off-the-field challenges from their federations over wage inequality and coaching decisions. These conflicts have raised questions about the ability of some of the best teams in the world to hold their own in the WWC.

Arguably the most anticipated match of the 2019 WWC was the faceoff between the U.S. Women’s National Team (USWNT) and the host nation, France, in the quarterfinals. Since that 2-1 defeat, French fans have eagerly awaited a WWC rematch. However, recent conflicts within the federation have caused three of France’s top players, including longtime captain Wendie Renard, to opt out of the tournament. Renard explained her decision on social media, citing reluctance to support the current national team “system” and concerns over her mental health in the national team environment. Her teammates, forwards Kadidiatou Diani and Marie-Antoinette Katoto, echoed these concerns. Their actions have put pressure on the French Football Federation to fire head coach Corinne Diacre just five



Canadian players protest inadequate funding and unfair treatment.

months before the WWC.

The up-and-coming Spanish national team is ranked seventh in the world and has what many consider the “golden generation” of Spanish players. As they’ve climbed FIFA’s rankings, fans are excited to see what this WWC has in store for them. In September, though, 15 of their senior players resigned from the team after a dispute with the Royal Spanish Football Federation (RSFF). Captain Irene Paredes and back-to-back Ballon d’Or winner, Alexia Putellas, also have not represented Spain after sharing frustrations about head coach, Jorge Vilda, with the RSFF. The RSFF has since released a public statement backing Vilda and the Spanish national team is without 17 of their best players.

The Canadian women’s national team is the reigning Olympic champion and has built a strong side ahead of the WWC. However, the team has struggled with their federation, Canada Soccer, over budget cuts. The players requested the same level of investment from their federation that the men received during their World Cup year but were ignored. They attempted to

boycott the She Believes Cup this February but, after facing threats of litigation from Canada Soccer, they ultimately participated in the tournament where they finished last. While the players and federation reached an agreement over the 2022 budget on March 3, a collective bargaining agreement, which is the end goal for players, has not been finalized.

After years of disputes with their federation, the USWNT secured a collective bargaining agreement last year which guaranteed the team equal pay and investment. However, the National Women’s Soccer League (NWSL), where the majority of USWNT players play, is still dealing with the aftermath of multiple coaching abuse scandals. Two seasons ago, five coaches were fired for sexual and verbal abuse. The NWSL players used the popularity the league gained after the USWNT won the 2019 WWC trophy as a way to put pressure on league officials to make changes. Now, the pressure is on the young USWNT team to keep the momentum going as they head into the 2023 WWC, which begins on July 20 in New Zealand and Australia.

Perspective

Refs Are Human, Too

by Thomas Fenner ‘24

Referees in professional sports have always been a common source of disagreement and frustration among fans and players regarding their power over the game. Whether it’s a fan base whining about the officials blowing a game or a superstar player begging for a foul with the game on the line, refs have regularly been blamed for some of the inconsistencies in professional sports.

It seems like the criticism of referees is at an all time high right now, especially with huge sporting events like the Super Bowl having controversy over calls. In the final minutes of the Super Bowl between the Kansas City Chiefs and the Philadelphia Eagles, cornerback James Bradberry was flagged for a hold on Chiefs’ wide receiver JuJu Smith-Schuster. The holding call essentially clinched the win for the Chiefs, giving the Eagles only a few seconds of time on the clock when they would eventually get the ball back. Inevitably, viewers across the NFL landscape were not happy with the call. Fans of both the Eagles and those hoping for an exciting ending argued that the hold was insignificant and should have been let go.

Holding is one of the most subjective calls in all of sports, as practically every time it’s called, you could argue it the other way. While grabbing and tugging on the jersey like the one called does happen on practically every play in football, the referees made the right call, even if it was the difficult one. Even Bradberry admitted later in an interview that he was guilty of committing the penalty and that it was the right call. “It was a holding. I tugged his jersey. I was hoping they would let it slide,” Bradberry said. While it is

one of the most infuriating ways for your favorite team to lose a big game, referees making unpopular calls has always been and will always be a part of sports.

Referees are oftentimes an enemy in the eyes of fans, but what many fail to consider is the fact that they make mistakes just as the players do. NFL commissioner Roger Goodell doesn’t agree with what the crowd is saying about officiating. “For us, when you look at officiating, I don’t think it’s ever been better in the league,” Goodell said. Opinions on refereeing is subjective most of the time, and usually depends on whether someone’s favorite team got the benefit of the call or not. However, a debate has recently grown around the sports community regarding changing the rules to change the level that referees can dictate the game. Leagues like the MLB may soon make the switch to remove umpires and lean on technology to make calls, similar to how they have been experimenting in the minor leagues. For a league like the NFL or NBA, the commonly proposed solution by critics is to allow for any play to be reviewable. However, a rule like this would dramatically slow down what is already a dragged out version of the sport in the case of the NBA.

Removing referees entirely is not the answer. The inconsistency of referees, while annoying at times, actually adds to the dramatic effect of all sports. The way an official calls a game can change how teams play any given night which causes more exciting outcomes and differences in playstyle. Removing the human element from sports will create a less enticing game for fans and will likely cause stagnant ends to games.

High School Lacrosse Rankings Favor Private Schools

by Alex Lacey ‘24

Maryland is well known for being a lacrosse hotbed, and it’s even the state’s official team sport. So it’s no surprise that the University of Maryland Terrapins have won 11 national championships on the men’s side and 15 on the women’s side since lacrosse became a NCAA-sanctioned sport in 1971. From pro players down to the youth level, history speaks for itself. However, inequities have emerged over the sport’s long history in Maryland. Although the rest of the state has closed the gap with the Eastern Shore in producing talented lacrosse players, there is a notable divide in the level of reputation and respect between private and public high school lacrosse programs in the metropolitan D.C. area.

In the previous two years, the DMVLACROSSE preseason top 10 has exclusively included private institutions, with the top 20

containing no more than four or five public schools. The disparity in high school rankings is unlikely to change. Most public schools are not even mentioned on Inside Lacrosse. MaxPreps is much the same, with only private schools in the top 10 last year and one public school in the top 15.

Top public schools like Churchill, Sherwood, Severna Park, and Kent Island continually are ranked far lower than average private schools such as Severn School, Gilman, St. Albans, and Episcopal in previous rankings by websites. Despite several losses to unranked schools, private schools like SJC, Gonzaga, and Georgetown Prep remain in the top five due to historically winning seasons.

Part of the reason for the dominance of private schools in local rankings is that lacrosse remains an elitist sport; those who play it tend to be privileged. The Haudenosaunee tribe of Native



Severna Park faces off against Severn School last season in an exhibition.

Americans invented lacrosse but despite its humble origins, lacrosse on the East Coast, specifically in Maryland, is not very diverse. This holds especially true at private schools that have more funding and resources and therefore better lacrosse facilities.

But this does not always mean that private schools have all the best lacrosse players. Eliot

Dubic (Maryland), Rory Sullivan (UMBC), and Matthew Popeck (St. Joseph) are all Maryland public school athletes who star in Division I. Yet, several notable private school players, such as Paul Rabil, one of the best players of all time, went from Watkins Mill to Dematha for better recruitment. Similarly, Billy Dwan, a defenseman from Lutherville, played at

the private school Loyola Blakefield, and is currently at Syracuse. In Maryland alone, there are more than 1,250 current college lacrosse players, with more than 380 of them competing at the Division I level. Of those players, however, 70-80 percent come from private schools.

College coaches focus on private schools to stay ahead of the competition in recruiting and to see more recruits at any given game. On the one hand, this makes sense for a college coach to attend a game between two private schools that might have as many as 10 collegiate recruits on the field. However, such an approach might overlook that great player who is going largely unnoticed on a public school team that isn’t loaded with other top talent. In this sense, it is not clear if private schools simply have the majority of the best players or if those players have more visibility by attending those schools.

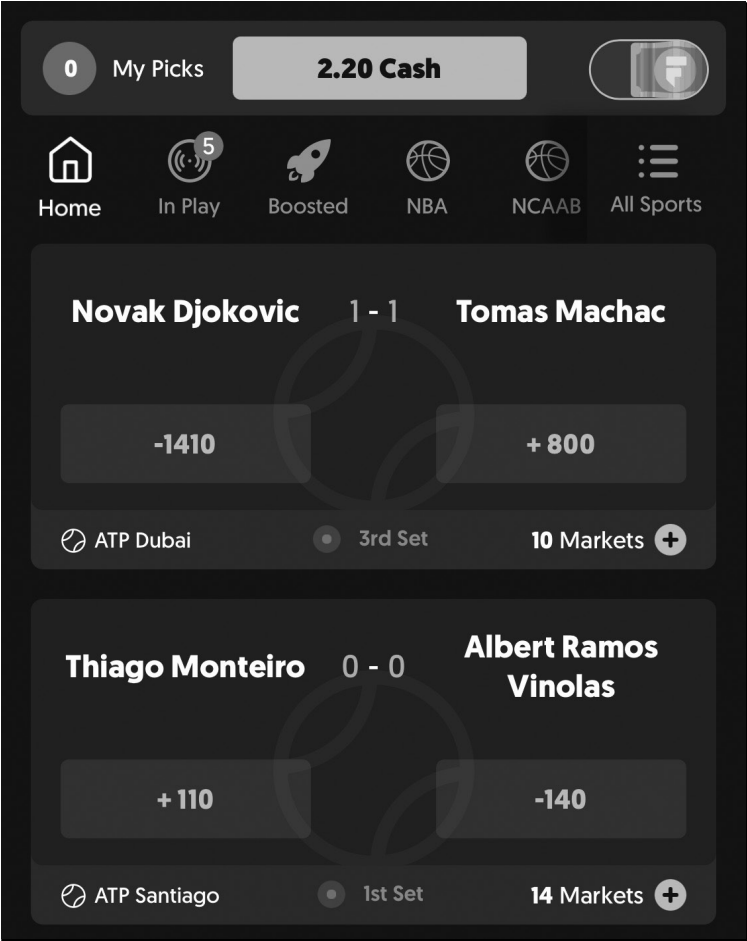
Simplicity of Sports Betting Leads to Increase in Sherwood

by Noah Bair '24
and Carter Braun '23

At the end of last year, in the first full month of legalized sports betting in Maryland, the state saw almost \$500 million wagered across all platforms. Since betting companies want to introduce potential gamblers to the industry, many implemented promotions when customers first register with a gambling app. Some of these potential incentives included better than normal odds on wagers and increased payouts. As a result of these promotional bets, \$70 million was spent by new gamblers being introduced to the betting industry. While the state requires bettors to be at least 21 years old, there are still alternatives that those under the legal age can use to scratch their gambling itch.

One that has risen in popularity throughout the country in recent months, but also in Sherwood, has been the app Fliff Sportsbook. Fliff is distinct from other wagering or gambling apps in that it does not require the user to pay money to make wagers. The app gives users one dollar for free every day, until the user reaches \$5 total, which can be used to place wagers without ever having to deposit any real money. Since it's not required that customers deposit money, Fliff is given the designation of a "sweepstakes" app rather than an official gambling app. Because of this, users don't have to input their social security and credit card information into the app (unlike official gambling apps), and people of any age can use Fliff.

While Fliff customers are al-



Fliff allows participants to easily place bets with the click of a button.

lowed to place wagers and accrue winnings, they're not allowed to deposit the money into a bank account until they're at least 18 years old. While it's against Fliff's terms of service, the app allows users to bet for years and stack up winnings and then deposit everything once they're 18. Realistically, this amount can be anywhere within the \$50-\$250 range. This phenomenon has caught on in Sherwood, with many students using Fliff for what seems like a harm-free way of betting and not losing any money since it's possible to lose everything but still

earn free money from the app every day. Senior Tyler Lynch is one of many students who have become hooked on the app in recent months. Lynch placed bets throughout the day, checking them hourly, explaining that "...the app gave me something to do when I was bored. I could use the money the app gives me and put it on a game going on, and then I could go watch that game. It was used for entertainment purposes, not to make a living." While it may be marketed as "just for fun," increased advertis-

ing and exposure to betting commercials have teens like Lynch being exposed to gambling on a daily basis. Betting apps are hook users by offering them incentives to join by making wagers seem easy to win and profitable, but incentivize depositing more and more money into the app to bet as time goes on. Sophomore Zach Harris has also been introduced to Fliff in the last months. Although he is only 15, he still places multiple bets a day, ranging from the Super Bowl all the way down to various semi-pro tennis tournaments. "Placing these bets keeps me energized, and makes watching sports more entertaining," he explained. Even though he's three years under the legal age to bet on Fliff, Harris is able to bet using the app because he says they "...don't know I am 15, and it is easy to lie in the app because they don't ask for your Social Security number or birth certificate until you want to cash out. So, I will wait until I'm 18 years old and have all this money saved up and then cash out." With betting on the rise, the number of people that have become addicted grows as well. The National Problem Gambling Helpline Network has seen a 45-percent increase in the number of calls to their helpline in the past year. This number is only expected to rise, as March sees one of the highest amounts of money wagered of any month with the NCAA Tournament going on. More than \$375 million was wagered on the college basketball tournament two years ago, and with the sports gambling market expanding, experts predict more than half a billion dollars could

be gambled on this year's March Madness. While gambling money might not be for everyone, filling out NCAA Tournament brackets are very popular even among casual sports fans. Nearly 80 million brackets are filled out every year, predicting the winners of each of the 63 games. While the odds are about one in 120 billion, millions of fans each year test their luck to see if they can fill out the perfect bracket. Friendly betting like these tournament brackets start as harmless, but can lead to the first steps on a path to a gambling addiction. The average person's brain doesn't develop until they're at least 25 years old, and if teenagers see gambling as harmless and risk-free when they're adolescents, they are at risk of developing a gambling problem once they have an income and their own money to wager with no limitations. With Maryland's Director of State Lottery and Gaming Control Agency Director John Martin expecting that the state's sports gambling program "will contribute approximately \$30 million per year to the State of Maryland," there are no signs of sports gambling in Maryland slowing down. Even with apps like Fliff where teens don't lose any money, everyone needs to be aware of when wagering goes from harmless fun to a risk for themselves and others. With constant exposure to advertisements, gambling companies work to hook teenagers and adults alike. Teens need to be aware of their habits, be vigilant, and know what their limits are when gambling to keep themselves safe.

Sweet Sixteen Staff Picks

Noah Bair '24

Led by a group of six seniors, the Longhorns are one of the most experienced teams left in the tournament. While Alabama and Kansas State have fantastic stars like Brandon Miller and Markquis Nowell, they lack the depth that Texas has. UConn has survived upset bids so far from Iona and Saint Mary's, but their team is bound to crack at some point. This is the first time head coach Dan Hurley has gotten them past the first round, and none of the Husky players have ever played in a tournament game after the first weekend. Texas interim head coach Rodney Terry has proven that he belongs among the best coaches in college basketball, and he has a team that is very capable of winning a championship.

Prediction: Texas 70 - Alabama 65

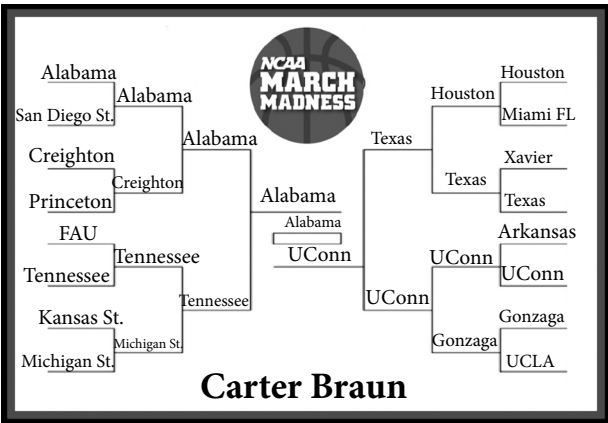


Noah Bair

Carter Braun '23

Averaging 21.5 points per victory in their first two rounds, Alabama has looked like the most dominant and consistent team in this tournament. Although teams such as UConn, Houston, and Texas look strong on both ends of the ball, the one-two combo of Jahvon Quinerly and Brandon Miller, with a plethora of 3 and D players and a solid big man in Charles Bédiako will be tough to overcome. Suffocating defense and timely scoring has been key to the Crimson Tide's success, and they have proven that they can continue their dominance and beat whichever team is in their way. After a year full of speculation and controversy within the program, coach Nate Oats and his team will silence the critics, and win their first ever championship.

Prediction: Alabama 72 - UConn 65

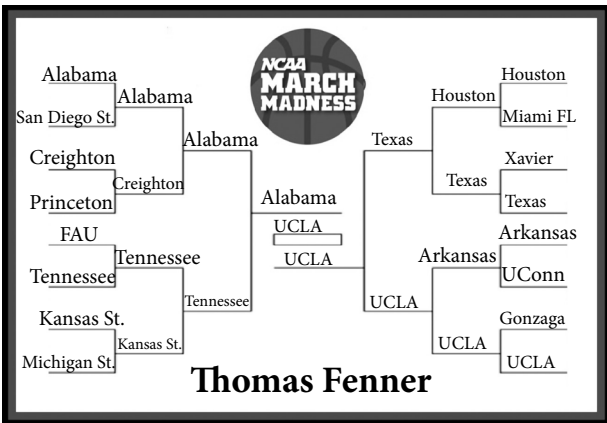


Carter Braun

Thomas Fenner '24

UCLA are battle tested and have built up momentum despite facing major injuries to the starting lineup. Led by senior Jaime Jaquez Jr., the Bruins are one of the most experienced squads still left in the tournament. Even with perimeter defender Jaylen Clark injured, Mick Cronin's team has played poised and battled through adversity. Alabama has rolled through their competition thus far, but their inexperience will cost them in the Final Four. Tennessee has one of the most physical defensive play styles in the country, but limited shotmaking will make it hard to compete with a higher-scoring team. Texas has looked shaky lately, as they shot just 1/13 from three in their second round matchup against Penn State.

Prediction: UCLA 75 - Alabama 70



Thomas Fenner

SPRING SPORTS PREVIEW

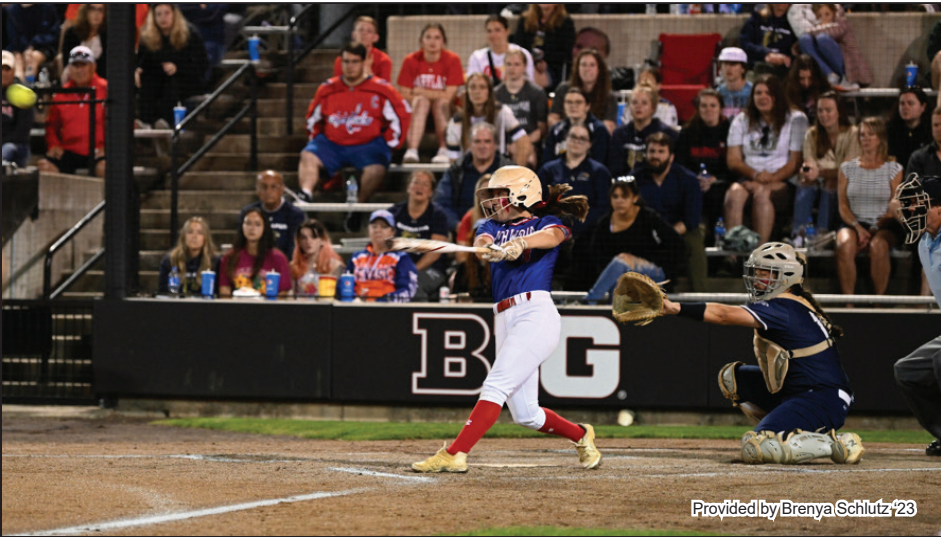
Softball Takes Aim at Another State Title with Repeat in Mind

by Maggie Reese '24

The softball team enters this season missing some of their biggest stars from last year’s state-championship team. Among other starters who graduated, Emily Siansky now plays for Division III at St Lawrence and Holly Rogers is at Montgomery College. Despite the loss of talent, the softball team has proven over the past decade that it can reload to always be a top contender for another state title.

“We lost some key seniors from last year, so every player on the team will need to step up and fill those roles,” said senior Brenya Schlutz. “Specifically, all of us seniors will need to step up as leaders and younger players will need to fill key positions like third base and right field.”

This season the Warriors are looking to return to the state final game after winning their 7th state championship title last spring. “We make sure we’re extremely focused at practice because we know that winning state again isn’t going to be handed to us,” said senior Katrina Hanson. “We know that in order to get another title we have to push ourselves at practice.” With their first game against Urbana on March 21 at home, the toughest games for the Warriors this season look to be Damascus on May 4, and Clarksburg on May 6. Come see your Lady Warriors this season on their road to repeat the success from last spring.



Senior centerfielder Brenya Schlutz rips a hit into left field in last year’s State Championship.

Girls Lacrosse Striving towards Another Appearance in States

by Dylan Sondike '24

After appearing in the 4A state semifinals last year, the girls lacrosse team will look to match that feat again or go even further. The Warriors will be tested tremendously this season as they will be without former star player, Brooke Walsh, and their four starting defenders, who all graduated last year. The team will rely on younger players to step up throughout the entire season.

“My juniors make up most of the team,” said Coach Kelly Hughes. “They will need to manage their games with patience and show leadership in the way they handle the pressure. My seniors on defense will be hopefully vocal and calm.”

Hughes noted that juniors Emma Walsh, Alexa Lyons, Savannah Weisman, Dani Watson, and sophomore Avery Graham will play key roles in the upcoming season. If the team can move the ball and score effectively in each of their games, they are positioned to go far into the playoffs once again. “I think that if we really work on our team play and find a way to connect, we have a really good chance at going as far as last year,” added Hughes.

The Warriors open their season at Urbana on March 21 and have their first home game on March 23 against Damascus. They will face their biggest challenges towards the end of the season when they visit B-CC on April 19 and against Walter Johnson on April 26, two of the counties strongest teams.

Baseball’s Eyes Set on Three-Peat

by Evan Joseph '23

Boys’ varsity baseball has high hopes for this year after coming off a 4A State Championship win last season. After beating Severna Park 11-0 in the title game in 2022, the Warriors will return key players such as seniors Ryan Bouma, Jack Andre, Ben Berger, Amari Allen, Brian Scott, and junior Mac Crismond. But a main challenge this year will be replacing the production of the players the Warriors lost to graduation like Jake Shalvi, Alex Escanilla, Dan Combs, Dylan Hughes, Leo Whalen, Scott Ervin, Niko Pernie, and Josh Hollowell.

“We have the talent to repeat but it won’t be easy. There are a lot of talented teams in the 4A,” said Coach Sean Davis. “We have a lot of players back but we are still figuring out where the younger guys fit in. Team chemistry is a very important factor.”

The key to success for this year’s team would be to play through their stars. The current team has multiple future college-level talents that should take the Warriors deep in the playoffs, including Frostburg State commit Ben Berger (pitcher), Maryland commit Brian Scott (outfield), Chipola commit Amari Allen (pitcher/first base), and pre-season all-state selection and Frostburg State commit Ryan Bouma (third base).

The Warriors opened their season at home on March 21 against Urbana. Early season matchups against Northwest and Churchill should both be great tests to see where the Warriors are as they embark on their quest for repeat championship.

Track and Field Optimistic for Upcoming Spring Season

by Alex Lacey '24

The outdoor track and field team returns a wealth of outstanding talent this season, including seniors Jack Link, JJ Singleton, and junior Leo Cantor, among others. Despite their prowess, the track and field team has struggled in States, scoring only one point last year when Link finished eighth in the high jump event with a leap of 5’10.

“On the 4x100, we just need one more piece but we can get it,” stated Cantor, who was a member of the relay that finished 15th at States last year. Strong returning distance runners such as Singleton, junior Sean Gravell, and senior Emily Zanni also will increase the Warriors’ chances to qualify for more events at States.

Key events this season include the Gator Invitational Meet on April 29 and the Katie Jenkins Invitational on May 6.

Boys Lacrosse Overcoming Loss of Graduated Seniors

by Carter Braun '23

A 14-3 season last year gave the Warriors hope that they could reach the 4A state title game for the first time in school history, but after a tight 10-8 loss in the state semifinals to the eventual state champions Churchill, the Warriors saw 16 seniors graduate. However, the Warriors return many star players such as senior attacker Drew Stahley (All-County 1st Team) and senior midfielder Jackson Derrick (All-County 2nd Team). In addition to just Stahley and Derrick, the team returns sophomore attacker Andrew Cavanaugh (1st Team All-County), junior midfielder Alex Lacey (1st Team All-County), and junior goal-tender Cooper Hawkins (2nd Team All-County).

“Underclassmen and first year starters will have to rise to the occasion this year for us,” said Derrick. “With two of our starting defenders graduating, and our other one being lost to an injury, junior Adam Masiky will have to step up big on defense and become a leader in order for us to have success this season.”

The Warriors will surely have an uphill battle to face this season if they want to continue their previous success and make another long run in the playoffs. Yet, the team has been on fire to start their preseason, cruising to wins over Richard Montgomery and Glenelg Country Day, and then beating River Hill and losing a tight one to reigning 2A State Champions Kent Island, located in Queen Anne’s County. Despite the loss of graduated seniors, the Warriors have shown no signs of regression and are one of the true contenders, yet again, to take home a State Championship this year.



Jackson Derrick carries the ball across midfield during last year’s win against Poolesville.

Boys and Girls Tennis Looking To Ace This Upcoming Season

by Lauren Frank '23

This season will certainly test both the boys and girls teams, as many star players from last year have since graduated. Nevertheless, both teams have a solid roster with a mix of new and experienced players, many of whom are underclassmen and returning senior players. With enough practice and consistency, both teams are hoping to win regionals and qualify for states, with at least one doubles and one singles.

After previously coaching the girls team for several seasons, Coach Michael King, a social studies teacher, is now in charge of the boys team after the previous coach retired. First time Sherwood tennis Coach Rebekah Byerly, a math teacher, is now taking over for the girls team. Both coaches are eager to begin training for the long road of competition heading their way.

“We have some high end Division I matches against Blair, RM, WJ and Wootton,” King said. “I personally don’t believe in looking at matches that are likely to result in wins, but we are going to approach every match on our schedule with a goal of playing our best.”

Senior Lizzie Abel, who’s one of the girl’s team captains, played singles last season and goes into this season as the top singles player. “Last year our doubles team got pretty far in the county championships, and for this year I’m hoping we can win regionals and maybe even go to states.”