

School Floods, Students and Teachers Left to Cope

by Anna Haas '23

Much to the surprise and annoyance of students, teachers, and parents alike, school resumed after winter break with the aftermath of a flood in the school. On December 27, the combination of an old system and frigid temperatures caused boiler pipes and a fire code sprinkler to burst on the first floor. Though maintenance crews were on site immediately after the event, the school was still suffering significant effects from the flooding upon students' return on January 3.

In addition to the many classrooms that were damaged, one of the most noticeable effects to many students and teachers was the stifling heat throughout the school. Unlike the water damage itself, the excessive heat as a result was not confined to the first floor but instead plagued most classrooms in the school. Even with the efforts of MCPS maintenance, who were on site all week, students and teachers did not see much improvement in their classrooms' climates for most of the first week back at school.

Also as a result of the flood was the damage to the school's fire alarm system. Since the sprinklers are tied to the fire alarm, the burst sprinkler caused the fire alarm to become unusable. The school has been on "fire watch" since returning to school while the system is being fixed. While the alarms are shut off, "security, building services, and administration have been walking the building at various times, keeping a log of areas, checking for safety, and obviously, fire hazards," said Principal Tim Britton.

As for the actual water damage, the art wing was the most affected. Many supplies and even artwork were damaged in the



Student artwork and supplies were put outside of Mrs. Spangle's flood-damaged room.

flood. "Some students lost artwork teachers had saved for the Art Show," said art teacher Michele Spangle.

The next most consequential point of damage was to the sound system in the Ertzman Theater. While the theater itself was left intact, there was significant damage to the amplifiers, according to music teacher Jonathan Dunn. "The only area impacted was the electrical cabinet that housed the amplifiers for the sound system," he said. "The county has done an assessment of the amplifiers and we are in the process of taking them to a repair shop to see if they can be fixed. If not, they will be replaced. The school has insurance that will cover that." Either way, Dunn has been told that the necessary fixes or replacements should be completed soon and should have no effect on Rock 'n' Roll Revival this March.

Along with irreplaceable artwork and expensive sound systems, many teachers faced difficulties when confronted with their damaged classrooms and supplies. Health Education teacher Heather Giovenco explained that at least 10 of her posters and trifolds were ruined and needed to be

redone. Damages also surpassed simply ruining supplies. "My couch, cushions, and rug all needed to be washed. All [my] ceiling tiles were replaced and there is water under the floor tiles and on the lights," said Giovenco.

Even though many teachers faced similar difficulties with their classrooms, all were initially told that no classroom changes would be necessary. However, many teachers and their classes took refuge in the Ertzman or the stadium during that first week back to school, if only to get away from the oppressive heat in the classrooms.

Since the events of the flood, there have also been concerns among parents regarding mold or mildew and the overall safety of their children being at school while the temperatures are so extreme. These concerns were often vocalized on the Class of 2023 Facebook page. An email from the school regarding some of the events of the flood was not sent out to parents until January 5, leading to many speculations and rumors. However, when the email came out, Britton assured parents that the school was safe for students and staff.

Internships Prove Popular among Sherwood Seniors

by Carter Braun '23

Rather than taking the common seven-class schedule required at Sherwood for underclassmen, an increasing number of seniors participate in internship programs that allow them to take only their classes required for graduation, and work a paid or unpaid job elsewhere for part of the school day. According to internship coordinator Catina Wist, around 65 seniors are in the internship program she oversees, and approximately another 35 are combined in three other school programs. The total number of seniors with internships accounts for approximately 22 percent of this year's Senior Class.

The internship program that Wist oversees is designed for students to be directly involved for a defined period of time in a career or field of study, while providing students with an opportunity to apply what has been learned at school to the working world. The intention of these internships can range from the Class of 2022 student who interned at an applied physics lab at Johns Hopkins with aspirations to become an astrophysicist, to a student working at a local restaurant, hoping to go down the culinary path. The other objective of internship programs is for students to develop and practice skills that they might not have in a classroom setting.

Taking an internship can allow students to gain an understanding of the outside world and the workforce, putting them in more "real-life" situations as opposed to

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MCPS Acquires the Largest Electric Bus Fleet in the Country

by Payton Seppala '23

Despite calls for climate action within MCPS, not many concrete steps have been taken until now, with the county's partnership with Highland Electric Fleets to deliver 326 brand-new electric school buses by 2025. A ribbon-cutting ceremony for what was the largest deployment of electric school buses in the country happened late October at Walter Johnson High School, when MCPS received its delivery of 61 brand new Thomas Built buses, bringing its total to 86. The new buses are not only expected to cut emissions, but also cut costs and toxic chemicals that are more likely to be present in diesel school buses.

This development pushes



The electric Thomas buses should greatly cut fuel costs for the county.

MCPS closer to reaching its goal of cutting 80 percent of its emissions by 2027, and 100 percent of its emissions by 2035. Currently, county owned diesel buses burn around 17,000 gallons of diesel fuel on a typical school day, and their irregular driving patterns involving stopping and idling for long periods of time mean they are very inefficient. With

an electric school bus, energy is only used when it is immediately required, meaning that it is much more efficient at its job. In addition to being harmful for the environment, fumes generated by the diesel buses are harmful to students inside the buses, as Maryland House Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo noted, "Toxic pollutants can be as much as 2.5

times more prevalent inside a diesel school bus than inside an electric school bus," he said.

The four-year contract costs MCPS around \$1.3 million in upfront costs for all 326 buses, far less than usually expected, thanks to the partnership with Highland Electric, which invests in the upfront costs of the buses themselves, planning to "recoup that investment over time through decreasing vehicle prices, less expensive fuel and maintenance savings."

Owning an electric bus is much less expensive than owning a traditional diesel powered one. Superintendent Monifa B. McKnight says that once all 326 buses are up and running, she expects to be saving upwards of 6,500 gallons of diesel per day and will be

immediately saving 50 percent of costs. Electric buses also contain far less moving parts than diesel buses, so maintenance costs are expected to be cut by more than 30 percent, according to Highland.

With the expanding fleet of electric buses, MCPS sets an example to school districts across the country the future of electric transportation. It also answers calls from students and staff alike from MCPS for providing more environmentally friendly changes to the school system. As McKnight said later in her speech at Walter Johnson, "The school bus is the first and last contact with our students each day, and a new, modern school bus reflects our commitment to an excellent experience for students."

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Harris Retiring Mid-Year

by Alex Braun '23

After seven years at Sherwood, Assistant Principal and 12th grade administrator Maychel Harris will be retiring. Harris has been in MCPS for the past 39 years, and has had almost every job imaginable in the school system, from building service worker, to security team leader, to teacher, and finally to Assistant Principal. While retiring at the end of the semester rather than at the end of the school year may seem unusual to some, it makes sense why he made this decision. Due to the fact that Maryland state law requires a 45-day period between retiring and seeking other governmental employment, retiring at the end of the school year in July wasn't the best option for Harris, who may want to explore second-career opportunities.

Throughout his time at Sherwood, Harris has made great memories and loved the various state championship runs from Sherwood's many sport teams, planning and experiencing Unity Week, and of course, working with the talented students and dedicated staff at Sherwood. One of his favorite memories is the first time he saw homecoming halls. "The talent, energy and enthusiasm was unlike anything I had ever since before in my school career," said Harris.

Harris has plans in "retirement" to stay busy. He is a Maryland Department of Transportation certified motorcycle safety instructor and plans to continue his love of teaching and motorcycles to instruct new motorcyclists on how to safely and responsibly ride motorcycles, while also caring for his aging parents and possibly working part time in MCPS. Deborah Higdom, a retired principal most recently at Lakelands Park MS, will take over Harris' duties for the remainder of the school year.

Mother of Magruder Shooting Victim Sues MCPS

by Katie Gough '23

Last November, the mother of the victim of the shooting at Magruder filed a lawsuit against MCPS, accusing the school system of neglecting to take action to prevent violence in school buildings. The shooting, which took place last January, left Karen Thomas' fifteen year-old son DeAndre in critical condition and in need of 10 separate surgeries. The 17 year old Magruder student who shot him pleaded guilty to attempted first degree murder in December in a deal that may allow for his release from prison in 15-25 years.

Thomas' complaint addresses the removal of police officers from school buildings beginning in the 2021-2022 school year. In 2020, principals of all 25 high schools in MCPS supported keeping officers in schools and the decision to remove them was made before research about the issue had been fully conducted, according to the lawsuit. Called "school resource officers" (SROs), police officers have been in MCPS schools since 2002 and have prevented and diffused numerous dangerous situations in MCPS, which are outlined in the lawsuit. The complaint continues to argue that since the removal of SROs, there have been more reports of violence in schools that school administrators and security are not equipped to handle on their own. The complaint alleges that the county failed to provide alternative adult support for students struggling with bullying and mental health issues, noting that while Superintendent Monifa McKnight announced that the removed SROs would be replaced with 50 new school social workers, only 20 had been hired by the time of the shooting.

MCPS Warns of Fentanyl Risk

by Cheikh Lo '24

MCPS is increasingly concerned for students regarding opioids, specifically fentanyl and fentanyl-laced drugs. In December, Dr. Patrica Kapunan, the MCPS Medical Officer, released a message warning the community about the dangers of illicit fentanyl and what community members can do to protect themselves and others as a drug epidemic rages across the United States. The Office of the School System Medical Officer is working with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and community partners within the Montgomery Goes Purple initiative to help create community-wide efforts of prevention and treatment.

According to NBC Washington, three MCPS students overdosed while at school in recent months and were revived with Narcan. On December 13, MCPS held a publicly open demonstration on how to use Narcan at an event at Wootton to raise awareness about fentanyl-related overdoses. Parents are being pushed to educate themselves about the dangers of drug use, specifically fentanyl since it was responsible for over 70 percent of overdoses in Montgomery County in 2021. Other drug products like marijuana, cocaine, heroin or illegally sold pills thought to be prescription medicine may be laced with illicit fentanyl, without the knowledge of the buyer.

New Photo Club Enters International Contest

by Nia Peake '23

Since 1969, creatives worldwide have shown their abilities and conveyed powerful messages through photos and films in the annual Nikon Photo Contest. Among the hundreds of participants that will tackle this year's theme will also be a group of students who are taking their talents beyond the Sherwood walls as members of the school's first photography club.

The club was founded by senior Kate Griffin in partnership with photography teacher and club sponsor Tania Barbera after the two realized there were other students who were interested in photography but lacked the space in their schedules to enroll in the class. With the club in place, students with and without experience in photography are offered opportunities to grow.

"For those who already know about photography and are here for the chance to use their skills, we try to find local competitions for them and let them have the chance to express their creativity in different ways and different themed contests," explained Griffin. "For those who are beginners, we want to teach them as much as possible about photography in the time that we have and hopefully even introduce them to the darkroom and film photography."

Two months into the club's existence, the members already started working on photography endeavors. For Sherwood's first



The club will enter senior Melissa Deedy's photo, taken in Madison, Ohio.

Winter Mug Fest this past December, the photography club sold holiday cards. The following week, they extended their sale by holding a mini-fundraiser. Griffin is eager to see where the group goes after its early successes, which include an infusion of new members and successful initiatives. She and Barbera hope that the events and fundraising will continue and are excited to take on their first photography contest.

"I love seeing the students push themselves by entering contests. It helps them refine their photography skills and teaches them about deadlines. They are taking it upon themselves to search out contests and they are encouraging each other to try," said Barbera.

Currently holding the largest international photo competition, Nikon has welcomed creative expression from diverse artists in

both its photography category and its short film category. This year's lead judge, Sarah Leen, gives participants an insight into what she is expecting in her profile on the Nikon website. "I'm looking for something that is going to really touch me and move me. For me, the most important thing is how the photograph makes me feel about what I'm looking at."

Members of the photography club are excited to showcase their abilities and personalities before the February 13 deadline. The Nikon Photo Contest is the ideal choice for the club's first entry because it is open to professionals and amateurs and is the first of many photo contests they intend to enter. "I welcome everyone to enter and share their opinion on the world today, even if they are not a member of the club," added Griffin.

A College's 'Prestige' Has Minimal Impact

by Lizzy Hermosilla '23

As college became an important facet of life, thousands of accredited institutions offer undergraduate and postgraduate education. Despite the number of institutions in the United States, there are some "name brand" ones, such as Harvard, UNC Chapel Hill, UCLA, and University of Michigan, that are coveted by students across the world. The importance of prestige holds too much weight in a college education, however, largely as a result of rankings such as the ones produced annually by U.S. News and World Report.

The mere exposure effect, a psychological phenomenon, states that people develop a preference for things based on sheer familiarity with the name and brand associated with the institution. In addition to the mere exposure effect, Nobelist Daniel Kahneman theorized that the human brain views a ranked list as a shortcut, a faster, more intuitive method of analysis. Many of the rankings lack the complete picture of what universities offer as a fit for students. U.S. News and World Report, arguably the foremost authority on collegiate rankings, uses 17 key factors to form their rankings of national universities. The criterion that most closely concerns students include: graduate indebtedness average, first-year retention rate, graduation rate, financial resource-

es, class size, and faculty to student ratio. However, much of the other information used to create these rankings are supplied either by the school itself or based on the opinion of other institutions.

In March 2022 a former business dean at Temple University was sentenced to 14 months in prison and fined \$250,000 for giving fraudulent data to U.S. News & World Report. Furthermore, Columbia University incorrectly reported data in 2022 and was named second on the list of national universities, calling the credibility of U.S. News and World into question. The university then announced that it will no longer provide data for rankings to the company. Despite many undergraduate programs continuing cooperation with U.S. News and World Report, Joseph Hock, Sherwood's College and Career Advisor, advised students to use college rankings as "a resource to be taken with a grain of salt."

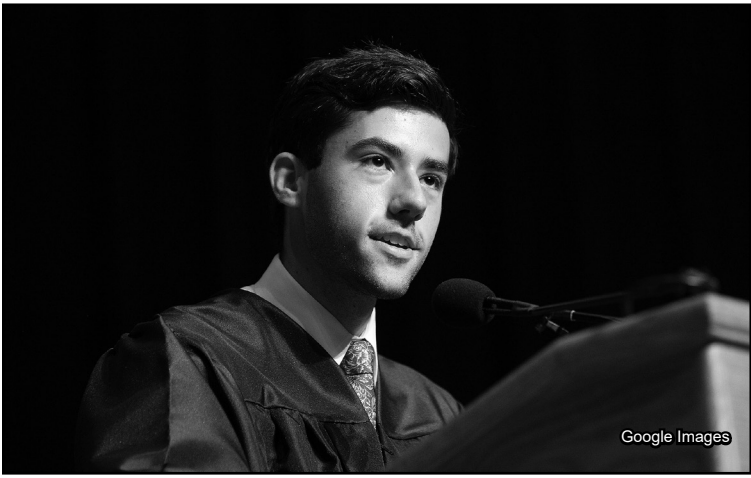
In a 2002 study published in the Quarterly Journal of Economics, economists Stacy Dale and Alan Krueger concluded that the salary boost from going to an extremely selective college is "generally indistinguishable from zero." The conclusion also stated that the amount of hard work a student puts into their education is a better indicator for success than the university on their diploma.

A more recent study conduct-

ed in 2017 reported a 14 percent increase in earnings, for women, as a result of attending a school with an average SAT score 100 points higher than the national average. However, this increase is not because of an increased salary, but rather a result of them continuing their career after marriage and childbirth. A 2017 study on social mobility stated, "Rates of upper-tail (bottom quintile to top one percent) mobility are highest at elite colleges, such as Ivy League universities." An article in The Atlantic described this idea of social mobility as a result of the resources lower income students gain at elite universities that well-off students already had through their parents. The culmination of these studies shows that an elite college education can positively impact low income students, minorities, and women comparatively more than their wealthier counterparts.

An undergraduate degree from a prestigious university has a short half-life once the recipient has entered the job market. "I think [prestige of a college] only gets you so far," explained counselor Kelly Singleton. "Once you get that first job, after that [future employers] are going to be looking at references from your job and from your employer. Yes, you'll still have your resume that says you went to a prestigious school, but they're going to want to see how you perform in that job."

Matt Post Finishes Third in Bid for Maryland State Legislature



Post addresses his class during graduation from Sherwood in 2018.

by Sydney Wisner '23

Former Student Member of the Board (SMOB) and Sherwood alum Matt Post ('18) ran in a special election on January 3 for Maryland state delegate, one of the two houses in the Maryland legislature. Post ran for the open Democratic District 14 seat which represents Olney, Damascus, Burtonsville, and east Montgomery county. The seat opened up when the current representative, Democrat Eric Luedtke, stepped down to take a job in Governor Wes Moore's administration.

While Post did not secure enough votes from the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee (MCDCC) to be nominated for the position, losing out to defense attorney Bernice Mireku-North, he was among the finalists. The MCDCC selected their nominee, whose name they sent to then-Gov. Larry Hogan for consideration, through multiple rounds of voting. At the start of the meeting, there were 10 candidates.

Post came in second with eight votes behind Mireku-North's nine, and in the second round, he finished third with four votes.

Post's belief in the power of public institutions to level the playing field in Maryland inspired his run for office. He hoped to bring a new generation's voice into the Maryland House of Delegates. If he was elected, he would have joined only a handful of other Gen-Z delegates elected for the first time in this election cycle.

"What I think sometimes we don't have is a sense of urgency and energy. I think anyone from our generation has that urgency," explained Post. "We're staring down a climate apocalypse in our lifetime. We have grown up under the shadow of mass shootings and the prospect of being slaughtered in our own classrooms and so, for us, there's not time to mull or study solutions to those pressing issues. We have to act. I want to bring our perspective on the urgency of those threats to the legislature."

Being one of the only youth voices in the room is not a situation that Post is unfamiliar with. Post got his start in politics as the 2017-2018 SMOB. As the descendant of Jewish immigrants, he was taught early that education and public institutions have the possibility to be "great

equalizers," for those in poverty. His own family rose from poverty thanks to their education, and later, many of them went back to work as teachers and principals in the field that gave them their start. As SMOB, Post followed in his family's footsteps by working to reform the institutions that gave his family opportunities.

During Post's time as SMOB, he learned valuable lessons about policy-making and gained experience in public office before even graduating high school. Post prioritized compromise and managed to have a good working relationship with board members across the spectrum of political ideologies while still advocating for big progressive legislation. While in office, Post successfully argued for equity for all MCPS students including making the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr a day off from school and allocating \$75,000 for non-English speaking students' mental health support by providing counselors who speak their same languages. Post also fought for more inclusive school curricula, voted to expand pre-K, and encouraged MCPS to include a student in their budget steering committee.

In addition to his work as a SMOB, Post served as a field strategist for the March for our Lives (MFOL), a student-run organization against gun violence founded by the survivors of the 2018 Parkland school shooting. Post spoke at the 2018 MFOL protest in D.C. in front of an estimated 200,000-person crowd. During his three years with the organization, Post worked to mobilize young people across the country. He encouraged them to start local MFOL chapters and helped them register to vote. Post hoped to use his work as an organizer in the work he would have done as a delegate.

After graduating from Yale in 2022, Post began the Ready for School Initiative. The organization's goal is to ensure that families in need fill out their Free and Reduced Meals (FARM) form so their children have enough to eat at school and MCPS' poverty rates are accurately measured. Schools with high poverty rates (40 percent or higher) receive additional funding from the state government. Although Post was unsuccessful in his bid for District 14 Delegate, this likely isn't his last run for a Maryland political office.

Internships Appeal to Seniors

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those that are present in school. Many of these internships are in close proximity to the Olney area, with about 75 percent of the current internships being located within ten miles of the center of town. However, by missing around half of the school day, students can potentially miss out on valuable class time. Wist said that she wants to see students fill their schedule with meaningful experiences, whether it be an internship or a full course schoolday.

Senior Ishan Desai works for a wealth manager in Brookeville. As an assistant, Desai gets paid for updating the website, quality checking stock purchases, and creating road maps for individual clients. With this internship, Desai works Monday-Thursday after completing his four class half-day schedule. Desai is unsure whether or not he would like to pursue this path in college, yet cites how it can be a great experience to figure out what he likes about working the job.

college."

Students interested in an internship must find the opportunity on their own before senior year begins or they may meet with the internship coordinator for assistance to choose where to intern. As long as students are able to fulfill their requirements for graduation, the decision to apply for an internship is entirely up to them. The school administration is not involved in approving or disapproving a student's internship, and Wist determines whether to accept a student into the general internship program.

In the case of the Medical Science program led by Keri Sykora, the Business Education program taught by Margaret Lynch, and the childhood development program directed by Nicole Schneider, students interested in an internship have narrowed their field of study down significantly and are left with more specific career-oriented internship opportunities.

Resource counselor Kelly Singleton believes that many colleges, particularly selective ones, would like to see the internship align with a possible career interest. She gave examples of an applied physics internship for a student interested in engineering, or an NIH internship for a student interested in the sciences.

"I want to see the students fill their schedule with meaningful experiences, whether it be an internship or a full course load," Singleton added. "I usually advise students to pursue internships that will give them experience in a field of interest to them or a field they are considering pursuing in

Governor Wes Moore Takes Office

by Bryan Kim '23

Wes Moore was officially inaugurated as the Maryland Governor on Wednesday, January 18, marking Moore as Maryland's first ever black governor and just the third African-American to ever to hold a governor position in the United States. Although the former U.S. Army captain and author of New York Times best-seller *The Other Wes Moore* had never run for any public office position before, he defeated Republican candidate Dan Cox in a landslide victory in November. Throughout his campaign, Moore vowed to make progress in such areas as public safety, gun violence, and public education.

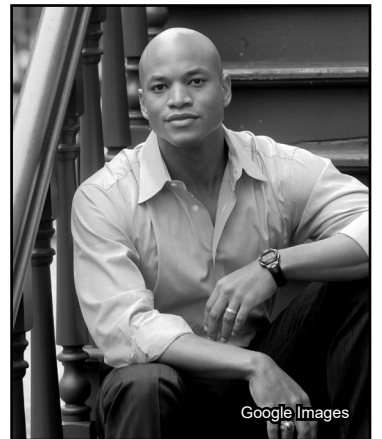
One of Moore's primary goals is to ensure the funding and implementation of Maryland's Blueprint for Education, a \$3.8 billion ten-year education plan created by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB). Four main priorities emphasized by the AIB are improving early childhood education programs, hiring and retaining high quality and diverse teachers, ensuring college and career readiness among students, and offering more resources for students in need.

The state Department of Ed-

ucation will closely monitor and provide technical assistance to local school systems as the plan is implemented. State school districts, including MCPS, will have three deadlines throughout the next ten years to submit their Blueprint plans. The first deadline will be on March 15, requiring the submission of detailed plans that will incorporate the four priorities for the 2023-2024 school year. The deadline for the second and third set of submissions will be in March 2024 and in 2026, which would include plans through the 2031-2032 school year. Moore has promised to provide dedicated funding to the Blueprint board in order to ensure the success of the project.

Another major issue Moore promised to address throughout his campaign is the rise of violent crime and gun violence in Maryland. As Governor, Moore plans on building strong partnerships across state, local and federal law enforcement agencies, and increasing resources for state law enforcement agencies so they are able to assist local agencies in preventing, interdicting and solving crime in our communities.

Additionally, Moore will increase investments in proven community-based violence intervention programs, and in re-entry programs in order to reduce the



likelihood of convicted criminals to reoffend.

As Moore begins his governorship and begins work on his top priorities, he already is being described in the national media and political circles as a potential rising star in the Democratic party. According to Walter Shapiro of the New Republic, "Moore's résumé hits almost every electoral sweet spot in the Democratic Party: childhood family struggles, Rhodes scholarship, glittering military record, bestselling book, and using private-sector resources to fight poverty." With a campaign focused on equal opportunity, compassion for the incarcerated, and quality education for all children, Moore's gubernatorial victory eventually may be a stepping stone for Moore to an even higher profile position on the national level.

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January 26, 2023

Debate Strives for Success in Competitive Pool of Schools

by Lauren Frank '23

Despite its typically negative portrayal in movies or T.V., debate at Sherwood is quite the opposite. This close-knit and motivated group prides itself on friendly competition and implementing debate skills during the real meets, hoping to make it to county championships.

Samantha Ager, the club's sponsor, hosts club meetings every Thursday at lunch in Room C118. At the beginning of the month, Ager creates a working document for club members to post their research materials and help them prepare for the next debate. During meetings, she and the captains help students brainstorm ideas, make pro/con lists, and research information. For the newer underclassmen, they often assist them more by finding exercises to help them with crossfire, where both sides can freely ask questions about each other's arguments.

Seniors Safiya Alam and Alexis Booker, the co-captains, spend a lot of time helping other members of the club while also preparing their own research. Alam and her partner, senior Tran Le, usually prepare for their debates 12-14 days before each meet.

"I would estimate that we would spend 10-15 hours researching and writing individually throughout that period," said

Alam.

Debate meets occur every third Wednesday of the month at Blair High School. Two teams with two students each are assigned a room along with a judge. One speaker from each team has four minutes to present their opening speeches and crossfire, when they ask each other questions. The remaining two speakers present their arguments and crossfire. Next, the first two speakers have two minutes each to summarize their argument. Finally, for three minutes all speakers from both teams can speak in a segment called grand crossfire.

A coin toss before the meet determines which side a team chooses to argue. Debate topics are unpredictable and cover a wide range of national and global issues, including conflict in the Middle East and biometrics. The debate topic is revealed at least a month in advance, so everyone has enough time to conduct quality research to argue either side.

While these topics are more complex, they give club members a better understanding of current global issues and broader outlook of the world.

"Debate isn't always attractive to everyone because not all these kids understand this kind of geopolitical discourse," Ager said.

On the debate team, members have many opportunities to improve not only their public



Members of the debate team pose outside of Blair High School before their meet on January 18.

speaking skills, but their writing, rhetoric, and argumentation. The research required before each debate adds a lot of work to these students who only meet together once a week, prompting hopes for a debate class at Sherwood. A specific debate class would benefit the team by providing more in-class time to research and lessons targeted towards debate skills, especially for their competition.

Several of the schools competing against Sherwood already have debate classes, putting them at an advantage. Magnets like Blair, Richard Montgomery, and Poolesville have significantly active debate team members. This improves their chances of winning, seeing as they have more students researching material

and class time to improve their strategies. While Sherwood is smaller in numbers, the members involved are dedicated towards researching and preparing together every week.

"Debate members at Sherwood are both creative and intelligent, so we are still equipped to adapt towards any difficult questions that may arise during a debate," Ager explained.

Ager hopes that one of the Sherwood teams qualify for the county playoffs in March. The championships are run by team, instead of by school, so it's rather an individual competition than a collective group competition. A team automatically qualifies if they win six debates. During the first day of playoffs, each team

matches up and debates three rounds. If a team wins all three rounds, they will advance to the second and final day. If they win all three final rounds, they will compete against the other teams until only two teams remain.

Since the start of the school year, Sherwood has gained several new teams because of increased participation. Alam hopes to send around three teams from Sherwood to compete at the next highest level. Regardless of whether any pair qualifies for the state level, MCPS doesn't require teams to advance if they do not want to. Ultimately, it would be up to the individual school to decide whether or not to send its debate team onto the state or even national level.

Falls Takes Students to France One Last Time

by Thomas Fenner '24

After contemplating his decision, French teacher John Falls has decided not to retire and will return to Sherwood next year. Falls has been teaching for 31 years, the last twenty of those at Sherwood. For most of those years, he was the head of the world languages department while also teaching French and Spanish.

On January 19, Falls sent an email to his students letting them know he decided to return for another school year. Falls had said previously that 2022-2023 would be his final year teaching, but this sudden decision is one that will inspire students to take his class next school year. "Sometimes one realizes that it is not so easy to walk away from what we truly love," said Falls.

This spring break will be the fifteenth year of his French exchange trip, which has been a facet in the world languages department and will certainly be missed by future students. When the 19 students arrive in France in April, they are assigned to a French family who they will be with for the entirety of the trip. The Sherwood visitors will spend their first eleven days going to school, eating, and living with their host families. The American students have the opportunity to learn how education works in a foreign country. It is a great chance for



Mr. Falls and his French students on their trip to Nice, France in 2017.

students to implement what they have learned in French classes as they are required to speak French at schools and in their homes.

Likewise, when the French students come to America later in the school year, they will be able to apply their English skills at Sherwood. "It's a total immersion experience," said Falls. "Both the American and French students get to apply their knowledge."

Falls is looking forward to making this trip special. For the final three days of the trip, the students and chaperones will visit three different cities: Avignon, Nimes, and Les Baux de Provence. This will allow Sherwood students to enjoy a different culture in the South of France.

In a decision made by Falls, the students will get to spend extra time with their exchange families instead of going on the final leg of the trip to France. "It's actually

something that has been suggested by former students," explained Falls. "They love spending time with their assigned families."

Ethan Tuttle, a Sherwood graduate who went on the trip twice, has fond memories of the daily activities he was able to participate at school and with the families. He enjoyed the day trips with the other Sherwood students and mentioned that his favorite spot was Marseille because of the beautiful mountainous scenery. Tuttle strongly encourages all French students to take part in this trip, as it was a life-changing experience for him and a time where he was able to make lasting memories and relationships.

"The French exchange trip was the most fulfilling, exciting, and impactful experience of my entire K-12 education, and that was no accident with Mr. Falls at the helm," Tuttle said.

Students Begin To Question College's Real-World Value

by Brian Wilbur '24

Whether the quality of a college education has changed over the years is a matter of intense debate, but no one disputes that the price of college has skyrocketed. This leaves prospective and current college students wondering if a degree is worth \$102,828, which is the average four-year college price tag for in-state. Out-of-state students on average pay \$173,684. Because of this, students (and their parents) increasingly are asking the question, "What am I going to get out of college?"

According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, undergraduate enrollment dropped by nearly five percent from 2021 to 2022. According to U.S. News, "Harris Poll found 51 percent of U.S. adults say costs have impacted their ability to pursue a post-high school education."

Obtaining a college degree is often a significant investment in time and money, but it can pay off in the long run. A college degree can open up doors to higher paying and more fulfilling career opportunities, as many employers prefer or require applicants to have a college education. In addition, research has shown that individuals with a college degree tend to earn more over their life-

time and have lower unemployment rates compared to those without a degree. A college education also provides individuals with a wider range of skills, such as critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving, which are valuable in any field. Overall, while the cost of earning a college degree may seem daunting, the long-term benefits suggest that it is worth the investment.

But maybe not for every type of degree, and maybe not for every person's situation or interests - some may prefer the job and financial security of other options. While there are many benefits to attending college, it is not necessarily worth it for everyone. The cost of tuition, fees, and living expenses can be steep, and many students take on significant amounts of student loan debt to pay for their education. In fact, the average student loan borrower in the Class of 2020 graduated with more than \$30,000 in debt. This debt can be a burden for many years after graduation and may prevent individuals from achieving financial stability. Prospective college students are faced with the daunting task of deciding not only what career they want, but whether they will make enough money to pay off the cost of their college degree that only gets more expensive if they are paying the interest on college loans.

DECA Club Broadens Business and Networking Opportunities for Students

by Devin Kosiorowski '24

At the beginning of the this school year business education teacher Margaret Lynch decided to take a new approach to the business management club. While keeping the overall focus of the club the same, Lynch broadened the opportunities for club members and gave the club more structure by switching the business management club into DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America), which is a school business and marketing club recognized nationwide. The club's switch has attracted more members with many of the leadership positions being new members, including junior Vittoria Satterlee, who is the president.



Members of DECA attended a region-wide competition on December 17.

With Sherwood joining the national student organization, members have had access to many opportunities, including trips relating to the focus of the club. One of these trips occurred earlier in the school year when members visited FedEx Field, the home of the Washington Commanders, for the duration of the

school day.

"We got a private tour of the entire stadium, and we listened to a conference of some of the leaders of the Commanders' organization," said Satterlee. "We also socialized with other members of DECA and made some connections about our upcoming events."

Members also participated in a region-wide competition on December 17 where they were assessed on their skills surrounding marketing, finance, hospitality, leadership, and team-building. Despite the club typically being thought of as business-centered, it teaches students valuable lessons that can be applied throughout their lifetime. All students, not just those interested in business, can gain valuable skills from joining the club. "To me, any opportunity I have to give a kid a real-life experience or just to let them see that they're part of something bigger and that there are communities out there that they can engage with other kids ... the impact is immeasurable," explained Lynch.

Even though this is Sherwood's first year with a DECA, members have high hopes heading into the next few years. The club is still getting adjusted to the new structure that DECA has provided for them. Although, after the club finds their footing, members plan on shifting their focus towards region and nationwide competitions. Making these competitions would prove to be a large accomplishment as there are many teams throughout the region all battling for a small amount of spots offered.

"I think we just need to develop a little bit more as a club and then further down the road I would like to see us as one of the top 50 teams in the nation," said Satterlee.

Former Sherwood Students Return, This Time as Teachers

by Ziv Golan '26

Sherwood has been around for over 100 years and although things have changed over the years, students who have returned as teachers have added to a state of continuity. Currently, nine teachers at Sherwood also attended the school: Dr. Gina Martin, Mr. Matthew Schneider, Mr. Thomas Nakamura, Mr. Ryan Burnsky, Mrs. Caitlin Thompson, Mr. Sean Hillman, Mrs. Nicole Schneider, Mr. Sean Davis, and Ms. Sydney Parra. Although Sherwood is forever changing, over the years the feel and community have always stuck with these Sherwood alums.

"School spirit and the sense of community in the Sherwood area still feels the same. Most of the school building is exactly as it was when I was here. I can still picture myself as a student walking the halls or taking classes in certain rooms," said Matt Schneider, who graduated in 2007 and is a social studies teacher.

Schneider has the unique story of marrying his high school classmate, who also teaches at Sherwood as the Child Development teacher. "It's fun and convenient. It was especially helpful to be working at the same school during online learning when I was new to Sherwood as a teacher," said Nicole Schneider ('07).

"We actually don't see each other during the day as much as people think, but we do sometimes eat lunch together." There are also many interesting stories passed down over the years that homegrown teachers hold onto.

"The F hall was still here ... And you want to know something? It's haunted; it was definitely haunted by a young girl and was known at the time about being a haunted hallway," said Hillman ('90), who teaches English to English Language Learners (ELL).

When thinking about the prospect of working at the school you attended, it is safe to assume that the first thought to pop into people's heads would be the awkwardness of working with former teachers. "It's not intimidating but

it's definitely weird," said physical education teacher Parra, who graduated in 2012. "It was weird at first to see teachers here and now I'm also a teacher here so I'm in some way equal to them. A lot of them, in the beginning, made comments about how old they feel now that I'm a teacher here."

Homegrown teachers have also said that the community aspect of the school helps Sherwood tremendously. "I definitely think there's an advantage to the community and having teachers that are attached, [whether] it's because they went here or their kids go here or they live here or just feeling connected to the building. I think that's good for morale and for passion and makes it a more connected place to go to school," said Thompson ('98), who is one of a number of alumni in the social studies department.

Whilst the school community of Sherwood is incredibly similar to how it was back in the day, the community surrounding the school has grown quite a bit. "When I graduated from Sherwood, Hallowell [neighborhood] hadn't been built ... well, actually they were building it, and when you go down 108 on that whole right side there were no houses," said Martin ('87), who is the head of the Science department.

There have also been changes to the Sherwood environment itself, one being that the school was stricter with its rules and policies. "Students were not allowed to be on cell phones during class, and some teachers even did not allow you to wear hats in the classroom," said Nakamura, who graduated in 2012 and is now a social studies teacher.

Burnsky, another teacher in social studies, believes that Sherwood has lost some of its school spirit over the years and that trend had already begun when he graduated in 2005. "My older brother graduated in 2001, and I feel like that group of students and students before them had way more school spirit," said Burnsky. "Over the years school spirit and pride have declined."



Rock 'n' Roll Revival 51 horns section rehearsing song #39 - "The House That Jack Built" by Aretha Franklin.

Shaping the Setlist of Rock 'N' Roll 51

by Aidan Therrien '23

The process by which songs for Sherwood's annual rock show, Rock 'n' Roll Revival (RRR), are selected is an enigma to most. From the cast's perspective, a finished setlist is handed out before winter break, without fail. However, this overlooks the deliberation and careful consideration from the show's directors, Jonathan Dunn and Alexander Silverbook. The directors have the ultimate say in what songs make it into the show, but this is not to say that the cast has no influence on the setlist. The directors consider a lot of factors when choosing songs, such as year of release, vocal capabilities of students, genre, what the cast wants, tradition, and of course, what the audience wants to hear.

Choosing songs often comes down to what vocalists are available. Sometimes a song will be added to the setlist because directors feel like a particular vocalist will excel at the song, whether that be a factor of vocal tone,

range, or stage presence. But with this, no one understands what a singer is capable of singing quite like the singer themselves. Leads are invited to suggest and perform songs for the directors that they want to be considered for the show.

"More times than not, students audition with songs that we ultimately decide to include in the show. If a student nails a song in an audition, we definitely consider including that selection in the show," said Dunn.

Any show will make an effort to play to the crowd. In RRR's situation, the crowd is composed of community members as well as the parents and friends of the cast, which is a wide age range to appeal to. "We are careful to select songs that we think would show well and appeal to our audiences," stressed Dunn.

As a result, the show has a cutoff for what songs are appropriate for the audience. A 60 year old member of the community may want to hear the music they grew up with in the 60s and 70s.

By extension, the 40 year old parents of the cast may want to hear the music they grew up with in the 80s and 90s. RRR typically functions more holistically as a homage to the music from the 50s through the 90s. The cast of the show was delighted to learn that this year, the directors have expanded the allowable decades all the way up to the early 2000. The decision came from, "Looking at where we are in terms of time or eras" as well as "the need to be more inclusive," said Dunn.

Oftentimes songs are chosen due to their history in RRR. Of the songs in the setlist this year, well over half of them have appeared in previous shows. Songs in the setlist this year like "Sweet Child O' Mine" by Guns N' Roses and "La Bamba" by Richie Valens were in shows #44 and #46 respectively. This is no accident; the directors have a regularly updated document with every setlist back to RRR #2. Leads are encouraged to look at past setlists in order to determine their audition songs.

January 26, 2023

A Year in War: Russia and Ukraine's Historic Conflict in Three Phases

by Cliff Vacin '25

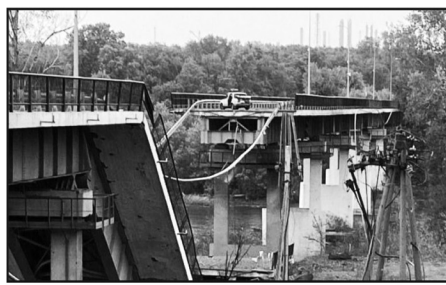
What was once predicted to last less than a month, the war between Russia and Ukraine will have its one-year anniversary next month. As the war moves into its second year, the risk is that Americans will continue to turn their attention away as the conflict continues into 2023.

Phase 1: Russia Invades; Evidence of War Crimes

Russian President Vladimir Putin announces his decision to launch a military operation in eastern Ukraine on February 24. Explosions were reported in Kyiv, Odessa, Kharkiv, and the Donbas, with Ukrainian officials reporting that troops had landed in Mariupol and Odessa, coming from Belarus. More than 130 Ukrainian citizens are confirmed dead on the first day of the invasion that marked the start of the war. The regional drama theater in Mariupol, sheltering around 1,000 civilians, is bombed. A mass murder of Ukrainian residents takes place in Bucha, with at least 300 people killed and 280 of them buried in mass graves.



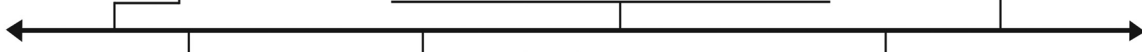
Flames rise from a fire following a Russian attack in Kharkiv



The final bridge connecting Sievierodonetsk to other regions of Ukraine is destroyed, severely restricting the Ukrainian military movement



Ukrainian rescuers extinguish a fire after a rocket hit part of the power grid in Kyiv



President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey speaks before talks between Ukrainian and Russian negotiators in Istanbul.



Ukrainian citizens, in a filtration center in Rostov, Russia



The Crimean bridge in flames after a Ukrainian military offensive.

Phase 2: Russian Advance Stopped

The area of heavy fighting shifts to the South and East of Ukraine, with Russia aiming to overtake Donbas and Southern Ukraine. By June 2, Russia controlled 20 percent of Ukrainian territory. Russia's State Duma

starts preparing legislation to convert to a war economy to be able to order companies to produce war supplies and make workers work overtime. Filtration camps are set up by Russia on seized Ukrainian territory to prevent Ukrainians from taking refuge in the European Union.

Ukraine joins NATO's Multilateral Interoperability Program that "achieves international interoperability of Command and Control Information Systems at all levels from corps to battalion, or lowest appropriate level, in order to support multinational, combined and joint operations."

Phase 3: Ukraine Counterattacks

On August 29, Ukraine launches a counteroffensive in the South. Forces retake Kupiansk, Izium and parts of Kharkiv Oblast, recovering 770 square miles. By September 12, Ukraine claims they reached the Russia-Ukraine border, retaking a total of 2,300 square miles. Putin officially announces partial mobilization to begin immediately. Over 194,000 Russian citizens, primarily fighting-age men and their families left Russia after announcements of a draft. A Ukrainian armored offensive burst through Russian lines in the south, this being the biggest Ukrainian advance since the war began. Ukraine blows up the Crimea bridge, killing 4. Forty percent of residents in Kyiv are left without water after missiles are launched at power sites, and 270,000 apartments are left without electricity. Putin acknowledges that the "special military operation" is taking longer than expected. The threat from the Russian nuclear arsenal has thus far prevented the conflict from escalating outside of Ukraine.

The Recently Split Congress Portends a Massive Gridlock

by Sydney Wiser '23

The 118th Congressional session was supposed to begin on January 3 for the first time with the changes from the 2022 midterms. The Republicans flipped the House securing a slim 222-person majority. Democrats retained control of the Senate.

Due to shifts in Congressional majorities, this session saw a change in House leadership. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) is serving his first term as the first black House Minority leader. Former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) was replaced by Kevin McCarthy (R-CA). It took McCarthy fifteen voting rounds over four days to be elected Speaker on January 6, making his bid the longest in over a century. In order to gain enough votes, McCarthy made concessions including reducing the number of members required to sponsor a resolution to vote out the Speaker from five to one. Now that McCarthy has been elected, he has the difficult job of rallying a divided GOP.

The midterms brought a young and energetic freshmen class to the Capital, 18 of which are in their twenties or thirties, including the first-ever Gen-Z Congress-member Maxwell Frost (D-FL). However, with the split Congress, it's uncertain how much they will be able to accomplish in their first Congressional session due to policy gridlock. Also, in the lead-up to the 2024 Presidential election, Republicans will likely try to block Democrat-backed bills to hinder Joe Biden's chances of securing re-election.

In the final weeks of the last Congressional session, the Democratic lame-duck Congress

rushed to pass bills. They codified protections for same-sex and interracial marriages under the Respect for Marriage Act. The bipartisan Electoral Count Bill, designed to prevent future threats of insurrections like the one on January 6, was passed as part of the annual Omnibus Bill. The bill clarified that the Vice President's role in certifying election results is ceremonial and raised the threshold from one member from each chamber needing to object to the certification of a state's election results to 20 percent of each chamber needing to object.

Last session, Congress narrowly managed to avoid a government shutdown after disagreements over the Omnibus Bill and its \$1.7 trillion federal budget. With a more divided Congress, there's a possibility for a government shutdown at the end of the fiscal year in September. Shutdowns occur when legislation that determines the funding for government agencies is not passed. Essential government agencies like the IRS and the FDA continue working during government shutdowns, but they perform only vital functions which are often delayed.

The January 6 Committee was dissolved after Republicans took control of the House. At its final meeting, the Committee referred former President Donald Trump to the Department of Justice (DOJ) and recommended he face four criminal charges, including engaging in a conspiracy to defraud the U.S. and obstruction of an official proceeding. Under the new Republican majority, the House Oversight Committee has opened an investigation into the Biden family's business dealings.

Post-Roe Ruling, Abortion Loopholes Take Hold



by Lizzy Hermosilla '23

Seventeen states, along with D.C., have laws in place to protect a woman's right to an abortion. However, these guarantees are countered by the 13 states that have banned all abortion, and 11 of those states have no exceptions for rape or incest. The divide among states over legal abortion have created a proxy war in which organizations and individuals in states where abortion is legal are offering support and resources for women to access abortions in states where it is banned. Further complicating the conflict is the federal government also can choose sides--depending on whether Democrats or Republicans are in control of Congress or occupy the White House. The Supreme Court's decision to overturn the Roe v. Wade decision means that approximately 1 in 3 women between the ages of 15-45 cannot access legal abortion where they live.

Most notably of all reproductive health care loopholes, is the emergence of mobile clinics for women. A Planned Parenthood in Illinois has transformed an RV into a mobile health care unit. While abortion is still legal in Illinois, the mobile unit allows them to travel to the border of Illinois, reducing the distance many patients from neighboring states which have restricted abortion access must travel for consultations or abortion pills. Currently the

RV provides abortions up to 11 weeks, but later this year officials hope to provide surgical abortions. Similarly, licensed obstetrician-gynecologist Meg Autry has raised millions of dollars to transform a casino ship into a mobile abortion unit to provide surgical abortions to the seven states along the Mississippi River that have banned abortion. Because the Mississippi River is a federally regulated body of water, federal laws apply and therefore Autry is able to legally provide surgical abortions on her vessel. She plans to launch her seaworthy abortion unit in the summer of 2024.

While new ways to provide health care have emerged, an abortion drug smuggling circuit has formed out of a need for safe access to medical abortions in states where the procedure is illegal. The route normally starts in Mexico, where activists obtain abortion pills supplied largely by private donors or international pharmacies for as little as \$1.50 a dose. One group at the epicenter of the network, Las Libres, said that they have terminated approximately 20,000 pregnancies in the U.S. in 2022. This group works closely with about 250 U.S. volunteers, but their numbers are growing. The group provides the pills to women without a prescription, based on patient testimonies saying they are within the 10-week limit to have a medical or self managed abortion. In order to avoid detection in states with

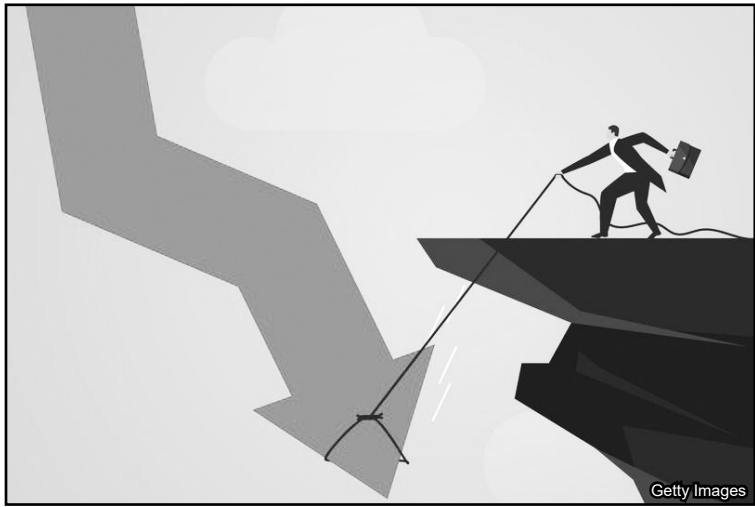
strict abortion bans, they normally send the pills in unmarked and unsealed bottles that had previously held other medications. Experts in the field are divided about this network, with concerns about the potential for ineffective and dangerous pills to reach the hands of women.

Many health care providers have also begun to experiment with the gray area caused by the rapid abortion bans and the lack of consistency between states. Some physicians have exercised their discretion by providing mifepristone and misoprostol (abortion pills) to women who have passed the 10 week mark suggested by the FDA. Additionally, many providers prescribe abortion pills via telemedicine without confirming the state in which the patient resides. The lack of clear language in the anti abortion laws mixed with the difficulty in policing such physician-led efforts has given patients in states with strict bans the ability to have a self managed abortion.

Many people are also taking the problem upon themselves. Many physicians that provide vasectomies have seen an increase in the number of men wanting the procedure. A vasectomy effectively sterilizes the man, thus preventing a woman from conceiving; however the procedure can almost always be reversed.

Director of the Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health at the University of California, San Francisco said, "The bottom line is that [abortion] restrictions ... cause unnecessary harm and delay women in accessing the care they need." The current efforts by women and men across the country and outside of it only prove that a woman will seek out an abortion despite restrictive laws.

Teens Should Care about Upcoming Recession



by Alexis Booker '23

Covid-19 destabilized the world economy, and unfortunately, many people in the United States suffered from unemployment and little job availability throughout the pandemic. Though the U.S. has been on track for recovery in the last two years following its crash, it is more than likely it will plummet back into a recession sometime in 2023. The intensity and length of the recession, however, are up for debate. Regardless, teenagers beginning to enter the workforce as they blossom into early adulthood will more than likely have difficulty in future career endeavors.

Navigating a complex economy in an even more upsetting state can be confusing, especially for teenagers who have had little to no experience working. Primarily, teens need to be familiar with a lot of factors that are currently changing. Inflation is relatively self explanatory, with it being the inflating (or increase) in the cost of goods and services that people use every day. Wage

growth is an adjusted income in response to inflation of the economy, to compensate for rising costs. Interest rates are an amount charged to a borrower by a lender over a course of time, an example includes student loans with the majority of people paying for a college education by taking out loans to afford it. Over time, these individuals pay their loans back to their lenders in smaller amounts until they've repaid the full (or sometimes greater) amount. Employment rate is the percentage of people employed in a job or career at a given time.

A recession can occur for a variety of reasons, including the imbalance of supply and demand, high interest rates, poor or irresponsible loan practices, world events, or a combination of those factors. The 2020 recession can be directly attributed to Covid-19, with the effects continuing to linger. The pandemic combined with the war in Ukraine has led to global inflation that will persist. Though it is being combated to be less intense, it will still leave an impression on the U.S. econ-

omy. Interest rates will continue to remain high for the next few years as the Federal Reserve (the central bank of the U.S.) tries to match rates with the state of the economy. While the chairman of the Federal Reserve, Jerome Powell, has stated that inflation is a top priority and they will continue to adjust restrictions in response to the changing economy, as of now the cost of borrowing money will remain high.

The U.S. will possibly have nearly zero growth in its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and a spike may not occur until 2024. However, peak inflation is expected to occur in the next business quarter and will plateau down to 2.9 percent at the end of 2023 with a further drop to 1.9 percent not long after. The overall intensity of the recession is reliant on the disparity between growth and wages along with employment. Wage growth grew 5.2 percent in October compared to a predicted 3.5 percent which, while promising, should consistently match the increase of inflation to foster a healthy economy. The U.S. job market is expected to maintain resiliency which would also weaken the overall effects of the recession. However, with this, the disparities between more stable countries, such as the U.S., and less developed countries will increase as a result of global recession effects.

As high schoolers begin their first jobs or go off to college, they will be thrown into an uncertain economy that they know little about. Not only will they be affected, but their family and friends will also face struggles.

Big Tech Has Big Layoffs

by Naomi Bang '23

Companies across the technology, social media, and entertainment industries will enter the new year with a significantly lighter workforce. While businesses commonly cut job positions in preparation for a new fiscal year, major companies including Meta, Twitter, Netflix, and Snap Inc. have laid off more employees than in previous years due to declining revenue, company overgrowth, and an impending recession.

In November, Facebook parent company Meta announced it would cut 11,000 employees, reducing its workforce by 13 percent. Meta announced a revenue drop and predicted decline for the next fiscal quarter while expenses rose significantly. CEO Mark Zuckerberg's commitment to expanding the Metaverse spread the company's income thin. Shortly after Elon Musk took over Twitter, he cut 3,700 employees, which is half of the total staff. Though these cuts primarily resulted from Musk's own modifications of the company, Twitter has also faced dropping revenue due to the current economic conditions.

Netflix had two rounds of layoffs this year following its first subscriber loss in a decade. Its reductions constituted three percent of the workforce in preparation for slowing spending growth in the coming year. Snap Inc. laid off 20 percent of its workforce after also reporting company growth below predicted numbers. Microsoft kept a significant amount of its employees but did report its slowest revenue growth in five

years this past quarter.

A total of more than 100,000 technology employees have lost their jobs in 2022. This exceeds the number of people laid off in 2020 and 2021 combined. Drastic growth and hiring during the Covid-19 pandemic era is partially to blame for the inflated numbers. Everyone was hopping on their Zoom calls, binge watching Netflix, and naturally spending more time online with lockdowns in place. More employees hired to keep up with the influx of online usage meant more employees to lay off once the industry returned to normal numbers. For example, Meta added over 15,000 employees from January to September 2022 as Zuckerberg aggressively expanded the Metaverse and must now rebalance the labor force. In short, the tech world is experiencing an inevitable recalibration as it returns to pre-pandemic conditions.

With the threat of an oncoming recession, customers are cutting back on spending and companies must find ways to reduce their budget in response to the revenue shift. The first way to economize is by cutting numbers in advertising and marketing. However, as digital advertisers have also scaled back on spending for the recession, businesses must turn to minimizing labor costs. Some companies including Meta and Amazon attempted hiring freezes throughout the year but eventually had to lay off employees. These tech companies may also be looking at each other's behavior to assess the current economic situation which is why so many layoffs coincided.

Threat of Authoritarianism Remain High around the World

by Solaiman Hassanin '23

The dangers of authoritarian tendencies in major democracies across the globe continue to ring alarm bells. In Brazil, many considered Lula Da Silva's victory over Jair Bolsonaro a narrow escape from the most populous county in South America tumbling into fascism. At the same time, concerns in India over increasing far-right success continue to hover over the world's biggest democracy. Internationally, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Turkey has emerged as a controversial discussion point, with claims of limitations on the press and a controversial foreign policy weighing against Erdogan's domestic popularity. On the flip side, many of those accused of fostering authoritarian tendencies, such as Hungary's Victor Orban, accuse opposing factions of inappropriate censorship and targeting.

The main concerns throughout the world follow general themes that have emerged as worrying trends in some of the world's democracies, particularly the limitation of free speech and the weakening of a nation's judiciary. For example, according to the Press Freedom Index, reported by Reporters without



Strongmen Victor Orban of Hungary, Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil, and Prime Minister Modi of India (left to right).

Borders, India has become the 150th-ranked country in terms of free speech in relation to 180 countries that were ranked. The low position is a signal of confirmation to critics of Prime Minister Modi, who is often accused of far-right connections with Hindu Nationalists, an especially troubling aspect of his rule in recent years as violence against religious minorities in India has increased. Another example is Turkey's new "disinformation" law, which allows the government to imprison those who spread misinformation with a three-year prison sentence. While Turkey is now ranked 149

out of 180 according to the same Press Freedom Index, up from 154 in 2021, concerns remain in the lead-up to the 2023 elections where President Erdogan will again be up for an extension to his presidency.

Recently, controversy has grown particularly strong around Hungarian institutions with the EU Commission recommending the freezing of funds heading toward the Hungarian economy, a move meant to pressure the Hungarian government into reform. While rights groups such as Human Rights Watch have claimed that Hungary suffers

from a weakened judiciary and is threatened with becoming dominated by the ruling party of Prime Minister Orban, the Hungarian side says it is being unfairly treated by biased left-wing European factions, noting that they believe they have fulfilled the conditions for EU support. A weakened judiciary would be manifested in the politicization of the courts, a clear slant in rulings favoring the government, widespread corruption, and increased power over the appointment of judges by the ruling party. While the recommendation was for support to be stopped, it should not go unnoticed that the

Hungarian proposed plan for judicial reform did, in fact, get endorsed by the EU Commission, adding a layer of complexity to Hungary's situation.

Back in Brazil, critics of Bolsonaro have continued to point fingers at his politicization of the Brazilian courts, a place of strong controversy in the recent elections. The Brazilian courts have ruled against Bolsonaro, showing an independence many considered to be Brazilian Democracy's saving grace. While international concerns over Brazil have since calmed with Bolsonaro peacefully conceding the presidential election to opponent Lula, many of Bolsonaro's supporters continue to insist that the election was stolen from them, with large-scale protests continuing on weeks after the election.

For some democracies, the future indications are certainly concerning to a high number of people, but in the same democracies, the reality still remains muddy and unclear. None of the above states-India, Turkey, Hungary, or Brazil, have been stripped of their opposition, none of them are truly authoritarian states. None of them can be stated as flourishing and unproblematic democracies either. They represent something in between.

January 26, 2023

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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 Cars Harm Olney's Transportation and Business

by Connor Pugh '24

Olney has long been a popular spot for students attending Sherwood to relax and hang out with friends. The town is officially considered a satellite community, which means it is a smaller town adjacent to the core of the metropolitan area, namely Washington. However, satellite communities often have their own distinct cultural and historical identities that set them apart from other towns.

In the Master Plan for Olney by the Montgomery County Planning Commission, a main goal stressed is to "reinforce the concept of Olney as a satellite community in the residential and agricultural wedge area." Additionally, Olney is one of the only choices at a convenient distance

from those living nearby due to the extensive coverage of suburbia in the surrounding areas, making it vital to the local community. With these combined factors, it is supremely important that Olney should be made friendly to walking and casual strolling for the benefit of local shoppers, as well as protect businesses and establishments that preserve the unique identity of the town. Unfortunately, the town of Olney in its current state does none of these things, making it extremely hostile to transportation that isn't by car and creating an environment that prevents local businesses from surviving amidst corporate chains and supermarkets.

The main problem with Olney's urban planning is the takeover of space by roads con-

gested with automobiles, making a simple walk unpleasant or occasionally even dangerous. The main example would be the intersection between Route 108 and Georgia Avenue right in the center of town, where to get from one side of the street to the other, a person would need to cross anywhere from five to lanes of traffic. Additionally someone may have to cross a yield lane that isn't regulated by traffic lights, making it even more unsafe for pedestrians crossing. The modern design of Olney was made for automobiles, which includes large roads, larger parking lots, and little room for those seeking other means of transportation.

Not only does the automobile-centered design of Olney disturb pedestrian traffic, it also

affects businesses in town. People are encouraged to make quick stops and then leave, rather than go to town to simply browse, hang out, and enjoy themselves. Generally a person would go into town for one or two specific reasons, and leave when they are done. This means businesses that prioritize quick and simple service such as fast-food chains have a higher chance of surviving, while more local, niche businesses are at a disadvantage.

While a complete uprooting of the entire structure of Olney may be too extreme, smaller changes can be made. A main solution would be to make the town accommodating to transport that isn't by automobile, like expanding sidewalks and designing separate space for transportation

like bikes so there isn't competition over a small sidewalk. By making the town friendly to other methods of transportation, people will have less of a need to use cars and therefore less space needs to be made to accommodate them. Instead, this space can be used for recreational purposes to encourage people to just stay and enjoy themselves, making Olney more favorable to businesses that create a unique identity. Additional changes can also include creating more greenery and space for nature so the town doesn't consist of blocks of concrete and asphalt. These changes would be a positive step towards making Olney a desirable place to hang out in, as well as preserve its unique identity and prevent it from being just a stop on the highway.



Teens Need New Messaging about Marijuana

by Maggie Reese '24

With the legalization of recreational marijuana in Maryland beginning on July 1 for adults age 21 and older, it is more clear than ever that the use of marijuana has become nearly as accepted and normalized as drinking alcohol. However, that does not mean that there are no risks from marijuana use. As teens head towards adulthood, the advice about marijuana needs to adjust to the times.

Parents who grew up repeatedly being told "don't do drugs" or "just say no" should talk with their teenage children about marijuana with more nuance and realism. Talking to teens directly and honestly about marijuana and alcohol will more likely increase the odds of an open and respectful relationship with a parent. Simply saying, "don't do drugs" is an unhelpful statement when recreational marijuana is now legal in nearly half the states in the country. Parents need to talk about

marijuana use the same as they talk about alcohol, since both will be legal to use for those age 21 and older. High school students already have so much exposure and availability to marijuana, and it is naive for parents to think otherwise. Having a conversation allows parents to set clear rules about what they expect from their kids when it comes to alcohol and now marijuana as well.

Some might believe that it is risky to tell teens that marijuana is more similar to alcohol than it is to other drugs, but most teenagers already think this way. Drugs and alcohol is a huge topic all over the county, especially drug abuse in teenagers and people with mental illness. To classify marijuana and cocaine, for example, as equally dangerous is simply untrue. Marijuana use is normalized through social media such as Snapchat and Instagram, as well as in depictions and references from the music industry and on television.

Simply put, marijuana is part of the cultural mainstream, and parents and other adults should help teens navigate that reality.

It is never too early to talk to teenagers about drug use. If they are not using marijuana, they very likely have been exposed to it. According to the Centers for Disease and Control, "more than one in three high school students (37%) have used marijuana, with one in five (22%) admitting to using this drug within the past month." The sooner parents talk about marijuana and alcohol, the greater chance they have of influencing their children's decisions. Not talking about this subject at all is more harmful than helpful. Kids don't have all these facts when it comes to these substances, and they might not even see any harm in trying these things. Having these conversations sets clear rules about what parents expect from their children when it comes to alcohol and marijuana.

Should the Supreme Court Rule Against Affirmative Action?

The Supreme Court will likely decide to overturn the legal precedent for race-based college admissions in a lawsuit brought by an action group, Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA), against two high-profile universities: Harvard University and the University of North Carolina. Affirmative action is defined as a policy that seeks to include particular groups, in this case racial groups, into an institution in which they are underrepresented. Also known as “positive discrimination,” the practice has been controversial for allegedly discriminating especially against high-achieving Asian college applicants in favor of African American and Hispanic students.

Yes: Affirmative Action Has Many Flaws **No: Colleges Should Address Racism**

by Matt Kauffman '23

A decision to outlaw affirmative action in college admissions is sure to trigger further backlash against an already polarizing Supreme Court, but may also shift the focus on college admissions to other, often more valuable measures of diversity than race. If the conservative majority decides to rule in favor of the plaintiff, the ruling will be based on firm legal precedent, as the court has previously struck down similar practices that seek to racially discriminate in pursuit of increased representation, and will stop the practice of punishing high-achieving students based on race.

The “model minority” myth contributes to higher expectations, often subconsciously, being placed on Asian students, who have claimed that an entire racial group is discriminated against because of generally high academic success compared to other groups. Although admissions processes are tightly guarded, a publication from Science Direct compiles data regarding the discrepancies in Harvard admissions, alleging that Asian American students suffer compared to other students, especially in the “personal and overall” ratings in which Harvard explicitly mentions race. The research found that Asian applicants were penalized based on race and that if the penalty was removed, the chances of an Asian being admitted would rise by nearly 20 percent.

The University of North Carolina (UNC) showed a similar pattern, according to Scott Jaschik of Inside Higher Ed: “Analysis by the plaintiffs’ experts calculated that an Asian American male North Carolina applicant with a 25 percent chance of admission to UNC (based on grades and test scores) would have his probability increase to over 67 percent if he were Hispanic, and to over 90 percent if he were an African American.”

UNC claimed, in a blog post responding to claims made in SFFA’s lawsuit, that race is one of many factors they use in their admissions process. North Carolina is a need-blind school and pledges to match all documented financial need of its applicants. If this is the case, is the use of affirmative action justified when it harms deserving students?

Harvard contends that affirmative action has been an “indispensable tool” in crafting a more racially diverse campus in recent years, and, to their credit, the prestigious university has somewhat shifted away from being dominated by wealthy whites. However, Harvard’s use of legacy, the practice of taking into account relatives who are alumni while examining an applicant’s status, has been controversial. After a federal judge ordered Harvard to disclose admissions data, it was revealed that 36 percent of Harvard’s class of 2022 claimed a relative who was a student there in the past. Similarly, the acceptance rate for legacy applicants for the class of 2025 is 16 percent, a number significantly larger than the general acceptance rate of five percent (as of 2020). These revelations beg the question: is Harvard truly diverse because of affirmative action? While it is undeniable that the practice has increased the amount of diversity in the school, has it really served to create a community that is any less elite than it has been in the past?

SFFA’s argument claims that the universities give “mammoth racial preferences” to African American and Hispanic applicants, while ignoring “race-neutral” alternatives that would preserve student diversity. Harvard seeks to draw attention away from its legacy admissions and exorbitant costs by prioritizing racial diversity. However, universities would ideally award acceptance to the most deserving applicants, regardless of race.

by Gabi Admi '23

Affirmative action, a policy first initiated by President Lyndon B. Johnson in the 1960s, aims to improve opportunities for people of color, women, and low-income individuals. The policy prioritizes diversity and aims to create equity for marginalized communities. Despite its successes over the past half-century, the Supreme Court likely will rule that affirmative action promotes “reverse discrimination.”

Systematic racism is a problem that has been plaguing the United States throughout its history and still continuing today. Systems put in place, such as segregation and discriminatory laws, prevented racial minorities and other marginalized groups from gaining access to higher education. The consequences of such inequities over generations are still felt by marginalized groups today.

White people as a population continue to have the upper hand when it comes to generational wealth and higher education. People in the socio-economic upper-middle and upper classes tend to get a better education due to living in wealthier areas with better public schools or having the privilege to go to private schools. The Pew Research Center concluded that “Whites are far more likely to hold a bachelor’s degree than blacks.” Additionally, data from the Federal Reserve concluded that “White families have the highest level of both median family wealth: \$188, 200.” In comparison, black families, for example, have a median income of \$24,100. Such significant disparities show the impacts of generational racism and why students’ race should be permitted as a consideration by college admissions officers.

Make no mistake, diversity will decrease on college campuses if the Supreme Court rules against affirmative action. After Michigan voters ended affirmative ac-

tion in the state through a referendum in 2006, the University of Michigan issued a brief stating that, “the admission and enrollment of underrepresented minority students have fallen precipitously in many of U-M’s schools and college since” the end of race being a consideration in college admissions.

California voters in 1996 also dropped affirmative action in its state colleges and universities and became the “laboratory for experimentation” in regard to the effects on diversity. According to a brief submitted by UC President Michael v. Drake, “UC has implemented numerous and wide ranging race-neutral measures designed to increase diversity of all sorts, including racial diversity.” Similarly to Michigan, the brief states that, “despite its extensive efforts, UC struggles to enroll a student body that is sufficiently racially diverse to attain the educational benefits of diversity.” The examples of California and Michigan proves the fallout that will come if the Supreme Court decides to ban affirmative action across the nation.

Many common misconceptions exist about affirmative action, such as that it takes away opportunities from White students or that marginalized people who receive admission to schools with the policy in place do not deserve it. This simply isn’t the case. Students’ applications are looked at based on how they excelled with the opportunities they were given. Privileged people need to look past the idea that they are “more deserving.” Affirmative action creates opportunities for those who have been disadvantaged by a system that favors people of a certain race and economic status. If the Supreme Court decides to get rid of it, the United States as a country will go backwards, and marginalized groups will remain all the more left behind due to an education gap.



Keep the Statues

by Anna Haas '23

Last May, five graduate students at Princeton circulated a petition for the removal of a statue of John Witherspoon. Princeton’s sixth president, Witherspoon was an influential figure in the American Revolution as well as the only clergyman and college president to sign the Declaration of Independence. Despite his influence and legacy as a patriot, Princeton wants to remove his statue because he owned slaves. However, it is unreasonable for society to hold slaveowners to today’s standards.

Slavery was terrible, no question about it. However, owning slaves was a part of life for wealthy landowners in the 1700s and does not make their contributions to the country void. In today’s world, society knows slavery to be cruel and wrong, but back then that was not the case. There are things society does today that people 200 years from now may look upon with the same disgust as we do slavery. It can be inferred that the influential figures of today would not want to be characterized solely by actions that were legal in their time but considered wrong in future societies. The same principle applies for people like Witherspoon. Witherspoon’s owning slaves was wrong, but it does not mean all his other accomplishments should be ignored. Society cannot hold people of that time period to the same moral standards that it has today.

Defending AI Artwork

by Genevieve Mayle '23

Jason M. Allen's "Théâtre D'opéra Spatial," an artificial intelligence (AI) generated art piece, won first place in the Colorado State Fair's annual digital art competition, sparking outrage from artists who claimed he cheated. Digital artists primarily create art using programs such as Photoshop and Clip Studio Paint. The applications of these programs and AI art generators are fundamentally different, and should be treated as distinct art forms. Thus, Allen’s creation should not have been judged as a digital art piece or earned first place in that art category. However, Allen’s work shouldn’t be prohibited from the competition solely based on the notion that it isn’t considered art at all.

The public release of newly developed text-to-image-generators ignited a debate over whether AI art is truly art. While there is no universally accepted definition of art, there are common elements that people consider when developing their own. According to the Oxford Dictionary, art includes "human creative skill and imagination." Writing a text that accurately conveys a person's desires to an AI art generator via keywords is arguably a learned skill. Furthermore, imagination is required to create a pleasing concept for what AI must generate. In essence, AI-generated works deserve to be considered an art form because they meet the broad criteria for what constitutes art.

Tate Should be Tossed Aside

by Alexis Booker '23

Former professional kickboxer turned social media personality, Andrew Tate, has recently landed in hot water with Romanian police officials after being arrested in his Romania estate on December 29 for human trafficking allegations. Prior to Tate’s arrest, he had left the country after similar allegations and went on to gain traction with male adolescents and men on the internet for his self-proclaimed misogynistic views. While many people online dismiss his shocking language, his arrest solidifies that his ideologies are associated with much scarier behaviors that end in trauma for many victims.

Audiences on the internet who either support or poke fun at his outrageous claims should look beyond the screen and realize they contribute to the problem of his growing platform. Their online reactions to what he says only fuel the algorithm, further pushing his content. He spreads the message that manipulating and using abusive tactics on women is a just thing to do, and whether people agree or not, the hateful message has spread to millions online. By people publicly reacting to his words, it allows his hate speech to persist. Out of respect for the victims of his alleged crimes, the internet needs to leave him behind so he can no longer appeal to easily influenced kids who could potentially mimic his damaging behavior.

DEFAMATION : is the action of damaging the good reputation of someone

FIRST AMENDMENT : prohibits any laws limiting freedom with respect to religion, expression, peaceful assembly, or the right of citizens to petition the government

HATE SPEECH : abusive or threatening speech or writing that expresses prejudice on the basis of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or similar grounds

Violence Against LGBTQ+ Rises with Rhetoric

by Sydney Wiser '23

On November 19, a 22-year-old gunman opened fire in an LGBTQ+ Colorado nightclub and killed five people. This shooting wasn't an isolated incident of violence against the LGBTQ+ community and comes amidst an uptick in anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric and policies.

In 2022, according to the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), more than 300 bills targeting LGBTQ+ rights were introduced by state legislatures across the country. In Florida, the "Don't Say Gay" bill made headlines for how it restricted students and teachers from discussing their identities at school.

In defense of this legislation, conservative lawmakers adopted language frequently heard in the far-right fringes. They've accused the LGBTQ+ community of "grooming" children by including LGBTQ+ topics in books, classrooms, and media. The HRC found that three of the top ten Twitter users responsible for driving the grooming narrative had direct links to politics including House of Representatives members Marjorie Taylor Greene and Lauren Boebert, and Ron DeSantis's press secretary, Christina Pushaw.

Dr. Mollie Blackburn, an Ohio State professor who researches topics pertaining to LGBTQ+ youth, partly attributed this resurgence in rhetoric to greater representation in the media and judicial and legislative successes in the past decade. "I think that panicked some people," said Blackburn. "We've seen in civil rights issues over time that that's a typical pattern, that once rights are starting to be acquired by a minoritized group, [there is] pushback."

Some activists fear that the results of this pushback are violence and intimidation. In tandem with conservative politicians and news pundits calling drag queens "groomers," the Proud Boys have begun to disrupt drag queen story hours across the country. The HRC reported that almost 1 in 5 hate crimes are motivated by anti-LGBTQ+ bias.

Experts worry that the adoption of anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric by influential public figures could be seen as a call to action for right-wing extremists. Blackburn noted that bringing these ideas into the mainstream can breed fear and intolerance in the general public. "There is a market for media that affirms [people's] fears and beliefs and then hatred."

History Repeats Itself as Anti-Semitism Rises

by Joon Baek '23 and Jordan Costolo '25

Anti-semitism is defined as "hate or unfair treatment towards Jews" by the Oxford Dictionary and dates back 2,000 years. In recent months in the United States, incidents of anti-semitism have become much more common, this time in the form of hate speech.

Hate groups who deny or obscure facts about the Holocaust, for example, have existed since World War II, but anti-semitism has spread to the general public quickly because of those who use the topic as a backbone for many political and social conspiracies. Celebrities have claimed that the European Jewish people are overrepresented in certain industries, such as banking and media. Most prominently, rapper Kanye West has been in recent headlines for his anti-semitic hate speech primarily on Twitter. Last October, West tweeted that he would go "defcon 3 on Jewish people," referring to DEFCON, the levels of alert used by the U.S. Armed Forces. Later that same month, NBA star Kyrie Irving in a tweet boosted the book and movie *Hebrews to Negroes*, which claims that Jewish people have major fault in the discrimination of people of

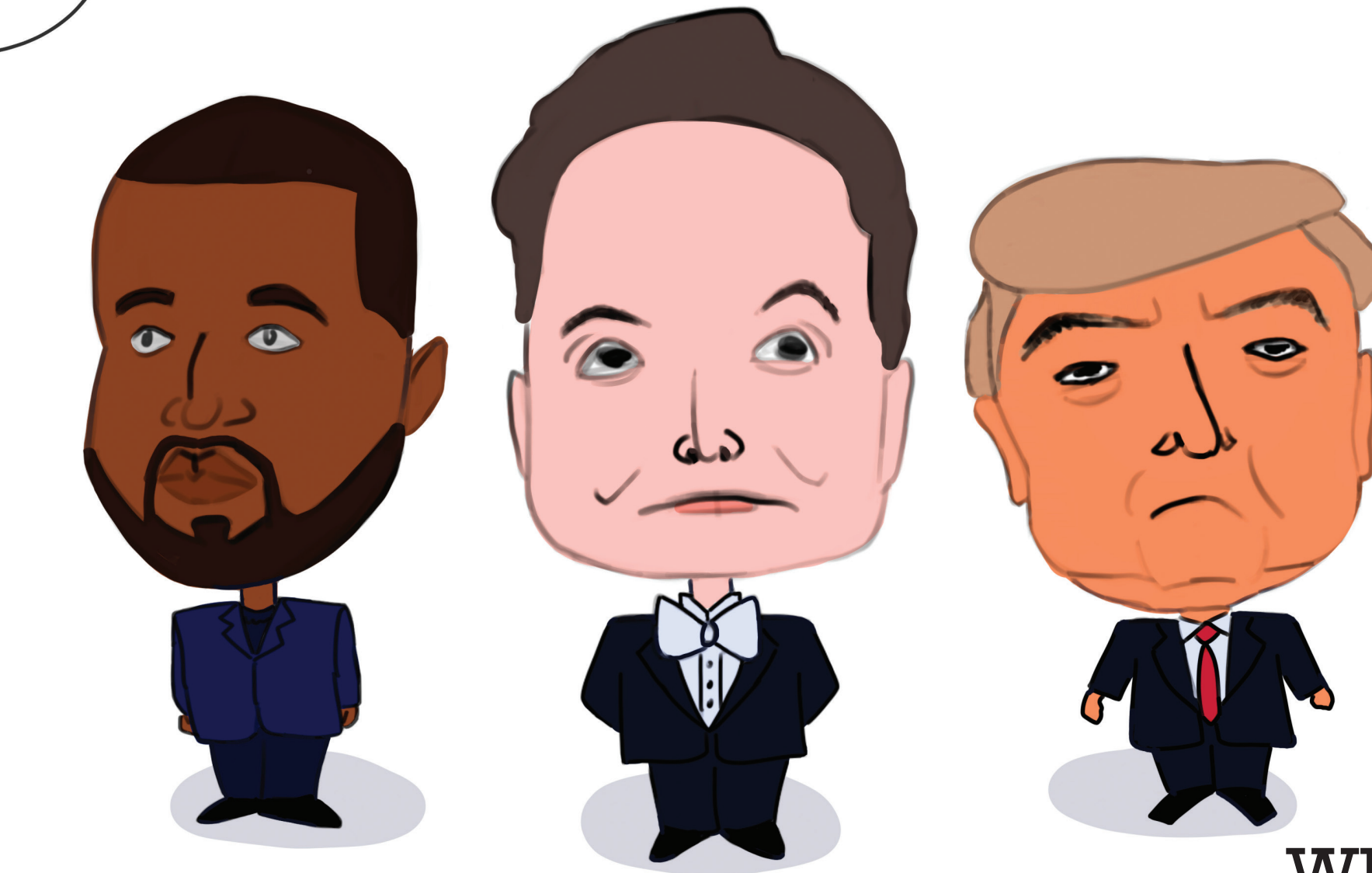
color. On November 22 former president Donald Trump hosted West and Nick Fuentes, a prominent anti-semitic and white supremacist, for dinner. Trump later stated that he did not know Fuentes without denouncing the views that Fuentes holds. As anti-semitic remarks have become more prominent, they have contributed to a greater prevalence of anti-semitism in the general public.

Earlier in November, the Bethesda Trolley Trail was tagged with phrases like "No More Jews" as well as other hateful statements and images. On December 15, a Swastika was spray-painted on a bus stop next to the Westfield Montgomery Mall.

These influences have spread to schools, even in MCPS. A day after the incident at the Westfield Montgomery Mall, the phrase "JEWS NOT WELCOME" was spray-painted onto the sign of Walt Whitman High School. The act of vandalism came as a shock to many, because it was on Shabbat and right before Hanukkah. It is assumed that those responsible were aggravated by the school's Jewish Student Union, which had given a lesson to the entire school on the topic of anti-semitism.

LIBEL : is a published false statement that is damaging to a person's reputation; a written defamation

SLANDER : is the action or crime of making a false spoken statement damaging to a person's reputation



Illustrated by Naomi Bang '23

World Cup Illuminates Tensions over Human Rights

by Solaiman Hassanin '23

In the modern world, rights movements are rarely isolated, and oftentimes, as movements spread, foreign governments and public figures clash. December's Qatari World Cup, which was controversial in the West from the time it was announced in 2010, has particularly emphasized multiple world perspectives on speech on foreign lands. Activism for LGBTQ+ rights, for example, has been prominently pushed by many Western athletes and spokespeople. Meanwhile, supporters of the Qatari government proclaim the right to autonomy for countries that wish to develop tangentially to their Western counterparts while also being a participant in worldwide events.

But even far from governments, many people, for example across the Arab world, have associated "Western causes" with neo-colonialism. They believe that in their country, their laws, religion, and culture should take precedence over foreign influence.

Even some more progressive thinkers view the Europeans' practice of free speech inside Arab countries as an unnecessary incursion. After all, they would say that very few countries in the Middle East were not European colonies or protectorates at one point, and they have all been deeply entrenched in Victorian and 19th Century European rules that make up some of the restrictive laws today. The lack of interconnectedness with the rest of European

law today means that Arab countries are no longer going to update their state values based on more modern European values. In that school of thought, "Westerners" should allow the region to develop its moral code without the foreign interference that created all of these states in the first place.

For much of the LGBTQ+ community itself, it is not as easy to shrug and let the region of the world figure itself out. Increasingly aggressive public opinion against LGBTQ+ rights necessitates, for them, that people speak outside of their comfort, speak outside of their land, and outside of their borders.

Yet even still, there is the more nuanced approach that rejects the absolute concepts of "West" and "East." Particularly among expatriated activists, the "West" is not a single block of opinion and culture, and neither is the "East." Many of them embrace the cultural displays of tournaments such as Qatar 2022 but reject the wholesale idea of the civilizational clash, which they would say is an outdated framing.

The example of LGBTQ+ activism in the Arab world is only a part of a more significant issue. The issue of legitimacy in opinion and personal liberty in a country not one's own is not purely a struggle of tyrannical government against pure soft-hearted activism. There is as strong a social element to the issue internationally, and an unmistakable historical undertone.

Musk Stands in the Center of Twitter's Chaotic State

by Dasun Panapitiya '24

Elon Musk initiated the acquisition of Twitter, the social media platform, on April 14. After months of legal issues, leaked direct messages, and Twitter stock drama, Musk finally bought it on October 27 for \$44 billion. Ever since, Twitter has seen dramatic changes to the platform like the \$8 a month verification and unbanning of public figures. There are both supporters and critics of Musk and his actions on the Twitter platform. With all of this controversy going on, Twitter is still one of the most influential social media platforms and may stay that way even after Musk announced on December 20 that he would step down as CEO of the company and name a hand-picked replacement.

Musk's marketing of Twitter is based on the idea of "absolutist" free speech, and "bringing back comedy" he said in a tweet. In order to free up the content on Twitter, he fired the team in charge of the moderation of toxic content. According to the Twitter binder analytics program, a tool that allows anyone to track hashtags or keywords on twitter, before the acquisition of Twitter by Musk, vulgar language based on race, religion, or ethnicity occurred 84 times on a seven-day average. Immediately after the acquisition, it grew to almost 5,000 times.

Musk added a feature of an \$8 a month verification to Twitter in order to give "power to the people." He also mentioned that this would lower the amount of bots on the platform by pushing people with the blue check mark to the top and the accounts without it to the bottom. How-

ever, many people have called it a money-making scheme to make up for the \$44 billion acquisition as well as criticizing the fact that the blue checkmark would silence people who didn't buy Twitter Blue, effectively going against the whole idea of free speech. Twitter Blue also created a chaotic situation with verified parody accounts of celebrities, politicians, and corporations going around Twitter. The most important of these accounts was the parody of the Eli Lilly Pharmaceutical Company tweeting out about insulin being free. Coincidentally, Eli Lilly lost billions in stock the day after, so many are left speculating whether it was the tweet that caused this incident.

Some people praise Musk for creating a place where thoughts and ideas are not controlled or censored by others. Many people have started to lose trust in governments and corporations. They want to live in a world where they can think freely and talk freely, but they fear that people are trying to control these differing opinions. Musk offers a voice to these people. They praise him for being a forward-thinking businessman and taking charge of Twitter to make money through such initiatives as Twitter Blue and through the firing of workers who are deemed "non essential" to the growth of Twitter as a business. There are many other people who are keen on wanting to see Twitter die in the hands of Musk even if there are worries that Musk is inherently increasing Twitter usage by creating all this drama. While the level of Twitter's influence may not change, the direction of its influence may lean towards that of Musk's political ideology.

When Free Speech Has a Cost

by Nia Peake '23

The back-and-forth controversy on whether the First Amendment right to free speech can blur into hate speech has re-emerged with the sudden increase in offensive speech. This is exemplified by the recent surge in insensitive comments by public figures, which has opened a space for others to perpetuate hurtful words and negatively impact those affected by the statements. Whether you believe that controversial speech is protected by free speech, people are not exempt from any consequences they may face from their words.

Social media has dealt with its fair share of the "cancel culture" debacle and the question of whether it holds people accountable, as those who have been "canceled" for questionable behavior have almost always recovered from the controversy. As frequently as we see celebrities publicly share harmful comments, the consequences rarely go beyond losing a few thousand social media followers. However, just because it is rare doesn't mean it doesn't happen. Recently, there have been cases where public figures have faced legal consequences for their harmful words, especially those who share their thoughts with a mainstream audience.

Months before the 10th anniversary of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, far-right conspiracy theorist Alex Jones was ordered by a jury to pay nearly \$1 billion in damages to the families of eight victims of the shooting after spreading misinformation about it to his audience. He was sued for defamation after circulating lies that the shooting was a hoax only hours after it had taken place. Days later, he also claimed that the families were "crisis actors." Families testified that they were harassed and threatened due to the perpetuated lies, mak-

ing them feel unsafe; some even ended up moving away from the town where the shooting happened. During the case, Jones admitted that the shooting was real, but that does not erase the years of agony the families endured. The families hope that the reprehensible outcome of the case will be able to prevent other families from experiencing any similar suffering.

Another example includes when rapper Cardi B took a gossip blogger known as Tasha K to court for a libel lawsuit after the blogger had spread "malicious rumors" about the rapper. In court, Cardi B used several of Tasha K's videos where the blogger had made "false and defamatory" statements and claimed that the material would damage her reputation and career. A judge ordered Tasha K to pay Cardi B almost \$4 million in a collection of two guilty verdict awards, medical expenses, and legal fees.

With social media comes being apprehensive about what is fake news and what is real. Not only are both of the defendant's platforms—gossip blogs and podcasts—two powerful vehicles that fuel misinformation, but they are also platforms from which the defendants have profited. Profiting off of defamatory lies increases potential legal jeopardy.

Celebrities are not the only ones who can act on being victims of social media slander; anyone can take legal action against defamatory statements made against them. If someone were to post false rumors about you on social media that resulted in harming your reputation, business, or mental health, you would be able to sue for defamation or libel. While defamation is primarily a civil case with monetary penalties, in 13 states, criminal offenses are codified. Although freedom of speech is protected under the First Amendment, that doesn't exempt anyone from the consequences of saying whatever they want.

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

Admin Who Makes 150K+ a Year Sympathetic to Teachers' Plight

As frustrated teachers rally around the clock to beg the school system for pay raises and adequate staffing to cover teaching shortages, Victoria Mercedes-Jacobs from Central Office promises that she and other district administrators will address teachers' concerns. She personally vows to help teachers in whatever ways she can from the ground up: right after her paid sabbatical.

"I understand, I really do," said Mercedes-Jacobs, sipping an \$8 coffee from a \$35 novelty mug. "Listen, I have a two-week vacation in Bali scheduled. We will 100 percent discuss the staffing shortage and our inability to provide any notable support when I get back with an awesome tan, mm-kay?"

Graduate Taking 'Gap Year' To Think about His Future

A mom of a Sherwood student who graduated last spring is extremely frustrated with her son's lack of can-do attitude after he promised he would spend his gap year applying to colleges and seeking volunteer opportunities. He is in fact heroically volunteering: volunteering hundreds of hours to Valorant.

"Mom, you need to be more sensitive to my emotional needs," the student reportedly said from his \$1,000 setup, where he was once again involved in a high-stakes game of League of Legends. "I promise I'll apply at--Whole Foods or something." His distraught mother has been frantically reaching out to colleges in her son's stead, praying that anybody will accept him long enough for her to recoup the costs of the vast amounts of game skins and DoorDash he's been buying via her credit card.

It's Not Too Early to be Thinking about Marriage

Freshmen and sophomores, though vastly different in terms of age and wisdom, on this one thing do agree: it's never too early to start thinking about love. "I've known him for three whole months, ever since we were put in the same Algebra class, and I can honestly say I see a future with him," one fourteen-year-old informed us. "I'm sure it's impossible that we could ever have drastic personality changes that cause us to hate each other, or that we could get trapped into a "high-school-sweetheart" marriage that eventually ends with affairs, emotional blackmail, a devastating divorce, and multiple lawsuits."

The sweet promises of affection that later on will create only an archive of deleted Instagram posts and unbelievable embarrassment for everyone involved will surely never be broken. But fear not, underclassmen: two percent of lucky couples make it from high school to the altar. And I'm 100-percent sure that two percent will definitely be you.

Employers Horrified at Shortage of Expendable Teen Labor

Local grocery stores and retail outlets are currently in crisis as high-school employees opt to prioritize their schoolwork and mental health instead of wasting 20 hours a week at a dead-end job. Crying after every shift and getting abused by customers and management is out, actually being a teenager in 2023 is in. One local store manager is frantically posting ads yet receiving no responses, angrily complaining, "Who knew that if we treated our employees like dirt, the word would actually get around to the point where no one wanted to apply anymore?"

The jobs available, which offer minimum wage pay, one 15-minute break for every four hours of hard labor, and absolutely NO job safety or satisfaction, just aren't cutting it anymore. If only they had more to offer. Until then, the high school population can try enjoying life for once.

Abnormal Advice: Ben There Done That

by Ben Schoenberg '24

Dear Benjamin,

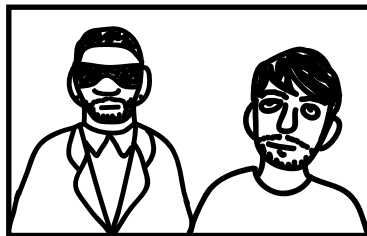
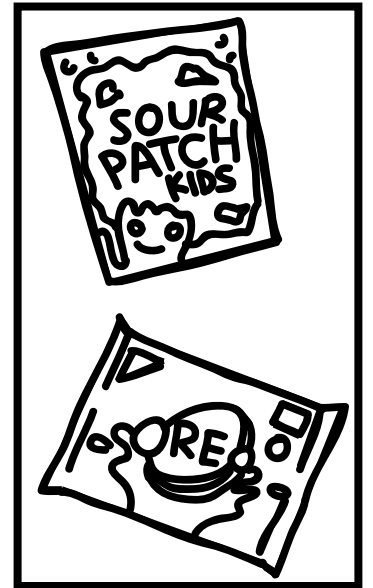
Every year I start a New Year's resolution to eat healthier and go to the gym but I fail every time! Oreos and Sour Patch Kids just taste too good to give up. Plus, I can't find the motivation to get out of bed and go to the gym. Looks like my six-pack will have to wait. What do you think I should do?

Signed, Couch Potato

Dear Quitter,

This is no easy solution but your only way out of having to commit to a New Year's resolution is by never creating one in

the first place. Everyone knows that the New Year is the only opportunity in your life when you're allowed to set goals and improve yourself, meaning if the new year never happens then you never have to set yourself up for disappointment when you can't stick with your resolution. Ask Bill Murray how he did it, because by being able to re-live the same day over and over again you don't have to create a New Year's resolution, therefore solving your issue. It may also help you realize how your laziness will get you nowhere in life and allow for real self-improvement.



Dear Benjamin,

I've been a Kanye fan for a long time. He has been the top artist in my Spotify wrapped for years! I'm in his top .00001% of listeners. I even tattooed his song

lyrics on my arms! Unfortunately, he is anti-semitic and I don't want to associate myself with him anymore. The only issue is, now that I can't listen to his music, I don't know who else to listen to. What do I do???

**Signed, Former super-fan
Dear Music nerd,**

Despite him making Graduation, I completely understand why you would want to separate yourself from Kanye as he's completely destroyed his credibility

and image. I think you should branch out and start to listen to some wonderful RNB artists such as Chris Brown and R. Kelly who constantly release hit after hit. If you wanna dabble in some more punk/indie-related musicians you have to check out Rex Orange County, who has become a big hit in recent years. All of these artists I've recommended are extraordinarily talented and most importantly, have never done anything wrong.

Decree of Twitter Ownership

Penning by Sir Ben Schoenberg '24

Thy dearest majesty, I might not but writeth to thee in the midst of extreme prosecution and turmoil. As thou art well acknown, mine own recent acquisition of the Twitt'r kingdom hath brought about a new 'ra wh'ire comedy and free speech shalt ranketh supreme. Yond is wherefore I requesteth fr m're of thy most hardc're and fearless knights to taketh parteth in our war 'gainst tyranny.

Despite mine own clearth square fr freedom, i visage stout opposition from those claiming yond I am wasting millions to did spread "hate." I did free honest men from exile such as the bard, ye, West, 'r the fallen rul'r, Donald Trump. This hast only did prove mine own hard stance as a free speech absolutist, something yond shouldst beest did praise by the Am'rican public.

Und'r mine own ruleth, I has't given people the pow'r by letting those folk sayeth whatever those gents wanteth. To help p'suade those folk to joineth mine own crusade 'gainst the auth'itarian hath left I has't given peasants the ability to wield a title yond proclaims their pow'r. By paying only a bawbling fee of 8 shillings a month, peasants shall taketh a high ranketh in mine own army and a blue checkmark on their chainmail. This shall giveth those folk the ability to standeth out amongst unloyal peasants and putteth a spotlight on their intelligent well-inf'rm'd opinions.

With these opinions, those gents can square side by side with me. As those gents sayeth, a tweet is mighti'r than a sw'rd. But this is wh'ire mine own hardships cometh in. Despite me making comedy legal once again, imp'rsonat'rs who is't dareth to presenteth themselves as me has't begun showing up, thwarting mine own eff'rts in hurlyburly. These imp'rsonat'rs has't wreak'd chaos across the lands, spreading lies in an eff'rt to besmirch mine own impeccable nameth and the nameth of many closeth allies who is't chooseth to standeth by mine own side. In mine own owneth kingdom, those gents shareth mine own nameth and mine own blue checketh marketh but spew tush tush by declaring things liketh "I drinketh mine own owneth urine" and yond tesla "uses child lab'r," things yond art clearly not true. Tesla wouldst nev'r forswear to our custom'rs, we off'r only the finest products yond art at each moment flawless.

Yond is wherefore I am once again asking fr thy financial aid so yond I can continueth to maketh Twitt'r the most accurate source of inf'rmation in the w'rl'd. Many of mine own soldi'rs in the kingdom has't hadst to visage execution because those gents has't not been hard-c're enow f'r what mine own people and I art trying to doth, meaning mine own army is but soft dwindling. In response, many outside kingdoms has't cutteth off mine own funding and I may 'r may not beest losing shillings by the second. So if 't be true thee couldst prithe just help me out fath'r, I wouldst very much appreciateth thy assistance.

Sinc'rly, Elon Musk



January 26, 2023

Zombie Survival Guide

by John Castle '25

Drawing the attention of people worldwide, including mine, there has been a recent emergence of a “Zombie Virus.” This pathogen was found present in Siberian permafrost. Discovered by scientists in late November, the disease was immediately contained in a specialized lab. Due to global warming, more of these dangerous zombie viruses will most likely be exposed to the modern world. As a DeVry University graduate who specialized in apocalypse and doomsday survival, I am a self-declared expert on what it will take to survive if (probably when) these viruses find their way into the general population.

Starting off, it's necessary to go into more detail about this virus. Even the name of the zombie virus tells all and I don't think it's necessary to explain what it does to humans, but in case you guys are still skeptical I decided to do some research myself. There have been several examples of ancient viruses and bacteria thawing out of the Siberian permafrost discovered by Russian scientists, which in my opinion is already a cause for concern. Who knows what Russia could be trying to do with such a dangerous and myste-

rious materials, and they're keeping new discoveries about it secret? Everything about this virus seems sketchy. Also why would Russia keep drilling into this frost if there are dangerous specimens frozen underneath it? Are they trying to release them, or is there something bigger they're looking for? Of course we won't know until it's too late, so let's talk about preparation.

I believe it is important to state the importance of preparation for all-out disasters as many people did for the covid-19 lockdowns by buying computer chips and toilet paper. In order to prepare you will need a stable food and drink supply. It's also important to prepare a shelter such as an island or a spaceship. In the most effective way, I listed all the materials needed to successfully survive the Siberian Zombie Virus Apocalypse. With all of these necessary supplies on your mind, you should be able to keep the virus out of mind.

1. Gushers and Mountain Dew for essential nutrients
2. At least one sword
3. Rocket launcher
4. Peashooters for defense
5. Rick Grimes
6. A cool/intimidating outfit
7. Hand Sanitizer
8. A cool pet like a Liger

Browns Give Sexual Predator \$230M To Play

by Declan Rooney '25

After serving an 11-game suspension, quarterback Deshaun Watson played in his first game for his new team, the Cleveland Browns, on December 4. The Browns beat Watson's former team, the Houston Texans, in a game in which Watson only threw for 130 yards and no TDs. But a win is a win, and the Browns went 3-3 with Watson as their starting QB to finish the season with a 7-10 record. Even if Watson hasn't played great, the Browns remain fully confident that they made the right choice to sign a player accused by more than 20 women of sexual assault. As is almost always the case in the NFL, what matters more is what a player does well on the field than what horrific things he does off it.

The women were all employees at massage parlors where Watson frequented from 2019 to 2021. Now a reasonable person might ask, what team would be desperate enough to trade for a player who is in the middle of a massive sexual assault scandal? The answer to that question is any team in the league in need of a QB. The league is a business and where there is money to be made, money will be made. But there was one team more desper-



ate than the rest, and the Browns traded three first round picks for a sexual predator while he was being investigated for criminal conduct. The Browns signed him to a massive five year \$230,000,000 contract with the knowledge that he had assaulted more than 20 women.

Years of losing leads teams and their fans down ethically questionable paths out of desperation. The Browns hold the record for the worst season in the league's history. They won their first playoff game since 1994 in 2020. Year after year the citizens of Cleveland drunkenly watch as this pitiful team makes blunder after blunder. They throw draft picks in the trash can like their quarterbacks throw interceptions. When they do draft high-end talent, the players waste

away and spend their potentially historical careers stuck on the laughing stock of the league. The Browns disrespect their players, their fans, and the whole sport on a constant basis. So what better way to return a team to glory than to make a pervert the face of the team.

Watson's return to the field was met with boos and profane chants from the fans in Houston. But was that because of outrage about his despicable behavior or because he requested a trade from the Texans? Or even the more pressing question is whether the Texans, who finished this season with a 2-12-1 record, would take Watson back if it meant they would be better next season. In the NFL, Watson is only a bad person if he's not on your own team.

Across

1. Where Mr. Falls is taking a group of students over Spring Break
8. What are Hollywood writers threatening to do?
11. What do you make on New Years?
13. Old Macdonald had a farm _____
14. A contraction
15. What drops on New Years in NYC?
18. A sporting event happening on February 12
21. A prefix related to the Earth
22. Elementary School (abbr.)
23. A vow you make at a wedding: I _____
24. To manipulate or alter something
25. It's national _____ Brittle Day!
27. Posed a question
28. English Prince writing a tell-all book
31. A popular round chapstick
33. Electromagnetic (abbr.)
35. Popular Taylor Swift song _____ Hero
37. Captain of the winning 2022 World Cup team
39. What you might put in a Christmas stocking
41. Our school
43. Christian Pulisic initials
44. Kevin McCarthy

47. The second Knives Out movie: Glass _____
48. Coldest part of the world and first half of popular band
49. United Nations (abbr.)
50. Belle in Beauty and the Beast Live 2022
52. Problem with traveling jet _____
53. Estimated Time of Arrival (abbr.)
55. Alternative to high school diploma (abbr.)
57. Plants that lose their leaves in the winter
59. The zodiac sign for December 22-January 20
60. Apartment Suite(abbr.)

Down

1. The spotlight section theme
2. A popular store for winter gear
3. A popular British clothing store
4. Yes or _____
5. What should you do at the end of a performance?
6. European Union (abbr.)
7. Arms, legs, etc
8. What we all want in the winter
9. One of the bones in your chest
10. The theme for Rock n Roll this year
12. You have four of these on your car
16. Goes along with
17. What do you burn in a fireplace?
19. A metal container that

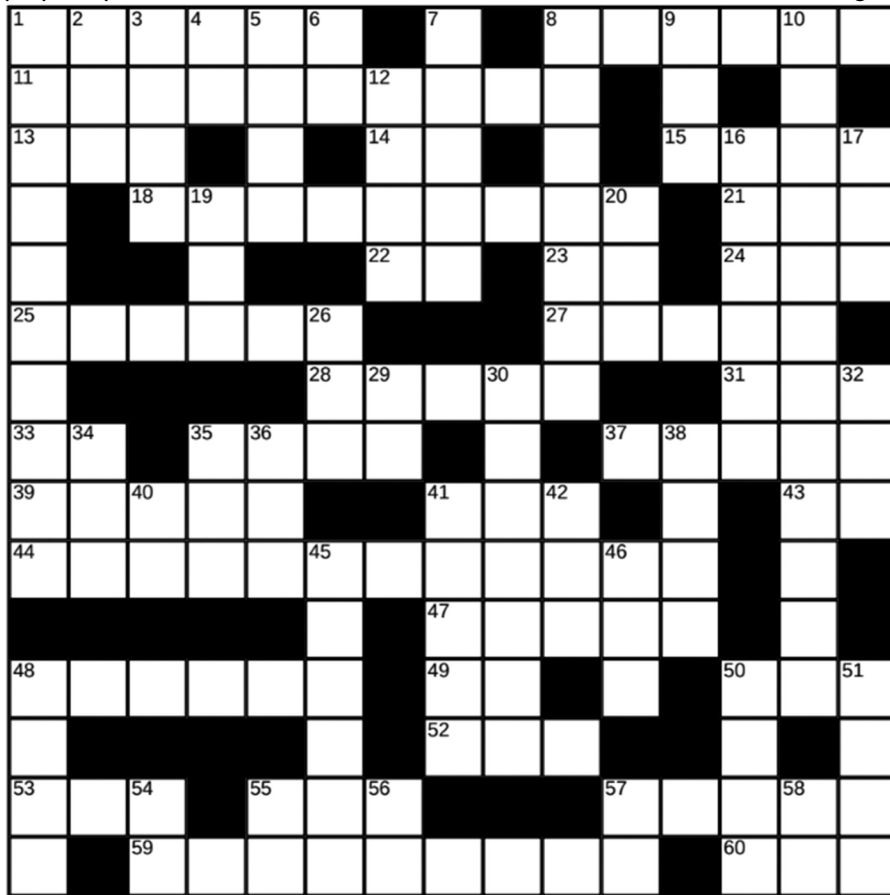
- holds large amounts of tea or coffee
20. _____ Angeles
26. That (abbr.)
29. Artificial intelligence (abbr.)
30. This year's Super bowl halftime performer
32. What you might do to a beverage
34. The first name of a famous Chinese president _____ Zedong
35. They're on social

- media, TV, etc
36. New Years Eve (abbr.)
38. Seniors this year will _____ diplomas.
40. The thirteenth letter of the Greek alphabet
41. Capital of South Korea
42. A winter activity done on a slope
45. People are getting _____ this year compared to years prior.
46. A long period of time
48. Fifteen, sixteen,

- seventeen for example
50. Shades of color
51. What you might give someone on February 14
54. What you don't want to turn on in the winter
55. General practitioner
56. Nickname for Princess Diana
57. Tennessee (abbr.)
58. A 1982 movie about a lovable alien

New Year, New Me

by Sydney Wiser, Alex Braun, Lauren Frank '23, and Ben Schoenberg '24



January 26, 2023

Staff picks for the BEST OF 2022

ALBUMS

Once Twice Melody is dream pop duo **Beach House's** ninth studio album and is an amalgamation of everything they have released thus far: it's bright, it's dramatic, and it's whimsical. It's evident that the album's greatness lies not just in its size but in its ability to fill the space in a captivating way. The strongest tracks on the album are "Pink Funeral" and "Superstar," which have a shoegaze-esque sound that is nostalgic. Every moment creates its own fantastical world of sound, which together flesh out the addictive universe of the album.

-Audrey Farris '25

Blue Water Road by **Kehlani** tops their discography as their most authentic and vulnerable release yet. This album follows the artist as they embrace their sexuality and newfound spirituality, finding deeper intimacy with their partner and internal peace. Kehlani opts for a gentler sound, exploring swelling strings underneath their usual R&B elements in tracks "Little Story" and "Everything." Their classic flow and clean riffs punctuate lead single "Alter" and "Up At Night." In thirteen tracks, Kehlani delivers an intensely personal journey for listeners.

-Naomi Bang '23

The 1975's most recent album, *Being Funny in a Foreign Language* is a catchy, refreshingly cohesive effort from a band known for its confusing lyrics and unusual production choices. At 11 tracks, *Being Funny* is half the length of the band's last album, featuring several strong pop songs that explore love and personal growth. The album's strongest tracks include acoustic ballad "When We Are Together," and lead single "Part of the Band." *Being Funny* proves that The 1975 can make a cheerful, upbeat album without sacrificing its characteristic off beat charm.

-Katie Gough '23

Harry's House is an energetic and sweet-sounding album, featuring some of the biggest hits of the year including "Music for a Sushi Restaurant," "Late Night Talking," and "Matilda." In his third studio album, **Harry Styles** explores themes such as falling in love and grappling with change in relationships. Shortly after announcing the album, Styles released one of the album's lead singles, "As It Was," which exploded all over social media, helping the album to reach a broader audience. To say the album hit the mark is an understatement.

-Lauren Frank '23

MOVIES

Set in the folds of a young woman's fleeting memories of her father, *Aftersun* takes a deeply intimate look into how people are remembered and how childlike innocence can cloud the more checked aspects of the people we love. Both Frankie Corio and Paul Mescal deliver wonderfully naturalistic performances, having great chemistry with one another and displaying a wide emotional range and this, along with the ambient score and minimalistic cinematography, helps greatly to amplify the film's dramatic beats. *Aftersun* is an overall masterful directorial debut from up and coming filmmaker Charlotte Wells that puts her as a unique voice to look out for in the future.

-Liam Trump '24

Nope provides a unique take on both thriller and alien movies through its distinct, well-rounded characters and engaging plot. Director Jordan Peele subverts many classic horror and blockbuster tropes in the film, especially through the intriguing design of the alien antagonist. The cinematography is exceptionally strong, featuring sounds that are genuinely frightening or intense. The movie also provides a thoughtful message on the dangers of chasing fame that viewers will continue to discuss after leaving the theater. While clearly laced with deeper themes, the plot still remains simple and comprehensible, providing plenty of action and entertainment.

-Nicholas Schade '23

Top Gun: Maverick, directed by Joseph Kosinski, didn't disappoint with many critics praising it. As the sequel to the original *Top Gun* from 1986, returning actor Tom Cruise offers a blast from the past and helps replay many similar yet unique parts from the original. Additionally, viewers feel like they are in the fighter jets with immersive sounds and other visual effects throughout the exciting film. The intense action, mixed with many different emotional and dramatic scenes, boosts the plot of the movie significantly. In an age of streaming films, *Top Gun Maverick* is a reminder of why certain movies are worth the price of seeing them in a theater.

-Dylan Sondike '24

The sci-fi comedy *Everything Everywhere All at Once* follows a Chinese immigrant named Evelyn as she navigates her relationship with her family while also traveling across a multiverse trying to stop a powerful evil that threatens the entire multiverse. The film has funny moments, suspenseful moments, action packed moments, and heartwarming moments. Despite the sci-fi elements, the film includes relatable elements even to people not from an immigrant family or with generational trauma. The special effects are stellar and so are the performances by nearly every actor, mainly Michelle Yeoh who plays Evelyn and Stephanie Hsu who plays Evelyn's daughter, Joy.

-Alex Braun '23

TV SHOWS

Wednesday provides an imaginative adaptation of *The Addams Family* created by Charles Addams. The famed Tim Burton serves as executive producer and directs four of the eight episodes. *Wednesday* combines romance, comedy, and mystery elements to create a wonderfully entertaining experience. The show provides fresh insight into Wednesday, the daughter of Gomez and Morticia Addams. Jenna Ortega's dedication to playing Wednesday is evident in her lack of blinking throughout the show. Fans of the older *Addams Family* films/shows will be pleased with the subtle references to the older material, but newer fans still will enjoy the captivating murder mystery.

-Genevieve Mayle '23

In May, creators Matt and Ross Duffer debuted the fourth season of their TV series *Stranger Things*. Most of the action follows the main group of protagonists as they try to take down the new villain, Vecna. Viewers also finally learn the context to the evil parallel world known as the Upside Down. Additionally, the show adds two new main settings taking place in California and Alaska. With a lot more going on in this season, the directors found a way to balance the show by making each episode and each plot engaging for viewers.

-Devin Kosiorowski '24

Better Call Saul, the slow-burn, highly acclaimed prequel to *Breaking Bad*, ran its final season last spring. Lead actor Bob Odenkirk delivers a phenomenal performance complemented by great writing and pacing that takes the story through various essential moments in Saul Goodman's life. Creators Vince Gilligan and Peter Gould let the storyline play out with masterful patience while not wasting a single scene. *Better Call Saul* perfected the art of creating morally ambiguous characters that are able to command sympathy at the same time as allowing the viewer to question their motives and actions, creating a whirlwind for its final season that ends in engrossing, climactic fashion.

-Matt Kauffman '23

January 26, 2023

TikTok: the New Home of Music

by Katie Gough '23

On October 22, 18 year old indie artist Shauna Dean Cokeland released her first single, "Moving in Place" on streaming platforms. In only 48 hours after its release, the song had garnered more than 150,000 streams on Spotify alone, likely because of her TikTok following of nearly 400,000.

Since 2020, Cokeland has been releasing short clips of her songs on the extraordinarily popular video platform, drawing in fans from behind a phone camera with her original lyrics and single acoustic guitar. Cokeland's simple style of production is not uncommon on TikTok, where the popularity of this "bedroom pop" has sent many creators like her into stardom. In fact, many of 2022's biggest breakout artists found their footing in the music industry through TikTok, including GAYLE, Nicky Youre, and JAX, all of whom have had their original songs become radio hits due to their massive popularity on the platform.

What makes TikTok unique from other popular platforms like YouTube and Instagram is its tendency to allow anyone's video to go viral on any given day, regardless of how many followers a user has. For many independent artists, TikTok provides necessary exposure to a potentially global audience, as well as the chance to prove to producers and agents that they have what it takes to go viral on the internet, which is now more than ever an indicator of a musician's ability to succeed.

On TikTok, users can sync virtually any segment of music or recorded sound to videos they publicly film and upload. Songs generally become popular on the app when enough creators sync them to videos that all share a common theme or idea, like a dance or challenge, and thus as-



Shauna Dean Cokeland, a young musician who grew popular on TikTok.

sociate the song with a "TikTok trend." As more creators participate in a trend, more people see the videos, and hear the music. This year, songs like "Beggin'" by Maneskin, "Until I found You" by Stephen Sanchez, and "Bad Habit" by Steve Lacy, among others, have all benefited from this format. Even throwback hits like "Dreams" by Fleetwood Mac and "Talking to the Moon" by Bruno Mars have found revival on the app. Notably, for the first time since its debut in 1985, Kate Bush's "Running Up That Hill" charted at Billboard's #1 spot for two weeks this Summer after going viral on TikTok when it was featured on Netflix's hit teenage drama series, *Stranger Things*.

TikTok's power to circulate music is not a new phenomenon. Even extremely popular artists like Billie Eilish and Lil Nas X had their starts on the platform, with the latter finding fame through his viral song, "Old Town Road."

TikTok has proven that it can also be a valuable tool for established artists, who can release their songs on the platform to

gauge consumer interest in new music as they put together a larger album or project. Musician Lewis Capaldi for instance, who had several radio hits before TikTok became prominent, has recently been using the platform to try to make a snippet of an upcoming song of his go viral, captioning his TikToks with "still not viral, still searching for validation from an app" and "I'm beginning to loathe the sound of my own voice now, is this supposed to happen when ur promoting a song on tik tok?"

TikTok has drastically changed the music industry for the foreseeable future. In many ways, the platform gives more power to the consumer. In a digital streaming age when album sales no longer dictate an artist's success, TikTok can prove, with numbers, exactly how popular a song is. The platform's unique format puts its users in complete control over which songs blow up, giving the general public the ability to make or break careers and giving artists the hope that maybe they too, will enjoy the benefits of TikTok fame.

Your Favorite Shows Are at Risk of Being Delayed

by Alexis Booker '23

Shows like *Gossip Girl* and *iCarly* shaped the late childhood and early teen years of many young people today. Though the shows had a lot of success, they originally set out to turn out differently, with many more episodes to air. But prior to the airing of their seasons, the 2007 Writers' Strike occurred, leaving many of these shows cutting their originally planned seasons to a few episodes. Writers insisted on being given higher wages and rights, speaking out against the numerous issues of treatment in the Hollywood industry. This echoes events occurring in Hollywood today that could cause a possible writer's strike later this year.

Controversy around the wages, rights, and economic mobility of TV and movie writers, combined with an uncertain economy, caused The Writers' Strike of 2007. It lasted 100 days and caused stagnancy for many popular shows of the time. The strike resulted in a contract between the Writers Guild of America (WGA), a labor union for film writers, and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP), which represents the supermajority of Hollywood studio productions. Contract renewals now should take place annually but haven't in the last two years due to Covid-19. Similar conditions in the industry and another fragile economy today could cause a strike if the AMPTP and the WGA cannot come to an agreement.

The AMPTP now has until May 1 to create an amiable contract expanding on the minimum basic agreement between themselves and the WGA East and West unions. The minimum basic

agreement is a bargaining agreement intended to protect the rights of the WGA members. The head negotiators of the WGA intend on being strict with the goals of the organization like offering hands-on opportunities for low-tier writers to gain experience along with better benefits, rights, and wages to keep up with growing inflation and be appropriately compensated. The writers through their union also want to focus on the excess of overtime and "free work" in which writers have to do extra hours without pay. Negotiators are aware companies have the means to support these higher benefits though have low hopes they will be open to agreements.

With the popularity of streaming platforms, Hollywood executives need to settle on a film production strategy to compete with big brands such as Netflix or HBO Max. The trend of mini rooms (small groups of writers for streaming shows) also creates a more cutthroat environment that executives can utilize to cut wage costs and improve their bottom lines. To prepare for a possible strike, executive producers have lined up scripts in advance before the May 1 deadline in case writers walk away from their projects.

Screenwriters have faced many difficulties in a new age of small writers' rooms and overworking. The success of these streaming platforms ripples into Hollywood, causing executives to want to replicate their success. WGA plans to maintain its position despite being aware of how little the AMPTP is likely to cave to all the demands on the writers' behalf. Due to this fact, a repeat of the 2007 Strike is likely. It is unclear how prepared companies are to manage without writers for film, though it is likely to delay many anticipated releases.

Babylon Gives a Nuanced Perspective on the Film Industry

by Liam Trump '24

Chronicling the transition from silent films to sound, Damien Chazelle's latest directorial outing *Babylon* exudes the fast paced, chaotic, and excessive nature of filmmaking during the roaring '20s. The first sequence reflects this as Chazelle gives us a long take, focusing on every corner of a cocaine-induced, sex-filled party in Bel Air which only becomes more over the top as an elephant is brought into the picture to jazz things up. Immediately, the attention to detail when it comes to the historical accuracy of the costumes and set design, as well as Chazelle's own talent in coordinating waves of extras, is evident. The score headed by Justin Hurwitz is consistently energetic, and further reflects the fast moving nature of the film industry.

But underneath the exuberant set pieces and flashy presentation is a profound look at image and



how an industry can take advantage of its frontrunners' desire for fame. Two up and comers in the film world, Manny Torres (Diego Calva) and Nellie LaRoy (Margot Robbie), thrust themselves into filmmaking as Manny becomes an executive after working under famed actor Jack Conrad (Brad Pitt) and Nellie becomes a famous actress in her own right. Both of them, along with Jack, have their

own rise and fall stories which become intertwined with one another. Seeing how they all deal with failure in their own way as the industry progresses into the 1930s without them really helps to flesh out each of their characters and further illustrate why they're a part of the film industry in the first place.

The main trio playing these characters, Calva, Robbie, and

Pitt, are at their A-game and deliver some outstanding performances. The story rocks these characters back and forth between success and failure, and to see the three leads take on this emotional turmoil is very impressive and helps to ground the script's more offbeat ideas.

Film production is at the core of *Babylon* and as a result the romance between Manny and Nellie

comes across as afterthought at many points, leaving parts of the film feeling unfocused with how poorly their romance is handled. Both characters simply don't spend a majority of the three-plus hour runtime building their relationship which leaves their motivation for wanting to be with each other rather shallow. The plot also splinters toward the middle of the film, with very little through-line, making especially the back half feel rather messy.

So while not the most structurally sound when it comes to its narrative, *Babylon* is still a wildly entertaining examination of the anarchy that the 1920s film industry wore so proudly on its sleeve. It's by no means a conventional love letter to cinema, but a necessary look into how an industry that seems so magical on the surface can be just as cutthroat and morally bankrupt as any other.

Grade: B

January 26, 2023

2022 Fashion Picking from the Past and Present

by Alexis Booker '23
and Lauren Frank '23

Dozens if not hundreds of trends have made an appearance in Gen-Z fashion and incorporated iconic styles from the past few decades. These fashion trends have quickly gained popularity and reached a wider audience because of the internet and the entertainment industry's influence. Fashion has evolved to fit into specific avenues and niches including 90s, early 2000s, Tumblr grunge, and "model off-duty" that incorporate timeless and popular styles into today's trending fashion.

Many of the popular styles seen last year have become significantly more accessible, with many hunting for their favorite pieces in local thrift stores like Goodwill or Unique Thrift. "I like how [thrifting] exposes me to new styles since clothes there are completely mixed together ... stuff I'm looking for might show me something I've never seen before," said senior Nick Brown, who finds many items that align with his personal style and those trending, such as baggy jeans, corduroy, earthy tones, and antique apparel.

These 90s era pieces have continued into trends today, especially with brands like Levi's and

Converse. Hit show *Friends* popularized the 90s indie and denim-filled wardrobe, while movies like *Clueless* popularized a more preppy, Beverly Hills style. The mixture of "underdressed" and "dressed" 90s fashion remains relevant among Gen-Z.

In a post-pandemic world, many look to the early 2000s for fashion inspiration and this era has become one of the most dominant influences in today's fashion. Many love the youthful, bright, and slightly retro style this early 2000s (y2k) aesthetic offers because of the nostalgia it brings people. Several designer brands of the time like Juicy Couture, Ed Hardy, and Von Dutch influenced some of the most iconic styles that were seen on prominent figures. These style icons like Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie often wore these extravagant and eye-catching y2k styles, including bright Juicy Couture tracksuits, animal print patterns, trucker hats, and mini pleated skirts. In general, this style is very distinguishable from others because of its flamboyance.

As y2k remains on the rise, it comes in tandem with the resurgence in emo/grunge fashion, a peak last seen at the height of Tumblr's popularity back in 2014. The Tumblr grunge aesthetic was a microcosm of pop culture at the



Styles are pictured from left to right and include Tumblr grunge, indie, 1990s, "model off-duty," and y2k.

time, with edgier pop bands like The Arctic Monkeys and The 1975 gaining their claim to fame. These trends have grown in popularity among those who desire the grunge, "rockstar girlfriend" type of look. The rock-punk look bleeds into teens' wardrobes with pieces like plaid skirts, Doc Martens, black eyeliner, and tall knee high socks. The recent success of Netflix's *Wednesday* further publicized dark and edgy wardrobes on the small screen, influencing many young viewers to emulate the styles in the show, especially seen on the feature character, Wednesday.

While y2k fashion empha-

sizes maximalism, some recent trending styles have started to shift away from this, instead toning it down towards a simpler look. The "model off-duty" or minimalist is an aesthetic popularized by social media but in reality was originally a staple pioneered by Black and Latina women in the 90s. Several elements of this style nowadays include neutral colors, gold jewelry, and blazers. This seemingly effortless look is topped off with glowy/natural makeup like "Brownie-glazed lips," which were publicized by Hailey Bieber, and paired with slick back hairdos.

Social media platforms such

as Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest give teens infinite access to what's popular, which has helped specific fashion and aesthetics gain traction quickly. Many experimenting with their style find themselves admiring modern celebrities and influencers who popularize fashion trends. Among them, Emma Chamberlain, Bella Hadid, and Zendaya, who often wear designer brands, create a greater interest in high-fashion for the average consumer. Trends reflect what is happening in pop culture; therefore, much of the fashion seen in 2022 was a mixture of several styles seen in the past, now popular in the present.



The Pale Blue Eye Stumbles in the Snow

by Connor Pugh '24

Despite an impressive cast and a fairly well known director, *The Pale Blue Eye* received little fanfare on Netflix, possibly due to the much more popular murder mystery *Glass Onion* releasing on Netflix only 2 weeks earlier. The film is a detective story based upon a novel of the same name by Louis Bayard, following the hardened detective Augustus Landor (Christian Bale) and a young Edgar Allen Poe (Harry Melling) as they attempt to solve some unusual murders at West Point Academy in the winter of 1830. A fascinating premise and a great cast set up *The Pale Blue Eye* to be a great film (if not very well known); however, it remains frustratingly inconsistent throughout its runtime, becoming a movie not without its merits but stumbling over key points that prevents it from being truly fantastic.

The Pale Blue Eye is most

definitely not incompetent, it understands and replicates how good mysteries function on a surface level. Everything at least feels earned and built up to. What the film's approach to a murder mystery fails to achieve is in its relation to the audience and the world. Unless the viewer would for whatever reason know obscure occult history or is a die-hard Poe fan, the audience has no tangible connection to the setting and—avoiding spoilers—the details and circumstances of the murders. The film has no time to immerse the audience in the world, it's too busy establishing the characters and overarching plot, meaning the historical setting continually keeps the viewer at arms length. Without the somber and frigid mood the story needed to properly sell its mystery of unsavory murders and mutilations, the story rings hollow, which most definitely wasn't what the film was going for.

Fortunately, once the mys-

tery really gets going in the last third of the film, the empty parts become less pronounced and the clever writing and raw catharsis of the detective mystery is able to take center stage. It would be spoiling the entire movie to explore the themes present with any depth or substance, but the film is able to explore its themes fairly well. The themes present in the film are deeply intertwined with the plot and story, so talking about them would be a major spoiler. However it can be assured there is ample substance to be had, and the film does not stray away from exploring heavy topics with emotional maturity.

While there are great ideas present and some fun is to be had from the film, *The Pale Blue Eye* keeps the viewer at arm's length, not committing itself to the setting and atmosphere in the way the film needed to truly excel.

Grade: B-

Edge of History Loses Itself on the Adventure

by Cailin Russell '23

The new series *National Treasure: Edge of History*, directed by Mira Nair, has launched to Disney+ with a total of five episodes its first season. The show tells the story of a young girl named Jess (Lisette Oliveira), who discovers there is a lost Pan-American treasure and goes on an adventure with her friends to unlock clues to find it.

In the beginning of the series, the character Sandusky (Harvey Keitel) tells Jess what a symbol on her necklace represents. After learning about the symbol's meaning, Jess goes searching for a treasure that supposedly her father and other men had been protecting, which gets the journey started. It is also mentioned in the beginning of the series that Jess is a Mexican immigrant and could be deported at any time, which helps create tension throughout the show.

The series references the original films by incorporating the same theme music while also some more modern music to keep with the present day, which is when the series is set. Additionally, the show includes some of the original *National Treasure* characters such as Riley Poole (Justin Bartha), Sandusky, and an FBI agent (Armando Riesco).

The similarities between the show and movies mostly end there, and the series ultimately is undermined by its flaws. The

writers clearly want to appeal to the younger generation through the script, but like much of what's on Disney Channel, this can be a turnoff for older audiences. Also, the acting throughout the whole show is not convincing or authentic at all, and it is disappointing that Nicholas Cage (the star in the original films) does not make an appearance in this series. Justin Bartha, who is an original cast member does appear in the series in Episode 4, but Bartha lacks a certain energy that he had in the original films. He is also given very few lines and is not portrayed as a primary character in the series as opposed to the films. His inclusion is more a painful distraction than an enhancement.

In Episode 5, there is a scene in which Riley and Jess are stuck in Sandusky's secret room in his home, and the oxygen levels in the room are decreasing. While this aspect of the scene creates suspense, it takes away from Riley and Jess trying to figure out a numerical code to escape the room. Moreover, this scene has no correlation to finding the treasure, which seems like a waste of time during the final episode of the first season. People who want to enjoy a series that has the same authenticity and charisma as the original *National Treasure* films will be disappointed.

Grade: C-

January 26, 2023



The Pulse

Watching the Times Square Ball drop. Making a champagne toast. Lighting sparklers. Banging pots and pans at the stroke of midnight. These are all traditions to help ring in the New Year. Whether you are a resolution aficionado or despise the celebration of time passing, there is one thing we can all agree on. Out with 2022 and in with 2023. **This edition of The Pulse is about all of the things the New Year brings.**

What is one of your New Year's resolutions?

"To put myself first and do what's best for me and not what others want."
-Kendall Aronow '23

"To eat healthier and work out at least three times a week."
-Noralexis Carrion '24

"Take care of myself better/work on myself way more often."
-Grace Pontell '23

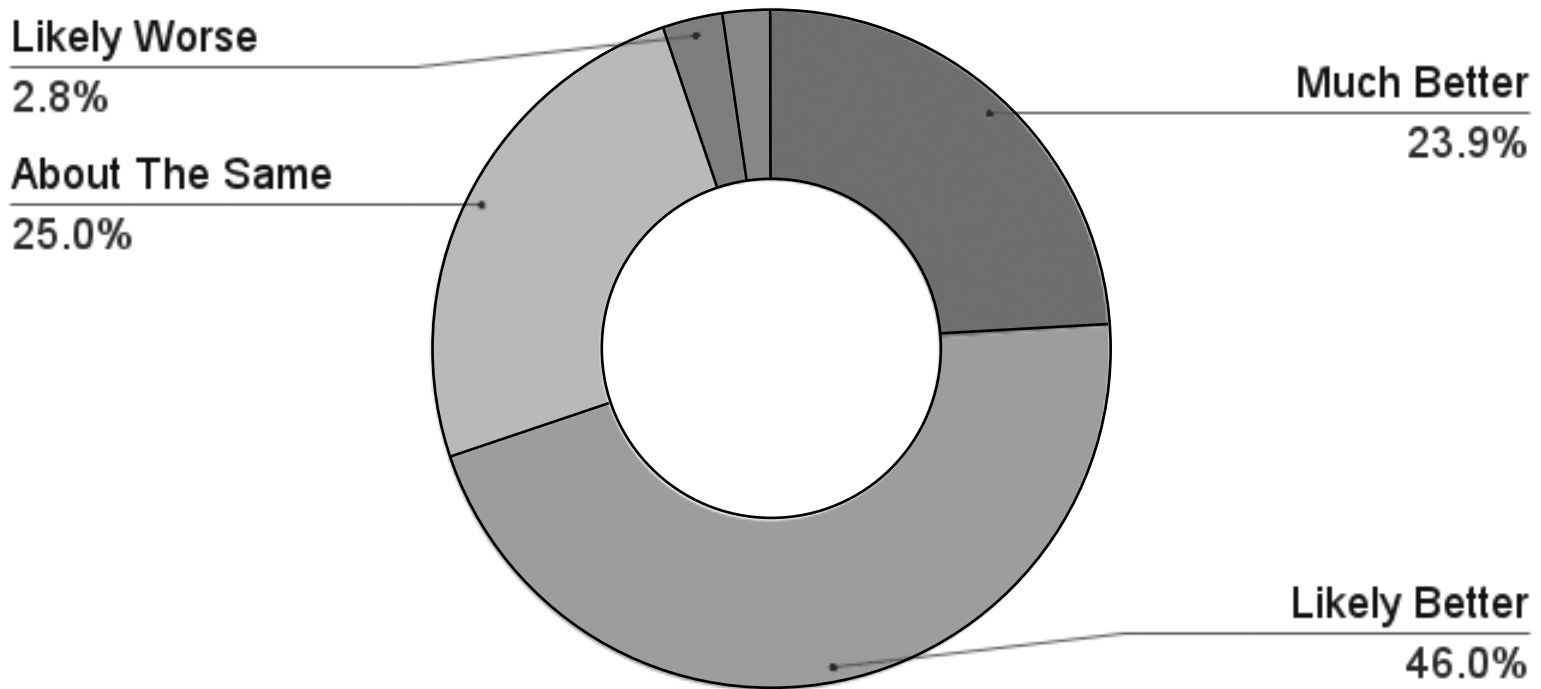
"I want to spend less time on my phone and spend more time outside."
-Abby Gleason '26

"To listen more than I talk."
-Maximus O'Neill '24

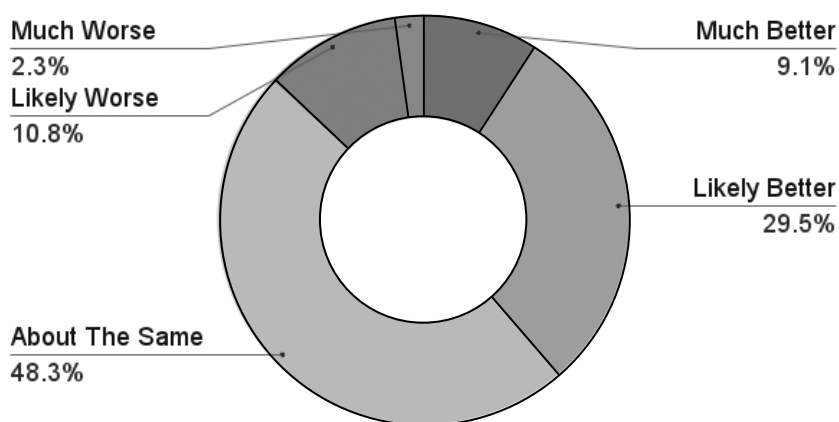
"My New Year's resolution is to have a better relationship with my family."
-Veronica Aguilar '23

"Create a good budget and have a good mindfulness."
-Nhi Truong '26

How do you predict 2023 will compare to 2022 for you personally?



How do you believe your grades will be in semester two in 2023 compared to semester one in 2022?



What is one prediction you have for 2023?

"There may be some revisions to the rules about marijuana in professional sports."
-Paul Papadimitris '23

"The Capitals will win the Stanley Cup."
-Matan Meltzer '23

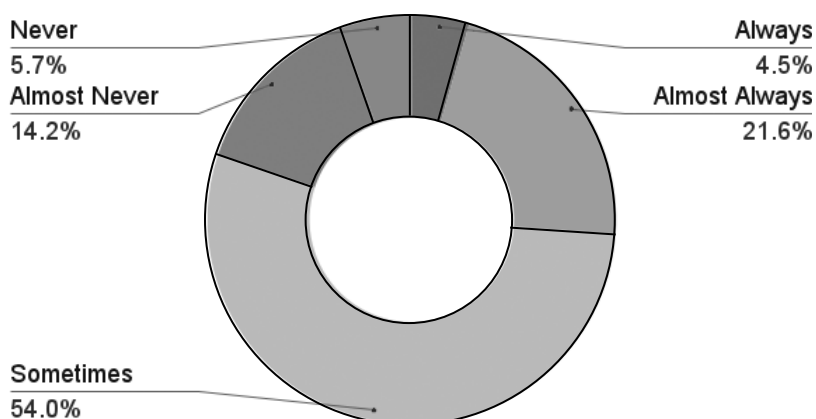
"The Vampire Diaries will get rebooted."
-Caitlin Fears '26

"People will accept global warming and start taking it seriously."
-Marie-Claude Melige '23

"The Donald Trump trial will become the most watched trial in history."
-Desmond Noble '25

"There will be a blizzard in late January."
-Cole Snyder '23

In general, do you tend to follow through with your New Year's Resolutions?



"Something cool is going to be found on Mars."
-Soumya Sukhadia '26

"We will find an effective way to eliminate certain cancers."
-Aidan Flaherty '26

"There's going to be another outbreak of Covid."
-Nathan Hyde '24

"My prediction is that Starship, the SpaceX rocket, is going to go through multiple orbital flights maybe even with payload."
-Srijesh Godavarthi '26

NIL Deals Are Now Open to Students

by Perri Williams '23

On December 7, the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) issued guidance for how student-athletes may engage in monetary compensation from the use of their name, image and likeness (NIL). Although the biggest NIL deals are reserved for high star recruits receiving offers from major Division I programs, NIL contracts already are spreading to a larger pool of high school athletes. This creates opportunities for high school athletes, but it also makes monitoring and enforcement of the new MPSSAA rules more challenging.

Just a few years ago, none of this would have even been possible, because the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) refused to allow its college athletes to make money because it was presumed their education was their compensation. Then in the 2021 Supreme Court case *Alston v. NCAA*, the court ruled that athletes should have the opportunity to monetize their NIL. The court's reasoning for this decision was, "...[the NCAA's] rules limiting education-related compensation violated section 1 of the Sherman Act," because college athletes gain no monetary compensation for their participation in a venture that makes revenue for their schools and other organizations.

The sportswear brand Aftermath Sports has taken advantage of the MPSSAA ruling to create branding opportunities with athletes through the local area. "I saw that Aftermath Sports was looking for brand athletes. I mes-



Junior wide receiver Alex Lacey promotes his NIL deal on his Instagram.

saged them for the opportunity; they explained their system to me and I joined," said sophomore Michael Robles, who is a starting offensive tackle for varsity football.

Junior receiver Alex Lacey also has a deal with Aftermath Sports. "Being a brand athlete helps me get my name out more so different companies see it. It also provides a way to make money and get gear," he said.

Andrew Fields, Sherwood's varsity football coach, thinks it is a good opportunity that student-athletes can now have NIL deals and is not concerned about such deals adversely affecting a team. "I don't think it would have any impact on team operations,"

said Fields.

Aftermath Sports asks interested high school athletes to initiate contact with the company. Those athletes receive an "Aftermath" advertisement along with promo code specific to each athlete. The MPSSAA has strict rules that student-athletes cannot make any reference or display to their school in their sponsored partnerships, which is why Aftermath blots out or colors over the high school names and logos on uniforms and helmets in their advertisements. Although NIL deals potentially could be lucrative, they also come with risks, including the loss of eligibility, if the student-athlete or the company run afoul of MPSSAA rules.

Wrestling Prepared to Compete at Regionals

by Dylan Sondike '24

Just over halfway through the season, the varsity wrestling team has exceeded expectations. As of January 10, the team remains undefeated with seven wins and has won six of those meets by a comfortable ten or more points. Coach Pete Siarkas explained that the team has been winning the matches that they are expected to win so far. Sophomore Colin Cyphers and senior Jace Munoz remain undefeated in their individual contests. Strong showings from other wrestlers such as senior Sam Dickey and junior Vasili Siarkas have also contributed to the team's victories.

"Jace Munoz will hit the 100-win category [for his career] and that's with him losing a year from the pandemic, which is a big accomplishment to get in four years, let alone three years," said Siarkas. Munoz's name will be added to the "Wall of Champions" in the wrestling gym, something that Munoz has aspired to see since his freshman year.

Despite the individual and team success so far, Siarkas noted that there are a lot of teams around the county that have looked good this season. He sees around eight strong schools in the area that could compete for a title including Sherwood. As the team continues through the back half of regular season meets, Siarkas points out that the end of the year county and state tournaments are where top teams and wrestlers separate themselves from all the rest.

After the regular season, the wrestlers participate in a team tournament called duals. The teams in the 4A North Region all make the tournament; however, only one team is crowned champion from each of the four regions and heads to a final-four showdown. Individual tournaments begin within their respective counties. In the county tournament, everyone gets in. As the Warriors are a part of the 3A/4A North region, the top eight individual wrestlers advance to the regional tournament based on a points system, where every match won equates to more points earned. From the regional tournament, the top four from each region make it to states to form a sixteen-person bracket.

Munoz is feeling optimistic about himself and the team's chances at this point in the season. "As a team, we are talented and have the wrestling experience to win states," said Munoz. "Individually, I'm confident that the work I put into the off-season and the extra work I put in during the regular season will have me at the top of the podium at the end of the year."

With tougher opponents on the schedule in the back half of the regular season, the Warriors will look to continue their tremendous season. With individual and county tournaments also on the horizon, Siarkas and the team will look to make this season a memorable one for wrestling, and try to bring some hardware back home for the Warriors.

Girls Basketball on a Streak after Lackluster Start

by Kobi Gyan '24

Through last week, the girls basketball team had a record of 8-4 and 6-1 in the division. What stands out about many of the Warriors' games are the lopsided victories over other teams. These one-sided results include a 69-36 win against Blake on January 4, a 71-31 blowout the next night over Wheaton, and a 54-21 win against Northwood on January 11. Three out of four of Sherwood's losses came at the beginning of the season, including a 71-27 loss against Churchill on December 12.

Although lopsided scores occur across all county sports, it happens frequently in girls basketball. For instance, Sherwood's boys basketball did beat Wheaton by 41 points on January 9, but the three games the team lost were by a mere combined 13 points. These large differences in scores between boys sports and girls sports likely is a result of less depth among many girls' teams in Montgomery County.

"It comes down to participation," explained Athletic Director Jason Woodward. "Kids aren't going outside and playing sports anymore. Also, there's a burnout rate factor; all these kids play travel sports and once they get



Senior point guard Elizabeth Furgione drives in the paint for a layup during victory vs. Blake on January 17.

to high school, they're like 'I'm done, I'm tired'. Girls sports especially." Woodward notes that participation in girls sports was a big topic at a conference of athletic directors that he attended.

In addition to a lack of participation, competition with private schools puts Sherwood at a disadvantage. Many of the most talented players in the area, particularly in the sport of basketball, attend private schools such as Good Counsel, St. Johns, Gonzaga, and other teams in the Metropolitan area. These private schools are

allowed to scout young talent, something Public Schools cannot do. According to Woodward, private schools appear much more attractive to a student-athlete as they have no limitations on how many games they can play and where they play. This makes it difficult for a public high school coach to sit down and talk to prospects about their school when they can only offer so much due to the limitations placed on their school.

Girls basketball head coach Tim Hobbs said that nothing can

be done to compete against private schools for players because "public schools are not permitted to recruit student-athletes." Still, Hobbs has developed a level of consistency over the eight years he has coached the team, with an overall record of 94-70 coming into this season. "I attribute our success to the fact we have been able to maintain the same coaching staff every year since my third year," said Hobbs. "This creates a sense of familiarity for the girls as they progress from JV to varsity. Furthermore, both teams play the

same style and incorporate similar strategies which aids in the transition from one team to the next."

Despite the decline in participation and the loss of a number of starters from last year to graduation, seniors Julia Peffer and Elizabeth Furgione have helped with the transition of their younger teammates, which includes six sophomores, to the varsity level. After a rocky 0-3 start, the team seems to have turned the corner, winning six straight before losing 30-27 against Blair on January 13 in a game in which they were outscored 16 to 4 in the first quarter. In spite of the loss, the Warriors remain in first place in the division.

In a rematch versus Blake on January 17, the Warriors again delivered another blowout win by a score of 65-28. This game had an overall balanced scoring effort with seniors Furgione and Peffer leading the way. That victory was followed by a 43-26 win three days later at Magruder. Because of the disparities among MCPS girls basketball teams, the lopsided scores raise a tricky question of just how good the Warriors are. A question in which the answer will be more clear after the team begins this week playing more teams outside of their division.

International Players Taking Over NBA at a Historic Rate

by Noah Bair '24

In 2014, a center from Serbia named Nikola Jokić was drafted 41st overall by the Denver Nuggets. Since then, Jokić has averaged almost 20 points per game as well as been selected to four straight All-Star teams and won NBA MVP each of the last two seasons. In fact, each of the last four MVPs has been from foreign countries, with Giannis Antetokounmpo from Greece winning the two before Jokić. Before that, an international player hadn't won the award since Germany's Dirk Nowitzki in 2006.

The success of many international superstars can be traced back to playing more competitively in European nations before coming to play in America's top league. Luka Dončić, who is currently favored to win MVP this year playing for the Dallas Mavericks, competed in Europe for Real Madrid in the EuroLeague. There, he won the most valuable player award before being drafted to the NBA in 2018. Dončić is now one of the NBA's brightest stars and is one of the league's best players at only 23 years old. Similarly, Antetokounmpo of the Milwaukee Bucks, who is now an NBA MVP and champion, played in Greece for three years before coming to the United States. During that time, he was an All-Star in a top Greek league while averaging more than 20 minutes per game at only 17 years old. Getting this playing time at such a young age contributed to Antetokounmpo's success in the NBA as he was already accustomed to the rigor of playing professional basketball years before playing in America.

While it's evident that foreign players are becoming some of the best players in the league, they aren't the only stars who don't take the traditional route of playing college basketball. The G



Victor Wembanyama shoots a three for French team Metropolitans 92.

League, which is the NBA's "minor league," has started to take in players who would have gone to play college basketball and instead get them to experience an NBA-style atmosphere and acquaint them with how the league will be when they eventually get drafted. The G-League puts NBA prospects up against established veterans and former NBA players who are past their prime. This is a much more realistic scenario to what they will be facing in the NBA, as they will go up against NBA-caliber players, while only 1.2 percent of college basketball players make it to the NBA. Recently, prospects such as Jalen Green, who was drafted second overall, and Jonathan Kuminga, who was drafted seventh overall, started their careers in the G League on their Ignite team, which is exclusively for draft prospects.

There are no signs of this trend slowing down. Experts

predict Scoot Henderson, who is currently on the G League Ignite team, to go second overall in next year's draft. The player above him, projected to go first overall on each and every draft board, is Victor Wembanyama from France, who is seven feet and four inches tall. Normally, when a giant of Wembanyama's stature emerges into the NBA, their primary role on a team is to get rebounds and protect the basket on defense. Wembanyama, on the other hand, is able to add shooting into his already impressive arsenal of blocking shots. This makes him a very well-rounded player, as many other centers won't be able to guard him at the 3 point line since. Wembanyama, Jokić, Antetokounmpo, and many others serve as more evidence that the future may entail a NBA league where players from other countries become supreme and dominate the league for years to come.

Perspective

Baseball Is a Game of Money

by Aviv Klayman '24

One of the biggest reasons why sports is beloved by so many people is its unpredictability. In any match up, any team can win. However, is this truly the case for "America's Pastime" -- baseball?

Over the last decade, eight different teams have won the World Series, which, from an outside perspective, suggests that there is parity within the game and that most teams have an equal chance of competing for the title. However, under a microscope, the truth behind baseball's unfairness and inequities toward certain teams is clearly visible.

The teams that have won the World Series since 2012 are the San Francisco Giants (2012, 2014), Boston Red Sox (2013, 2018), Kansas City Royals (2015), Chicago Cubs (2016), Houston Astros (2017, 2022), Washington Nationals (2019), Los Angeles Dodgers (2020), and the Atlanta Braves (2021). The commonality with all of these championship teams are that they come from "major markets", located in highly populated cities with influential reach to other parts of the country. The Yankees and Dodgers have local fan bases of well over 16 million people, while the Cubs, Nationals, Giants, and Red Sox have fanbases of just over 5 million people. The facts show that the teams that win are the teams that have the money. Nearly all of the winning championship teams had a team payroll that ranked in the top half of the league, with a few exceptions.

This problem of the "big market" teams always having the upper hand is rooted in how the MLB, different from most other major league sports, does not have a salary cap, meaning there is no maximum value on how much a team can spend. Instead, the MLB has a luxury tax, which is implemented on the top gross-

ing teams, with the money being distributed evenly to the other teams in the league. However, the tax is so light and inconsequential that most teams just ignore it. So it doesn't stop teams from spending hundreds of millions of dollars and does little to help teams that are struggling to keep up money-wise. The ability for a team to make it to the championship is based on this huge gap in money. For instance, since the consistent implementation of the tax in 2003, the Yankees have paid a total of \$348 million in tax. Nearly every year they are above the allowed threshold of money, which is set at the beginning of every year.

This issue of the pay-to-win method the MLB seems to be following is also very prevalent when it comes to the signing of players during the offseason. In terms of payrolls, the New York Mets, so far for the 2023 season, are paying their players over \$356 million. In comparison, the Oakland Athletics are only going to pay their players \$15.5 million. In terms of signing free agents during the offseason, the same "big-market" teams reign at the top, while the "small market" teams watch in envy. This effect makes it exponentially more difficult to vie for big-name free agents which could increase the teams performance and also draw more attention from potential fans.

If the MLB were to transition to a salary cap oriented league, it might allow for smaller market teams to fight for championships. If the MLB cannot make any adjustments, it will be a long while until some of the smaller market teams will even be to compete for a World Series. If the MLB wishes to revitalize their dying franchises, then adding more parity into their game would rejuvenate some of the current bottom feeders of the league.

Indoor Track Builds Strong Team with New and Old Talent

by Katie Gough '23

With a solid group of returning upperclassmen and several promising new runners, throwers, and jumpers, the future of the indoor track and field team's performance in the upcoming championship season looks bright.

The often overlooked sport of indoor track incorporates several different running events along with jumping and throwing. With a slightly misleading name, the vast majority of the team's practices are outside. Only meets take place inside, with most of this season's meets being held at the PG Sportsplex with a 200 meter indoor track.

This is Coach Matthew Holonich's second year leading the indoor team with assistance from Coach Erica Klein. Because the team includes sprinters, jumpers, throwers, and distance runners, the coaches must vary their training plans between the different



Senior JJ Singleton places 9th in the 3200 in the Montgomery Invitational.

groups. "We separate our practices between distance runners and sprinters," Holonich said. "Both groups do their own workout that is beneficial to what they compete in and incorporates the distances, recovery, etc. We provide time after running for those to practice the field events."

The team has high hopes for this upcoming championship season. "I am very excited to see how our team performed throughout

the rest of the season," Holonich said. "We have done a good job at the meets so far holding our own, I think we will have some kids take home some ribbons/earn points for the team. We could have a handful of kids qualify for states."

"JJ Singleton is a name that comes to mind when talking about state championship qualification," said senior jumper Jack Link. "He's worked really hard

to be where he is now and I look forward to seeing what he can do in the 3200 meter run." Link himself, who placed third in Maryland for high jump in outdoor track last year, is very likely to advance to states, and hopes to up his impressive six foot personal best by clearing six feet and two inches this season. On the girls side, senior Emily Zanni has a chance to qualify in the 3200 meter run.

A lot of new talent has emerged this year as well. "Maddy Quirion is having a great freshman season and has been placing well in the 1600 and the 3200," said Zanni. Quirion also anchors the girls' 4x800 meter relay. On the boys side, sophomore Zaire Fulmore has been performing strongly in the 500 meter run and sophomore Van Mahoney in the 55 meter dash.

According to Zanni, it has been somewhat difficult to put

relays together due to a smaller girls' team this season. "We've chosen not to do a 4x400 this season, but we do have a 4x200 that has been showing improvement and a strong 4x800 that has been placing well in meets."

The smaller size of the indoor team has created a tight-knit, positive team dynamic. "The team is great to be around," said Holonich. "There is a great group of upperclassmen who have taken that leadership role and helped the team."

Indeed, many juniors and seniors have taken on leadership roles to help younger teammates navigate the sport. "The girls team is almost entirely underclassmen, with the exception of myself and junior Savanna Mills," said Zanni. "It's great to have a young team because athletes typically improve throughout high school, so this group could be a stronger team in 1-2 years."

January 26, 2023

Boys Basketball's Defensive Pressure Leads to Easy Offense

by Evan Joseph '23

After a solid start to the year through their first few games, the Warriors have continued to build their identity as a defensive-minded team. In their last eight games, they have gone an impressive 6-2, only losing to Blair twice in two highly contested matchups. The Warriors are looking to build off their current momentum behind their stifling defense and balanced offense.

The increase in offensive production for the Warriors has been largely centered around a more well-rounded approach. As opposed to having one player be responsible for most of the team's offensive production like last year, the Warriors have thrived this year by sharing the ball and playing off the hot hand. While senior Vincent Frene has been the team's primary scorer, the Warriors have also seen significant offensive contributions from players like senior Mason Eller, junior Chris Hall-Taylor, and junior Micah Webb. By sharing the offensive workload more throughout the team, the Warriors



Senior guard Fontaine Green dribbles across halfcourt during the 87-63 trouncing of Blair on January 13.

offense has been able to average about 64.2 points per game (ppg) through 10 games, compared to 58.9 ppg last season.

"I think the two main changes are better defense, which leads to easier points in transition and on offense, and then also we ran our plays more effectively with less dribbling and more passing," said senior forward Mason Eller.

Although the offense has improved from last year, this year's Warriors calling card would have to be their defense. The Warriors have gone from allowing 67.3 ppg last season to only surrendering 50.2 ppg this season, and this improvement has stemmed from the switch to a press-heavy defense. The addition of press to the Warriors' approach has led to

an increase in forced turnovers and has made it hard for opposing teams to find an offensive rhythm.

"I believe in pressure, and I believe in getting up and doing a lot of running and jumping," said assistant coach Darnell Myers, who brought the press in his first season at Sherwood after a successful time coaching Springbrook. "Our matchup zone fol-

lows man-to-man principles so everyone has to play man-to-man when the ball comes into their area. They picked it up real well, the guys like Vincent, Evin, Mason, and Chris back there covering everything up for us. Guys like Isaiah are athletic and cover the ball well, Mac coming off the bench can also play great defense, and Micah is very good in the system because he can get out in transition when we get steals."

The Warriors improved their record to 9-3 with a 60-48 win against Magruder at home. The Warriors' press defense led to a number of easy fastbreak points, making the game Magruder's to lose from the start. "That's what the defense does; [the other teams] commit turnovers so we can score on offense," said Myers. "I thought watching and coaching against Sherwood over the years [that] they never had a defensive team that played with this intensity, and [my] thought when I was coming to coach here was to bring this defensive intensity." The Warriors play at Blair tonight at 7:15 p.m.

Swim and Dive Excited for Championships

by Maggie Reese '24

As the swim and dive team transitions to the major meets that punctuate the end of the season, there already have been countless successes. The boys have had an exciting season so far with an extremely close meet against Poolsville and an impressive win against Richard Montgomery. On the girls side, The Warriors started fast with victories against Damascus, Blake, and Poolsville.

Among the strong swimmers and divers on both teams are a substantial number of talented freshmen such as Corinne Blachere, Kylie Gravell, Jill Williams, and Maya Quiroga that have all placed high in events, contributing to the team's overall success. Williams and Blachere team up with another freshman, Julia Boardman, and senior Lily Smith to form a strong 200 medley relay.

The girls also have senior diver Lilia Atanda, who is preparing for even more success than last year when she achieved first place at States. Earlier this season, Atanda broke the school record with her scores for four dives in the process of earning a total score of 205.00. Junior Adriana Caponiti also has potential to place high in 200 and 500 yard freestyles.

On the boys side, seniors Lucas Quiroga and Bryan Kim, along with junior Brian Wilbur and sophomore Justin Lakso, put together an excellent 200 yard medley relay that may be among the strongest in the state. Wilbur continues to pile on various wins in the 200 IM and 100 breast as well as contributing to relay. Continuing the trend, Quiroga scores with 100 fly and Lakso with 50 free. Junior Devin Kosiorowski and Kim have stolen points away from opposing teams with a num-



Junior Owen Mascott dives during a competitive meet on December 4.

ber of 2nd and 3rd place finishes. After starting the season 3-0, the girls got a reality check in a 132-54 loss against Richard Montgomery on January 7. The Rockets took first place in all but two events, with the Warriors' only top finishes being Caponiti in the 200 free and Atanda in the dive event. After losing a close meet against Gaithersburg before the holiday break, the boys flipped the script in 101-83 win against Richard Montgomery with wins in the 200 IM, 100 breast, 100 fly, and 50 free, along with multiple 2nd and 3rd place finishes.

"We've had some wins and we've had some losses, but the spirit and the atmosphere at the meets makes the competition exciting, practices worth it, and the commitment a valuable and memorable experience," said Caponiti. "It has been an awesome year so far. I think that in our upcoming dual meets and Metros, we're going to have some very challeng-

ing competition and close races."

Soon, swimmers and divers all over the county will be preparing for Metros. At the multiple-day meet that takes place on February 10 and 11, swimmers must place in the top 20 at preliminaries to advance to the finals. Sherwood is excited to go against rivals that they only face at the annual event that features public and private schools from around the region..

"I'm also really excited for the Metros because it's the biggest and most exciting meet of the season," said senior captain Smith.

Sherwood has one last regular season meet against Blair on January 28. Sherwood's swim and dive team, with its capable veterans and fast freshmen, is in a prime position to match or exceed previous performances at Region Meets from February 16-18 and at the state championships February 24-25.

Seasons in Summary (thru 1/20)

Varsity Swim and Dive:

Division Championship on Saturday, 2/4 @ MLK Swim Center

Metro Championships on 2/8-2/11 @ Germantown Indoor Swim Center

4A/3A Regional Championship on 2/18 @ PG Sportsplex

Maryland State Championship on 2/25 @ UMD Swim Center

Boys Varsity Basketball:

12-3 Record Reg. Season

Game Tonight @ Blair 1/26

Girls Varsity Basketball:

8-4 Record Reg. Season

Game Tonight vs Blair 1/26

Varsity Wrestling:

11-3 Record Reg. Season

Varsity Indoor Track:

3-2 Record Reg. Season

State Championships on Wednesday 2/22 @PG Sportsplex.

Varsity Poms:

Placed 2nd in the Seneca Valley Invitational

Placed 2nd in the Northwest Invitational

County Championships on Saturday 2/4 @ Montgomery Blair HS