

Sherwood High School: 300 Olney Sandy Spring Road, Sandy Spring, MD 20860 -

New Wellness Committee Supports Students' Well Being Absenteeism Still

by Cliff Vacin '25

The Warrior Wellness Committee is a new organization at Sherwood started by Health teachers Heather Giovenco and Claudia Wilks to improve the atmosphere of the school and the mental health of teachers and students. Application-based, the club functions as a team of students and teachers who work together on activities for students and staff equally.

Both Wilks and Giovenco stated their desire to support the school community. "We know that wearing Blue on Wednesdays will not solve the wellness of students and staff," explained Giovenco. "But we hoped to start there to build our name and grow into larger activities and movements specialized to improve the well-being of the school community."

Among these larger activities is a Wellness & Spirit Week, which took place from December 11 to 15 and included activities such as themed dress-up days, daily student and staff relaxation opportunities, and an SGA-organized pep rally with a staff vs. students basketball game. Also, all official school clubs were invited to create decorated doors that represented the club. All these activities were determined by the results of a survey, with student-led suggestions. Staff and committee members were also given a chance to provide input. This collaboration between the Warrior Wellness Committee and the SGA was an attempt to allow everyone to feel seen and heard.

"We have had great staff support," said Wilks. "We have staff members who are on the committee who help us brainstorm ideas and put events together. So far,



Students and staff compete in a basketball game as part of the pep rally which capped off Wellness & Spirit Week in mid-December, with an overall purpose to improve well being.

the most popular activities have been department competitions like the Halloween costume contest and chili-cook off." Multiple teachers have been seen participating in the various spirit weekdays, especially with teachers dressing up in suits, PJs, and clothes from past decades.

The Warrior Wellness Committee is not Giovenco and Wilks' first effort at bettering the atmosphere of a school. They had together won an award at their previous school after starting a similar Wellness club. "Being new [this year] to Sherwood, I wanted to get involved with the staff, students, and community," said Wilks. "I thought this was a great way to get involved and hopefully help Sherwood as a whole improve the overall wellness."

Chronic Problem

by Noah Bair '24

During a press conference before the start of this school year, MCPS announced its Attendance Action Plan, which focused on lowering the county's chronic absenteeism rate and making sure students are attending school on a regularly. Despite MCPS spotlighting an issue that is plaguing school districts across the country, attendance rates have barely improved in MCPS schools this year.

Chronic absenteeism is defined as having an unexcused absence for at least 10 percent of the total school days, or missing at least 18 days, a problem that resource counselor Kelly Singleton sees as a chain reaction. "If you're not in class, you're not learning, you're not doing well in those classes, and then you're not getting those credits," she explained.

Chronic absenteeism has jumped to record high numbers since the Covid-19 Pandemic and a year of virtual learning, going from 19 percent of MCPS students being listed as chronically absent in calendar year in 2019 to 27 percent in calendar year 2023. After having 32 percent of high schoolers being chronically absent during the 2022-23 school year, that number has dropped to 29 percent for the first quarter of this current school year for all MCPS high schools. According to data in Performance Matters pulled by Pupil Personnel Worker LaJuana Maynard, the number of Sherwood students chronically absent by December this school year was 32 percent.

see ATTENDANCE, pg. 3

Herman Reflects on Her Experience as Principal Intern

by Ziv Golan '26

Through the MCPS Principal Intern Program, Assistant Principal Jennifer Herman took over in December and January to learn the daily responsibilities of a principal. The Warrior asked Herman about her experiences as the school's principal intern.

What did you learn about the position of principal? What challenges have you faced and what accomplishments are you most proud of?

"It's a difficult job that requires you to make big picture decisions for the good of the whole school, which can cause people to agree or disagree with them. It's

my job to consider the safety and life of a principal? security of all students and staff and make decisions that meet the needs and are a fit for the whole school. As a principal you work with your team to decide the best path forward but at the end of the day the decision is yours and you own that decision. You have to be okay with not everyone agreeing. I am super excited to have been a part of the work that led to an increase in our graduation rate by over 3 percent. I look forward to increasing that percentage again this year!"

Many students aren't sure what a principal does during the school day. How would you describe the typical work day in the

"Sometimes I have calendar items and can anticipate my schedule. However, most days I never know what my day will bring and have to take the pitch as it comes. What I love to do each day is walk the halls and talk with people. I also like to collaborate with my admin and ILT team to make Sherwood the best it can

It seems like a lot of work and a lot of pressure to be a principal. Why do it--what are the most appealing or satisfying aspects about the position?

"What matters most to me is being the warrior for our kids and our community. I will always ad-



Principal Intern Jennifer Herman frequently meets with students to see how their days are going and to get their input on schoolwide issues.

vocate for our kids and our community and want the best for all. I want all of our kids and staff to be successful and to see the good in what we do here. When our kids

walk across that stage and graduate that is a huge proud moment for our community. I do what I do for our kids and our community because the work is important."

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news brief

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Students May Receive Zeros

by Katie Ng '25

The MCPS grading and reporting policy received an update this past fall. Some of the updates include: "R" must be used in Synergy to show assignments may be reassessed; teachers must assign five practice/prep assignments per quarter; and, teachers must contact parents if a student shows "a marked decline in achievement." Teachers will also use "Z" to show that a student still has an opportunity to turn in a missing assignment along with the 50-percent rule.

Principal Intern Jennifer Herman clarified that teachers may give students a zero on an assignment if they refuse to or fail to complete it, even after the teacher has worked with them. "After the support has been given, and the teacher has made two-way communication with the parent or guardian, a zero can be assigned," said Herman. A student can also receive a zero if they plagiarize.

MCPS Introduces 'School Profiles' Data Site

by Seph Fischer '25

The MCPS website has recently unveiled a new "School Profiles" dashboard. Anyone with an internet connection can now view in-depth enrollment, facility, and staffing data for individual schools or the district as a whole, broken down by race, sex, and other demographic lines.

Generally, Sherwood classes have four more students than the average MCPS school. Meanwhile, Sherwood teachers are on average more experienced than county teachers as a whole; 80 percent of Sherwood teachers have greater than fifteen years of experience, while only 54 percent of MCPS teachers as a whole do. Slightly more students score a three or higher on AP tests at Sherwood than the county as a whole, too, but only by about two percentage points. Projections from the Schools Profile dashboard estimate that enrollment at Sherwood will go from 1,757 up to nearly two thousand by the year 2030, which still will be below the building capacity of 2,152.

Students Campaign for Crosswalk on Route 108

by Ben Schoenberg '24

A group of students have collected more than 500 signatures of Sherwood students in support of putting in a pedestrian crosswalk on Route 108 between Sherwood and the Ashton Village Center. The student organizers of the @shscrosswalk-project on Instagram believe that a crosswalk would make it much safer for students to cross the busy two-way street.

The leaders of the campaign include sophomores Spiros Barboutsis, Sebastian Kudrycki, and Danny Landi, and senior Andres Campos. For the previous few months, they have collected signatures and hung fliers around the school. They also have communicated with Montgomery County Council Member Will Jawando and SMOB Sami Saeed. Jawando was scheduled to come to Sherwood in early January, but the meeting was canceled due to the school day being shortened because of bad weather.

Student Debt Plan Modified

by Briana Sisler '24

Approximately 45 million people in the United States have student debt totalling to around \$1.75 trillion. Last year President Biden attempted to forgive some of the federal student loans with a program that could reward up to \$20,000 for people with outstanding debt. However, the Supreme Court ruled that Biden didn't the power to cancel or reduce student debt and needed direct authorization from Congress. This year Biden introduced a new plan.

The Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) is not a one-time debt forgiveness program but instead is a repayment plan. The payment plan is income-driven and payments are calculated based on the borrower's income and their household size. The plan lowers the threshold required to qualify for a monthly payment of \$0 and unpaid interest will not accrue if full monthly payments are made. Around seven million people have already signed up for the SAVE plan and four million people qualify for a monthly payment of \$0. In July people who have borrowed at most \$12,000 and have been paying for at least ten years can have their remaining balance cancelled. Every additional \$1,000 borrowed will equate to an extra year until the remaining balance can be cancelled.

New Resolution Aims To Improve School Safety

by Randy Wang '25

The Montgomery County Board of Education unanimously approved the "Safe Schools Resolution" proposed by Sami Saeed, student member of Board of Education (SMOB), at the November 9 board meeting. The resolution aims to create a safe and secure learning environment for students by proposing various ideas to expand or add policies.

Multiple MCPS schools around the county have experienced numerous safety incidents ranging from possession of firearms to bomb threats. MCPS also saw an increase in student arrests and drug use in schools. On November 26, Wootton was on lock down and students were evacuated due to a bomb threat from an anonymous source. Another incident occurred on November 28 at Springbrook High School where a student got stabbed on the back of the head during school hours and the 17-year old perpetrator was charged with 1st degree as-

Saeed introduced the resolution to the School Board at the October 26 school board meeting. The resolution was crafted with the feedback of 400 surveyed MCPS students and Saeed's own experiences as a student at Richard Montgomery High School.

Saeed cited an incident in his post on his Instagram account where an intruder entered his high school with a firearm. "That's when it really hit me, from a personal experience, that this is a really big issue," said Saeed during the October SMOB meeting.



Current SMOB Sami Saeed raised concerns about safety incidents.

The resolution will introduce an ID program to all high schools in Montgomery county. This program will require students to present their school ID to security guards who are stationed at main entrances before entering the school. If a student were to lose their ID, they will receive a new card from the school's main office. "I think it's something necessary because if you think about it right now, some high schools have absolutely no way of, you know, ensuring and checking the identity of people who enter the building," said Saeed during an interview with Moderately

Along with the ID program, students and security staff will receive more training around safety procedures in how to appropriately respond and report safety issues such as drug use and potential bodily harm. The resolution also proposes to expand and improve upon community messaging. Some examples include sending messages across multiple

platforms and providing more timely messages as a situation progresses.

The implementation of this resolution is expected to be smooth sailing. "I purposely used language in the resolution to allow for more broad changes to be enacted to fit each requirement; that way MCPS would not be limited and could achieve all the goals without delay or dysfunction," said Saeed in an interview with The Warrior. He added that the resolution was amended at the Board table to include key stakeholders and associations on the resolution, such as principals and teachers, to ensure that everything that is implemented is done in collaboration with school staff and administration.

Saeed credited the help he received from the SMOB Advisory Council and MCPS administration with helping him craft the resolution. An update on the process of the resolution will be provided by the SMOB during one of the board meetings in April.

State Exams Soon Count Towards Students' Grades in Biology and Government Classes

by Connor Pugh '24

Eight years on from MCPS axing finals back in 2016, the Maryland Department of Education is requiring new EOC (End of Course) exams for on-level and honors government and biology classes. Unlike other state tests that students are required to take to graduate, the EOC exams are tied to grades, accounting for 20 percent of the final Semester 2 grade, with each quarter now representing only 40 percent of a semester grade. Currently there is no available comprehensive available information regarding the format or content of the exam.

As of the current school year, the new tests will only impact freshmen, but each new year, another grade level will be required to take the tests in those classes, until eventually all students will be required to take EOC exams at some point in high school. Tenth graders next year--many of whom take on level or honors government classes--will have to look out for these exams when they take the class. Currently, there are few to no people taking on-level or honors government classes in 9th grade, but any freshmen tak-



ing Biology should be prepared for these new tests this spring.

MCPS' rollout of these new tests have been marred with confusion and uncertainty. Teachers talk of not getting proper information about the tests currently, with many details being withheld from the general public.

"We teachers have not received too much information regarding the rollout of these exams ... Just that they will start to count towards a student's final grade," said Ryan Burnsky, a government teacher who will have to account for the exams in his classes next year. "The lack of info is purposeful so that MCPS can put out the correct info and correct wording before setting all the details in stone."

Anxieties and concerns about the effectiveness and impact of final exams are resurafcing. MCPS' initial justification for removing their previous exams was due to the tests "disproportionately and negatively [impacting] students of color and economically disadvantaged students," but there are doubts as to how these new tests will be any better.

"Teaching is an art," said Gina Martin, a science teacher at Sherwood who teaches affected biology classes. "Students learn and communicate that learning in many ways. To standardize learning and demonstrations of knowledge is to convey that there is only one way to show what you've learned, and in my opinion, that perpetuates racist ideas."

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Fallout Continues; BOE Wants McKnight Out

by Evelyn San Miguel '26

On November 29, Montgomery County Inspector General Megan Davey Limarzi released the results of her first of three investigative reports into former Farquhar Principal Joel Beidleman, which presented a more full accounting of his sexual misconduct during his tenures at multiple schools across the county. The second, released January 8, addressed the issue of MCPS leadership, and whether or not they had any involvement in covering up Beidleman's years of harassment, or participated in inappropriate conduct themselves. A final report, expected in the coming weeks, will reveal more details about "what went wrong in MCPS' initial investigation of Beidleman."

Details corroborated by high-ranking MCPS officials gave insight to information as to Superintendent Monifa McKnight's involvement in allowing Beidleman's promotion, Moco360 and The Washington Post revealed. As of January 22, the Board of Education has indicated a desire for her resignation, which she vehemently opposed. McKnight responded, saying that the only way she would accept the calls were

if the Board were to go through with a "fair, legitimate, and legal process" and that "anything less would be unacceptable."

Reports by officials for Moco360 report that Beidleman and McKnight had been "longtime friends," a friendship which spanned decades and into her tenure as Superintendent. Despite the many leadership changes which have come after the investigations, Beidleman still remains employed by the district. Though, according to MCPS spokesman Chris Cram, he stopped receiving his post-promotion salary of \$191,000 on December 18, 2023. New revelations in recent weeks regarding MCPS executive leadership, released by MoCo360 and the Inspector General in her second investigative report, have also revealed major transgressions committed by MCPS administrators. The alleged inappropriate conduct done by leadership includes excessive drinking, intimidation, and sexual harassment in workplace environments.

The calls for McKnight's resignation have followed the release of investigations by Limarzi, which preceded those done by the Baltimore-based Jackson Lewis Law Firm, hired by the MCPS Board of Education to look into

Beidleman and MCPS leadership shortly after the scathing Washington Post exposé about him was released in August. Concerns about a conflict of interest for the firm—because it had worked for the Board previously—sparked the Inspector General to launch investigations of her own, which revealed more eye-opening information about Beidleman and the county, as Limarzi has not worked for the Board before, and had no obligation to censor or redact information.

In anticipation of Limarzi's investigations, McKnight had implemented corrective measures ahead of the Inspector General's recommendations earlier this month, including staffing changes in the Department of Compliance and Investigations (DCI) and other major changes to MCPS policies, she wrote in an email to MCPS staff.

The investigation into Beidleman's long history of sexual harassment revealed appaling details about the professional environment he created and the fear he instilled among his subordinates. "[He made] verbal comments of a sexual nature that ... affected their work performance and created an offensive work environment," the report concluded.

MCPS Pays Millions To Settle Sexual Assault Cases from 2018

by Aspen Weinberg '25

In November, a jury awarded a judgment of \$4 million in damages in a sexual assault case to a former students at Gaithersburg High School. According to Fox News, court documents detail that the assault occurred in 2018 when the student was a freshman on the wrestling team. The unnamed student filed the lawsuit in 2020.

The ruling came less than two months after MCPS paid \$9.7 million to settle the legal dispute related to a criminal complaint against a number of football players at Damascus High School who were allegedly involved in a "brooming" sexual assault incident in the school locker room, also in 2018. The lawsuit was brought against the MCPS Board of Education, former Damascus High School principal Casey Crouse, former football coaches Vincent Colbert and Eric Wallich, and former athletic director Joseph Doody.

After the initial incident in 2018, Janis Zink Sartucci from the Parents Coalition of Montgomery County stated, "We see a repeat of the same pattern over and over" in response to the recurring "trend" of sexual

assaults in school locker rooms. The suits alleged that the school board and employees at Damascus knew about the longstanding tradition of sexual assault in the football program. Civil rights attorney Billy Murphy Jr. represented three of the four plaintiffs in Judge Peter Messite's court. According to court documents, sophomores on the Damascus JV football team were known by staff and faculty at Damascus for "brooming" freshmen players on the team as an "initiation" to the program. Disciplinary actions towards the students are confidential due to the criminal charges being brought in the juvenile court system.

According to WUSA9 news, the school district issued a statement last September that, "The district fully understands the importance of maintaining a safe and respectful environment in all of our school spaces." Following the incident at Damascus in 2018, MCPS implemented extra security measures in locker rooms and have since mandated additional sexual assault and harrassment trainings for coaches and athletic trainers of students and school sports teams at many high schools across the county.

Schools across the Nation Struggle with Absent Students

from ATTENDANCE, pg. 1

Principal Intern Jennifer Herman said that Sherwood needs to work to find the root cause of the issue and be a bridge for students. "We have a whole team approach to get kids back to school," Herman noted. "We have action plans for students where we individualize everything to the student and the family for what they need."

Sherwood puts an emphasis on not only making sure students who are absent for long periods of time return to school, but that their mental and physical state is in good condition. "If we don't know where a kid is for 5 days, we want to know if they're okay," Herman emphasized. Every Wednesday, staff and administrators meet to discuss students who have been out of school unexcused multiple days, where the team will often reach out to parents and attempt to bridge the connection between the school and families, an important first step in bringing students back to the classroom. If that doesn't work, there is the option to send someone out to the students' home for a check, a more direct way of attempting to help to get the student to return.

MCPS data has revealed that African American, Hispanic, and low-income students are at the highest risk of chronic absenteeism. Years ago, MCPS followed a policy where if a student missed a certain percentage of school days, they would face the possibility of 'Loss of Credit' in classes if they continued to be absent. But, according to Steve Neff, the county's Director of Pupil Personnel and Attendance Services, this policy was shown to disproportionately impact minority students. "We believe that a student's grades should be reflective of their mastery of the course material, and not by behaviors such as attendance."

In addition to those who cannot come to school based on their mental or physical state, there is also the problem of students who show up to school but do not come to classes. There are students who make the effort to wake up early and go to school but roam the halls or hide in the bathrooms during their classes. While Sherwood has attempted to eliminate so-called "hall walkers," there remains a number of students who missed 25 percent or more of their classes during first semester

Sherwood is dealing with an issue that has become one of, if not the biggest, facing schools in the modern day United States. It has become a top priority for MCPS to make sure students are in the classroom learning. In a post-COVID world where all schools are back to what they were before the pandemic, school systems are under pressure for attendance numbers that should start to look like what they once were again.

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The Warrior serves as Sherwood's primary news source, receiving numerous state and national honors over the 46 years it has been in circulation. With a staff of more than 25 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.

Regulate Your New Year's Resolutions

by CC Thomas '24

With the new year arrives new resolutions, yet this tradition often demonstrates some concerning behaviors among those who choose to partake in it. The idea of the new year resolution is to encourage self-improvement in the coming year by making promises to oneself to change behaviors, habits, or any other un-appealing attributes. However, this tradition becomes dangerous when the goal chosen is extreme, or sometimes even unrealistic.

In 2023, 37 percent of people in a Forbes Health poll reported losing weight was part of their New Year's resolution. In addition to that, 72 percent of people reported having a goal involving diet and body changes for 2024. Many of these goals, if regulated correctly, can be beneficial to a healthy life but without proper knowledge on diets and fitness routines, these goals become harmful. For example: setting a goal of 20-pound weight loss in a short period of time, or adapting to a ridiculous fad diet at the drop of a hat.

Seph Fischer '25

New Year's resolutions are designed to motivate participants by confining the goal within the next year. People wake up on January 1, with an end goal in their sights, and the excitement of the new year encourages them to hit their new practices hard. Ever notice an increased number of joggers on the streets in early January? Or an influx of gym-goers in the first weeks of the new year? "Right now, the gym is very crowded," remarks Jen A. Miller, an avid runner and author for the New York Times, in response to the new year. She gives advice to regulars at the gym on how to deal with these crowds, but then promises that the crowds will soon subside as the hype from the new year decreases.



Going all in from the get go, like many choose to do to start their resolutions, is not healthy. When it comes to diet, fitness, and appearance, changes do not happen overnight. Then those who start out aggressively on their resolutions often become discouraged, and lose their goal. An especially ironic response to this is national New Year's Resolution Recommitment Day which falls on June 1. Giving up on resolutions has become such a common thread that many recognise a formal day to try again at the chosen goal.

So what is the secret to not giving up on resolutions that involve fitness, diet, or weight loss? "Make sure that any changes you undertake in the pursuit of weight loss are behaviors you can realistically continue long-term" is

the advice Alissa Palladino, a dietitian and nutritionist, gives for maintaining difficult resolutions. Making a schedule, and doing research into what exercises and/ or diet is correct for you before beginning the new year is also important as everyone's body is different. What works well for one person may not be correct for someone else, and must be kept in mind when choosing goals for the new year.

By making a schedule for these new habits and behaviors, the path to the goal is visualized, and this avoids starting extreme actions in lieu of a goal. This way, a plan can be made on how to achieve over time, instead of being discouraged in a week after seeing no results. With this, success is possible and not dangerous.

Selective Attention of Western Powers in Foreign Conflicts

by Connor Pugh '24

Privileged American's attitude towards their government's foreign actions is one of complacency. If America goes to war, attitudes range from unwavering support to a sigh and shrug, with only a small minority vocal about any consequences to the people affected. It's been 50 years since the Vietnam War, when there was any mass opposition at a noticeable scale to a foreign conflict. Even if an American citizen may have criticisms, they usually still view the United States as one of the "good guys," the counterbalance to authoritarian states such as China and Russia. However, the truth is far from this simple, and the United States and its allies France and Britain have a long history of crimes and violent actions globally, from the Cold War to the modern day.

From the beginning of the Cold War the United States has laid out its commitment to "support free peoples who are re-

sisting attempted subjugation" in an attempt to preserve democracy across the globe. The United States' powerful allies pledged similar support; Britain and France took intense political and military interest in many countries across the globe for the sake of "preserving democracy," especially their former colonies that became independent nations in the 1950s and 60s. Wherever these Western powers exercised their influence the lives and future of the people and governments existing there were drastically changed. However, it's increasingly obvious that the interventions in foreign matters of other states by these formidable Western Powers were less out of a supposed goodwill and more towards maintaining the existing global hierarchy of control and keeping Western powers at the top.

When the Cold War was still going strong, the main justification for any foreign actions by these Western Powers was the ongoing fight against Communism. Under Domino Theory it was argued that if one state were to fall to communism, it's only a matter of time before all its neighbors and eventually the whole developing world succumbs as well. Therefore, it was absolutely imperative that the United States and its allies use their strong militaries and deep pockets to prevent this from becoming a reality by any means necessary, even if it means tearing a country apart or plunging it into a dictatorship (as long as it aligned itself with Western Power's interests and views). A prime example is when Salvador Allende, the democratically elected socialist president of Chile, was violently overthrown in a coup in 1973 with the help of the CIA. The government of Chile was then replaced with the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, who instituted a brutal and oppressive regime that lasted for 17 years, violated numerous human rights, and sold off the country to the highest bidder at the expense of the people.

At the same time, Britain and France were trying to maintain control of their colonies by any means necessary. As they saw their grasp on their colonies slipping away, France and Britain turned to a variety of measures to preserve their authority, ranging from explicit military intervention to more passive or financial support of groups friendly to them. This included violent crackdowns against rebellions, including the British in Kenya and the French in Vietnam. These were often bloody affairs with both sides committing atrocities, but it was the oppressive and dehumanizing conditions created by the ruling colonial powers that led to people believing violent revolution was the only way.

Even after the "Fall of communism" happened with the collapse of the USSR and the Eastern Bloc, by no means did the foreign policy of these Western countries cease. As global affairs shifted away from fighting communism to fighting terrorism, the United

States and its allies still seemingly exercised a lack of concern towards how their foreign policy ambitions affected the long term living of the people living in these places. The best case is the Iraq war: although Iraq was ruled by the dictator Saddam Hussain, the United States overthrow of the regime caused Iraq to collapse into decades of violence and instability, facilitating the rise of extremist groups such as the Islamic State.

The foreign policy of France, the United States, and Britain constitutes a failure to maintain basic respect for the people whose lives they hold immense power over. They act in direct contradiction to their professed humanitarian and democratic ideals. These countries possess robust political philosophies its citizens pride themselves in taking part in the democratic process. However, it seems that these ideals are forgotten when these countries exercise their vast influence away from home

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Seph Fischer '25

Let Students Be Creative

by Gael Rebu '24

Creativity is often a characteristic of lessons given to elementary school students. The younger students are able to express themselves through the work they do in class, whether through drawing pictures, watching interactive videos, or writing stories. Younger students often have the autonomy in choosing how they present their understanding of a topic in their assignments. As these children grow up, transitioning to middle and high school, the frequency of opportunities to be creative diminishes. While a more sophisticated format of assignments are usually needed for more rigorous topics, the loss of creativity in lessons has caused many high school students to feel trapped and under-stimulated during lessons, and ultimately not retaining the lesson's purpose.

While reverting back to coloring pictures and writing sentences on lined paper may not be the best direction to take for high school students, more creative and open instruction could be a great option for older students to flourish in the classroom. By giving students open-ended questions that allow for more creativity as opposed to multiple choice when teaching a subject, students have the opportunity to truly show their knowledge, not just their test-taking abilities.

Rote memorization has been proven to be scientifically ineffective. Encouraging students to process information as they learn by putting what they've learned into their own words is one of the best ways to ensure that what's being taught is retained. Oftentimes when students focus on memorization, they end up forgetting

that information in the long term; throwing away what they just memorized to make more room for other content. With open-ended questions students are better able to articulate their thoughts when they answer a question and show how they got to their conclusion. In turn, that also helps teachers see where a student is struggling, allowing them to then make more specific comments for the student to recognize their mistake and fix it. Giving students the opportunity to "show their work" in assignments helps them better develop their ideas when solving a problem, pushing them to use reasoning skills, critical thinking, and overall to be more adept at forming original ideas.

Providing students with more choice as to the types of assignment they submit is another excellent way to reintroduce creativity into the classroom. Students are able to find an outlet to express their ideas or thoughts on a subject and better develop those ideas to solve a problem. Giving students the freedom to submit assignments in different formats like video, paper, computer, audio, and digital helps students better enjoy whatever assignment or project they have been given. By allowing for more creativity, students can find unique ways to answer the questions and show their understanding of the subject matter. Having students complete engaging activities related to what they are learning not only helps them understand the lesson, but also how it relates to their own experiences. By implementing school environments that allow for more creativity, schools will produce more intelligent and inspired students, as opposed to the many lackadaisical ones they're producing now.



Don't Record Student Fights by Katie Ng '25

At the end of lunch, a fight erupts or nearly erupts in the hallways every now and then at Sherwood. When this happens, students rush to film the fight instead of going to class and often end up arriving late to fifth period. Although Sherwood is not a school that has frequent fights, end of lunch fights occur every school year. Recently, security guards have had to start blowing whistles at students to get to their classes. This kind of student behavior is embarrassing and students need to learn to be upstanders rather than bystanders.

Recording fights is plain insensitive and does nothing to help the fight, especially for the student living their worst moment, as they receive punches or threats. When students film fights, they are only exacerbating the problem by promoting fighting. They may also block others who are trying to get through to go to class. Furthermore, a recorded fight could end up on social media, creating bigger problems. For example, others could torment and harass the people in the recording. So instead of crowding around students who are about to fight, students should find an adult to intervene or go to class if there is already an adult, which would better promote Sherwood's values.

To Kov's Hosting Misfire

by Hannah Mushahwar '24

The 81st annual Golden Globes commenced on January 7 with stand-up comedian Jo Koy stepping on stage in front of millions. When he was officially announced as the host of the Golden Globes, Koy said in a statement that he was "so excited" to be hosting one of the entertainment industry's biggest shows. The list of attendees gathered for a night of awards and laughter but as he took the stage, his opening monologue left the stars in the room and audiences on social media disappointed.

Koy started his opening monologue referencing Hollywood's Ozempic craze and weaving in jokes about films up for nomination. With *Oppenheimer* and *Barbie* earning huge box office hits in 2023, he joked, "*Oppenheimer* is based on a 721 page Pulitzer prize winning book about the Manhattan Project, and *Barbie* is on a plastic doll with big boobies," the latter of which was met with unamused stares from Margot Robbie and the film's director Greta Gerwig. After watching a movie that highlighted the struggles of women while also celebrating girlhood, listening to Koy reduce the production to a sexist, low-leveled "joke" on national television is simply offensive, a sentiment shared by many women who tuned in.

Stop Ignoring Climate Change

by Evelyn San Miguel '26

Climate change, for decades, has been something inevitable but ignorable by those it affects the least. Until now, the year 2023 was the hottest on record, a record that will likely be broken in 2024 and the years following. We've known about the existence of climate change since 1896, when Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius predicted that changes in carbon in the atmosphere could create a greenhouse effect. And since then, awareness about climate change has increased, but meaningful action hasn't. Many of the deadlines for carbon neutrality, clean energy transitions, or effectively saving the planet are set for 2025, 2030, or 2050 at the latest. We need to start making changes, and fast.

The catch is that our summers have become unbearable, our cities have already begun to flood, and our air quality has started to deteriorate to dangerous levels. This year had an average temperature of 58.96 degrees, 2.4 degrees above the usual temperature. We need to convert to clean energy, we need to stop destroying our environment, we need to utilize alternatives for our most harmful commodities, and now. Climate change may not be inevitable if we do something about it, but it will be if we don't.

The Warrior · Opinions

January 25, 2024

Stop Leaving the LGBTQ+ Out of School Libaries

by Briana Sisler '24

Jack of Hearts (And Other Parts) was removed from MCPS libraries on October 11, the continuation of a disheartening trend throughout the country. Many LGBTQ+ books have been requested to be removed from schools, and in MCPS parents have requested the ability to opt their children out of reading these books.

There are several common reasons why LGBTQ+ books have been challenged, but the main one that parents and organizations state for challenging these books is due to their 'sexual' or 'inappropriate' nature. Many books targeted towards teenagers and older audiences, like Jack of Hearts (And Other Parts), which discuss topics of sex in the form of advice columns, are continually bashed because they try to inform LGBTQ+ teens on how to stay safe. Similarly to sex education, allowing teens a wide variety of books that can show them healthy sexual interactions for all different types of relationships



can help them find and maintain healthy relationships in their own life. LGBTQ+ teens are already at higher risks of depression and suicide compared to their heterosexual and cisgender peers, and removing books that can help them through troubling times will do the opposite of help.

While some parents find numerous depictions of sex off-putting and feel genuine concern, there are still a number of parents that challenge LGBTQ+ books solely because of their subject matter. Homophobia and transphobia are underlying reasons for why LGBTQ+ books are heavily scrutinized. Some parents fear that after their children read a diverse and inclusive book they

will become influenced and join the LGBTQ+ community. However, there is no research to back up that idea. Exposing children and teens to the LGBTQ+ community will not make them any more or less likely to identify as part of the community.

Books in the library are not the only ones being censored, and books included as part of the curriculum to be read in class have also been targeted. In MCPS three parents have recently sued the school board over several LGBTQ+ children's books in the curriculum stating that for religious reasons they don't want their children to be reading the texts. These three parents were specifically suing over the poli-

cy change from MCPS that, according to the Revised Message Regarding the Use of Inclusive Texts released by MCPS, stated that "Students and families may not choose to opt out of engaging with any instructional materials, other than 'Family Life and Human Sexuality Unit of Instruction' which is specifically permitted by Maryland law". The parents have argued that it is unconstitutional to prevent people from opting their children out of reading books like Pride Puppy!, Love Violet, and Born Ready The True Story of a Boy Named Penelope. The U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland sided with the school board but the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit is expected to make its own decision within the coming

These parents have also questioned the book selection process in MCPS; however, MCPS has an inclusive system that allows everyone to be involved in the book selection process. In order to add new books and textbooks

in MCPS, media specialists and library media professional staff review the books before they are placed on a 30-day shelf where parents, organizations, students, and teachers have the ability to review them and submit a complaint. The Database of Accountable Evaluations is where all the evaluations are stored. In addition, MCPS compiles all media located in each individual school library in the Destiny Library Manager.

Choosing to shelter children from the diversity that exists all around in the world today is more devastating than allowing a child to read a book that says the word drag queen. Attempting to stifle the expression of many young children and teens not only throughout MCPS but throughout the country is telling LGBTQ+ youth that people are ashamed of them. Preventing people from being able to read books with these characters is demoralizing and not helping the already catastrophic depression and suicide rates among the LGBTQ+ youth.

Antisemitism Cannot Be Ignored Any Longer

by Ziv Golan '26

On October 7 the terrorist group Hamas launched a brutal attack on Israel that resulted in the death of over 1,200 Israelis along with the kidnapping of hundreds of Israeli civilians, including children. Sadly, whenever something happens in Israel, criticism often is not just aimed at the Israeli government but at the Jewish people as a whole. For example, people have called for all the Jews living in Israel to "go back to where they came from" and return to the countries from which Jewish people were expelled. This is calling for the mass expulsion of the nearly 7 million Jews from their true homeland of Israel and goes far beyond criticism of the Israeli government.

This hate has also on many occasions resulted in violence against the Jewish community. Since October 7 the Anti Defamation League (ADL), which is an organization that focuses on monitoring and combating antisemitism, has reported a dramatic increase in antisemitic hate crimes. Preliminary data from the ADL shows that in October reported instances of harassment, vandalism and assault have increased by 388 percent in the United States compared with the same period last year. These incidents have been particularly horrific online and especially on college campuses. This rise in antisemitism has been nothing short of atrocious and has had profound effects on the Jewish community. Many now feel scared to just walk down the street with anything that may identify them as a Jew. Countless Jewish people are even trying to hide their Jewish identity for fear of being attacked or worse.

This issue has been prevalent in Montgomery County where many incidents have occurred. This includes a mezuzah, which is a common object placed on doors at Jewish households, being ripped off a doorway in Rockville. Also, on the first night of Hanukkah the menorah in front of a local synagogue in Olney was vandalized in an apparent hate crime. There have also been calls to boycott Israeli-owned restaurants around the country including a Mediterranean restaurant in Washington D.C. Many of these restaurants and other Jewish-owned businesses are being boycotted simply because they are owned by Israelis and Jews. These local and national incidents go back to the point that whenever something happens in Israel the Jewish community feels targeted. Even before the war began, any post by a Jewish creator, even ones that had nothing to do with Israel at all, had comments about the Isreali-Palestinian conflict. Such misplaced vitriol continues to happen all the time.

Even before October 7 antisemitism made up 60 percent of the religiously motivated hate crimes in the United States. However, since October 7 this has worsened and has led the Jewish community to feel increasingly isolated. Jews saw people they once thought were their friends posting things online glorifying the terrorists who attacked innocent Isrealis, among other posts. This has made countless Jews around the world feel as if they were isolated and in a separate reality. This is absolutely abhorrent and should not be happening in this day and age.



A fake image of an explosion near the Pentagon was shared by a verified Twitter account, @Deltaone.

Media Sites Should Prevent AI Misinformation

by Marceline Meador '24

Several recent major developments in open-source AI technology have opened the floodgates for opportunities and innovations in this new field. However, as is the case with all open-source software, this technology can be misused. While text-based AI software such as ChatGPT, Davinci, and Bingchat have their own potential exploits, image-based software such as Midjourney, DALL-E, and Stable Diffusion opens up an entirely new realm of risk. The ability to create realistic and near-perfect images out of thin air makes it possible to easily spread misinformation and fool the public.

Twitter was the first to act upon this realization with an addendum to their "Community Notes" feature. While this feature was previously exclusive to text-based posts, Twitter amended it to allow users to add notes under possible photo-based misinformation posts. This feature allows for a more free method of community-based moderation in order to combat fabricated images and false information. This feature is incredibly beneficial to the average social media user, as several incidents of AI-fabricated photos have caused confusion on the platform before.

An example of this can be seen in an incident occurring prior to Twitter's photo notes feature, in which false information claiming an attack on the Pentagon was spread around the platform. One of the most beneficial features of Twitter's image community notes is an AI-based image recognition function, in which images that are detected to be similar to an image deemed misinformation will be labeled with the same community note. This will aid users approved to submit community notes by

eliminating the need to repeatedly add tags and notes to the same image, should it be reposted.

Twitter, however, is not the only platform seeking awareness of AI-generated content. YouTube has come forward with a policy of its own. In a similar vein, it does not advocate for the direct removal of AI-generated content, but the awareness of it. While Twitter's AI content policy depends on users in the community discovering and labeling AI content, YouTube's policy operates by requiring users to disclose whether or not content is AI-generated prior to uploading it. While this is a step in the right direction, assuming those posting misleading AI-generated content will openly admit to it is as naive as it is foolish. It is the responsibility of a platform to ensure that users do not post harmful misinformation, as it is not a mere possibility, but a definite eventuality.

The Pulse

A month into 2024, Sherwood students reflect on the trends in 2023, and their hopes for the new year. Students were asked their favorite memories from 2023, and their aspirations for 2024.

STUDENTS' TOP MONTHS OF 2023

- 1. JULY (24%)
- 2. DECEMBER (18%)
- 3. AUGUST (13%)
- 4. JUNE (13%)
- **5. OCTOBER (10%)**

BEST MOVIES

SPIDER-MAN: ACROSS THE SPIDER-VERSE



THE HUNGER **GAMES: THE BALLAD OF SONGBIRDS & SNAKES**



July 20 **BARBIE**

BEST ALBUMS

UTOPIA



ZACH BRYAN ZACH BRYAN

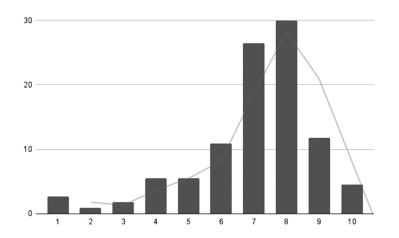






1989 (TAYLOR'S VERSION) **TAYLOR SWIFT**

2023, RATED 1 - 10



Do you believe 2024 will be a better than 2023 for you?

"I believe that 2024 will be a better year for me personally, because I have learned so much this year of what and what not to do. I know I will have more opportunities to excel next year with sports and academically, which I am looking forward to!"

- Elly Ylava '27

"Depends on how much I like college. If I love it, 2024 will probably be a fun year, especially not having any worries after applications and during the summer."

- Jacob Nelson '24

"Yeah, it will, I'm going to do a lot more outside of school this year. I've made a lot of plans leading up to senior year that'll all finally happen. Going to go on road trips with friends over the summer, going to take volleyball next year, and I'm going to try out for RNR. Going to be a big "doing things" year, bigger and better than 2023."

- Zach Geller '25

What was your favorite new TV show of 2023?

"Lockwood and Co., because it's a book series I really like, and the TV adaptation was really well done."

- Colin Vandre '24

"The Last of Us is good because it's scary and accurate to the video game."

- Sydney Gould '26

"Blue Eye Samurai. The animation is beautiful and the story is very interesting."

- Jesse Rogers '27

"Scott Pilgrim Takes Off. It's a great new interpretation of an older franchise with phenomenal animation, great voice-acting, and an interesting storyline."

- Milo Dowling '24

1896 The Modern Political Zionist movement was formed with the publishing of Der Judenstaat by Theodor Herzl. The first Jewish Congress met a year later to work towards achieving the goal of establishing a Jewish State.

1948 The British leave and the State of Israel is established. The Nakba begins as Jordan and Egypt invade, occupying the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, respectively.

1973 Egypt and Syria with a coalition of allied forces launch a surprise attack on Israel, with initial success until an Israeli counteroffensive, leading to an eventual Israeli victory. This began normalized relations between Israel and Egypt which would result in Egypt being the first Arab country to recognize Israel in 1978.

1993-95 The Oslo accords are signed, negotiating an uneasy peace between the PLO and Israel, where each recognized the other as their respective governing bodies and created the Palestinian National Authority, the intended governing body of Palestine that would hold democratic elections.

2022 Benjamin Netanyahu is elected as Prime Minister of Israel for the third time (unconsecutively).

- 2023-24

= October 7

Hamas fighters breach the Iron Wall surrounding the Gaza Strip and invade the surrounding Israeli countryside.

October 9

Hamas attacks Israel; Israel begins mass bombings of the Gaza Strip.

– October 10

Israel returns to the Gaza border and most Hamas fighters have withdrawn, taking about 250 captives and killing around 1,200 Israelis. Israel imposes a blockade on Gaza.

= October 13

Israel issues an evacuation order for all civilians north of Gaza.

= October 27

Israel begins a ground invasion of northern Gaza.

November 11-15

Widely publicized Al-shifa hospital siege in Gaza City occurred, where Israeli forces surrounded the Hospital and claimed that Hamas had a military command center in tunnels underneath the hospital complex. Al-shifa doctors accused IDF forces during the siege of preventing proper treatment of

– November 24

Hamas and Israel agreed to a ceasefire and hostage exchange for four days, subsequently extended to 7 days, finally ending on the 30th with both sides accusing each other of breaking the truce.

– December 15

Israel mistakenly kills three hostages who escaped Hamas 5 days earlier and were reportedly waving a white flag and pleading in Hebrew when shot by IDF soldiers.

– December 28

The New York Times releases an article detailing extensive accounts of sexual violence by Hamas committed against mostly women during the October 7 attacks on Southern Israel and the attend-

🗕 January 2

An Israeli drone strike kills Deputy Hamas Chief Saleh al-Arouri and six others while in Beirut, Lebanon. Arouri was Deputy Chairman of the Politburo of Hamas and a founding member of the Al-Qassam brigades, the military wing of Hamas.

South Africa presented its case for genocide to

January 12

the UN International Court of Justice (ICJ), and on January 13 Israel presented its defense. In the sessions, South Africa brought up comments by Israeli officials and IDF soldiers dehumanizing Palestinians and highlighted the indiscriminate bombing campaigns by Israel, and Israel emphasized its right to self defense in the wake of the October 7 attacks and stressed the need to destroy Hamas as a terrorist organization as it represents a threat to the people of both Israel and Palestine.

1967 Tensions between Egypt and Israel over access to the **1919** Britain establishes the Mandate of Palestine---compris-Straights of Tiran escalates into war between Israel and its neighing modern day Israel, Palestine, and Jordan---in the Levant (the bors Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. Israel is victorious and occupies the

hundreds of thousands more Palestinians in the fighting.

Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights, further displacing

1987 The First Intifada begins, where widespread resistance

by Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip begins. During the 6 year uprising, about 200 Israeli citizens were killed by Militant palestinian nationalist groups and around 1,950 Palestinian civilians were killed by retaliatory Israeli military forces.

the Israel-Hamas

COLLEGES STRUGGLE TO BALANCE FREEDOM OF SPEECH

BY HANNAH MUSHAHWAR '24

York University law student had a job offer rescinded by a top law firm and was voted out as president of the school's Student Bar Association after stating that Israel is to blame himself— called for Harvard for the Hamas attacks on Oc- to release the names of the tober 7 that killed about 1,200 students who are members of people and took more than 240 captives. At Harvard University, controversy brewed over a similar anti-Israel message, with 34 student groups at the Ivy League school signing a controversial statement. In October, the groups released a letter stating that Israel is "entirely responsible for all unfolding violence" related to the Hamas attack. The students behind the letter denied supporting Hamas and say the backlash has led to a doxxing campaign against those believed to be connected to the letter. Some told ABC News that they've been "flooded with racist hate speech and death threats."

Similarly, influential donors to numerous Ivy League colleges say they will cut their ties to the schools in protest of college administrators' response to alleged anti-Isra-

In early October, a New el speech and antisemitism on campuses in the wake of Hamas' terror attacks. Taking it a step further, "billionaire hedge fund investor CEO Bill Ackman— a Harvard alum the organizations that signed the statement, saying in a post on X (formerly known as Twitter) that he wants to make sure never to 'inadvertently hire any of their members," reported CBS News. Ackman added, "It is not harassment to seek to understand the character of the candidates that you are

Eastern Mediterranean comprising current Israel-Palestine, Leba-

non, and west Syria) after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

considering for employment." Thus, some students are facing consequences as part of this environment in which universities are struggling to be arbiters of right and wrong when it comes to speech and actions. Due to the growing division among school communities, a heated debate over the ethical responsibility of students has escalated in which schools are struggling to protect individual opinions but still foster a community of

University of Maryland

an email to the campus comthey are "recommitting [them-ties across the country. selves] to providing an environment where students, faculty and staff can participate in their right to free expression, in an environment that is free from hate, bigotry and harassment. Learning cannot

As college campuses are often seen as hotbeds for political discussions, they have increasingly been criticized for lacking open dialogue about social issues within their com- met. munity. In hopes to avoid retribution, professors are feeling a growing temptation to err on the side of caution and not raise contentious topics in classes. This has contributed to a lack of academic speech and instead incited protests and violence throughout campuses, including Cornell, where a tisemitism.' student was accused of posting online threats against Jewish students. Likewise, the faces and names of some students allegedly linked to anti-Israel statements were displayed on mobile billboards near the campuses of both Harvard and

Since the October 7 Hamas Department of Education has opened an unprecedented number of investigations into alleged incidents of hate on college campuses. Both Hareffectively coexist in a climate vard and Penn, along with six other colleges, are under investigation. Many argue that the responsibility of universities to provide all students with an environment free from discrimination has not been

> As a result, the House of Representatives passed an amendment to an appropriations bill that would deny federal funds to any college or university that "authorizes, facilitates, provides funding for, or otherwise supports anything even promoting an-

Since then, the President of the University of Pennsylvania, M. Elizabeth Magill, resigned just days after her congressional testimony on antisemitism drew fierce backlash from students, faculty and donors. On December 5, Columbia. The Israel-Hamas Magill and the presidents of

President Darryll J. Pines sent War has unquestionably rat- Harvard and MIT testified betled the academic environ- fore Congress about how they munity in November stating ment at colleges and universi- are protecting students from antisemitism on their campuses. Criticism quickly followed terrorist attack on Israel, the around how the university presidents answered the question of whether "calling for the genocide of Jews" would violate the university's code of conduct. After Magill's comments, six members of Congress from Pennsylvania sent a letter to the school's board of trustees calling for Magill's resignation.

> "Rep. Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., who posed the question around the schools' code of conduct, called Magill's resignation 'the bare minimum' of consequences for Magill and the two other university presidents who testified on Tuesday," reported NPR.

Colleges have been scrambling to restore a sense of security for Jewish and Arab students- and stressing messages of inclusion for diverse student bodies. But distinguishing what's protected as political speech and what crosses into threatening language can be a daunting task one that is keeping many college presidents feeling intense

Intifada "Uprising" in arabic, the name for resistance by Palestinian forces against Israeli

SHERWOOD INTERVENES IN PLANNED STUDENT WALKOUT

inefficient.

BY AUDREY FARRIS '25

In response to the Israel-Hamas War, the school's Muslim Student Association (MSA) planned a walkout to take place during the Advisory period on November 29 in support of Palestine, posting to their Instagram account a week earlier to advertise the event. In their initial post, they encouraged students to join them and requested that students bring posters and wear Palestine colors and keffiyehs.

On November 27, Sherwood administration made an announcement during the second period, acknowledging the planned walkout and stating that the walkout is not approved by administration. Principal-Intern Jennifer Herman said over the public announcement that there would no longer be an Advisory period that week. Later that evening, Sherwood sent a community letter to parents, students, and staff that MCPS BOE regulations permit students to demonstrate peacefully regarding social and political issues. The letter continued that the walkout is not approved or supported by the school or MCPS and students who leave a class period will receive an unexcused absence. On Monday afternoon, the MSA removed their initial instagram post about the walkout. The next day, a new infographic was shared on many students' Instagram stories (but not on the MSA's) the upper lot, but instead during fourth period.

Sherwood administration permitted the walkout to take place but asked the sponsors and student-leaders of the MSU and the Jewish Student Union to create a 2-3-minute video that was shown to all classes during an extended third period on November 29 and that reviewed the Sherwood Pillars of school administrators' approval."

civility, accountability, rigor, and engagement. While it was apparent that the video was in response to the planned walkout and to discourse regarding the Israel-Hamas War, it never directly or indirectly addressed those topics.

2005 After 38 years of military occupation,

government regarded by many to be corrupt and

Israel pulls out of the Gaza Strip. A year later, Hamas

is elected into power in Gaza, replacing the previous

Roughly eighty students peacefully walked out in support of Palestine. They met in the upper lot and walked around the school campus, chanting and stopping at various meeting points to spread stories and messages of support for Palestine. Administration sent out a community letter that evening commending the students for their peaceful demonstration and encouraging families to have conversation regarding the event.

A similar event occurred earlier in November at Clarksburg High School. Dozens of students walked out in support of a ceasefire in Gaza. The walkout was hosted by Clarksburg's Student Government Association and the school's Muslim Student Association. Edward Owusu, Clarksburg's principal at the time, notified parents of the planned walkout in a community letter, expressing support for students' right to demonstrate and explaining the school's approval of the event. He also stated that absences due to student participation in the walkout would be excused.

Owusu's handling of the event was almost immediately picked up on the website of a conservative stating that the walkout would still be occurring in publication, National Review, which harshly criticized Owusu, Clarksburg, and Montgomery County for their lack of condemnation of the walkout. The article, titled "Maryland High School Endorses Anti-Israel Protest," claimed without evidence that "Jewish students sat in classrooms while their high-school peers professed support for Israel's demise— with

MCPS FACES RISING ANTISEMITISM IN WAKE OF ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

BY EVELYN SAN MIGUEL '26

In the United States, antisemitism- defined as cordingly. hostility or prejudice against Jewish people- has ti-hate committee in June to combat hate on school grounds.

October, tens of thousands have died as a result of cluding those who have family or friends in that refighting in the Gaza Strip. Protests have broken out gion," revised McKnight, following criticisms from across the globe as the war has become a source of division and controversy.

When the Hamas attacks began on October 7, Superintendent Monifa McKnight released a statement regarding the war in which she gave her sympathies for the community in mourning, and reminding the community of the mental health resources available

Many Jewish groups local to MCPS felt the statement was vague and pacifying, lacking any sort of real plan to aid students in need. Students, both Jewish and Muslim, have felt they have not seen adequate dents in recent years makes it more disappointing support from county leadership. The community that school leaders failed to respond appropriately."

consensus: the Israel-Hamas War has had a significant community impact, and MCPS should act ac-

"We reserve our greatest anger and disappointseen an upward trend in the past few years. Locally ment for Montgomery County Public Schools ... Suin Montgomery County, antisemitism has also seen a perintendent Dr. Monifa McKnight remained silent significant and dangerous rise. At Walt Whitman this until the release of an inadequate statement last year, members of the debate team were overheard night," the Jewish Community Relations Council of making offensive comments and threats toward their Greater Washington (JCRC) wrote in early October. Jewish peers. On top of that, antisemitic graffiti on $\;\;$ The JCRC is "directly engaged with administrators desks and walls have been reported from dozens of school board members, principals and educators, schools across the county. As a response to the rising to support students who experience incidents of anreports of hate speech, several community members tisemitism." The council holds trainings for teachers have taken action. County Council member Evan and staff members, and provides support for students Glass (D), for example, created a student-led an- and staff in order to ensure the safety for Jewish students on school grounds.

"I recognize that the situation in Israel and Gaza Since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas War in has affected many members of our community, inthe JCRC. Many members of the community have felt McKnight's statements often lack clarity and place the responsibility onto students, parents, and teachers to seek support when in times of crisis or need.

Alan Brody, the Director for Communications and Marketing for the JCRC, wrote in an email to The Warrior that in terms of antisemitism in MCPS there is "no room for sanitized language that gives room for debate about whether these actions [in Gaza] were warranted," said Brody. "The fact that Jewish students in MCPS faced a flood of antisemitic inci-

Gaza The strip of Palestinian land hugging the coast in the southwest corner of Israel-Palestine. The headquarters of Hamas, who was responsible

Aliyah The term in Hebrew for the immigration or travel by Jewish people to the holy land. Since the founding of Political Zionism, there have been Aliyahs in multiple waves throughout the decades, including during the early days of Nazi Germany before Britain banned travel, and after the fall of the USSR and travel bans within that country were lifted.

for the October 7 attack, and the current location

of the mass bombing campaigns by Israel.

West Bank The other part of the State of Palestine, comprising much of the eastern border areas with Jordan. In theory, the area is controlled by the Palestinian National Authority, but large parts of it are under Israeli occupation, with hundreds of thousands of people living in Israeli settlements on the territory.

·glossary-**Glossary and Timeline compiled** by Connor Pugh '24

IDF The Israel Defense Forces, the name of the Israeli military. Its three branches are the Israeli Ground Forces, Israeli Air Force, and Israeli Navy.

Al-Aqsa The mosque complex located in the Muslim Quarter of the Old City in Jerusalem, famous for the Dome of the Rock Mosque that is sacred to Palestinians. Hamas' justification for its October 7 attack was the recent increase in beatings and raids by Israeli forces against worshippers and pilgrims to the complex.

Nakba "Catastrophe" in Arabic, the name for the mass displacement and destruction of Palestinians following the establishment of Israel. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled to the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and to neighboring countries as they were forcefully removed from their homes by Israeli forces.

Hamas The political party controlling the Gaza Strip, designated a terrorist organization by Israel, the U.S., and many other countries. The armed wing of Hamas, the Al-Qassam Brigades, was the group responsible for the October 7 attack

PLO The Palestinian Liberation Organization, a group established in 1964 for the purpose of establishing an independent Palestinian state from Israel. The PLO had a key role in the peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine in the Oslo accords, but in 2018 the PLO suspended the Palestinian recognition of the state of Israel.

the two separate events of civil disobedience and occupation of Palestine. There were two separate Intifadas, one from 1987-93 and the second from

The Warrior · Humor

January 25, 2024

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.

Stanley Ruined My Life

by Declan Rooney '25

When I waltzed my way into Target on a fine afternoon last month I expected nothing but a quick run to pick up a quality bottle from a very popular brand called Stanley. Stanley has been praised for its high quality bottle the "Quencher," which I wished to procure for my various hydration needs. But as I entered I laid my eyes on an unforgettable scene.

If you could have seen what I saw that day, you might not sleep for the rest of your life. Moms, Daughters, Teens, Babies, and even Elders of all shapes, sizes and colors clawed at each other just to get their rich little hands on a Quencher. Ugg boots and frappuccinos flew through the air as families waged war on each other like it was the dark ages. It looked like a Call of Duty mission where the objective was just a stupid little water bottle I was shocked at this sight. Why would people spill blood over a cup?

Well you see, the Stanley Quencher is not just a bottle, but a signal of prestige, wealth, and superior femininity to these war-

ring peoples. To top that, the price tag of \$60 to \$100 makes these bottles worth bashing in a skull.

I barely escaped with my life that day. I lay awake at night thinking of how those innocent employees and little brothers who were sent in to snatch the cups were slaughtered by opposing families, wielding armored shopping carts and akimbo purses. The worst part is I was sucked into the conflict myself, crawling my way through the no-mans-land of aisle six just to grab a bottle. I was totally consumed by the thoughtless consumerism. It made me not only risk my life, but harm an innocent employee in the process.

Stanley, I will be suing you for the mental health damages your products have caused me. The sleepless nights, the flashbacks anytime I enter a store, the images of those poor employees being hit across the face with a Louis Vuitton bag.

But the worst part, I can't even use my Stanley because everytime I take a sip, I feel like a brainless, consumerist, rich white girl; a fate worse than death. Thank you Stanley, you have ruined my life.

Sophomore Helps Others (To Help Self)

by Thien Dinh '26

When sophomore Joel Green was young, like many other kids, he didn't know what he wanted to do with his life. However, that all changed when he was on his way to middle school and noticed a man with dirty shoes and disheveled hair. Green was compelled to assist him with whatever he could, giving him the only thing he knew would help: a harmonica he had won in an Ocean City arcade three years back.

"Here, have this mister," Green told the stranger. "It'll support all of your future endeavors. You'll be able to apply for a job with a more positive attitude." Green walked away grinning ear to ear, and this set him on the path to becoming a true humanitarian.

Today, Green is a self-proclaimed advocate for the unhoused. "Did you know that on average, 5 percent of the unhoused can't sleep through the night because it is cold outside? I feel terrible that as an ordinary human being, I sleep in a warm and comfortable environment. I strive to counteract my privileged life by giving to the unhoused," he said.

Green is very fond of talking about himself, especially about his compassion for others. So he continued: "In fact, I've done many things to achieve a positive impact on the world. One, in effect, is using the new term 'unhoused' which I have already accomplished. It was a difficult change, but necessary nonetheless. Using the term 'unhoused' to refer to the unhoused will reduce the already increasing stigma of 'homeless' people since the 'less' in homeless is already very degrading to an unhoused person. The second is joining several clubs. When applying to college, admission officers ONLY look at everything non-school related, right? Therefore, the clubs that have humanitarian work, which is about helping others and not about what's helpful to me, will make me desirable enough to get into any college.'

Right now, Green has plans to establish an environment for learning and providing for those who are unhoused. In effect, his charitable work and soon-to-be unhoused re-educational shelter will solve nationwide poverty.

Unfortunately, in today's

crazy world, there are always obstacles that get in Green's way. "The government, kind of weird don't you think?," He wondered aloud. "When starting construction of my unhoused re-educational center, these dang government agents tore the whole thing down! Mind you, the government also has many programs that help people, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and The Emergency Food Assistance Program. I don't understand why I am scrutinized, but charities that are similar to mine aren't. Again, this is weird."

Days after the event, Green didn't do all that much. He was seen by many to be talking with employers at McDonalds, Giant, and even Denny's of all places. "He wants to go to college, wanted to be successful in life," Green's mother said. "But now Joel is having to think about alternatives. He's having doubts about whether he wants to help people after all." Green's life, dictated by charity, seemed to have fallen into the pit of despair. Can Joel Green ever escape? Or will he continue his monotony and stay a lost, lonely individual?

How to Write a Hit Song

by Katie Ng '25

Many people aspire to write songs and become a pop star, but they don't realize that songwriting is not easy and never was. You may want to learn how to write songs but may not know where to start. Here are some tips to consider.

First, use curse words. Profanity will make the song more relatable. If you end up writing an album, it have a parental advisory and at least half the songs should contain explicit content. Most singers don't use big vocabulary in their songs, and only Taylor Swift is allowed to use big words like "clandestine," "machiavellian," "crestfallen," and "contrarian." Second, interpolate another song. Interpolation means drawing inspiration from an older song or artist by taking that work and incorporating it into your work. Every pop song sounds like at least one other pop song, and it isn't considered plagiarism as long as you don't outright copy another song. Additionally, there is no such thing as stealing or owning chord progressions! Third, write about your ex. Call them a lying traitor and say they were a horrible person who sucks and has many problems. Be overdramatic and exaggerate what you are singing about. Make sure to not name drop but to also leave enough details so your fans can figure out who the ex is. That way, they can rally against that person which will boost your popularity. If you don't have an ex, pretend you have one. Fourth,

use your money to obtain access

to a recording studio. Any producer will be more than happy to record your angry pop rock song. Lastly, if you end up completing an album, make sure the album contains a sad song, an angry song, a song about jealousy, and a song about someone you know experiencing abuse. Pop albums seem to have each of these kinds of songs these days.

If you are still unsure on how to write a song, consider following these simple step-by-step di-

Step 1: Purchase a rich sounding piano or alternatively a \$400 keyboard and turn it on. If you can't obtain either, download Garageband on your phone or tablet and open up the Keyboard Touch Instrument, which allows you to play different keyboards like a grand piano and an electric

Step 2: Come up with a song idea. The only reason you want to write a song is because you are moody and need to get something off your chest.

Step 3: Play that keyboard passionately.

Step 4: Sing over your keyboard composition from the bottom of your heart, like someone pulled you apart and you are absolutely broken.

Step 5: Post the song on You-Tube or TikTok to promote it. Clearly, YouTube and TikTok are the path to fame.

With these tips and steps, creating an unforgettable song or album is easier than ever and you will most certainly achieve fame and musical stardom.

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Illustration by Jordan Costolo '25

January 25, 2024

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Rebel Moon Delivers a Fine Sci-fi Experience Wonka Remarkably Prequels a

by Connor Pugh '24

Rebel Moon Part One: a Child of Fire is director Zack Snyder's (of Man of Steel and 300 fame) attempt at a gritty space opera, striving for the same playing field as the likes of Star Wars and Dune. Initially conceived as a standalone film in the aforementioned Star Wars franchise before Disney rejected the concept, Snyder instead turned to Netflix, who essentially gave him a blank check to pursue his wildest dreams as long as he released a PG-13 cut first. As the title suggests this movie is the first part of a grand space epic, with the second film scheduled to release in April. An R-rated extended cut of the films is coming out at a currently unspecified later date.

Rebel Moon follows the mysterious Kora (Sofia Boutella) along with farmer Gunnar (Michiel Huisman) as they travel across the galaxy to find help protecting their small town from the threat of the empire of the Motherworld, crossing paths with the likes of disgraced General Titus (Djimon Hounsou) and laser blade-wielding bounty hunter Nemesis (Bae Doona), among many others.

Anyone who has seen any of Snyder's work will find much of Rebel Moon's aesthetics and compositions familiar. There's the aggressive lens flares, there's the liberal use of slow-mo shots, and there's even the macho military men gritting their teeth and firing heavy weaponry. It's almost too familiar in many places; the world of Rebel Moon is populated with every sci-fi trope and plot point imaginable, and it's obvious



this movie was originally something else at some point, because it was. Because Disney didn't allow Snyder to base his film in the Star Wars franchise and its decades of history, he and everyone else working on the film had to build from the ground up the entire universe of Rebel Moon, and it shows. The worlds of Rebel Moon feel less like inhabited spaces and more like a cardboard backdrop to a stage play.

But there's sort of a charming quality to this obvious fakeness. Snyder's warm colors and harsh lighting makes many of the scenes in the film strangely intimate despite the extravagant scale of its setpieces. The camera remains steadfastly focused on its characters instead of getting distracted by the backgrounds, which almost makes the fakeness of the entire movie feel like a deliberate choice. Rebel Moon is of essence a modern pulp movie, a film that knows it isn't the next Star Wars but is still willing to wear its heart on its sleeve and just be an enjoyable--if slightly forgettable--experience.

Many of Rebel Moon's thematic and character beats remain frustratingly vague or unsolved, a consequence of this just being the first part to a larger story. This means it's a little hard to latch on to anything thematically interesting as of now, but the first part has the hopeful beginnings of larger thematic arcs tackling the spirit of revolution and overcoming trauma. While Snyder definitely reached too close to the sun with this one, Rebel Moon nonetheless remains a fun pulpy space adventure that could be a satisfying experience if you gave it a chance.

Grade: B-

Classic Story Loved by Many

by Randy Wang '24

Directed by Paul King, Wonka is a prequel to the events of the 1971 film prominent in the childhood of many people, Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, directed by Mel Stuart, and/ or the 2005 remake, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, directed by Tim Burton. King's prequel makes successful connections to Stuart's film, having similar Oompa Loompa designs and reimagined songs from the original.

The film opens with Willy Wonka (Timothée Chalamet) entering the city that is a cross between London, Paris, and Prague in the late 1930s with the goal of opening his very own chocolate shop. The film goes on to have Noodle (Calah Lane) and other characters who worked for Mrs. Scrubitt (Olivia Colman) helping Wonka sell his chocolate while rising up against corrupt chocolate-selling competitors. The film is filled with many heart-touching moments and viewers understandably could feel a compelling desire to rewatch the original movies. The excellently choreographed songs throughout Wonka easily draw the audience into Wonka's world.

The cast all performed phenomenally through the entirety of the movie. Chalamet's dynamic facial expressions and expressive tone are all fitting for Wonka's personality. The supporting actors perfectly blend into their respective scenes and come across as actually complex people. The villains Slugworth (Paterson Joseph), Prodnose (Matt Lucus),

and Fickelgruber (Mathew Baynton) kill their performances with cartoonish expressions yet evil intentions, creating both a comedic tone and a feeling of suspense in the audience.

However, Wonka has its shortcomings, mainly in its resolution. The overall direction of the movie is fantastic as the plot stayed consistent throughout, creating amazing visuals and a great story that many age groups will enjoy. But there were two moments that really stand out as negatives. In the second half of the movie, Wonka and Noodle are faced with a conflict that endangers their lives. The scene feels cliche and awkward when compared to other parts of the movie and kind of downplays the remaining parts of the film despite the tear-jerking moments that happen. Despite being an emotional moment, the resolution to Noodle's story seems like it was rushed to make time constraints. Her ending doesn't feel complete as it felt forced into the film's ending. Nevertheless, this flaw doesn't ruin the amazing ending that follows that scene.

Being a musical shouldn't deter moviegoers from seeing this movie. Despite being made for the younger demographic, teens and adults may find themselves liking this movie as it contains many creative scenes and the songs are catchy rather than cringeworthy. While not perfect, Wonka is surprisingly enjoyable.

Grade: B

The Color Purple Is the Cumulation of a Growing Trend Towards Musicals

by George Awkard '25

Movies are one of the most well-received forms of entertainment in history, which makes them extremely easy to adapt. And since musicals already have a substantial and dedicated fan base, many of them have been turned into films. The Color Purple goes even further as it seamlessly has moved from paperback to the big screen, then on stage, and now back in theaters.

The film takes place in rural Georgia, spanning several decades and following the main character Celie (Fantasia Barrino), a strong and independent African-American woman. The story takes place from her adolescence to adulthood and her journey through the most painful and significant years of her life.

The musical aspect of The Color Purple enhances the story by immersing the audience in the world of Celie through enthralling songs. Tracks like "Miss Celie's Pants" and "I'm Here" provide a glimpse into the joyous future for Celie. The Color Purple includes other stellar performances from prominent names, including R&B artist H.E.R as Squeak and actress Halle Bailey as Young Nettie. The most riveting performance, however, is by actress



into a live musical, and once again adapted into a musical movie. The current film so far has grossed 11.7 million dollars in the first week.

Danielle Brooks as Sophia, who gives an energetic rendition of the riveting track, "H*ll No!," paired with a compelling performance of despair after being thrown into jail for 6 years.

The darker aspects of the film, however, lack the more intense elements of abuse, assault, and violence that were necessary to tell the story of Celie and the pain she experienced. The film missed the mark on how devilishly her father betrayed her and how evil the man she married was. These elements were present in the previous movie version from 1985, starring Whoopi Goldberg as Celie. Despite this shortcoming, the musical version of *The Color* Purple offers a powerful journey of a woman with a rich story, full of impactful musical performances, and a satisfying ending.

In the early 2000s, both musicals and movies were originals and offered brand-new stories for the viewers to immerse themselves in. However, musical producers saw movies as an opportunity to broaden their horizons and open up the stories they had created to more people.

The Color Purple is not the only movie that has been adapted, Musical theater has favored adaptation for a while now. A popular example of a movie that has been adapted into a musical is Moulin Rouge, which was directed by Baz Luhrmann and released in 2001 and adapted into a musical in 2021. The same is done with musicals adapted into movies. West Side Story debuted on Broadway in 1959 and was adapted into a movie twice, once in 1961 and again in 2021.

Musicals being made into movies can draw in audiences and grow a new following for the musical. The Color Purple was able to amass both a strong following of the original movie and new

These adaptations and musical movies are extremely beneficial for producers and directors, as The Color Purple made \$11.7 million in its first week in theatres. Directors are also free to change and modify an adaptation so that the story can immerse the audience, just as one would be in a live theater.

Adaptations are one of the easiest ways for a film/musical to make money and be greenlit for public release. Even if critics generally dislike your film or musical, it will still initially draw audiences just because of its name. Such is the case with *Back to the* Future, an 80s film classic, that was adapted into a musical on Broadway. Adaptation may only be a re-told version of the same story, but they are a great way to bridge the gap between films and musicals.

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Rock n' Roll Revival Leaves Lasting Impact on Participants

by Jordan Costolo '25 Audrey Farris '25

Rock n' Roll Revival has been an annual tradition at Sherwood for the past 53 years, starting with the dream of a few students and the help of their teachers. Spanning over three generations it has grown into a pivotal part of the Ashton, Olney, and Sandy Spring community, while giving thousands of students the opportunity to perform on stage. Rock n' Roll Revival since the beginning has created the space for anyone, no matter their background, to transform into a rock star for a few nights and live out their dreams of being part of something much greater than themselves alone.

Being part of Rock n' Roll Revival gives students the experience of working towards a common goal of putting together a memorable, cohesive show that pays homage to the top hits of the 1960s, 70s, 80s, and 90s. The process of collaborating with peers, practicing chords, mastering choreography, and learning how to work a spotlight creates

memories for students that last a lifetime.

The Rock n' Roll process starts with auditions. Finding the confidence to audition can be tricky, especially for students new to Sherwood or new to the music program. Sometimes, however, all it takes is a moment of inspiration to drive someone to audition. "When I was in 8th grade, one of my friends had an older sibling that was in Rock n' Roll. I went to one of the shows with her family and I was amazed," explained Stacy Gray, who was a lead singer in Rock n' Roll 21-24 in the 1990s. "It was at that point that I realized that as soon as I got to Sherwood I would audition."

Connal Sahler, a lead singer and dancer in Rock n' Roll 48 and 49, shared a similar sentiment. "A lot of my friends had been doing Rock n' Roll since their Freshman year and all I heard about it was how much fun it was and the wonderful community building experience it provided for them."

Rock n' Roll is special to Sherwood. It has hundreds of students auditioning for parts every single year, with hopes to be a part of something bigger than themselves, and getting the chance to stand on the Ertzman stage and show the community what they got. "Nothing beat the thrill of standing backstage before the opening song, waiting for the curtain to go up, and hitting the stage," said Jevarn O'Neal, who was a lead singer and dancer in Rock n' Roll 22-25. "Also, waiting to see how loud your applause would be when taking a bow at the end of the show. Hearing how much fun my mom and her friends had in the crowd during the show. People called your name from the crowd when the lights were down because they knew your song was

The pride of being a part of something entirely performed by students is another aspect of the experience of Rock n' Roll, and is one of the things that make it so special. Everything from sets, lights, and costumes to vocals, music, and choreography is all done by the students themselves. Alum Ben Kaufman, who was in Rock n' Roll 19-22, explained

that the responsibilities put on students developed life-long skills and habits. "I remember it being both a lot of fun and a lot of work," recounted Kaufman. "While I didn't realize it then, the show allowed us to learn how to work for someone, work together, and develop pride associated with being part of something bigger than ourselves."

The Ertzman stage of Rock n' Roll creates a safe environment for students to express themselves and hone new talents in the safety of their hometown. With support from teachers and fellow students, everyone is able to come out of their shell and try their best being their own rockstar.

"During senior year I remember [former music teacher] Mr. [Joseph] Reiff talked about playing sax with wedding bands in the area and he told me to find an audition," said Kaufman. "So I did, and I started with Washington Talent Agency right out of high school. I've been performing with them for 30 years. The show set me up for a career in music."

This freedom of expression

can lead to new passions, realizations, or even simply a student gaining more self confidence than they had before. For example, Rock n' Roll helped O'Neal to, "see that there was nothing I should be afraid of, and there was nothing in life I couldn't get through. If you can get on stage singing and dancing in front of all those people, you can handle anything."

Looking forward, Rock n' Roll will continue to be an important of the community, even decades in the future. A show like Rock n' Roll that brings so many people from so many different backgrounds together and showcases Sherwood's level of talent is a rare occurrence in this day and age. "I don't think that I have enough words to effectively convey how much R-N-R has meant to me. It's an experience that I will always cherish and be so very thankful to have ever been a part of," said Gray. " I commend Sherwood for keeping this going, so that future generations will hopefully have the same fond memories that I do!"



Iron Claw's Tragic Tale of Showmanship

by Liam Trump '24

Director and screenwriter Sean Durkin's The Iron Claw follows the true story of the legendary Von Erich family as they set their sights on the NWA (National Wrestling Association) World Heavyweight Championship. The Von Erichs were a inter-generational wrestling dynasty who suffered tragedy after tragedy, all under the leadership of the former NWA star, Fritz Von Erich (Holt McCallany). After his own shortcomings in the ring, Fritz is dead set to have one of his sons carry the Heavyweight title.

The story centers on Kevin Von Erich (Zac Efron) as he tries to live up to his father's aspirations for his career in professional wrestling. Eventually, he's joined in the ring by his brothers, comprising of the charismatic David (Harris Dickinson), the hot-headed Kerry (Jeremy Allen White) whose dreams of Olympic level glory were cut short by the U.S. boycott of the 1980 games in the Soviet Union, and his more artistic younger brother Mike

(Stanley Simons). While the Von Erich brothers are given lots of characterization, their father Fritz comes across as mostly one-note, with very little nuance found in his motivations.

The actual wrestling sequences are very well shot, with a big emphasis on the eye-popping reds and blues of the 1970s and 1980s. The sound design immerses viewers, letting them feel every impact in and out of the ring. The intensity of these scenes reflects upon the significance of professional wrestling in their lives; how it essentially gives them a way to live up to their father's high expectations.

But the heart of the story is that of perseverance through adversity. The multiple tragedies that the Von Erich family go through--one after the other-weighs heavily on the surviving members, especially Kevin. But a by-product of giving little breathing room between each event causes the latter half of the film to feel rushed, even if it does highlight the bond Kevin had with his

brothers.

Efron, throughout the film, absolutely nails his character of Kevin, showing audiences he has a far wider range than the *High School Musical* trilogy might have led people to believe. The physical transformation he went through is impressive to say the least, but what's more important is how he conveys how loss can affect someone who doesn't want to express his emotions ... how, other than for his father's approval, even he doesn't know why he's fighting so hard for the title.

Underneath the flashy set design and energetic soundtrack is a heartbreaking tale of brotherhood and hardship. While there were some shallowly written characters and some of the pacing was inconsistent, *The Iron Claw* hits it home when it comes to giving a devastating portrayal of the Von Erich's legacy.

Grade: B+

Disappointing Finish to DCEU

by Dylan Sondike '24

When the DC universe was jump-started a little over 10 years ago with Man of Steel, there were high hopes for what adventures these DC superheroes would go on and how the films would stack up against the Marvel franchise. Films including Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice and Justice League gave fans hope for what would come in the future. After 10 years, however, the release of James Wan's Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom concludes the DC extended universe, ending on another disappointing note.

With the introduction of Aquaman (Jason Momoa) in *Justice League* followed by his own movie a year later, the character development and concept seemed very promising. However, Momoa's new film has a very stalled plot throughout the movie and lacks adventure.

Lost Kingdom returns to a character, Black Manta (Yahya Abdul-Mateen II), who has resented Aquaman since he left Manta's father to die on a submarine in the opening of the first film. Manta's new power from the black trident forces Aquaman to team up with the major villain from the first film. Aquaman is forced to team up with his brother Orm (Patrick Wilson) who prevented him from taking the throne in the first movie.

While Wan creates a cool concept of having the brothers unite to take on a new enemy, much of the new film is repetitive to Wan's first creation of Aquaman. With practically the same cast, there lacks a true challenge to Aquaman's throne as he had already been shown to be more powerful than these same villains in the prior film.

Additionally, while Abdul-Mateen II as Black Manta



does a somewhat good job at portraying his hate and resentment toward Aquaman, his character doesn't come off as an overpowering force to Aquaman and the entirety of Atlantis due to his lack of technology and a large army to defeat them.

This film also lacks creativity as it reminds this viewer of many aspects of past Marvel films. It similarly takes the idea of brothers who once fought each other for power and now have united, as seen in the *Thor* movies when over time Loki and Thor made peace and became closer to one another. *Lost Kingdom* also repeats the idea of sharing technology with humans and the rest of the world, which was evident in *Black Panther: Wakanda Forev-*

Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom struggles to come up with a new plot and characters. Ironically, this film is the perfect ending to the disappointing 16 movies created by DC's extended universe

Grade: C-

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Message on Migration Falls Short

by Dasun Panapitiya '24

Well-known Bollywood director Rajkumar Hirani released his 6th movie, *Dunki*, around the world on December 21. Known for movies such as *3 Idiots* and *PK*, which both excel in blending comedic aspects and emotional depth into a well developed story, Hirani once again delivers. With a loveable cast, featuring the iconic and long-time actor Shah Rukh Khan (SRK) and amazing writing from Hirani, anyone who watches *Dunki* will immediately deeply connect with this story.

The film follows Manu Randhawa (Taapsee Pannu) escaping a hospital in London to meet with her friends, Buggu Lakhanpal (Vikram Kochhar) and Balli Kakkad (Anil Grover). They plan on leaving London to go back to India, their home, but are rejected a Visa because of the illegal nature of their migration to London. They had used a dangerous method of immigration called Donkey Flight, or Dunki in Punjabi, to get to London, and had to ask for asylum in London to legitimize their residency. In order to get home, they must meet up with SRK's character, Hardy Singh, in Dubai, leading into a prolonged flashback which unravels the entirety of the narrative.

The first half of the movie is all world building, where there are a lot of comedic moments and where the motives of each character are revealed. The comedic tone of the movie shifts to a more somber and emotional tone when Vicky Kaushal's character, Sukhi, is introduced at the end of the first act. His introduction is the driving force behind the rest of the story and Kaushal's performance ensures that the dark turn is emotional and impactful.

Besides the good writing and performances, the film's portrayal of illegal immigration tries to offer a message about the discriminatory nature of the immigration process when it comes to class and wealth. While the message is commendable, the execution of the message is one of the weakest points in the movie. The comedy, which works in the first half of the film, becomes off-key when featured in the very serious second half of the film. The overall message about how it is difficult for the poor to get Visas is undermined by Hirani's focus on the grandiose and daring adventure of a donkey flight rather than the harsh realities that lead to the characters wanting to actually leave.

While *Dunki* is spectacular on a technical level and works as a great story that anyone can simply enjoy, its disregard for root causes of migration hurts the social commentary.

Grade: B-

Rise in Short-Form Content Has Been Connected to Decline in Mental Health

by Declan Rooney '25

Short form content is a type of media that is brief, quick, and consumed rapidly. Over the past decade, there has been a tremendous rise of this type of media online, from early blog posts to TikTok, due to its huge popularity and profitability. However, concerns are growing about the potential consequences of the addictive nature of these apps.

The first Short form content social media was Vine, a very popular app that existed from 2013 to 2017. Short form content is defined as any online content that is formatted as brief and concise. Vine was formatted a lot like many popular short form social medias today; it had a central feed where users could scroll through an endless pile of short videos that each were anywhere from 15 to 30 seconds long. Behind that feed was an algorithm that tracked what users engaged with and fed them more of that type of content. TikTok, which operates with similar systems, came into the mainstream after a merger with another app Music.ly in 2018. TikTok had long been successful in China, operating under the name Douyin, before coming to the United States. Once TikTok came to the United States through a merger, it blew up in popularity and has continued to grow since. Users love the app for its short comedy videos, political debates, sport updates, dancing, and even occasionally news.

Showing shorter videos in rapid succession means users consume content at a higher rate, which in turn means more ads and higher ad revenue. According to a 2021 article entitled "What Makes TikTok so Addictive?: An Analysis of the Mechanisms Underlying the World's Latest Social Media Craze" by the Brown Undergraduate Journal of Public Health, "Recent reports reveal that users spend an average of 46 minutes per day on the app and open it eight times daily; considering the maximum length of videos is 15 seconds, they may watch upwards of 180 videos per day on average." TikTok has since surpassed

its competitors as the most downloaded social media app in addition to becoming the most valuable startup in the world at \$75 billion. Since this form of new content is so profitable many other social media giants have implemented a similar feature within their own app. Youtube introduced its own feature "Shorts" in 2021. Meta, owner of Facebook and Instagram, launched "Reels" in 2020. Viewers might even find these short form content features in places you wouldn't expect, such as the website for National Public Radio (NPR). This is because of another factor that makes short form content so profitable: its addictive qualities.

Showing users a series of short videos is a highly stimulative process that leads to users spending more time than they thought they had on scrolling through their feed. According to an article in the Brown Undergraduate Journal of Public Health examining what makes TikTok so addictive, "the infinite scroll and variable reward pattern of TikTok likely increase the addictive quality of the app as they may induce a flow-like state for users that is characterized by a high degree of focus and productivity at the task at hand, whether that be a game, one's social media feed, or another virtual activity." This addictive cycle can also be detrimental to attention spans, particularly in children. The Wall Street Journal reported in the article "This Was Supposed to be the Antidote for Tik-Tok Brain. It's Just as Bad," that when children watch short-form videos, they learn to expect continual stimulation and fastpaced changes, which can cause problems when engaging in activities that require greater focus, such as reading."

So, while companies like TikTok, Meta, and YouTube pushing short form content may be good for business, it is important users are aware of the potential consequences of consuming this content. People, especially teens, are very prone to this kind of addiction and may not even realize it.

What the Warrior Staff is...

Reading

Gideon Falls: The Black Barn, created by writer Jeff Lemire and artist Andrea Sorrentino, tells a story about a schizophrenic man who keeps getting visions about a black barn while simultaneously finding parts around the city to build said barn. His therapist tries to break him out of these delusions before she too starts seeing visions of the black barn, and only then does she believe this supernatural barn could be real and not just a delusion. They join together to try to connect the pieces of the black barn and why they are seeing it. An engrossing sub plot centers on a priest who has been following and documenting the black barn "murders" and disappearances. From the stunning art to the enthralling story this graphic novel series is a great read for anyone who enjoys mystery stories with supernatural elements.



Watching

Poker Face on Peacock, starring Emmy-nominated actress Natasha Lyonne, is a perfect watch for anyone who loves murder mysteries. The series follows Charley Cale across America as she is wanted by the owners of the casino where she previously worked. Charley has a distinct ability in which she can tell when others are lying so she pushes the truth out of everyone. While running from the owners, she makes multiple stops and along the way she meets new people and solves murders that go on in the town, all while she's on the run herself. Throughout the whole series, I was eager to see what would happen with Charley, whether it would be getting caught finally or if she would fail at solving the murder.

~Andrew Rosenthal '24

Broadchurch, Season 1, on PBS, starring Emmy-award winning actors Olivia Colman and David Tennant, is a must watch. This series, set in a quiet, cliffside British town shaken by a horrific death, is a devastating, emotional, and thrilling viewing experience. As the mystery of a local 11-year-old boy's murder unfolds, the seemingly innocent, sleepy town slowly reveals something more sinister beneath its surface. Watching the pilot episode is a whiplash of emotions and from one moment to the next, I found myself laughing, crying, or sitting at the edge of my seat.

~Evelyn San Miguel '26

The 2016 HBO series *The Young Pope* tells the story of a future revolution in the Roman Catholic Church orchestrated by newly elected pope Lenny Belardo (played by Jude Law). Taking on the name of Pius XIII, Lenny makes sweeping and reactionary changes to the operation and structure of the Church. Conflict with the internal Church bureaucracy and the public ensues, all while Lenny struggles internally with his faith and his past. Paolo Sorrentino's masterful directing work makes *The Young Pope* an artistically as well as emotionally engaging watch, providing a unique insight into the Catholic church for those unfamiliar with it, and a reflection on Catholic principles and faith for those who are.

~Seph Fisher '2

Martin Scorsese's 1985 film *After Hours* is a hidden gem amongst the director's legendary discography. Going into the movie I hadn't thought much of it because compared to the rest of Scorcese's movies, I haven't heard much fanfare but after watching it for the first time I was blown away and it became a top-5 Scorcese movie for me. The film is extremely atmospheric and portrays one man's night go from bad to worse as he goes through a myriad of strange interactions in New York City. *After Hours* does a perfect job of making viewers feel claustrophobic and anxious, and it highlights Scorcese's ability to make the audience feel. I recommend *After Hours* to anyone who is a fan of this great director or anyone who is willing to experience a nightmare-like movie.

~Ben Schoenberg '24



Listening

Erykah Badu's second studio album, *Mama's Gun* is a vibrant neo-soul experience. *Mama's Gun* incorporates funk, soul, and jazz elements to take the listener on a journey throughout the vivid, imaginative world of Badu. From "Penitentiary Philosophy" to "Green Eyes," the 71-minute album combines familiar Hip Hop beats, record crackling sound bites, and proud, hypnotizing vocals to immerse the listener in the story of Badu's life in the 1980s and 90s.

~Audrey Farris '25

Acid Bath's 1994 album *When the Kite String Pops* is a perfect blend of sludge metal, death metal, and simultaneously, melodic blues, having just enough energy to wake a dead man up. Liked by metalheads and punks alike, each song has a perfect mixture of elements for every enjoyer of heavier music. Each song flows effortlessly into each other, with a strong amount of bass in each song. My personal favorite is "The Morticians Flame," which has enough energy and enough slow melodies to make the four-minute song feel less than a minute

~Cliff Vacin '25



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Senior Competes in Pan-American Games

by Andrew Rosenthal '24

Senior Anna Sullivan represented the United States in the Pan American Games in Ibague, Colombia, in December 2023. Sullivan competed in Acrobatic Gymnastics in a trio alongside Maddy Hunt and Avery Puleo. The trio brought home three gold medals for Team U.S. and scored a 27.500 in the final round to seal the deal.

"Getting the opportunity to compete in Colombia was incredible," said Sullivan. "It was amazing to represent our country and even better to bring home three gold medals. The crowd watching the competition was so supportive, and I could tell they enjoyed what we performed."

Acrobatic Gymnastics isn't something that most people have seen, or have even heard of. It is a discipline of gymnastics that is limited to only competing on the floor. Gymnasts work together to perform different figures and moves. Sullivan currently is a part of a trio that is in their third year working and competing together. Sullivan, Hunt, and Puleo all belong to International Elite located in Crofton, Maryland

"We compete in three different routines: Balance, Dynamic, and Combined," explained Sullivan. "The balance routine focuses on static holds in different positions. The Dynamic routine shows the flips and twists. The Combined routine is a combination of the two where you show the biggest and hardest skills you have. There is a mix of dance, tumbling, and Acro moves."

Sullivan has been involved in gymnastics her whole life, start-



Senior Anna Sullivan (right) balances herself at the Pan-Am Games.

ing at 2 years old and becoming a competitive artistic gymnast by the time she was in elementary school. The levels of artistic gymnastics range from 1-10, with Elite levels beyond that. When she began acrobatics she was able to jump to level 10 which led to her first full season to start in 2021 after losing a year to the pandemic. Sullivan trains 5 days a week at her club, with training sessions lasting 3-4 hours.

"Trust is a big factor in Acrobatics," Sullivan added. "My top has to trust that her bases will always be there to catch her, and the bases have to trust that the top will do the skills perfectly. Without trusting each other, we would never make it to the elite level."

For Sullivan to become a member of the National Team, her trio had to start competing at the elite international level. To stay on Team U.S., they had to keep competing every 6 months

in order to be re-selected for the National Team. Sullivan and her trio were first selected to compete in the Maia International Acro Cup, which was held in Portugal in March 2023. The second time Sullivan and her trio were selected was in June of 2023 and they were ranked first on Team U.S. for elite level 12-18, which led to

the opportunity to compete in the

Pan American Competition. In the Fall of 2024, Sullivan will be attending Quinnipiac University in Connecticut -- which is Division 1 -- for Acrobatics and Tumbling. Sullivan communicated with the coach by sending videos of her skills and continued to touch base for many months. Eventually, Sullivan was granted the opportunity to do an official visit of the campus alongside other athletes and earn a scholarship. "It was an amazing visit, and I am so excited for my future there," said Sullivan.

Perspective **Christian McCaffrey** Should Win NFL MVP

by Noah Bair '24

Every year, the NFL gives out awards before the Super Bowl for players who had the best regular season. While there are six awards that can be won by players, there is none more important than the Most Valuable Player (MVP) award, which theoretically can be won by any player in the league. Voters for the award are instructed to vote for a player who had the most impact on their team, thus dubbed "Most Valuable." For each of the last ten years, a quarterback has won the MVP. In nine of those ten years, it was given to the quarterback on a team with the best record in their conference.

The award has moved from awarding the player that has contributed the most to their team into simply going to the quarterback on the best team. If the NFL wants to restore the award back to what it is truly meant to be, more non-quarterbacks should be given the award in the future, which would start with Christian McCaffrey of the San Francisco 49ers winning the award this year.

Lamar Jackson most likely is going to win the NFL MVP award in February when it is presented. Despite not leading in any major passing statistics, Jackson is the favorite to win the award because of the fact that his team has the best record in the league. The Ravens finished the year with a record of 13-4, earning his team the top seed in the AFC and a first-round bye in the playoffs. This year, McCaffrey had more than 2,000 yards from scrimmage and 21 touchdowns, leading the league in both of those categories. His contributions to the team are one of the main reasons why the 49ers finished with the second best record in the league and a first-round bye in the playoffs.

Even though he is not going to win the MVP award, McCaffrey will win the Offensive Player of the Year award, which will be the first time he has won the award in his seven-year career despite being widely regarded as the best multi-threat running back in the league.

Despite the award being a shining accomplishment in his impressive career thus far, it is a consolation prize to being named the MVP. Even doing something historic likely isn't enough for a non-QB to win the MVP award. Most recently, in 2021, Los Angeles Rams wide receiver Cooper Kupp came within 17 yards of breaking the NFL's receiving yards record, but only received one vote out of 50. Who got the rest? QB Aaron Rodgers with 39 votes and Tom Brady with 10, and those two have won a combined 7 regular season MVPs.

This season, Jackson led his team to the best record in the league in what anyone would agree was an impressive season, but he didn't even make it to 30 combined passing and rushing TDs. His MVP award will be undeserving.

Indoor Track Overcomes Many Meet Cancellations

by Liam Trump '24

To start the track and field season, the Prince George's Sports and Learning Complex, where the majority of indoor meets are held, announced its temporary closure due to renovations. The original calendar had four MCPS meets held at the PG Complex, in addition to the season including two invitationals: The Dickinson College Holiday Invite and The Montgomery Invitational. Both invitationals went as planned, however all but one of the MCPS meets have been canceled due to renovations or poor weather. The only rescheduled event was the first meet which was held outside at Einstein, with only 7 schools competing instead of the standard

"The closure of [the] PG sports complex for half the season was less than ideal. The good part is the kids have been showing up with a great attitude everyday and not letting it affect them," said Coach Matthew Holonich. "We know there is adversity, and we are overcoming that adversity and just getting better everyday. The tough part is keeping the motivation because just practicing and not having competition is tough because we want to go out and

prove what we are able to do."

The season has, in spite of the cancellations, had some impressive performances for some of the top athletes for the boys and girls teams. The Dickinson and Montgomery invitationals, in particular, yielded very good results.

On the boys side, senior captains Sean Gravell and Ayden Fritsch both performed well in the 1600 meter race, with both of them getting times well below 5 minutes. On the sprinting end, some of the team's standouts include freshman Jan Mason in the 55 meter dash, junior Tyrese Oxendine in the 300 meter dash, and junior Zaire Fulmore in the 500

On the girls team, sophomore Madeline Quirion has done well in the 1600 meter run, finishing the race in 5 minutes and 38 seconds. Leading the sprinters are juniors Zoey Scheraga and Sanora Floy, both running well in the 300

With the regular season not living up to its expectations due to bad luck with the renovations and the weather, the indoor team's top athletes are hoping to succeed at the MCPS County Championship meet on January 23 and the 3A West Regional on February 10.

Girls Basketball Winning Despite Changes

by Thomas Fenner '24

Despite enduring changes to the coaching staff and switching divisions, girls basketball has begun the season with an impressive 8-2 record. The Warriors suffered their only two losses in the opening game against Whitman on December 5 by a score of 53-31, and fell to Damascus in a tight 30-23 finish on December 13. Since then, the team has won seven straight games, including several blowout finishes.

What makes this start more remarkable is that the team has had success with a greatly different coaching staff from last season. With the addition of new coaches Tammy Ross and Patricia Hollowell, it has created a new culture for the program. The players have been very complimentary of the new coaching style, and believe these changes have played a major role in the hot start for the Warriors. Senior Taylor Corrothers expressed the importance of communication and believes the coaches have done a great job of implementing

"After each game [Ross] gives every player individual note-cards where she assesses our play and gives advice on how to improve," said Corrothers. "The way she runs practice also has gotten us in shape and focuses on



Senior Savannah Weisman passes to junior Avery Graham at Blake.

specific skills that demonstrated a need for improvement in the game prior."

Corrothers spent her offseason recovering from a major knee injury she suffered before her junior season. A torn ACL caused her to have to sit out for her entire junior year, and she also missed the summer and fall league games as well. However, through hard work and discipline, she was able to get cleared before the season started, and earned her way to a starting spot and a leading scorer.

"My preparation was through physical therapy and conditioning." Corrothers said. "When I was cleared to play basketball with no contact, I practiced shooting and ball handling on my own time."

Another key contributor so far has been freshman Aubree Thompson, who has made a big impact in her first season with the team. Thompson has served as the main ball handler and facilitator for the Warriors, while also displaying an impressive shooting ability and good leadership.

The team looks to build off their strong record start and continue with the momentum they've built over the win streak, gained from the winning start. They will play teams they've already beaten such as Springbrook and Blake again down the stretch of the season on February 5 and 9. They also rematch Richard Montgomery and Paint Branch on February 2 and 16, who gave them competitive games earlier in the year.

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Swim and Dive Balances Huge Team with Focus on Getting Results

by Hannah Mushahwar '24

Sherwood Swim and Dive witnessed incredible wins in the previous 2022-23 season, placing 9th at states and with a number of swimmers breaking personal records. Coming off of last season's progress, the 2023-24 team has significantly larger numbers of swimmers, growing from 68 to a striking 93 members. Coach Ryan Burnsky's decision to keep such a large team has certainly caused a change in the dynamic of the team, but nevertheless, he does not see the need to be exclusive in a sport that already requires a large team.

"If an athlete is willing to meet all the team requirements and work hard, then they can be part of the magic too," said Burnsky. "Having a big and diverse team creates more support for one another and at the very least a louder cheering section at meets." There is no doubt that the team has been incredibly high-spirited and determined, and that is thanks to the many captains working together in order to create a sense of connection among such a large team. "There is an extremely positive environment on our team. There is so much cheering and support when athletes are swimming and diving," said senior captain Adrianna Caponiti. "We have pasta parties every week to keep the team closely connect-

Despite the growing liveli-



Coach Ryan Burnsky makes adjustments while watching the team compete at their meet against Magruder.

ness of the team, there have been notable changes to the dynamic of both practices and meets. With lanes now containing 8-10 people, swimming more than 100 yards and optimizing practice sessions has become a challenge. "We have done a couple different strategies like splitting the lane to groups or heats with one group

in and one group out," Burnsky remarked. Whether or not swimmers are lacking opportunities to improve their long distance skills, Burnsky has incorporated different tactics in order to maintain the stamina and techniques of each swimmer. "We most recently did partner swims while specifically working on flip turns and breakouts," he explained.

As for meets, unfortunately with a team so large, not all swimmers are able to participate. Top swimmers are entered into multiple individual events while Burnsky attempts to incorporate each swimmer into at least one event per meet. But, substitutions can be made on the fly, so

all swimmers are expected to be ready at any moment, whether on the original lineup or not.

Despite the energetic practices, the conclusion of the season ushers in a shift towards individual accolades. After Divisionals. the team narrows down as only qualified swimmers proceed to Metros, Regionals, and States. This will most importantly allow Burnsky to direct his attention to individual focus. Seniors Brian Wilbur and Caponiti, recognized by the Washington Post's All Met Honorable Mention for their stellar 2023 seasons, are gearing up for Metros. Wilbur's record-breaking performance and Caponiti's impressive finishes foreshadow the team's potential success. Wilbur broke the school's 23-year-old 200 IM record with a 1:54.02 at last year's Metros. Wilbur's record-breaking performance was enough to earn him 6th overall in an event with over 80 swimmers. Caponiti finished 9th in 500 Free, and 16th in 200 Free at Metros as well.

As the team has been working incredibly hard, they are anticipating some top finishers at the upcoming competitions. "We have the best boys and girls team we have had here in my 5 years of coaching," said Burnsky. "Boys have a real shot to win the Division and the Region. Girls can make a good run at Regionals too, but both boys and girls have to get over the hump and beat Blair!"

New Leaders Emerge for Boys Basketball

by Dylan Sondike '24

Through 11 games, the Warriors have impressed with a 9-2 record. With narrow losses to only Richard Montgomery and Paint Branch, the Warriors have played efficient basketball this season. Last year, the coaches prioritized defense and once again these ideas have played a key role in their success.

"Everyone knows, defense wins championships. We put a lot of emphasis on defense and Coach Myers does a fantastic job in practice and games reminding players of their responsibilities," said Head Coach Tom Sheahin. "We need to improve during the second half of the season on the defensive side to reach a state championship. Our team needs to hold teams under 60 points a game and then we will have a strong chance at all our team goals."

The Warriors have allowed 58.9 points per game (PPG) through 11 games which is just under Sheahin's target. Subtracting the loss to Richard Montgomery, where the team allowed nearly 100 points, the team's average is 55 PPG in the rest of the games.

Along with stressing defense by the coaching staff, Sheahin added that player development has been a factor to the Warriors' winning ways. Sheahin explained that most of the starting lineup rode the bench for much of last season, but it allowed them to develop in practice. Specifical-



Senior guard Micah Webb makes a down-court pass against Rockville.

Thomas Fenner and Kobi Gyan as Warriors who have stepped up their play this season. Before an injury to junior Evin Thompson, he and seniors Chris Hall-Taylor and Micah Webb round out the starting five.

"As we face tougher opponents, I will continue to do all I can as a team captain to make sure my guys are prepared for the game ahead, " said Thompson. "Knowing our opponents and team strengths is key in out-matching opposing teams."

Thompson was thriving on the court as the team's leading scorer before his ankle injury against highly touted Blake in one of their most important victories of the season. The absence of Thompson has led to Webb standing out significantly and leading

Sheahin mentioned seniors the team. Webb's most notable performance came in the Warrior's biggest game this season against rival Blake where he lead the team with 31 points in an 86-76 victory.

> "With the absence of Evin, I feel like everybody has had to step up their roles and score more," said Webb. "Against Blake, my coaches and teammates believed in me so I just kept shooting and played my hardest."

> The Warriors still have more challenges ahead of them in the regular season. Next Friday Richard Montgomery will come to Sherwood in a game where the Warriors will aim for revenge for their early-season loss. They will also face rivals Blake once more and end the season with Magruder, who both have impressive records to this date.

Wrestling Looks to Build On Success at Recent Meets

by Thomas Fenner '24

Varsity wrestling opened the season with a 4-2 start despite facing tough competition early on. The team finished 8-1 at the Rockville Duals event, held January 5-6, and battled their way to a championship appearance, falling to Chesapeake 36-33. Other quality teams at the Rockville Duels included Churchill and North-

"Rockville Duals was a big test for the team with some very good teams," Coach Pete Siarkas said. "We wrestled great, coming just short of winning the tourna-

The team faced adversity going into the year, dealing with early season injuries to junior Brendan Heyer and sophomore Cade Munoz, while also having to fill the void left by the graduations of some of top wrestlers, including state champion Jace Munoz, Cade's older brother. Younger talent on the team has stepped up and returning wrestlers have developed their skill sets in the offseason. Munoz, following his older brother's great success at Sherwood, has joined fellow sophomore Connor Flickinger and freshman Landon Clore as up-and-coming stars.

"It's always tough losing a state champion," Siarkas said about Jace Munoz. "However, we have three wrestlers undefeated for the season at this point."

While underclassmen have

shown great potential, seniors such as Walker Smith and Vasili Siarkas have started the season strong as well. The leadership from the seniors has been crucial in developing the talent on the roster. Smith emphasized the importance of holding himself accountable and setting strong expectations for the team as a whole. However, he has also put the time in to better himself and his ability as a wrestler.

"I have definitely tried to improve my offensive skills this year," Smith noted. "I've tried to take more shots instead of relying on my defense."

The team competed in another tournament on January 12 and 13 at Paint Branch. Vasili Siarkas placed first for the Warriors, with Clore and Flickinger tying for second place, followed by sophomore Jaylen Mahoney at third in their respective weight classes.

The Warriors end the regular season traveling to Churchill for a match before returning home to face Northwood to close the season on February 3. Following the final match, Coach Siarkas said the team will hold a private wrestle-off to decide the regional team. Once the team is set, they will earn regional points for each win, contributing to how the team will be seeded in counties. After that, the state tournament is looming and a number of Sherwood wrestlers could qualify.