



Hoofbeats

"A Source, A Forum"

SANFORD H. CALHOUN HIGH SCHOOL MERRICK, NY 11566

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Confronting racism

Clubs join forces to host open forums

by Emma Bhansingh
Editor-in-Chief

Since its founding earlier this year, the Racial Equality Club has worked hard to spark productive discourse about race and the impact of racism on the Calhoun community.

After experiencing racial prej-

udice themselves, seniors Joan Mesy and Eden Gould-Anderson wanted to create a place where other students could turn to for guidance and additional peer support.

Each weekly Racial Equality Club (REC) meeting includes an identity activity, as well as discussion topics, to both educate and

bring to light various issues related to identity and race.

The origin of the club is born from similar interests and a noticeable need for social change.

"The officers of the Racial Equality Club began their racial equity work as officers of the International Buddy Club, eventually branching off from IBC this year due to societal circumstances and the perceived increased need for a club dedicated to just that," said Ms. Heather Glick, ENL teacher and adviser of Racial Equality Club.

One of the club's achievements has been co-hosting two after-school forums open to students and faculty to increase awareness and empathy across Bellmore-Merrick.

On afternoons in December and January, dozens of students gathered in-person and tuned in virtually alongside Gender Equality Club, Environmental Club, IBC, Model Congress, and GSA to participate in a school-wide discussion on race.

The events were hosted by Mesy, Gould-Anderson, and Maeva Exius, officers of the Racial Equality Club. Also present at the event were Principal Nicole Hollings and Assistant Principals Anthony DeMartinis and Mark Melkonian, as well as numerous teachers and club advisers.

"I hope students feel the power they have to use their voices and speak up for themselves and for causes about which they care deeply," Ms. Glick said. "I also wish that students who attend feel the support of the administrators and staff to help them make any

change they see necessary for the betterment of their education and life experience."

One of the hour-long forums began with a general question of how race affects society as a whole and then transitioned into how it plays a role in the Calhoun community.

Senior Amy Grossman started off by discussing the counterproductive concept of being "color blind," emphasizing that at Calhoun every culture should be appreciated.

Grossman said that many people claim to not see color and refuse to take public note of race, which allows people to ignore manifestations of persistent discrimination.

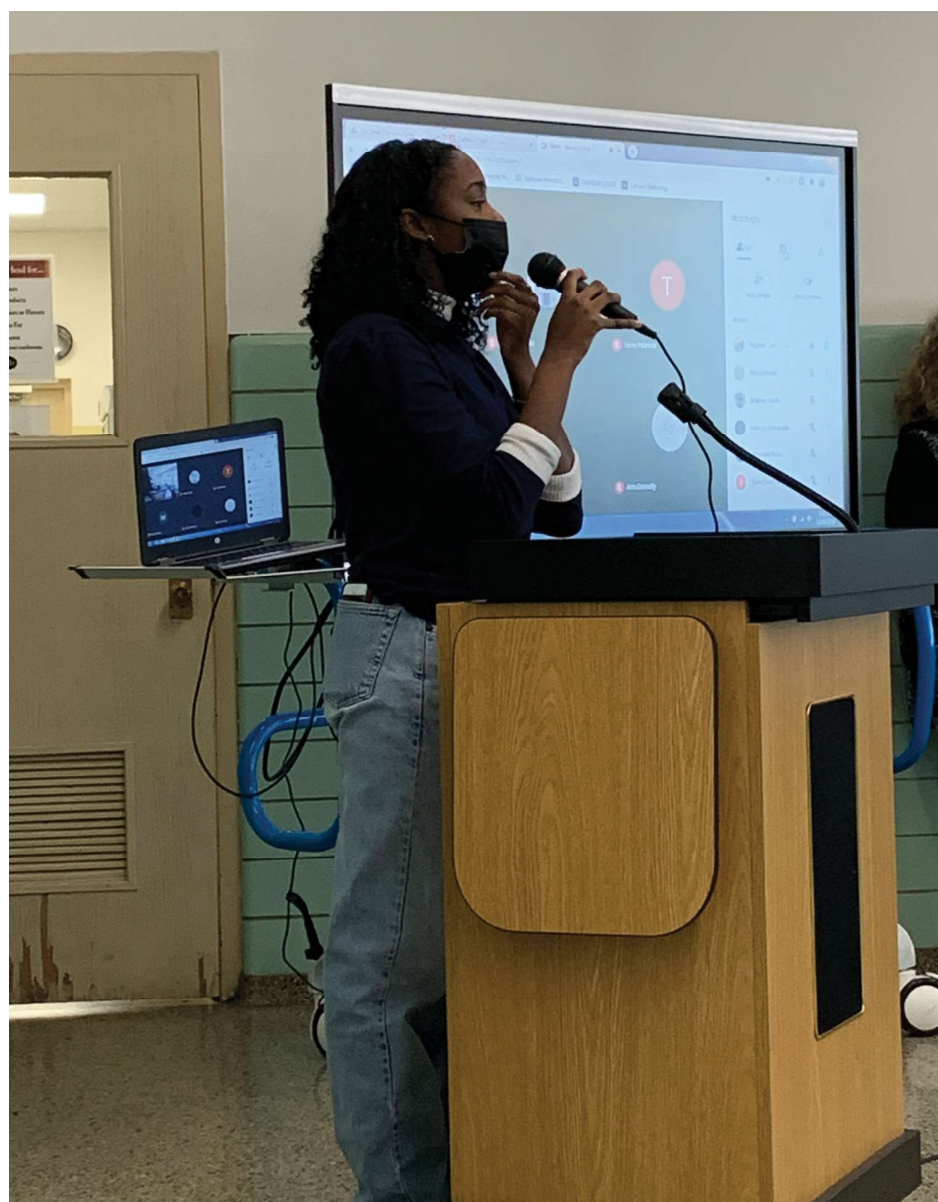
Senior Julia Kirpalani spoke to the audience on the importance of educating students about the lived experiences of people of color as a means of combating ignorance.

"Perpetuating the rhetoric that you don't see color is equivalent to staying complacent with the current racial injustices. Choosing to stay ignorant is complacency," Kirpalani said.

Another important topic discussed at the forum was the presence of residential and school segregation on Long Island.

Ms. Beth Finneran, Model Congress adviser and Social Studies teacher, encouraged teachers to find ways to incorporate Black History into their lesson plans and challenged the audience to go on a journey of educating themselves about topics not taught in the school curriculum.

Telling the story of her first year
(See RACISM on page 5)



(photo by Emma Bhansingh)

Senior Eden Gould-Anderson welcomes students and faculty to the forum.

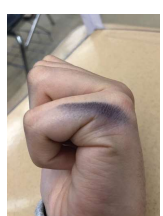


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Seniors show leadership

by Jamie Cabán
Staff Writer

In a year that defined the term “essential workers,” one class decided to give back to those working on the front lines.

Mr. Brian Joyce’s Leadership Class held a fundraiser for local healthcare heroes who have worked tirelessly since the pandemic began last March.

Long Island has been hit hard by COVID-19 with over 144,000 cases in Nassau County and over 158,000 cases in Suffolk County.

Mr. Joyce discussed the work doctors and nurses have done since last March with his students and asked the class, “What should we do to move on from here?”

After contemplating the question, the class spent time figuring out an effective idea and decided to raise money and hold a luncheon for healthcare workers at a local hospital.

“It’s such an amazing feeling knowing that my peers and I are making a difference and helping those that need it the most,” said senior Ava Stamm. “It makes my heart so full knowing that each class I go to is spent dedicating my time to helping our health care heroes. This pandemic certainly hasn’t been easy on any of us, but it is our job to give back to them in any way possible.”

The class’s first charity event



(photo by Erin Hans)

The Leadership Class raised funds for local frontline workers by selling and delivering flowers.

idea to was to hold a Valentine’s Day fundraiser where students in the second period Leadership Class worked together to sell and deliver flowers.

Senior Anya Resnick, a class member who worked hard to finish the project by finding the florist for the flowers, said knowing

the impact that COVID-19 has had made the fundraiser important.

“Covid has hit our communities hard. Really hard. Having family that has been affected by this virus and training myself to become an EMT, it has been scary,” she said. “Coming together with my class and working together to give back

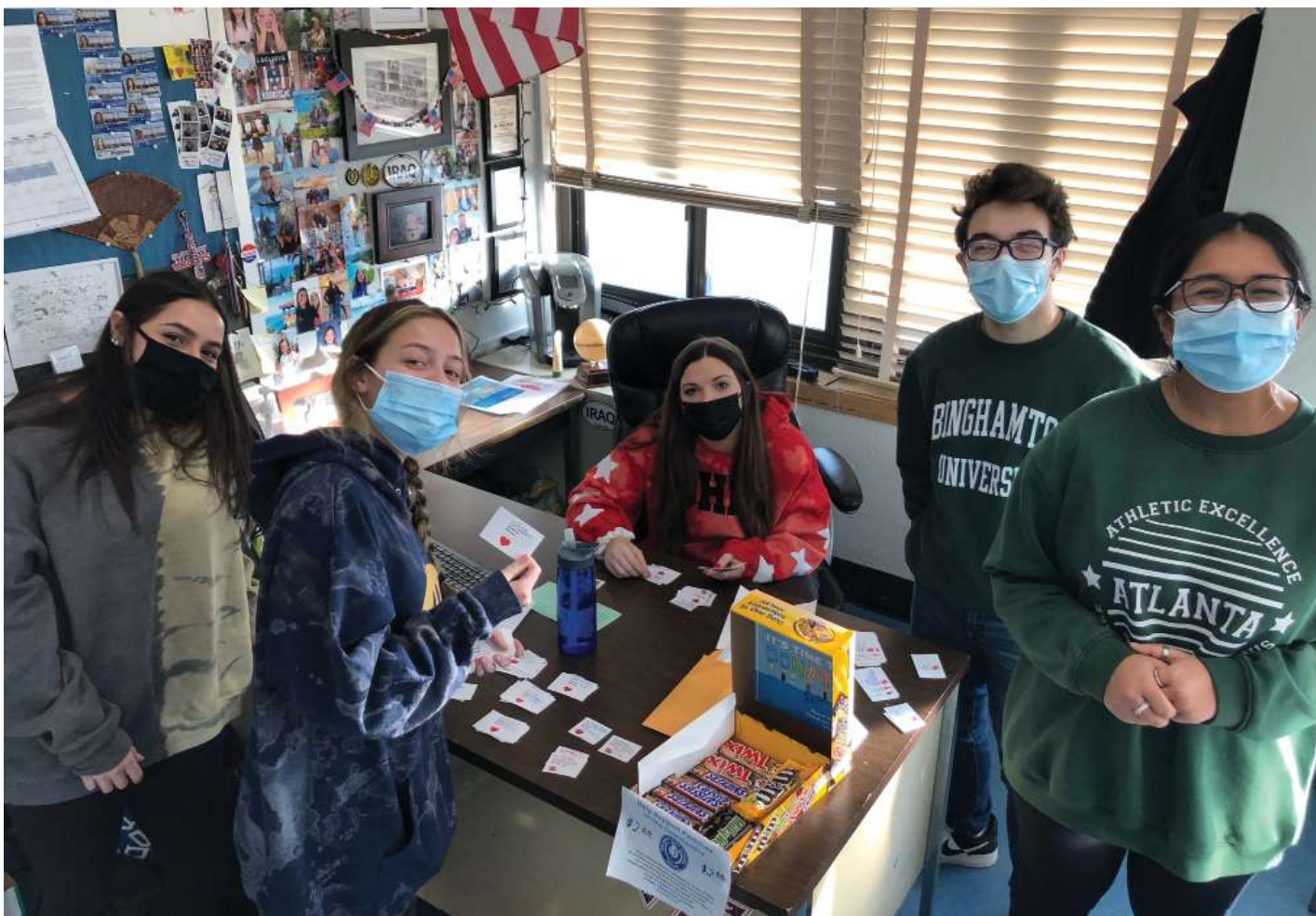
to our healthcare heroes makes me so happy to think about since we are making a difference in our community and giving back to those who have been helping us for so long.”

The senior Leadership Class does have more upcoming fundraisers planned for the cause of helping and giving back to healthcare heroes.

“Being able to step into class and push ourselves to make sure we are putting our best foot forward and putting into action the leadership skills we’ve been being taught is a feeling I can’t even describe,” said senior Nicole Castiglia. “Working together as a class and keeping helping our healthcare heroes at the forefront of our minds is an honor. It’s really great to be able to work on attaining this goal every class we take.”

In addition to the benefits of helping deserving frontline workers in local communities, students said they also created lasting bonds with their classmates.

“I think that the project is great, but it’s even better how close our class has become while working together for such a great cause. It brings me so much joy being able to spend time with my peers and brainstorm effective ideas together to make sure we are helping out our community to the best of our ability,” said senior Alexis Tocco.



(photo by Alexis Tocco)

The seniors have plans for more ideas in mind this year in order to give back to healthcare heroes.

Deciding from afar

by Skylar Sena
Editorial Editor

The 2021 college commitment process has been made no easier by the omnipresence of COVID-19.

As if deciding which university logo crewneck to snag off of the merch site wasn't hard enough, having to make a decision for the next four years of one's life seems impossible when schools are so out of reach.

Taking a painful family road-trip to visit a campus isn't so simple when it's coupled by the challenges of masks and quarantines, aside from the traditional battle for the window seats. However, as much as the college process and college commitments have changed in the year of the pandemic, there are some ways to make that decision just a little bit easier.

Long gone are the days of 12-hour-long campus tours, overnight visits, and admitted student events. Visiting campuses has quickly gone from a college process staple to an anomaly, as prospective students are relegated to browsing Google for images of their could-be campus.

While it may seem a simple fix to scour the internet for videos and pictures to get a feel for the school, it isn't nearly the same as the real thing; the images of the incredible collegiate dorm rooms, lecture halls, and libraries are highly staged and doctored to draw students in, and aren't representative of the typical freshman experience.

Not only do universities often publish only the best of the best, but it's also impossible to get the feeling that happens when you step onto the campus that's just right. You may fall in love with a school from a Google Image search, but the spark might sputter out as soon as your feet hit the university pavement.

Since stepping on a college campus is rarer than the lower half of a face these days, the best way to ex-



(photo by Skylar Sena)

Go through all the mail colleges have been sending to get a feel for the campus and the available courses.

perience the real thing is through social media. Scour the Instagram pages of current students, graduates, and friends attending these universities. Though it's nothing like the real thing, if you're thinking of attending somewhere that requires a bit of a hike—like the University of Michigan, for example—question any friends who go there, or find friends of friends who do, to give you the best idea of the college experience.

Not only has there never been a harder time to choose a college, but the admissions process also itself rivals its difficulty; what with cancelled SATs, grades plummeting due to stress and uncertainty (all with the backdrop of a pandemic and political unrest), figuring out

how to get into college seems unbearable.

For most juniors, their first soiree with the SAT was demolished by initial pandemic closures, thus prompting a wave of colleges to forgo the typically necessary admissions exam. With the pinnacle of high school academic achievement no longer necessary, it can feel impossible to know what exactly schools are looking for. Refresh their websites, focusing closely on the undergrad admissions page, to see any last-minute changes to what they want from a prospective student.

Of course, another challenge for seniors has been scrambling for the only clubs, sports, or job opportunities available during the pandemic to ensure the all-important resumes no longer look sparse. Aside from healthy, dedicated students, it's difficult to know what the colleges want.

The best advice for soon-to-be graduates? Do your research. Not just a skim over the Wikipedia page, dig deep. If this generation can determine the exact longitude and latitude coordinates of Timothee Chalamet, it can absolutely do proper college research. It's certainly not as fun, but it's much

more attainable.

Be a nerd, make some spreadsheets. Include some serious information about the programs and tuitions, and then the actual important stuff, like mascots, colors, and the quality of the dorms and food. (Do you really want to be stuck in brown and orange for the next four years?)

You know that giant stack of course catalogs and college material that has filled your mailbox? Sit down and go through it. All of it. Get a feel for the major you might like, the financial aid availability, or a course description for classes that make you wish you already put down your deposit.

The more you actually invest into researching the schools you've applied to, the easier it will be to choose one when the time comes. Creating clear documents of all the nitty gritty details of each school can help you compare them to one another and weigh the pros and cons of each as you move through the process.

The college process is hard. All of high school and all of college have been and will be hard, but it's going to be worth it in the end, as long as you've managed to get a good crewneck.

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A talk to teachers:

Funniest teaching moment?

by Gary Solorzano
Staff Writer

As they say, laughter is the best type of medicine.

Several teachers shared some of the funniest memories they've had over the years. From ripped pants to sports accidents, find out what has made these teachers laugh.

Mr. George Lessig - Math

"Since I've been at Calhoun for 20 years, there have been so many

I am one of the social workers in the building and one of the girls' lacrosse coaches.

I would have to say one of my funniest moments at Calhoun was when Coach Peck asked me to supervise the kickline team for a football game last fall. Of course, I was happy to help out a colleague, but I was quite nervous. She instructed that all I had to do was stand in the skybox at halftime and press play for the music. Seems simple, but I was terrified that someone was go-

down and up, so I asked, 'Hey, Moeller. What's up?'

He responded that he just had his pants cleaned and that he was just stretching them out. And as he made one last squat, we heard a giant ripping noise. What was that?

Coach Moeller's pants had torn right down the middle, leaving a hole almost three feet wide. Coach Flood and I were laughing so hard that we were crying, unable to catch our breath. Finally, I recovered and said, 'Moeller, you can't

the time a student was helping me return desks back to rows for the next class, and she pushed the desk so hard that it fell over on my toe and broke it.

Or the time during Challenge Day when I tripped and fell in front of a gymnasium filled with people. Not actually funny at the time, but looking back, it makes me chuckle.

Most of my memories from Calhoun are just rooted in experiences with students or friends that make



Mr. George Lessig - Math



Ms. Kiera McNally - Social Worker



Mr. Jay Kreutzberger - Social Studies



Mrs. Dawn Boland - English

great and funny memories; it was hard to pin it down to just one. But one that stands out happened in the staff volleyball game several years ago.

I spiked the ball toward Mr. Muscarella. He didn't have time to react, so he caught the ball with his stomach first and then hands. In slow motion, he looked at me and fell backwards onto the gym floor. What made it so funny was that it took a few seconds for him to fall and how slowly he fell to the ground. Plus the fact that it was Musc. We both continue to have a good laugh about it."

Ms. Kiera McNally - Social Worker

"For those who don't know me,

ing to call my phone mid performance and mess up the music.

My heart was pounding for the whole 2 minutes and 30 seconds. Thankfully in the end it all worked out, and the girls put on a great show for the fans. It was a fun day, but needless to say I will be sticking to coaching lacrosse."

Mr. Jay Kreutzberger - Social Studies

"During the 2010 winter sports season, the boys' basketball coaches huddled up in the hallway outside of the gym before our game.

Coach Moeller was the last to arrive, having just changed his clothes in the phys. ed office. I noticed that he was repeatedly crouching down and up, and

coach like that.'

But I'll give Coach Moeller some credit. He hustled, got his hands on another pair of pants, and was on the bench before the opening tip-off."

Mrs. Dawn Boland - English

"I have been a part of the Calhoun community in some way since I was 13 years old. I went to high school here, and with the exception of the four years I attended college, I have been a part of Calhoun ever since I was a teenager.

But in terms of funny memories, I am sort of drawing a blank. I have lots of memories that make me smile, and some are sort of funny because time has passed. Like

me grateful to live and work in a place where when you break your toe or fall down in front of people, someone is there to pick you up and help. So my moments aren't laugh out loud funny, but they do make me smile."

Mrs. Cara Sycoff - World Language

"My funniest memory was on a Jeans Friday, and we were all in class. We were having this big debate and discussion, and I was walking around the class as I usually do. I jumped up and sat on the old radiator, and all of a sudden, the entire class heard a 'tsss' sound, and my pants completely ripped! I had a senior class, and

(See MOMENT on page 15)



Mrs. Cara Sycoff - World Language



Mrs. Nikole DeLuca - World Language



Mrs. Christina Cone - Social Studies Chair



Dr. Saul Wiener - English

Clubs confront racism

(continued from page 1)

teaching and her own educational epiphany after reading the eye-opening book *Beyond the Mayflower*, Ms. Finneran said she realized she had gone her whole academic life without learning about these topics.

"I'm not finished learning, and I might never be," she said.

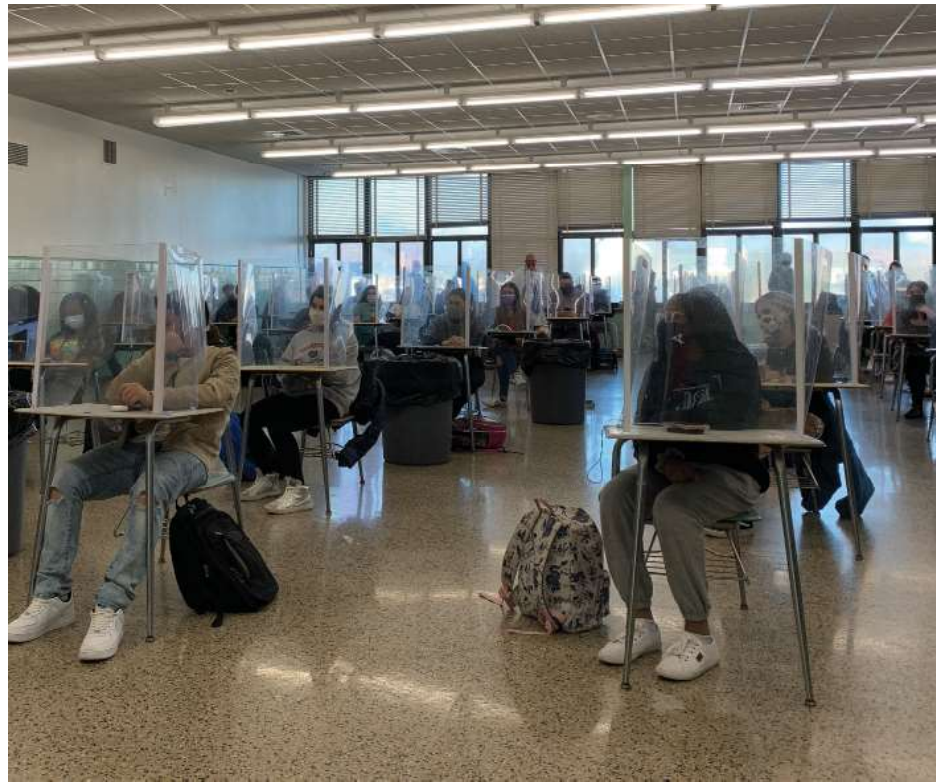
Senior Maddie Ferber, co-president of Gender Equality Club, spoke to the crowd about the lack of a formal education on the impact of racism, saying "Misinformed teens become misinformed adults who have the power to vote."

In addition, students of color, including Darguens Noel, shared personal experiences growing in a predominantly white town.

"Minorities become desensitized to racism just to fit in," Noel said. "It's a sad system that in order to fit in with white peers you have to sacrifice parts of your identity."

With in-depth questions and thorough responses, many students gradually came to the consensus that history and English classes need to be more inclusive.

Tuning in from home, Kathryn



(photo by Emma Bhansingh)

A socially distant crowd of students and teachers filled the cafeteria for the forum.

Moschella of the Activism Club added, "Racism in English classes, from my experience, is only taught through one lens, which is a white person being a savior figure toward African Americans. We need to be reading stories from black perspectives. Also, instead of put-

ting such a focus on learning about white men throughout American history, there needs to be way more women, people of color, and LGBTQ issues are brought up."

The forum concluded with brainstorming solutions to cultivating more inclusivity and em-

bracing diversity at Calhoun, with many students in agreement that more voices need to be heard and amplified by hosting more open forums in the future.

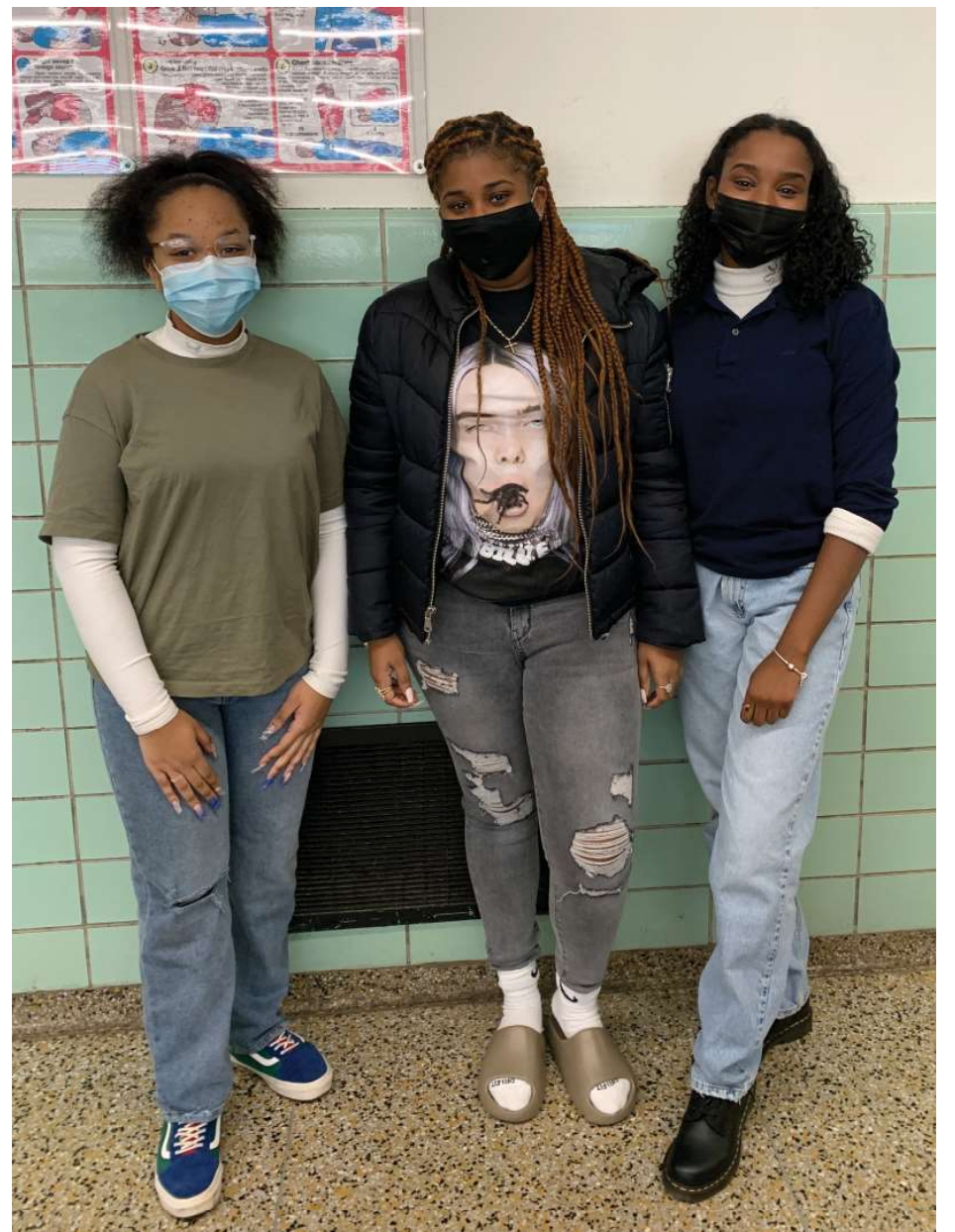
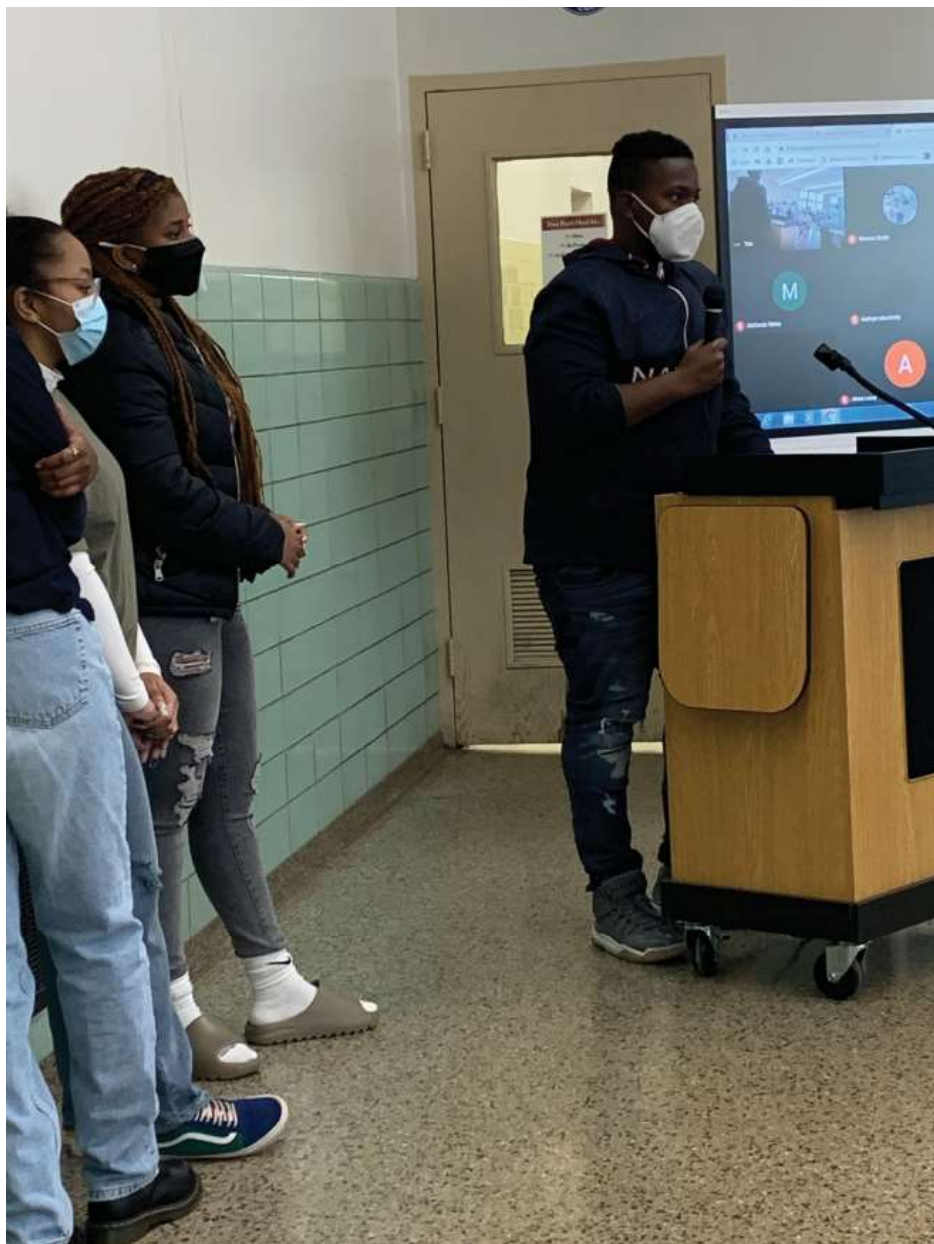
Senior Alyssa Formisano, co-president of Gender Equality Club, said that one of the biggest takeaways from the forum was the importance of celebrating different cultures.

"One point that was brought up is the emphasis on 'Calhoun Culture,' but Calhoun Culture means nothing without recognizing and appreciating the differences that we are composed of," she said.

Mesy, co-president of REC, expressed her hopes for the future.

"With more forums, we can definitely help build racial empathy, and hopefully find a middle ground where everyone feels heard."

REC puts a focus on racism as a societal issue that must be combatted through actionable steps and aims to open students' minds to the differences that exist, while also providing a space and opportunity for students to connect, feel empowered, and build their impactful voices.



(photos by Emma Bhansingh)

Darguens Noel (left) takes the mic to share his own experiences with racism. At right, Racial Equality Club officers Joan Mesy, Meava Exius, and Eden Gould-Anderson.



It's just not right

by Julie Moehringer
Staff Writer

Have you ever heard the saying, "It's my world, and you are just living in it?"

For me as a lefty, "My world is a right-handed world, and I am just living in it."

Left-handed people only make up about 10 percent of the population. Because of this disproportionate position, we do not get much of a choice when it comes to everyday items that right-handed people take for granted.

For lefties like me, things that need to be adjusted to and thought about in order to use correctly. Here are just a few other things that left-handed people struggle with:

Ballpoint pens: your hand dragging over what you have just written leaves quite the mark on the side of your hand.

Zippers on pants: the flap covering the zippers on pants blocks easy access from the left side.

Cup holders: car cup holders are almost never on the left, making people grab drinks with their non-dominant hand.

Keypads on keyboards: the keypads on keyboards are always on the right side. There are keyboards with keypads on the left, but they

cost more and are annoying to anyone else using your keyboard.

Desks: the school desks with the chair attached are definitely not made for lefties. They contain an arm rest for people's right arms, leaving left-handed people with their dominant hand dangling.

Spiral notebooks: writing in a spiral notebook with your left hand is almost torture; your hand resting on a ring of metal is definitely not comfortable.

Can openers: old-school can openers only work well in the right hand. Lefties have to reach across the can and turn the crank at a really awkward angle.

Guitars: lefties have to buy special guitars, or they can make like Jimi Hendrix and just play a righty guitar upside down.

Cameras: a camera's most important buttons are always on the right, and lefty photographers often have to use their right finger to shoot photos.

Rulers: When lefties draw a line along a ruler, their hands cover the numbers, so it's hard to see when to stop.

Tape measure: When you hold a tape measure in your left hand, the numbers are upside down.

To try and help people with this issue, companies have made the same products for left-handed people, but at a higher cost.

For example, pens for left-handed people have been made with less or quick dry ink, but they are so expensive. The price of a left handed pen is around \$6. Who wants to pay \$6 for a pen? No one.

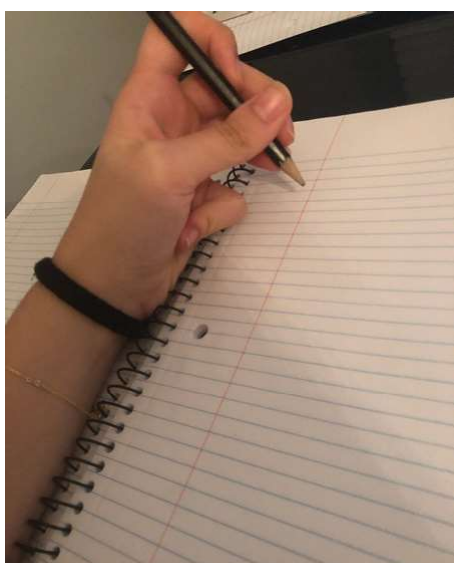


A true solution should be both helpful and reasonable. Providing unreasonably expensive options to lefties is actually a continuation of the discrimination we have faced in the past.

Being left-handed, however, also comes with some perks; left-handed people tend to score higher when it comes to creativity, imagination, daydreaming, and intuition. They are also better at rhythm, visualization, and have been shown to have a disproportionate number of geniuses.

When you thought we could not get any cooler, we have some of the best celebrities under our ranks: Oprah Winfrey, Tom Cruise, Niall Horan, Justin Bieber, David Bowie, Will Ferrel, Jennifer Lawrence, Barack Obama, just to name a few.

Think about what we could achieve if armed with a reasonably priced pen, door handle, or pair of scissors.



(photos by Julie Moehringer)

From taking notes in class to opening the fridge to taking photos with a camera, the world was just not designed with left-handed people in mind.

Turning trash to treasure

by Frankie Failla
Staff Writer

Need to make a quick buck? Spring cleaning is right around the corner, and this is how you can turn your useless items into profitable money.

As we embark in the new year and are in the whirlwind of a global pandemic, finding a job is not easy, and staying in your house (bored to death) is the new normal. Ebay and Depop are completely safe during this pandemic, and both can be used on a smartphone in the comfort of your own home.

Ebay is an app/website that allows you to sell mostly anything you want for free. All you need to do is set up an account and start snapping photos of your item. Before you start, make sure you have parental permission.

First, set up your account following the steps they give you on the website. It should not take more than five minutes to do so. Next, go to the search bar and look up what item you are trying to sell. This is a must in selling items, so you don't price your items too high or too low.

For example, let's say you are trying to sell an old tea set that you found buried away in your at-

tic. You're going to want to make sure you get the fullest amount of money for this item. A little bit of research won't hurt if you did.

Once you have found the desired price for your item, it is time to list it. First, snap a few pictures of the item. Make sure to include flaws in the picture, such as stains and rips for clothes, chips and breaks in glass items, and rust in metal items. Get photos from all angles of the item, so the buyer can get the clearest picture of the item.

Next comes the description and title. For the title, keep it short and sweet; get to the point. If it is a women's medium striped shirt from American Eagle, that's all you have to title it.

However, for the description of the item, make sure you add as much detail as possible. You don't want to skimp out on the flaws and details of the item, leaving the buyer in shock when they receive it.

Lastly, it is time for pricing and shipping. After you have done your research, list the price at your desired value. The cool thing about Ebay is that you can do bidding and auctions. For auctions, they last for one week; after that, you would have to repost the listing. Ebay helps you by suggesting a starting price for bidding. You



(photo by Frankie Failla)

Clothing is easy to ship and can bring a good profit if it's new with tags or vintage.

can even do an auction and "buy it now," making the price for the "Buy it now" option higher than the starting bid price.

Lastly, you need to address the shipping situation. I recommend only doing shipping nationally, though you can select it for worldwide. I would also recommend doing "No returns," so the buyer won't have your address. Press "Post your item," and then wait to see if you have any watchers, bids, or messages from interested buyers.

Another way to sell your items is Depop. Depop is similar to Ebay, but it's strictly for smaller items, such as clothing, jewelry, and accessories.

You set up your account the same way as you do for Ebay, and you make your profile. Depop is perfect for any popular brands you want to sell, such as Nike or any vintage items.

Depop does not offer an auction process, but you can negotiate with your buyers. Your account can get followers, and you can follow others, so when you go into your feed, you can see items you like. If you

even want to start a small business by making jewelry or clothing. Listing your items here is a great way to start. You can also add hashtags to your listing to help get buyers to view your product.

One thing to keep in mind is that Depop takes 10 percent of the final price. There is also an option to swap items, but be sure you trust the user you are working with if you're going to swap.

On the flip side, you can also use these sites to buy items you may be interested in. Since walking through malls and window shopping is put on hold until the pandemic is over, shopping from the comfort of your home and your phone could be a great way to pick up a bargain.

Just be sure you don't overdo it; it can be pretty tempting to just buy everything you see. Shop with a specific purpose in mind, and find one item at a time that you think is a good bargain.

By selling your items on Depop and Ebay, you not only get money, but you are salvaging items that are filling your closet or could end up in landfills.



(photo by Frankie Failla)

Old toys, such as Hot Wheels cars, could have a great value to collectors.

De-stress with music

by Ava Stanek
Staff Writer

From enhancing our ability to focus, relax, or be productive, various genres of music assist us in living our lives to the fullest.

Especially during the stressful and tense times of the coronavirus pandemic, everyone is in need of aid when it comes to unwinding and relaxation. By listening to music, whether it be classical or any other genre that you find comforting, you allow your body to decompress and enjoy the present moment.

In times of stress, many avoid listening to music, as it seems like an unproductive way to spend your time. However, studies show that listening to music is a simple way to reduce stress, thus allowing your mind to be more productive when there are many tasks in need of completion.

In addition to increasing productivity, listening to relaxing music before bed has been proven to induce better sleep, leaving your body to properly recharge for the next morning. Most teenagers find it extremely comforting to listen to music to finally relax after a long day of being in school (especially now with a mask on), completing assignments for several AP classes, and preparation for tests.

Several stress-reducing methods involve music as their primary

psychological relaxation tool and have an obviously successful impact, helping countless people with their anxiety and stress struggles. But how?

Neurologically, the sound waves of music travel through the ear and are then sent to parts of the brain that determine your mood, stress levels, and concentration abilities.

To portray its effect in a way that can be easily understood, an experiment was conducted to test the effects of music on cognitive ability by providing one group of participants with 10 minutes of listening to a Mozart tape and the other group with a relaxation tape.

According to psychcentral.com, the results confirmed that the group that listened to Mozart answered questions on a standardized test more accurately than the opposing group, thus confirming how music allows for higher levels of concentration.

With the success of this experiment, the idea of music increasing human cognitive ability was deemed "The Mozart Effect" and is a commonly known term in the world of psychology.

In addition to testing cognitive ability, physicians at Harvard conducted an experiment to record how music affects the stress levels of surgical patients. Those who were permitted to listen to the music of their choice before and after their procedures showed

lower stress levels and were more likely to await calmly in the recovery room. They were also able to receive smaller doses of anesthesia to relieve their pain. However, those who remained in silence before and after their surgeries remained hypertensive throughout their procedures. This fascinating information provides clear evidence to prove the true power of music on human stress levels.

Everyone has a preference as to what type of music allows them to relax and unwind after a long day. Whether it's classical or classic rock, various genres of music assist in letting go of stress.

Personally, I find that listening to music I am familiar with and never get tired of always makes me feel comfortable and at home.

Artists I have listened to for as long as I can remember, such as Nirvana, whose "MTV Unplugged" record never fails to calm me down, or Harry Styles, whose first solo album especially features peaceful melodies that always provide a sense of warmth, consistently make me feel safe and homely.

Artists whose music is always filled with soft harmonies that instantly calm your mind, like Billie Eilish and Hozier, are widely popular among this generation and are listened to by many during times we all try to alleviate the pressure of being a teenager.

Additionally, the solo records of Freddie Mercury, the late frontman of Queen, feature his incredible vocals that amaze me more and more with every listen.

Lastly, The Beatles are notorious for their versatile musical styles, and their timelessly peaceful songs provide a common tranquility for various generations of music listeners.

While deciding what kind of music to listen to in order to fall asleep or lessen your levels of tension, be sure to choose music that invariably presents you with a sense of nostalgia that sanctions your ability to unwind, even if it's not Mozart.

Who knew that something as simple as the sounds of harmonizing violins or soft flutes could have a neurological impact on humans so significant that with just a few minutes of listening, can improve the quality of their lives?

The next time you get home after a stressful day or need to decompress in your room, put on one of your favorite albums. After listening to a few songs, your brain will allow you to be more relaxed and achieve a higher level of concentration, helping you succeed at important tasks. You can even try putting your music on a low volume level if you're having trouble sleeping.

Just another reason to deem music as nothing but pure magic.



(photo with permission from The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame)

With their timeless, peaceful songs, The Beatles are a perfect bank to listen to when you need to relax and take your mind off the world.

Albums you have to have

by Kacie Moschella
Staff Writer

If you're looking for new music to listen to, I compiled a list of what I believe are the best albums ever made.

I limited my list to only one record per artist, as I did not want my favorite artists taking up multiple spots.

"Carrie and Lowell"

Sufjan Stevens is an indie folk singer who has always written with personal and introspective lyricism. As an avid listener of Stevens, I have explored every album in his discography, especially 2005's "Illinois," with an immense amount of depth.

Upon hearing 2015's "Carrie and Lowell," I finally felt I had a complete picture of who he is, considering this is his most personal record to date. At first, "Carrie and Lowell" just sounds like every other stripped-down, depressing folk record, but when you begin to peel back its layers, you will find that it is truly one of the most heart-breaking and beautiful albums ever made.

The details Stevens sprinkles throughout that give a deeper meaning to his own personal struggles are absolutely gut-wrenching, but he also manages to make this record universal for all of humanity. "Carrie and Lowell," as a body of work, manages to find beauty in the bleak, and that is why it is a masterpiece of its genre.

Favorite track: "John My Beloved."

Best line: "I love you more than the world could contain in its broken and ramshackled hands."

"Red" - Taylor Swift

I am the type of person who truly considers Taylor Swift to be their favorite artist of all time. While I had so many incredible albums to choose from, there is no denying that 2012's "Red" is her masterpiece.

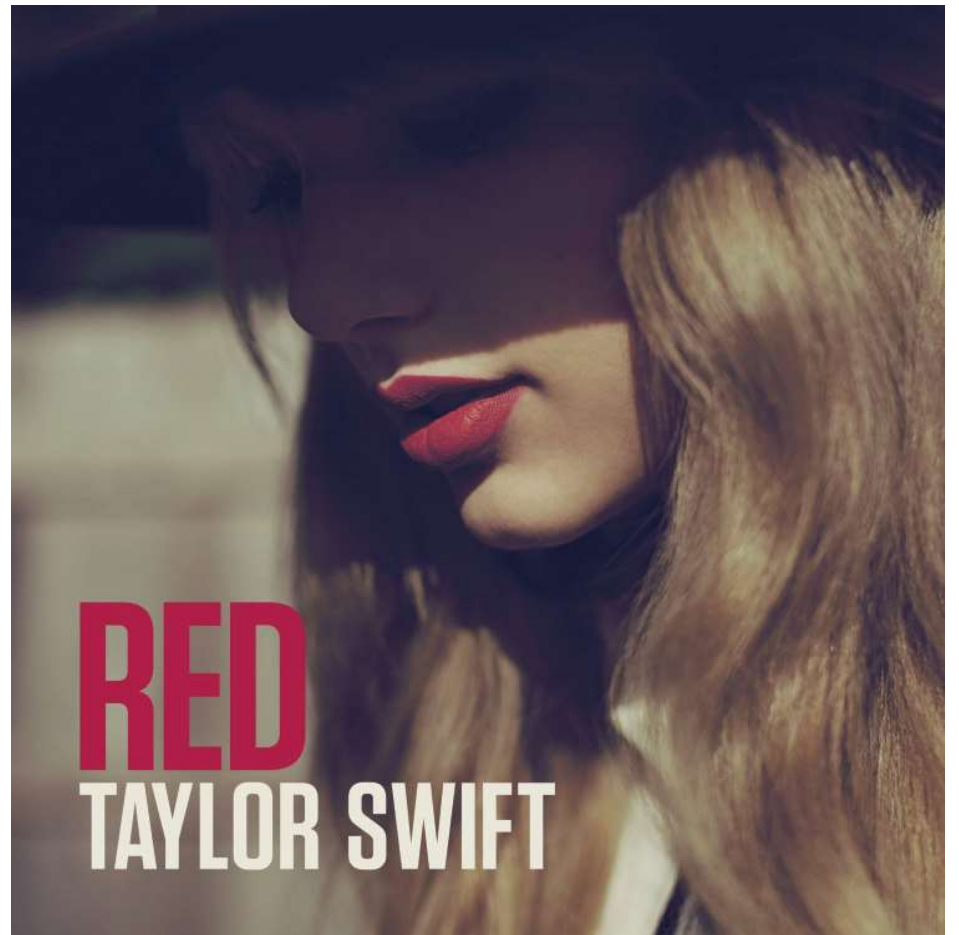
The most crucial aspect of a good record is the lyrics. Swift was already a brilliant writer who showcased her expansive abilities on 2010's "Speak Now," but "Red" manages to turn extremely specific details into universal emotions, which is something I doubt I could see another artist pulling off this flawlessly. It is no mere coincidence that the soaring first track is titled "State Of Grace."

Despite the deep emotional turmoil Swift discusses throughout these tracks, she pulls it off with so much ease that by "Girl at Home," you will forget she was ever heart-broken in the first place.

One fact to acknowledge is that Swift wrote or co-wrote every song on the album, which was her fourth album released.

The pop genre is certainly not for everyone, but if you cannot acknowledge that Taylor Swift is one of the greatest songwriters of the decade, then I genuinely do not know what to tell you.

Favorite track: "All Too Well"



Taylor Swift's 2012 "Red" turns specific details into universal emotions.

Best line: "You call me up again just to break me like a promise, so casually cruel in the name of being honest."

"Norman ***** Rockwell!" - Lana Del Rey

On her brilliant 2019 release, Lana Del Rey sings of freedom, transformation, and the difficulties of being a young woman in America. On its cover, Lana is standing with an attractive man, showcasing the ideal young couple, while extending her hand out to the listener. With the American flag hanging from the back of the boat, it is clear that with this record, Lana believes that the ideal American life she has always believed in is slowly sailing away. Norman Rockwell himself illustrated the "ideal America."

Lana gracefully cuts through his outdated fantasies with profanity, signifying that the "American Dream" is not stars and stripes or apple pie, but exactly what you make of it.

That is not to say that Lana struggles to find beauty in everyday existence; on the contrary, she is absolutely in awe of it.

The tidal of the final track is a poem that perfectly encapsulates her vision: "Hope is a dangerous thing for a woman like me to have, but I have it."

Favorite track: "Mariners Apartment Complex"

Best line: "There's things I want to talk about that are better not to give, but if you hold me without

hurting me, you'll be the first who ever did."

"The Queen is Dead" - The Smiths

Rock is, arguably, the driving force behind all of music, and "The Queen is Dead" is an excellent example of depressing rock at its absolute best.

When I listen to modern indie records, I know that none of them would have the audacity to pull off such melodramatic lyrics if The Smiths had never made their 1986 magnum opus. When I first heard this album back in middle school, I was appalled that Morrissey threatened to break into the palace "with a sponge and a rusty spanner."

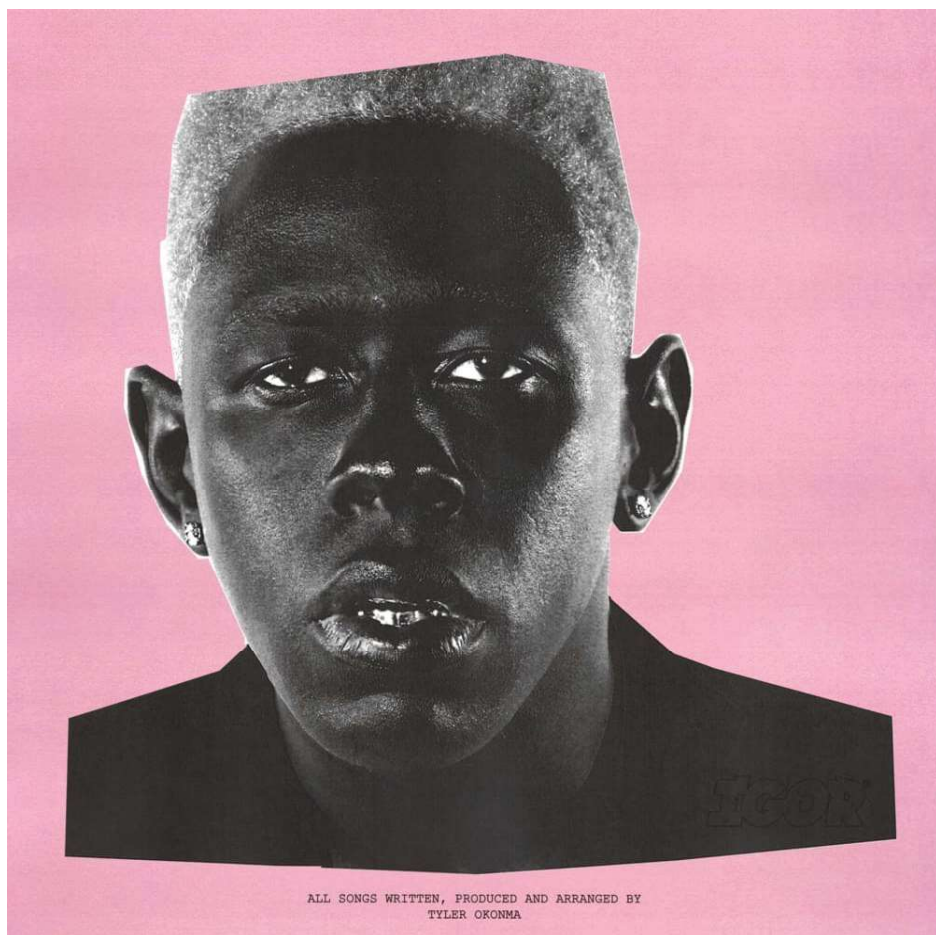
Having a political agenda was so foreign to me, and I have now developed an appreciation for The Smiths because of their blatant anti-royalist ideals all the way back in the 80s.

While Morrissey himself has certainly not stood the test of time (he has often been accused of controversial comments), "The Queen Is Dead," without a doubt, sounds even fresher in modern society. I never lived in Manchester and listened to this record on vinyl, but listening to this album really makes me wish I had.

Favorite track: "I Know It's Over"

Best line: "And if a double decker bus crashes into us, to die by your side, well the pleasure, the privilege is mine."

(See HAVE on page 13)



ALL SONGS WRITTEN, PRODUCED AND ARRANGED BY TYLER OKONMA

There are rap artists virtually anyone can enjoy, including Tyler, The Creator.

Putting mind over matter

We often put more importance on other people and things rather than ourselves, whether that be spending too long scrolling on social media or not paying attention to our own needs and feelings.

The truth is that you are important, and making sure you are happy and taken care of mentally and physically is vital to living a well-balanced life.

Forgetting to be mindful and present day-to-day can have adverse effects on our mental health. One way to combat this is through limiting screen time.

It's easy to get caught up in the lives of others; swiping through Instagram stories and commenting and liking posts can take a significant mental toll. Like any bad habit, it will be hard at first, but setting screen time limits will help you in the long run.

While it's important to stay up

to date with friends and relatives, at what cost to you? We easily get consumed with technology. Reconsider how you are spending your time and how you are investing in the connections with those who are physically present.

A good habit to incorporate is meditation, a seemingly simple but impactful daily practice. Taking just five to 10 minutes to recenter yourself, organize your thoughts, and completely disconnect with technology can make all the difference and set your day up for success. Being in tune with yourself is critical to building a healthier mind-body connection and boosting your overall mood.

Goal-setting is another great way to stay on track. We all have goals we want to accomplish, but putting others' needs in front of ours all the time can cause us to

lose focus. If you don't put yourself first at least some of the time, your goals and aspirations can get lost. One way of keeping track of your goals is to write down specifically what you want to achieve and

make an action plan for how you will get there, making sure to

stay realistic and keep yourself accountable along the way.

Start by breaking down your long-term goals into smaller, more attainable goals. Accomplishing these short-term goals provides momentum; you feel a sense of achievement and success that keeps you motivated and focused. Without these short-term goals, you may lose sight of what you are pushing for in the long run.

Self-reflection is equally as important as setting goals. Reflecting on your accomplishments at the end of the day or the week can

help you understand yourself better and process your thoughts and feelings.

Journaling is one way to practice self-reflection and improve your quality of life. Spending time with yourself will help you discover things you never knew. It allows us to look neutrally at our thoughts, feelings, emotions, and actions.

Most of us constantly check our feeds and notifications, eating up a lot of our time and energy. We allocate a large portion of our day to mindless scrolling, wasting time and attention unnecessarily. We are so connected virtually, yet we're disconnected from those we actually care about in reality.

Taking a step back from technology and intentionally reinvesting that time into yourself can help replenish your energy, increase your productivity, and prioritize your own mental well-being.



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A green, new hope

by Jordan Novak
Colture Editor

Just a week after one of the most frightening political cataclysms of the past four years, good news is coming to light.

Senator Jon Ossoff's and Reverend Raphael Warnock's victories in Georgia led to a Democratic majority in the Senate. This means that climate activists may be able to see their dreams realized.

Traditionally, the Republican Party has steered away from any kind of climate resolution, most recently the Green New Deal. The Democratic Party has almost always understood the connection between environmental science and economic inequality and pushed the regulation of carbon emissions, created new jobs to offset pollution, and encouraged the adoption of renewable energy. That could all be possible with more Democrats in power.

Before celebrating, however, the main points of the Green New Deal are worth revisiting. The proposal sounds incredible, but there's no doubt that it will take work to come to pass.

Ideas including providing universal health care, high-quality public schooling (with climate education, of course), the construction of energy-efficient power grids, and upgrading infrastructure transcends a team effort. Those ideas, and more once seemed impos-

sible to implement, but with new forward-thinking members of the Senate, it just might work.

The "New Deal" part of the proposal is exactly what makes it feasible: encouraging unemployed citizens to join in the effort in a job with government benefits (which include a steady salary and good healthcare coverage) to break into the workforce and contribute to the cause of a protected planet. Jobs such as construction workers, energy researchers, and transportation workers (all with unions and subsequent job protection) would provide for not only the unemployed, but also those who are currently in the coal fields who will be looking for work.

Specifically, proposals such as investments in the electric car industry and alternative energy sources are closer than ever to fruition. Blueprints for a high-speed rail system, universal health care, and protection against monopolies are in development and now have a possibility of passage in the federal government.

The results of the Georgia Senate races have given Democrats a small advantage in the House and the Senate, but now the real work can start.

Climate change may finally become a discussion instead of a debate. Now it's up to Democratic Party members to determine how to move forward and protect the planet and its citizens.

Inequality in education

by Kacie Moschella
Staff Writer

On Friday, March 13, of my sophomore year of high school, I went home in the midst of rumors that our school was not going to reopen the following Monday.

While I was annoyed this alleged “deadly virus” was starting to ruin my social life, part of me was excited to not have school for a few days. Sure, there might be an illness going around, but for me, there was basically an extended snow day. Right?

Looking back on that Friday afternoon, I cannot help but laugh at how devastatingly wrong I was. COVID-19 utterly upended the lives of every human being across the country and around the world.

Even though the globe has been in a horrific state since the beginning of 2020, some people are choosing to look at the pandemic as an event of unification. Even though we were all upset, at least everyone was experiencing exactly the same emotions. The reality, however, is much more complex than how it appears on the surface.

Every school in the state of New York was forced into a mandatory lockdown in March, upending the lives of millions of parents and students who were simply trying to receive an adequate education. Families were entirely unprepared for remote learning, especially considering the climate in which these orders were delivered.

Not every single school was legally obligated to provide the means necessary for students to be properly taught.

Personally, I only had about one Zoom call per week for an AP class, but the majority of my other assignments seemed entirely random and not necessarily helpful for self-teaching.

Trying to complete school every

week was a struggle even for a student like myself who had access to a computer, an internet connection, and an adequate workspace. Navigating the beginning stages of the COVID-19 pandemic was like wading through an ocean with no clear land in sight.

The reality for many children living in lower class urban communities was much more dire.

“Navigating the beginning stages of the COVID-19 pandemic was like wading through an ocean with no clear land in sight.”

People were so full of uncertainty, misconception, and above all, fear; getting a proper education ranked relatively

low on our government’s list of pressing issues. Political officials failed to take into consideration the fact that underprivileged students are the children who need a proper setup for remote teaching the absolute most. But the burdens that were placed on our schools made this task entirely too difficult to accomplish.

No matter what way you choose to view it, school closures resulted in the loss of knowledge and work ethic for the majority of young students. For the entire spring quarter of 2020, schools simply were not fully expected to establish a set schedule for remote learning because of how unsure we were in terms of public safety. But our government did not ensure that children were receiving a proper education.

If you were not in possession of multiple electronic devices, an internet connection, or even a printer before March 13, you were already at a severe disadvantage for learning. Tuition for universities and private schools was also not decreased during this period of remote teaching. Factor in that many parents were at a steady decline for the amount of money coming into their homes, combined with the fact that unemployment rates were high.

A survey conducted by the University of Essex revealed a harsh,

yet predictable outcome: pupils from lower class families spent considerably less time doing schoolwork than their peers.

If parents are not well-educated, they are not able to assume the role of being their child’s teacher. Disadvantaged parents who previously relied on public teaching facilities were put in a difficult position. If these children were provided with the adequate supplies in order to learn remotely, the learning gaps would close.

Disadvantaged learners were severely impacted by home learning in the social aspect as well. For students who live in abusive households, going to school serves as an escape from intense family life, and they are able to find a sense of safety in the classroom they are not receiving elsewhere.

Other children who struggle to get three meals a day are normally entirely sure that at least two of those meals will come from their

school, but the lockdown took this privilege away from many families. Fortunately, many schools (including ours) stayed open to distribute meals, but that was not always the case for every school.

Our country is an entirely new phase of COVID-19 compared to where we were last March, however, and schools are starting to prioritize disadvantaged students by giving them more adequate work materials.

Live video conferences are now regulated to make students feel more of a connection with their teachers and peers, which is also extremely beneficial for mental health.

Preparedness for remote schooling is a policy the state government is focusing more on than they did last year, but there is still significant work to be done in order to end the educational inequality students have been experiencing since the beginning of the virus.

Snow daze



(photos by Jasmine Ramlowtan)

Evan Dier enjoys making a snow angel (top) and poses with Alexa Saade and Daguens Noel.

To submit a letter to the editor,
email the staff at
hoofbeatseditor@yahoo.com

Pt./Counterpoint:

Should teachers share their politics?

Who better to learn from than educators?



No place for pushing opinions on students

by Kacie Moschella
Staff Writer

Modern educators, above all else, know just how polarizing it can be to discuss politics inside of their classrooms.

While I am not a high school teacher, I am positive that every educator has pondered over the pros and cons of engaging students in a politically-oriented discussion. The idea of sharing your own personal political views, however, is a bit of a grey area. But in the year 2020, where every action is shadowed by an ever-growing political culture, these discussions must be had within classrooms.

School administrations reinforce the fact that teachers must take a neutral stance if politics are ever brought up within the classroom. But as a high school student, I respectfully disagree with this particular viewpoint.

The biggest issue I have with educators being forced to remain silent on political views is this: why should they have to? This question is all the more prominent in history and English discussions, where political discussions are arguably a crucial aspect of the curriculum.

Many high school students are just beginning to discover what their own political agendas are, and the only way they are able to do so is by hearing adults discuss multiple different viewpoints.

What an educator is saying to his or her class could be completely separate from what students' parents are telling them at home, and by hearing different perspectives, these students can start to figure out how they feel.

As long as teachers do not attempt to force their students into believing certain things, there is no problem discussing political views. It is entirely understandable that administrators and parents alike are fearful of their children facing corruption, but if that is the case, then schools need to do a better job of hiring more reliable staff members.

Educators are much more afraid of sharing any kind of information about the current state of the world than they should be (perhaps be-

cause modern parental pushback is much too aggressive). In a day where overprotective households are the norm, the only way for young students to gain information is through their teachers' lessons. Teachers need to discuss the state of the world if children are expected to learn anything.

Politics have become entirely two-sided, and people fail to take a simple fact into consideration: views are not merely Democrat or Republican. If you are afraid of your child becoming a so-called "liberal" because a teacher brings up an argument that may not fully align with traditionally conservative views, then you need to learn tolerance toward political ideas that are outside of your circle.

National politics are such a driving force of modern society, so how are children expected to become educated on important topics if they are not given the tools to gain this information? Issues such as race, gender equality, and LGBTQ+ rights are largely seen as "too political," but do we really have to box off such important things as taboo when they are the exact subjects our students need to be learning about?

Outside of the classroom, politics are one of the main topics of discussion between modern students, which opens the door for misinformation. Current American news companies are not a reliable source, so teachers need to be doing their best to eliminate insensitivity or ignorance.

Educators also have a responsibility to teach pupils their personal rights under the Constitution, and that topic has everything to do with politics. Engaging in political-related discourse will lead to constructive and respectful teaching.

We are living in a climate full of uncertainty and violence, so discussing what is happening and how students feel about it is also crucial for maintaining mental health.

It is extremely difficult for a teacher to discuss political arguments without sharing their own view on what is right and wrong, so including their own opinions helps students shape their own.

by Joseph D'Andrea
Sports Editor

A teacher's primary goal is to educate and inspire his or her students.

Because their motive is supposed to be to inform the content they are teaching, teachers should not express a political bias in the classroom.

If a teacher were to unload his or her opinion on a class, some students might believe that to be factual content since a knowledgeable adult is repeating it. A student could feel pressured to support that viewpoint (perhaps for fear of not fitting in with the adult or with the class).

They might also feel discouraged to express their beliefs to others and will rethink their own thoughts as a result of a teacher's more realized presence. Imagine if you thought your grade was on the line because your conservative (or liberal) beliefs clashed with what the teacher aggressively preached every day?

No matter how well or poorly a student is doing in school, it remains a fact that a teacher is an influential figure in a student's life, and they can have a big impact on those students who may be uninformed on many political issues, leading them down a path they may not actually align with. What if the opinion a teacher is pushing isn't actually based in fact and is just his or her own beliefs?

It is best left to students to supply the opinions on any political issues, and for the teacher to provide any needed context or facts to keep the discussion going on an objective stage.

Teachers should be educating their students on the material to help them generate an opinion and viewpoint on the subject, not telling them what to think.

A responsibility of a teacher is to encourage students to have a constructive way of discussing topics, as well as becoming avid and individualist thinkers, and this cannot be fully brought about with a feeling of a student's beliefs being wrong due to a teacher openly thinking differently.

The atmosphere inside a classroom is a crucial part of a young student's experience in learning, and to have a teacher go against that developing mindset, forcing an opinion made to seem like fact upon them, will prevent any further forward-thinking to evolve.

I have been fortunate enough to have great teachers throughout my entire life, many of whom have made me feel interested in the subject being taught beyond the textbook. I have not encountered any teachers who have forcefully presented their viewpoints or have taught the curriculum according to how they feel on the political spectrum. They have, in fact, had thoughtful and conscious discussions relating to this type of discourse, and this should be a commonality within all schools.

This is not to say a teacher should completely stay out of political discussions, but on a one-on-one level. It's not the job of a teacher to lecture a student on what he or she should believe in politically, but to teach them how the government works, about the facts relating to current events, and how history has proven different aspects of the world and changed how people think. Confining students to not being an open-minded individual will cause them to be less willing to become involved in learning about politics at all and is a restrictive mode of education.

In many ways, it is natural that social studies teachers in particular will feel more tempted to use a part of either history or a current affair to express their own bias, but it's

undeniable that students are better off drawing their own conclusions on matters — not history through the lens of the teacher's opinion.

In a setting where critical thinking is the most favorable way to learning, nobody should take for granted the amount of possibilities given to students to have an independent way of thinking, especially when it comes to such a wide-ranging, fluid subject like politics.

Teachers are important in developing young minds, and this applies no better than to how students will look at how politics affect their everyday lives.

"Current American news companies are not a reliable source, so teachers need to be doing their best to eliminate insensitivity or ignorance."

"It is best left to students to supply the opinions on any political issues, and for the teacher to provide needed context or facts..."

Adjusting to online life

by Skylar Sena
Editorial Editor

I'm not sure whether it's ironic or fitting that I'm beginning to compose this as I take respite from online classes during the coveted 15 minute breaks between each period of virtual learning.

As online learning has quickly become a part of education, it has garnered both praise and criticism, what with its ease of remaining home versus its hours glued to computer screens.

As a student who has experienced both in-person and online learning this pandemic school year, I have to say: online learning isn't quite so bad.

For those of you about to rip my throat out in protest, hear me out. Not only does online learning relieve the stress of that dreaded close-contact phone call, it also relieves some of the stress of school itself. The four minute breaks being elongated to 15 allow for students to take a deep breath between periods, not gasp for air as they sprint from the third floor to the B-wing.

Learners can take a leisurely stroll around their kitchen table as they actually process the last half hour of learning time rather than being thrust into an entirely different subject with barely enough time to get there.

In the building, students are constantly moving, both physically and mentally, as their minds run a mile a minute doing calculus equations and poem analyses; at home, they get a chance to breathe.

Not only do students get a chance to breathe, but they also get a chance to eat. No more scarfing down granola bars in some secluded corner of the hallway.

With 15 minutes between classes, students can practically create a five-course meal for lunch, and there's no rush to finish it by the time class starts; you're in your own home after all.

Giving students the opportunity to consume a meal with more nutrients than a bag of Doritos is vital for both their physical and mental health, as well as their ability to learn and focus.

Maslow's hierarchy reminds us that no one can process trigonometry when they're hungry. A casual trip to the local pantry for snacks is simple when it's 20 feet away, and you've got a quarter of an hour to get there; there's no rush when you're home, and no one walks on the wrong side of the hallway.

Perhaps the best part of virtual learning is the dress code. Now I'm not saying you should get onto your Google Meets looking like a slob, but when the class can only see you from the shoulders up, you have no need to worry about putting on jeans.

If you want to lounge around in sweats, who cares? Your crush can't see them, even if they have your tab pinned. The stress of outfits and hair and makeup are relieved when there are no eyes on you across the hallway, and the

camera quality could make photographers cry.

Virtual learning offers a form of respite by way of hoodies and sweatpants when there's no pressure to walk down the hallway like it's Anna Wintour's runway.

Virtual learning isn't easy; it has its pitfalls and mishaps just like everything else. We all know too

well how the separation from each other was so hard last March. And while it may be a chore to remember the schedule and where to find the Meet link, virtual learning does have its perks.

As I sip on my coffee, relaxed in my desk chair, with my 15 minutes of freedom, I remember that online school isn't half bad.

"A casual trip to the local pantry for snacks is simple when it's 20 feet away, and you've got a quarter of an hour to get there."

Albums you have to have

(continued from page 6)

"Currents" - Tame Impala

This is the only album on this list that made it solely due to its production. When I first listened to this record, I had no clue just how crucial excellent production was for making or breaking a record, but as soon as I heard the progression of the opening track, "Let It Happen," I knew I had opened up a door to a whole new world of music.

Some of these tracks have grown insanely popular over the years, but that only makes me admire Kevin Parker's 2015 release all the more. Knowing the incredible mixes on "Currents" are universally loved makes me hopeful for the future of music.

Favorite track: "Eventually"

Best line: "And I can always hide away in the world my demons cultivate. But there's a world out there, and it's calling my name, and it's calling yours, girl. It's calling yours too."

"Igor" - Tyler, The Creator

Before 2019's Igor, I always viewed rap as a genre-specific form of music, and also a genre that was simply not for me.

But upon listening to "Igor," I came to the realization that rap comes in so many different forms, and there is rap music that virtually anyone can enjoy if you look hard enough for it. "Igor," in my eyes, is the perfect rap record.

Incredible synths combined with Tyler's flow combined with deep and meaningful writing all

work and blend together to create a unique, introspective sound that I doubt I will ever hear again.

Considering he did all the production, writing, and performances for "Igor," Tyler will go down into history as a musical Renaissance man, and I cannot wait to hear what he puts out next.

Favorite track: "New Magic Wand"

Best line: "You never found your truth, I'm just happy I lived in it, but I finally found peace, so peace."

"Melodrama" - Lorde

I am going to make a bold claim: 2017's "Melodrama" is the greatest pop record ever made. "Melodrama" is a masterful study of what it is like being a young woman. Those kinds of personal emotions should not combine so brilliantly with the sleek synth production that is maintained throughout this album, but then again, isn't the best music a combination of contrasting elements?

Lorde was just 20 when she released this record, but her voice is already so full of grief and wisdom. Every teenager who feels as if they are mature beyond their years need only look at how Lorde studies human emotions, and they will surely start to second guess their level of maturity. The imagery Lorde generates throughout these tracks is absolutely fluorescent and electrifying, but this neon is far too beautiful to last: chemistry is bound to fizzle out, and the listener comes to this realization by the time she has sung the final track on "Perfect Places."

Favorite track: "Supercut"

Best line: "Well, summer slipped us underneath her tongue. Our days and nights are perfumed with obsession."



There is deep symbolism in Lana Del Rey's album cover art for "NFR."

Letters to the editor...

School should be remote

To the Editor:

I completely agree with the article "School should be fully remote," by Zach Dumelle [Editorial, December 2020].

With COVID-19, it has been a huge change for all of us. Everyone had to adapt to this new lifestyle. Keeping everyone safe from the virus is one of our main priorities.

Even though in school everyone wears a mask, I am not sure if everyone is really protected. I see in the halls no one follows the stay six feet apart guidelines. With so many students in one school, it is nearly impossible. But this is all new to us, and we have to learn and see what fits us best.

I agree with the facts about online school making life easier. Waking up and rushing to get ready and get to school was always my least favorite part of my day. When we have online classes, it gives me so much more time to do plenty of things at home.

I feel a lot more comfortable at home knowing I'm safe and don't have to cover my face with a mask and especially look through those

dirty dividers they have set up on our desks. Knowing all I have to do in the morning is wake up and log onto my class on time gets rid of all my stress, and I get plenty of more sleep than I usually would.

Due to the coronavirus, more kids have been resorting to virtual school because of the stress of actually getting the virus or spreading it to others. Many kids, including myself, have been sent home more than once for contract tracing because of students getting sick and continuing to see other people.

There is so much students have missed out on. It's our last year to enjoy high school and prepare for what the future holds.

However, the COVID-19 virus numbers have dramatically increased in the months we have been back to school. The numbers may never decrease if we continue to go back to school and potentially spread the virus. It is time to resort to online learning at least for a couple of months, so we can all stay safe and see if the amount of cases goes down.

This could have a huge impact

on the pandemic and many families. By not being around each other will definitely decrease the cases.

— Vincent DeVito, Class of '21

Miss sports

To the Editor,

I love playing football. I always have for as long as I can remember. Every year the one thing I look forward to is the football season: a time for me to de-stress and have fun with a great group of guys.

Not having the season this year is upsetting to the players who love it most, as pointed out in the article, "Sporting a new look," by Joseph D'Andrea [Sports, December 2020].

Students won't be able to develop the kind of relationship and brother-like connection that a football season helps you create.

People who spend countless hours working to get better and perfect their craft won't be able to showcase their talents in a full season, so I am thankful the coaches were able to put a tournament together for the players. The new look of football was a great chance

for the players to show off they still got it.

The whole experience was put together well. Everyone was safe, and we were able to play the sport we love with low risk of sickness. The mandatory masks and six foot rule while not playing kept all participants safe and happy.

COVID-19 was a real kicker this year and affected everyone differently; with the chance to play football and other sports, these athletes were able to enjoy the outdoors with their friends again.

The article on these intramurals gives good insight to the benefits of sports and how the school had to overcome adversity to allow us to play. It highlights the importance of how beneficial it is for the kids to be a part of something bigger than themselves.

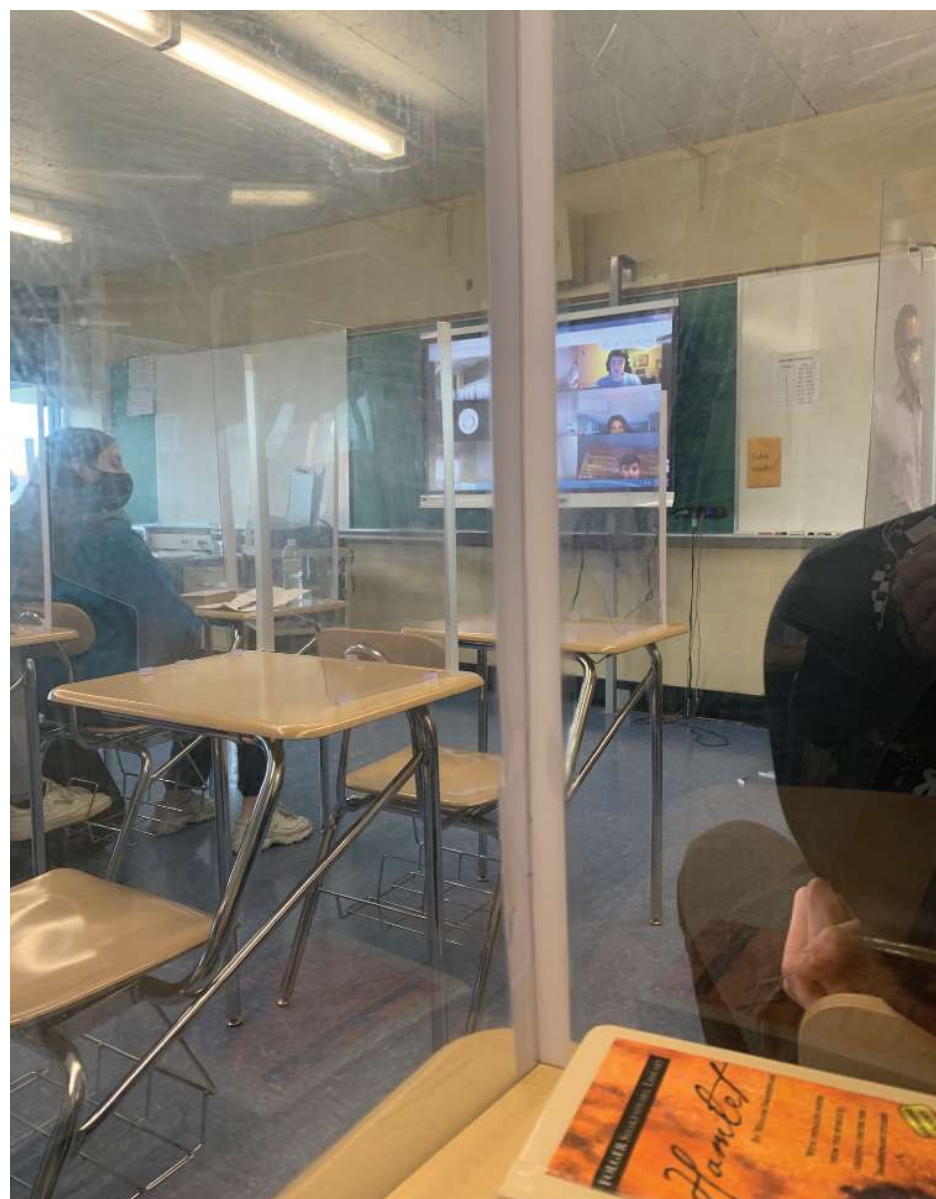
Since the season has been pushed back, intramurals were important to give the team an edge for when the season returns, so we were not behind schedule for the year.

Intramurals gave us that way of building a camaraderie with the team, so we would be better able to perform at a high level when it comes to game day in March.

— Wyatt Knowles, Class of '22



(photo by Frankie Failla)



(photo by Meghan Bello)

Though the desk dividers are there to stop the spread of COVID-19, many students prefer attending school virtually to avoid the stress of in-person school during the pandemic.



(photo by Meghan Bello)

Senior Kaylin Kranmas and the girls' basketball team practice at the Brookside gym.

Moment

(continued from page 4)

the kids knew me pretty well. One of the guys took off his sweatshirt and threw it at me, so I would have it. We talked and it was in Italian about how we were going to fix this, so that I didn't have to walk around with this sweatshirt tied up around my waist the entire day.

We decided that I would use duct tape! I got duct tape out, ran to the bathroom, and taped the inside of the pants.

I've had them for years now, about 15 years. I found the pants one day, and I put them on; they still had the duct tape!"

Mrs. Nikole DeLuca

"About five years ago, I was running down the hall to get to class in time. I had to run up the stairs. When I got to class, a student noticed that I had a massive hole in my pants!

Luckily, she was kind enough to tell me that I did. I had to get a new pair of pants. I had to wear one of the gym teacher's pants until I could get a new pair. That will always be a funny memory to me simply because the hole was the size of my hand!"

Mrs. Christina Cone - S.S. Chair

"I have not been at Calhoun for long, so my repertoire of funny moments is short thus far. However, a recent conversation had me crying real tears.

I was having a conversation with the social studies academic intern regarding my latest bread making escapades. I shared how I wanted to purchase a device to be able to slice the bread evenly. She suggested that I also look into purchasing a toast knife. I admitted my ignorance and asked her to share more about this invention, to which she sat down at a computer and moments later admitted that she was duped.

As cool as it sounds, there is no such knife that can toast bread while slicing it. The email she sent stating, 'I guess this isn't real. This seems hazardous,' with a YouTube video to model what it would have done was hysterical!"

Dr. Saul Wiener - English

"One of my funniest memories at Calhoun was in 2009 at the teacher-student improv night.

OnTour students invited some teachers to participate in some im-

Bounce

(continued from page 16)

This is especially true for the seniors. And it is not just the physical nature of the sports, but the team camaraderie that comes with them. Sports will be able to conduct their seasons in such a way that the athletes are able to participate safely. Those sports obviously have greater challenges to overcome."

Tryouts began this month for boys' and girls' basketball, kickline, cheerleading, and wrestling, and athletes have been informed about the new levels of daily requirements.

Temperatures of athletes will be checked in advance, social distancing must be adhered to, and hand sanitizing will be highly encouraged, as the coaches and students will begin their after-school meetups for practices and games.

Mr. Caballero also emphasized the fact that COVID-19 "Testing will be required for high risk sports participation."

Weekly testing began in February and was offered at Brookside on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Mr. David Hendler, boys' cross country head coach, said he was impressed how the athletes worked hard since last March and were ready for the first meet one week after the season started.

"Most of the athletes ran personal best, besting their previous times by a tremendous amount," he said. "I think all after-school activities have their merits. It's nice that the school has been able to run all the sports and after school activities with very little incident,"

Calhoun has made a great effort at keeping in touch with each and every extracurricular activity in order to advance to the point where sports currently stand. It was a quick turnaround from the governor's announcement to when students were medically cleared and back with their teams.

Especially with the Super Bowl in the NFL and other professional sports being active, this undertaking by schools statewide seemed appropriate in its timing, and it's taken a lot of commitment and planning to get high school sports to this point.

Snow place like home



(photo by Joseph D'Andrea)

A look down Henry Road in Merrick during one of the February snow days that cancelled classes.

prov sketches including 'The Bean Skit' and 'Freeze.'

Before the show we did warm-up exercises to bond and get more comfortable. Once the show started we got to have fun on stage in front of an audience of teachers, students, and family members laughing and embarrassing ourselves at the same time."

High school will forever be filled with awesome and hilarious moments that will always be remembered. Several teachers gave everyone just a small taste of that. The thing many don't always consider is while students are making memories in their high school years, their teachers are making memories, as well.



(photo by Katt Brown)

Sports bounce back

Senior Nicole Devlin looks to pass the ball against Jericho High School as the Lady Colts returned to the court for an abbreviated season.

by Joseph D'Andrea
Sports Editor

After a long (and necessary) wait, seasonal sports are starting up once again.

It's been almost a year since real high school sports have been allowed. With Governor Andrew Cuomo permitting "high risk" sports to begin for New York State schools, hopes are high for a return to normalcy, though an even more attentive set of precautions must be taken as coronavirus numbers continue to roll in.

Districts across New York have been making continuous efforts to allow for this step forward for sports and other extracurricular activities.

In an e-mail sent home to families, Bellmore-Merrick Director of Physical Education, Athlet-

ics, Driver Education and Health, Eric Caballero, announced the proceeding of these higher-risk sports, stating, "Please know that the BMCHSD remains committed to providing interscholastic sports to our school community and will work closely with the Nassau County Health Department and Section VIII to determine the safest course of action to make this a reality for our student-athletes. As more information becomes available, we will communicate with our school community accordingly."

With the Nassau County Health Department working closely with schools in situating how interscholastic sports will proceed in the coming months, there is a high sense of security from both the athletes participating in the sports and those who will be making sure

guidelines are maintained and safety is ensured.

Along with the lower-risk sports including rifle, bowling, swimming, and track and field beginning not too long ago, the football field, baseball field, and softball field will soon be filled once again.

"Intramurals provided us with an opportunity to get the wrinkles out, while making sure that the athletes were safe. Thankfully, we have not encountered any real problems this season," said Mr. Robert Kaefer, girls' swimming head coach. "We have a small team this season and are able to safely distance throughout practice and have protocols in place for our meets."

Calhoun athletics have learned to face challenges, from seasons being cancelled to a lack of spectators, which takes away much of

the excitement typically found at sporting events, but coaches are optimistic going forward.

"We started sports off with a short period of intramurals that allowed coaches and athletes to get a feel for what the upcoming sports season might be like," Coach Kaefer said.

Coach Kaefer said he has been greatly anticipating the return of sports.

"Giving athletes the opportunity to participate in low risk and moderate risk sports allows them to not only stay physically fit, but also use parts of their brain that they don't get to in the scholastic setting," he said. "So many of these athletes have been training for years for their individual sports, so it is so important to get them back doing what they love.

(See BOUNCE on page 15)