



Reflecting On The College Application Process With The Class Of 2021

By: Lauren Hagen and Sophie Rosencrans

The Senior Class of 2021 has faced an unusual task: applying to college amidst a global pandemic. "How does this affect the college application process?" one might ask. COVID-19 affected the college process by limiting the number of SAT/ACT tests offered, eliminating the majority of in-person-visits, inducing an extra layer of stress, etc. We checked in with North Shore High School's seniors to see how they felt that the college application process went during this strange time in their lives. Some of the things students share below is how they narrowed down their college options, managed their time, and dealt with stress. Listen up underclassmen; there might just be some advice for you to use when your own college applications come around!

Q: How did you choose which schools to apply to? How many schools did you decide to apply to and why?

Lizzie Lockwood: I chose the schools based on location and rankings for my intended area of study. I applied to 14 so I could have a sufficient number of safeties, targets, and reaches.

Jackson Best: I looked for small liberal arts schools with low student to faculty ratios to narrow down my picks. I also used websites like Niche to get an idea of what being a student at these schools was like. I wanted to apply to 6-8 schools; thanks to my parents, I think I hit a dozen.

Jamie Holzmann: I chose schools to apply to mainly based on their location and size. I applied to 9 schools which ranged from small-medium in terms of undergrad students, and they were all within a couple of hours of Long Island.

Celia Labbate: I based my choices off of mainly size, location, and rank of the programs I want to pursue. I applied to 12 schools in total.

Emma Arboleda: I chose which schools to apply to through Naviance and what my guidance counselor suggested. I visited a few to help decide. Since I applied early decision, I applied to three schools.

Q: What time management skills did you put to use during your application process?

Carson Paradis: I spread out my applications over a long period of time before they were due. I would work on a little of it each day and I did my early decision

application first. Once I finished my essays, I revised them a little bit every day and made sure everything was how I wanted it to be.

Sasha Hirsch: I started filling out my Common Application during the summer as well writing my supplements which helped a lot. I also made a detailed spreadsheet of which schools required how many supplements, when the applications were due, etc.

Zeke Hert: Over the summer I spent a lot of time during my breaks at work organizing different applications. I wrote the supplements in a night and revised them during another.

Marianna Chebuske: I managed my time in an orderly fashion to make sure all of my applications were done way before the due date.

Sam Rosencrans: I created a schedule and mapped out all of my accomplishments. I set time aside to research schools and to actually create a strong application.

Q: Due to the asynchronous school days, did you find that you had more or less time to fill out your applications? If you had more time, how did you make use of that extra time?

Jamie Holzmann: I had more time with the asynchronous days that I greatly appreciated during the application process. I did make use of that extra time and felt very lucky to have it once I talked to some of my older friends who didn't have that time and were cramming in applications and schoolwork everyday with little to no breaks.

Celia Labbate: More time definitely. I used this time to work on my applications and I was able to finish applying in October.

Lizzie Lockwood: I had more time on the asynchronous days to fill out applications. I felt I had the liberty to choose what I needed to work on which let me use the time to edit essays and fill out Common App sections.

Natalia Difeo: I did have more time since that extra "day off" allowed me to reevaluate the schools that I wanted to apply to.

Danny Eisenstein: I had more time that I definitely made use of when I needed to.

Q: Were you able to visit colleges in person?

If not, how did you get a sense of the schools you applied to?

Olivia Aikman: I saw two schools before quarantine and one during. Now I am just using the resources the schools are giving me to get a sense of whether or not I like them. I am hoping to tour in person the schools I've been accepted to.

Ava Moynihan: No, only my top school which I visited before COVID. I applied to schools with good programs for my major in urban areas.

Samantha Passuelo: I visited colleges over February break and I felt as though I got a good sense of the campuses and the student life.

Lizzie Lockwood: I only visited some schools in person, but as for the other schools, I attended virtual events to get a good sense of each one.

Carson Paradis: I was only able to visit one college in person. Other than that I joined Zoom meetings with the schools as they gave virtual tours, and I researched each school a lot before deciding to apply.

Q: Did you have any interviews with colleges? If so, describe how they went (how were they conducted, what kinds of questions were you asked, etc....).

Oliver Palone: I had two interviews and they went pretty well. They asked me why I was a good fit for the school; they also wanted to know more about me and my extracurricular activities, and how what I had done in high school would translate to college.

Emma Morley: I had a few Zoom interviews with colleges and they asked me questions about my hobbies. A lot of the questions they asked were essentially personality based.

Zeke Hert: I had a few interviews which were very straightforward as the interviewer was simply trying to get to know me as a student and a person.

Carson Paradis: I didn't have any interviews, but I met with students from my early decision school and talked with the Dean of Admissions.

Emma Arboleda: I did two interviews virtually: one with an alumnus and one with

a senior. They were each really nice and wanted to get to know about me and my interests.

Q: What advice do you have for high school students who have yet to start the college application process?

Ava Moynihan: For the art students -Having a portfolio to submit does not make the application process less difficult. Do not underestimate the difficulty of presenting 12-22 pieces and creating artwork with your portfolio in mind. Also, have many people read over your college essay. Something that might be clear to one person might not make sense to others.

Natalia Difeo: My advice would be to not apply to a school based off of what others think. Whether it's a SUNY or a school that isn't as widely known, apply to what's right for YOU.

Jamie Holzmann: Start early! Get it done as soon as you have time to! You will thank yourself later and you'll have time to take a step back and think about your decisions each step of the way.

Olivia Aikman: Manage your time and don't leave it till the last minute. Yes, everyone says that, but it's way more stressful when you are rushed. Applications aren't as bad as everyone says they are, but just make sure to do them sooner rather than later.

Ashton Guss: Start the summer before your senior year; it will really help you manage your time with school work and the college process!

Q: On a scale of 1-10 (10 being the most), how much stress did you feel this year in regards to the college application process? Why? How did you manage that stress?

Natalia Difeo: I would give it a solid 8.5 because it was stressful waiting on decisions and getting applications done in time. After that, it's nerve racking thinking about if you're going to get in or not while waiting 2-3 months for a decision. I managed that stress by reassuring myself that college admissions officers know what they're doing. Remind yourself that if the school rejects you, it isn't the right place for you; everything happens for a reason.

Sam Rosencrans: I would say a 9. During the October, November, and December months, I felt that normal school had been getting much

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Hello, 4th Quarter!

Spring
Has
Sprung!



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The Class Of 2021 And College Admissions

(Continued From The Front Page)

harder and busier and I had a lot of applications to do which gave me some of the worst stress I had ever felt. This was also coupled with the fact that I had to continue to study for ACT and subject tests up until almost December because of COVID.

Celia Labbate: 4; I was stressed about editing all of the supplements and missing any typos, but I managed this by having peers and teachers read them. I was more stressed about the decision letters than the application process.

Jackson Best: Roughly a 5. The stress was bad before deadlines, but I can only blame myself for that. I think hanging out with friends and actively choosing to NOT worry about college stuff for more than a few minutes everyday really helped me deal with stress.

Jamie Holzmann: 6; my stress related more to choosing my colleges and figuring out what I genuinely wanted in a school. With the huge gap in last year due to Covid, it was stressful to go from 0-100 in terms of applications and work.

Q: If you could go back and do something differently during your college application process, what would you do? Is there anything you regret about how you handled your college application process? If so, what?

Sam Rosencrans: I would do more research in regard to my top schools and make applying early decision my number one priority. I would also try to learn how to write the essays because

the format and style take some getting used to. And I would try to finalize my list earlier.

Lizzie Lockwood: I would do more research on my intended area of study and/or career because I would probably have picked slightly different majors for my schools.

Emma Morley: No. I think I did pretty well. I think a balance of types of schools is good. Medium and safeties with a few reaches mixed in is a good balance.

Celia Labbate: I wish I had been able to visit the colleges. I would also apply to fewer schools because I only really wanted to go to about six of them and the rest were just safeties.

Zeke Hert: I don't regret anything.

The senior class seems to have emerged from the application process successfully, having gotten all of its applications in on time and surviving the daunting process. The common theme of the seniors is that they knew what they wanted going into the college application process. Before starting the college search, the members of the Class of 2021 asked themselves some crucial questions like: What size college did they want? How close to home did they want to be? What majors interested them? The general consensus though is that it's important to enter the process with some direction, and to start applying as early as possible. Spreading out the work over the course of several months helped relieve stress, and this is important for the underclassmen to note. The application process may be intimidating, but it does not have to be stressful and confusing!

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Impeachment Update

By: Calvin Spence

After the second impeachment trial of Former President Donald J. Trump, following his incitement of a riot in which the Capitol building was invaded by domestic terrorists, many wonder why the trial was necessary after he had left the office. Many believe that impeachment is only for punishing and removing current presidents, but, even though he wound up not being removed or punished, it was necessary in this instance. There are many misconceptions during this crazy time and they need to be cleared up.

Why Try To Impeach Trump Now?

Even though Joe Biden has already taken office as president, the goal of this impeachment was never truly to remove Donald Trump from office. The reason behind it was that the crime of inciting an insurrection as the nation's leader is such a terrible thing, and leaving it unaddressed would set a dangerous precedent. The trial set an example for future presidents that holding the office of president does not put the individual above the law. Even though it was unlikely from the outset to result in Donald Trump's removal, it is enough that the United States has demonstrated that we will hold our politicians accountable.

How did this process work?

This impeachment process started with an article of impeachment that was introduced by over 210 Democrats, which accused Trump of having made statements that encouraged the lawless actions at the Capitol. It also cited Trump's call with Georgia Republican secretary of state where he asked him to find enough votes for him to win the state, in his efforts to illegally overturn the election. Next was the House of Representatives' vote. This resulted with the majority in favor with 232 votes, and 197 against the impeachment. The final step was the senate vote. This resulted in 53

senators voting guilty, and 47 voting not guilty.

Why is this impeachment trial different from the first?

This impeachment was different in a couple of ways. In the last impeachment trial, only a few members of the House crossed party lines, but this time it was different, with 10 House Republicans voting against Trump. Although this was a good message of unity, the conviction still didn't happen. Feelings in the Senate were also different this time, as the evidence against Trump was clearer than in the last trial. More Republicans questioned Trump's actions, and realized that he was in the wrong. Senator Mitch McConnell, formerly the most powerful Republican in Congress, backed the impeachment efforts, although he ultimately did not vote in favor of impeachment. He agreed that the riots were "provoked by the president and other powerful people" (*New York Times*), which likely caused some Republican senators to vote in favor of impeachment. 17 Republicans had to vote against Trump for this impeachment to reach a conviction, so this did not matter much in the end. Perhaps it will lead to more senators crossing party lines for important issues in the future.

Although Trump didn't get convicted, the trial will serve as a reminder of the crimes that he committed and will leave a stain on his presidency. Trump is one of only three presidents of the United States to be impeached, and the only one ever to be impeached twice. He will go down in history as a failing president.

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Andrew Cuomo: Should He Remain In Politics?

By: Matt Malone

Most would expect a state with one of the highest-paid governors to run smoothly and efficiently. However, in New York it has been quite the opposite, especially as of late. Governor Andrew Cuomo was born on December 6, 1957. He graduated from Fordham University in 1979 and he is the son of Mario Cuomo who was the 52nd governor of New York and served from 1983-1994. Cuomo has been governor of New York since 2011, almost twice as long as any other United States' governor, and he remains power-hungry and reckless. Rising Coronavirus numbers and more criminals on the streets, all resulted from Cuomo's inept ability to run the State smoothly. Andrew Cuomo must be removed from his position because of his poor decision making skills and mismanagement of New York.

Cuomo has made a countless number of mistakes in his handling of the Coronavirus. Cuomo, who was once praised highly for how he handled Covid 19 in mid 2020, has now completely derailed. At the height of the virus, he allowed approximately 6,300 Covid positive patients back into nursing homes (*Washington Post*). In addition, a new update has recently come in from the state attorney general stating that the Cuomo administration undercounted the number of deaths from the Coronavirus in nursing homes by as much as 50 percent (*The Hill*). Whether or not Cuomo lied about the nursing home deaths is, at this point, being left up for debate. What does not lie is the immense number of deaths that took place under his authority. This further substantiates his recklessness and cluelessness when it comes to running a state.

The nursing home incident is not the only scandal Cuomo has been a part of recently. Nine women have now (as of March 21st) accused the governor of sexual harassment. In October of 2017, Cuomo told Lindsey Boylan, one of his former aides, that they should "play strip poker" (*New York Times*). Later on in 2018, Boylan said that Cuomo stepped in front of her and kissed her on the lips (*New York Times*). The governor's office has said that Boylan's claims are false. However, in the instance of Charlotte Bennet, Cuomo reportedly asked Bennet about her sex life and if "she had ever had sex with older men" (*New York Times*). There is a big age gap between Bennet, who is 25, and Cuomo, who is 63. On Sunday, February 28th, Cuomo released an apology. Within it, Cuomo stated, "I acknowledge some of the things I have said have been misinterpreted as an unwanted flirtation" (*New York Times*). More investigations must be done in regards to all allegations of sexual harassment. If Cuomo is found guilty, he needs to resign. New York needs to be run well.

To add to Cuomo's legacy of poor decisions making, he also shut down indoor dining in hundreds of New York City restaurants, not allowing any of these establishments to earn much money at all. Many people would argue that closing down these places of business was a good idea because it would greatly reduce the spread of Covid. However, "in-home gatherings

account for 74 percent of new Covid cases, while just 1.3 percent come from bars and restaurants" (*The Hill*). Outdoor dining is the only possible way for many of these eateries to thwart going out of business. However, during New York's frigid winters, that would be difficult to accomplish. Instead of limiting the spread of the virus, he virtually did nothing and negatively impacted the lives of a plethora of people.

Lastly, on January 1st of 2020, Cuomo ratified a bail reform law. This allows accused criminals to walk freely while awaiting their trial. The reason behind this is that some people do not have enough money to post bail. Since the new law was enacted, New York City has not been the same. Potential criminals get another chance to roam the streets and commit more crimes. For example, last year, someone by the name of Tiffany Harris was arrested for assaulting three Orthodox Jewish women in Brooklyn and was released without bail the next day. The day after she was released, she assaulted another woman (Welcome to New York). People will not learn their lesson and will continue to commit crimes if they are not going to be punished. The bail reform therefore reinforces Cuomo's poor decision-making. This law should have never been allowed because it poses a threat to the lives of innocent people.

For New York to remain a place where people want to live, it would be in its best interest to get rid of Governor Cuomo. A country or state can run effectively with a Democrat or Republican as its head. The leader just needs to have good decision-making skills and knowledge when it comes to what is best for the region. With this, the well being of a state can increase drastically.

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What To Do With A Democratic Senate

By: Lillian Molesky

On January 20th, 2021, millions watched as Joseph R. Biden was sworn in as the 46th President of the United States of America, but he was not the only elected official to be inaugurated that day. Reverend Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff were both inaugurated after historic runoff elections in Georgia left the two Democrats victorious. With these two seats being flipped, alongside the inauguration of a Democratic president, the atmosphere in Washington has changed, and provides newfound leeway for the Biden Administration.

The Georgia elections tied the Senate with an equal number of Democrats and Republicans; in the event of a tie, the Vice President, who also serves as the President of the Senate, casts tie-breaking votes. This ultimately leaves the Senate in Democrat control, as Vice President Kamala Harris will more often than not rule in favor of her party. The significance of this switch in control is multilayered, and provides an open window for the Democrats to make substantial changes.

In breaking down the importance of this new Senate, the most general and key difference is how Congress as a whole will be impacted. The House of Representatives lost many seats this election cycle, but still maintained a narrow majority. With the House and the Senate both having a Democratic majority, the legislative branch is now liberal leaning. This will change the type and amount of bills that are signed into law, along with the likelihood of certain Supreme Court nominees being appointed. Trump-era

conservative Justices Kavanaugh, Coney-Barrett, and Gorsuch were all approved in a Republican Senate, and now Biden has the opportunity to balance the scale with more liberal Justices (should there be a vacancy).

Arguably the most immediate and direct impact of a Democratic senate is regarding the Impeachment Trial of former President Trump. In January of 2020, the House passed a resolution to impeach Trump, but it swiftly failed in the Republican Senate as all voting members voted by party lines. However, with a Democratic majority in 2021, the likelihood of Trump's impeachment is far more likely, if not definite. In short, the impeachment of Trump by both the House and Senate would ensure Trump would be unable to run for office again, along with lessening the intensity of his post-presidential security detail.

All in all, the Biden Administration has a large advantage in the Democrat-run Senate. Arguably, as important as the inauguration of Biden, the Democrats will still have to work hard to fight for their causes, as a single vote outside of party lines could change everything.



Social Media: A Career Maker Or Breaker?

By: Liliana Stella

Social media has taken over our society by storm. Some of our favorite and beloved celebrities got famous or retained their fame through various social media platforms. However, social media has also been a place where stars lost their likeability. It is not just a spot for young people; it's also been a place for politicians to advocate for themselves.

When we think of social media we think of various forms of platforms. such as Tik tok, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube and Facebook. Specifically, Tik Tok, over the past year, has taken the spotlight. Many new celebrities emerged from this app, but a name that most people know and associate with this app is Charli D'Amelio. Charli D'Amelio says in her Jimmy Fallon interview that she got her fame by just, "dancing in her bedroom and bathroom" (Charli D'Amelio). As of recent ly, Charli D'Amelio is the most followed person on Tik Tok. According to her Tik Tok page, she has a follower count of 107.3 million. That is an astonishing number. Most countries aren't even populated with that many people. However, with fame comes major responsibility. For instance, recently, Charli D'Amelio was spotted traveling even though health officials warned not to. Charli and her sister, Dixie D'Amelio, "are facing outrage from fans after they reportedly traveled to the Bahamas during the holidays" (*Insider*). This sparked a lot of controversy because as many are struggling during this time to help stop the spread of Covid, they feel that the D'Amelio's are being reckless by traveling during this time. It also brings up the idea that although Charli D. holds a lot of power and fame, activities like going away on vacation during a pandemic can take it all away and lose the respect of audiences.

Although the political spectrum faces far more different issues then a teenage celebrity on social media, both groups of people still advocate for themselves through social media. For example, if we look at politicians like Joe Biden and Donald Trump during the 2020 election, they both posted multiple times about when they were having rallies

and what their campaigns stood for. Social media has been a critical tool for talking to massive audiences with a tap of a button in seconds. According to their instagram pages, Donald Trump has a follower count of 24.4 million and Joe Biden has 18 million. A really interesting thing that not many know of is that with the transfer of power comes the transfer of social media handles. So when Trump left office, Joe Biden got the instagram handle of POTUS. According to *Variety*, "Facebook confirmed that as of Jan. 20, 2021, when president-elect Joe Biden is sworn in as the 46th U.S. president, the official White House accounts on both Facebook — including @WhiteHouse, @POTUS and @FLOTUS — and those on Instagram will be transferred to the Biden administration." This demonstrates that in the era we are living in, social media is critical for the spread of ideas among audiences. Due to the fact we are living in a digital age where the number of followers is critical to someone, it also creates massive responsibility. Important information can be accessed by millions of citizens and people around the country. Moreover, when speaking about critical issues facing our country, the president's words should always be respectful.

Furthermore, living in the digital age creates a great deal of responsibility and accountability and it is crucial that we utilize these tools for the better.

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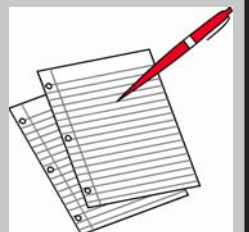
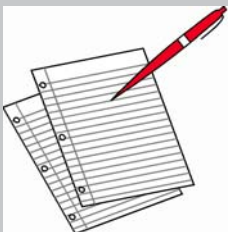
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Is There A Right Way To Fight?

By: Summer Rice

From the hundreds of Black Lives Matter protests and riots to the recent storming of the Capitol, 2020 and 2021 have been action-packed. Both events appear to be similar as they are classified as protests. However despite their similarities, they have many differences that play a big part in regards to how these events are viewed.

On May 25th, 2020, George Floyd, a 46 year old African American male, died at the knee of Derek Chauvin, a white Minneapolis police officer due to an accusation that he paid for something with a counterfeit twenty dollar bill. After this incident hit the media, many people were outraged by what happened, and very soon after, hundreds of Black Lives Matter protests and marches were taking place all around the country. "A data science firm that works with businesses and Democratic campaigns suggest that about 15 million to 26 million people in the United States have participated in demonstrations over the death of George Floyd" (*The New York Times*). The vast majority of these protests were peaceful, consisting of people marching, chanting, and carrying signs. However, some took a turn for the worse. Riots, looting, and vandalism took place. This resulted in a great amount of police presence and National Guard troops being deployed. Even though most protests were peaceful, police were present and occasionally interfered at both peaceful and not peaceful protests by throwing tear gas into crowds, arresting rioters, and more.

On January 6th, 2021, after a conspiracy theory that the presidential election ballots had been stolen resulting in Joe Biden winning the election and Donald Trump losing his position as president, the United States Capitol was stormed by a mob of his supporters. It started with many people gathering outside of the Capitol with signs and flags, but things quickly turned extremely violent. Looting, vandalism, assaults, and more occurred. Protesters climbed up walls, broke windows, and even entered the Capital building itself. There was some police presence, but not enough to keep the protesters under control. "This temple to democracy was desecrated, its windows smashed, our offices vandalized," Senator Chuck Schumer, says. The National Guard was called and deployed, although, that was hours after the violent storming had begun. It took quite some time for them to arrive. Thankfully, no other stormings or riots followed this one.

The Black Lives Matter protests and the Capitol storming seem very similar as looting, vandalism and rioting were present in both; however, they also have many differences. One divergence is that the Black Lives Matter Movement had a proven and valid motive behind the protests, which was the death of George Floyd and police brutality. In addition, George Floyd was not the only victim of police brutality against African Americans as Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks, Atatiana Jefferson, and many others were victims. Meanwhile the Capitol storming occurred because of Donald Trump losing his place as president, as well as a non-factual conspiracy theory about ballots being stolen. Overall, the Black Lives Matter protests had a valid and deep motive behind them, while the Capitol storming was an unjustified and violent act, which never should have taken place.

Long Island: A Region Riddled With Social Disparities

By: Sophie Rosencrans

In early January of this year, I attended the Long Island Leaders of Tomorrow ERASE Racism Conference. Going into this event I was unsure of what to expect—I didn't know who would be speaking, what would be discussed, or if I would learn information that I hadn't otherwise been taught in previous classes. To my surprise, the conference was led by high school students who passionately spoke about tackling racial disparities in our nation, and especially on Long Island. These students discussed the responsibility that we have as a generation to address racial injustice and search for ways to enact change. By engaging in these conversations I was able to learn a substantial amount of new information—information that I had not learned in school.

Long Island is among the ten most racially segregated suburban areas in the United States. Is this fact surprising to you? While I was aware that segregation is an issue on Long Island, I was not aware of the extent to which it exists and how much Long Island's schools and communities reflect this disturbing fact. North Shore is a predominantly white community that significantly lacks diversity. In other areas of Long Island however, there are communities where the majority of people are classified under minority groups. Racial barriers are visible, separating communities by color and standing as evidence for Long Island's long history of systemic racism. The organization that held the Long Island Leaders of Tomorrow conference, ERASE Racism, aims to desegregate and diversify Long Island in a myriad of ways, some of which include: working towards promoting racial equity in areas such as housing, public school education, and community development.

ERASE Racism is a Long Island based organization that confronts structural racism and hopes to achieve its objectives by conducting research, educating the public, advocating for policy change, engaging Long Island leaders and taking legal action. Since its founding in 2001, ERASE Racism has "used statistical analysis, fair housing testing, survey research, and anecdotal evidence to reveal disparities in opportunity, and most recently, community organizing to increase community capacity and bolster advocacy efforts" (ERASERacism.org). The information that ERASE Racism has uncovered is utilized by university researchers, the media, and the public. The high school students leading the Long Island Leaders of Tomorrow Conference have joined ERASE Racism's student task force in order to address issues of racism and build alliances with students across different districts and racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Issues that members of the task force extensively spoke about during the

conference included ones which ERASE Racism primarily tackles: housing and public school education.

Long Island has failed to affirmatively further fair housing. In 1968 the Fair Housing Act was passed in order to ensure equal and fair housing to all people regardless of race, color, national origin, etc, and prevent redlining. Redlining is a discriminatory practice that puts services out of reach for those of certain races and backgrounds, in this case the service being housing. Long Island communities illustrate how redlining has continued into recent times despite the enactment of such legislation. A 2017 census report estimated that "half of Long Island's black population lives in just 11 of the Island's 291 communities while 90 percent lives in just 62 of them" (Winslow). This type of segregation "was advanced by policies explicitly ensuring that mass-scale affordable housing created in the mid-20th century, like Levittown, was for whites only" (ERASERacism.org). In 1960 African Americans comprised 0% of Levittown's population while in 2017, almost 60 years later, African Americans comprised only 1.73% of the population. The insignificant increase in Levittown's diversity comes as no surprise. From 2016-2019 "Newsday investigated real estate practices on Long Island using a testing system in which whites and minorities, acting as home seekers, were paired to gauge how real estate agents treated them" (Winslow). They found that white testers were shown housing in neighborhoods with a higher white population, while black testers were shown housing in neighborhoods with more diverse populations. Newsday's report is just one piece of evidence that explains the perpetuation of visible segregation on Long Island.

Racial segregation along community lines has largely impacted public school education—so much so that districts in close proximity appear to be divided on the basis of race. Housing discrimination directly causes residential segregation which then leads to unequal educational opportunities. Education influences employment and career prospects which can then impact a person's access to housing, leading to a continued cycle of segregation and inequality. According to a 2020 analysis by Newsday, wealthier districts spent \$6,000 more per student than in poorer districts. Wealthier school districts tend to have higher percentages of white students than minority students as a result of residential segregation and housing discrimination. This statistic can explain why during the 2019-2020 school year, schools classified as majority white offered 35 AP/IB classes on average as compared to non-majority white school districts which on average offered 22 AP/IB courses. It can also account for why during the 2018-2019 school year, white students were 3.4 times more likely to enroll in AP/IB

courses than black students in Suffolk County. According to ERASERacism.org "when students are blocked from more challenging classes and other educational resources, they face added challenges in pursuing higher education relative to their peers who attended schools with better funding." In order to promote equity in both housing and education it is necessary for the local and federal government to design and implement policies that aim to combat systemic racism.

We do not live in a post-racist era. The effects of long standing systemic racism are not only evident throughout the nation, but in our very own community. In my four years of high school I have examined the topic of racism in the United States while in two history classes, re-visiting the topic in a few other subjects and then at length during my Theory of Knowledge discussions. The majority of these conversations focused on racism in the context of slavery, only beginning to focus on its presence in the modern era after the Black Lives Matter protests in June. I believe that we must be thoroughly educated on the effects of structural racism in both our nation and on Long Island specifically. In order to unlearn racial biases, enhance our growth as globally-aware citizens, and enact change, we must first start by becoming actively anti-racist students. Each year we must provide students with extensive educational materials that allow them to identify racism, understand how white-privilege manifests itself in our society, and empathize with those struggling under the weight of these forces. This could mean examining curriculums and implementing lessons that cover the topic of racism at each grade-level while simultaneously dedicating more time for discussion. Although I was able to gain a better understanding of race implications in housing and education through Erase Racism, it is important to examine and acknowledge the intersection of race in all facets of society in order to truly begin eliminating racial barriers.

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White Hands Against White Marble: Comparing the Storming of the Capitol to the Summer's Black Lives Matter Protests

By: Jackson Best

Just six days into the new year, and the history of the United States was permanently scarred as violent rioters stormed the Capitol Building. Following Rudy Giuliani's calls for "trial by combat" and former president Trump's urging to "fight like hell," throngs of civilians pushed back Capitol Police barricades and interrupted the official counting of electoral college votes—votes which would ultimately herald Joe Biden as the next president of the United States. Protesters pushed deep into the Capitol, vandalizing both the Senate Chamber and Nancy Pelosi's personal desk. Five deaths have been confirmed, composed of four rioters and one police officer. While the storming of the Capitol Building is harrowing in and of itself, a far more sinister story emerges when one compares the events of January 6th to the public's reaction of the Black Lives Matter protests that exploded across the nation following the death of George Floyd. Many news outlets, particularly those leaning towards the right, outed the overwhelmingly peaceful demonstrators as looters and rioters, while ignoring the blatant violence and treason committed at the heart of our nation's democracy. Such hypocrisy not only reflects a deep-rooted ignorance, but reveals the extent of systemic racism within the country.

The vast majority of protests in response to George Floyd's death were peaceful, yet many around the country believed that protesters were actively trying to harm America. According to a report released by The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, of the 10,600 protests that occurred between May 24th and August 22nd, 10,100 involved peaceful protesters (Kishi). That's approximately 95%. Contrast this with public opinion regarding the protesters. A Yahoo News/YouGov poll questioned 1,001 individuals across America and found that only 54% of adults believed that protesters wanted to improve the country, with 80% of Democrats favoring protesters. A whopping 78% of Republicans believed that protesters wanted to destroy the nation (Sanders). Clearly, there was a divide between the frequency of violence at protests and public opinion. The overwhelming negative coverage of the protests by various right-leaning media outlets likely contributed to the above statistic. To be absolutely clear, there were instances of violence and looting. But these demonstrations were not over divisive policy or moral issues. Protesters gathered to condemn the blatant murder of an African American man over the alleged use of a \$20 counterfeit bill. If barely half the nation can support such actions, it is no wonder why many Americans agree with the actions of the rioters at the Capitol building.

Another YouGov report polled a nationally representative population of 1,448 registered voters just hours after the storming of the Capitol, and found that 21% of Americans, including 45% of registered Republicans, actively supported the storming of the Capitol (Smith). One in five Americans agree that breaking into the Capitol building and potentially harming our legislators was justified. While it doesn't take rocket science to determine why this is the case, such statistics are still terrifying. The rioters were largely white, and included members of far-right groups like the Proud Boys (Tavernise). A man carrying the Confederate flag paraded throughout the halls of Congress (Cramer). Largely peaceful protests over the murder of an African American man barely exceeded a 50% approval rating from Americans, yet 21% support blatant acts of treason committed by crowds populated with white supremacists. It is not difficult to determine why such differences in public opinion exist. The issue is black and white.

The events of January 6th were nauseating to say the least, not only due to a flagrant disregard for democracy, but because the rioters were able to break into the Capitol building only because they weren't associated with the Black Lives Matter movement. George Floyd was publicly executed, and the resulting protests were met with scorn by large sections of the country. Lies about the election were spread, crowds containing white supremacists stormed our nation's seat of democracy, and one in five Americans agreed with them. In the opening days of 2021, our country's lurking racism has reared its ugly head once again.

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New Year; New Georgia

By: Sophia Marchioli

In early January, the Democrats reigned victorious with control of the Senate, adding to their list of wins in the House of Representatives, and the Presidency. Senators Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock finally turned Georgia blue in the Senate races, for the first time since 2000 (Martin and Fausset). Warnock beat Kelly Loeffler, the Republican opponent, on Wednesday January 6th, with Ossoff's win against candidate David Perdue coming in later that same day. However, the victories weren't the only newsworthy event that occurred on that day; an impassioned mob attacked the Capitol building, disrupting the process of certifying President Joe Biden's victory. It was a mournful day for Democrats and Republicans alike, clouding Ossoff and Warnock's win. The senators' appointments had an additional layer of significance because Ossoff is Jewish, and Warnock is black. So, despite the upsetting state that the country is in, Ossoff and Warnock's wins have proven that, "violence never wins" as former Vice President Pence stated, and that acceptance does, because even though so many acts of hatred took place on that day, we were also all reminded that there is still hope for a better, more open-minded future for this country.

The South is a historically conservative part of the United States, so this victory meant a big change for Georgians. For perspective, Raphael Warnock is the first Black Democrat to be elected to the Senate from the South (Faussett and Martin). However, many committed Democrats have been attempting to flip the red states for the past decade. Stacy Abrahams, the Democratic Senator of Georgia, has been fighting to change the state from red to blue since 2013 (King), with her campaign called The New Georgia Project. With this project, she raised millions of dollars that have gone to emphasize the importance of registering to vote. Ultimately, Abrahams' plan worked, getting many citizens, specifically African Americans, registered to vote, and forging a new path for the diverse state of Georgia.

Raphael Warnock's early years did not stop him from pursuing his dreams. The senator came from a low-income family, and therefore had access to limited resources. But, despite those challenges, he graduated from Morehouse College in 1991, and went on to become the "youngest pastor selected to serve [as Senior Pastor] at the [Ebenezer Baptist Church]" (Warnock for Georgia Writers). Ebenezer Baptist Church is also where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. served as a reverend.

Since the beginning of his candidacy, Senator Warnock has focused on making health care more accessible, raising the minimum wage, and reducing the U.S.'s carbon emissions; these are all issues that could make him appealing to Democratic voters. Due to his upbringing in an impoverished family, the Senator understands the struggle of the lower

classes, and with a good percentage of Georgians in this position, he can speak to their struggles and represent them in government and policy making. As for the environment, Warnock focused on the issue of preserving the environment, which had been at the bottom of the Trump administration's list for years. The new Senator's background and plans for the future make him appealing to the demographic that felt neglected over the past four years by the previous administration.

The other winner of a spot in the Senate was Jon Ossoff, of Atlanta. He, a former congressman, national security aide, investigative journalist, media executive and small business owner, went to school at Georgetown University and the London School of Economics (Elect Jon Writers). Ossoff worked hard to gain his status, and has provided many young Georgians with a sense of hope.

Jon Ossoff has promised similar things to Georgia as Raphael Warnock, with a strong focus on health care and lending a helping hand to the poor. In a video thanking Georgia for the support, Ossoff said his, "campaign has [focused on] health, and jobs, and justice for... all the people of the state", further enforcing the many promises made by liberal politicians (Associated Press). In addition to matters concerning equality, his campaign has promised to shine a light on a few topics rarely talked about today: security, privacy, and safety on the internet. His former professions seem to have helped Ossoff realize the importance of these matters, and he has shown his commitment to the issue throughout his campaign.

Together the Ossoff and Warnock team represent demographics that haven't been prioritized in the past. As Alex Roger, a journalist for CNN, put it, "Warnock... and Ossoff will respectively be the first Black and Jewish senators to represent Georgia." Over the course of the past decade, more than one million immigrants have migrated into Georgia, so it seems as if Warnock and Ossoff will represent the newly diverse Georgia well (U.S. Census Bureau).

These victories represent a landmark for Georgia. It is a change from the roots that were laid there prior to Civil War times: new values, new populations, and new motivations. As we wave goodbye to the tragic year that was 2020, we start fresh, with a new Georgia in the new year.



A New Year's Resolutions Check-In

By: Veronica Frank

According to *Forbes Magazine*, 40% of Americans make New Year's resolutions, and many have something to do with appearance- to work out more, eat better, or lose weight. In our image-conscious culture, we often emphasize our physical appearance, but tend to neglect our mental health. Both teens and adults battled depression, loneliness, and anxiety during this previous year due to the COVID pandemic. Hope was in the air though as the ball dropped on New Year's Eve and people began to announce a "new year new me" kind of attitude. However, with the countless limitations regarding COVID-19 and winter, it is difficult to make improvements right now, so let me tell you why focusing on your mental health should be the focus of your resolutions.

A trend at the start of the new year is to try to change oneself. In 2021, the number of Americans making New Year's resolutions increased by five percent from the previous year. The pandemic, a shocking and seemingly never-ending event, prevented people from going about their daily lives. In 2020, every negative emotion from grief to separation anxiety was accentuated; no one was left unscathed from the tragedy, where screen time hours and emotional eating steadily increased. More challenging still, even though lockdown started in March of 2020, here we are, a year later, contained to our homes with limited social interaction. When December of 2020 came, many were excited to get back on their feet and try to eat healthier, invest in a Peloton or a workout service and, get off their phone; the tradition of resolutions gave them a reason to make a change. Unfortunately, despite the good intentions, only seven percent of people will stick to their resolutions.

Our new year starts in the middle of the darkest and coldest season of the year. Winter is a time when there are limited hours of sunlight every day, and in New York, many of those days are full of rain and clouds. As a result of this lack of sunlight, our bodies produce less serotonin and dopamine, chemicals that are responsible for feelings of happiness, and more melatonin, the chemical responsible for sleepiness. Our bodies, which are similar to those of bears, want to go into a winter hibernation which contributes to pervasive seasonal depression. Doctor Christa Baldwin explains, "Things like seasonal affective disorder and depression and all of those mental health concerns, may be more exaggerated during this time of the year" (Baldwin). On top of the lack of sunlight during the winter months, indoor social activities and hang outs with friends are very limited because of COVID. So, it is no surprise that you may be struggling with mental health and feeling unmotivated.

To combat this illness, consider taking the upcoming months to care for your mental health. As teenagers, focusing on mental health is especially important since we are faced with isolation due to COVID and developing brains. Isolation during development can cause an increased susceptibility to mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety, and eating disorders. Performing self-care activities

such as working out, and creating art while isolated can help heal.

A wise habit to take up is meditation. Meditation has been done for centuries and it has amazing benefits such as better sleep patterns, increased focus, and less anxiety and depression. For teens who have problems getting to sleep at night or who feel anxious in the morning, meditation is a perfect way to start, end, or even break up the day. It might seem intimidating at first, but, it does not take long to see the benefits. With beneficial free apps such as Calm and Headspace and thousands of meditations on YouTube, this practice is an accessible way to approach mental health improvement.

Another resolution that we can all benefit from is journaling. This does not necessarily mean keeping a secret diary, although that can be pretty fun too. A journal can be a place to go to when you are unable to talk to your friends or you need a break from your household; it's a place to silently rant and explore your deepest emotions via pencil and paper. The benefits are similar to meditation in that it can clear the mind. Journaling also has benefits such as stress reduction and problem solving within yourself and with others. All you need to start is a pen and a piece of paper! If you have something on your mind, start writing; if not, I recommend using a prompt. There are many on Pinterest or Instagram. This stress-reducing technique can be an excellent personal outlet for expressing emotions.

Meditating and journaling are both useful techniques that you can integrate into your everyday life. Of course, they are not the only ways to improve your mental health. Taking walks, eating healthy, and drinking plenty of water are additional ways that both your physical and mental health can benefit. If you feel unmotivated and are stuck inside this winter, consider incorporating these techniques into your daily routine and be prepared to see a difference in your life.

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Coping With Your Successes

By: Lauren Hagen

As college decisions are sent out and the Class of 2021 finds itself on the edge of a new beginning, panic is setting in, diminishing its members hard earned success. This inability to recognize achievements is known as imposter syndrome, a phenomenon that occurs when high achievers are unable to accept their successes and so attribute them to luck rather than their abilities (Weir). Within the psychological community, imposter syndrome is acknowledged as a specific form of self-doubt, and is typically accompanied by anxiety and depression. There are a myriad of situations that could bring on such a feeling, but no matter the cause, they pose a risk to the sufferer's mental health.

The groundwork for mental illness is often laid in childhood, and this applies to imposter syndrome. The upbringing of experiencers is a major contributor to its development. This phenomenon is often experienced by people who grew up in homes that placed a heavy emphasis on achievement. When parents overpraise their children, then criticize them based on their ability to meet their goals, they experience self-doubt (Weir). This type of childhood, paired with society's tendency to conflate the ideas of self-worth and achievement leads to a whirlwind of insecurities that plague children well into adulthood.

Imposter syndrome manifests itself in different forms. There are five types of imposter syndrome: the perfectionist, the superhero, the natural genius, the soloist, and the expert (Wilding). The perfectionist tends to set excessively high goals for herself, and when she fails to reach those goals, she experiences extreme self-doubt. This tendency often leads to procrastination, because people become terrified that they won't be able to meet their own high standards. Perfectionists may also prepare excessively for smaller assignments and spend more time than necessary on inconsequential tasks. In both scenarios, they remain unsatisfied with their finished products. The superheroes, similarly, push themselves to their breaking point in order to measure up to unrealistic standards. This means taking on heavy workloads. The superhero suffers from an addiction to external validation that comes from working, but not the work itself. The

natural genius, rather than dedicate herself to studying and working hard, believes in getting things perfect on her first try. She judges one's competence on her ease and the speed in which she accomplishes things, rather than her effort. This desperation for natural talent causes her to reject mentor figures and leads to isolation. Similarly, the soloist feels she must deny other's assistance in order to prove her worth. The expert also longs for greatness in the same ways the soloist and natural genius do, but she believes the way to achieve it is to bury herself in work. She bases competence on what and how much she knows or can do, and so participates in an excessive amount of trainings and certifications. No matter what the brand of imposter someone has, it is a detrimental mindset. Sufferers experience an overwhelming fear that they are not good enough and thus partake in a mental torture during which they constantly work towards goals they do not allow themselves to celebrate.

While the fear of being exposed as unintelligent or untalented seems legitimate to those experiencing it, it is a trick of the mind. Fortunately, there are ways to overcome this problem. The first step when addressing any problem is admitting there is one. By becoming aware of damaging thinking, one can begin to correct oneself internally. It's important to take note of situations that bring on this panic and make honest assessments of one's performance, and reframe one's way of thinking (Weir). Another form of reassurance involves participating in study groups; being able to carry one's weight around others helps people to realize their own expertise (Wilding). This also applies for tutoring, because it's impossible to teach others unless you understand the concepts yourself. Another major aspect of imposter syndrome is glossing over achievements, so it's important to implement awards for successes, even when they are small victories. Imposter syndrome can infringe on mental health, as well as a one's ability to succeed in her profession/college career, so it's important to implement these strategies in hopes of one day shaking such destructive habits.

Congratulations To Sophie Blumenthal, Jackson Cooperman, Bridget Lewis, Lucia Martin, Henry Reiger, Ruishe Sun, Kate Weseley-Jones, and Brandon Zhu For Being Commended Students In The 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program

When Will Teens Have A Shot At The Shot?

By: Evie McCreery

The COVID-19 vaccine development and distribution process has been remarkably rapid. Distributions of COVID-19 vaccines for select categories of people have begun, but most teenagers will have to wait several more months for their turn to get vaccinated. With the limited availability of COVID-19 vaccines, New York State has developed a timeline with different phases that prioritizes the most at-risk groups. There are currently three approved vaccines for teenagers; the Pfizer vaccine is approved for 16+ year olds and both the Moderna and Johnson and Johnson vaccines are approved for 18+ year olds (cdc.gov).

Currently, any individual that is part of Phase 1A or 1B is eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Any teens in the groups listed below are eligible to make appointments and receive vaccines in Nassau County (nassaucountyny.gov):

- High-risk hospital staff, affiliates, volunteers and contract staff, following the clinical risk assessment guidance.
- Emergency Medical Services Personnel

- Funeral workers who have direct contact with infectious material and bodily fluids

- Health care or other high-risk direct care essential staff working in Long Term Care Facilities and long-term, congregate settings

- Persons living in Long Term Care Facilities and in long-term congregate settings

- Agency staff and residents in congregate living situations run by the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) the Office of Mental Health (OMH) and the Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS)

- Urgent Care providers

- Any staff administering COVID-19 Vaccinations

- All Outpatient/Ambulatory front line, high risk health care providers who provide direct in-person patient care or other staff in a position where they have direct contact with patients, such as receptionists, of any age

- Home care workers and aides, hospice workers, personal care aides, and consumer-directed personal care workers

- Staff and residents of nursing homes, skilled nursing facilities, and adult care facilities

- Teachers and education workers

- First responders (including law enforcement and fire service)

- Public safety workers

- Public transit workers

- Restaurant workers

- Taxi drivers

- People with Developmental disabilities
- Individuals with underlying conditions (cancer, kidney disease, pulmonary disease, diabetes, obesity, and pregnancy among others)

and

- Immunocompromised individuals

Unless additional categories are added to the above Phase 1 groups, all other teens (16+) will be members of Phase 2, which is likely to begin in the Summer or Fall of 2021 (nyc.gov). A Moderna spokesperson stated in late February that vaccine safety and efficacy research “data from 12 to 17-year-old subjects will be in by around mid-year 2021”, and a Pfizer-BioNTech representative said that “they hope to submit data on subjects 12 to 15 years of age in the second quarter of 2021”. Additionally, White House Chief Medical Advisor Anthony Fauci claimed on February 19th, 2021, that “American high school students might be able to get vaccinated against COVID-19 by this fall” (CBS News).

To summarize, older teens are going to have to wait until the summer of 2021 and younger teens are going to have to wait a bit longer to receive their COVID vaccine. The creation of a timeline is a result of the scarcity of COVID-19 vaccines, and Northwell Health Chair of Medical School and Family Medicine Tochi Iroku-Malize has explained that “timing for dissemination of the vaccine depends on the availability of the vaccine” (Northwell Health Spark Program Seminar). For this plan to be successful, people must be patient and have fortitude.

The frustration of waiting has tempted people to cut the vaccine line. With high vaccine-demand, some individuals are making fraudulent claims regarding their eligibility for vaccination. This has caused a great controversy. Is it ever okay to cut the line for vaccines?

Founder of Berman Institute of Bioethics Ruth Faden explained that “the system relies on people presenting themselves accurately...people need to follow the rules of the game”. A person that cuts the line is taking a dose away from someone that is in a higher risk group. As writer of the Ethicist column for the *New York Times*, Kwame Anthony Appiah stated, “when reasonable rules have been set in place, morality requires us to do our part in collective practices that are good for the community” (nytimes.com). The one situation where bioethicists agree that it is okay for a non-eligible person to accept a vaccine is when the vaccine would otherwise be discarded (npr.org).

It is crucial that most teenagers, along with the rest of the Phase 2 population, wait until vaccines are available to be distributed. A group mentality, patience, empathy and confidence in vaccines will hopefully lead to the end of this global pandemic.



March 2021

Ready, Set, Focus

By: Trevor Janusas

When it comes to writing about something, many people are easily distracted. Whether it's because they don't want to do the assignment or they feel anxious about it, they just can't let their thoughts flow; thus, they start doing everything, but the assignment. People have a lot of stress, anxiety and distractions in their lives, so here are some ways to stay focused when working on homework or projects:

1. Turn off all technology you don't need- Many people naturally get distracted by the technology around them. When a phone or computer is receiving notifications, it can be distracting and make you lose your train of thought. So make sure to put your phone on 'do not disturb' or shut it off completely.

2. Find a quiet area- Noise is a constant; so go to a place like the library or wear noise canceling headphones to filter out things that happen in daily life such as people talking, barking dogs, lawn mowing and loud machines.

3. Listen to music- Many people find it relaxing to listen to calming music and it helps them focus. Even listening to your favorite genre of music may help you focus. This is also good if there are loud distractions around you because music lets you focus in on one noise that may be calming and relaxing which in turn improves your focus.

4. Set up a reward system for yourself- Many people give themselves a reward for getting work done. Whether it's their favorite dessert or buying something they've been wanting for a while, you should try to reward yourself whenever you get all your work done on time; it will motivate you.

5. Take breaks- Taking periodic breaks after completing an assignment or after a certain amount of time is a great way to give yourself a brain break and not get overwhelmed with your work. Whether you take a break every 20 minutes or after each assignment, allowing yourself to have a break is a great time to check other distractions like your phone.

6. Plan ahead- When working on a big assignment, you are often given a lengthy amount of time to complete it. So instead of saving it all for the last minute, try to pace yourself and do a little bit each day.

Distractions are a constant in people's lives so make sure you have tools to deal with them to successfully get assignments done accurately and quickly. Homework can feel very overwhelming and many people will make any excuse to stop doing it. Don't be one of those people.

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Dietary Restrictions And School Lunches In A Pandemic

By: Emma Arboleda

This year, the school lunch menus have a limited amount of choices available for students and staff—an understandable consequence of the pandemic, except when it comes to students with dietary restrictions. Should a student or faculty member be restricted by his or her diet, the menu can seem discouraging

In previous years, daily pizza options, salad bars, and the Deli allowed school to be far more accommodating of various diets because they provided one thing that's missing from the cafeteria this year: options. Even North Shore High School's principal, Mr. Contreras recognizes that at the very least the vegetarian choices have “diminished during COVID” as the cafeteria works to prepare food safely. While a pre-made turkey sandwich may be good for the efficient and safe distribution of food, it can leave people who are on certain diets with one less lunch option.

Despite the limited lunch options, the cafeteria seems to have the resources to accommodate people with various diets; it's just a matter of putting in the effort. Principal Contreras understands that the frequency of which certain options are offered could increase, saying that “we have a lot of the ingredients already in place and” and that “it appears to be a matter of just preparation and advance planning”. The only thing that seems to stand in the way of broadening the cafeteria's food options is communication.

While it does not seem transparent, the school has both the resources and the means to support different diets. In fact, the head of food services at the High School, Mary Uryan, confirmed that “if [someone] needs something switched up a little bit or changed, the kitchen is very accommodating” and in our conversation established that it's simply a matter of asking, saying “If you request it [the cafeteria] will do it”. With the school needing to maintain Covid safety standards and efficiency, the main concern seems to be product demand. Supposedly simple solutions to the dietary concerns such as separating cheese and meat from a salad pose complications, as “[the cafeteria] doesn't like to waste food” and they fear solutions like that may cause their fresh ingredients to go to waste.

But how would students and faculty find out about these options? I discovered that the cafeteria is willing to accommodate different diets, but only has one student that comes in and requests a lunch. It is clear that despite the cafeteria's willingness to work with the North Shore community, not a lot of people know to ask. This is likely due to a lack of communication that is causing a disconnect between the cafeteria and the consumers. Since the ability to request a lunch that accommodates one's diet isn't widespread knowledge or particularly convenient, it proves to be another obstacle in obtaining inclusive lunches. Various methods of communication such as Google forms, emails, or even adding a note on the menu outlining the possibility of obtaining an accommodating lunch could make these options more accessible for all.

Ultimately, in the long run, more work can be done to accommodate the various diets found at North Shore High School, but for now, if you are restricted by certain diets, don't be afraid to ask for a lunch that accommodates your needs.

Having “The Talk”

By: Jessica Lillis

Sex is often an inevitable part of one’s high school experience. Whether this involves hearing about it from a peer, experiencing it on your own or even just seeing topics related to it on television or social media, the subject is almost unavoidable. If students are not taught anything in school or by a parent about it, rumors from classmates or social media may be the only source of preparation they have—and this can be quite detrimental. Catherine Brown, the vice president of education policy at Center for American Progress, in an interview recorded for Harvard EdCast, states, “Absent a more complete sex education—or any at all—children often learn from peers, siblings, or the internet... opening the way for misinformation and a lack of understanding of what is and isn’t appropriate when it comes to respect in sexual relationships”. High schools can provide a reliable source of information to teens and give them real facts. As of October 2020: “Thirty states and the District of Columbia require public schools teach sex education, 28 of which mandate both sex education and HIV education” (NCSL). Thus, only about 60% of states in the U.S. have mandatory sexual education classes in order to help and benefit the students. No matter what the topic, high schools should prioritize preparing and teaching teenagers things that are important for the future, whether the course is mandatory or not.

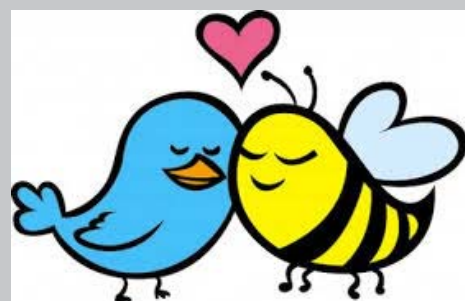
At North Shore High School, students are required to take a year-long health class which is often completed during one’s freshman year. One of North Shore’s health teachers, Ms. Kelly Huggins, explained the current sexual education curriculum and her perspective on it. “I don’t have a set time frame as this is a great unit for question/answer periods. The length of the unit depends on the amount of discussion so it varies for each class depending on their experience, interest, questions, etc. There are 10 set lessons for the sexual education unit though”. She later added, “However, if students aren’t engaging in relationships at that time, the information is not necessarily pertinent to them and so they tend to forget what was discussed”. Huggins continued on to say: “As I talk with past students in their later years when they are actually engaging in relationships, I often get the ‘oh yea - I forgot about that’ comment”. So yes, North Shore does include numerous lessons on sexual education in its high school health class. However, if the lessons are being taught when the material isn’t relevant to the students yet, they often seem to lack any real value. While it is important that sexual education is a part of our health curriculum, it seems that many students struggle to retain the information.

Upon interviewing some students to get their perspective on sex ed at North Shore, they all had similar opinions. Dina Lazaridis, a sophomore

, stated “Last year during health I recall learning about sexual education 2-3 times at most... I think it’s necessary for high-school students to learn about how to prevent things like STD’s”. Jared Dominguez, another sophomore at the High School, added “They definitely talked about it in freshman health, but none of us took it seriously because it was always stuff everybody knew”. In addition, when asked if any of the lessons that were taught included the LGBTQ+ community, Azuré Harvey, a sophomore stated “No, not at all; I can’t remember a single time it was talked about in sex ed, ever for that matter. It’s important because there are students who like the same sex and they have the right to have sex education. It’s harmful enough to have a brief and surface level sex education, but to have none for same sex relationships is dangerous and putting students who are a part of that community at risk.” Not only does the time, depth and relevance of the material being taught matter, but so does including every student, regardless of his or her sexual orientation.

We are lucky that as a school North Shore is able to support a health class that includes mandatory sexual education; however, it is important to be mindful of how and when it is being taught so that the topics have the most impact. The Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine conducted an experiment to measure the effects that sexual education programs have on kids. They discovered “The evidence for the positive impact on behavior by curriculum—and group—based sex and HIV education programs for adolescents and young adults is quite strong... Two thirds of the programs had a significant positive impact on behavior. Many either delayed or reduced sexual activity or increased condom or contraceptive use or both” (SAHM). They were able to prove that having sexual education in the curriculum is truly impactful and if taught correctly, the course can really help teenagers at that time as well as in the future.

Sexual education is not something that should be kicked aside. As a school we should focus on the most effective way to teach and help students, even if that means expanding the curriculum or even waiting a year or two to teach it when it may have more relevance; we also need to make sure everyone is included. Since having or hearing about sexual experiences during teenage years is largely unavoidable nowadays, the school should arm students with valid and reliable information and answer those very difficult and sometimes uncomfortable questions.



A Case Of The Varsity Blues

By: Jamie Holzmann

Universal among all parents is the desire for their child to succeed to the best of their ability. In the midst of college admissions season, many parents are now experiencing the rush of emotion that inevitably comes with watching their previously needy kids get one step closer to entering the real world. However, oftentimes parents subconsciously believe that regardless of their child’s level of independence, they overwhelmingly know what is best for them. For actress Lori Loughlin, this parental instinct cost her and her family not only their pride, but their reputation as well.

In April of 2019, Lori Loughlin, best known by the world for her role as “Aunt Becky” on *Full House*, along with 50 others including her husband Mossimo Giannulli, were charged with bribery and racketeering for manipulating their children’s college acceptances. This event is now referred to as the largest college admissions scam to ever be prosecuted by the Department of Justice, making it clear that the controversy was not simply swept under the rug, regardless of the wealthy financial status of those involved. This conflict dealt with Loughlin’s youngest daughter Olivia, an online influencer known as Olivia Jade, who became popular through various Youtube and Instagram accounts she had created in recent years. Once she had openly announced her commitment to the University of Southern California (USC), things started to get fishy. Her fans began to question how her involvement, or rather lack of involvement in school, as portrayed in her daily “vlogs” led to her attending this elite college.

In the investigation, known as “Operation Varsity Blues”, it was found that Loughlin and her husband had chosen to connect with a college admissions consultant by the name of William Singer in hopes that he would work to secure Olivia’s admission to the university. This involved framing Olivia as a recruit for the University’s crew team. However, according to prosecutors, Olivia had neither previously participated in the sport or intended on participating in it. The plan behind this involved Singer arranging fake athletic profiles, which included pictures of Olivia using the equipment correctly, which the parents would be in charge of taking and sending in, along with faking test scores on the SAT and ACT. This plan did not prove to be successful, as Olivia’s internet fame turned on her after the announcement of her mother’s arrest. Suddenly, she was no longer an inspiration to millions of young viewers, but instead was labeled a cheater for the news that had spread regarding the choices her parents had made.

After almost a year of choosing to seclude herself from all of her social media, she finally broke her silence on the talk show *Red Table Talk*, hosted by Jada and Willow Smith, as well as Jada’s mother Adrienne Banfield-Norris in December of 2020. The interview

tackled not only the previously unanswered questions regarding Olivia’s involvement in and knowledge of the situation as it was happening, but it also addressed how her outlook on life changed because of it. Regarding her involvement, Olivia claimed to have enough knowledge of the fact that she was receiving an extra boost of attention compared to other kids, but “didn’t see why it was bad” at the time. She admitted to having assumed that her parents were in control of the situation enough to trust them with college admissions. She has additionally been under fire in the past for explaining her lack of interest towards education, specifically as she entered her freshman year at USC, telling her fans in a video made in August right in her dorm room: “I don’t know how much of school I’m gonna attend... but I do want the experience of game days and partying, I don’t really care about school”. Soon after, fans began to question why she had chosen such a competitive school if her motive was not related to education, rather than focusing on her internet career and the opportunities she has received with such popular parents. She reflects on her statement in the interview, saying “It’s embarrassing that I ever said those types of things, and not only said it, but edited it, uploaded it and then saw the response to realize it was wrong”. Nevertheless, her association with the University in the first place was still being questioned.

When confronted about her parents’ original reasoning behind USC specifically, Olivia stood by them and their decisions, arguing that both had nothing but good intentions going into the situation, regardless of how inconsiderate or privileged their actions had made them look. She discussed what she believed to be the motive behind her father’s original interest towards USC, saying “I really believe my dad has attachment issues and didn’t want us to leave California”. While this is an understandable concern for parents sending their kids off to college, thousands of families experience these obstacles every year, and the family’s financial status clearly helped them choose USC.

The potential risk of jail time for such a scandal was not recognized until it was too late. Regardless of this family’s emotional motive behind it, a and every other willing participant involved in the Varsity Blues scandal, the situation generally reflects the value of status over morality and an underappreciation of genuine hard work within our society. The exposure of this scandal reveals the dirty secret that oftentimes people with power or connections use their prestige and money more than those who are putting in the work.

COLLEGE

Miss Americana: 15 Years Of Fighting The Media

By: Sammy Lockwood

Everyone knows Taylor Swift. She is a former country singer who is now considered the queen of pop. For longer than some students at North Shore have been alive, Swift has been creating and producing iconic songs that everyone knows and loves such as, "Shake It Off," "Blank Space," "22," "Love Story," and, of course, "You Belong With Me." Albums like *Red*, *1989*, *Fearless*, and *Speak Now* played a monumental role in our generation's childhood. However, no matter how much everyone loves her, no one can forget the drama-filled "Anti-Swift Era", where it was more popular to mock Taylor Swift than it was to admit to be her fan.

As kids, we constantly heard Swift being mocked for having what the media claimed to be a revolving door of boyfriends. As young children, it seemed fair; she dated many of the heartthrobs: Joe Jonas, Taylor Lautner, John Mayer, Jake Gyllenhaal, Calvin Harris, Tom Hiddleston, and, perhaps most notably, Harry Styles. However, now that her fanbase is older, we can recognize that her rise to fame had nothing to do with her love life. The media attributed her success to her relationships because the patriarchy made it so that women could only have so much influence without standing beside a man. So, for most of Swift's career, she was forced into the role of arm-candy for her lovers. But with the rise of feminism, the media found a new angle to attempt to topple the uprising star.

Swift gave the news outlets little to use against her, but Kanye West was more than happy to supply the media with a feud. The two first had an altercation when West interrupted Taylor Swift's acceptance speech for winning "Best Female Music Video" at the VMAs in 2009, claiming that Beyonce was robbed and more deserving of that award. The two claimed they held no quarrels with each other, but Swift later wrote lyrics in her famous song "Innocent" that suggested otherwise: "life is a tough crowd, 32 and still growing up now" doing little to hide her jab at West, who later said he had no remorse for taking the moment at the VMAs away from Swift.

Then again, years later, after everything seemed to have been resolved, West released "Famous", where he claimed Swift should sleep with him because he made her famous, and then called her fake. Jumping on the chance to get her word in, Kim Kardashian, West's wife at the time, pulled up footage of Swift claiming to be cool with the lyrics, even calling them funny. This caused the start of Swift's Reputation Era, where it appeared that she was at odds with the whole world of social media and news outlets.

Taylor Swift's Reputation Era is arguably the most famous of all of her brushes with the media. Having been slandered by a majority of the world and being publicly called a snake, Swift decided to change her style. After laying low for over a year, she released "Reputation", her sixth studio album that changed everything. With her iconic line of "I'm sorry, the old Taylor can't come to the phone right now. Why? Oh! Because she's dead!" Swift effectively branded herself with the hatred that the media forced on her, featuring snakes all throughout the album and making unmistakable parallels to West's brand as well. She effectively empowered herself through this album by showing that no matter how hard the media pushed at her, she would fight back.

Finally, after ten years of her career, the media let Taylor Swift be. She finally regained her popularity among her targeted teenage audience with her sister albums, *Folklore* and *Evermore*. Over the course of her fifteen years in the spotlight, Swift has been tried and tested over and over again by the media, and she has proven herself to be worthy of the global spotlight by holding strong, even when the world appeared to be against her. Against all odds, Taylor Swift only became more popular as her world changed, even being named Artist of the Decade in 2019, simply by being true to who she is; she is strong in moral character and focuses on fighting the patriarchal ways of the media through her music.

A Much Needed Spring Break

By: Faith Cook

The past few months of cold and cloudy weather have left families trapped inside with little to do. Spring break is the perfect time to get out and enjoy the outdoors, but the lingering threat of Co-vid means people have to be cautious. However, there are still many safe activities to partake in with your family, like safely traveling, having a fun movie night, getting organized and hanging out with a small group of friends, getting outside, and more.

Spring Break is usually the perfect time to take a vacation and relax. Many people might be thinking that because of the pandemic they can not travel. However, a lot of airports have found new ways to keep their passengers safe. Many airports "...want to ensure that the public knows it is still safe to travel," said Dana Schield who is with the Colorado Springs Airport. And, she says, the airport is taking every precaution. These precautions include workers wearing a clear plastic face shield and the TSA officers changing their gloves with each passenger pat-down or upon a passenger's request.

In addition to travelling, no one can go wrong with snacks and a good movie. The first job to be done is to find a movie you and your friends/family all agree on. If you can't find a movie to watch, there are plenty of resources you can use like Random Movie Picker to help you make a decision. After that is done, the most important step is to find good snacks. Usually some popcorn, candy and sodas will do. Then find a comfy place, a cozy blanket and enjoy the show.

A popular thing to do in relation to this activity is known as Netflix Party; it is a website that allows you to watch Netflix movies and shows with your friends in real time. All you need to do is share the code and you can watch a movie and chat with your friends as if you are all in the same room.

Whether you are looking for new ways to organize yourself or are taking this Spring Break opportunity to do smaller clean-up projects, Spring Break is the perfect time to tackle the clutter in your life and get back on track. To start off, you can choose one place in your house that you need to re-organize and start there. Organize your work, a section in your house or your clothing. Being organized helps reduce stress and it is a healthy and safe activity for Spring Break.

Finally, cooking at home is another safe activity to do over Spring Break. However, cooking is a hobby that doesn't appeal to everyone, but it is worth a try. Cooking can help you feel and look healthier, boost your energy and stabilize your mood. If you need some ideas and inspiration, look up Baking Ideas For When You're Feeling Bored and you will find many baking ideas along with their recipes.

During Spring Break you may find yourself with nothing to do besides going on your phone. If that happens, stop and consider trying any of the above activities. There's so much to do and see instead of going on your phone, even with the Covid restrictions that are in place. Make sure to use the time during your Spring Break efficiently.



The Power Of Vision Boards

By: Ella DeSane

Scissors in hand, pictures ready to glue, a vision in mind ready to make come true. We all have visions, hopes and dreams that we want desperately to become our reality; a push is all that is needed, yet there is not one in sight. Motivation is not always easy to find and procrastination tends to take over the mind. Many people do not realize that vision boards can be that motivation that they are looking for to help get them out of a rut.

Mental and physical health are important. For most people though, it isn't their priority. Making a vision board is a simple aid, however; it can be made quite easily. Typically, a board is made by using paper, glue, pictures, magazines, scissors, and other art materials like glitter. A lot of people would say that it isn't "their thing" or that they aren't an "artist,"; the best thing about vision boards though is that you don't have to be one. Vision
March 2021

boards are about you and your personal style. It's a way of motivating and expressing yourself when it comes to organizing your future and being motivated in regards to your dreams and desires. It helps to channel what goals you hope to achieve in your life, whether it's focused on the upcoming month, year or an even longer period of time. It can focus on one area of your life or on all areas of your life. Just be selective about what pictures and words/phrases that you put on your board.

Focus and motivation are essential when it comes to getting anything done. Without these things, completing a simple task usually takes much longer than it needs to. Procrastination can be everyone's enemy from time to time. However, it is hard to ignore the things that need to get done if there is a constant reminder in front of you. To-do lists were made for that very reason. However, why not

have something attractive to look at though like a vision board. It sparks creativity and will inspire you to make the most of a day that does not seem like it has much potential to be a good one. The more that someone's responsibilities get pushed back, the more stress that builds up. This can lead someone down a dark path in regards to anxiety or depression. A vision board will help you to keep your "eye on the prize".

Vision boards are not only a way to organize your life and stay focused, but it's clearly also a form of art therapy. Many people find that putting their emotions into vision boards helps them to better understand what is going on inside of their head. Author Emily White, someone who has faced anxiety and depression in her life, said in regard to vision boards: "I have struggled with anxiety, depression and other mental disorders. The most difficult part of these mental illnesses is that we lack

clear solutions that will create inner healing so many people need. However, after several years of having no solutions to my struggles, I finally found something that brought relief." She added that "Vision boards sound a little silly, but they are nothing short of extraordinary. They function similarly to a poster you hang up in your room, except a vision board is decorated [by you] with pictures or quotes that capture your goals". "Studies on the use of vision boards for depression are limited. Available research though suggests that they may be helpful when combined with solution-focused therapy. This type of psychotherapy helps you change your thinking patterns and behaviors to meet goals you set for yourself." (Healthline). Overall, vision boards are an affordable, fun, and easy activity to help someone stay focused and decompress. So grab your friends, some magazines, glue and oak tag and make an evening out of it. You won't be sorry that you did.

Have The Brooklyn Nets Stolen New York From The Knicks?

By: William McConville

The New York Knicks are historically one of the most well-known teams in the NBA. If you're talking about the 1970 and 1973 championship teams, or the Patrick Ewing led playoff regular Knicks team of the 1990s, then the New York Knicks can even be deemed an iconic team. The Knicks today however are known for being one of the worst franchises in the NBA, not making the playoffs since 2013 during the Carmelo Anthony era, where they were eliminated in the Eastern Conference Semifinals by the Indiana Pacers. In the years that followed, they were and have continued to be abysmal, to the point where the Knicks returning to being the respected franchise that they once were has become an unrealistic dream. Meanwhile, their crosstown rivals, the Brooklyn Nets, did in the 2019 off-season what the Knicks couldn't do for the past 20 years, signing MVP caliber players Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving in free agency. Neither player had any interest whatsoever in meeting with the Knicks while looking for a team. On top of that, the Nets completed a blockbuster trade in January 2021 for James Harden of the Houston Rockets, creating a big three in Brooklyn that has the potential to be one of the most dominant offensive forces the NBA has ever seen. So the question is, have the Brooklyn Nets become the new face of New York basketball?

As of right now, the Nets' games dominate viewership in the New York market over the Knicks. This trend has been going on since the arrival of Durant and Irving in Brooklyn, but the James Harden trade finally gave Brooklyn the edge over the Knicks, who have averaged 111,000 viewers per game in their last eight games on the MSG network, while the Nets have averaged 122,000 viewers on the YES network over the same span of time. This may not seem like a significantly higher number than the Knicks' viewership, but just five years ago during the 2015/16 season, the Knicks had over four times more viewers locally than the Nets had, a trend that has slowly reversed since then. These numbers show that the Nets have become much more appealing to New Yorkers, who are growing tired of a Knicks' organization that has disappointed every year in the time since they have last made the playoffs.

Amid all of the negativity surrounding the Knicks, things are looking up for them though based on their start this season. They began the season with two losses, but won five out of their next six after that to give them a record of 5-3. They have kept this good momentum going as they have a record of 20-19 as of March 14th and are the seventh seed in the Eastern Conference. Julius Randle's play has been stellar this season, with him averaging 22.1 points, 11.2 rebounds, and 6.9 assists, causing him to be named to his first All-Star team, a big statement by him as well as the New York Knicks. They have an impressive core of young players that include RJ Barrett and Mitchell Robinson, who have shown very positive signs of growth in their game so far this year; rookie Obi Toppin has also performed well and shows positive signs that he will be a major piece in the Knick's future. The 25th overall pick in this year's draft, rookie Immanuel Quickley, has exploded onto the scene this season in the NBA, averaging 12 points, 2.3 rebounds and 2.7 assists off the bench, surpassing all expectations. The Knicks have also completed a trade for veteran point guard Derrick Rose, reuniting him with head coach Tom Thibodeau, who coached Rose in Chicago and

Minnesota. So far, these positive points to the season can give Knick fans hope for the future, and establish a positive winning culture in New York in the years to come.

Brooklyn seems like it has completed the mission of establishing this winning culture on its side of New York, further solidifying it with the arrival of James Harden. There are many who criticize this trade however, saying that the Nets lost too much, by giving up their best interior defender, Jarrett Allen, as well as guard Caris LeVert. Brooklyn gave up an absurd number of first round picks in this trade as well, trading its 2022, 24, and 26 picks to the Rockets and four first round pick swaps in 2021, 23, 25, and 27. In short, the Nets lost two of their best players outside of Durant and Irving and gave up control of their future first round picks for the next seven years in order to land Harden. Brooklyn definitely has gone all in to win a championship, and this trade proves that. Even so, the fact remains that if Durant, Irving, and Harden can figure out their chemistry together on the court, the NBA may have a new dynasty in Brooklyn that has the potential to bring multiple championships back to the Big Apple.

Even though there is potential for an NBA dynasty in Brooklyn, it doesn't change how most Knicks fans feel about their team. The Knicks have an extremely loyal fan base and a team that has the potential to be great in the future. Most Knicks fans would be content to see how things go with their young talent under coach Thibodeau rather than redirect their support to Brooklyn. Although Brooklyn may have taken New York for the next few years in terms of winning, the Knick's fanbase will continue to stand behind them in hopes of seeing a budding franchise blossom once again.

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When The Saint Came Marching In

By: Jack Levin

Drew Brees is considered one of the best quarterbacks of all time. With countless records and awards, his name will always be respected throughout the NFL. Unfortunately it looks like Brees's career has finally come to an end. As we look back on his career, we can see how important of an impact he left, not only for his teams, but for anyone who has watched him play.

Drew Brees attended Austin Westlake High School where he was 28-0-1 as the starting quarterback. Even after tearing his ACL in the 11th grade, Brees came back and won the Texas High School 5A Most Valuable Offensive Player award in 1996. In that same year, he led his high school team to the Texas high school title game where they beat Abilene Cooper High School 55-15. But even after having a stellar high school career, Brees was not heavily sought after by colleges.

Brees went on to attend Purdue / University and broke a myriad of records there, including "two NCAA records, 13 Big Ten Conference records including passing yards, touchdown passes, total offensive yards, completions, and attempts, and 19 Purdue University records, including longest touchdown which was 99 yards." (NFL.com) He then went on to be drafted by the San Diego Chargers in 2001 where he was the backup to quarterback Doug Flutie. Upon getting the starting job, Brees had a couple of shaky seasons as the starter, but once his job was in jeopardy, he pulled himself together. He eventually became a free agent, which marked the beginning of his legacy.

Drew Brees signed with the New

Orleans Saints after the Miami Dolphins backed out of negotiations. "Drew Brees was the perfect guy for an imperfect situation" says Saints' general manager Mickey Loomis. Drew Brees came at the right time, as the state of Louisiana was struggling to recover from Hurricane Katrina which hit it hard the year before. Brees led the Saints to 8 playoff appearances and a Super Bowl title in 2009. Saints' fans flourished watching their team hoist the Lombardi Trophy only a couple of years after they had lost everything. Despite a few more heartbreaking losses in the playoffs, Drew Brees gave Louisiana everything he had. He now has 13 Pro Bowl appearances, one All Pro, two Offensive Player of the Year titles, and holds 8 NFL quarterback records at the moment, including most career passing yards and passing completions.

Drew Brees is a gentleman on and off the field; he gave everything he had to the game of football and fans praise him for his dedication. He will and forever be a New Orleans Saint. "The Saints made the right decision signing Drew Brees — not just in terms of his arm, but because of his heart and mind." — NFL Hall of Famer Marshall Faulk

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2021 NFL Free Agency Overview

By: Michael Ye

The 2020 NFL season has officially concluded, with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers defeating the Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl LV. Now that the playoffs are over, the early stages of the off-season are approaching. With that being said, the next upcoming event is free agency, which began on March 17th. This is a period of time filled with huge signings and blockbuster trades, helping teams improve their rosters for both the short and long term. The 2021 free agency class is filled with superstars and headlined by elite talent at the safety and wide receiver positions. An important thing to note however, is that the NFL had lost billions due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This loss in revenue will force it to lower the salary cap for the 2021 NFL season, which may affect teams' decisions when negotiating contracts with players.

On March 8th, Dak Prescott signed a four year \$160 million contract extension with the Dallas Cowboys. Prescott, 27, has a career passer rating of 97.3 (Football Reference) and was named the 2016 Offensive Rookie of the Year. In the five games he played last year, he completed 68% of his passes for 1,856 yards, 9 TDs, 4 INTs, and posted a passer rating of 99.6. His season unfortunately came to an end however, as he suffered a devastating compound ankle fracture, concluding his 2020 campaign. Despite this career threatening injury, Prescott is still a top ten quarterback in the league and has led the Cowboys to the playoffs twice in his five year career thus far. He has proven that he has the talent and consistency to be the franchise quarterback.

Like the free agent quarterback class, there aren't many great running backs on the market. Some of the players available include Aaron Jones, Chris Carson, Kenyan Drake, Todd Gurley, Leonard Fournette, and James Conner. The best player available in this position is Aaron Jones, who has cemented himself as a top ten halfback in the league. Jones, 26, is an elusive dual threat back that provides immense value in both the running and receiving game. In 14 games last season, Jones rushed for 1,104 yards, 9 TDs, averaged 5.5 YPC, and caught 47 passes for 355 receiving yards (Football Reference). He was a key contributor to the Green Bay Packers' NFC Championship run, by leading the running game. With the Packers having a projected -\$28.4 million in cap space for the off-season (Over The Cap), there is a real possibility that Jones will leave and sign with another team that can afford him. Jones should receive a four to five year contract worth between \$11-15 million per year.

When it comes to the free agent wide receivers, there are talented playmakers all across the market. Some of the best players include Allen Robinson, Kenny Golladay, Will Fuller, Antonio Brown, Corey Davis, Marvin Jones, and Juju Smith-Schuster. Robinson, 27, has solidified himself as an elite receiver in the league, and can be a true number one option on any given offense. In 16 games last season, Robinson caught 102 passes for 1,250 yards and 6 TDs, while only dropping three passes all year (Football Reference). What makes him such a great player are his hands, route running, and his ability to perform under any

quarterback. Despite not being the fastest receiver, only running a 4.56 40 yard dash, he is one of the best in the entire league at gaining separation from opposing cornerbacks. All of this is evident as some of his most productive years came while catching passes from below average quarterbacks, such as Mitch Trubisky and Blake Bortles. Robinson was franchise tagged for \$18 million by the Chicago Bears after failing to reach an agreement on a long-term extension a few weeks ago. However, he has hinted, on numerous occasions, that he isn't eager to stay with the team. Right after being tagged, Robinson had reportedly "liked" Tweets of fans criticizing the franchise tag. These subtle actions have already sparked trade rumors, and it's only a matter of time before the Bears need to make a move on the situation. Kenny Golladay, 27, is another player who has proven that he can be a number one receiver. Before last season, he had two consecutive years posting over 1,000 yards. In 2020 however, Golladay dealt with injuries which only allowed him to play five games. In that limited sample size, Golladay caught 20 passes for 338 yards and 2 TDs. Unlike the best receivers in the league, Golladay is not a great route runner, as he often struggles to gain separation from defenders. But he's able to make up for all that with his athleticism and 6'4" frame. His physical traits are what allow him to go up and catch difficult passes that are often contested. Golladay should see a four or five year contract worth anywhere between \$16-22 million per year.

In terms of offensive lineman available on the market, there are elite players at every position. Some of those players include Trent Williams, Corey Linsley, Joe Thuney, and Alex Mack. Williams, 32, is an eight time Pro Bowler and has been one of the best and most consistent offensive tackles throughout the 2010 decade. In 14 games last season, he allowed four sacks, committed ten penalties, and had a PFF Overall Grade of 91.9. Williams is the best run blocking tackle in the league, earning a 91.8 run blocking grade from PFF. He has also proven that he can play in any blocking scheme, allowing him to fit in on any given offense. Williams should receive a three or four year contract worth between \$18-21 million per year. The best center that is set to become a free agent is Corey Linsley. Linsley, 29, had a breakout year last season, where he was named to the First Team All-Pro. In 13 games last year, he allowed just one sack, committed no penalties, and earned a PFF Overall Grade of 86.4. Linsley is effective as both a pass and run blocker, and was a key piece of the Packers' offensive line, which helped lead them to NFC Championship. Linsley should see a three year deal worth between \$9-12 million per season.

Shifting over to the other side of the ball, there are a lot of great pass rushers set to become free agents this off-season. Some of the best players include Shaquil Barrett, Yannick Ngakoue, Jadeveon Clowney, Carl Lawson, Leonard Williams, Melvin Ingram, Haason Reddick, Bud Dupree, Trey Hendrickson, and Matthew Judon. Over the past two years, Barrett, 28, has established himself as one of the

league's better edge rushers. In 2019, he had a career year where he led the league with 19.5 sacks, earning himself a franchise tag worth \$15.8 million. In 15 games last season, he recorded 8 sacks, 42 pressures (Football Reference), and a PFF Overall Grade of 70.7. Barrett is a speed rushing 3-4 OLB that can rush the passer, stop the run, and even drop back into coverage when needed. He was a key part of that Buccaneers' defense, and helped lead the team to a Super Bowl victory. Barrett should receive a 4 year contract worth anywhere between \$16-20 million per year. Another intriguing player on the market is Leonard Williams who, like Barrett, was franchise tagged right after the 2019 season by the Giants. Williams, 26, is coming off a breakout season where he recorded 11.5 sacks, 42 pressures (Football Reference), and earned a PFF Overall Grade of 79.8. He's most effective as a run stopper, as he only missed 3.4% of his tackles in 2020 (Football Reference). Williams also has the versatility to play both the 4-3 DT and 3-4 DE roles, as he did with the Jets and Giants, respectively. He is a big and strong power rusher that can anchor the defensive line. As he's really only had one great season, the Giants decided to franchise tag Williams for the second consecutive year. This move comes at a hefty price, as it will cost approximately \$19.35 million for the 2021 season. A transaction like this indicates that the Giants need to see whether or not this high level of play is sustainable for a player like Williams.

When looking at the off-ball linebackers set to become free agents, the market is rather lackluster in terms of talent. Some of the best players include Lavonte David, Jayon Brown, and Matt Milano. On March 10th, David and the Buccaneers agreed on a two year \$25 million extension. David, 31, has been one of the best linebackers in the 2010 decade, and the best player out of this group. In 16 games last year, he recorded 117 tackles, allowed a passer rating of 93.4 (Football Reference), and had a PFF Overall Grade of 81.6. David was a big reason why the Tampa Bay Buccaneers were able to claim their second Super Bowl in franchise history. He was the captain of their defense, which only surrendered nine total points in the Big Game. David has proven that he can stop the run and play pass coverage at an elite level, making him one of the most complete MLBs in the league.

In terms of the free agent cornerback market, it is loaded with mostly nickelbacks who typically play in the slot. Some of the best corners include William Jackson, Desmond King, Richard Sherman, Mike Hilton, Shaquill Griffin, Troy Hill, Chidobe Awuzie, and Brian Poole. Sherman, 32, is the best and most established player in this group. Although he isn't quite the shutdown number one corner he used to be on the Seattle Seahawks, he is still a starting caliber guy who can play on the outside. In 2020, Sherman dealt with injuries that limited him to only five games. In those games, he grabbed one interception, allowed a passer rating of 116.2 (Football Reference), and logged a PFF Overall Grade of 67.7. What makes Sherman such a talented player is his football IQ and tackling ability. In the past three years, he's never missed more than 10.3% of his tackles (Football Reference). As an experienced veteran in this league,

Sherman has a great understanding of coverage concepts, especially in zone defense. However, given his age and limited scheme variation, he will see a short term contract for one to two years worth between \$9-15 million per year.

Finally, the free agent safety market contains the best and most talented players available. Some of the best players include Anthony Harris, Justin Simmons, John Johnson, and Keanu Neal. Over the past three years, Harris, 29, has quietly been one of the best safeties in the league. In 2019, he had a career year where he grabbed a league leading six interceptions, allowed a passer rating of 44.2, and only missed 4.8% of his tackles (Football Reference). This elite level performance earned him a franchise tag by the Minnesota Vikings worth \$11.4 million. In 2020 however, Harris took a step back along with the entire Vikings' defense, where he allowed a completion % of 58.3, a passer rating of 118.1 (Football Reference), and earned a PFF Grade of 66.2. Even with a down year in 2020, Harris still remains one of the most complete safeties in the league. He is a superb tackler and plays elite zone coverage, especially against the deep ball. Over the past three seasons, him and fellow teammate safety Harrison Smith have formed the best safety duo in the NFL. Considering that Smith becomes a free agent in the very next off-season, there is a possibility that the Vikings will choose not to give an extension to Harris. With that being said, Harris should receive a three to five year contract worth between \$12-15 million per year. Like Harris, Justin Simmons has also been one of the best safeties in the league. Simmons, 27, was also franchise tagged by the Denver Broncos right after the 2019 season. That year was by far the best of his career, as he allowed a passer rating of just 43.6, only missed 7.9% of his tackles (Football Reference), and earned a PFF Grade of 90.8. In 2020 however, Simmons regressed, yet was still a great player. He hauled in five interceptions, allowed a passer rating of 102.2, missed 11.1% of his tackles (Football Reference), and earned a PFF Grade of 77.4. What makes Simmons such an elite talent is his versatility, run defense, durability, and coverage skills. He can line up all over the secondary, whether it's at free safety, nickel corner, the box, or even on the outside. With his athleticism, speed, and awareness, Simmons has also proven that he can match up against some of the league's best offensive weapons. The Broncos decided to franchise tag Simmons for the second consecutive season, rather than give him a long term extension. This move will cost about \$13.7 million for the 2021 NFL season.

Just like so many other events going on throughout the world today, this NFL off-season will be like no other in history. With the first month in resulting in huge rumors about players like Deshaun Watson possibly being traded, as well as transactions such as JJ Watt signing a two year \$31 million contract with the Arizona Cardinals, it sends off a signal as to what will come in the later weeks. A fanbase will either feel pain and disappointment when a star player leaves, or joy and excitement when its team makes a huge signing. But if there's one thing that is guaranteed, it is that many players will find a new home with a different franchise.