



Parting Words From The Class Of 2021

By: Sophie Blumenthal

Even in normal times, the concept of a farewell is bittersweet. It suggests that even through the sadness of parting, one can still take solace in the promise of a new beginning. This year, despite the chaos, tragedy, and social remoteness, North Shore has managed to maintain an environment of inclusion and prepare us for that farewell. From Mr. Bloom's extra drive in the face of the pandemic to create a yearbook that matches up to the ones of years past, to Ms. Soltis' efforts to navigate Google Meet, to Mr. Contreras' initiative to get to know the students of North Shore, every person in this school has shown a dedication to making this year as normal, manageable, and enjoyable as possible.

When I was asked to craft an article bidding farewell to North Shore, I balked. I hadn't walked the halls, looked my teachers in the eye, or toasted a bagel in the cafeteria in over a year. How could I possibly say goodbye to a place I had already been isolated from for so long?

The Class of 2021 has certainly experienced great loss since the District shut down last year, but as this year draws to a close, I'd like to use this space to exercise gratitude for all we still have and highlight the experiences of some of you, the Senior Class of 2021.

"We are so proud to be part of the Class of 2021," omnipresent and tireless class presidents Michael Gimondo and Ariadna Pavlidis-Sanchez told me. "Our class has overcome a lot of challenges this year and we are excited to see the amazing things we will all accomplish in the future!"

As Michael and Ariadna directed my gaze to the future, Lauren Hagen reminded me to appreciate the past, observing, "Despite the insanity that this year brought, I'm grateful for it and the way it pushed me. I not only learned a ton of new skills, but I learned more about myself and all the things I'm capable of, like learning new subjects remotely, managing my time, learning to paint with my left hand after breaking my right wrist, and the list goes on."

Lauren left me with a hopeful note, saying, "If the past year has taught me anything, it's that I'm much more capable than I give myself credit for, and I think this is true for everyone."

Emma Arboleda eloquently and simply told me, "I'm grateful for healthy friends and family."

Finally, Jackson Best gave voice to what I think I'll miss most about my home here at North Shore in his comment: "I don't know where I would be without my friends, whether I need help or just need to vent, they've always been there."

As we look ahead to our new lives as high school graduates, we must remember those who shaped who we are and helped us get to where we are. It is easy to allow oneself to take for granted the people who truly matter, which is why I'm so grateful to the seniors who shared their gratitude, hopes, and insights with me.

The Class of 2021 has faced its fair share of difficulty, but it is my hope that we can enter into the future stronger, more resilient, and more appreciative than before.

Resisting Adulthood

By: Lauren Hagen

Every incoming senior is faced with the realization that by the end of the year they should somehow make the daunting transition from child to adult. Now, what that means I don't exactly know, but it sounds terrible and conjures the image of someone drowning in responsibilities. This pressure makes senior year into a countdown, where everyone is just waiting for life to suddenly change after graduation, like the flip of a switch. The last ten months at North Shore High School are packed with as many fun activities as possible so that we can make the most of our limited time, because come graduation, we really have to "buckle down."

While it makes sense that adults try and force a sense of responsibility upon us before we leave for college, this does not mean we must abandon the things we once loved. Why must we leave behind our childhoods just because we're leaving high school? I see no reason why we can't be successful without relinquishing the people we used to be. We are often our best selves when we readopt aspects of our childhood personalities, unencumbered by stress, with a hopeful view of the world and a trust in our peers. I believe we should strive to hold onto the joy in which we regarded the world with at a young age, because a love of life is what inspires people to keep going.

Furthermore, we must reject the idea that adulthood must be filled with serious activities because frankly, "adult" hobbies seem boring. Some of the most enjoyable moments of my high school career have occurred while revisiting activities from my childhood that I was supposed to outgrow: ghosting with my friends, decorating pumpkins, going swimming with all of my clothes on, fingerpainting, having scavenger hunts. These are all things I do not plan to abandon, simply because they make me happy. I hope that our class adopts this same mindset - that no matter what, we should hold onto the things that delight us - and remember that sometimes it's good to abandon the notion that we have to get serious and simply just try and enjoy life. I know we are all going to become adults and take on new responsibilities, but we get to choose how to "adult" for ourselves.

Track: The Activity That Shaped My High School Experience

By: Sophie Rosencrans

Upon graduating from the eighth grade, I remember thinking to myself just how different my life was going to be from that point forward. The plot of every coming-of-age movie I had seen was centered around the high school experience - studying tirelessly for exams, meeting new friends, "becoming yourself," maybe even falling in love. High school was glamorized for some characters, and seen as some sort of torturous dungeon for others. I was unsure of what to expect in this new stage of my life, but I set incredibly high expectations for myself. Although the college application process was a while away, I recognized the enormous task that lay before me, and as I entered high school, I prepared for four years of hard work in both the academic and athletic spheres of my life and left no room for error.

Well... high school was nothing like I had envisioned or how it was portrayed in the movies I had watched. Despite the first two years of high school being relatively normal, almost the entirety of my time was consumed by my involvement in the North Shore Cross Country and Track programs. The intensity of the training and competition was unlike any other sport I had participated in before and I strove to become the best possible version of myself. Being a runner did not simply mean having practice six days a week - it meant immersing myself in the sport and planning my entire day, all year, around my training. By mid-freshman year I had set forth an outline of what I wanted to accomplish in the next three years, all so that I could fit the requirements of the term that was coined by our team as "being great." My mindset was geared towards competition, and when I was unable to train, I feared that I would quickly lose the fit state I was in. This mentality is what pushed me to hop on the treadmill at 6am each morning on my teen tour before sophomore year, bike before work the following summer, and run each day during a global pandemic. It is what also led me to face injury after injury and disappointment after disappointment.

Although I began my sophomore year at a high point, I soon faced an injury after a hard collision between my knee and a bench. I ended

my Cross Country season short that year and was unable to regain a high fitness level until the end of the following season, Indoor Track. The Spring Season was spent making up for the time I had missed between mid-fall and winter and when I learned that I had sustained a stress fracture (an injury caused by repetitive force and overuse of the foot) I was benched for the remainder of that season as well, unable to run for the next three months. Despite the challenges that Sophomore year had brought me, I was confident in my ability to achieve success during my Junior year. After once again making up for lost time, I felt good about the place I was at in my running career in January of 2020. The team and I were working hard together and had hopes of a national ranking in the Distance Medley Relay. Just our luck, our opportunity to achieve this accomplishment was taken from us the day before we were scheduled to compete due to the impending threat of COVID-19. While I could never have predicted it at the time, it would be almost a year until the team would officially train together again.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, I spent quite a bit of time reflecting on what I had done with the Cross Country and Track team. Had I spent so much time focusing on running that I ultimately missed out on my high school experience? Was I putting myself through the stresses of training at the expense of my own health? Could I ever truly enjoy the sport if I was unable to achieve "greatness"? What I have come to realize is that my high expectations led me to discover a sense of resiliency, diligence, and self-discipline - qualities I take pride in and know will lead me to future success. Despite this, failing to reach such high expectations often left me feeling unsatisfied, even when I had pushed myself to the point of physical exhaustion. Although I cannot confidently proclaim that I have no regrets, I am eternally grateful for my time spent on the Cross Country and Track team. I have learned what it means to contribute to a cause greater than myself and work hard for the sake of those around me. I will always cherish the moments spent with my teammates during workouts, on trips, and all of the time in between. I know that I will be profoundly impacted by my time on the team for years to come.



Time Flies

By: Jackson Best

Well, we made it. To be honest, I didn't think we would get here. When school first shut down in March of 2020, so many things that I took for granted evaporated before my eyes, most notably, school itself. Within a week, I was wandering the streets of Sea Cliff, reliving memories of playing poker backstage at the Winter Concert. In under a month I found myself reminiscing about cramming in my math homework at cafeteria tables. Even the things that I once dreaded, like deadlines, awkward seat assignments or Mr. Rodahan's history tests, seemed preferable to lockdown. Don't get me wrong, sleeping till noon armed with tea and my cat was amazing for the first few days, but it got old. Fast.

People have always been saying that time flies. In fact, the phrase comes from "tempus fugit," found in Virgil's *Georgics*, a Latin text dating back to 29 BCE. It seems that even our best poets have to remind themselves of our limited time. But often, the message falls on deaf ears. Mr. Timlin sat me down towards the end of my freshman year and told me that before I knew it, I'd be walking out the main entrance of the school, college bound. Due to my Geometry test the next period, I politely nodded, and then proceeded to scribble formulas in the margins of my weather map. In sophomore year, Mrs. Sclair gave me weeks in advance to study for tests, exams which I often began reviewing for no earlier than midnight the day before. 24 hours prior to my SAT, originally scheduled for March 14th, 2020, I was frantically punching numbers into my calculator until I got a text. Canceled. Within minutes I was out of the house and in a friend's driveway. For nearly my entire life, I had my time laid out for me via assignments, extracurriculars and events. What made lockdown so difficult was that now I was the captain of my own life. I chose when to eat, sleep and work. And frankly, it was terrifying.

Time wasn't flying. It was more of a walk. Or crawl. I couldn't sleep it away, although I certainly tried. I couldn't blame the world forever, but I put up a valiant effort. Even my pets couldn't make the days go by any faster, despite my cat's best attempts. As my phone flooded with missing assignment notifications and my tea stockpile ran dry, I found myself grasping at straws. There's a reason we attached "when you're having fun" to Virgil's message. I might also add, "when you're nervous." I was so used to being pressed for time, to being worried about something, or excited, or anxious. I was living in the future, always looking ahead. Quarantine forced me, and many others, into the present moment rather violently. For the first time, I had to be comfortable simply being.

Living in the present is hard.

It has been the aim of many religions and philosophies. The samurai of feudal Japan practiced Rinzai Buddhism to eliminate the fear of death by focusing on the here and now. The Stoics of Rome recognized their inability to control the world, so instead they focused their attention onto themselves. Even secret societies like the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn sought to be fully present within reality. When your schedule is busy, you don't have to be consciously aware of your thoughts or feelings. But when it's you, a cat and an increasingly claustrophobic bedroom, it's all you have.

When my parents kept waxing on about how they were "really discovering themselves," or "seeing the silver lining of the situation," I wanted to throw a chair at them. That's the last thing a nervous wreck wants to hear in the middle of a global pandemic. But slowly, slowly, I began to understand where they were coming from. Where once spring just blended into summer without my attention, each day I noticed the air being slightly warmer, and the sun out a little longer. I started actually listening to music as opposed to putting it on as background noise. And the few interactions I had with friends and extended family were precious. While I'm no samurai, I like to think that quarantine helped me appreciate not just what I have, but simply the act of being. That's something I probably wouldn't have investigated if lockdown never occurred.

So, back to Virgil. The full quote is "fugit inreparabile tempus," meaning "irretrievable time escapes." When people, especially young people like myself, hear our parents or long dead Roman poets preach about the value of time, our ears tend to turn off. So, I offer a slightly different solution. Time doesn't have to fly. You don't have to maximize every waking moment trying to "seize the day," a phrase penned by Horace, another Roman poet. Time is not sand slipping through your fingertips, nor is it an inexhaustible resource. Consider the advice of American psychologist and spiritual teacher Ram Dass: Just be here now.



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Please reach out to an editor, Ms. Millman or our Google Classroom (trahm5w) for more information.



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My Thank You To Soccer

By: Celia Labatte

Throughout high school my most valuable memories were created while playing on the varsity soccer team. Playing on this team taught me how to work with others and act as a leader by teaching me how to effectively listen to others. I began playing for the team in ninth grade and I continued playing for the rest of my high school career. I came back each year because I enjoyed practicing with my team, working to improve my skills, and building friendships with my fellow teammates.

My fondest memory was playing in the semi-finals during my junior year. We entered the playoffs unsure as to how far we would actually make it, but after winning the first round against Calhoun, we became more confident in our abilities. The next game we played was against Garden City and it threw many challenges at us. We fought through receiving a red

card and having one of our best players taken off the field; as a result, we played a man down. Ultimately, we persevered and won a huge victory that sent us to the semi-finals. Our final game was against Mephram, and even though we lost in overtime, it is still one of my favorite memories because we all played as hard as we could and left everything on the field. The many practices and pasta parties that led up to the playoff games are also some of my most cherished memories because it was during those moments that we became a family.

When the pandemic began in March of 2020, we never expected that it would take away our fall season, and when it did, we felt defeated and robbed of a treasured experience. Luckily, we were able to restart our season and compete during the spring. After experiencing the heartbreak when the original season was suspended, I found

myself grateful that I had the opportunity to play one more time. The pandemic has shown me how much I value my soccer team and how my experience at North Shore would not have been the same without it. Because our season could have been shut down at any moment as a result of an increase in Covid-19 cases, I appreciated every practice and enjoyed each moment with my teammates. I am grateful to the coaches and staff at North Shore who made it possible for us to play through the pandemic, and who constantly supported us throughout the season, as well as our amazing soccer team who has made saying goodbye anything but easy. Our senior year has been anything but normal, although being back on the field with my teammates was the best way to return some normalcy into life and to our senior year. I credit the soccer team with the way I have grown over the past four years and for that I owe it my gratitude.

Everyone always says high school goes by fast, and like every senior, I didn't really believe it. To be completely honest, I probably couldn't recall more than five or six memories from all of freshman or sophomore year. That's not to say they were necessarily bad or not meaningful. I'm sure in the moment I experienced plenty of teenage coming-of-age movie moments, or had what I believed was an end of the world emotional breakdown (or two or three) over an Earth Science grade. When looking back at high school as a whole, the first two years were sort of a blur. Junior year is what registers in my mind as the beginning of my true high school experience. It was the time when things started to take shape in my life as a young adult.

My last memorable school-related experience before quarantine was the music department trip to Greece during my junior year. Looking back, I can confidently say that this trip changed the way I looked at being a high school student. I found myself sitting in these beautiful Greek theaters, watching the chorus kids rehearse Elijah Rock for the fifteenth time that day with teachers and other kids that hadn't even known my name before we had left for the trip. Yet, we sat together and shared our excitement like friends that had known each other for years. Nothing can compare to the adrenaline that went through my body as I ran to join the kick-line, spanning across the whole theatre as the audience and us sang along to the band playing Frank Sinatra's "New York, New York". It was a movie moment, as was almost every event on that trip, from our performances to the ten minute bus rides back to the hotel. I credit that trip for showing me what being a high schooler truly had to offer and I will always be thankful for the great memories.

Then came quarantine. Yet through it all, at least I had the normalcy of being a senior who was applying to college. Tests and quizzes aside, nothing this year has been tested more than my decision-making abilities. After all, there is no better time to test your independence than during college application season! When it came to college, I personally had always dreaded it as a topic of conversation with other kids my age. College, to me, was a personal thing that I wanted to figure out on my own, and I feared the idea of my intuition failing me after hearing other people's opinions of the schools I was considering. After the application process, I can confidently say that fear diminished, and I found myself being the first one of my friends to commit to a school. Afterwards, I sat and talked with my friends about their college worries, and tried to help them troubleshoot those anxieties and make the right decision for themselves. Regardless of how much of high school was eventful for me, I'm grateful to be at a point where I can acknowledge the good, the bad and the meaningless.

The Evolution Of School Sports

By: Jack Levin

The 2020-2021 school year was an unforgettable one. It was difficult for everyone to adjust to going to school during a global pandemic. Wearing a mask all day and only seeing half of our grade really made it difficult to enjoy the school year. However, after a long wait, we did receive a glimmer of hope that the second half of our school year wouldn't be as bad. This glimmer of hope was the return of school sports.

Due to countless safety precautions implemented by the school in September, an indefinite suspension of athletics was implicated at North Shore High School. However, the school gave us an opportunity to play our sports within the

school. Sports were introduced in stages, the first being intramural sports. Senior Mike Cristofori said "It was a great experience, not only because they prepared us for our sports, but because it brought everyone together for the first time in a long time." It was a gateway into what we all wanted, which was regular scheduled sports season. Before long, sports returned in full swing.

February kickstarted the re-opening of the Athletics Department with the winter season. It was a little different because of the shorter season and the winter sports going first, but every student was ready to represent his school. "Going into our senior year not sure if we would have sports was definitely a

let-down. With new guidelines that allowed for sports to be able to come back into play, it felt as if the whole year had the chance to turn back around and become a somewhat normal senior year for all of us," said Senior Ashton Guss. Sports bring people together and during a pandemic, coming together and showing a sense of unity was something that the school definitely needed

It was a difficult year for almost every school in America, and the return of extracurriculars, such as sports, worked to remedy this. It's amazing to be able to play the sports we love with our friends and classmates. We can all agree that it helped us cope with this pandemic.

Masquers: A Must Do Extracurricular

By: Bridget Lewis

One of the most rewarding experiences of my four years at NSHS has been being a part of the Masquers theater productions. Theater can often be viewed as a road to individual success, with the idealized lead role being the complete center of attention. This perception fails to recognize the group effort and collaboration that goes into making a performance possible. Many people, when they see our shows, fail to realize the dedication that students and teachers put into creating these productions. Everyone puts in long hours and their commitment to the shows is truly admirable. Through Masquers, I have met new people from all grade levels and made memories that make the thought of leaving NSHS so difficult.

Long nights, shared meals, and inside jokes only scratch the surface of the family-like nature of this community. Spending endless hours in the auditorium while rehearsing is something I will dearly miss.

As the youngest of six children, I have watched my siblings during their time in the Masquers theater department while eagerly awaiting my turn to get involved. I never could have prepared myself for the challenges this department has had to overcome, from snowstorms that forced us to cut tech week short, to a global pandemic that completely changed

the way we view theater in society. However, the stress of these obstacles has not diminished my love for theater and day after day I find, the theater is where I want to be. For the entirety of my high school career, I have made sure I can be a part of the shows whether in the cast or another crew because just being a member of this department is what is most important. It doesn't matter what I'm doing; I just know I need to be involved. This experience has fueled my desire to continue theater in the future and I know that the theater department will be one of the things I miss most after I leave North Shore.

Congratulations To The Class Of 2021!

Wishing You All The Best In Your Future Endeavors!

From Us, To You

After spending the past four years watching the Class Of 2021 grow, some of the high school's staff and faculty wanted to impart some final words of wisdom on the upcoming graduates.

Mr. Bianco: Congratulations Class of 2021! Getting to know each and every one of you over the last few years, especially during a pandemic, has made me a better teacher, mentor, and overall person. Thank you for being you because you made each day an experience to remember that puts a smile on my face. I cannot wait to see where the future takes you, so please keep in touch. Once a student, always a student.

Mr. Bloom: Hello, Seniors! Wearing masks. Being six feet apart. Quarantining. Attending school every other day. Being away from your friends. This year was unlike any other. You went to class. You did your projects. You stayed up late studying. You did everything right. And you hoped your senior year would be a memorable one. Unfortunately, something happened. The Covid pandemic changed everything. It was not your fault. You had nothing to do with it. And most importantly, it was out of your control. You continued to go to school. You continued studying and moving along the best way you could; you did a great job. You finished school. You chose a college or a job that hopefully you will be happy with. Nothing was going to stop you. I have heard so many of you talk about how this year was terrible, how nothing happened and how you missed out on so many things. No. It was not a good year. It was not the one that you expected. No doubt you did miss out on things, but you made it through one of the toughest times in history. And for that, I commend you. There's an old saying: "What doesn't kill you, makes you stronger". These trying times have made you all stronger. Stronger. More focused. And able to handle the toughest problems. Hopefully you will now be able to appreciate even the small things in life. Everytime you say you can't do something, push a little further. Push a little harder. Go the extra yard. The results will be phenomenal. We will all look back at these times one day and say, "I can't believe that happened!" Wishing you all the best of luck in your future endeavors.

Mrs. Cano: To the Class of 2021, I wish you all the best that life has to offer! Be kind. Be brave. Keep making art!

Ms. Delima: Dear Class of 2021, you have an amazing story to tell! Keep looking deeply. Keep asking questions. Keep making the ordinary EXTRAORDINARY!

Mrs. Donnatin: The Class of 2021 will always have a special place in my heart! Sending virtual hugs and wishing everyone the best in the future. Congratulations!!

Ms. Fawcett: Class of 2021, you've proven that you're more resilient, more resourceful, and more remarkable than most as you've gracefully navigated the unique challenges of the pandemic. Thank you for sharing your spirit with the entire North Shore community, and best of luck in your future endeavors. We'll miss you!

Ms. Francis: Congrats Seniors! You made it through one of the most unique and extraordinary years! Be proud of yourselves and continue to impress yourselves daily - and don't forget to meditate!!!

Mrs. Grimshaw: Congratulations to the Class of 2021! It was amazing to be able to work with so many of you over the past four years! You have a very special place in my heart and I wish

you peace and happiness!

Ms. Halloran: To the Class of 2021: You have proven your resilience throughout this pandemic by continuing to volunteer for those in need and finding ways to think outside of the box when in-person service was not possible. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed! To my BC Calc class: I am so proud of your ability to work both remotely and in-person! Your willingness to work through this year's challenges and your patience with any glitches we encountered, as well as your positive attitudes, have turned what could have been a disastrous year into a winning year. Looking forward to seeing all those 5's!

Mrs. Iacovelli: YOU DID IT! You showed perseverance, endurance and kindness through your amazing four years at North Shore. Through all of this, you became stronger and that will help you on the various roads you all travel ahead. Best wishes and continue to do good things!

Ms. Kelly: I had so many of you in the middle school. I am in awe of your transformation from a young 8th grader to an amazing senior, ready to take on the world. SHINE LIKE A STAR!

Mr. Knight: This is an atypical end of your high school career and one that I'm sure none of you could've imagined. Those are the breaks, but take comfort in the notion that we will get through this soon.

Typically, I would look at this senior newspaper edition as an opportunity to say something humorous, or to make light of a serious situation. I'm going to try to play this straight, and I'm going to try to be serious. Those of you who know me know that will be a stretch.

Your future is bright, at least in comparison to 2020. You'll have your whole lives to make memories, and you will even have a certain bond with the classes of 2021 all over the world. Not many people can say that they share universal senior year stories of perseverance and strength with everyone their own age. It might not seem as important as having a junior prom, or a sports night, or a fashion show right now, but I suspect that news organizations will be doing reports on the effects of the pandemic on graduating seniors for many many years to come. "The Class of 2021: Where are They Now?" I imagine there will be a new expose every decade. Think how fun those will be to read. You are a test case for remote learning, social distancing, and, I suppose, online relationships.

In any case, high school is no place to peak, and I suspect very much that few of you will look back at this year as the best in your life. That's a good thing. While I think we all realize that you gave up a lot, we want you to look at this as encouragement to make new friends, have new celebrations, and live every day with an appreciation of friendship, love and life. We will not forget you Class of 2021!

Dr. Kurrus: The strength and fortitude you have demonstrated this school year has been nothing short of amazing! While I am saddened that you missed out on some of the opportunities to celebrate this past year, I will remember you all and the courage and perseverance you have demonstrated forever. I wish you lots of fun, smiles, and happiness this summer and best of luck for what lies ahead!

Dr. Mabrouk: Congratulations Seniors! You've made it through a difficult and challenging year with style, grace, and poise. Good luck in all

your future endeavors and may you meet each of them in the same manner.

Mr. Millard: Congrats Class of 2021! Find what motivates you to be better every day. A better person. A better citizen. A better friend. A better student. A better coworker. A better son/daughter/sibling. A better friend. A better human. A better version of you. You can do it! Believe in yourself and surround yourself with supportive people. And may the best of your todays be the worst of your tomorrows!

Ms. Millman: Despite the fact that things have been a little wonky in the world for the past year or so, you made things happen. You stuck with your academics, handled your college applications/essays with a great sense of pride, and persisted in pursuing all of the extra-curricular activities that you had previously developed a name for yourself in. And now, you are moving on to even bigger and better things.

It was an absolute pleasure to teach so many of you throughout your high school years. I wish you well in all of your future endeavors.

Ms. Nersesian: As one of your advisors, I started your high school career with you and now I am beyond lucky to end it with you and send you off onto your next chapter. I can't express how wonderful the past four years have been watching you grow into the fabulous individuals that you are. You are hardworking, funny, and people who love to wait until the last minute to get anything done just to stress me and Mrs. Rizza out. But it always gets done and is done beautifully. Keep these traits with you wherever you go and continue to surprise the world with what you are capable of.

Mrs. Paolilli-Schiano: Dear Seniors, it has been a pleasure and honor to have you either in my FACS classes or clubs during the past four years! Your class is strong, smart, and resilient. I wish you the best in your future endeavors!

Mr. Perles: Democracy is not a spectator sport. Stand for truth. Promote Equity & Justice. Evaluate your sources. Vote. Speak. Organize. Engage.

Ms. Rizza: Congratulations to the Class of 2021! When Ms. Nersesian and I were first asked about being class advisors, we weren't sure what we were getting ourselves into. I'm happy to say that four years later, I have no regrets. Watching you all grow from young, unsure, freshman to mature, confident, seniors has been such a privilege. I'll always think of your class fondly, even the times y'all had me screaming during Sports Night exercise practice. I have no doubt you'll all go on to accomplish such great things - just don't forget to come back every once in a while to let us know what you're up to. Best of luck in all your future endeavors!

Ms. Rogala: Congratulations Class of 2021! I hope you cherished all of the valuable minutes of learning (when you weren't doing anything mathematically illegal)! ENJOY YOUR LIFE:)

Ms. Soltis: Congratulations to the Class of 2021! You took a pandemic in stride, and are now poised for next steps—so work well (and not too much), enjoy life (and not too little), and don't ever forget to make time for the people and things that matter to you most. It was a privilege to work with so many of you these last four years.

Mr. Timlin: Congratulations Class of 2021!! Embrace a mindset of positivity and growth. Be an individual. Think for yourself. Never stop learning.

Dr. Titone: In the spirit of IB: The important thing is not to stop questioning. — Albert Einstein

I am so proud of the Class of 2021. Your resilience and perseverance are admirable, and we will surely miss you. All the best!

Problems Spurred By Political Extremes

By: Sophia Marchioli

America is readdressing the southern United States-Mexico border crisis now under the leadership of a significantly different president. Both this crisis and the one that occurred a couple of years ago, have taken a devastating toll on migrants coming into the U.S. In 2019, former President Trump was leading, and now President Biden, who has come off as more at ease towards immigrant flow than Trump, is taking a different approach. Coming out of the Trump Era, Biden has promised Democrats an easier immigration process for migrants coming through the southern border. The Trump administration's focus was minimizing the number of immigrants, specifically undocumented immigrants, coming in through the Mexico-United States border. Former President Trump seemed to come under scrutiny for his policies which were often referred to as extreme and inhumane, and so now the world is watching to see what measures President Biden uses.

Although President Biden has stated on several occasions that he not only considers himself a Democratic president, but that "[he is] an American President" he irrefutably leans to the left when making policies (NBC News). Nonetheless, many people view him as a middle ground between the left and the right in comparison to former President Trump. However, his views on immigration still face heavy opposition, as Trump's did. Unlike Trump's view that undocumented immigrants should be sent back across the border, which can be identified as the "zero tolerance" policy that he imposed, Biden believes the opposite: that the solution to illegal immigration is to provide a simpler path to citizenship, or documentation, for those immigrants. Additionally, while Trump practically shunned undocumented immigrants, Biden praises them in his national addresses and speeches for all that they do for America (in terms of the workforce). There is a stark difference between the two's views.

Both the 2019 border crisis and the current border crisis most likely occurred because of a lack of attention to the well-being of the migrant children who were separated from their parents. Many immigrant children were sent across the U.S. border without their parents. The idea of unsupervised children making this journey seems ridiculous, but occurs often because their parents believe that life in America will be better than life in Mexico; and so, they are willing to face these risks. In 2017, nearly 21% of these border crossers were living in harsh poverty in Mexico and were hunger stricken, so this probably seemed like the only solution (Batalova & Zong). However, life on the U. S.'s side of the border during the Trump administration didn't live up to its reputation: children who crossed the border were forced to sleep on cement floors, and locked behind bars as if their very existence was a crime. The lack of money and attention put into these border camps was a major source of contention between the Republican and Democratic parties.

President Biden has said that one of his goals throughout his presidency will be to make sure that immigrants can become documented, or even citizens, as fast as possible. While the President's attitude towards immigration seems to encourage people to cross at the border, it is not the best time to do so. Due to the global pandemic, the border camps are facing terrible conditions and are still battling a low budget. The Biden administration is prioritizing COVID safety; therefore, the budget

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The Trials And Tribulations Of Politics

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for the border camps is low on the list of priorities. So, after being promised better treatment, immigrants waiting at the border camps are still facing a life of brutality and harshness.

Despite the differences in former President Trump and President Biden's approaches, one can easily see that neither of them has led to the desired improvements of Democrats and migrants. The ineffectiveness can be blamed on both candidates' affinity for the extreme and as America has seen in the past, these extremes do not work. For instance, Republican senators, and Trump saying that the mass shootings that occurred in 2017 (and on) "[aren't] gun situation[s]", has just led to more mass shootings (Baker). In 2021, from March 16th to April 16th alone, there were 45 mass shootings, proving that taking the most passionate side of the argument doesn't solve the problem (Holcombe). This country must learn that it is acceptable to settle for a middle ground, and that it actually is more beneficial.

Extremes in leadership haven't just hurt the country, but they have created a divide during a time when we should be united the most. Although America was built off of passion, it must be rebuilt by compassion. The solution to these extreme divides and to the damage they have done is to learn to compromise. On a smaller scale, one way individuals can help improve the conditions at the border is to donate to Save the Children, a non-profit dedicated to helping children all over the world that are struggling through all sorts of harsh situations: from natural disaster relief, to protection from abuse, to helping the poor. The organization has also been working to raise money to improve the conditions at the border camps where many migrant children are staying (Save the Children Editors). Additionally, drawing more attention to the border crisis can help the situation; it is not getting much coverage in the media, so people need to start to raise awareness. The more eyes there are on this crisis, the more likely it is that our government leaders will dedicate more funds to the issue.

What Is Going On At The Southern Border?

By: Matthew Malone

A lack of security at the Mexico-United States border has plagued America for years. During the Trump Administration, these border issues were less of a problem as they are now because it was closed off. However, with President Joe Biden taking over, the border has completely reopened, giving way for waves of illegal immigrants to damage the nation. Illegal immigrants can increase crime rates. Also, many of the migrants are children without parents or guardians to look after them. The unaccompanied children cause an issue for President Biden because no one knows what to do with them. However, if the border had not been reopened and more security was present, Biden would not be dealing with these daunting issues.

As 2021 progresses, the influx of people and problems are growing. Don McLaughlin, is the Mayor of Uvalde, Texas, a city located next to the Mexico-United States border. In early April, the mayor was interviewed on *Tucker Carlson Tonight*. Carlson asked McLaughlin, "What's it like there right now?" McLaughlin responded, "Well, it's kind of like the wild west now down there." McLaughlin's list of problems consisted of being involved in car chases, illegal immigrants jumping off of trains, running through people's yards, and adult males with criminal records entering the city. Also, 97 sexual predators have been caught attempting to cross the border in Uvalde alone (Fox News). The Biden Administration has done very little to help these border towns, yet it's telling them the border is under control (McLaughlin). The border, however, is clearly not under control if many crimes are being committed by illegal immigrants daily.

Another problem President Biden will have to deal with in regards to illegal immigration is the immense number of unaccompanied children crossing the border. In March, more than "18,500" (NBC

News) children without parents or guardians were caught trying to cross the border. This record absolutely crushed the previous one, set by Biden's predecessor, President Donald Trump, by about 7,000 unaccompanied minors (NBC News). This brings up multiple issues for the Biden administration. For one, it fills up the shelters that are meant to hold migrants trying to cross, forcing the President to call for new ones to be built. Also, what do you do with 18,500 children that have no one to look out for them? You can't just turn them away, so then what? Some also are held for over the 72 hour maximum. However, this is one of the reasons why the Río Grande Valley border facility is at 800% capacity (NBC News). According to Senator Ted Cruz, President Biden has "invited illegal immigration" (NBC News). If Biden had not reopened the border, this problem would not be occurring.

The number of migrants looking to cross the border has drastically increased. In March alone, 172,331 illegal immigrants have been encountered at the border (cbp.gov). This is no coincidence that the number has increased tremendously during the Biden Presidency. Many left-wing media outlets are trying to defend Biden and say, "The U.S. southern border is actually a predictable pattern" (*Washington Post*). It is true that numbers do tend to rise during the spring season. However, 172,000 immigrants are about 70,000 more immigrants since the last big surge in 2019. Also, 351,803 immigrants have been encountered at the border from January 2021 to March 2021. From the start of October 2018 to September 2019 (2019 FYTD), 977,509 immigrants were encountered. It is important to lower these numbers and strengthen the border security. The last thing anybody should want is to let illegal immigrants into the U.S. and damage the country more than it already is.

You Can Never Be Too Careful

By: Trevor Janusas

You are walking alone late at night and you hear something behind you. It may just be an animal or the wind, but what if it's something more? Well, here are six tips that will potentially help you during a time when you feel unsafe:

- 1. Be aware of the environment around you-** When many people are around or if you are in a more public, open space, you are less likely to encounter any danger. Also, knowing where exits, police stations and other safe places are is a useful tactic in case you have to make a quick get-away. Remember, to always walk in well-lit areas. Also, never: walk with your headphones on, look at your phone or make a call while walking alone at night as this makes you an easier target for someone to take advantage of. If you are distracted, you are automatically less aware of your surroundings. Finally, someone, like a family member, roommate or friend should always know where you are at all times.
- 2. Learn to be loud-** If you are loud when in danger by yelling something like "STOP!" or "NO!" you will not only startle an offender, but be more prone to attract attention and potential help. Make sure to yell as loudly as you can and as much as possible.
- 3. Know where to hit-** When needing to fend off someone, it is smart to know where to hit him/her to stun him/her the most. Go for the eyes, knees, groin or throat and then quickly leave instead of staying to continue the attack.
- 4. Improve your posture-** Looking like you are strong or big may make a difference when someone chooses who he/she will try to cause danger to. If you look tougher, people will be more nervous about who they are fighting. Puff out your chest and stand up straight if you believe you are in potential danger.
- 5. Have a 'weapon' ready-** There are many small items that can be used for self-defense, such as keys and pepper spray. However, make sure that your attacker does not end up using it against you if he/she overpowers you.
- 6. Trust your "gut" -** Your body gives off natural responses when you feel as if you might be in danger. Even if there is ultimately no danger, it's better that you follow your natural reaction to leave a certain place.

Is Facial Recognition Technology Really For The Best?

By: Veronica Frank

It was only four years ago that Apple, the tech supergiant, introduced its customers to facial recognition technology, which advertised for the first time that it allowed people to use their facial structure as a password for their phones, as well as all of the information associated with it. According to the company, facial recognition, which is more personal than a fingerprint, can be used for credit cards and as a safeguard for any other important information that is stored in their products. Apple is not the only one utilizing this new and exciting idea; law enforcement also realized this technology's potential and has used it for missing person cases and to solve crimes; it takes a fraction of the time! The technology seems to be without fault, but unfortunately, that is not the case, recent studies have concluded that communities of color are being discriminated against by these recent technologies.

Every American who owns an Apple cell phone has now entered the facial recognition system, whether they like it or not. "It is estimated that almost half of American adults – over 117 million people, as of 2016 – have photos within a facial recognition network used by law

enforcement" (Najibi). Americans, without much consent, have their faces in a database that can be used by the government in airports, on public transportation, and if they were to commit a crime. Even the photos uploaded to social media are submitted to a database! With half of American adults using facial recognition, there is a guarantee that this new technology will not work for everyone. Communities of color and minorities in many other fields have yet again been excluded from the development of these technologies. African Americans and other communities of color face problems such as the technology not recognizing their face or having a hard time remembering them. These small discriminations add up to being a part of the larger systemic racism that is going on in our country.

When creating this technology, the majority of the sample size tested to see if the facial recognition software was ready for the markets were Caucasian males, meaning that it is designed to much more easily recognize Caucasians instead of people of color or those who have facial features that are uncommon in western populations. An independent

assessment by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) confirmed these suspicions "finding that face recognition technologies across 189 algorithms are least accurate on women of color" (NAJIBI). Women of color are the most highly discriminated against group in our country and to now discriminate against such a personal feature as their faces, can cause difficulty in performing daily tasks. Now in America, facial recognition is finding its way onto public transports as a way of identification and payment, which is highly disruptive in a person of color's life. This might not seem significant; however, with the increase in usage of these technologies in common places such as airports and schools, it is just increasing the amount of systemic racism in our country.

Another more significant way people of color are being affected by the increased reliance on facial recognition is in regards to crime-scene investigation. It is known that the social justice system targets minorities. In cases like the murder of George Floyd and Breanna Taylor, it is clear that a sect of law enforcement is willing to use violent tactics against people of color who

are suspected of committing minor crimes. Adding facial recognition into the equation makes it even worse. To calculate suspects of a crime, facial recognition can notice past mugshots of criminals and estimate who a suspect might be. As a result of the number of minority members who are accused of crime compared to those who are white, the number of mugshots by people of color is far more than those who are Caucasian. The police and investigators are now using a prediction system that is more likely to target a black, Latinx, or colored person for a crime because of the inequality that is already instilled in our justice system. The data that is being used by facial recognition technologies puts people of color at a dangerous disadvantage by increasing their probability of being found to be suspects in a crime.

To sum up, facial recognition technologies benefit a large majority of people in America, making it easier to access important information. However, because of the disadvantages they have for people of color, it provides just another barrier that minorities must break through to tackle America's systemic racism.

Recap: Netflix's *Operation Varsity Blues: The College Admissions Scandal*

By: Kate Gilliam

The names college Lori Loughlin, and Felicity Huffman go hand-in-hand with the college admissions scandal. It is widely known that Lori Loughlin paid hundreds of thousands of dollars and photoshopped her daughters' faces onto the bodies of rowers to gain their acceptance to the University of Southern California. It was front-page news when Felicity Huffman was exposed for paying to inflate her daughter's SAT score. Although it may seem that Hollywood's biggest stars are the only culprits of cheating through the college admissions process, this scandalous behavior spans farther than the zip code of 90210. Recently, Netflix debuted *Operation Varsity Blues: The College Admissions Scandal*: an expository documentary revealing the harsh realities of the misconduct, and the mastermind behind the fraudulent admissions, Rick Singer. Here are a few of the many surprising facts that were unveiled in this documentary:

Why use Rick Singer?:

Some may wonder why parents would go through Rick Singer to gain their children's admission to college. The answer is his now-infamous strategy, the "Side Door." In phone calls retrieved by the federal government through wiretapping, Rick Singer explains his side door strategy to several parents. The "Side Door" approach involves parents paying Rick Singer's foundation several hundred thousand dollars in the form of a donation. Next, Rick Singer would work his fraudulent magic, and pay one of his liaisons at the university desired by his client. These liaisons were admissions officers, athletic directors, or coaches at some of the most well-known universities. Singer ensured parents that this payment transfer guaranteed their children admission. Singer's method also included application doctoring. For example, he would change a client's race on the application to qualify him/her for affirmative action or forge SAT and ACT scores. The opposite route for America's wealthy was the "Back Door" approach. This involves a donation of millions of dollars, and acceptance is in no way guaranteed. Rick Singer's method makes more economic sense, but it is just as fraudulent and unfair.

SAT and ACT:

The SAT and ACT are two of the most dreaded and high-stakes exams. Ultimately, a near-perfect score on either or both tests is required to attend America's most prestigious institutions. Thus, these exams put a wrench in Singer's plan... somewhat. Rather than allowing his client's children to take exams and earn a score just like other students do, Singer would manipulate scores in several ways. Before kids even considered the exams, Singer would have psychological and intellect exams conducted in an attempt to earn them extra time. He would encourage parents to have their kids appear to struggle on diagnostic exams so that they could earn unnecessary extra time. Another tactic of Singer's was to alter student's answer sheets. Clients would take the SAT in a room by themselves with only a proctor. This proctor, Mark Riddell, would then collect the exam, and change the answers so that the children could then earn the desired score. Riddell was an expert at the SAT and ACT exams and could land scores with unbelievable accuracy. This route undermined the scores of students who worked honestly for countless hours in hope of achieving impressive results.

What is 'Prestige':

When experts discuss why the college

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admissions scandal occurred, the term "prestige" comes up time and time again. These parents claimed they wanted what was best for their children, and they believed that admission to a prestigious university was what was best. However, the documentary questions the idea that a "prestigious" university is the best case scenario for teens. Jon Reider, a former Stanford admissions officer, explains how prestige is a French word; in the original French language, prestige means deceit. Reider describes prestige in universities as an illusion that people buy into. Universities appear more prestigious when they have a low acceptance rate, so some colleges make adjustments to seem more selective than they really are. It's true that some schools are stronger than others, but because some schools adapt their selection criteria to improve their rankings, a school's reputation cannot be based on its acceptance rate.

The Irony: Parents vs. Their Children:

Operation Varsity Blues: The College Admissions Scandal revealed the irony behind the misconduct. In most, if not all, situations, parents seeking Rick Singer's guidance and fraudulent behavior kept it from their children. By participating in the unethical scheme, parents are throwing money at a problem that their child does not necessarily want to be solved. These parents buy their children acceptance into a prestigious school that the children do not belong at. Rather than accepting their children for who they are and allowing them to follow their dreams, they lie and cheat to boost their parental egos. Parents do not want their kids to know about this behavior because they know it is wrong, and they know their children would not approve. As more information has come out regarding this scandal, it has become quite clear that many of the children involved, like Olivia Jade Giannulli, were oblivious to the outrageous behavior of their parents and are disappointed by their parent's actions. This is quite ironic considering that parents risked their jobs and livelihood by partaking in illegal activities to provide their children with an unwanted top-ranked education.

The Aftermath:

In the end, Rick Singer, and all of his known clients were caught and punished for their scandalous actions. However, some believe that this crime could have concluded with a more positive outcome. In the documentary, one expert, Barbara Kalmus, explains that the fines given to many of the culprits were insignificant, considering their immense bank accounts. She explains that if these offenders were hit harder financially, and the money was put towards supporting underprivileged kids, some good may have come out of this scandal. Another expert argues that rather than placing blame on the families, the colleges and universities should be held responsible for creating this flawed system. If universities did not provide loopholes and preferences for families of wealth, there would not be the temptation to take advantage of their privilege and power during the admissions process. Interestingly, all of the experts interviewed in the documentary were in agreement that where one goes to college has little effect on the trajectory of his life. A college education is what the student makes of it; it does not matter what university he attends. Unfortunately, the goal of many families has become the name of the university, rather than the best education. Hopefully, greater awareness of this scandal will reverse these beliefs and discourage the elite from abusing their fortunes.

Oprah's Bombshell Royal Interview: America's Acceptance vs. Britain's Disapproval

By: Liliana Stella

Oprah Winfrey's bombshell interview with Prince Harry and the Ex-Duchess of Sussex and American actress, Meghan Markle, shocked us all. From all the dirty laundry that was aired out on March 7th, to the intense emotion, Winfrey's hard hitting questions had us all glued to our television screens. Markle had stayed silent for four years, and it was time to share some information on what she endured.

Markle mostly discussed the negative aspects of royal life. The horrible press she received, the randomly strict guidelines she had to follow like, "not being able to have lunch with friends" (CBC), and the racism she experienced made Markle finally decide that enough was enough. One of the major moments in this interview was when Markle revealed that there was a point in which she was so miserable and felt so lonely that she wanted to take her own life. During the interview she explicitly said, "I didn't want to be alive anymore" (CNN). This was a major statement for Markle to make and many British people believed that her remarks were insulting to the Queen.

One Londoner in the street who was interviewed by NBC on March 9th said that this interview basically highlights Markle's experience adding, "there is only one side of the story here" (NBC). After the interview aired, people in the UK wanted some closure from the palace. Another huge critic of Markle's statements was Piers Morgan; he is a widely renowned journalist in the British media. Morgan stated, "Now, is she deliberately lying? Is she completely delusional? I don't know, but frankly, I don't care." (USA TODAY) Moreover, Piers Morgan believes that the accusations that Markle and Prince Harry made were not true. In a way, he seemed to think that Markle was just simply unhappy and was ignorant about the realities of royal life.

Interestingly enough, Piers Morgan attacked American citizens due to the fact that American's seem to be open-minded to listening to Markle and believed her accusations. According to his interview with Tucker Carlson on Fox News, Morgan stated, "Many Americans are believing (what she said) and it's not true - that's what angered me, that's what enraged me." (FOX). I believe that a myriad of American's believe Meghan Markle because they have empathy towards what she has been through. To add, the loss of Meghan Markle to the British Monarchy has had no impact on the daily lives of Americans nor their traditions. Meanwhile, British folks are watching their monarchy start to crumble, due to the major loss of their Prince. Furthermore, it's easier for Americans to agree and feel for Markle's story rather than British folks who are disappointed because they cherish tradition.

However, despite who you are or where you come from, we must respect the courage Markle and Prince Harry had to speak on a subject that has evidently been difficult for them.

Is This The Beginning Of The End For The British Monarchy?

By: Lillian Molesky

The tell-all Oprah interview with Meghan Markle and Prince Harry has left Buckingham Palace in critical condition, and has led many to question how much more controversy the Royal Family can withstand.

The Royals are no stranger to scandal throughout their centuries of power, but the intensity of the accusations has become increasingly brutal. Most recently, Prince Charles' son and his wife, Harry and Meghan, sat down with Oprah Winfrey for a two-hour long interview that uncovered much of the struggles they faced while living in Buckingham Palace. From Markle's declining mental state to the race-based conversations regarding their son, Archie, a permanent and public rift is forming that could have lasting impacts. With the Monarchy seemingly stubborn in its willingness to progress with the times, it seems to only be a matter of time until it, too, becomes history.

After the airing of the Oprah interview, viewers around the world were furious at the blatant discrimination described. Whether this is the nail in the coffin for the institution or not, Markle's accusations of neglect and racism are yet another tick on the list of scandals this decade. Following Prince Andrew's apparent involvement with Jeffery Epstein, the already tense relationship with the public is at stake, which leads to the question: could this possibly be the end of the Monarchy?

To counter-argue the severity of the situation that was noted above, it is important to remember that the British Crown has existed for hundred of years, and has survived numerous blows to its reputation. From the abdication of Edward VIII in 1936 to the death of Princess Diana (and the scandals that existed within her marriage to Prince Charles), Meghan and Harry's interview may be more insignificant than it seems right now. The Firm is known for its ability to respond to and conceal the criticisms of its functions, so time may be the only thing that will determine how detrimental this tell-all was.



Marching For Justice

By: Summer Rice

Violence towards women is a serious problem. This includes sexual or non-sexual assault, rape and more. “1 in 3 women, around 736 million, are subjected to physical or sexual violence”(who.int). Recently there has been an uptick of women’s rights marches and protests in hope of raising awareness and getting justice for the women who have experienced violent behavior from others.

Numerous women have been silent about their violent encounters with men. Some of these encounters include being sexually assaulted, raped, and more. Recently though, plenty of women are speaking up about these incidents and hoping to make a change. In Australia, many violence against women marches are occurring. “The protests in at least 40 cities represented an outpouring of anger over the treatment of women at the highest levels of power.” (*The New York Times*). At the events, thousands of women

showed up in all black clothes and marched through the streets chanting, singing, and holding up signs that stated things such as, “Fight like a girl.” and “Survivors don’t lie; abusers do”. Furthermore, there were marches and protests that took place in south London to honor Sarah Everard, who was murdered, “on March 3 on her way back from a friend’s house.” (*The New York Times*). The crowd of protesters shouted things like, “Shame on you!”, and “How many more!”. They also held signs with sayings on them like, “End violence against women” and, “She was only walking home”.

Overall, women are now speaking up and sharing their stories about their negative encounters with men with the public. Some are looking for justice, while others are spreading awareness. As the protests, marches, and fight for violence against women continues, they are hoping for justice and change in the near future.

The Facts For Life After The Vax

By: Evelyn McCreery

A critical question everyone is asking is: what can I do now that I am fully vaccinated? Eager to return to normal life, many people hope that with the emergence of the COVID-19 vaccines, they will be able to enjoy activities that were stripped away by this devastating global health crisis. While fully vaccinated people are approved to resume a variety of activities that are considered safe at this point in time, it is still vital for people to take necessary precautions to protect themselves and others around them.

The activities that the CDC allows for fully vaccinated people to participate in include:

1. Visiting inside a home or private setting without a mask with other fully vaccinated people of any age
2. Visiting inside a home or private setting without a mask with one household of unvaccinated people who are not at risk for severe illness
3. Travelling domestically without a pre- or post-travel test
4. Travelling domestically without quarantining after travel
5. Travelling internationally without a pre-travel test depending on the destination
6. Travelling internationally without quarantining after travel (CDC.org)

President Biden’s Medical Chief Advisor, Dr. Anthony Fauci, suggested that small group gatherings of vaccinated people indoors are classified as safe, whereas activities that exceed these rely on “data, modeling and good clinical common sense” (nytimes.org). It is predicted that life will presumably return to a more normal state in the spring/summer of 2022 as long as the population follows the medical guidance over the course of the year. Scientific experts predict that “life in the warmer months of 2022 should be normal, or at least whatever qualifies as normal post-pandemic” (atlantic.com).

Despite the desperation that many are feeling to return to normal, it is necessary to be cautious. With new COVID-19 variants spreading and the existing dangers of COVID-19, scientists are concerned that the fast-paced opening up of the United States, starting with the activities permitted for fully vaccinated people, will cause the United States to “completely lose the hard-earned ground we have gained”, according to the Director of the C.D.C., Dr. Rochelle Walensky (nytimes.org). The UK-originating variant is spreading quickly across the United States and research has concluded that the COVID-19 vaccines are not as effective for protecting the body from the disease.

Although the pandemic has caused immense destruction, the emergence of the COVID-19 vaccines offers hope. For instance, for high school and college students who had their academic and social lives disrupted by this pandemic, the vaccines will facilitate the return to a normal school environment.

Overall, it is crucial to follow the suggested guidance provided by health experts in order to transition back to pre-pandemic life.

Save The Butterflies!

By: Emma Arboleda

A world without butterflies sounds dull and strange to imagine, but in the near future, it may become a reality. It is possible that butterflies will become extinct in the future. Many species are facing the imminent threat of extinction due to human activity and global warming. While endangered animals like tigers, turtles, and polar bears, are in the public eye, butterflies are not receiving that same attention. The lack of media attention, however, does not diminish this threat. The rapid decline of butterfly populations is too great to be ignored. The falling population is not only a threat to the food chain, but to humanity as well.

Similar to bees, butterflies are essential pollinators that play a critical role in the maintenance of plant populations. With both bee and butterfly populations declining, plants will observe lower reproductive success as a result. Entire ecosystems would be destroyed, and without pollinators, the human race would not be able to survive. Additionally, the food chain would be disrupted in its entirety. Not only would the plants that butterflies pollinate cease to exist, but the predators that rely on them for food will die out too. Ultimately, butterflies’ extinction would result in a chain reaction in which other species of both plants and animals would eventually die out permanently.

Butterflies are on track for extinction. Various scientific research journals have made note of the declining butterfly population. Most credit the decline to global warming and degraded habitats, and nearly all conclude that their diminishing population is significant. *Science Daily* published a report that focused on over 450 butterfly species; it was concluded that butterfly populations are declining at a rate of 1.6% per year. While startling, this statistic seems minor compared to western monarch decline: the population has diminished by 99.9% since the 1980’s (University of Arizona). Though preventable in the long run, the popular (and not so well-known) butterflies will cease to exist entirely.

Climate change is not a quick fix, but there are some things you can personally do to help the butterflies. So many of them are dying because they fail to regulate their body temperatures in extreme climates, which at times can be preventable. Things like keeping your grass long, diversifying your garden, and providing them with shade and shelter can help keep butterfly populations from declining so rapidly. Reducing pesticides and planting milkweed can actually encourage population growth. These changes are miniscule and a chance to beautify your home whilst saving a species from extinction.

Source:

University of Arizona. “Dramatic decline in western butterfly populations linked to fall warming.” *ScienceDaily*. *ScienceDaily*, 4 March 2021.

<www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/03/210304145405.htm>.

To
Emma Arboleda
Jackson Best
Lauren Hagen
Jamie Holzmann
Jack Levin
Sophie Rosencrans,
The Senior Editors
Of
The Viking View:

Thank you for your hard work, focus, dedication and desire to share your love of writing (and even journalism) the past few years. It has been an honor to teach you and work with you.

Continue To Change The World For The Better.

Wishing You All The Best!

**Sincerely,
 Ms. Millman**

New York Baseball: A Heated Rivalry At Its Peak

By: Michael Ye

The 2021 MLB season officially began last month, with each team set to play a normal 162 game season. Last year, both the Mets and Yankees experienced disappointment, as the Mets failed to reach the postseason for the fourth consecutive season, while the Yankees were eliminated in the ALDS by the Tampa Bay Rays. Coming into this season however, every New York baseball fan has high hopes and expectations for his own team. For the first time in a while, both the Yankees and Mets are legitimate World Series contenders. The crosstown rivals haven't met in a World Series since 2000, when the Yankees defeated the Mets in five games. Since the introduction of the American and National Leagues in 1997, the Yankees have dominated both the regular and postseason series with an overall record of 78-55 (Wikipedia). 21 years later, a rematch of the Subway Series seems more likely than ever.

On November 6, 2020, billionaire investor Steve Cohen finalized his \$2.4 billion purchase of the New York Mets. Unlike the previous owner, Fred Wilpon, Cohen isn't afraid whatsoever to spend money on players and help improve the team. This idea is evident, as the Mets were one of the most improved teams during the off-season, making them championship contenders for the first time since 2016. Their upgraded starting rotation got a lot deeper, as they traded for quality pitchers like Carlos Carrasco and Joey Lucchesi. They also signed Taijuan Walker to a reasonable two year \$20 million contract, with a player option for 2023. These new additions join a rotation that already includes other great pitchers such as Jacob deGrom, Noah Syndergaard, Marcus Stroman, and former top prospect, David Peterson. Over the last three years, deGrom has been the best pitcher in baseball, winning two Cy Young awards and being named an All Star in all three years. During that span, he's had a 2.10 ERA, 0.943 WHIP, and 190 ERA+ (Baseball Reference). DeGrom is the greatest Mets pitcher since Tom Seaver, and the clear ace of this rotation heading into 2021. Noah Syndergaard is another All Star caliber starter in the rotation, and is looking to bounce back from Tommy John Surgery, which forced him to miss all 60 games of the 2020 season. As of March 31st, he is targeting a return around June. Syndergaard has a career ERA of 3.31 and a WHIP of 1.161 (Baseball Reference). Like Syndergaard, Marcus Stroman is another All Star caliber pitcher that also didn't pitch in the 2020 season after opting out. During the off-season, he was brought back on a one year qualifying offer worth \$18.9 million. Stroman has a career ERA of 3.76 and a WHIP of 1.292 (Baseball Reference). In terms of new acquisition Carlos Carrasco, he has quietly been one of the most underrated and consistent pitchers since 2014. In 68 innings pitched in 2020, he had yet another stellar season, posting an ERA of 2.91 and a WHIP of 1.206 (Baseball Reference). Compared to last year, the starting pitching on the Mets has drastically improved, with key players coming back and new arms being brought in. When healthy, this is a top ten rotation in the league.

While the bullpen lost one of its better relief pitchers in Justin Wilson, the

Mets were able to sign free agent Trevor May to a two year \$15.5 million contract to replace him. May has been a well above-average reliever for the Minnesota Twins, and adds a solid arm to the bullpen. In 23.1 innings pitched in 2020, May posted a 3.86 ERA and a 1.157 WHIP (Baseball Reference). He will join a Mets' bullpen that already consists of other great pitchers like Edwin Diaz, Seth Lugo, Jeurys Familia, Miguel Castro, and Dellin Bentances. Diaz is coming off of a bounce back year after having a miserable 2019 season, where he was one of the worst pitchers in the league.

The former Reliever of the Year pitched in 25.2 innings last season, where he posted a 1.75 ERA and a 1.247 WHIP (Baseball Reference). Diaz has some of the best stuff among all relievers in the league, shown by his career 14.7 K/9 (Baseball Reference). When commanded, his fastball and slider combination can generate swings and misses from the league's best hitters. Diaz is the closer of the Mets' bullpen, and is the clear X Factor.

Shifting over to the other side of the game, the Mets' lineup has also been significantly improved during the off-season. Their biggest move was trading for four time All Star Francisco Lindor, who was included in the trade with Carrasco, in exchange for Amed Rosario, Andres Gimenez, and two other prospects. A few months after this trade happened, Lindor was signed to a massive 10 year \$341 million extension, making him a New York Met for life. They also signed James McCann to a four year \$40 million contract. Over the past two years, McCann has been a top ten catcher in the league, and provides above-average value both offensively and defensively. In 2020, he had a .289 BA, .360 OBP, and an .896 OPS (Baseball Reference). Behind the plate, he has a great arm and is one of the best pitch framers in the league. When it comes to Lindor, he is arguably the best shortstop in the league, and is an elite defender. Throughout his career, he has won two Gold Gloves and a Platinum Glove, along with two Silver Slugger awards. In 2020, Lindor had a down year, hitting .258 with a .750 OPS and a 102 OPS+ (Baseball Reference). However, his 60 games last year shouldn't have too much stock put into them. Across each of the four years before 2020 (16-19), Lindor had a .284 BA, .841 OPS, and a 118 OPS+ (Baseball Reference). These new acquisitions will join a lineup that includes All Star caliber players like Pete Alonso, Jeff McNeil, Michael Conforto, Dominic Smith, and Brandon Nimmo. Alonso has been one of the best power hitters in the league, becoming the fastest player to hit 70 home runs to start a career. In 2020, he hit 16 home runs with a .231 BA and an .817 OPS (Baseball Reference). While his defensive abilities aren't great by any means, they are certainly improving. McNeil on the other hand, is a completely different player, as he hits for more contact while being a versatile defender. In 2020, he had a batting average over .310 for the third consecutive season, with a .383 OBP and a .836 OPS (Baseball Reference). With teammate Robinson Cano being

suspended this year for PEDs, McNeil will certainly be the full time starter, and receive consistent starts at second base.

Moving to the Bronx, the Yankees' roster hasn't changed quite as much as the Mets'. They were able to keep the majority of their core intact, and believe that it can once again get them to the World Series. During the off-season, they lost both James Paxton and Masahiro Tanaka to free agency, leaving massive holes in the middle of the starting rotation. In an effort to replace them, the Yankees were able to sign two time Cy Young Award winner Corey Kluber to a one year \$11 million contract, and trade for former Pirates' starter Jameson Taillon in exchange for four prospects. Both Kluber and Taillon have dealt with injuries over the past two years, and join a starting rotation that already consists of All Stars Gerrit Cole and Luis Severino. Since 2013, Kluber has been one of the most dominant pitchers in baseball, with a career 3.18 ERA and a 1.095 WHIP (Baseball Reference). However, he sustained two season ending injuries in both 2019 and 2020, forcing him to miss the majority of both years. Kluber has one of the best cutter and curveball combinations in the league, and he will heavily rely on those two pitches with his velocity dropping. Taillon is also in a similar situation, as he is looking to bounce back from both Tommy John Surgery and cancer, which forced him to miss most of 2019 and all of 2020. He has a career 3.74 ERA and 1.250 WHIP (Baseball Reference). During his rehab, Taillon made drastic improvements to his pitching mechanics, and hopes to be a solid middle-of-the-rotation starter that the Yankees desperately need. Nonetheless, the best player on the Yankees is Gerrit Cole, who over the last three years, has been a top three pitcher in baseball. Ever since the Astros traded for him back in 2018, he posted a 2.71 ERA, 0.962 WHIP, and a 161 ERA+ (Baseball Reference). Cole throws one of the hardest fastballs in the league, which is his unhittable primary pitch. Cole is, and will be the clear ace of this rotation for many years to come.

The strongest area of the Yankees' pitching is the bullpen, which has been one of the best in the league over the last few years. After trading away Adam Ottavino and letting go of Tommy Kahnle, they were able to sign both Justin Wilson and Darren O'Day to cheap one year contracts with team options in 2022 as replacements. Both of them are above average-relievers that are coming off of phenomenal 2020 campaigns, each posting a sub 4 ERA. They will join a bullpen that already features former Reliever of the Year winners Aroldis Chapman and Zack Britton, as well as Chad Green. Throughout his career, Chapman has never posted an ERA above 3.60, and he has been the best reliever in baseball since 2012. In 11.2 innings pitched in 2020, Chapman had yet another terrific season, posting a 3.09 ERA, 0.857 WHIP, and a 141 ERA+ (Baseball Reference). His deadly fastball and slider combination generates strikeouts at an elite rate, which is what makes him such a dominant closer.

Meanwhile, Britton is a completely different type of pitcher, as he earns his outs through soft contact, rather than swings and misses. He throws one of the best sinkers in the league, and it helps him generate weak ground balls on a consistent basis. In 19 innings pitched in 2020, Britton posted a 1.89 ERA, 1.000 WHIP, and a 226 ERA+ (Baseball Reference). While he would be a closer on most other teams, he is the clear set-up man behind Chapman. After sustaining an elbow injury that required surgery during spring training, Britton is not expected to return until after the All Star Break.

Finally, the lineup is by far the strongest part of the Yankees' roster, and features All Star players like DJ LeMahieu, Aaron Judge, Giancarlo Stanton, Gleyber Torres, and Luke Voit. Ever since joining the Yankees back in 2019, LeMahieu has finished in the top four in terms of MVP voting each year, as has been the Yankees' best hitter. In 2020, he became the first player in the modern era of baseball to win the Batting Title in both the American and National League, as he hit for a .364 BA, .421 OBP, and a 1.011 OPS (Baseball Reference). His elite level of hitting, paired with his Gold Glove caliber defense, earned him a six year \$90 million extension back in January. Luke Voit was another MVP candidate last season, finishing ninth in voting. In 2020, Voit had the breakout year, hitting for a .277 BA, with a league leading 22 home runs, and a .948 OPS. While he may be a one-dimensional player by not providing much value defensively, he adds even more power to a lineup that is reliant on home runs. Like Voit, Aaron Judge can provide just as much power offensively, and is another annual MVP candidate. Over the past three seasons, Judge has dealt with numerous injuries that forced him to miss a large chunk of games. He has a career .272 BA, .947 OPS, and 151 OPS+. What makes Judge such a valuable asset to this Yankees team is his defense. He is extremely reliable in the field and has one of the best arms at right field. The key for the Yankees will be staying healthy, as many players on this team can be labeled as "injury prone". At full strength, this team is a World Series contender.

With all the strengths that the Yankees and Mets possess, they each have a lot of positives in terms of how far they can go this season. With that being said, both clubs need to find more consistency throughout a full 162 game season. Each team includes a mix of established stars and young developing talent. While there are other teams around the league that pose a challenge, such as the Los Angeles Dodgers, San Diego Padres, and Houston Astros, the talent on both the Mets and the Yankees could very easily put them over the top.



The NBA's Rookie Of The Year Situation

By: William McConville

The NBA's Rookie of the Year award is an accolade that is annually given to the best performing player in the regular season during his first year in the league. It has been won by many of the greatest players in NBA history such as Michael Jordan, LeBron James, Wilt Chamberlain, and Shaquille O'Neal. This year, the winner of the award looked to be Lamelo Ball, who was, by far, having the best rookie season with averages of 15.9 points, 6.1 assists, and 5.9 rebounds. On top of that, he became the youngest player in NBA history to record a triple double in a game, and shoot 37% from the three-point range. However, in March, Ball fractured his wrist in a game against the Los Angeles Clippers, and will most likely miss the rest of the season. So, the question is, has Ball already done enough this season to win Rookie of the Year, or could another player from the 2020 draft class steal it from him?

The player who is the frontrunner to win the award, should Ball not win it, is Timberwolves' shooting guard Anthony Edwards. The number one overall pick coming into this season, Edwards started his year off kind of shaky, but has stepped it up and become more of the playmaker and rim-attacker that he was advertised to be going into the draft and the season. The major highlight of his rookie season so far is a dunk he had against the Toronto Raptors in February on Toronto forward Yuta Watanabe, which was a turning point in the 19-year old's rookie season. Since that dunk, he has had averages of 22.5 points, 2.7 assists, 5.2 rebounds, and 1.5 steals per game. In comparison, before the dunk, he averaged 14.6 points, 2.4 assists, 3.7 rebounds and 0.7 steals per game. This is an impressive jump, but fans will have to wait and see if he can stay consistent for the rest of the season in order to have a shot of snagging Rookie of the Year away from Ball.

Another player that has a chance of winning the award amid Ball's injury is Sacramento King's guard Tyrese Haliburton. Haliburton has been an absolute steal for the Kings, as he was picked 12th overall in last year's draft. While other rookie's performances have been very up and down this season, Haliburton has been consistent for the Kings, with averages of 13 points, 5.1 assists, 3.1 rebounds, and 1.3 steals. He has also made 40% of his threes and 47% of his field goals overall. The Kings have been steadily improving this season when compared to last year, and Haliburton has been a large part of that. When asked about what winning

Rookie of the Year would mean to him, he revealed it is not that important to him, stating that he prefers to focus on improving personally as a player and winning games. Another main focus of his is to prove that this year's rookie class isn't as weak as analysts have stated it would be. There was so much uncertainty of the quality of talent because the college basketball season had been cut short due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Overall, if Lamelo Ball doesn't emerge as this year's Rookie of the Year, there's a high chance that Haliburton could win the award if he continues his impressive rookie campaign for the Kings.

The third player who has a chance of snagging the award is New York Knicks' guard Immanuel Quickley. Despite the fact that he has taken a downturn recently in his numbers, overall this season, he looks to be the steal of last year's draft. Taken with the 25th pick by the Knicks, Quickley has defied all expectations in the NBA, with some analysts projecting him to not be taken until the second round prior to last year's draft. So far he is averaging 11.7 points, 2.1 assists and 2.3 rebounds, and shooting 37% from 3-point range and almost 90% from free throws. Unlike other rookies, Quickley's numbers have directly impacted winning with a resurgent Knicks team this season. When Quickley is on the court, the Knicks are 2.1 points per 100 possessions better than when he's not playing, and he also has the best assist-to-turnover ratio on the team. He's learning very quickly as a player, and his numbers become even more impressive since he's only getting about 19 minutes per game. He's probably the rookie who is the most farfetched option to consider for Rookie of the Year, but he definitely deserves to be in the conversation because of the things he has done for this year's surprisingly good Knicks team.

Lamelo Ball was almost undoubtedly the player who would win Rookie of the Year prior to his fractured wrist. If he still turns out to be successful in winning the award, he would be the player who played the least number of games to win it. If not however, the window has opened for these other talented rookies to take the award. Regardless of who wins it, Lamelo Ball, Anthony Edwards, Tyrese Haliburton, and Immanuel Quickley all deserve recognition for their hard work that put them in the conversation for Rookie of the Year, and they will all undoubtedly be remarkable players in the NBA for years to come.

The March Madness Disparities

By: Calvin Spence

A massive wave of anger came over the NCAA after the accusations that it had been providing greater service to its men's basketball players. Since the spread of these accusations, the NCAA came out and apologized and has been trying to fix its mistake by improving the women's facilities in the middle of the tournament. The NCAA added more machines to the weightroom and the women's tournament finally got what it initially deserved. The NCAA has come out and said it is for equality, but has a long history of undersupplying resources and funding to its women teams. The men's teams have always been favored because they are more profitable for the organization.

At the beginning of the annual March Madness tournament, a video posted by Sedona Prince, a member of the Oregon Women's Basketball team, sparked outrage on the internet. In this video, Prince shows the extent of the inequality between the men's and women's facilities. The men's weight room was well stocked, with bench racks and machines scattered across a massive gym. The women's gym was not so luxurious. The women's gym simply had a single rack of weights. These differences were made clear and Prince stated that "If you're not upset about this problem, then you are a part of it" (NYT). The video, which has more than 17.7 million views, has caused people to express their outrage towards the NCAA organization.

The outcry for equality only intensified as other disparities came to light. Other videos revealed the dinners that the women's tournament served, including soggy vegetables, mystery meat, and other scrap-like foods. On the other hand, videos of the men's tournament showcased a delightful selection of gourmet foods such as lobster mac and cheese, grilled vegetables, cakes, and puddings. Though food is not typically a trigger for controversy, at the biggest college basketball tournament for both men and

women, it is expected that they should have access to the same resources.

Another more serious issue that was brought to light were the disparities between Covid testing centers. The method used at the men's tournament was the P.C.R. test, which is considered the most effective form of virus testing, and the safest option to keep the players healthy. Similarly to the rest of the services provided for women, their testing was worse. The women's tournament used a rapid antigen test, a cheaper alternative to the P.C.R., which provides quicker results at the cost of being more likely to provide false results. It can be concluded that men were treated with significantly more care because they are viewed as the most important to the NCAA.

The budget cuts for the women's tournament are obvious from these reports. Figures provided by the NCAA reveal a \$13.5 million gap between the men's and women's tournaments. Many, coming to the defense of the organization, have said that this is because the men's tournament is more popular than the women's tournament. Although they may have more fans in basketball, it does not excuse the actions of the NCAA. The NCAA makes a huge profit from these tournaments, which means that it should have no problem providing equal facilities. From television alone, the NCAA drew in more than \$850 million dollars in revenue this year.

Although the NCAA has tried to reverse its slip-up and suppress any more backlash, the firestorm is sure to come back. It's facing more and more criticism everyday and will need to continue improving as an organization.

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