

## N.S.H.S.’s Book Club Starts A New Chapter: Community Service

By: Mae Curiale

This past November, North Shore High School’s Book Club hosted a Book Drive in which used books were donated to an organization called The Book Fairies. This group then distributes the books to communities in need across Long Island, New York City, and internationally (thebookfairies.org).

With the help of the board members and the club’s advisor, Ms. Stacy Hosemann, the Book Club’s President, Keira Rechsteiner, organized the event, taking on a major leadership role. The idea was proposed at one of the Club’s weekly meetings, in which members typically discuss the book they are all reading. Rechsteiner found The Book Fairies because the North Merrick Public Library, where her mother works, has done book drives with the organization before. Rechsteiner explained that her goal in organizing the Book Drive was to “get a lot more involved with the community.” Hosemann called the Book Drive “Keira’s brainchild,” and commented on how much of a “seamless process” it was with Rechsteiner taking the reins.

After Rechsteiner shared her

idea for the Book Drive at one of the Book Club’s meetings, the board members asked North Shore High School’s Principal, Mr. Eric Contreras, for a place for the books to be collected. Once space was granted, the Book Club’s Board got to work with the advertising. They made flyers, posted on the Book Club’s Instagram page, and sent out emails to the staff to spread the word.

The Book Drive took place in front of the Main Office, and donations quickly piled up. Both students and staff members were invited to participate, and teachers from the Middle School also gave donations. Hosemann also received an email from Central Office about books it was willing to donate. Long after the deadline for donations, people still tried to contribute.

In the end, North Shore’s Book Drive was a major success, and the club was able to collect 969 books. The result of the Book Drive was made possible due to the support of staff and students; and, according to Rechsteiner, the Book Club plans to host another event in the future.



## IB Language And Literature Takes On Broadway

By: Elsa Lanne

On the 5th of December, 10 adult chaperones and 95 IB Language and Literature students at North Shore High School, including me, took a trip to New York City to see the Broadway production of *The Great Gatsby*. Librarian Donna Rice, and IB Lang and Lit English teachers planned the exciting adventure that allowed students to see a live production of the book they had read and analyzed earlier in the year.

*The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald was published in 1925 and it is a commentary on the wealth, glamor, and affairs of the American Jazz Age. This book is an influential part of American society as “*Gatsby*

is regularly named one of the greatest novels ever written in English” (Churchwell). Echoes of messages such as, “the American Dream, old money versus new money, and love” (Travis) help immerse the reader into the period in which it was written. Due to the importance of the novel, Dr. Kirmsier, an IB Lang and Lit teachers, has had many years of experience teaching this book to North Shore students. She said “We live so close to the setting of the classic novel” as it takes place in Port Washington.

The Broadway production of *The Great Gatsby* which Chunsoo Shin produced, opened on April 25th at the Broadway Theater (Playbill.com). This popular book-to-stage

## A Hidden Gem At North Shore High School

By: Abby Reisberg

North Shore High School offers many electives from Psychology to Acting to Journalism, all to benefit students and their interests. What is almost too difficult to find though is the classroom that is in the Woodshop’s hallway: The Photo Lab. For those who do not know what lies behind its rather small wooden door, there are lots of computers where students can access all of the apps Adobe offers; there is also a studio area where portraits are taken and photoshoots take place; there is a separate room where film developing happens and of course, there is a darkroom! With the excellent features the Photo Lab offers, students can get lost in the world of Photography with, of course, the guidance of Ms. Lynn Johnson, the Photography teacher who has helped grow the program since the late 1990s.

The school year was 1998-99 and there was no Photo Lab, and none of the creative spaces that exist in that room today, including the darkroom that is home to 18 enlargers. The back of that space was originally used for an aviation class run by Mr. Tom Milito who had a special license that allowed him to teach his students to fly planes. There was though a tiny “little closet-like” darkroom where, in Ms. Johnson’s first year at North Shore, she held a half year, beginner Photography class with four students. They utilized this cramped space that had limited resources such as six working enlargers to print film photos. In that small ‘closet,’ there was no ventilation, and it was considered to be a safety hazard. Even with these circumstances, Ms. Johnson immediately fell in love with teaching photography and was eager to grow the program. By the following school year, the number of students taking Photography quadrupled, and it continued to grow to the point where there were so many students who wanted to take the course that there just was

not enough room for everyone.

Besides the Beginner Photography class that Ms. Johnson taught during the school day, some evenings, parents would come in and learn photography, which only brought more excitement to the program. With all of this joy, the community rallied for Photography and raised a 134,000-dollar tax bond to be used to build a new and improved darkroom. Ms. Johnson helped design the space that makes up parts of the photo lab today and a special company came in to build the spectacular darkroom; the students’ creativity only increased from that point on.

By 2002, Beginner and Advanced Photography courses were offered with maximum enrollment; eventually, two more Photography classes were added. Eventually Digital Photography became super popular. Interestingly enough, according to Johnson, in the mid-2000s “people weren’t interested in film; they wanted everything to be digital, and now that digital has gotten so common, people are interested in film photography again.”

When asking Ms. Johnson about the impact students’ work has had on her personally, she said, “Seeing the enthusiasm behind students is an uncontrollable feeling. I just get so excited and that just feeds me constantly as a teacher. When I see the kinds of work that you guys make, how could I not be inspired as an artist?” Honestly, it can’t get much better than having a teacher who is passionate about the creations of her students and continues to learn every day.

By signing their name along the walls leading into the darkroom with the year they took the class, hundreds of students since 2002 have left their mark on the Photo Lab. As students continue to explore all that photography offers, more and more names will be added to that wall, thanks to four optimistic students who took a chance on a brand new class.



Photography Teacher Lynn Johnson explains different lighting techniques as Senior Luke Dixon models.  
Photo Taken By: Ellamarie Mitchell



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November 2024

**Trump's Tariffs: Threat or Tool?**

**By: Raymond Lin**

“To me, the most beautiful word in the dictionary is tariff, and it’s my favorite word” (Weisbrot). While this may sound like something President Herbert Hoover would have said in the 1930s, it is actually a recent quote by President Donald Trump, who has frequently endorsed the usage of tariffs as an economic and foreign policy tool. He has announced that, once in office, he will implement 25% tariffs on all Mexican and Canadian imports and an additional 10% tariff on Chinese imports, adding that they will “make us rich” and force Mexico, Canada, and China to work on the United States’ immigration and fentanyl issues (Pitas). Trump’s tariff proposals would raise the average tariff levels to 17.7%, the highest levels since 1934 (Lawder). Many have taken issue with these proposals though, seeing them as jeopardizing the U.S.’ close relationship with its neighbors and hurting our economy through inflation and retaliatory tariffs. To get to the bottom of this though, we first need to define a tariff.

A tariff is simply a tax on imported goods that the importing business or person has to pay, not just foreign companies as Trump has claimed in the past. For example, if Apple makes its iPhones in China and then imports them into the U.S. to sell, Apple would have to pay a tariff on the smartphones, possibly as high as 60% of the devices’ value (Lawder). This would have some positive effects, increasing the U.S. government’s tax revenue and incentivizing consumers and companies to buy domestically produced goods, which could boost U.S. job growth and manufacturing. However, this push away from cheaper and more efficient production overseas would, in the long term, reduce competition, economic output, and household income, especially if other countries apply their

own tariffs in response to ours as China did during Trump’s first term (York). Another possible effect of tariffs would be higher inflation as once cheap goods now face higher labor costs and the expenses of building new manufacturing plants, leading to those goods becoming pricier.

When analyzing what happened during Trump’s tariffs from his first presidency though, it seems as if these negative effects outweigh the positive ones. A study by the U.S. International Trade Commission revealed that Trump’s steel and aluminum tariffs helped U.S. production, increasing it by \$2.2 billion. However, the tariffs made other companies pay more for those metals, leading to a \$3.5 billion reduction in economic output (Swanson). Broadly, it seems American consumers are the ones paying the price of tariffs as Economist Pablo Fajgelbaum, Author Alberto Cavallo, and others reported that U.S. importers continued to import difficult-to-replace Chinese goods and passed on the additional costs to consumers, although the effects were relatively minor. Another study by researchers at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and Columbia University found that the U.S.’ economic well-being was reduced by 3%. Gordon Hanson, a professor at Harvard University, conducted a study to investigate if Trump’s tariffs had a measurable economic impact, finding that there was no positive or negative effect on employment or earnings. One major reason for this is that, when faced with tariffs, many companies may stop manufacturing goods in China. However, they do not bring factories or jobs back to the U.S.. Instead, they move their operations to other countries with low costs like Vietnam, leading to higher costs for Americans and no economic benefit. Additionally, China’s retaliatory 25% tariff on U.S.

agriculture led to U.S. producers dropping their prices by an average of 7% to maintain competitiveness in China, which is the U.S.’ agricultural sector’s biggest export market (Stackpole).

With the past’s resounding economic failures, it seems unlikely that Trump’s proposed tariffs will be any different. Several macroeconomic estimates have already come out regarding how Trump’s tariffs and a resulting trade war could affect the U.S.. While these estimates vary, ranging from the American Action Forum’s predicted 0.31% fall in GDP, RBC’s forecast of a 0.75% reduction in GDP, and The Budget Lab’s estimate of a 1.43% decline in GDP, they are resoundingly negative in economic outlook (York). Additionally, the Yale University’s Budget Lab has concluded that Trump’s tariffs would lead to a reduction in household income of \$2,576 and that tariffs could initially raise the price of consumer goods by 1.2% to 5.1%. While Trump’s first presidency did not see such high inflation in spite of his earlier tariffs, the tariffs he has proposed going into his second presidency are higher and affect more goods (Lawder). In fact, Trump himself has stated that he cannot guarantee prices will not increase due to tariffs, which indicates that inflation will be a clear consequence of Trump’s actions (Barrow and Weissert).

Still, there is the possibility that Trump’s tariffs will help U.S. foreign policy. One will have to wait and see if Trump’s promise of combatting America’s immigration and drug problem can be met. But with the damaging of bilateral ties and the threat of retaliatory tariffs, the success of Trump’s tariff ventures is uncertain. What is increasingly certain though is the economic damage that they will soon possibly have on the American people.

**Off-Periods And All That Comes With Them**

**By: Lucia Cagno**

Off-periods have always existed at North Shore High School (NSHS), but are they always beneficial? Today, the number of off-periods for a student can range from none to four on a given day. Ask any student or faculty member, and they will all have a different opinion as to how many are too many.

A huge benefit to having an off-period is the opportunity it affords to be able to calmly eat lunch. Therefore, when a student has only one off-period in their schedule, it is typically scheduled between period 4 and 7, as this is when lunch is served in the Cafeteria. Having the ability to eat lunch with friends instead of during class, which is when many students who do not have an off-period must eat, allows students to take a break from academics and decompress. Sophomores, juniors and seniors also have off-campus privileges, meaning that they can leave campus during an off-period to get lunch or, even study at the local coffee shop alone or with friends. Dr. Kevin Kurrus, an assistant principal at NSHS, says that often “an off-period will offer students downtime from their classes,” which is “extremely important for their social-emotional well-being.” Therefore, at least one off-period is generally recommended for a student, he adds.

As an alternative to an off-period, students may choose to enroll in an elective course. At NSHS, there are 50+ elective courses for students to choose from. Mrs. Donna Rice, the Librarian at NSHS of 15

years, says that a benefit to taking an elective is that students are “able to sample from a wide variety of subjects,” and therefore discover new passions. Many elective courses are less academically rigorous than core classes, and therefore allow students to learn new things with less stress. However, some electives offered, such as Advanced Placement (AP) Statistics or AP Psychology, are courses that can offer students college credit, and are more high-pressure. Mr. Dan Doherty, the Director of Counseling at NSHS says that “colleges will want to see students enroll in a challenging schedule,” so taking high level electives can be an opportunity to do so. Ultimately, the choice of what electives students want to take, if any at all, is theirs, and students have a fair level of freedom when developing their schedule.

Traditionally though, Seniors can schedule more off-periods or electives than underclassmen because they typically have already earned close to all or all of their required credits. For instance, some seniors might be able to choose to not enroll in a science class because they have earned the required science credits needed to graduate, giving them more time to have an off-period or an elective. Underclassmen have less opportunity for off-periods or electives because their schedule is usually filled with required courses, such as Health and English Lab. Mr. Doherty explains that underclassmen “should try to complete as many of their graduation requirements as

possible,” and will usually only have one off-period as a result. Later, these students will have a more flexible schedule which allows for additional off-periods or electives.

Generally, off-periods are a way for students to learn time management skills that are vital in college and throughout life. Students having the freedom to schedule open time versus an elective course is very collegiate, and can be extraordinarily helpful for those who plan to attend college. An off-period provides a block of unstructured time in-between classes and forces students to make choices about how they want to use it, whether it involve socializing, studying, relaxing, or, maybe even being disruptive. Each day, a significant portion of the student body makes this choice. For example, in the current Sophomore class, about 40% of students have two or more off-periods (Tech Dept.). Of course, there always is the potential for trouble, as mischief finds idle hands (to paraphrase Benjamin Franklin). If disruptive events do occur, administration helps these students to better manage their time. Overall, off-periods can be quite telling and help students in the long-run.

So how should students know whether to fill their schedules with electives or off-periods? “Ultimately, it comes down to the student,” says Dr. Kurrus. Whether being enrolled in AP/IB courses or Regents courses, some students thrive when they can have a break from academics during the day and they can reliably use their time wisely.

*(Continued On Page 5 )*



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**The Great Gatsby**

*(Continued From The Front Page)*

students to “Expose them to another interpretation of the classic novel,” said Kirmser. The planning process took a few months, but with the help of the three IB Language and Literature teachers, Mr. Knight, Ms. Viesta, and Dr. Kirmser, and the librarian, Mrs. Rice, it went smoothly.

The students utilized the Long Island Rail Road to travel to and from the City. Once they arrived at Penn Station, everyone was allotted 45 minutes of free time to explore and eat in Times Square. “It was such a great opportunity for students to get to experience the City and take advantage of their proximity to Manhattan,” added Kirmser. Once students regrouped with their chaperones, they proceeded to the Broadway theater to enjoy the performance.

“Walking into the theater was so exciting as we were shown to our seats that gave us amazing views,” said student Chone Iannelli. He added, “As my first Broadway experience, the talent of the cast and the organization of the show was so impressive to watch.” Chaperones even collected every student’s phone for the duration of the production so there would be no interruptions. “I think that the experience without the phone being in our possession really allowed us to focus and enjoy the show,” said Junior Chloe Rowell.

As the group hurried back to Penn Station to catch the 5:28pm train, many smiles could be seen. “I thought the trip was so fun and an amazing conclusion to studying *The Great Gatsby*,” said Junior Camila D’Amato. Overall, the well-planned and wonderfully executed trip led to an amazing New York City Broadway experience that the IB Language and Literature students will forever remember.



*Who can resist taking a group selfie while in Times Square? Not Ms. Viesta's IB Lang and Lit students.*

**Elon Musk’s**

**Transformation of X**

**By: Kalista Lin**

In April 2022, shortly after Elon Musk proposed buying Twitter, he pledged to keep the platform politically neutral. “For Twitter to deserve public trust, it must be politically neutral, which effectively means upsetting the far right and the far left equally,” Musk tweeted. However, the reality under his ownership has diverged sharply from this promise. Since acquiring the platform—now renamed X—Musk has reshaped it into a space that heavily amplifies right-wing causes, including President Donald Trump’s electoral campaign. Academic research, user engagement data, and reports on X’s operations reveal a pronounced shift favoring conservative content. In fact, Musk himself has become an outspoken supporter of Trump, donating extensively to his campaign and using X to bolster right-leaning narratives.

By 2023, X had become a key space for Republican political discourse. Musk hosted campaign events for GOP candidates, reversed bans on political ads, and shared revenue with accounts driving engagement—most of which lean conservative. His restructuring of the blue check verification system prioritized paid users and incentivized divisive content, benefiting right-wing accounts. Musk’s own posts have amplified conservative causes, from criticizing diversity efforts to spreading debunked conspiracy theories. Though Musk insists X is neutral, data shows otherwise. Engagement metrics favor right-wing accounts, while left-leaning users report increased harassment. Pew Research recently found that perceptions of X’s impact on democracy are deeply divided along partisan lines, with more Republicans than Democrats viewing the platform positively. Additionally, Raymond Lin, an avid user of X and a senior at North Shore High School, has stated that in his recent experience, he has seen more “flagrantly right wing posts now than two years ago. But since there is a more centrist presence that I follow and the niches I engage in, my time using X has not been significantly affected by the right wing shift”.

**Inspiring Young Poets: North Shore High School’s Newest Author**

**By: Mollie Regan**

North Shore High School junior Lucia Cagno recently published on Amazon her own book of poetry, entitled *Daffodils and Dandelions*. The book, dedicated to her parents, contains two sections- one labeled *Daffodils*, and the other, *Dandelions*. The poems, each marked with a date, have themes of nature, love, longing, heartache, and wonder. Cagno’s poems encapsulate the feelings and experiences of a teenage girl, in a way that all people can relate. Her talent with words is evident and I recently had the pleasure of not only reading her work, but also talking to her about the compilation:

**Q:** How long have you been writing?

**A:** I started writing a little bit in eighth or ninth grade and then I started writing with a goal of publishing a collection the summer between my freshman and sophomore year.

**Q:** What made you want to write a book?

**A:** It was always just something I thought I could do. And then I started researching it more and seeing how you could self-publish; it seemed really possible. So then I decided why not? And I started working on it a little bit more.

**Q:** What was your inspiration and/or your thought process behind writing *Daffodils and Dandelions*?

**A:** So the premise of it is that despite there being good days or bad days or good or bad experiences, everything adds up to make someone human and we’re all sort of the same. So I wanted to show that message in my poetry and that everyone feels similarly. Everyone is equal and everyone deserves to be treated in a good way. I wanted to spread that message.

**Q:** How did you decide upon the title *Daffodils and Dandelions*?

**A:** So, I think it was freshman year. I wrote a poem that’s not actually in the book, but it’s called “Daffodils and Dandelions”. And it’s about how dandelions are flowers that people always think of as a weed. I always thought they were really pretty though. Daffodils also look like yellow flowers, but they’re treated really differently. How they’re thought about really interested me. I felt like it could be applied to real life and how some people are treated differently than others, just based on the way they look; it doesn’t make sense .

**Q:** And how long did it take you to write and publish this collection?

**A:** The writing process was definitely the longest- It took a year and a half. And then publishing; that also took three or four months because you have to get proofs of your writing. You have to make sure everything works. I had to work on the cover and all this other stuff just to make sure that the book itself was in order; I think the writing process was probably the longest part, however.

**Q:** Did you face any challenges while writing it or working to release the book?

**A:** I wasn’t really sure how to put it all together and join the poems in a way that really made them mesh. But overall, it was a pretty smooth process. There was also a time when I was a little worried that I would be embarrassed if I published it, but I just took the leap and put it

out into the world. I was vulnerable because it’s my writing and it’s straight from my head and my thoughts. But it’s definitely a cool experience.

**Q:** How do you feel now that your book is published?

**A:** I’m proud of it. It took a ton of work. I’m happy that I finally got it done and I committed to doing it. And yeah, it’s so far bringing a lot of cool experiences for me. It’s fun to talk with people about my work, like my friends, classmates, and teachers.

**Q:** Are you planning to write another book in the future?

**A:** I think a second collection would be super cool. I do have some pieces that weren’t in this book, so maybe.

Lucia Cagno is a talented young poet, and her poems show beautiful, heartfelt, and meaningful insight into the various highs and lows of life. Writing and releasing a book is both difficult and admirable, and Cagno’s work serves as an inspiration to people of all ages. *Daffodils and Dandelions* can be found on Amazon in paperback format.



*Photo Credit: Ellamarie Mitchell*

Approaching the 2024 election, Musk ramped up his support for Trump, from livestreaming rallies to promoting financial incentives for voter outreach favoring swing-state conservatives. These actions, coupled with inflammatory posts targeting figures like Kamala Harris, who recently ran in the presidential election for the Democratic Party, have drawn criticism and legal scrutiny. “We do have a lot of evidence to suspect that X is turning more and more far-right by the day,” said Giulio Corsi, a researcher at the University of Cambridge who studied X’s recommendation algorithm. Musk’s vocal alignment with Trump contrasts with the silence of executives at other platforms and undermines his claims of neutrality. Critics argue that X, under Musk’s leadership, has implemented right-wing influence, reshaping the platform’s identity. Additionally, Trump has recently tapped Brendan Carr—an Elon Musk ally—as FCC Chair, which will further strengthen the rightward shift of X as a social media platform. By placing Musk-backed figures in influential regulatory positions, Trump ensures that policies favoring deregulation and “free speech” narratives will continue to dominate. In turn, it will also allow X to operate with fewer government restraints and control, amplifying divisive content and right-leaning content as a whole under the guise of promoting open discourse.



# Will The Real Timothée Chalamet Please Stand Up?

By: Lucy Jackson

Have you ever met someone and thought he looked like the famous actor Timothée Chalamet? Well, you’re not alone. Timothee Chalmet is an American actor who stars in movies including *Dune*, *Lady Bird*, *Little Women*, and *Wonka*. His distinct facial features and acting style make him extremely recognizable in any film. And so, on Sunday, October 27th, 2024 approximately 10,000 people showed up to the Timothée Chalamet look-alike contest in New York City’s Washington Square Park. In late September, when the organizer of the contest, Anthony Po, posted flyers about this event around New York City, he didn’t expect more than 50 contestants to show up. Po, who is a YouTuber and event organizer based in New Jersey, was itching to host an event to get people talking; he knew exactly what to do. When interviewed about the event, he said, “‘They call me ‘Less hot Timothée Chalamet,’

so we wanted to host a look-alike competition’” (Huston 8). The flyers included nothing but the date, location and the promise of a \$50 prize for the winner. Soon, photos of the flyers were showing up online. As the contest became more popular on Tiktok, Instagram, and Twitter, Chalamet doppelgangers from around the country prepared for their day of recognition. Reed Putman, one of the constants, said “I wasn’t sure if the Manhattan event was even real or not. But as it became apparent that it was legit, I bought a plane ticket” (Putman 2).

By the time the contest started, the large crowd of people made it hard to navigate around the Washington Square Arch. People were dressed up as Timothée Chalamet’s movie characters including Willy Wonka from *Wonka*, Paul Atreides from *Dune*, and the poster boy for Chanel. To

the shock of the organizers and the crowd, the real Timothée Chalamet showed up to the contest. People started doing double takes as Chalamet passed by. Some did not even realize he was the real deal. One contender named Spencer Delorenzo said, “I thought he was just another impersonator, and I was like, for a moment, ‘Wow, he’s really good.’ And then I was like, ‘Oh my God, that’s him!’” Unfortunately, Chalamet only stayed for a few minutes and was then swiftly taken away by his bodyguards. Shortly after, the New York City Police Department caught wind of the unpermitted event and started pushing people away from the crowd. Matt Manix, another one of the look-alike contestants, was arrested and charged for “failure to comply with directions from park staff, police officers, or park signs; disorderly conduct; and trespassing” (Ishmael 3),

along with three others. Many people who witnessed the arrest yelled “free Timmy” in protest. There was later a #freetimmy on TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter and the content involved Manix’s arrest. Ultimately the events organizer, Anthony Po, was fined \$500 for the unpermitted event.

The contestants eventually migrated to Mercer Playground where the winner was decided. The participants were judged on their hair and “rizz” (Carter 8). The judges awarded Miles Michell “Best Tim” because of his amazing Wonka costume and all the candy he was handing out to spectators. He received a six foot tall trophy, a giant sized \$50 check, and a large bag of Halloween candy. In the end, the contest exceeded Po’s expectations and left spectators delighted.

## “Let The Truth Stand As The Truth”

By: Ella Cleary

The Menendez Brothers are well known for being found guilty of brutally murdering their parents, but what happened behind closed doors that led to this killing is rarely recognized. In August 1989, Jose and Mary “Kitty” Menendez were found dead in their home. It was later revealed that their sons, Lyle and Eric, were responsible for the murders. At the time, Lyle was 21, and Eric was 18. In March of 1996, a jury convicted them of first-degree murder and they were sentenced to life in prison with no possibility of parole. During the trial, it was discovered that the reason for the murders was an endless amount of mental, physical, and sexual abuse they endured at the hands of their parents.

New-found attention has been brought to this case recently because of a new Netflix series, *Monsters: The Menendez Brothers*, written and directed by Ryan Murphy. This show includes many facts from the case, but it also contains some fiction just to create a more “interesting” narrative. Eric Menedez addressed this shortly after the show was released, as his wife, Tammi Menendez, posted his thoughts on Facebook. He stated that Ryan Murphy “shapes his horrible narrative through vile and appalling character portrayals of Lyle and me and disheartening slander.” After watching the show, and the videos of the actual court case released on YouTube, it is clear that the most inaccurate part of the series was how the characters portrayed the real people involved, specifically Jose, Lyle, and Eric Menendez.

In the show, Jose Menendez is shown to be physically, mentally, and sexually abusive

to his sons. However, Murphy provides just as much evidence that the brothers might have lied about the abuse they endured from their father. This suggests that Lyle and Eric Menendez could have killed their parents for no reason at all, when it has been proven in court that they have a clear motive. There are multiple pieces of evidence to prove the abuse that occurred in that household. This includes a letter written by 18-year-old Eric to his uncle a couple of months before the murders, in which he describes the sexual abuse he received from his father.

The portrayal of Lyle and Eric’s relationship was another big inaccuracy. Many scenes heavily implied an incestuous relationship between the brothers. It was even suggested that they killed their parents because they were caught together. However, there is no evidence that this ever happened, and the possibility was addressed in court in the past, but ultimately proven false. These many discrepancies in the show have “taken the painful truths several steps backward,” Eric stated on Facebook. They have a very big effect on how the brothers are viewed and it may impact the chance of them being released from prison, which is being considered at the moment as there is a parole hearing this month. As Eric Menendez stated, “Is the truth not enough? Let the truth stand as the truth.”

## Will the Cookie Empire “Crumbl?”

By: Kaitlin Ho

In just a few short years, dominating the dessert world with its innovative flavors, viral marketing strategies, and rapid expansion, Crumbl Cookies has become a household name. With its iconic bold black writing on a pink box that’s packed with 700-calorie giant cookies, it seems as though everyone has jumped on the Crumbl bandwagon. However, as Crumbl navigates its global ambitions and the challenges of viral fame, the question remains as to whether or not Crumbl can sustain its meteoric rise.

Founded in 2017 by cousins Jason McGowan and Sawyer Hemsley, Crumbl has transformed the cookie business. Its signature offering—a weekly rotating menu of innovative cookie flavors such as “Cinnamon Square” and

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“Maple Cream Sandwich”—pairs with a visually striking, oversized presentation. By 2023, the company had over 1,000 locations and \$1 billion in annual sales, with exponential growth continuing. (Wilson).

The majority of Crumbl’s success is attributed to its social media marketing. On TikTok, the brand has garnered millions of followers and views by sharing enticing visuals and behind-the-scenes content. Customer reviews, weekly flavor reveals, and relatable, humorous posts have created a community of loyal fans eager to share their own experiences trying the cookies (Cappiello). Crumbl’s approach to marketing makes its cookies more than just a product—but an experience.

While the brand has reached impressive heights, its rapid success has brought new challenges. One of the most notable incidents was an unauthorized Crumbl pop-up in Sydney, Australia. In September 2024, organizers sold imported Crumbl cookies at AUD \$17.50 each—three times their usual price in the U.S. Many customers were disappointed to find the cookies stale, leading to public backlash and accusations of false advertising (Werner). While Crumbl had no involvement in the Sydney pop-up, this incident reflects the potential pitfalls of viral fame—having to protect the brand from opportunists who produce dupes. Shortly after the fake pop-up, Crumbl responded to the Sydney pop-up, announcing plans to open

official locations in Australia, wanting to provide an authentic Crumbl experience to international fans (Magennis).

Crumbl’s story is one of innovation, amazing marketing, and remarkable growth. However, its longevity will depend on how well the company addresses the challenges that come with viral fame and rapid expansion. If Crumbl can keep delivering on the promise of quality and excitement while navigating its growing pains, it’s poised to become not just a viral sensation, but a lasting global brand. So, swing by the Port Washington Crumbl cookie store and see what all of the buzz is about.

## The Gen-Z Job Market Frenzy

By: Jenna Sasso

In today’s world, young adults are struggling to find jobs. In fact, the percentage of 16-35 year olds who are unemployed globally is 4.2%. So, what has made the current job market so challenging? The answer is automation, social media and high competition.

One major reason why people are having difficulty finding a job is the rise of automation. Automation is a system that uses robots, machines or AI for things like jobs, studying, and teaching. Technology has advanced so much that many businesses rely on automation to do the work instead of humans. Automation is fast, accurate, and doesn’t require a paycheck, making it an appealing choice for big companies like Amazon, UPS, Nike, and Google, which have all adopted automation. The jobs Gen Z typically applies for, entry-level or hands-on positions, are the ones being hit hardest by automation. Calum McClelland, the Head of Operations at IoT For All, says, “Blue-collar and white-collar jobs will be eliminated—basically, anything that requires middle skills.” This means more “starter” jobs are disappearing. Gen Z is therefore being forced to aim higher and dream bigger to find success, which isn’t easy when so many barriers are in the way.

Another reason why the job market is so challenging is social media. Believe it or not, the apps Gen Z can’t live without may be hurting its chances of being hired. Author Chris McGowan explains how social media can cause “Reputational damage, loss of customer trust, compliance violations, decreased employee productivity, and compromised intellectual property and/or sensitive data”. In other words

many Gen Zers don’t think twice about what they share online, but employers might judge those posts even years later. On top of that, social media can also ruin one’s mental focus. McGowan adds that “Distracted employees are more likely to make mistakes or take shortcuts at work, which can lead to serious problems”. Gen Z is so used to constantly checking its phones that this distraction can even carry over into job interviews or the workplace.

Lastly, a large amount of competition has always been an issue in the job market, but now it’s worse than ever. Morgan Smith, a reporter for CNBC explains that “Job openings in April fell to their lowest level in three years”. This means there are fewer opportunities and more people fighting for the same jobs. According to writer Greg Iacurci “Applicants today have to deal with a 10% to 20% increase in competition for many positions”. It doesn’t help that the most in demand jobs often require skills or experience that Gen Z may not yet have. On top of that, job postings are decreasing, making the situation even worse.

So, how can people increase their chances of finding employment? Try researching automation and social media to learn about their impact. Don’t be afraid to showcase your strengths and unique qualities to stay ahead of competition. With that being said, it’s crucial to enhance your knowledge on interviewing skills and job application etiquette. But most importantly, don’t give up. With determination and a good strategy, anyone can overcome the challenges of technology, social media, and competition.



# Giving Thanks To New York City

By: Elsa Lanne

On November 28th, 2024, which was a rainy Thanksgiving Day, a parade centered on tradition and love marched through the center of Manhattan. It traveled 2.5 miles starting at West 77th Street and Central Park West and turned onto 6th Avenue, ending at Macy's Herald Square flagship store on 34th Street. The 98th annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade could not be stopped by the cold and wet conditions, as dedicated spectators dressed in ponchos and raingear willingly stood in puddles to watch the wondrous display. While on that day some families run a Turkey Trot, take a lazy morning, or begin meal preparation, many others spend that morning up against the barricades while watching the parade.

Dedicated families like mine, woke up early that day to catch a subway or train to the parade grounds. Around 8:30, me and my family arrived at my mother's Bryant Park office space. Hanging my head out the window left me with a thrilling view of an open street where the parade would soon take place. I knew the show was going to be spectacular.

Preparations for the parade take an extensive amount of time as all year round "a small army of sculptors, painters, seamstresses, carpenters, and welders [work] to put together the giant balloons, floats, and elaborate costumes [in] ... a massive warehouse in New Jersey known as the Macy's Studio" (Gordemer). In the dark hours of the morning before the parade, roads

are closed and traffic lights are turned "flush to the sidewalk so that the balloons [have] a safe and clear path" (Gordemer).

2024's parade consisted of "17 giant balloons, 22 floats, 11 marching bands, and 700 clowns" (Weaver). The helium-filled balloons were a popular draw that left children watching in awe. In addition, this year's float "The Bronx Zoo's Wondrous World of Wildlife" (Kimont) celebrated the Bronx Zoo's 125th birthday and was astounding. The high school and college marching bands that were featured wowed onlookers.

For the 2024 parade, approximately 3.5 million spectators lined the streets of New York to watch the show in person while another 30 million streamed the event live on their television (Gordemer). Also, 5,000 volunteer balloon handlers walked in the parade. Positive energy was everywhere. And finally, the spectacular Macy's store served as a backdrop to all of the live performances, which included Jennifer Hudson, Kylie Minogue, and Idina Menzel. Broadway performers from *Hell's Kitchen*, *Death Becomes Her*, *The Outsiders*, and *Redwood* were also there as well.

I will never forget my first time at this parade as it's such a big part of New York City. Even with the cold and wet conditions, many people came together to celebrate; and, that is something to be thankful for.

# To Fill Time Or Not To Fill Time

(Continued From Page 2)

Some however, find the unstructured time to be boring, and therefore might disrupt other students. Dr. Kurrus mentions how after the COVID-19 pandemic, he saw how the transition back to fully in-person learning was challenging for many students, and therefore there was a bit more disruption in the hallways. He says that now, more students feel comfortable with their off-periods, and that student-discipline is consistently maintained.

Overall, the process of creating a schedule that fits each student's specific needs requires careful thought. When in doubt, NSHS's Guidance Department is ready to help students figure out what kind of schedule works best for them.



# Ways To Keep The Holiday Season Jolly

By: Lucia Cagno

As we reflect upon the past holiday season, it is easy to get caught up in all of the festive spirit and forget about some potential threats to the environment that this time of year can cause. Wrapping paper use, fast fashion, and travel all greatly increase during the holiday season, and, if people are not cautious, they can have extremely negative effects on the environment.

A potentially unexpected aspect of the holidays that can hurt the environment is wrapping paper. Approximately 108 million rolls of wrapping paper are thrown away each year (wheeliebins.co), primarily during the winter holidays. While the extensive use of wrapping paper does not seem that damaging, the name "wrapping paper" is deceptive. Many holiday-themed wrapping papers contain glitter, decorations, ribbons, and other plastic embellishments, in addition to the paper. This means a huge amount of wrapping paper becomes unrecyclable, and explains why 2.3 million pounds of wrapping paper end up in landfills yearly. (wheeliebins.co).

Using paper that explicitly states that it is recyclable, which is often written on the label of the plastic wrapping, is key in preventing such a huge amount of wrapping paper from going to landfills. Repurposing other kinds of paper for gift wrapping, such as newspapers, is also a great way to help the environment during the holidays. The same can be said for gift bags, if they are recyclable. Reusing other bags is a wonderful thing to do as well.

Additionally, fast fashion is highly present within holiday gifts, and is detrimental to the environment. Fast fashion is "trendy clothing that samples ideas from the catwalk or celebrity culture" (goodonyou.eco). These items will decrease in cost which makes them available to the

average consumer, yet they are often unsustainable. The constant Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and general holiday sales from brands supplying fast fashion trends encourage people to buy more goods at lower prices, ultimately causing damage to the environment. This damage occurs for a number of reasons. To start, fast fashion breeds a huge amount of textile waste. Fast changing trends cause some items to go out of style just as they are being mass produced, causing a surplus of non-trendy clothes that will not sell. The fashion industry accounts for 10% of global carbon emissions and 85% of all textiles end up in landfills (earth.org). Therefore, fast fashion causes more items to be wasted at a faster rate. With social media influencing people to add trendy outfits to the top of their holiday list, the gifting season only increases the amount of fast fashion consumed.

There are several ways to protect oneself from falling prey to fast fashion trends during the holidays. When sales arrive, people should be sure to only purchase things that they truly want, not just because items are on sale. Purchasing items that are trending and cheap, but not actually one's style encourages fast fashion. Also, when seeing new fashion trends on social media, take caution and try to recognize that some of these trends may not be around for long. Maybe wait a few weeks to see if they are still worth the purchase. Finally, make an effort to shop sustainably. There are hundreds of shops that prioritize sustainability in their clothes, and doing a little bit of research into what brands are sustainable will go a long way. Shopping second-hand is also a great way to look for specific items that a person might be interested in, as there is always a wide

assortment of clothing items at thrift stores, through online reseller sites, and more.

Lastly, the holiday season causes an increase in travel. As people visit family and spend time with loved ones, there is an unfortunate huge carbon footprint left behind them. An estimated "additional 96 kg of CO2/person [is] produced" (Researchgate) as thousands of families travel across the country. This estimate does not even account for the many miles traveled by airplane, train, and bus. Another aspect of this carbon footprint is the shipping details of gifts. Gifts are shipped via trucks, ships, and more, all of which add carbon emissions into the atmosphere. Reducing your carbon footprint is possible while still being able to visit loved ones and order gifts. For those traveling shorter distances, using public transport or carpooling with others helps to reduce the impact. Finally, ordering gifts in fewer orders can sometimes reduce the amount of shipments that are required.

Although each of these changes may seem small, it is important in order to help the environment so that there are many more holiday seasons to enjoy. Throughout the entire year, even when it is not the holiday season, making a conscious effort to aid the environment is extraordinarily important. It is everyone's responsibility to preserve this planet that we call home.



# The Play With An Important Message

By: Allie Friedman

*The Skin of Our Teeth*, a 1943 Pulitzer Prize winning drama written by Thornton Wilder, was recently adapted and directed by Mr. Aaron Brateman, the theater teacher and director at North Shore High School. It was performed on Friday November 22nd, and Saturday November 23rd, 2024 in North Shore High School's auditorium.

The run time of the play was about two and a half hours, according to Director Brateman, and followed "A family called the Antrobus, who survived several disasters, like, world ending disasters". And, the central theme of the drama is "the collective hope that we have as humans to pull together and pull through the worst of times, and really find meaning in life by doing that."

The play is divided up into three settings. The first is during the Ice Age, when the Earth is freezing over and barely anyone survives; the second is during a large scale storm and natural disaster, and the third is after a monstrous war. North Shore's production was outstanding as Senior actresses Violet Ganzekaufer, Axel Glatt, and Ginger Sanborn, who played stage manager, Sabina, and Mrs. Antrobus, respectively, were able to bring their roles to life thanks to their long term participation in North Shore Masquers' plays and musicals. The Seniors who were behind the scenes included Olivia Cagno, Madison Jairala, Erin McLellan, Samantha Nyhan, Mollie Regan, Oliver Schweiger, and Caroline Winchester; they all demonstrated just how much they have learned as active participants in the Theater Department over the past few years, whether it involved set design, costume design, props, or lighting.

When Mr. Brateman chooses a play for the students, such as *The Skin of Our Teeth*, to put on, he first thinks about who will participate; for example, he takes a look at the actors and actresses he expects to audition, and tries to find a show that will fit the group of students as a whole. He also thinks that it is quite important that "the work that we're doing is connected to the world around us". This process begins the second the striking of the previous Spring's musical takes place.

*The Skin of Our Teeth* was special this year, as when Mr. Brateman chose this play over the summer, he took into account that it "would be presented this Fall, a few weeks after Americans would learn more about our country and what would be going on in the world.

In addition, when designing any given play or musical's backdrop, the Masquers' production team chooses a specific concept, which is defined as "an aesthetic lens that we look at the show through", Mr Brateman stated. For *The Skin of Our Teeth*, the idea of the American Flag was used, because of the current political, economic, and social climate. Lots of red, white, and blue color schemes were used in designing costumes, sets, and lighting.

Though the world may currently be going through some troubling times, so many students at North Shore High School have found solace in the theater program. "I think in the last couple years it's been so cool to see our students take ownership of their community, and have pride in it," added Brateman.

A special thanks to Aaron F. Brateman (Director and Lighting Designer), Margaret DeLima (Set and Prop Design), Damien Chillemi (Producer and Technical Director), Christian Andersen (Chief Constructor), Meghan O'Beirne (Costume Design), Tori Kalberer (Costume Advisor), the North Shore Arts Angels, Sharon Morello, Jerry Boertzel and the custodial staff, and Steven Burgos (Language Instructor) for allowing our students artistic freedom and for encouraging a love for the arts.



## Hits Of 2024: The Best Of Pop Culture

By: Kate Spieler

2024 was a monumental year, with some of the best movies, television, and music having been produced. For example, according to *The Tufts Daily*, one of the most notable films was *Twisters*, starring actors Glen Powell and Daisy Edgar-Jones (Gaines); it is a remake of the 1996 classic *Twister*. The latest version of the film is thrilling and emotional, as viewers are grasping the destructiveness of natural disasters such as tornadoes, while also becoming invested in the characters' personal story lines. Furthermore, the live action movie of the Broadway musical, *Wicked*, is absolutely phenomenal and it stars Ariana Grande and Cythina Evro as the iconic characters of Glinda and Elphaba (Gaines). This Broadway based film made history defying box office records compared to other Broadway related films, earning 525 million worldwide since its November 22nd release! (Weiss).

As far as television shows are concerned, *Dancing With The Stars* had an impressive surge in popularity after being on air for over 20 years. 2024's season drew in Gen-Z viewers through its addition of new pro-dancers, a popular cast and the use of TikTok. Partners Jenna Johnson and former *Bachelor* runner-up from Season 20, Joey Graziadei, won over this season's viewers, as well as the Mirrorball Trophy. Moreover, USA Olympic rugby player, Iona Maher was runner-up. Maher truly displayed how with dedication and courage, learning a new skill is possible; she even helped many people feel more confident about their self-image.

This year also went particularly well for a number of musical artists, thanks to their new releases. Groundbreaking artist Taylor Swift released her eleventh album, *The Tortured Poets Department*, which was her first one to have over 200 million streams in one day. This collection of stories is different from her usual music, and truly showcases how she is well-versed in all genres. She clearly also is exceptional at getting in touch with her thoughts. Moreover, the iconic artist from the early 2000's, Charli XCX, made her way back to the spotlight with her sixth album, *BRAT*. Lastly, many other famous artists, such as Sabrina Carpenter and Billie Eilish, released new albums this year which were well-liked, as both made the Billboards Top 10 list (McIntyre).

Overall, 2024 was a novel year for pop culture as it had a wide variety of movies, television, and music that caught people's attention. Hopefully, 2025 will not be any different.



January 2025

## From Midwest Princess To Pop Powerhouse: Chappell Roan's Newest Music

By: Mollie Regan

It has been just over a year since the September 2023 release of *The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess*, Chappell Roan's debut album. Since then, the 26 year old artist has raced to the top of the charts, with her songs dominating social media and music festivals such as Coachella and New York City's Governor's Ball. Her fast success and popularity has so many wondering "whats next?" for the rising star.

Roan has been releasing tidbits of information about her upcoming music through her social media, and in a lengthy interview with *Rolling Stone*, she gave insight into her plans as well as the progress of her new album. Roan stated that she would be taking "from November to mid-May off to write" in order to create and refine an album to follow up her explosively successful debut. The singer has placed great emphasis on creative freedom, and reportedly already has at least five songs in the works. Dan Nigro, Chappell's producer, has stated that the upcoming album is "a new version of Chappell", and that it will contain a "dancy" song, a country song, a "seventies" song, an "eighties" song, and a distinctly "acoustic" song. Considering Roan's statements, and the songs she has already performed, many fans speculate that her album will come out by mid to late 2025.

Fans have already heard several new songs from her yet to be officially released album. Chappell Roan first performed her emotional ballad "The Subway" during the 2024 NYC Governor's Ball Music Festival, and had huge success with it. Later, she performed "The Giver" on *Saturday Night Live*, an energetic pop-country fusion piece, which also served as a glimpse into her upcoming music. More recently, she appeared in the Netflix Christmas special, *A Nonsense Christmas with Sabrina Carpenter*, in which the two prominent pop singers performed a duet of "Last Christmas" by Wham!

Although no hard evidence about a new album has been released, it is evident that Chappell Roan is putting her efforts and talents into creating some truly incredible music. While it will be difficult to exceed the success of *The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess*, she has proven that she is immensely capable; and, for now, all fans can do is wait.

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## 2024's Sparse Spotify Wrapped

By: Ava Varasano

Since its debut in 2016, the release of Spotify Wrapped has become a significant event for Spotify users. Each year, music listeners look forward to seeing their most streamed artists and songs. When music lovers receive their unique slideshow of their listening habits from the past year, they share it with friends and post Instagram stories. People brag, mock, and complement each other's musical tastes, creating connections among music listeners.

However, the Spotify Wrapped that was released on December 4, 2024, did not fulfill Spotify users' expectations and left many feeling disappointed. 2024's Wrapped featured fewer special features than in previous years, frustrating both Spotify users and music enthusiasts.

Since its start in 2016, Spotify Wrapped has continuously evolved, changing its presentation, statistics, features, and user experience each year. Typically, users receive a slideshow-like presentation on their Spotify homepage in late November or early December, designed for easy sharing on social media. Spotify Wrapped traditionally showcases users' top podcasts, artists, genres, albums, and songs from the year, along with the total listening minutes they accumulated, which many users proudly share as proof of their listening addictions. Each year, new special features are introduced to the Wrapped display; for instance, the "Sound Towns" in 2023 and the Meyers-Briggs personality types in 2022, which was determined by the kind of music each listener streamed, were big hits.

The listening data is collected annually by tracking each user's listening habits, such as what songs they listen to and how long they listen. The most streamed songs are determined by the total number of streams a song has, whether online or offline. The listener has to play the song for at least 30 seconds for it to count as a stream. The most listened-to songs are calculated based on the songs streamed the most frequently, rather than the total listening time of each song. For example, playing a five-minute song for 30 minutes will count for fewer streams than playing a three-minute song for 21 minutes.

When streaming in "private sessions," the data about the album, artist, genre, and song does not contribute to the annual Wrapped data, although the listening minutes are still counted. Songs streamed earlier in the year generally have more weight in determining the most listened-to songs,

as data collection typically stops in late Fall. Albums released later in the year tend to be ranked lower on global Spotify charts because they have less time to grow on Spotify. Album length also plays a role in Spotify's top albums and artist rankings; longer albums usually receive fewer listens simply due to their length.

Although Spotify Wrapped is usually celebrated, 2024's display disappointed many users. It only showcased listening data on users' most listened-to songs, artists, and their overall listening minutes. Many were upset that their top genres and albums weren't included, especially given that 2024 featured many high-quality album releases.

The special feature in 2024 was "Music Evolution," which gave users a timeline of their listening habits for the past year; however, it only provided three months of the year. Instead of the normal music genres, users were given abstract micro-genres. One popular micro-genre was "Pink Pilates Princess," which many thought was weird and artificial sounding. People made fun of their assigned micro-genres on social media, creating a wave of memes and videos mocking the feature.

2024's Spotify Wrapped definitely included many AI features, like an AI podcast and AI playlist maker. While these features were good concepts, they did not seem fully developed or executed correctly. Many listeners felt that the AI-generated podcasts sounded artificial and robotic, which contrasts with the relatable and human nature that a podcast typically has.

Some avid music listeners also claim that their listening data for 2024 was incorrect, claiming that their top songs and artists were not the music they listened to the most. Many blame AI for these errors, suggesting that the Wrapped display was put together by AI and not Spotify itself, leading to messed up listening statistics. Users questioned if AI was used too much in the production of 2024's Wrapped. Many mentioned on social media how it just felt artificial, prosthetic, and lazy. Due to Spotify's open endorsement of AI, many listeners are wondering if Spotify and the music industry overall will begin to incorporate more AI technology into their future projects.

Overall, the disappointment that followed the 2024 Spotify Wrapped was undeniable, and Spotify listeners hope that 2025's Wrapped will make up for 2024's weak display.



# Aardman Vs. Ghibli

By: Wyatt Snyder

After the first *Wallace & Gromit* episode was released in 1989, people all over England immediately fell in love with the classic British wit of the clay man and his dog; soon after, Americans got on board. And now, this Aardman Studio animated film series has a cult following, and for good reason: every *Wallace & Gromit* film, whether its a short or a feature, has earned over a 90% rating on Rotten Tomato. Even after more than 30 years, Aardman Studios has been able to live up to its reputation, as they released a new film entitled *Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl*, on Christmas Day, which has, so far, scored a 100% on Rotten Tomatoes; certainly this film will be a best-animated feature Oscar nominee in 2025.

Another movie producing company that has been in the spotlight more recently, is Studio Ghibli, a Japanese animation studio based in Tokyo. Even though this company has been in existence since 1985, it recently brought home two best-animated feature Oscars, with its films *Spirited Away* (2003) and *The Boy and the Heron* (2024). Although these films lack the goofiness found in *Wallace & Gromit*, they make up for it with impactful and moving themes, as well as their commentary on greed, industrialism, and environmentalism.

However, these differences between the films and their studios' focus do not deter any fans of animated films, as they are both undeniably great.

On the other hand, with two highly acclaimed movie producers like Aardman Animations and Studio Ghibli on the same playing field, there is bound to be a rivalry. In 2005, both studios had movies nominated for the Oscar award for Best Picture, with *Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit*, and *Howl's Moving Castle* respectively. The final decision was one which controversially awarded Aardman Animations with yet another Oscar-winning film, as many animated film lovers believed this to be the wrong choice. Fortunately, this duel between the two studios appears to be all in good spirits, as it has been fueling each one of them to produce the best movies possible in hopes of winning yet another Oscar. Now, each studio plans to release new films in the near future, and it will certainly be exciting to see how they compare to one another.



## Knowledge: A Pondering

By: Anne Kelly

What is it about humanity that makes us want to explore and understand? What is the root of our inherent need to explain and uncover? Why, when we are truly so cosmically insignificant, do we search to find meaning for our existence and the ultimate truth?

Knowledge endures because it is the key to advancement and a necessity for our significance. It is our guiding star, our ever-moving target propelling us through our hatred and division; a prime example of how the quest for knowledge and its importance traverses time and circumstance is North Shore High School's most recent production of *The Skin of Our Teeth*.

However, in the past, much of society feared free thought for its risk of allowing objective interpretation of the world: Since the ancients, knowledge could disrupt the legitimacy of power and alter the perceived balance between the gods and us mere humans. Prometheus, the mythological Greek titan, stole the gods' fire and was doomed to eternal suffering. Many in society worried that those who knew too much or thought too critically might step out of their place as humans. Knowledge was clearly an enemy of control, and because of this, those with influence and those who followed them forced the world into what they wanted it to be for their own benefit and comfort.

But there has always been more to be known. The truth knocks at the door until someone is brave enough to open it. From the Greeks to Copernicus to Einstein, questioning always emerges victorious from

this battle.

And why is that? On the whole, intelligent beings tend to gravitate towards exploration and discovery. I truly believe that at our core, most humans want to make some meaning out of existence. Though some do attempt to spread ignorance or change even fact itself, most have curiosity and the desire to pursue knowledge because they yearn to feel connected to something. From religion to science, so many of us attempt to explain the world we live in because we are simultaneously afraid of our insignificance and motivated by it. When a person looks to the sky, the majority are awed, inspired, and connected by the incomprehensibility of the universe, and those who have dedicated their lives to the search for knowledge continue to look for these answers because, in this humble position, it is a privilege to be able to do so.

As simply a dot on the canvas of the universe, those who have advanced human knowledge realize that if some small understanding of the world is gained, humanity, throughout its history, will have truly lived and lived up to the universe's immensity.

Knowledge is our champion and motivator because those inspired by the privilege to pursue it continue to do so even in the face of ego-driven indifference and manipulation. Over eons, knowledge has and will continue to be sought after because history has shown that more of us than not know that this quest, in itself, is our species' greatest gift, our deepest honor.

# Pickleball's Meteoric Rise In The U.S.

By: Colin Davison

Pickleball has become one of the fastest-growing sports in the nation. Across the country, Pickleball courts and leagues have sprouted up and people of all ages have begun playing. The meteoric rise of this previously somewhat unknown sport makes us question how it has skyrocketed in popularity, and why people love it so much. To answer this question, I interviewed Frank Milillo, the Ambassador of Pickleball for Nassau County and the founder of the Long Island Pickleball Pros organization, based in Rockville Center, which offers pickleball lessons and leagues.

Pickleball was created in 1965 when Joel Pritchard, a congressman from Washington State, and his friend Bill Bell used a badminton court, ping pong paddles, and a perforated ball in the first game of pickleball with their families (USA Pickleball). From there, they formed a corporation in 1972, and in 1975, the first article about pickleball was published in *The National Observer*. The following year, the first pickleball tournament took place, with mainly college tennis players competing for fun. The sport began to expand, with associations being created and more and more tournaments being held. From 2020 up to 2024, pickleball has experienced the greatest growth and popularity, becoming a prominent sport in America.

One of the main contributing factors to pickleball's emergence is the accessibility of the sport. Milillo explains, "It's an easy game to play, easy game to learn the rules, and extremely competitive." It is free to play on outdoor courts and all you need is a paddle to join in on games or compete with your friends. In addition, the courts are relatively small, so not much strenuous physical activity is required, making it more accessible to potentially less agile participants, such as senior citizens. When comparing pickleball to tennis, Milillo stated, "Tennis is like ballet, but pickleball is like square dancing. Ballet is very hard for people to understand; the music is a little difficult, but everybody likes square dancing and anyone can do it; all you have to do is go out there and dance with your partner."

Pickleball's rise to popularity has been sudden and drastic. In fact, The Sports and Fitness Industry Association reports that Pickleball is the fastest-growing sport in America for the third year in a row, boasting a 233.5% growth in

those three years. The COVID-19 pandemic helped make the sport what it is today. Milillo shared that "When COVID hit, all the activities were canceled except for pickleball," mainly because it is played outdoors and is non-contact. Since people were stuck inside their houses, they desired activity and exercise, as well as the ability to see their friends and connect socially—pickleball was the perfect sport for that. On Long Island, pickleball's influence is seen as more courts are being built and there are many organizations that host pickleball lessons and leagues. Milillo explained, "On Long Island, pickleball is taking over tennis courts," highlighting the local impact of the sport. Furthermore, new pickleball courts recently opened at Tappen Beach, allowing free access to pickleball within our North Shore Schools area.

A major benefit that pickleball brings is the building of social relationships and connecting with others through sport. Milillo highlights the profound effect that pickleball has on people's social lives, saying he "sees people posting pictures at Christmas dinner with their pickleball partners." Pickleball goes beyond just the game; people create strong bonds with others just by playing with them. Recently many schools have incorporated pickleball into their athletics, forming school teams and organizations, providing opportunities for students to connect and create relationships. For instance, North Shore High School had even tried starting an intramural pickleball team, a testament to the growth of the sport in our local area.

Pickleball's impact has been profound, with many people incorporating it into their lives and routines. It is also a great way to stay active and in shape, with some people even telling Milillo that it has "changed their lives." So, if you aren't on the pickleball train just yet, it's never too late to hop on!



## Sport Betting's Future

(Continued From Back Page)

Fantasy, etc., can really take away from the enjoyment that sports have traditionally brought viewers.

So, as the sports betting industry continues to grow, the effects it has on the American economy, mental health, and the focus of the games or matches will remain hot topics of debate. Economically, the industry's benefits are unquestionable, as they provide remarkable revenue. However, a balance between economic success and passion for the sport is important to prevent serious gambling addictions. The future of American sports betting will depend on observing the fine line between their economic opportunities and dangers.

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# Winning In Sports And Academics

By: Brock DerGarabedian and Luke Launer

“Nah; I can’t hang out tonight. I gotta get up at 5:30 tomorrow; the drive to Philly for my game is gonna be about two hours and then I have to play for either another two hours or six hours, depending upon if we keep winning or not”. As these words leave my mouth, I realize that tomorrow is going to be an extremely exhausting day. Across the country, this scenario is becoming common as more and more teenagers are now involved with travel sports. In fact, according to jerseywatch.com, “27.5% of youth athletes now play travel or club.

So, what exactly is a travel sport? Well, it features elite youth athletes who compete and travel quite a bit for games, competitions and tournaments. “They are associated with private or club sports programs, distinct from recreational and school leagues” (deseret.com). And what are the positives of joining such an activity? It can allow players to take their skills to the next level and give them more daily activity time which improves health. However, there are some who have acknowledged some negatives as well such as how expensive it can be, how time consuming it can be, and how burnout causing it can be. Not only do these athletes have to pay to play, but many of them also play on their school teams or local teams; all of can add up physically and emotionally.

In terms of how these travel sports work, all kids must try out unless they are recruited. Once they are on their respective teams, the skill level of the player determines how intense the travelling gets. Some will stay on the coast where they live while others will travel all over the country. Players often look for teams that will give them playing time and that have coaches who have some relation to colleges that are known for their athletic programs.

The ultimate goal however of signing up such teams is often to play these sports on the college level and then ultimately the professional level. Many kids sacrifice so many things just to play the sport they love. Travel sports take complete skill; tryouts for a team can take up to three to ten days for coaches to determine who will be best on the team. Travelling is the most challenging part of the entire package though. Teenagers are travelling to different countries and states for their

sports. Parents also feel the effects as well; gas prices, plane fare, and hotel expenses makes a dent on most families’ income. The commitment lasts about five to eight months each season.

In addition, academics can often be impacted as these travel teams take up so much time. North Shore High School travel team students however, seem to prioritize academics over athletics. For example, Brady Ayres, a sophomore, plays both school and competitive travel baseball. Ayres has an astonishing 78 mile per hour pitch and he has already received interest from Division I colleges! In addition to being at school for a minimum of 10 hours a day during baseball season, Ayres said: “I usually wake up around 8am on a weekend when I have a game and leave soon after to head to the field. I always motivate myself to work harder. I love baseball, but it can be challenging to keep all my other responsibilities managed too, but its important that I do”. When Ayres was asked what his endgame is in keeping such a hectic and intense schedule, he said “to make it to Major League Baseball; however, I am taking things slowly and focusing on my first goal which is to play in college”.

In addition, North Shore Sophomore Lila Archer is a high level lacrosse player who states she “never receives a day off”. “I didn’t really like it when I was very young because there was a lot of travelling, but I started taking it seriously in about sixth grade; my parents played lacrosse in college and it is helping to guide my future.” Participating in honors level academic courses, Archer knows she must find a balance.

Finally, Gregory Kleinman, a 15- year-old North Shore multi-sport athlete, explains how his travel baseball is more demanding than school football as more of a commitment is necessary”.

Overall, playing on a school sports team, at least one travel team and keeping up with one’s academics is a full time job . According to *USA Today*, “About 70 % of kids drop out of organized sports by age 13 and the so-called ‘professionalization of youth sports’ can’t be understated as a significant factor why”. Clearly the student athletes at North Shore who stick with it deserve to be recognized for being so determined and focused.

# The Impact Of Sports Betting

By: Tyler Harding

Picture this: a 16-year-old boy secretly downloads Fanduel, a sports betting app that has over 17 million users, and uses his parents’ credit card to sign up; ultimately, he loses \$1,000 in one week by placing losing bets. How should his parents react? Even if he placed a winning bet, how should they react? Either way, this whole scenario is problematic.

Sports betting has quickly reshaped the American economy. From teenagers to full-grown adults, betting apps are used everyday for every sport under the sun. Some people dabble for fun, and others want to make a lot of money. However, these apps have been found to negatively impact the mental health of many bettors; in addition, players on various teams have become impacted because of the distraction and pressures that come from knowing they are being betted on.

Today, in the U.S., more than 38 states, including New York, have, to some extent, legalized sports betting and many others are considering it. “This rapid growth was sparked by the Supreme Court’s decision in 2018 to overturn the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act of 1992; this act outlawed any form of sports betting in the U.S., except for a few states. As sports betting continues to gain popularity, it’s always important to remember and consider the positives, as well as the consequences it can have on those who participate or find themselves collateral damage.

Ever since onling betting was legalized, billions of dollars have been added to the U.S. economy. According to an article in *Forbes*, “Gross gaming revenue from sports betting in the US skyrocketed from \$4.3 billion in 2018 to nearly \$11 billion in 2023 alone”. This growth is expected to continue as more states make sports betting legal. “Americans wagered a staggering \$119.84 billion on sports in 2023, a 27.5% increase from the previous year” (Purnell).

While there are clearly economic benefits that come with sports betting, its social costs are of concern, particularly when it comes to a person’s mental health. As more people take part in betting, especially the younger generations, there’s a rising concern about gambling addiction. Studies show that individuals who engage in sports betting are at a higher risk of developing problematic gambling behaviors. In fact, according to the National Library of Medicine, “Sports betting marketing appears to be implicated in young people’s gambling problems. Specifically, young people who have gambling problems may be more likely to bet in response to advertising (Di Censo, Delfabbro and King). In other words, teens are being targeted.

Mental health professionals argue that many people who participate in sports betting do not understand the psychological effects of gambling, which can eventually lead to financial problems, loss of relationships, and increased stress. Some studies even indicate that sports betting can be especially harmful for people who are more vulnerable to addiction, like those who have a family member with a gambling addiction.

Additionally, as more people become involved in betting on sports, the behavior of fans might deteriorate. Experts warn that some fans become more obsessed with the outcomes of their bets rather than with the actual game, which can lead to frustration if they don’t win. This behavior can become polarized and dangerous, as “betting incentives may contribute to an intensification of their gambling behavior” (Di Censo, Delfabbro and King). This shift of focus from apps such as Caesars, DraftKings, Underdog

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# The Path To An NBA Dream

By: Brian Kraupner

Imagine stepping onto an NBA court, not just as a player, but one who is alongside one of the greatest pair of players of all time. LeBron James and Bronny James could soon be this pair as the first father-son duo in NBA history. Bronny James is currently playing in the G League, which is the minor league for the NBA, where he is showcasing his skills on the South Bay Lakers. Will LeBron James pass his legacy down to Bronny? Time will only tell as Bronny develops in his career.

Lebron James’ professional career began when he entered the League in 2003. Even though he was a teenager, who was fresh out of high school, he immediately made a name for himself. He has now played for the Cleveland Cavaliers, the Miami Heat, and the Los Angeles Lakers. In that time, James has created unbeatable records, won four NBA championships, and received multiple MVP awards. According to *The Dunker*, “He is the first player in NBA history to reach 30,000 points, 10,000 rebounds, and 10,000 assists—a record that will likely remain unbeaten for decades. Moreover, on February 8, 2023, he became the all-time leading scorer, surpassing Kareem Abdul-Jabbar”. Lebron James’ milestones demonstrate his dominant force and consistency on the court.

Despite all of these achievements on the court, Lebron James’s biggest and most personal goal has been being able to see his son Bronny develop into a basketball superstar. In an interview this past July, Lebron James said “Obviously it’s a dream come true. For me, to see my son be able to be in the NBA alone, it’s always been a dream of his. For us to be there side by side, words are lost; let’s be honest.” (CBS Sports) The possibility of Lebron James and Bronny James playing together in the NBA is significant on many levels beyond basketball. This symbolizes a father’s dream and a son’s aspirations. Such a moment would leave an incredible mark on basketball history.

Meanwhile, Bronny James has been playing in the G League as a shooting guard or point guard for approximately twelve weeks so far, and has shown significant progress. He played basketball at Sierra Canyon High School in Los Angeles; then he spent one year at the University of Southern California (USC). In June 2023 however, Bronny suffered a cardiac arrest attack during basketball practice at USC. He was later diagnosed with a congenital heart defect. Despite this setback, Bronny made a full recovery and resumed playing basketball. NBA Skills Coach Chris Brickley recently described Bronny James by saying, “He made a cut, caught the ball full speed and dunked it eye-to-eye with the rim. [During the game] his technique is very good, he has good form and his athleticism is different. He is going to be better than people think” (NBA). Bronny James has demonstrated his exceptional physical and mental abilities. After suffering a traumatic health setback, he was able to fully recover and return stronger than ever.

Ultimately, the possibility of Lebron James and Bronny James becoming the first father-son duo in the NBA is a testament to their talent and legacy. Their individual journeys have represented the enduring legacies of family in sports. As Bronny continues to develop, fans have no doubt that sooner or later, they will see this father son duo cross paths on the NBA’s courts.

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