

A Work In Progress

By: Jessica Lillis

If you currently attend North Shore High School, then you know that due to construction, a lot of things are currently not where they should be, nor is there as much space as there should be. This has caused quite a bit of anxiety for both students and faculty this school year. With all of the different construction projects going on at North Shore High School, it’s also just simply difficult to tell exactly what is being worked on, and if any progress is actually being made. So, I met with Principal Eric Contreras to get a status update.

Q: What progress has been made thus far regarding the construction taking place at North Shore High School?

A: “I’ll take it by areas: the Life Skills/ FACS room is pretty much complete; kids are cooking and baking and the classes are very happy they have a new classroom. The CAD Lab is pretty much complete; it is being used for classes, but the lighting still isn’t done. The Robotics Lab is awaiting some equipment and components, but the team is starting to use that space now; the kids even had their kickoff event on January 7th. However, the room is still being worked on. The Woodshop is in a similar place as the Lab as the kids are using it, but there is still work to be done. Overall, we’ve made modifications, given the lack of finality, to be able to use the spaces. As a result, we did not need to cancel any classes and kids can still have experiences. I’ve been told there have been delays with components due to shortages and delays in shipping, but instead of not using those rooms, we’ve actually just modified them for use. The Language Lab is finished, but we are using it as a classroom now since the School House is being used as the Library”.

Q: And how are things going with the Library?

A: “The Library was estimated to be done around March/Spring, but it’s also having challenges with getting components, so in the interim, we’ve opened the School House; this is not ideal, but it creates a space for kids to use. I hope the Library is done by the Spring, but considering what has happened in other areas, I can see that opening in September. I’m hopeful, but realistic”.

Q: What is going on with the entrance area that is all dug up?

A: “The entrance was never slated to open this year because they have to dig a new

foundation and build new construction; it is planned to open in September. We’ve been using the gym entrance and people have become really accustomed to that now. We have moved all of the security features, all the call response components and cameras, so the security hub is exactly the same as it was; it has just moved. I am looking forward to September with a proper entrance”.

Q: Despite not having many of our spaces currently available, what are some of the positives that have come out of this work-in-progress?

A: “The positive thing is that every class is running; we didn’t cancel Woodshop or the Robotics program, the kids still have a temporary library space, and we have figured out ways to meet the needs and allow the classes that were scheduled to happen, happen. I really thank people for their patience and understanding. I will say this, I would rather it be done well and not rushed. The interesting part is that the delay is enabling us to see some modifications that need to be made before the projects are finalized. So the silver lining is, due to the slower pace of the work, we will get the results that work best for those using the spaces; we have been able to see the projects evolve with the teachers’ eyes on it so they can point out things that need to be changed before they are finalized”.

Q: Have any problems arisen because of the construction?

A: “Only one time the workers hit a pipe in the front, but it was fixed right away. I was mainly concerned about getting every class to run on time, but due to the efforts of the custodians, Central Office, and teachers, they really went above and beyond getting everything in place. When I came to school two weeks before the opening, I knew it was going to take a lot of work to make it happen, but in a North Shore way, people came together and got it ready to open. I was very impressed and grateful”.

Clearly, there is still a lot of work to be done. However, because of the help from our teachers and the North Shore community, no classes have been canceled and all, seems to be running smoothly. Yes, the construction is a long process, but the most important thing is that these projects are being done right and will make our school even nicer for incoming students.

MAY We Have A Spring Fling?

By: Ava Connelly and Chloe Corn

As we approach the month of May, juniors and seniors are starting to think about and prepare for their prom. While this is all very exciting, many of North Shore High School’s underclassmen are left wishing they had, at the very least, a dance to look forward to in the spring. A myriad of schools on Long Island host a Homecoming dance in the fall, or even a Spring Fling in the spring for underclassmen to attend; so, why has North Shore High School not held a dance in the gymnasium since 2001? For example, Chaminade hosts a dance for each grade in the Spring and Saint Anthony’s hosts a father daughter dance. Thanks to a recent survey conducted by *The Viking View*, it has become apparent that the majority of freshmen and sophomores at North Shore would in fact attend a school dance, if one was offered.

“Hosting a school dance for freshmen and sophomores would help to unify our school and improve our spirit,” Sophomore Sebastian Park believes. In an interview with Park, he spoke for the student body when he expressed the sentiment that North Shore High School is seriously lacking in school spirit. An opportunity to connect with others and provide all students with something to look forward to at the school, would directly benefit our spirit and bring students closer together. Ms. Berg, a social worker at North Shore High School, also feels there is a positive side to holding a school dance. She said that for some students “a dance is a great way to become engaged and socialize with their peers.” However, she also stated that events like these can “cause anxiety and feelings of loneliness.” After seeing the excitement of the students who were interviewed for the survey, it would appear though as if North Shore High School’s underclassmen, if given the chance to host a dance, would plan to make it enjoyable, welcoming and inclusive for all.

As far as planning is concerned, class officers for the freshmen and sophomore classes can form a committee and help organize. This way, a nice number of students can become more involved in school activities and feel as if their opinions matter. Sophomore Brian Kraupner expressed his feelings about a Spring Fling and he believes that, “a Spring

Fling will help create friendships between the sophomores and freshmen.” Freshman Preston Samtani added, “It would be a positive event because it is something you can go to with your friends and hang out. It is a good way for people in the grades to interact and have a good time.”

After doing some research, it would seem as if the dance should be held in May in the gymnasium and have a theme that is voted on by the underclassmen. The theme options we provided in our survey were: Masquerade, Retro/90s, Hollywood/Red Carpet, Under the Stars/Galaxy, Floral, Tropical, Neon, Disco, Under the Sea, and Fantasy. Interestingly enough, 30 students out of 40 from the Sophomore and Freshman class who were surveyed preferred a tropical theme.

In addition to suggesting a theme, students were also asked to suggest food options. Many different items were recommended such as pigs in a blanket, pizza, and mac and cheese bites. Also, many students stated they would want fast food such as Chipotle, Chick-Fil-A, and McDonald’s to be served. We also gave students the option of having a band or a DJ at this event; 93% of the students chose a DJ, and 7% of students chose a band.

Overall, School dances are traditionally such a big and important part of one’s high school years. A dance is an opportunity for social interaction, which is especially important with the freshman just coming to the school this year. School spirit is a fundamental aspect of one’s high school years. It is imperative that we do everything we can to make North Shore High School a place where students are encouraged to socialize with those around them. A Spring Fling would allow us to do just that, all while making great memories at the same time.



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Weak And Insufficient, But Mighty

By: Raymond Lin

The United States Armed Forces are both tremendous and lacking. They are inhibited by the role that they assumed after WWII. Their domineering hard and soft power has led to great influence for the US, but that has been increasingly challenged by its foes. China has initiated plans to strengthen and fuse parts of its military and civil development while providing an ominously close 2027 deadline to modernize its military (US Dept. of Defense). Additionally, China is tailoring its military in order to secure its interest in the Indo-Pacific and counter the US. In Europe, although it is preoccupied with its failures in Ukraine, Russia has shown an uncomfortable truth in our modern age: war is still a reality, an incredibly harsh and deadly one. It had been thought that no major conflict would occur in Europe post WWII due to economic integration and international diplomacy. The taboo of warfare has been broken and a difficult situation has emerged in the world. The reality of the situation is that the US is a critical inflection point in terms of its military strategy. How should it respond to its growing menaces and responsibilities?

Before considering how the US should act, it is pertinent to better understand its situation. The US currently has two major enemies, China and Russia, and three minor enemies: Iran, North Korea, and Salafist-Jihadi groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda (Ochmanek, et al). When purely looking at the numbers, a cause for concern arises. The two primary powers the USA faces are friendly towards each other and would together outmatch the US in several departments. China has more than three million military personnel whereas the US has around 1.8 million. Russia has 12,420 tanks, about 5,800 more than the US' 6,612. The US also has significantly less artillery and self-propelled artillery than either Russia or China (Global Firepower). While Russia is not currently a threat due to its failed invasion of Ukraine and the atrophy of its economy and military, China is currently still developing and modernizing. For example, China has dramatically improved its training and equipment while emphasizing realism and standardization in its training (US Dept. of Defense). China is also competing with the US Navy as it now has the most ships in the world and is shifting from defensive posture to one that, according to the DOD's China Military Power Report, can do "protection missions on the far seas". China is not lacking in its air force either. It has the largest air force in the Indo-Pacific and is rapidly catching up with western air forces (US Dept. of Defense). The tools of warfare are constantly sharpened and further developed. Terrifyingly, China is also increasing its nuclear warhead count as the US Department of Defense estimates that China has surpassed 400 and is likely to have 1,500 by 2035 (US Dept. of Defense). These warheads will have improved range and accuracy and while they will likely never be deployed, they are still a serious threat.

An even more present concern, recently, is that the US' armed forces have seemingly decayed while China has been modernizing. While the US Army in 2012 was building up to 48 brigade combat teams, it now only has 31. The Marine Corps estimates that it would need 27 infantry battalions to satisfy regional Combatant Commanders, but it only has 22 as of now (The Heritage Foundation). Additionally, it seems as if the US is having

difficulties with recruiting and equipment. The Army missed its recruitment goal by 25% in 2022 and has expressed concerns about its future recruitment. U.S. Army Secretary Christine Wormuth told CNBC that "only 9% of young Americans say that they're interested in joining the military" and the army is "competing for talent just like all of the folks in industry are" (Thomas). This shortage of manpower means that we will not only have less manpower, but also be able to mobilize less men. Unlike the recruitment issue, the US' equipment woes are not as severe. But after several rounds of aid to Ukraine, the US is running low on equipment to give (Sciutto, et al). The US has found itself close to what it needs for itself. This reveals two major things: the US stockpiles are somewhat inadequate, and the US has difficulty scaling manufacturing. These are small issues during peacetime, but extremely detrimental during wartime. Of course, this doesn't mean we should stop helping Ukraine. Tens of thousands of prime Russian soldiers are dead and significant amounts of equipment have been lost: 1,500 tanks, 700 armored vehicles, along with the usage of many rounds of artillery shells and other munitions (Pifer).

The information presented before the piece about the war in Ukraine is true, but flawed. It is information that provides a strong reason to expand the army; it is not wrong that the US can no longer meet the standard that it had in the past. But is this truly a bad thing? The baseline that groups like The Heritage Foundation use to analyze the US military is the two-MRC standard. The two Major Regional Contingency standard is the "requirement that U.S. forces should be able "to achieve decisive victory in two nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts and to conduct combat operations characterized by rapid response and a high probability of success, while minimizing the risk of significant American casualties" (The Heritage Foundation). This standard asks for the US military, by itself and without the Reserve and National Guard which make up one-third of the U.S. military force, to beat two major enemies at nearly the same time (The Heritage Foundation). Aside from the fact that one MRC has been severely inhibited and is unlikely due to a certain nation's extreme losses in Ukraine, the two-MRC asks for the United States to maintain constant military dominance by itself, a standard that is simply unrealistic. The US hasn't been alone since its isolation during the early 20th century. Nowadays, the US has the largest alliance network in the world and several strategic agreements with other nations. If the US were to find itself in a conflict in Europe, it would likely have NATO on its side. NATO contains most of Europe and one-third of the top 10 military powers in the world. In terms of conflicts in Asia, South Korea and Japan would likely assist the US and both nations are also in the top 10 military powers (Global Firepower). If the US itself were ever to be attacked, half of the top 10 military powers would help defend it. Each of these nations, and the variety of smaller ones aligned with the US, have their own considerable forces, whether it be naval, aerial, or land based. The US' allies are also strengthening as Poland ramps up its military spending and plans to have 300,000 troops by 2035. (Karnitschnig and Ko). With the likely further addition of

Sweden and Finland soon, the US' bloc will only become more powerful. Additionally, some members even have their own nuclear weapons which decreases the willingness to strike on all sides. In short, the United States is less dominant than before, but its situation is not dire.

The US' military strength and overall security could be increased by more military spending, but this is simply a lackadaisical solution. Trying to solve our minor security woes by pouring tens of billions more dollars into it is pointless. The US already drastically outspends its rivals, even without its allies who contribute major sums by themselves (Statista). Rather, the US needs to divert its resources to other arguably more vital endeavors. Climate change threatens the entire world with more destructive weather which would bring economic devastation and loss of life. While it has been partially addressed, the nations of the world still need to do more. Another important area the US needs to address is infrastructure. US infrastructure is quite dreadful with the American Society of Civil Engineers estimating an \$2.6 trillion price tag to prevent \$10 trillion in lost GDP by 2039 (McBride and Siripurapu). The reason for the enormous cost is that most of the US' major infrastructure was designed in the 1960's. Since then, the US population has doubled and the infrastructure has aged. For example, The U.S. Government Accountability Office has found that one in four bridges is deficient with 14% of all bridges being structurally obsolete (McBride and Siripurapu). The US finds itself surrounded by things that it needs to fund with only so many funds. Additionally, these investments would have benefits besides improving people's lives and saving many across the world. If the US reduced its military spending by \$125 billion and spent that money on green manufacturing, an additional 250,000 jobs could be created while helping slow climate change and its disastrous effects (Peltier). This \$125 billion is not a random figure either. It's a number that could be gathered by removing inefficiencies and pointless endeavors within the armed forces, according to the Center for International Policy. The integrity of the armed forces could still be maintained and with the strength of US allies, there is no doubt that the US could still be quite strong militarily. It would lose its strategy of completely overpowering the enemy, but that's not a role the US should be playing anymore. The US requires some changes in its spending and needs to focus on other things.

What we, as a nation, need is a realignment of parts of our strategic posture as well as a rethinking of how we spend our budget. This does not mean the US military will decline; we can remain powerful with a smaller military budget. The Congressional Budget Office recommends three ways that the US could spend less money while maintaining its military integrity: downsizing parts of the army, greater collaboration with allies, or a focus on controlling air, sea, and space to ensure control with allied support. It is true that the first option seems short-sighted now, but the second and third options are still quite viable. The simple fact is that the US military and its allies currently remain superior in conventional warfare and until this fact changes, the US has better ways to spend the money it uses on the military.

Purchase With Caution

By: Georgia Stefas

Does your family have a pet that is treated like a best friend or even another child? If so, I bet that you can't imagine what it would be like to lose that pet to an illness, nor would you want to. To make matters worse, imagine that illness was hidden from you by the store where you purchased the soon-to-be love of your life. I, unfortunately, had to face such a situation. This year my family purchased a kitten from Shake A Paw in Lynbrook that was supposedly in perfect health. We soon realized however, that she was sick; as a result, we took her to the vet and waited for the lab results. The following morning, my kitten seemed perfectly fine as she was eating her food and drinking her water. Later that same day, when I arrived home from school and my mother got home from work, we went to check on the kitten and found her dead in her bed. The words horrified, disturbed, and

heartbroken do not even begin to describe how we were feeling. We immediately rushed her to the vet, but it was too late.

In addition, Christopher, a Shake A Paw customer, surprised his mother with an adorable puppy. He was attempting to cheer her up since her husband was battling Stage 4 lung cancer as a Vietnam veteran, but little did he know he had been sold a Yorkie that soon became sick. His mother loved the dog, but was worried about him; so she took him to different doctors. On top of caring for her husband who was battling terminal cancer, she now had a sick puppy to care for as well. Ultimately, many more have since accused Shake A Paw of selling them sick dogs as well; protests were soon held outside of the store (Smollins).

Knowing first hand how it feels to

be sold a sick new furry best friend, I truly feel sorry for the families that have had to go through something similar. Fortunately, recent investigations of veterinary records and complaints proved that Shake A Paw had sold pets that were suffering from serious illnesses. Though they did not necessarily make the pets sick, they obtained the sick pets, did not give them the proper treatments they deserved, and passed them off to customers as perfectly healthy. Evidence proved that pets were dying within weeks or even days after they were sold. Bills of perfect health were provided at purchase, but soon after, it became clear that those documents were a scam. More than half of the puppies were said to have been diagnosed with an illness. Payments were also found that were made

to horribly run puppy mills, as well as non-reputable breeders (abc7ny.com). In addition, at the beginning of 2022, Shake a Paw would not comply with the attorney general's office in regards to allowing it to examine all of its puppies (nypost.colm).

Fortunately, on December 15th, 2022, New York State Governor Kathy Hochul signed legislation to end the puppy mill pipeline by banning the sale of cats, dogs and rabbits at retail pet stores. This law will go into effect in 2024 (governor.ny.gov). It's so important to stand up for animals as they can't stand up for themselves. And hopefully no other pet owner will have to go through the loss and trauma that so many others suffered as a result of greedy pet shop owners and breeders.

Why The Red Wave Fizzled

By: Matt Malone

Coming into the 2022 midterms, Republicans had high hopes of a red wave that would result in a conservative majority in both chambers of Congress. However, these aspirations fell short, as Republicans lost a seat in the Senate and took the House only by a slim majority. Democrats put the last bit of salt in the wounds of many conservatives as incumbent Raphael Warnock defeated challenger Herschel Walker in Georgia's senate runoff to cap off the 2022 election cycle.

So, what happened? Why did the red wave fizzle? Well, first let's start off with the things that went well for Republicans. They now have a majority in the United States House of Representatives, creating a divided Congress, which makes it more difficult for liberals to pass their far left agenda. Also, while there was no red wave across the United States, there was certainly one in the state of Florida. Senator Marco Rubio defeated Democrat opponent Val Demming by roughly 16 percentage points. Likewise, Governor Ron DeSantis won re-election, beating challenger Charlie Crist by over 19 percentage points. DeSantis was the first GOP governor since 2002 to win Miami-Dade county. Compared to 2018, DeSantis saw his share of the Puerto Rican vote jump from 34% to 55% (Fox News). In his victory speech, DeSantis said, "We chose facts over fear, we chose education over indoctrination, we chose law and order over rioting and disorder. Florida was a refuge of sanity when the world went mad. We stood as a citadel for freedom for people across this country and indeed across the world." He went on to say, "We will never ever surrender to the woke mob. Florida is where woke goes to die." Ron DeSantis has helped turn Florida from a purple to a red state. DeSantis, in one poll, has a five point lead over former President Trump in the 2024 Presidential Republican Primary; however he has yet to state if he is going to run (FiveThirtyEight). Now, what went wrong for conservatives? A plethora of things including abortion, and the grip that liberals hold on the younger population.

Back in June of 2022, the Supreme Court took on the case of Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization. In its decision, the court overturned Roe v. Wade, which guaranteed women a constitutional right to an abortion. This sparked feelings

of exultation from one side and vexation from the other. Writing for the majority, Justice Samuel Alito stated that in order to eliminate "gruesome and barbaric" medical procedures, states are entitled to regulate abortion (NPR). According to NPR, "States appear to be completely free to ban abortions for any reason." In this case, Republicans really 'shot themselves in the foot'. With a Biden Administration that was crumbling to the ground and pushing the country in the wrong direction, Republicans looked to have a clear path to a red wave in the approaching midterms. However, overturning Roe gave Democrats a fighting point. It appeared that in this election, many people disregarded soaring inflation and crime caused by President Biden and other far left politicians. Rather, many voters strictly voted to protect abortion rights. For example, Vox's Adam Freeland conducted a study examining the 2022 midterm elections. He showed that unpopular presidents tend to have huge losses in Congress. However, while Biden's approval rating was the lowest of the other presidents shown (Clinton, Bush, Obama, Trump), what someone would expect to happen, didn't. Under Biden, the Democrats lost approximately 15 seats in the House, while under Obama in 2010, the Democrats lost 63 seats in the House. Obama's approval rating was 45%; Biden's was 41%. However, next in the study, Freeland examined a chart depicting the "Partisan Swing of special congressional elections." Right around the middle of June and onward, the Partisan Swing favored strictly Democrats, explaining how the overturning of Roe v. Wade played a huge role in the midterm elections. Freeland said, "First term presidents almost always lose tons of seats in Congress and the major exceptions are driven by huge events like the New Deal, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and 9/11; and what these numbers suggest is that the overturning of Roe v. Wade has something in common with those events". Completely banning abortion does not seem like an argument that Republicans will win. Rather, more Republicans should take a more moderate stance on abortion, something in between completely

outlawing it and New York's radical law of terminating an unborn child's life six months into a pregnancy (NY.gov).

There is no doubt that the GOP struggles in regards to winning over young voters. In the 2022 midterm cycle, Democrats had a 28 point lead over Republicans when it came to voters that were 18-29 years old (CNN). How can this divide be explained? College education, now more than ever, is playing a huge role in the way young voters vote. According to an article in the *Washington Examiner*, "Liberal professors and researchers outnumber conservatives nearly 12 to 1. Depending on the department, this disparity could be as great as 33 to 1, as the study found in departments of history." Another study found "that nearly 40 percent of the top ranked liberal arts colleges have zero professors who are registered Republicans" (*Washington Examiner*). Additionally, these liberal professors seem to be making students with contradicting viewpoints self-censor and second guess their political beliefs: "Shockingly, half of students (54 percent) have stopped themselves from 'sharing an idea or opinion in class at some point since beginning college,' almost one-third of students (30 percent) have 'self-censored in class because they thought their words might be considered offensive to their peers,' and almost one-third of students (29 percent) have 'self-censored on campus outside of class because they thought their ideas might be politically incorrect'" (*Washington Examiner*). The indoctrination of young college students tremendously favor Democrats as it seems as if many radical professors tend to teach their opinion. As a result, these college students are greatly impacting elections. And yes, for a long time, colleges have been a place of liberal pandemonium. However, young voter turnout is on the rise. In the 2022 midterm elections, young voter turnout was the second highest in the last 30 years (*The Hill*). One of the many places where these young voters impacted the midterms was in Pennsylvania. Voters between the ages of 18 and 29 had 70% of their votes go to the Democratic nominee, John Fetterman (*The Hill*). With these numbers increasing at alarming rates, Republicans need to

start appealing to the younger vote.

While overall the performance by Republicans during the midterms was disappointing, the road heading into 2024 looks promising. If Joe Biden chooses to run for the presidency again in 2024, many conservatives believe the GOP can win the presidential election as long as the Republican nominee is not named Donald Trump. Also, key Senate seats are up for Joe Manchin (D-WV), Jon Tester (D-MT), and Sherrod Brown (D-OH), which could make the difference in Republicans taking the Senate. However, for the GOP to be successful, it needs to change some of its game plan.

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Is Representative George Santos Living the “American Dream” Or An American Lie?

By: Veronica Frank

George Santos, who was recently sworn in as the U.S. Representative for Queens and parts of northern Long Island, built his candidacy on the idea that he was “the embodiment of the American Dream” (Gold). His biography was the definition of “rags to riches”, as Santos came from Brazilian immigrant parents, and is the first openly gay Republican to win a house seat as a non-incumbent. (Ashford). His story depicts the life of a hard-working student going to public college in New York City, who with dedication became a “seasoned Wall Street financier and investor” (Santos). In addition, Santos owned a real estate portfolio of 13 properties and supervised an animal rescue charity that saved more than 2,500 dogs and cats. However, Santos’s story has turned out to be too good to be true, as all of it seems to be fabricated information.

The first lie is Santos’s claim to higher education with multiple degrees in finance and economics. Santos explained to the public that he graduated from Baruch College in 2010 with a Bachelor’s degree in Finance. In addition, a biography on the National Republican Congressional Committee website says he had attended both Baruch and New York University and received degrees in Finance and Economics. However, when asked to recall records to verify Santos’s claims, neither institution could locate any records with his name and graduation year (Steck). On December 23rd, 2022, George Santos revealed to the press that he had not graduated from Baruch College or any college.

The next aspect of Santos’s

fabricated biography was his employment with Wall Street Firms Citigroup and Goldman Sachs. Both of these firms are multinational, trillion-dollar companies, with extremely high credibility. Unfortunately, neither Citigroup nor Goldman Sachs could find any records of Santos’s employment or partnership with the companies. Later, he admitted that he had lied about working directly with Goldman Sachs or Citigroup, adding “We all do stupid things in life.”

In addition to his embellishment regarding his early professional life, little is known about Santos’s current company: the Devolder Organization. *The New York Times* could not find “any public-facing assets or other property tied to the firm” (Gold). In addition, Mr. Santos did not list his clients in his disclosures, despite the requirement that candidates list any compensation over \$5,000 from a single source (Ashford).

Philanthropy was also a large aspect of Mr. Santos’s narrative, as he claims to have founded the organization “Friends of Pets United,” which he ran for five years beginning in 2013. Although this group can be found on Facebook, the I.R.S. was not able to find any records showing that the group held the tax-exempt status that Mr. Santos claimed (Aleem). In addition, neither New York nor New Jersey attorney general’s offices could find records of Friends of Pets United being registered as a charity.

Finally, Mr. Santos, who describes himself as “not a criminal in any way”, was found guilty of fraud in 2008 when Santos was 19. According to

Brazilian records collected by *The New York Times*, Mr. Santos stole the checkbook of a man his mother was caring for and then used the checkbook to make fraudulent purchases. Two years later, Mr. Santos confessed to his crime in Brazilian court. While George Santos continues to make claims that his mistakes made in adolescence should be ignored, it is hard to ignore criminal acts.

Now, although one lie, or simple fabrication can possibly be excused, George Santos lied about most of his life story. From his education to his current company and even charities, Santos has fabricated qualities that made him a valuable candidate for the Republican party. MSNBC visited residents of northern Long Island in late December of 2023 to ask whether they felt Santos is worthy of representing the district in the federal government.

The consensus was that the majority felt completely “duped”. Even Republicans felt regret and embarrassment in regards to their new senator. One woman remarked, “I really hope he doesn’t represent us.” With the endless amount of lies and fabrications that Santos has told in his campaign and beyond, is it right that he holds federal office when Americans claim to value “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth”? Is Santos really the epitome of the “American Dream” as he claims to be? Or did he create a story that has made him the biggest American liar? And if it’s the latter, what should be done about it?

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The Single Swan

By: Joanna Kenney and Ava Varasano

As you are driving and going about your day, you happen to pass the Swan Club, an event venue located at 90 Glenwood Road in Roslyn. Here you notice a singular swan just swimming around in the fenced off pond. While the venue is perfect for hosting events, some have doubted if it is the right place for a swan that clearly does not have the option of leaving the premises. People have been concerned with the swan's well-being, safety, and emotional state. Community members are constantly saying how lonely this swan must be. To respond to these concerns, first we must understand more about swans.

Swans are naturally wild creatures, spending most of their days in various bodies of water. While seemingly graceful and peaceful, these birds are also known for their vicious and aggressive nature. The specific breed of swan that is found at the Swan Club is known as a Mute Swan. A Mute Swan is a common species of swan on Long Island. Contrary to their aggressive tendencies, Mute Swans are more of the romantic type. Most mate for life and live for around 20-30 years. These birds, though not incredibly social, are highly loyal to their partners and offspring. When faced with loss, these swans can grieve for long periods of time and most often, they will never mate again; thus, it's a tragic love story.

After an interview with Louis Tiglias, the owner of the Swan Club, we were able to form a proper conclusion regarding the solo swan we see on a daily basis. While some may think that the swan was imported or is forced to stay in the front of the club, Tiglias has put down these rumors and explained that the swan is in fact not captive, and has free will to leave whenever it may like. It is a wild swan that has lingered

in this area for around three years. We asked if the swan has the ability to fly. Tiglias stated that he is unsure if the swan is able to fly, and has never seen it do so. At the Swan Club, the employees see swans seasonally. Tiglias added, "Swans are wild- they come, they go, they come once a year ... and they have babies. It's a perfect place for them ... we see them for a couple days or weeks and then they're gone." The swan is well looked after and has even been checked out by the staff of Bailey's Arboretum, a nature preserve in Locust Valley. The preserve is home to various types of birds and other wildlife that is found on Long Island. Tiglias told us that they taught him about what to do and what not to do when it comes to tending to swans. With the Arboretum's help, the staff at the Swan Club learned more about how to properly take care of their more permanent guest.

It has also been confirmed that the lone swan previously had a mate that passed away. While at first, it appeared to be grieving the loss of its partner, it surprisingly became friendly with the neighboring ducks in the area. "[Swans] usually don't get along with other ducks and stuff; they chase them away. But this year we had a whole family of little ducks and they're still together; the swan hangs out with them" said Mr. Tiglias. "He's happy now and feels safe here."

An so, it seems this lonely swan may not be so lonely after all.



Disney And The Death Of Modern Cinema

By: Benjamin Cooperman

In an age of extreme accessibility, where everything is at our fingertips, the prospect of actually waiting for a movie to be released seems like some sort of dark fantasy. Circa 2012, one would jump at the mention of a new marvel or *Star Wars* project being released.

Fast forward to 2023; this fictional giant has been milked of any content left to give. Within the last two years, Marvel has released close to 20 projects, which is almost ten times the prior rate content would be released. Not only has the quality of these releases also substantially dropped, but the rapid fire pumping out of content has turned Marvel's great characters and universe into a product to consume and not a reality to experience. After viewing the most recent wave of Marvel trash that has been released, it is evident that Disney execs care more about turning a profit than creating anything of substance. Acclaimed

director Martin Scorsese agrees with me on this topic when he said: "Cinema is an art form that brings you the unexpected. In superhero movies, nothing is at risk". He feels that the writing is lazy and it lack the risks that are needed to make a good film these days. After *Endgame*, the global consensus is that Marvel's most recent phase (phase four) has been mediocre at best, with unmemorable and uninspired projects being released.

Other pop culture figures have also come out to criticize Disney's recent dog pile of released content. Celebrities like Jennifer Aniston have been quoted as saying "big Marvel movies are diminishing the quality of movies." And then went to criticize streaming platforms like Disney + for contributing to the sheer amount of constant content being released. Marvel isn't the only franchise Disney has ruined. After purchasing *Star Wars* in 2012 for over a billion dollars, the beloved series also has experienced a major drop in quality and a major

To Amazon Or Not To Amazon?

By: Robin Spieler

Amazon, one of the largest and most profitable companies in the world, recently announced layoffs of approximately 10,000 employees worldwide. As consumers, we are all familiar with Amazon: great prices, great selection, and delivery to our doorstep. We click a button, and our items often appear in our mailbox the next day - what could be better? We all want low prices and quick delivery, but how often do you think about the wages and working conditions of the employees? Like any company, Amazon must cover its costs (wages, rent, advertising, shipping, etc.) in order to stay profitable; and, at times, it must make difficult decisions like firing employees.

On the surface this sounds like a greedy corporation firing hardworking employees so that it can increase its "bottom line", i.e., profit. Let's dig a little deeper. First, as of year-end 2021, Amazon employed over 1.6 million employees worldwide, the majority of that number is within the United States (1.3 million). The total employee headcount is even higher when including seasonal workers (primarily during the busy holiday season). While no one wants to lose his job, the 10,000 employees to be dismissed (as of November 2022) represent about 0.6% of its workforce. There are current rumors (December 2022) that Amazon now intends to fire approximately 20,000 employees. Although 20,000 jobs sounds like a lot, it is still a far cry from the massive layoffs experienced in other industries in the past, including the automotive and manufacturing sectors. For example, General Motors fired 14,000 employees in 2018 representing about 15% of its workforce. When viewed in this perspective, the layoff does not appear quite as ominous.

Second, let's consider which employees were fired at Amazon. Amazon has multiple different lines of

business and employees in many areas including Amazon Web Services (cloud computing), retail fulfillment, delivery, warehousing, acquisitions including Zappos shoes, and other units. It is not uncommon for large corporations with multiple lines of business to dismiss employees in divisions that are underperforming. Note that Amazon has tripled its workforce in the past decade, particularly increasing staff during the surging demand from Covid-19. The initial layoffs were concentrated in the Alexa division, a part of Amazon that has not lived up to expectations. In addition, Amazon had indicated that the revised 20,000 layoffs would also include low performers. While it is sad for any individual to lose his job, firing low performers is common practice in all businesses, both large and small. Amazon also announced the layoffs would be across all levels although exact figures were not reported. The company has confirmed layoffs in the Devices and Books, Robotics and People, Experience and Technology divisions. It is not surprising to see layoffs in these areas where demand for printed books is clearly declining and devices such as Alexa and Kindle have not reached significant adoption levels with consumers.

Amazon admits that it may have expanded too quickly during the pandemic and waning consumer demand is requiring most of the cost-cutting. An anonymous source notes, the layoffs are "...a result of over-hiring during the pandemic and the need for cost-cutting as the company's financials have been on a declining trend." Amazon has also faced other workforce problems including complaints about poor working conditions and unionization. Particularly during the pandemic, many warehouse workers felt they were overworked and endured an unsafe work environment. There are reports of employees that complained about working conditions being fired. In addition, some Amazon warehouses have had open discussions about unionizing. Unions allow employees to ban together to negotiate with management collectively more forcefully than individually. Unions benefit employees, but generally impose greater costs on employers like Amazon. More recently, Amazon employees in 30 countries staged a strike on Black Friday, the busiest shopping day of the year. In addition, employees protested outside of former president and CEO of Amazon, Jeff Bezos', Manhattan apartment to voice their displeasure.

In closing, the issue of corporate layoffs is more grey than black and white. There are valid reasons for firing employees, but workers should also earn livable wages in safe working conditions. As customers, the low prices we enjoy also negatively impact the demand and wages of employees. As the saying goes, "You can't have your cake and eat it, too"; therefore, it is hard to criticize Amazon too harshly.



The “Red Wave” That Never Hit: The Role of Gen Z in the 2022 Midterm Election

By: Sophia Marchioli

A “red wave” was supposed to hit America this past November after the midterm elections. Data scientists had predicted that the Senate and House of Representatives would be flooded with incoming Republican electees in the coming year. As a result of these projections, Republicans were exuberant. The internet was filled with Republican-made political cartoons illustrating the incoming red wave. In a shocking turn of events however, Democrats shifted the tides. The Senate reached a slim Democratic majority, and the party withheld a promised red wave in the House of Representatives as well (Walsh; Collinson). According to new statistics, the results occurred because of a surprising turnout by the Gen Z population (Aylward).

According to *Time*, liberal campaigns that targeted the Gen Z population on social media platforms such as Tik Tok and Twitter were able to boost their votes. For current college students, social media is their top news source, so it plays a huge role in the lives of young people today, and thus can have a major impact on elections. In addition to the use of social media, candidates learned the “lingo” and the way that Gen Z utilizes these platforms. Many learned that in order to grasp the attention of this younger audience, they must use bold and striking language, and provide detailed plans as to how they would implement their list of promises. However, as Republican candidates also utilized social media to expand their campaigns, it can’t be that Democrats experienced this amount of success purely because of their outreach online.

The Gen Z population has proven to have more liberal values overall, which most definitely contributed to the spread of blue victories (Aylward). For instance, 74% of people between the ages of 18 and 34 believe that it is important to protect a woman’s right to a safe abortion (URGE). As the U.S. is currently in the wake of the overturning of Roe V. Wade, more was on the line this year because the candidates elected in the midterms would ultimately be the ones making the decisions on where abortions are legal. Additionally, those aged 13-25 have shown that gun violence is their biggest concern for the country, another concern of the Democratic party (Dvorak). Gen Zers also expressed the greatest concern for climate change out of all previous generations (Tyson). Many regulations were on the line for all of these

controversial issues which brought an increased amount of the Gen Z population out to the polls on November 2nd.

This loss for Republicans acts as a second consecutive blow for the party after former President Trump lost the 2020 presidential election. Some have stated that in order for the Republican party to see success in the future, it must modernize some of its values and think about what populations currently comprise the U.S. (CNN). The country is currently more diverse than ever, which may provide more support for progressive legislation (Aylward). To survive the shift towards younger generations getting involved in U.S. politics, the Republican party may have to alter some of its more traditional promises.

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China’s Internal Battle

By: Giuliano Wang

On December 12th, 2022, China announced that it would finally be relaxing its controversial Zero-Covid policy after mass protests occurred all across the nation, a rarity for China as political protests are often unheard of.

Implemented in August of 2021, the “dynamic zero-Covid” was a policy that was intended to completely eliminate transmission of the virus. The implementation of this policy was strictly enforced, with state mandated quarantines of potential or suspected cases in government facilities, a required negative Covid test result to enter a business or public facility,

January 2023

and even lockdowns of entire apartment buildings. The policy was widely criticized by the international community; Dr. Anthony Fauci, the leading infectious disease expert in the United States and Chief Medical Advisor to the President, said of the strategy: “the people you really needed to protect were not getting protected”. Not helping matters was the fact that China’s rate of vaccination was lower than most nations and that the Chinese government refuses foreign made vaccines.

Meanwhile in China, frustrations have been brewing for some time over the policy. The policy of lockdown has made in-peron

Why The Warmer Winters?

By: Wyatt Snyder

For many people, the excitement for potential snowfall and chilly weather begins as soon as the winter season approaches. However, nowadays, the cool days that are imagined do not seem to come as often as they once did. Even in mid-December, New York did not have a day below 25 degrees (weather.com).

The Fall of 2022 ended off warm, with temperatures up to 76 degrees in November, but are these weather patterns new (weather.com)? According to an article which appeared in the *Washington Post*, writer Kevin Myatt said the answer is... not really. Although winter temperatures have been steadily increasing over the years, “1931-32 winter is still the gold medalist for winter warmth”. However, the winter of 1931 was an outlier, and when compared to more recent years, it is clear that the winters are getting warmer, but why?

It is hard to pinpoint the cause of our recent warm winters, but the effects are alarmingly clear. These warm winters are causing an increase in “spring like severe storms”. The same article explains how the winter months are “usually too cold for strong thunderstorms, which require warm, humid air”; however, with the recent increase in temperature, “unseasonably mild air is being drawn northward more frequently”, allowing these winter storms to ensue. This “mild air” could be a result of the La Niña’s return for the third consecutive winter, shown by the NOAA’s (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) U.S. Winter Outlook that was released on October 20th, 2022. La Niña refers to the “periodic cooling of ocean surface temperatures in the central and east-central equatorial Pacific” (weather.gov) that is occurring this winter.

So what can you expect by the end of this year? According to meteorologist John Homenuk, the second half of the winter could “end warmer than normal in February” as a result of the “ongoing La Nina event”. Although La Niña is going to persist this year, its effects are expected to weaken as the winter months go on.

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activities such as school, work or even shopping next to impossible. The Chinese people’s frustrations seemed to come to a head when, on November 22nd of 2022, a fire broke out in Xinjiang, a region that was under lockdown at the time. Ten people were killed. This, along with the growing public resentment for the lockdowns, sparked the protests that eventually led to the retirement of the policy.

The response from the Chinese people has been largely celebratory. However experts are far less optimistic as many believe that the sudden shift in policy will see a wave of new cases this winter. Whatever the case may be, the future remains cautiously optimistic as this is an unprecedented victory for the Chinese people’s ability to have their voice heard.

The Red Wave Crashes Into Long Island

By: Brian Kraupner

In the recent 2022 election for the governor of New York, the Democratic turnout declined by 7.8% according to *Newsday Long Island*. Long Island took a swing in the most recent election.

Governors are responsible for overseeing state laws and overlooking the state’s executive branch. Since 1996, Nassau County, along with Queens and Brooklyn, has been Democrat. Kathy Hochul had 52.8% of the votes according to *CBS News*. Although Democrat Kathy Hochul won the election against Republican Lee Zeldin, there has been a significant change in the Republican voter status on Long Island.

Why is the red wave occurring on Long Island? Social issues such as abortion rights, gun control, LGBT and immigration laws divide Republicans and Democrats. Many Long Islanders are also concerned about the increasing crime rate in New York. Although Nassau County and Suffolk County are clearly not a part of the city, many Long Islanders travel to the city for work, restaurants, shows and meet ups with friends and family. “They were afraid for their safety and their pocketbooks,” said Democratic strategist Hank Shienkopf. “It’s becoming more and more of a mental issue for us, constantly worrying about being safe,” said Pilar Weston, a 53-year-old Harlem resident. “What will happen to me if I take the train? Or if I walk on the wrong street? Or when I take a ride on my bike?” From 2007 to present day, the New York State’s governor’s party party was Democrat. “When you see an area that has been very dominantly blue and Democratic leaning for so long, flip, it just tells you that the quality of life people are seeking on Long Island is not what was being delivered,” said George Santos, who won in the 3rd Congressional District. The concerning crime rate in New York City is now clearly having an effect on the political parties.

Lee Zeldin, the most recent Republican nominee for governor, focused his campaign on public safety, the economy and cost of living according to *Gotham Gazette*. Zeldin pushed for order in the city and the reduction of crime rates. Meanwhile, Democratic nominee Kathy Hocl pushed for healthcare, economic development, gun violence, education, childcare and abortion rights as stated by the *Gotham Gazette*. Although both parties focused on important social issues, the voters wanted a safer city which Lee Zeldin clearly pushed for more than Kathy Hochul did.

On Election Day 2022, New York started with a House delegation of 19 Democrats and eight Republicans. The House ended up with 15 Democrats and 11 Republicans. One seat was lost to redistricting which happens due to a population increase or population decrease. In this case, it was caused by a population decrease. Although the change in the amount of seats in the Republican party is not a huge number, it matters. Kathy Hocl did win this election, but if she doesn’t deliver a safer New York, some future changes can be expected.

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The War On Ukraine: Back To The Beginning

By: Mae Curiale and Elsa Lanne

For many people, the war between Ukraine and Russia may seem to have started suddenly, but in reality, Ukraine and Russia have had a tense relationship for many years. And so, the war is actually not so unexpected. A myriad of events brought these two countries to where they are now; so, the question is: what caused the instability between the two countries?

The earliest of the two Ukrainian independences happened after the Russian Revolution that ended in 1923. During this period of unrest, Ukrainian people saw the revolution as a chance to gain their independence and they wanted to split from Russia so they could be recognized as their own republic. This led to the formation of the Ukrainian People's Republic, "but independence was short-lived" as a few years later, Ukraine was absorbed back into the Soviet Union (History.com). After being fully taken into Russian control, Ukrainians faced severe consequences. In the article "Russia and Ukraine: The Tangled History That Connects—and Divides—Them" by Eve Conant, the writer states, "In the early 1930s, to force peasants to join collective farms, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin orchestrated a famine that resulted in the starvation and death of millions of Ukrainians." Against their will, Ukrainian people were thus put through tremendous hardships and forced to assimilate into Russian culture. Ukraine's involvement in the Soviet Union gave Russia more control over territory and ultimately more power. Ukraine has many valuable natural resources and fertile farmlands which are important for supporting large populations of people. This meant that Russia saw Ukraine as a precious part of its empire.

Decades later, the conflict between Ukraine and Russia was still occurring. As it loosened its grip on the eastern European countries, the Soviet Union began to crumble. With this slight release, these countries began to split from one another. This then became one of the reasons for the downfall of the USSR (United Soviet Socialist Republic). When the Soviet Union dissolved on August 24, 1991, Ukraine became a free country (Conant). Again, since Ukraine is valuable due to its resources and location, Russia has always wanted to regain control.

The first signs of the conflict started in 2014, when Crimea, which previously was Ukrainian territory, was taken over by Russia since it was "home to an ethnic Russian majority" (Clinch). So Russia seized Crimea in early 2014 in an unexpected attack, capturing government buildings and airports. Due to this attack, riots broke out because the leader of Ukraine at the time, Viktor Yanukovich, "rejected closer ties with the European Union (EU) by refusing to sign an association agreement" (Clinch). The EU is an organization designed to help the countries in it have peace and security against other countries. Yanukovich was a pro-Russian leader, and many Ukrainian citizens were angry that he rejected involvement with the EU. Therefore, furious citizens swarmed the streets of Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, and the violence led to many deaths. The current President of Russia, who has been in office since 2012, Vladimir Putin, saw the unstable conditions of the government and the many "street protests" as a chance to seize Crimea (Clinch).

It was not until February of 2022 that the conflict between Ukraine and Russia became a full-scale war, with Russian troops invading Ukrainian cities and causing extreme devastation. Putin has made claims that the reason for his recent conquest of Ukraine was

that there had been genocide and Nazi activity in Ukraine (Kirby). These claims have not been backed up by evidence, and it is inferred that the true reason Putin wants to re-conquer Ukraine is for Russia's benefit, and that his claims aren't true at all. Not only would Russia gain power with Ukraine as part of its country, but it would also keep Ukraine out of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), which is one of Putin's main goals. NATO is a military alliance that was formed in 1949 after WW2 to combat and create protection from the Soviet Union. With Ukraine in NATO, it would gain much more power and make it less likely for Russia to conquer Ukraine ever again.

In 2008, as tension in its relationship with Russia was increasing, Ukraine made it a top priority to join NATO. Its acceptance was considered for many years, but was never approved. Joining NATO is not easy and the application could take a very long time to complete. Countries that would like to join the alliance must first get an invitation and then meet certain guidelines in order to be considered. If Ukraine were to join NATO during a state of war, all of the other countries in NATO would help defend Ukraine and fight against Russia. This type of alliance could ensure victory for Ukraine. In September of 2022, Ukraine did submit an application to be a part of NATO, but it is difficult for Ukraine to actually join at the current time, without essentially starting another world war.

In the current war against Russia however, alliances have been crucial to the success of Ukraine. Poland has served as an ally to Ukraine and has been providing military aid as well as taking in more Ukrainian refugees than any other country (Zimmerman). These actions have formed a close relationship between the two bordering countries. Despite, Poland's help, it's not the only country providing aid to Ukraine; the US has also played a huge role in Ukrainian advancements throughout the war. "Since Russia invaded Ukraine in late February, the United States has provided \$14.5 billion in military equipment" (Martinez). So as to not become directly part of the war, the United States has essentially done as much as possible without getting too involved. The US is part of NATO, but because Ukraine is not, the US can only help to a certain extent. So, if Ukraine did join NATO, it would gain much more direct support from many other countries as well.

From a military standpoint, the war is intense, but it also has much deeper personal effects on both Russian and Ukrainian people. The war is greatly impacting the social environments of both countries and the leaders of these countries do not always support the values of the people who inhabit them. In Russia, some citizens completely disagree with the war, but they are unable to protest due to the strict punishments they could face. The Russian government is also not being upfront with the Russian people about the true state of the war, and misinformation is extremely common (Myers). News is broadcasted through state-run companies, which Putin has control over and he is keeping up with his claims that there are Nazis and genocide in Ukraine, thus, trying to justify Russia's attacks. Many Russian people are essentially being brainwashed, and with Putin making Ukrainians look like they are at fault, a large number of Russian people are taking a pro-war stance. However, some Russian people are resisting in their own way, by spreading what they believe

is true information, which Putin doesn't want them to find out about (Olimpieva). Russia has control over much of the media that is watched, read and listened to by its citizens, but there are still some platforms, like Instagram and WhatsApp, that can be used to spread true information; plus, some news agencies are still covering the war without corruption (PBS.org).

The war is continuing its devastation to both Ukraine and Russia. Ukraine has been considerably successful in the war, in large part because of the soldiers' motivation and all of the

The Dangerous Side of Social Media Beauty Trends: The Hyaluron Pen

By: Kaitlin Ho

In a world dominated by social media, it's incredibly easy to blindly follow the latest trend. Such is the case with Hyaluron pens, the newest Tiktok must-have. Recently, several content creators on Tiktok have been advertising the Hyaluron pen, which claims to be a needle-free, painless, DIY device used to inject hyaluronic acid filler at home.

While on the surface the Hyaluron pen seems to be a cheap, painless alternative to achieving a beautiful wrinkle-free face and plump lips, underneath there's a much more sinister reality: not only has the Hyaluron pen been proven to be ineffective, but it is also illegal.

The Hyaluron pen is a needle-less device that works exactly like the medical jet-injector for diabetes patients, but instead of insulin, the Hyaluron pen injects filler. In patients with diabetes, a jet-injector device, which uses pressure instead of a needle, injects insulin into the patient's bloodstream. Since the device uses pressure instead of a needle, the injections are much less painful. Yes, the medical jet-injector device is approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for diabetes treatment, and has been tested for efficacy and safety; however, it has not been approved by the FDA for any other injections, especially not hyaluronic acid injections. Thus, the Hyaluron pen is being illegally sold online, as it has not been approved for sale by peer-reviewed studies.

Despite the lack of regulation with Hyaluron pens, many users still make use of them and ultimately end up feeling pain from the injections, even though the pens are advertised as painless. According to an *Allure* magazine article in which Hema Sundaram, M.D., a board-certified dermatologist is interviewed, Hyaluron pens are "approximately five to 18 millimeters deep and fire with an advertised force of roughly 1,000 to 5,000 pounds per square inch (PSI). 'To put it into perspective, an average punch in the face is estimated to be 65 to 80 PSI, and bullets have a force of 1,000 PSI and up' (Edgar). Furthermore, many users of the Hyaluron pen report dissatisfied results, and in severe cases, some report extreme medical complications such as permanent skin necrosis (death of body tissue) and blocked blood vessels. On top of that, many users of Hyaluron pens consult plastic surgeons or dermatologists afterwards in order to reverse the effects. However, for many users, the effects are irreversible, and potentially life-threatening.

So if the Hyaluron pen is so dangerous, why are people still mindlessly buying and using it? Well, the answer lies in social media and the ever growing "herd mentality" that feeds into trends.

With the growth of social media, it's so easy to fall into the trap of following what's "hip" since everything has been glamorized to only show one side of the story. Such is the case with the Hyaluron pen; every user and advertisement shows an amazing transformation, but the negative side-effects are never discussed. The fine-print is always left out of the picture, and filtered out. Essentially,

support and aid that has been given from other countries. Every day Ukrainian people are fighting hard for their country to remain free from Russian influence and control. They strongly want and need to protect their homeland. On the other side of things, some Russian soldiers are being forced to fight in a war they do not agree with or understand. With everything that has led up to this fight and all of the history that has created this amount of tension, it would seem as if Ukraine should be left alone to enjoy the independence it had previously fought so hard to achieve.

with features such as likes and comments, a trending, well-liked post or video gives the product a false reliability—because it shows that several people approve of the product. Thus, social media breeds a "herd mentality," in which people will try to conform to the latest trend in order to fit in. However, in the process of following a trend, people may disregard critical thinking and just impulsively follow. In other words, if someone sees that a product, such as the Hyaluron pen, is really popular, she may be more inclined to try it out without doing research into its safety or questioning its efficacy.

Northeastern University's Science Magazine (NU Sci Magazine) explains this herd mentality by using Henri Tajfel's social learning theory: "A central hypothesis of social identity theory includes that group members of the in-group look for negative traits or aspects of the out-group to help enhance their self-image. Applying this to fashion trends and pop culture, this mentality could be why people follow trends set by celebrities or other people they look up to" (Gomaa). To put it simply, people are motivated to better their own self-image, and thus want to follow what seems to be well-liked. Furthermore, *NU Sci Magazine* states that following trends could also be a result of a "mental shortcut," or laziness: "By following what others are doing, it shortens and eases the thought process for someone (Gomaa, 'The Psychology Behind Trends')." This is proven through Bandura's social learning theory, which states that people are more inclined to imitate what others are doing by observing their behavior and copying it. Thus, it makes perfect sense why people would buy the Hyaluron pen: they see that well-liked or trending users online are using the product, and on top of that, no negative side effects are shown.

The Hyaluron pen is the perfect example of why everyone should critically think for herself and do research before just blindly following the latest trend. Just because something is popular and has a lot of likes, that does not mean that it is safe to use or credible. What's scary is that the Hyaluron Pen is not the first time a social media trend has had negative consequences, and, it probably won't be the last. Another example of a dangerous social media trend was the Tide Pod challenge in 2018 where users would film themselves eating Tide Pods in the name of fun and following the trend. The unfortunate result though was at least 10 deaths, along with several other health complications such as "lung damage, kidney problems, and nose and eye irritation" (Adams). Despite the fact that the Tide detergent pods contain chemicals, people disregarded the warning not to eat them. Thus, before engaging in the newest social media challenge or buying the newest trendy product, please do your research. Popularity does not equal legitimacy, and it's imperative to keep that in mind when using social media.

Megan McCormack: Sea Cliff Elementary’s Interim Principal

By: Mia Perciballi

On September 8th, 2022 Megan McCormack was appointed Interim Principal of Sea Cliff Elementary for the 2022-23 school year. McCormack has been an avid member of the North Shore community for years as she herself attended the North Shore Schools. She is committed to making the District the best it can possibly be. In the following interview, McCormack explains her journey ‘up the ranks’ from camp counselor, to teacher, to now, administrator. She discusses how and why she decided to pursue education as a career. Another major factor of McCormack’s transition from teacher to administrator is the fact that she had to step away from coaching the Women’s Varsity Lacrosse Team at the High School. Ms. McCormack has made an everlasting impact on the team and the players have done the same for her. She says that she will always be rooting for the team, even if she is not coaching. Let’s look at what she had to say about her new role in the District:

Q: How many years have you worked in the North Shore School District?

A: I have worked in the North Shore School District since I was a freshman in High School teaching tennis at the summer program. [Then] I taught Health and Physical Education for ten years,[after graduating] and this is my 11th year!

Q: Have you ever worked in another school district?

A: I have not; I have always been at North Shore!

Q: Did you always know that you wanted to work in education?

A: No! I started in a physical therapy program and my undergraduate degree was in Psychology. After I started coaching at North Shore, I quickly realized the immediate impact that educators have and the difference they can make every day. I went on to get my Master’s in Physical Education and Health and loved learning. I continued with a second Master’s program in a school building and district leader program with educational technology.

Q: Have you always wanted to be an administrator, or was it just recent events that made you want to make the change?

A: I always eventually wanted to pursue administration, but knew the time would have to be right. When things unfolded this year, I knew I was ready and was very excited to start this next chapter! I had a lot of experience before this year such as Interim Athletic Director, leading the North Shore Summer Experience and sitting on a wide range of committees such as the Instructional Support Team, Shared Decision Making, Teaching and Learning, Wellness, and District Safety. I also am a part of the Tri State Consortium. I always loved a challenge and enjoyed being part of various curriculum writing projects. The combination of these experiences and committees helped me realize I wanted more and wanted to be an elementary school principal.

Q: Do you think that you have a unique view in relation to other administrators because you are a former North Shore student?

A: I feel since I am an alum, I am very protective of North Shore. I had an incredible experience here, so I want every child to have the same. I am invested in the values of the District and always want to continue developing. I feel being a teacher here and working closely with the administration in that role, shaped me into the leader I am now.

Q: Are there any aspect of teaching that you miss?

A: I don’t miss teaching because there are so many teaching opportunities within an administrative role. You work very closely with the faculty, staff and students so I still have all those special relationships. I love the elementary level because the students here bring such joy to the hallways and building every day. I love co-facilitating lessons with teachers and teaching students’ lessons at lunch and recess. I have principal roundtables with a grade level each week. Seeing students in a different way has been amazing!

Q: Was it hard leaving the Varsity Girls’ Lacrosse Team?

A: Giving up something you love and are passionate about could always be very difficult, so it was a little challenging. The group of girls are incredible and so talented. They are very mature, and I met with them at the beginning of the year to share my news. I emphasized that sometimes things in life come up that you can’t pass up and you can’t always plan. They will be in good hands in the upcoming season, and I will always be rooting for them.

Q: How do you like the job of interim principal thus far?

A: I love the position thus far! Sea Cliff has always been a wonderful place and we have a great team here. The students are amazing, the faculty and staff are so hardworking, and it is a full team effort. The entire Sea Cliff community is special, and I have loved the partnership between the community at large and the school. Ultimately, we have the same goal, and we all want what is best for the students at Sea Cliff.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to share about your new role at Sea Cliff Elementary?

A: Sea Cliff is such a special place! I want to continue building upon the amazing programs and creating an environment where everyone continues to be so happy!

Ms. McCormack is elated about her new position as Interim Principal of Sea Cliff School. She has plans to keep the elementary school as happy as it has always been, and build upon the programs that exist in the school already. This writer wishes her all the best in these endeavors.

Has Owning A Piece Of The American Dream On Long Island Become Unrealistic?

By: Vincent Giugliano

Owning one’s own home is part of the American Dream, but is home ownership becoming less and less obtainable for Long Islanders nowadays? With the cost of living increasing and home prices skyrocketing, it is becoming more difficult for many New Yorkers to earn their “piece of the pie.” Although interest rates dipped to an all-time low during the Covid-19 pandemic at 2.68 percent (rocketmortgage.com), these too are now higher than they have been in quite some time at 6.31 percent (LaMantia). “The pandemic also boosted home prices to record highs in 2021, and for the most part, they have remained there, with rising interest rates putting home purchases even further out of reach for many buyers” (Kolomatsky); and, on top of that, since the pandemic, there has been a shortage of houses on the market which has resulted in insane asking prices and offers.

As far as Long Island is concerned, “Housing prices across Long Island..., [are] showing signs that the increase in interest rates has finally started to curb the meteoric rise in real estate costs.” (Costello). This drop is a relief to buyers as there has been an

average increase of housing prices of over \$200,000 in Nassau County. Suffolk County has seen an average housing price increase of over \$150,000 (Costello). However, the “median sales price among deals that closed last month [November] in Nassau County was \$668,000, or 2.5% higher than in November 2021” (LaMantia). Even though the fall season is usually a slow time in the housing market, people just could not afford those high housing prices, the high-interest rates, and the increasing cost of living so something must give. And so, as of this past December, the number of sales on Long Island has dropped 31.3% since November 2021(LaMantia). Even if housing prices come down a tad, a shortage still exists as more sellers are holding on to their properties.

While it’s hard to tell what the future holds for the New York housing market, one thing is for sure: it’s volatile. “When you have that degree of uncertainty, that can weigh on the market” (LaMantia). When all is said and done though, Bankrate.com professionals still project that home prices will continue to increase into the new year and eventually decrease in late January or February, creating a potentially more affordable New York.

Congratualtions To The Winner Of North Shore High School’s Writing Center’s Gratitude Contest:

Thanks I Guess

By: Sophia Glazarev

Saying why we are thankful
Has become such a burden
It feels like it has all been said
I love you, and i’m grateful is all that comes to my head
The bright light shines down on me
The room goes quiet waiting for me to speak

Saying im thankful has become so meaningless
Like i’m grateful for my family but i’ve only had one experience
I haven’t witnessed a life that’s harsh
I’ve never spent days hungry or parched
I don’t know what it’s like to not have a home
So maybe i don’t appreciate that i’m not alone

I think we need a new word for thanks
One that is used sparsely
Partially because there is so much to enjoy
Thanks to those who fight and deploy
The ones who bought me a brand new toy
The ones who stop crime
And the ones who love me all the time

I hear the tales of some of my friends
The bicker and fights never end
This however is not true for me
Not in my loving family
Sometimes we yell but never for awhile
And only because my clothes are not in the right pile

So this thanksgiving when it’s my turn to speak
Ill stand up tall even if i look like a geek
Ill say there’s no one i’d rather want
Because the ones i love ill be sure to flaunt
In the back of my mind there is a spark
Who would I be if these people haven’t left their mark.

The Tutors Get Tutored

By: Michael Ye

When I was first introduced to the idea of being a Writing Fellow at North Shore High School’s relatively new Writing Center, I didn’t think much of it. After taking time to think about it however, I decided to accept this opportunity, thinking it would provide me with an interesting experience. So far, I have had an enjoyable first few months in this position. It has all been highlighted by a field trip to the LIU Post Writing Center on October 26th, one that I found very helpful; it changed my view on tutoring as a whole.

The trip itself was fairly brief and simple. After arriving on campus, we made our way through the library and into a relatively small room. From there, we were able to meet the tutors working at the Writing Center; we then had them look at a piece of writing that was written by each one of my fellow tutors. This exercise is what I was able to take the most out of, as I was introduced to a new strategy they implemented during this process. It involved asking the tutee questions about the point of specific parts of their writing

What’s Your Favorite Holiday?

By: Kyprian Kallaur and Fergus O’Neill

Have you ever wondered what people’s favorite holiday is here at North Shore High School? We made a holiday survey to find out! Thank you to all who participated.

Together we made a list of holidays. We then left surveys in staff member’s mailboxes and went around the school to survey students. Then we split the work! I, Kypa, analyzed the staffs’ results and Fergus analyzed the students’ results. Here is what we found:

We surveyed 79 staff members. The favorite holiday was Christmas, with 45 votes.

The staff really loves Christmas because of these three reasons:

1. The warmth of the season – decorations, music, food, and treats!
2. Spending time with family.
3. Gift giving and donating to others.

In second place was Thanksgiving with 20 votes. Based on the results, the staff enjoys Thanksgiving mainly because it is the unofficial beginning of the “holiday season” and because they love to eat delicious food with family and friends!

Next, we surveyed 49 students. Once again, the favorite holiday was Christmas, with 34 votes! The students really love Christmas for these three reasons:

1. Gift giving and receiving.
2. Spending time with family.
3. The season itself – decorations, music, and lights!

In second place for the students was ALSO Thanksgiving which received 5 votes. Students voted for Thanksgiving because they enjoy spending time with family and of course, eating all of the delicious food!

Whatever your favorite holiday is, we hope you find the time to enjoy celebrating it with family and taking part in whatever tradition(s) you participate in.

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piece and making him answer them. While this seems like such a basic concept, I noticed that by doing this, the tutee is able to know whether or not he is fulfilling the requirements of a certain assignment a lot more easily. This realization has allowed me to see the main purpose of tutoring as a whole, which is to help the student uncover how he can improve with the assistance of a tutor facilitating the session. This is much different than simply giving comments and feedback, something most would expect when getting their writing looked over by someone else.

Another thing I took away from this method was the effectiveness of reading the piece out loud, which is what we were asked to do. When doing this, I noticed that both the tutor and tutee get a much better grasp of the content and meaning. This method is obviously limited considering the Writing Center at North Shore High School is located in a shared space, but it’s still worth considering nonetheless.

Overall, the chance to become a Writing Fellow is something many should look into. There definitely is a commitment in holding such a position, but I personally believe it is worth it in the long run.

The following ten films caught my attention this past year and the reasons are as follows:

10. The Batman:

If a film combined classic film noir, and modern comic book action, you’d have *The Batman*, which has to be one of Matt Reaves’ top productions, coming in behind his 2008 hit *Cloverfield*. The tense tone in *The Batman*’s early scenes establishes a clear idea with the audience of what the film will be; it gets the audience ready for a ride which may not exactly be a joyful one. Robert Pattinson takes his acting to another level going from Edward in *Twilight* to the tense and broken Bruce Wayne. With producer Reaves’ change in pace film-wise combined with Pattinson’s great acting, you will find yourself watching one of the best superhero movies that you’ve seen in a long time.

9. Top Gun Maverick:

In the blockbuster of the year featuring fighter jets, explosions, grandiose battles, and especially, Tom Cruise, Director Joseph Kosinski delivers his definitive best feature film. When it opens, the audience is immediately thrown in at high speeds, along with notable cast members such as Tom Cruise, Miles Teller, Val Kilmer, Jon Hamm, and Ed Harris who all deliver fantastic performances, *Top Gun Maverick* is an exciting must see for 2022.

8. The Northman:

In Robert Eggers’ third film *The Northman*, the audience follows Alexander Skarsgård (Amleth) on his journey of revenge. This is one bloody, badass ride, but do not be completely fixed on the gore and awesome power of the Vikings in the Middle Ages as this film is also simply spectacularly made. Shot around Northern Ireland, the cinematography is great, showcasing Amleth’s journey, and bringing an

Battle Of The iPhones

By: Kalista Lin

Apple is currently one of the most successful companies in our economic system, with almost half of the population in the United States carrying an iPhone. For Apple, it has become a trend for them to come out with a new iPhone model every year. This strategy seems to have worked for quite some time, with the popularity of this brand skyrocketing to its peak earlier this year. Although the company is most well-known for its technologically advanced phones, the “new” iPhone 14 has been released for a couple of months now, but the number of sales of this most recent iPhone model has worsened when compared to the iPhone 13. Although the new versions of the iPhone look almost identical, customers who have purchased the iPhone 14 find that there are barely any upgrades to the quality of functionality and/or appearance.

For instance, the iPhone 14 looks identical to the iPhone 13, but there’s a new 6.7-inch model called the iPhone 14 Plus. Minimal improvements include 6GB of RAM, a 5-core GPU, Bluetooth 5.3, and multiple camera updates. Color options have been updated with red, blue, purple, midnight, and starlight. Apple announced the iPhone 14 and iPhone 14 Plus during the “Far Out” Apple event on September 7, 2022. These devices could easily be mistaken for their predecessors, minus the larger 6.7-inch model. Like the iPhone 13, the displays support HDR, True Tone, and have a P3 color gamut. The OLED offers a 2 million to 1 contrast ratio and 800 nits of brightness in normal use. The only recognizable difference in the design that was altered

is the lack of a SIM card tray (in the U.S. version of the devices). Apple has gone all-in on e-SIM support, so users are saved from the inconvenience of physical cards.

According to a chart in *Forbes*’ article, “iPhone 14 Prices Falling Twice As Fast As iPhone 13”, the depreciation percentage of the iPhone 14 compared to the iPhone 13 after 10 days of its release has increased drastically. While the iPhone 13 had a maximum depreciation percentage of 18.3%, the iPhone 14 had a maximum depreciation percentage of 40.3%. This clearly shows a massive difference in the popularity of the two models of the iPhone, and the extent that Apple had to go to to retain as much profit as it could. According to supply chain specialist Ross Young, iPhone 14 sales are allegedly down 38% compared to the iPhone 13.

Compared to the success of the iPhone 13 model, a growing number of industry reports claim that sales of iPhone 14 and iPhone 14 Plus models are below expectations. In addition, in the resale market, the iPhone 14 and iPhone 14 Plus are losing their value more than twice as fast as the iPhone 13 Mini and iPhone 13. The differences between the iPhone 13 and iPhone 14 are minor. There are some improvements to the camera along with the addition of features like Crash Detection and Emergency SOS via Satellite. However, these are most likely the biggest upgrades Apple could give to create a distinction between the iPhone 13 and iPhone 14.

2022’s Movies That Move You

By: Rockwell White

intensity to his character. *The Northman* is a wonderful fresh of breath air post-pandemic.

7. Everything Everywhere All at Once:

Our current era loves a minimalist style or a bare, modern look; *Everything Everywhere All at Once* does not deliver this at all. Directors Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinart utilize a maximalist style connecting to the title and the story simultaneously, as they bring the audience on a strange journey in which a normal family faces enormous odds. On the surface, *Everything Everywhere All at Once* is an action-packed science fiction film with a deep theme, but in reality it is an exploration of our philosophical reasoning behind the things we do. All in all, *Everything Everywhere All at Once* is one of the best movies of the year and an unexpected gem.

6. All Quiet on the Western Front:

Netflix’s new *All Quiet on the Western Front* is the war film to see. The audience follows a young Paul Baumer and his friends and their unsuspecting descent into war as they are unaware of what is to come. *All Quiet on the Western Front* is a humanistic piece, which is relevant today as it reminds us of the atrocities of war.

5. Bones and All:

In actor Timothée Chalamet’s second movie directed by Luca Guadagnino, *Bones and All*, the audience follows two nomads who are struggling to survive while driving through the backroads of America. *Bones And All* might be Guadagnino’s best film and comes in close to 2017’s *Call Me By Your Name*. In a ravishing, yet violent fashion, *Bones and All* strikes the viewer with strong feelings of fear, disgust, and compassion and it is one of the most beautifully shot films I have ever seen.

4. Argentina, 1985:

Argentina, 1985 is a fantastic re-enactment, with even better acting. While the film may be long, it keeps its intensity all the way through; it follows the story of a prosecutor, a young lawyer, and their

legal team, fighting against a raining dictatorship in order to buy their freedom.

3. The Banshees of Inisherin:

Martin McDonagh’s latest film *The Banshees of Inisherin* has huge shoes to fill following films such as *In Bruges* and *3 Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* and well, it certainly does just that. Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson, who were former co-stars in *In Bruges*, play two best friends who suddenly stop being friends; and showing off eastern Ireland with stunning cinematography, we follow them on their journey.

2. TÁR:

TÁR directed by Todd Field is, in my opinion, one of the best movies of the year, if not the best. Cate Blanchett delivers undoubtedly her greatest performance yet. Lydia Tár is a female composer at the top of the world who has won every big entertainment award, and directs one of the most prestigious orchestras in the world. The film follows Tár’s unexpected demise; stripped of all her glory and prestige, TÁR is a tense case study that is highly relevant to some of our controversies today.

1. Decision to Leave:

Some of the best editing and cinematography I have ever witnessed comes from Park Chan-Wook’s *Decision to Leave*. This drama/thriller/mystery/romance is masterfully crafted and is guaranteed to strike you with emotion. Some of Wook’s other productions, *Old Boy* and *The Handmaiden*, convey their themes in similar ways, but in *Decision to Leave*, Wook steps out of his norm to create something beautiful.

Most agree that 2022 was supposed to be the return of the movies following the pandemic; it definitely lived up to it with *Top Gun Maverick* grossing over one billion dollars and the independent field releasing some certified masterpieces. So get busy catching up on these films. You do not want to miss out.

Grammy Nominations 2023: Everything You Need To Know

By: Charlotte Marchioli

There is no question that 2022 was a huge year for the music industry. With smash-hit releases from artists like Adele, Harry Styles, Lizzo and Beyonce, the year has come to a close. For artists, that means one very important thing: Grammy nominations. The Grammy Association released its highly anticipated nomination list for the 65th Annual Ceremony on November 15th (Lee) and after a year of buzz and predictions, there is much to discuss.

Nowadays, it is easy to say that winning a Grammy is a huge milestone for artists who are hoping to reach “pop-star status”. Last year, Olivia Rodrigo received her first-ever nominations as she was nominated for eight Grammys, taking home ‘Best New Artist’, ‘Pop Vocal Album of the Year’ and ‘Best Record’ (*Rolling Stone*). However, this year, most artists nominated under the big categories, including the ‘Big Four’ (Album of the Year, Record of the Year, Song of the Year, and Best New Artist) are past winners. This includes ABBA, Adele, Bad Bunny, Beyonce, Mary J. Blige, Brandi Carlile, Coldplay, Kendrick Lamar, Lizzo and Harry Styles. Both Beyonce and Adele are nominated for their respective ‘come-back’ albums. Beyonce is the top-nominee of the year with a total of nine nominations for her work on the album *Renaissance* and

single “Be Alive” (Grammy.com). With 88 total career-nominations, Beyonce now is tied with her husband, Jay Z, for most Grammy nominations for any artist in history (*New York Times*). Adele finishes out the year with seven nominations for her album *30* (Grammy.com). The two will once again face-off this year for Album of the Year just like they did in 2017 when Adele’s 25 beat Beyoncé’s *Lemonade* (*New York Times*) (Grammy.com). *Rolling Stone* predicts that once again, Adele will beat out Beyonce.

This year, Taylor Swift’s “All Too Well (10 Minute Version)” will face-off with Adele’s “Go Easy on Me”, Beyonce’s “Break My Soul”, Harry Styles’ “As It Was” and Lizzo’s “About Damn Time” for Record of the Year (*Rolling Stone*). Although Swift’s “All Too Well (10 Minute Version)” became the longest song in history to hit No. 1 on the Billboard Charts (Trust), *Rolling Stone* predicts that Adele’s “Easy on Me” will not only take home Record of the Year, but also Song of the Year and Best Pop Solo Performance.

This year, The Grammy Association has started to see for the first time that a good amount of its nominees for Best New Artist got their start on platforms like Tik Tok. Nominee Gayle, who’s single ‘ABCDEFU’ was a

smash hit this year and it gained its popularity on Tik Tok. PinkPanthress is also nominated for Best New Artist and has Tik Tok to thank for the success of her first single “To Hell With It”. Dove Cameron is yet another nominee in the same category whose single “Boyfriend” was made popular by the app (*New York Times*). Despite the success of these artists and their music’s popularity on social media, *Rolling Stone* predicts that Nigerian singer Tems will take home Best New Artist, arguing that her global sound and team of industry pro collaborators are sure to secure her a win.

As for the other smaller categories at the 2023 Grammys, *Rolling Stone* predicts that Kendrick Lamar will take home Best Rap Album and Best Rap Song, Beyonce will win Best Pop Vocal Album and Summer Walker will win for Best RnB album. The 65th Annual Grammy Awards ceremony will be held at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles on February 5, 2023 (Grammy.com).



A Winter Wonderland Spectacular: North Shore High School’s Winter Concerts 2022

By: Liliana Stella

North Shore High School’s Music Department held its winter concerts on December 14th and December 20th in the High School Theater at 7pm. The evening was filled with holiday spirit, and of course, fantastic music. The beautiful event required a lot of preparation when it came to the music selection and physical setup.

This year’s Chorus music selection was curated by the Chorus teacher, Mr. David Catalano. Catalano explained that this year, “After some reflection on my first year here at North Shore, the choir made some truly beautiful music last year, but every piece we sang was written by a man. I wanted to actively push myself to find high quality music worth the student’s time, music that they could connect to and enjoy singing, that was written by women.” And so, specific pieces that were sung by the Chorus this year were, “Sorida” an African greeting song by Rosephanye Powell, “Eight Days of Light” by Judith Clurman, an Indian Raga by Reena Esmail, “Every Night (When the Sun Goes Down)” by Gwyneth Walker Madrigal Singers, “Perhaps” by Dale Trumbore, “Ilus Hääl” (Beautiful Voice) by Laura Jakobson, “Mu ge” (Pastoral) by Xixian Qu, and “Sing My Child” by Sarah Quartel.

The preparation for the execution of these songs took months as Catalano explained, “The Madrigal Singers got together in August to begin rehearsing, and Concert Chorale had been working on these pieces since October. Rehearsals can be intense, long periods of note learning and focus, but we also work to make sure that the rehearsal process is a joyful one.” He added, “We devote ample time to building connections because when students feel safe, welcome, and included, they perform so much better.”

As for North Shore High School’s

Orchestra, the music curation and preparation were just as significant. Orchestra teacher Mr. Jason Domingo described, “These pieces are selected as a curated program offering a contrast of styles, modes of expression, and musical challenges for a vastly diverse array of skill sets in our orchestra. Students need to appreciate the art we are exploring more than just ‘like or dislike’ material that is often new to their ears. We consider the rehearsal process, as well as our audience’s experience, hearing our work. We need to fit everything we do into a brief timeline of our shared concert programs. All music is selected for the artistic growth it will offer our young musicians.” The pieces performed this year were an excerpt from Edvard Grieg’s Peer Gynt Suite No. 1 entitled “Ase’s Death”, an arrangement of Rimsky-Korsakov’s Scheherazade for string orchestra, “October” by Eric Whitacre, the third and fourth movement of Gustav Holst’s St. Paul’s Suite and “It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year” with all string players at North Shore High School.

Preparing for the execution of this event is what Domingo described as “taking the form of listening, planning technical and artistic challenges, and setting benchmark goals on our calendar to make sure we are progressing towards a successful performance. We listen to our selections early on in the rehearsal process to establish the feel of the entire program, not just the individual piece.” Domingo elaborated by explaining the orchestra’s approach to challenging new music. “We always begin by exploring each piece as a whole, practicing the Gestalt method: experiencing the overall landscape of each work before identifying the detailed elements that make each piece come to life. We ultimately aim to tell the story of ourselves

in each of our programs.”

Mr. Brandon Bromsey, the Band Director, stated that music selection for the Band “Starts with assessing the band and finding the balance of music that’s fun, sad, loud, happy and soft all in one program.” Bromsey elaborated that music selection is about “finding music that fits the strengths and caters to the weaknesses of the band and finding things to work towards and work on.” and, “working on balance on what students like to play and what audiences like to hear.” The band played the phenomenal pieces of “Festival Prelude” by Alfred Reed, “Shenandoah” by Frank Ficheli, “Columbia” by Randall Standridge and closed the program with “Sleigh-Ride” by Leroy Anderson.

Bromsey also noted, “Physical prep certainly goes into it.” Adding, the Music Department was “Setting up chairs, stands, and the percussion equipment all the time. What’s difficult too is that it’s also middle school and elementary school concert season too, and most of them perform at the High School so we are accommodating space for their needs all the time as well with equipment.” However, Bromsey highlighted the fact that its “more so the process of learning the music for the performance that takes a lot of diligence” and “there is always something we are working on and that’s the fun and joy of it!”

This year’s concerts were live-streamed utilizing camera equipment, specifically two operating cameras at once. Overall, all ensembles did an excellent job and the work and dedication to the pieces certainly were witnessed by all who were in attendance.

2022’s Films To Remember

By: Norah Davison

2022 came to a close, and after a year filled with movie releases, here are what critics claim to be the best movies of 2022. These decisions are based on critical acclaim and popularity. Although these movies may not be everyone’s favorites, the films chosen are widely acknowledged to be successes. So, here are the 5 best movies of 2022.

1. Top Gun: Maverick- Released this past summer, this long awaited sequel to the classic 80’s blockbuster *Top Gun* stars Tom Cruise, alongside Miles Teller. Although the sequel was released more than 30 years after the original, it did not fail to sell tickets. In fact, it was the highest grossing movie of 2022, making almost \$1.5 billion worldwide. This movie focuses on how times have changed for Pete Mitchell (Maverick), who is now an instructor for the North Island Naval Base. With lots of exciting action, and a plot filled with emotion and danger for Maverick, this movie keeps viewers entertained. At its core, *Top Gun: Maverick* is a nostalgic return to the 80’s, appealing to young and old alike.

2. Nope- Jordan Peele’s third film, starring Daniel Kaluuya and Keke Palmer, was a smash hit this past summer, earning critical acclaim for Peele’s astounding craftsmanship, including a complex plot that has deep social meanings. This movie combines cowboys, aliens and monkeys, a combination that seems a little odd. Yet, Peele pulls it off in a way that only he can. It’s guaranteed to keep you on the “edge of your seat”.

3. Everything Everywhere All at Once- This may be the most confusing, mind-boggling movie of 2022. As an A24 production, this movie is far from conventional. It did very well in theaters, as it’s the production company’s highest grossing film. Critics loved this film’s ambition and creativity in exploring the concept of a multiverse in a way that has not been done before. Yes, it does get messy, but in a good way! Michelle Yeoh stars as a laundromat owner who is tangled up in a multiversal battle. Full of bizarre action, this film’s craziness does not diminish its narrative involving many emotions and lots of drama. It’s very chaotic, but that’s kind of the point.

4. Black Panther: Wakanda Forever- After the death of Chadwick Boseman, people were unsure if the Black Panther series would continue. Fans were devastated by his passing, and it took a while to process that society lost a figure who influenced so many lives. This movie explores grief and loss, as the kingdom of Wakanda faces the challenge of finding a new leader in a time of mourning and confusion. Yet in this loss, two new stories are told, those of Angela Bassett and Letitia Wright, the leading figures of this sequel. With powerful female leading roles, striking visuals, and sorrowful themes, this film is deeply impactful, and a final goodbye to our beloved Black Panther.

5. Marcel the Shell With Shoes On- Yet another popular A24 film out this year, *Marcel the Shell With Shoes On* follows Marcel, a one-inch high hermit crab shell who has googly eyes and wears tennis shoes. The audience follows this little guy as he experiences the big world of his house. With a very basic stop-motion animation and simple setting, Marcel’s home, this film has a childlike wonder to it that earned it so many great reviews. A seemingly simple movie won critical acclaim and a 99% Rotten Tomato rating.

These are just a few of the fantastic movies of 2022. Movies had a great return after three years of non-existent content, but these films prove that the excitement of the big screen is back. Now, with big titles being announced for the year ahead, we can look forward to a fantastic movie season in 2023!

January 2023

The Trumpets Are Staying In New York, But At What Cost?

By: Michael Ye

The 2022 season ended in complete disappointment for the New York Mets. Despite winning over 100 games, fans will mostly remember the team getting swept by the Atlanta Braves in their final series meeting of the regular season and blowing the lead in the NL East. While they still secured a playoff spot, they were forced into a much more difficult situation by having to play the San Diego Padres in a best-of-three Wild Card series. On paper, the Mets were clearly the better team, but the Padres ultimately came out on top in three games. This late season collapse completely overshadowed the team's astounding success before the final stretch. A big part of why they were even competing for the division title in the first place was the dominance and consistency Edwin Diaz provided them with at the closer position. Every time Mets fans heard the trumpets of his walkout song, that indicated his entrance to pitch in the bottom of the ninth inning; they knew the game was over from there.

For context, Diaz's career thus far in New York has been a rollercoaster. In 2018, he was originally acquired by the Mets in a blockbuster trade, which saw the team obtain both him and Robinson Cano in exchange for Jay Bruce, Anthony Swarzak, Jarred Kelenic, Justin Dunn, and Gerson Bautista. After the first season since the trade passed, it was looking like a big loss for the Mets. At 36 years old, Cano was showing clear signs of regression, producing an abysmal .736 OPS, a major drop from his .845 OPS the year before. Diaz, on the other hand, was even worse. He was a below replacement level player, posting a 5.59 ERA in 58 innings pitched and he eventually lost his closer role to Seth Lugo. With both Kelenic and Dunn being considered top prospects at the time, this was on track to be one of the worst trades in Mets' history. Fast forward to the present, and the public perception on this trade has completely changed. Kelenic has struggled in the Majors and is looking like a bust, while Dunn was not impressive either and he was eventually traded to the Reds. For the Mets, the Robinson Cano experiment was a complete failure, as he was eventually designated for assignment and his career now looks to be over. As it stands right now, Diaz has been the only player that has panned out. His numbers

after his first season pitching in New York have been excellent, and reminded Mets' fans why the team invested so many assets into trading for him in the first place.

So just how good was Diaz last season? Well, it's safe to say that he was the best reliever in all of baseball, posting a 1.31 ERA and a 0.839 WHIP across 62 innings pitched while converting on 32 of 35 save opportunities. The advanced stats are just as impressive, as he had an ERA+ of 297 and struck out over half the batters he faced. Although his repertoire only consists of two pitches, both of them are among the best in the league. He throws one of the hardest fastballs at around 99 mph and a wipeout slider that also reaches over 90 mph. It's obvious that he picked the perfect time to have a career year, as he was set to become an unrestricted free agent this off-season. This historic season inevitably earned him a massive five-year \$102 million extension, the biggest contract for a reliever in MLB history. There's no question that he was bound to make this much money after the year he just had, but was it worth it in the end for the Mets to pay him this much for past production that was so difficult to replicate?

The simple answer to this question is a resounding no, and that is completely out of Diaz's control. The reason is simple: the relief pitcher is the least valuable position in baseball. Going by the Wins Above Replacement metric, Diaz's 3.2 WAR ranks outside the top 100 in 2022, despite being considered a better player than the majority of players ranked ahead of him and even a top 50 player by many. Even though Diaz is a former starting pitcher turned closer that has shown he could go multiple innings per appearance if needed, relievers are asked to do a lot less than starting pitchers, who are expected to eat up multiple innings every start. For reference, Chris Bassitt, Diaz's teammate last season, earned a three-year \$63 million contract from the Blue Jays and also had a 3.2 WAR. In 181.2 innings pitched last season, he posted a 3.42 ERA and a 1.145 WHIP with an ERA plus significantly lower than Diaz's at just 113. So how come both players had the same amount of value? The reason is because Bassitt was asked to do significantly more by throwing about 120

more innings than Diaz. Even though the innings he gave were not as productive as Diaz's, they all add up to the same cumulative value at the end of the day. While they are set to make a similar amount of money per year on their new contracts, both players are coming off of completely different situations. Bassitt had just a decent year for his standards and has far more longevity being a soft-tossing middle-of-the-rotation starter with a significantly more diverse repertoire. Diaz is coming off what was likely the best season he will ever have and relies heavily on velocity, which will likely regress once he gets past his 30s. In other words, it is far more likely that Bassitt will end next season with a higher WAR value.

Diaz's contract is very similar to Luis Castillo's extension that he received in the middle of last season after being sent to the Seattle Mariners by the Cincinnati Reds. Castillo is set to make \$108 million over the next five years, just \$1.2 million more per season than Diaz. For comparison, Castillo is an excellent starter that has proven he is a legitimate ace. In 150.1 innings pitched last season for both the Reds and Mariners, he posted a 2.99 ERA with a 1.084 WHIP and an ERA+ of 138. If you were to compare these numbers to Diaz's, they are obviously worse considering cumulative volume is not taken into account. But his WAR was almost a whole extra win at 4.1, mainly because he threw over 150 innings. In fairness, Castillo would have likely received even more money if he had tested the open market. However, the fact of the matter is that he is set to only make a little bit more than Diaz for the next five years despite clearly being the more valuable player.

As a lifelong Mets' fan, Diaz was my favorite player on the team and I am more than happy to see him return. The issue with this lies on the financial side of things, which could limit the team's ability to retain other players in the future. A transaction like this only moves the team further past the dreaded luxury tax. But at the end of the day, the New York Mets are still owned by billionaire Steven Cohen, someone who has just proven he is willing to spend as much money as he would like to on his team.

Goodbye To A Football Legend

By: Jessica Lillis

Mississippi State University football coach, Mike Leach, died on Monday, December 12th due to complications after a heart attack. Not only is this a massive loss for Mississippi State, but Leach really has affected the entire college football and NFL community with his innovative coaching skills and wonderfully quirky personality.

Leach's coaching career began in the 1990s when a coach named Hal Mumme offered him an assistant coaching job at Iowa Wesleyan. It was here that Mumme and Leach worked together to create a new offensive approach known as the "Air Raid offense". It's an offensive strategy that revolves around short quick passing plays, which, at the time, was an uncommon concept. An article in the *Wall Street Journal* explains, "To them, it was basic math. Passing plays averaged more yards than running plays. In their minds, it was crazy not to throw the ball more".

After his time with Mumme, Leach took his newfound offensive ideas to Oklahoma where he became the offensive coordinator working under Bob Stoops. After signing a new young quarterback, Josh Heupel, it was here that Leach's career really took off. With an outstanding arm, Heupel was able to showcase what the Air Raid was really about and it led to much success, leading Heupel to a runner-up spot for the Heisman Trophy in 2000. Leach's accomplishments with Heupel were able to legitimize his tactics and kick-start his head coaching career at Texas Tech (WSJ). As a head coach, Leach had an overall record of 158-107 in his 21 years of coaching (ESPN), and his Air Raid offense is now used in high school, college, and professional football.

Mike Leach's impact was not only felt on the field, but off as well. His personality shined through in several of his interviews when he was discussing his opinions on things like weddings, his hatred for candy corn, and his fascination with pirates. His uniquely dry sense of humor was evident in all areas of his life. Overall, Mike Leach truly was a valuable coach and a special person. His offensive tactics will continue to be used in the world of football and he will forever be remembered as an outstanding coach, father, and person.

Happy Valentine's Day



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