



# GUIDE POST

NORTH HIGH'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER

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## GOVERNOR ANDREW CUOMO SURROUNDED BY CONTROVERSY

JONATHAN SANDERS '24  
STAFF WRITER

Gov. Andrew Cuomo of New York was praised in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic for his candor and leadership ability in combating the pandemic, which hit the state especially hard in Mar. and Apr. 2020. While many Americans justifiably feared this new, strange virus and the “new normal” supposed to come along with it, Cuomo’s calm tone and attractive personality relieved many New Yorkers, bringing him to national attention.

All around the country, people would tune into his daily press conferences; members of the New York’s government who had previously lived in obscurity became household names. Plans for 2024 were even floated about and yet, a year later, the country’s attitude on him has changed completely.

The controversy began on Dec. 13, 2020, when Lindsey Boylan, candidate for Manhattan Borough President, accused Cuomo of sexual harassment. The governor “existed without ethics” and “sexual harassment and bullying is so pervasive that it is not only condoned but expected,” said Boylan.

Cuomo denied these claims, but two more women have since reported such inappropriate behavior on the governor’s behalf. In response to the second allegation on Feb. 28, Cuomo said his words had been “misinterpreted” and that he acted the alleged way in an “attempt to add some levity and banter to what is a very serious business.”

Cuomo has also faced trouble in how he has handled nursing home deaths during the pandemic. On Mar. 25, 2020, he ordered patients who tested positive



Governor Andrew Cuomo answers questions regarding scandals such as sexual harassment allegations and the COVID-19 nursing homes scandal. (Photo: Spencer Platt)

to be sent to nursing homes as hospital beds filled up across the state, attracting criticism from many members of his own board of health. This spelled disaster for the caregiving locations, as nearly 7,000 nursing home residents had died from the virus by June 2020.

This issue was exacerbated in late Jan. 2021, when it was determined by the New York State Department of Law investigation that this number was a gross underestimation of the actual number of deaths. State Attorney General Letitia James released a report reading, “COVID-19 resident deaths associated with nursing homes in New York state appear to be undercounted by DOH (Department of Health) by approximately 50 percent.”

An aide to the governor sug-

gested that Cuomo’s office feared the actual number of nursing home deaths and would prompt an investigation by the federal Department of Justice. As this news broke, emergency powers were stripped from the governor, and an investigation into the nursing home deaths by the FBI had been launched.

Many public figures have announced their support of the investigation. Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand (both from Cuomo’s own Democratic Party) have come to the side of the inquiry, along with State Assembly member Ron Kim of Queens. Kim tweeted, “And Cuomo hid the numbers. Impeach.” Gretchen Whitmer, Gover-

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## FIELD TRIPS IN AN ALL-VIRTUAL WORLD

LEILA HAWA '23  
STAFF WRITER

COVID-19 has sparked an epoch of virtual field trips. Many students have embraced the circumstances and are glad to have the opportunity to experience a virtual field trip, knowing that the only other plausible option would be to disregard field trips altogether for the time being. Others do not see the point in a field trip through the means of technology. With the relatively high technical accessibility of North High, virtual field trips remain possible.

In the past, many clubs held conferences and tournaments where students would compete against students from other schools. While these students would be competing, they would get to meet and engage with other competitors. The social aspect that was once in many clubs has changed. With club meetings taking place over Zoom, members are unable to socialize in the same manner as compared to the past.

Model U.N. has had two conferences this year, both of which were virtual.



*Sarah Smith*

There were some technical difficulties, but “they worked themselves out,” said Mr. Ragot. The conference hosts had almost as much material to learn in these virtual conferences as the student club members.

While Model U.N. has managed to work out some of their technical snags, Mr. Ragot describes how on the downside there is something “about forming human relationships that Zoom just can’t do as well.”

Although it still is possible for delegates to find new friends from schools and communities that differ from Great Neck, Mr. Ragot claims that he does not see it happening. These students lack the opportunity to share the experiences in person as they traditionally would. Although students are facing this at this time, they are ready to make new memories.

Despite these challenges, Mr. Ragot happily reports that “Model U.N. is still going strong.” The club hopes to have a virtual tour of the U.N. this year, and re-

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# North High's Virtual Racism Assembly

RACHEL SUTIN '24  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Local nonprofit organization ERASE Racism presented a lesson about systemic racism on Long Island to North High students on Feb. 26. Elaine Gross, the organization's founder, and Nicole Grennan, ERASE Racism's Community Organizer, sought to educate students and teachers about the basics of racism and how this social construct has impacted Long Island as a region. Since its founding in 2001, the group has worked to reveal racial disparities in public school education and housing in Long Island.

Ms. Silk, North High's No Place for Hate coordinator, notes that she put in significant time and effort to organize this event, making it almost seamless. Weeks before, the No Place for Hate Club brainstormed ways to honor Black History Month.

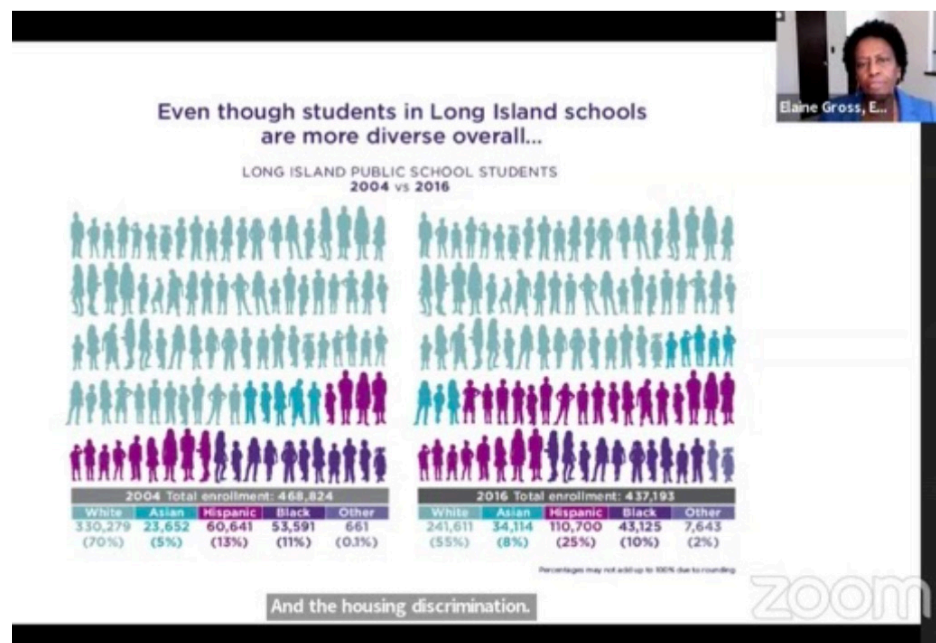
Members decided that "having a speaker would be the most impactful," said Ms. Ostrover. From there, Silk and Ostrover, the club advisers, reached out to various Long Island organizations North High has collaborated with in the past to find an appropriate presentation for the North High population.

The presentation included multiple sections which consisted of Racism Basics, Housing and Education Discrimination, Long Island Connections, and a question-and-answer session. Racism Basics defined racism, including what racism is, what racism isn't, and the impact of racism on various sectors.

Housing and Education Discrimination covered the ways in which redlining

leads to segregated neighborhoods. Gross and Grennan demonstrated redlining's vicious cycle of inequality, where Black and Hispanic neighborhoods are given

tion allowed students and teachers to send anonymous questions to the presenters that were answered via Zoom. Though there were technical is-



President of Erase Racism, Elaine Gross, held a virtual assembly and educated North High students on racism and how to help end it. (Photo: Pamela Ostrover)

subpar loans, can't grow their wealth, and as a result can't pay high taxes that would fund schools and local projects.

Long Island Connections was centered around Levittown's controversial history of discrimination, and how that has made Long Island one of the most segregated regions in the United States.

The Question and Answer sec-

tion with Zoom, North High students took the technical issues in stride, and were soon back to learning about prejudice on Long Island.

"The video that was chosen by the presenters did a really great job of explaining structural racism that exists, specifically on Long Island," noted Ms. Silk, when asked

about her favorite part of the event.

Junior Jaden Livian echoed the same sentiment about the importance of learning about racist systems, especially somewhere so close to home.

"It was enlightening to learn that the Great Neck population is not representative of the many other communities on Long Island where African Americans live separately and do not have the same opportunities as we are privileged to have," said Livian.

Likewise, junior Michael Bornstein believed "the assembly sparked a good discussion between students about topics they may not have been able to talk about before."

ERASE Racism was founded by Gross to fight systemic inequity, and to transform her home region of Long Island. ERASE Racism describes their mission as to "Transform, [and] integrate communities in which no person's access to opportunity is limited by race or ethnicity." ERASE Racism works in multiple sectors, some of which include the housing, education, legal, and financial sectors.

Even with technical difficulties, North High was provided with a refreshing and factual perspective on racism from experts in this field.

Although assemblies have operated differently this year, one principle has stayed the same: the potential of powerful speakers to move a crowd and inspire hundreds.

ERASE Racism's presentation was a revealing and interactive presentation for all, moving North High one step closer to dismantling years of racial injustice on Long Island.

## ANTI-ASIAN ATTACKS RISE IN N.Y.

XIOMARA TRINIDAD PEREZ '21  
STAFF WRITER

Recently, there has been a significant rise in hate crimes against Asian-Americans, with many becoming the target of numerous instances of harassment, discrimination, and violence. Nearly 3000 anti-Asian incidents have been reported since Feb. 2020. New York City has seen an 867% increase in Asian-American hate crime victims in 2020, compared to the year before.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States, the blame has been put on the Asian community. Americans, including former President Donald J. Trump, had repeatedly used xenophobic terms such as the "Chinese Virus" or "Kung Flu" to blame the spread of the pandemic on Chinese-American and other Asian-American communities.

The widespread maltreatment plaguing the country has made many Asians fear walking the streets and doing normal daily activities, like shopping.

Long Island is not immune to this type of behavior either. Russel Jeung, a professor at San Francisco State University and co-founder of Stop Asian American and Pacific Islanders Hate, has documented several thousand complaints of shunning, verbal harassment, and being barred from establishments on Long Island.

"There's widespread worry over safety," explained Weiwei Zhang, a board member of the Suffolk County Asian American Advisory Board. "As far as I'm aware of, there are no attacks on individuals here in Suffolk."

But people are becoming more careful about when and where they go."

The racist incidents that oc-

cure and even in our very own Great Neck have scarred the local community: this is not an issue just for "other places."



Noel Quintana, an Asian-American man, speaks about discrimination against the Asian community at an Anti-Asian Hate Rally on Feb. 27. Photo: Anokha Venugopal

curred in our own town last summer and that have been perpetrated amongst Asian members of neighboring communities in Queens and elsewhere on the island show that this is an issue Great Neck must tackle head-on.

Attacks against Asian-Americans in Flushing, Queens, in Manhattan,

Many students and community members felt that these incidents stem from an anti-Asian sentiment that plagues many in the community.

North High senior Stephanie Kim expressed her feelings and concerns about the topic, one that affects her personally. "The increases in Anti-Asian

hate crimes and harassment have made my family and I scared to simply walk down the street, use public transportation, or leave the grocery store," Kim explained. "It has caused us to have conversations about how to stay safe if targeted by an attacker. So, seeing this problem escalate has not only made me heartbroken and angry but also realize the importance of spreading awareness of the issue and further educating my peers and me about racism."

Both Long Islanders and residents of New York City are taking action to ensure that these Anti-Asian hate crimes do not go unnoticed. A Rise Up Against Anti-Asian Hate rally led by the Asian American Federation was organized to protest the brutal attacks on Asian-Americans, such as the recent stabbing of a 36-year-old Asian-American man.

Prominent government officials such as New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio spoke out during the rally, to address the rise in xenophobia. "Stop Asian hate. This is the message we have to get out, not just in New York City, but all over this country: Stop Asian hate, stop it now," said de Blasio.

The AAF estimates that the majority of hate crimes go unreported, making it difficult to estimate just how many people have experienced discrimination. Many members of the Asian-American community state that this is due to the fear of speaking up and exposing their oppressors.

There is still much work to be done to help prevent racism and let the voices of those wor-



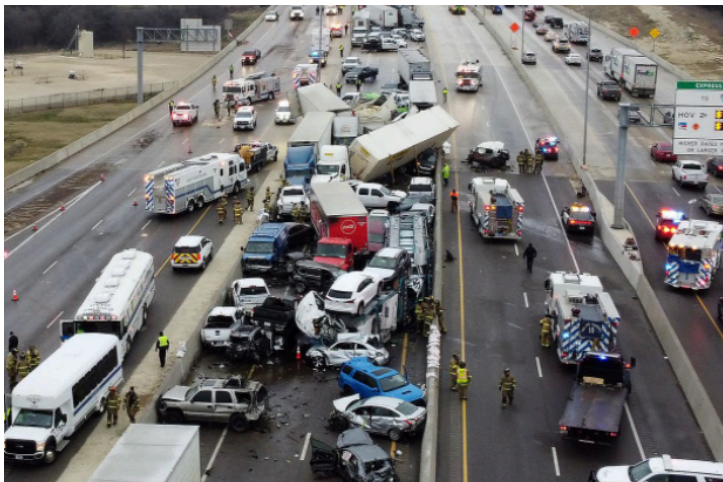
# DEADLY SNOW STORMS HIT TEXAS

REBECCA BERNSTEIN '23  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Over President's Day weekend late this February, ruthless Winter Storm Uri caused massive damage throughout the country, leaving destructive ice in the Northwest and snow across the Midwest and Northeast. The storm had a great effect on numerous states, but is in-

high for winter, the grid operator instructed utilities to begin controlled power outages to avoid long-term damage.

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) became a powerful broker over electricity flow since its creation in 1970 and has taken most of the blame from Texas politicians and the public, who continue to criticize its abilities after the storm has ended.



On Feb. 11, black ice on Interstate 35W in Fort Worth, Texas caused a 133-car pileup, leaving at least six dead and many injured (Photo: Lawrence Jenkins.)

comparable to the conditions that Texas endured. The frigid temperatures and winter weather battered the state, leaving many people in unspeakable conditions and made basic needs unattainable. First, this unprecedented disaster left millions without electricity and heat in the cold. Then, as power began to be restored, millions more discovered that their taps had run dry, pipes had burst, or water treatment plants had failed, meaning that water had to now be boiled prior to using. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality says, "Water systems serving a majority of the state's 254 counties continued to be disrupted, meaning millions of people remained without running water or under notices to boil their tap water."

Further prevalent issues caused by the appearance of this natural disaster includes the delay in distribution of COVID-19 vaccinations. In North Texas, the storm resulted in the cancellation of nearly 200,000 appointments at vaccination sites such as the hub in Dallas' Fair Park.

It has been a challenge for the Lone Star State to resume its vaccination process due to limited vaccine availability and additional doses not being able to arrive as a result of the winter freeze and the widespread electrical outages. The result is that Texas now lags far behind most other states in terms of the percentage of the population that has received an initial dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines.

Even as power is restored, many Texans are still struggling with rolling outages. The state's power plants were not ready for the freezing conditions, and as the production of natural gas froze, the pipelines that transported the gas did as well. As people began to turn up the heat, the problem worsened, further increasing the demand for natural gas and contributing to the shortages at power plants that use the gas to produce electricity. The problem heightened with the appearance of high gas prices, which caused many operators to take their plants offline because they could not make a profit.

While coal and nuclear power plants were also disrupted and wind turbines froze, it still does not compare to the severe disruption of the production of natural gas. As demand hit a record

This disaster has been compared to the 2011 storm, where millions of Texans had lost power during the Super Bowl, and resulted in two agencies, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, to conduct a study on how Texas could "winterize" its energy infrastructure. At the highest end, winterizing 50,000 gas wells would cost an estimated \$1.75 billion, but there was no broad movement done to winterize equipment.

In a recent Fox News Interview, Republican Gov. Gregg Abbott criticized this week's fiasco on green energy, an assertion for which he was sharply criticized. At other points, Abbott did note failures across the energy industry, but others among the Republican leadership continued to tweet condemnations of green energy or support for natural gas. Todd Staples, president of the Texas Oil & Gas Association, declined an interview request but issued a statement saying the industry was "steadfastly committed to doing our part to help Texas recover."

"I think there is going to have to be a serious inquiry into why it was, what were the factors that led the grid not to be able to meet the energy needs of Texas," said Republican U.S. Senator Ted Cruz, who has been denounced for his underwhelming efforts.

Unlike the energy infrastructure existing in Texas, New York has built theirs with regards to possible winter disasters. "[I think that] it is less likely that New York will undergo the same crises that Texas had endured because our energy system has been built to respond well to any natural disasters, and has been pretty reliant during past winter storms," said sophomore Sophie Frenkel. "However, if our system is connected to Texas, this may be a disastrous issue emerging in the near future due to the overuse of electricity."

Many wonder why wind turbines in cold-weather states like New York can operate in the winter with seemingly little trouble when their counterparts in Texas cannot. The secret to this remains in the variety of cold weather and anti-icing technologies which help to prevent the buildup of ice on turbine blades, detect ice when it cannot be prevented, and remove ice safely when it is detected.



KELLY CHU '21  
COLUMNIST

## HONG KONG ACTIVISTS FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY

Citizens of Hong Kong have taken to the streets in protests after the arrest of 47 pro-democracy politicians and activists. These influential figures were each charged with one count of "conspiracy to commit subversion" in violation of China's national security law that was imposed in June 2020, in an effort to criminalize and prohibit any act of succession, subversion, terrorism, and collusion with foreign forces. This national security law severely limited the freedom of speech and personal security of the people of Hong Kong as Beijing continues to tighten its grip on the previous British colony.

Hong Kong was a crown colony for more than 150 years after it was ceded by China to Britain following the First Opium War through the Treaty of Nanjing. China also ceded the Kowloon Peninsula and other islands adjacent to Hong Kong after the Second Opium War. The Convention of 1898 essentially leased the New Territories, or the neighboring islands, to the British for 99 years, beginning from July 1, 1898. Although Hong Kong remained

a restricted group of candidates as well as formally appointed to the role by the mainland Chinese government. The current chief executive, Carrie Lam, was appointed by a pro-Beijing committee. Beijing holds a tremendous amount of political power over Hong Kong, as while Hong Kong is limited in its semi-autonomy, China's parliament holds the absolute power of interpretation over its laws. Unrest has long been brewing in Hong Kong, as many citizens feel that they are being denied the level of democracy they were promised and that China is already trying to chip away at their autonomy. There have also been numerous calls for democratic reforms to the Basic Law.

Peaceful protests first spread across the territory in June of 2019 in response to a bill that would allow people to be extradited, or deported, to China to stand trial. Many citizens were fearful that this bill would be used to intimidate those that were openly critical of China's central government. These protests eventually turned extremely violent. Although the bill was later withdrawn, the protestors had grown their list of demands to include an investigation into police brutality and the use of excessive force



Protesters in the Causeway Bay district of Hong Kong protesting against the anti-freedom actions of the Chinese government. Photo: Lam Yik Fei

a Chinese territory, its economy prospered under British control, flourishing into a busy trading port and distribution center. It quickly became a refuge for those fleeing instability in mainland China, especially during World War II.

During the 1970s, apprehension about the future of Hong Kong grew as the 1997 expiration date for the end of British control loomed. After difficult negotiations between the two countries, Hong Kong became, once again, governed under Chinese sovereignty. Hong Kong's Basic Law, or its mini-constitution, established it as a Special Administrative Region of China with executive, legislative, and executive powers delegated from the central Chinese government.

Hong Kong's Basic Law also established a principle of "one country, two system," which preserved Hong Kong's role as one of Asia's leading capitalist centers and financial hubs; outlined the territory's structure of government; and guaranteed the protection of certain rights of the people, such as freedom of speech, assembly, and religion as well as freedom of the press. Under this agreement, these rights will be protected for 50 years, or until 2047. Until then, Hong Kong has continued to use its legal system inherited from British rule.

Hong Kong's chief executive is assisted by the Executive Council, or a formal body of advisors. The chief executive, however, must be elected from

during the protests, amnesty for the arrested protestors, and universal suffrage, which was guaranteed by the Basic Law but never implemented. These demands went unheard, and protests broke out once again in May 2020 after China's central government proposed a security law that would bypass Hong Kong's Legislative Council to be implemented.

The full text of this new security law was kept from the public until after it had been enacted. Many have condemned it as China's latest effort to tighten its reign of control over Hong Kong and phase out the principle of "one country, two system." Although protests have become a rare sight in Hong Kong due to both pandemic restrictions and the new security law, peaceful protests have once again spread across the city after the recent arrest of 47 pro-democracy activists. They were arrested for attempting to take back the majority in the legislature through the primary—a move that is perfectly legal and quite common in other countries that use similar parliamentary systems, such as the United Kingdom. Because the new security law even sets a higher standard for bail, the activists will likely be held for months before the start of their trials. "We have long before decided that we would not bow to authoritarianism," said Lester Shum, an activist who was one of the 47 people arrested. "I hope that everyone will carry this decision in the very difficult days ahead."



# POTENTIAL TENSION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND SAUDI ARABIA

**GISELLE MAKANI '23**  
STAFF WRITER

The Biden administration recently announced a ban on dozens of Saudi government officials traveling to the U.S. in response to an intelligence report about the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Khashoggi, was a U.S. and Saudi journalist from the Washington Post who was killed in 2018.

Although the U.S. and Saudi Arabia have worked closely together over the past several years, their relationship is set to change. Recently, President Joe Biden has declared that he will treat Saudi Arabia differently than the Trump Administration has in the past. Donald Trump made keeping the American-Saudi bond strong in his four years as president a priority.

The Biden administration has said their main goal is to “recalibrate” rather than “rupture” their relationship with Saudi Arabia. In his first foreign policy speech, Biden announced a freeze on all weapons sales to Saudi Arabia.

Trump held close ties with Saudi Arabia by providing them with support against Iran. In return, the Saudi's helped the United States by purchasing American munitions. Trump, who heard about the murder of Khashoggi in late 2018, essentially disregarded it and continued business and maintained positive relations with Mohammed bin Salman.

“[Joe Biden has] set the stage for a potential showdown with one of the world's biggest oil producers and a key to stability in the Middle East as the Biden administration looks to escape the region and pivot to Asia,” wrote Cailey Griffin.

According to the White House, a call made by President Joe Biden to Mohammed “affirmed the importance” the U.S. “places on universal human rights and the rule of law.”

Biden reportedly made the call after reading the forthcoming U.S. report regarding the murder of Saudi journal-

ist Khashoggi. Khashoggi, an open critic of Saudi Arabia's government, was drugged and murdered back in October of 2018 inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul with his body left dismembered. There were many conflicting reports about

the severity of the unnecessary death of the U.S. citizen drove Biden to contact Mohammed bin Salman, the prince of Saudi Arabia, to inhibit instances like the tragic death from reoccurring.

The report's release seemed des-



*Then-Vice President Joe Biden shaking hands with Prince Salman bin Abdel-Aziz at Prince Sultan palace in Riyadh, Oct. 27, 2011. Photo: Reuters/Fahad Sahdee*

what specifically fueled the controversial killing, but the majority placed the blame on the Saudi Arabian government.

Saudi authorities claimed the death resulted from a “rogue operation,” and those complicit in the murder were subjected to 20 years in prison. While Trump was in office, he concluded that the alliance between Saudi Arabia and the United States would not be harmed as a result of the brutal murder. Yet,

timed to impact the U.S.-Saudi relationship negatively. The Saudi government has issued statements explaining that they found the report quite inaccurate and impermissible, demonstrating the strain that the report is likely to have on relations. Moreover, Congress requested the release of the report, but there is no doubt that publishing a report like that is damaging to the relationship.

Time and time again, the U.S.-Sau-

di relationship proved to be important, considering the powerful countries both maintained great trade and economic exchange. All aspects considered, the publishing of the report is harmful to American interests. The United States and Saudi Arabia have maintained steady relationships for years. As the Cold War took off, Saudi Arabia also became a strong ally of the U.S. in the fight against communism. Although the United States has not formally announced that it would discontinue relations with Saudi Arabia, Biden has gone to great lengths to attain his goal of discussing the role of human rights in Saudi Arabia's government.

This week Biden paused the selling of weapons to them in order to further evaluate the current situation and decide the best course of action moving forward. Biden declared that he would not punish Mohammed bin Salman for his role in the murder in fear of damaging diplomatic relations. This call is unpopular to many human rights leaders and activists who voiced their discontent with the decision not to hold him accountable.

Many organizations were pressing Biden to, at a bare minimum, impose the same travel restrictions against the crown prince as the Trump administration imposed on others involved in the plot, which was later acknowledged by Biden's aide who said that the prince would likely not be welcomed into the United States in the near future.

His administration also refused to say whether or not they will be letting the prince off the hook for his actions that resulted in the murder because no official consequences were administered. The controversy with Saudi Arabia is still at large, and despite attempts to lessen the tension, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia will continue to stress until a resolution is reached.

## GOVERNOR ANDREW CUOMO SURROUNDED BY CONTROVERSY

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nor of Michigan and another member of the Democratic Party, has encouraged the continuation of the inquiry.

Members of the Republican Party have been vocal about the situation, as well. William Barclay, the New York State Assembly Minority Leader, has called Cuomo's actions “appalling” saying that “the recent revelation that the governor's administration was so blatantly proactive in crafting this false narrative crosses from misrepresentation to obstruction.”

However, some other members of New York's government have defended him, with Howard Zucker, Health Commissioner. “We made the right public health decision at the time. And faced with the same facts, we would make the same decision again,” said Zucker.

Tensions in New York's executive branch are continuing to rise, as Cuomo has stated that he will not resign. Women's groups have lambasted his decision to hire Debra S. Katz as one of his lawyers, considering Katz represented Christine Blasey Ford in her accusations of sexual assault by then-Supreme Court Justice nominee Brett Kavanaugh. Cuomo has also employed the help of lawyer Elkan Abramowitz, who previously defended Harvey Wein-

stein in his own sexual harassment case.

Kathy Hochul, New York's lieutenant governor since 2015, would ultimately take Cuomo's place, and become the first female governor in state's history if he resigns or is removed from office. Cuomo chose Hochul as his running mate in 2014 and the ticket since won two statewide elections. If she were to take on New York's governorship, Hochul has said one of her biggest focuses would be initiating citizens through vaccination programs.

At North High, thoughts on the matters seem to be divided. “Cuomo's sexual harassment allegations made me feel concerned, but not surprised,” said freshman Rachel Sutin. “In New York, Cuomo has been put on a pedestal as this model of COVID response, so seeing that he has severely misconstructed nursing home deaths made me feel betrayed.” She echoes the opinions of many New Yorkers who had once praised the governor's actions in March.

Cuomo's controversies may cost him his reelection in 2022—he declared his intention to run in 2020, and he has reaffirmed his commitment to his candidacy, even after the past few months' revelations. However, several of his financial backers are already looking to pull out, and, given preliminary polling data, this maybe the year that another ascendant politician unseats him.

## Field Trips in an All Virtual World

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turn to in-person conferences next year.

The debate team is now competing in virtual tournaments instead of in-person tournaments like in the past. These tournaments take place over Tabroom. The debate team has done a few tournaments, however their lack of live presence is why club adviser Ms. Pfrogner “feels they are missing out on the professionalism of an in-person debate.”

Students are unable to greet their opponents and get the authentic sense of what debate tournaments have been like in the past. There have been occasions during tournaments where students have had to repeat their speeches due to their poor connection. The judges have been understanding and ask the debaters to redo parts of their arguments that have gotten cut out from this lack of connection, allowing the opportunity to be judged justly despite the difficulties.

At in-person debates, partners have been allowed to sit near each other and communicate while debating. However, they cannot communicate with their teammates on Tabroom because their opponents will be able to listen.

Many debaters have been facetimeing and texting to communicate with their teammates. Ms. Pfrogner explains

that “visiting different buildings for the tournaments is an experience in itself that is being missed.” The debate team is working hard to maintain their high rankings, even with all the limitations and impediments they are facing.

DECA has virtually participated in both regional and state conferences since the start of the year. They too have been greatly missing out on many of the typical aspects of DECA conferences. Yet DECA advisor Mr. Marchese positively reports “virtual competitions are less expensive, since there are no travel and hotel expenses.”

Students additionally do not have to miss school as they did in the past. Even with these advantages, “the entire ‘ethos’ of the experience is different,” said Mr. Marchese. Students are unable to bond like they used to or make friends from the conferences.

“Virtual trips are poor substitutes for the actual travel and competition experiences students would normally engage in,” said Mr. Marchese.

It is no doubt that clubs have been faced with unfortunate circumstances due to virtual tournaments and conferences — yet students have worked hard through technical mishaps and mixed feelings. These clubs are looking at the bright side and are trying to make the best out of their virtual field trips.

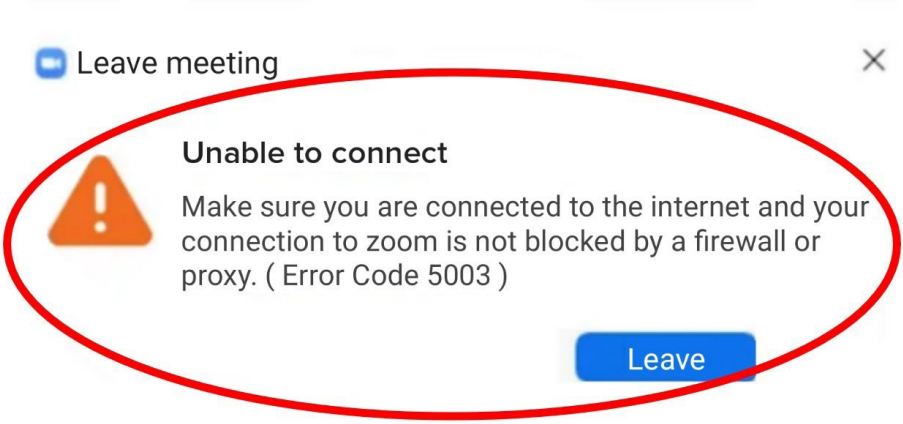


Staff Editorial:

# The Value of At- Home Learning

I t’s been a year since the emerging pandemic pushed our school away from in-class learning, and while students have spent hours discussing our opinions on remote and hybrid learning, we’ve rarely asked our teachers how they feel about it. In trying to maintain a sense of

Though there is no real data as to if students are truly more productive at home or in person, Mr. Lawson prefers “seeing and working with students and colleagues directly... [as] it is nice having the social connection that happens when we are all in class and the building together.”



Since the start of remote learning, students and teachers have been meeting through the Zoom videoconference platform: a situation that has many wishing they could return to in-person class. Photo: Maya Slobin

normalcy, teachers at North High have been tasked with facilitating at-home and in-person learning simultaneously. Similar to the varying ways that students have adapted to the situation, teachers have also found new methods of addressing and coping with this year’s added stress.

Like most teachers, Mr. Ragot, who teaches AP World History and AP European History, lectures from school each day, regardless of the hybrid schedule that students follow. When asked about how the learning experience differs between being at-home and in-person, Mr. Ragot noticed some positives for remote learning in that “it is easier to not be distracted by other students and there is less acting out.” However, he believes that students perform better in person and that major issues with remote instruction include, but are not limited to “the potential lack of engagement, the always staring at a screen, the awful sound of Zoom or Meet... the lag in communication, and the need for repetition of most things said by people.” But, of course, the negatives of at-home learning can be adjusted, as Mr. Ragot suggests that “students should go to their learning place - whether a desk or table - something that sets the space apart from living/relaxing” as well as maintaining a better routine regardless of home settings.

Similar to Mr. Ragot, Mr. Lawson, who teaches physics, utilizes synchronous learning from the school for his students, despite their setting. Mr. Lawson also notices the key advantages for students at home, like not having to worry about transportation, as well as “access to their own food and restroom.”

While most teachers grapple with the challenges of engaging at-home students while in school, English teacher Mr. Hahn is one of the few teachers who can empathize with the struggles of working remotely. Mr. Hahn has been teaching remotely for the duration of this school year, but he is no stranger to the task, as he has “taught and attended online writing workshops, university courses, and other writing and literature courses.”

While Hahn’s perspective contrasts that of most other teachers, as he “[notices] some things about remote instruction that [he finds] more effective than in-person instruction,” the staff of North High seems to agree that “there are also parts of in-person learning that cannot be replicated.”

Initially, many teachers, like Mr. Hahn, were “extremely apprehensive about being able to engage high school students through remote instruction,” but most have followed a path of continuous improvement due to the joint effort of students and teachers. While Mr. Hahn credits his classroom engagement to “the eagerness and attentiveness of each of [his] students,” the student body is both aware and appreciative of the extra efforts and measures teachers are taking to ensure the enjoyment of learning.

Hybrid learning inevitably comes with frustrations and technical difficulties, but the teachers at North High have demonstrated their determination in confronting every challenge with a sense of dedication and compassion for their students. Still, despite these efforts, virtual learning will never be as effective as in-person instruction, and we await the day that we

## GUIDE POST • STAFF 2020-21

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Guide Post strives to inform and entertain the student body, provoke conversations and debates, and provide insight on student and community life, while preserving and promoting journalistic integrity.

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# STRIKING SYRIA

LEILA HAWA '23  
STAFF WRITER

President Joe Biden recently ordered airstrikes on Syria. The Pentagon claims they were done by Iranian-backed militias, in response to the rocket attacks that targeted U.S. military bases in Iraq. When asked about his intended message of the airstrikes, Biden's only comment was that "you can't act with impunity [and must] be careful." After the airstrikes, the administration officials defensively announced that their actions were not only legal but appropriate, which was then followed by diverging opinions.

Biden is the third president to arrange these strikes against Syria at such a rapid pace. In 2017 and again in 2019 former President Donald Trump ordered airstrikes, and President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris questioned the morality and necessity of doing so. It is on record that Biden and Harris were not supportive of this decision made by Trump. The administration is being accused of hypocrisy since they were questioning the legal basis of Trump's decision and then repeated these actions themselves.

After only 36 days of his presidency, Biden chose to conduct a lethal airstrike on a base in Syria against rebels who attacked the U.S. forces. Multiple lives were lost by U.S. forces, causing Biden to send a message that the U.S. is powerful and unafraid to retaliate if need be. In addition, especially without a war

this lethal decision to be made in such a haste," said sophomore Giselle Makani.

Members of Congress such as Tim Kaine, Chris Murphy, Ro Khanna, as well as others, have openly criticized the airstrikes, insisting that Congress should have been briefed on the situation. They hadn't authorized the airstrike beforehand and are pushing that such authorization, along with legal justification, should be required prior to an attack. I think that Biden shouldn't have completely disregarded Congressional approval that should have been made in advance to the launching of the airstrikes.

While there may be numerous reasons as to why the United States should have acted differently, there are also reasons that claim that the choice made was a decision of virtue. For instance, a U.S. civilian contractor was killed and a U.S. service member was wounded by a Syrian rocket attack. Biden wanted to retaliate, so he sent airstrikes. The purpose of the attack was to send a message as retribution to Syria for their actions and did not intend on escalating the dispute. U.S. officials carefully calculated where to drop the bombs in order to not cause any unreasonable significant damage. These officials reported that the strikes were relatively small, just like they had planned, which is not entirely true. Various pictures and news sources such as The New York Times proved that these attacks killed people, injured people and destroyed homes, which equates to sig-



*In retaliation to the Syrian attack on American bases, President Biden ordered airstrikes on an alleged Iranian-backed militia base in the country on Feb. 25. Source: The Guardian.*

being declared, the legal authority and morals of this action are being put into question. Syria and its allies are claiming that the airstrikes caused a death toll of around 20 people. Innocent Syrians were killed, and there are some people in the United States who do not support this decision made by Biden. "The bombing was unnecessary," said sophomore Noa Enayatian. Instead of coming up with another plan where no one would need to lose their lives, Biden impulsively allowed for a violent strike on many innocent people. There were no immediate threats for Biden to respond to, which classifies these airstrikes as a retaliating strike. "[If] there had been any imminent threat, it would be understandable for Biden to strike Syria so instantaneously, but there was no rush for

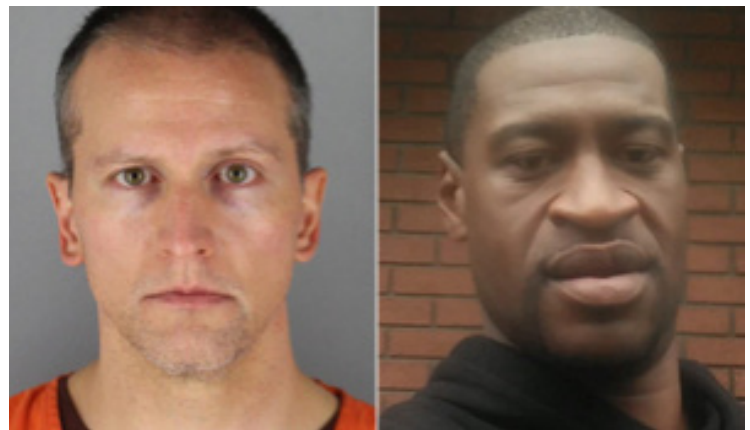
nificant damage. Seven bombs were released on buildings in an unofficial crossing at the Syria-Iraq border, which is a common smuggling route. This makes it seem as though Biden formulated this decision carefully and made his intended point. Although that may be the case, I still think that it was done too quickly and Biden should have at least run the attack by the members of Congress.

Syria is currently still recovering from the damaging attack and has responded by not initiating any further conflicts. The United States is interested to engage in a "meaningful diplomacy," claimed a Biden administration official. Hopefully, this will bring an end to this series of attacks between the U.S. and Syria and conclude the conflict once and for all.

## Smo LENS on

KATHERINE SMOLENS '21  
COLUMNIST

On Monday, March 8, eyes around the world turned to Minneapolis, as the trial of ex-Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin began. Chauvin is currently charged with second-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter for the killing of George Floyd in south Minneapolis on May 25. A third-degree murder count which was under review has now been reinstated as well. While it is uncommon for police killings to result in trials,



*George Floyd's death on May 25, 2020 at the hands of Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin has since lead to widespread protest and calls for social change in recent months. Source: CNN*

this trial is a reflection of the recent shift in attitudes on racism and police brutality which was sparked by the increased public awareness and action taken after the tragic and violent death of Mr. Floyd.

The city itself, whose neighborhoods still retain signs of last year's looting and arson, is preparing for potential unrest over the case; government buildings now stand surrounded by concrete barriers, tall fences, and national guard soldiers. There are also fears that white supremacists belonging to groups like those that stormed the Capitol this past January might turn to Minneapolis.

Many have referred to the trial as the "George Floyd Trial," a seemingly harmless title, as the trial does revolve around the events surrounding Floyd's death. This language, however, has been strongly opposed by many activists and organizations. Ben Crump, the attorney representing the Floyd family, explained the importance of the distinction, tweeting that the phrase "George Floyd Trial" questions Floyd's character, as Chauvin is the one on trial. "Don't call this the George Floyd trial. George Floyd wasn't even charged. He was lynched on the street. This is the Derek Chauvin trial and we are demanding justice for George," tweeted the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in regards to the trial.

This trial will be the fourth time in Minnesota history that an officer is put on trial for the murder of a civilian on the job, but it will be the first in which a white officer is charged for the murder of a black civilian. This just shows that "there's more than Derek Chauvin on trial here. The entire public — in fact, a great deal of the world — is wanting to know if the justice system can produce justice," remarked attorney A.L. Brown. Indeed, the world is watching; dramatic and painful video footage of Floyd pleading for his life for the nine minutes that Chauvin knelt on his neck contributed largely to the widespread anguish of taking action

## The George Floyd Trials

against the systematic killing of Black Americans by the police this past year.

The age of technology can lead to greater accountability for crimes like these, which have historically received little justice. However, more cameras also mean that the American public has formed an opinion. The death of George Floyd ignited countless protests in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, violent opposition, several tributes, and a major questioning of law enforcement; it would be questionable if someone was unfamiliar with George Floyd's death and the sub-

sequent protests against police brutality and public outcry to end systemic racism. The public's familiarity with Floyd's death also makes it very difficult to determine an impartial jury. Last year, a questionnaire was sent out to begin looking for potential jury candidates, consisting of questions on the individual's opinion on Black Lives Matter, familiarity with Floyd's death and the video footage, and if they had attended protests. It also included an open-ended essay question with the prompt: "tell us everything you know about the death of Floyd." So what constitutes impartiality? If someone has attended BLM protests, does that make them partial, unfit to serve as a juror? It's a slippery slope, hence the drawing out of the process of selecting jurors. Many have expressed the difficulty of the situation and that "there have been few incidents in our state that have had as much impact on the community. It's hard to imagine finding a juror who has enough of a blank slate to really give both sides a fair hearing," said a former top prosecutor in St. Paul, Susan Gaertner. However, five days into the trial the Minneapolis City Council agreed to pay \$27 million to George Floyd's family as a civil settlement. The family was "very grateful to Mayor Frey and the City Council for not just saying you care about George Floyd, but showing that you care about George Floyd." Although this settlement can never amount to the unlawful death of George Floyd, it does show to "the world that Black lives matter," said Crump.

**All cartoons on pages 8 through 9 are drawn by Hannah Fishman.**



# BEHIND THE SCREENS OF FASHION SHOW

ALEXA NISSIM '22  
STAFF WRITER

Like most events this year, North High's annual Fashion Show will be occurring remotely. Not only are try-outs and practices remote, but so is the final show. Fashion Show requires a great amount of time and funding to produce a two-night performance. Despite its name, Fashion Show does not solely showcase the latest fashion trends. There are intricate dance scenes that the emcees prepare and choreograph. This year, five seniors will conduct these dances: Natalie Ashirzadeh, Zoe Gilad, Emily Greiff, Eden Harel, and Alina Lyakhov. All five of these girls are working tirelessly to construct the dances for this year's event.

The emcees seem to be more grateful than disappointed about the show being virtual. "[I am] really happy we can continue the tradition of Fashion Show in some form. This year's Fashion Show will especially highlight the importance of adaptability and teamwork," shared senior Zoe Gilad. The performers have to work harder to overcome the challenges that they are facing. Even though the final performance will not be the same as in past years, the time and effort put into the show is worth it, particularly for the seniors, who hope to finish their last year in high school in the most normal way possible. Fashion Show has always been known for bringing the community together and showcas-

ing school spirit. "[I feel] really grateful for the opportunity to be an emcee... [There is] an amazing cast that is willing to put in the work to make this show a success," said senior Emily Greiff.

Another great component of Fashion Show is the opportunity it creates for students in all grades with similar inter-

ing an entire production through videos and Zoom meetings, there is hope for a great show among the casts and emcees.

One of the coordinators of the show for the past several years is Mr. Henriquez. "The main priority is to make sure that everyone is safe during this pandemic, following protocols, and trying to

sense of normalcy and smiles to our students and community," Henriquez added. Ultimately, the emcees along with the rest of the performers want to pursue what they truly enjoy, regardless of whether it is in-person or through a screen. "[The emcees are] working hard to bring everyone a great show in one way or another," says junior Isabella Rastegar, who will be participating in Fashion Show for her third time this year. Although it will occur on Zoom, this year's outcome will not be much different than the rest.

Some might argue that it's not worth using students' time preparing for an event that is completely remote. Yet an event like Fashion Show allows for student participants and emcees to express their passion for dancing in front of a crowd or not. Every year, the cast puts on an incredible show, and the show's remote format should not undermine the pure talent that is expressed.

With other school events being canceled, it seems right to invest in something that will bring everyone together and provide the students with a sense of normalcy in this unprecedented time. The senior students, in particular, will not have many other chances to participate in school events, with senior prom and even graduation still in question. Fashion Show has always been a uniting and fun event for all students. Luckily, everyone appears to be overcoming the challenges claimed by virtual coordination, and the students are looking forward to the final show.



*Students social-distanced and wore masks at one of their in-person Fashion Show rehearsals. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, rehearsals took place at students' houses rather than in North High. Source: Kayla Kavakeb*

ests to meet. Typically, Fashion Show practices are in person, but this year some practices are in person while others are virtual, similar to the hybrid style during the school day. "The emcees are hoping to have [more] practices in person, abiding by COVID-19 guidelines as well," junior Kayla Kavakeb informs. Regardless of the challenge of coordinat-

have fun while preparing for the performance," Henriquez commented. Some individuals did not even think Fashion Show could occur this year, yet as long as the cast continues to follow regulations and safety precautions, the show will go on. "[The entire cast has been] working hard to try and make the best of this situation and try to bring back a

# Driving Into a Cleaner Future

SOPHIE FRENKEL '23  
STAFF WRITER

As electric cars have become more technologically advanced and popular, people have begun to ask themselves if fully electric vehicles are safe, practical, and effective. This new type of car has not existed long enough for professionals to have sufficient experience to answer these questions. The lack of knowledge surrounding these cars forces us as consumers to determine the answer for ourselves.

There are a few safety concerns that come with electric vehicles, the most glaring one being the risk of an electric fire while charging. Despite this, there are many instances where it would be much safer to drive an electric vehicle rather than a gasoline-powered one. The batteries used to power electric cars have a much lower risk of causing fire explosions than gasoline does in conventional vehicles. As a result of this, it is much more likely for a conventional car's engine to catch fire than it is for an electric car's battery.

In some cases, however, it would be more convenient to drive a conventional vehicle rather than an electric vehicle. If there is an emergency in which a gasoline-powered car has run out of gas, it would not be difficult for the driver to locate a nearby gas station to refill the car's tank. Meanwhile, if a driver of an all-electric vehicle was far from their final destination with a low battery charge, locating a charging station would be much more difficult. The number of electric car public charging stations is currently 22,000 in the United States, but this number is still significantly lower than the

168,000 gas stations within the country.

Apart from safety comparisons between gasoline and electric cars, other factors set the two types of vehicles apart, such as the price range. Although an electric vehicle may seem more ex-

tronic car would save the average American approximately \$2,460 per year.

Additionally, the electric car's effect on the environment is a huge bonus. Electric cars do not produce exhaust, and their batteries are emission-free, meaning



*Electric cars: Mach-e and Tesla are two competing electric cars. They are a part of a major movement to have a cleaner future, while also developing technology. Source: Insideevs*

pensive, in the long run, the cost evens out due to the lack of spending on refueling. The average American drives 15,000 miles per year and spends \$250 on gasoline monthly, whereas charging an electric car to drive the same 15,000 miles would only add \$45 to their electric bill. This means that driving an elec-

tric car emits no waste products that pollute the environment or disrupt the climate. Gasoline-powered cars are a major pollution cause, and, in 2013 alone, they contributed to more than half of the carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides.

Because of the advantages, many people feel extremely comfortable driving

an electric car. Senior Matthew Bloom is "glad to see people taking steps towards using less gas and protecting the environment." Driving an electric vehicle comes with other perks, like "having the ability to drive in the [the High Occupancy Vehicle lane]," said Mr. Appell. [He's] happy the government incentivizes having an electric car" and pointed out how "road trips take longer because of having to stop and charge."

Mrs. York supports electric cars, but sees that they're not a perfect solution. "Simply making electric cars without looking at the environmental costs of mining the metals needed for the batteries is not beneficial," said Mrs. York. "The move is a good start for improving our environmental impact, as long as we are conscious of our choices."

Luckily, some U.S. states are passing laws and setting goals for a transition to electric vehicles. For instance, New Jersey produced a plan in Jan. 2020 that aims to have 330,000 cars on its roads by 2025 and for 85% of its cars sold in 2040 to be electric as well. Adding on, in 2014, the 11-Point Plan, which provided methods each state can use to contribute to the ultimate goal of putting 3.3 million zero-emission vehicles on U.S. roads by 2025, was agreed upon by California, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

With the technological improvements that have been made on electric cars and their increase in popularity, I believe that a transition to a world with primarily electric vehicles would tremendously benefit our technologically advancing society, instead of hurt it.



# THE PUSH FOR EQUALITY

## Biden's Acceptance Act

**ZOE PAISNER '24**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The new Equality Act, H.R.5, was recently passed by the United States House of Representatives under the Biden Administration. This bill was first passed by the House of Representatives in May of 2019 but was then not acted upon by the U.S. Senate, which, at the time, was led by the Republican Party. A few weeks ago, the Equality Act was again passed by the House of Representatives and subsequently reintroduced to the US Senate that now is made up by a majority of Democrats.

This Act contains the first federal law that promises to protect the LGBTQ community from discrimination. Thankfully, Biden supported the Act. I agree with the passing of this Act and believe that it is long overdue. Unfortunately, people have been facing discrimination for their gender identity and sexual orientation for so long, and it is time that equality is promoted.

Many people discriminate against members of the LGBTQ community because doing so gives them a way to maintain power. Discrimination has come in the forms of being restricted from health care insurance, being treated differently in restaurants, and more. There is no reason that people should be looked at as "different" for being a part of the LGBTQ community, and it is about time that oth-

ers understand that. For people in the LGBTQ community, there is often a fear that takes over them knowing that they will have to come out to their friends and family. Freshman Lizzie Paisner also agrees with the passing of the Equality Act. "It is unfair to be discriminated against for being who you are," said Paisner.

A study done by the NORC (National Opinion Research Center) showed that many LGBTQ members continued to face discrimination in their workplace, public atmosphere, and personal lives. As a result of this discrimination, many of these people began to experience financial, mental, and physical consequences.

Although I hope that everyone will accept the Act and move forward with this change, I know that will not realistically be the case. Some people simply don't accept LGBTQ members. I see this as a human rights issue, not a social one. Looking back on what has happened just this past year — dangerous BLM protests and rioting at the US Capitol — I know that certain groups are not afraid to violently protest for anything.

I think it may take a little while for the impact of this newly passed act to be felt as there are many ignorant people in the U.S. A group who does not support the LGBTQ community and sees these changes and protections occurring may feel anger towards the government that causes them to protest. Not believing in protection for those of the LGBTQ community

comes down to a human decency issue.

Kids today often grow up without knowing about the hard history that LGBTQ members have faced. The Equality Act will be educational to these younger people and generations. Hopefully, younger people will view the Equality Act as a great thing, making the future of America

even more accepting to LGBTQ members.

"LGBTQ members should have equality because we are all human [beings] and should support one another," said freshman Chloe Hedvat. Passing this Act is a huge step in granting equality and ending discrimination and I do believe that over time being a part of the LGBTQ community

will become more normalized. It may take a while to see a change in America and change in certain groups but, in a couple of decades, LGBTQ members will see a change in how they

are treated due to the Equality Act.

There are and will always be religious entities in the world that are homophobic and against the LGBTQ community. Some religious entities see gender identity and sexual orientation as a choice and do not believe in one's right to make that choice. However, I do not believe

that this act is unfair to their beliefs.

The Equality Act is a modernized version of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as it extends protection for LGBTQ members to ensure that they are treated fairly. Religious values is never an excuse to treat another human being as "lesser than", and this treatment should not be excused by the government.

Although certain religious groups may not support the LGBTQ community, that does not mean that the LGBTQ community does not deserve fair treatment and equality after years of discrimination.



## Encouraging Equity

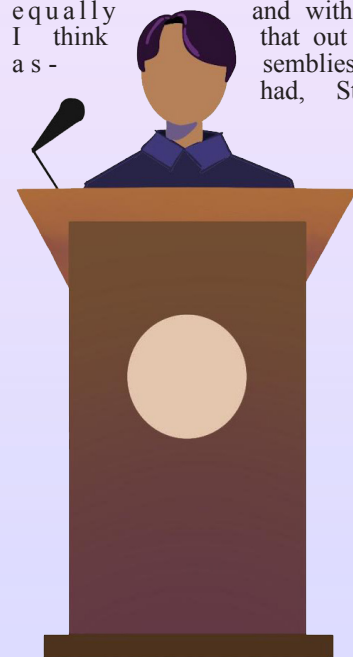
**KATIE NG '24**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Over the course of this school year, North High has been lucky enough to be visited by various speakers to educate students and faculty on important topics like racism, relationships, and major historical events. All these assemblies have had one common theme: equality. Due to the current circumstances and safety precautions, North High has resorted to virtual assemblies on YouTube Live or Zoom, instead of the auditorium. While these methods are a safer alternative than in-person presentations, they aren't always the most effective in getting important messages across to our school community.

Sitting and listening to someone simply give a lecture isn't the best way to teach students about the importance of equality. All lectures, especially virtual ones, can typically be considered boring. When watching almost anything on an electronic device, various factors including other open tabs, devices, or family members can easily cause one's attention to drift away from the speaker. This issue is not only limited to school-wide lectures but includes average day-to-day online classes. From the moment the lecture begins, there should be something attention-grabbing, whether it be verbal or visual,

to hook the audience. Either way, the best way to learn about equality is having a hands-on approach when discussing the topic, like Sami Steigmann's story or the Structural Racism presentation.

As many of us probably remember, Sami Steigmann, a Holocaust survivor spoke to our school this past fall, about the Holocaust. He emphasized the importance of treating people equally and with kindness. I think that out of all the assemblies we've had, Steigmann's



was the most effective in teaching this valuable lesson. He spoke not only about the Holocaust, but his first-hand experience during that time, making his speech that much more unique and captivating. Even if none of us could fully relate to his story, the message he relayed of treating everyone with kindness had the ability to apply to everyone's life. "I think that only the speakers who speak from personal experience of large events really have impacts, like Sammi or college speakers," said freshman Nicole Yeroushalmi.

Another presentation I believe was effective is the one that our school had on structural racism. This presentation stood out because of its use of graphics and slides. Additionally, many students were able to relate to the topic of racism, making it more interesting to listen to. "I found the structural racism presentation to be attention-grabbing... the graphics demonstrated instances of structural racism that I was able to understand and somewhat relate to", explains freshman Angie Tso. Not only was the presentation interesting and relatable, but it was also surprising to learn about how structural racism was common in suburban areas that are just like Great Neck. By talking about racism, something that many people have experienced, there is a higher chance of people listening to what you have to say.

Besides having school speak-

ers speaking about equality, the school has done a great job teaching students to always be kind and treat one another with respect. In addition, Dr. Holtzman announces and sends emails regarding important dates such as Black History Month, International Women's Day, etc., and North High students are always reminded to think carefully about their actions. Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) and many other school clubs welcome people who feel like they aren't treated the way they should be.

No matter how many school speakers come or how many events North High holds to teach important lessons about equality, inequality will always be present in every community. But even that being true, it is amazing to watch people learn new things about kindness. I believe that our school has done a great job in informing us about the unfairness present in not only our community but the world. From making people feel more included by creating new clubs, outlets, and opportunities for students to reach out and expand their social bubble and understanding of the world around us, to inviting inspiring and knowledgeable speakers to our school, we as students have had ample amounts of opportunity to learn about the true message behind equality. I'm looking forward to seeing what new school speakers we will have and what they have in store for us.



# THE PUSH FOR EQUALITY

## Rebranding ~~Mr.~~ Potato Head

**SALOME ASSARAF '23**  
STAFF WRITER

Mr. Potato Head, a well-known children's toy and one of the main characters in a Pixar animation, Toy Story, is no longer considered a "Mr." Recently, Hasbro, the company which owns this toy, has decided to drop the mister and make the toy gender-neutral. This announcement created confusion and chaos among customers which was later clarified when Hasbro tweeted that the original Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head will still be sold in stores.

The change in the brand's toy created uncertainty on numerous social media platforms. People began to question if Barbie, another iconic children's toy, was going to change her name next. Many now predict that "this new change [may] misteach children, and confuse them more about gender issues," said sophomore Dorin Beladav. Although the change in the brand name may seem subtle on the surface, in reality, it shows that businesses feel the need to change certain aspects of their products in order to stay relevant in the 21st century. As a result, Mr. Potato Head, a toy that has been around for 70 years is now being altered.

In the United States, 52 percent of people ages 50 and up said they disapprove of the name change, while 20 percent approved. Even among younger generations, who tend to be more accepting of gender fluidity, had an overall negative opinion towards this alteration.

Forty-five percent of millennials, people between 23 and 37 years old, disagreed with the change, compared to the 30 percent who said they supported the move.

When I first found out about

this change I was shocked. I would have never thought that such a well-known company would need to change a toy's entire brand, just to "appease" our new societal beliefs.

Although this change can be seen as a positive thing, which allows kids to relate themselves to the toys they are playing with, I believe that it is unnecessary to modify a toy's gender and name. Individuals are still able to buy the Potato Heads they want by choosing their own combination. In my opinion, small as rebranding should not be seen as a way to make others feel more comfortable.

In addition to that, many people wonder what other changes are in store for the future of children's toys. Whether it is

staple toy brands such as Bratz Dolls or Barbie who may soon redirect their marketing to adhere to society's needs. Will gender no longer be placed in toys, movies, and books? Will wanting a toy to be a certain gender be seen as wrongful behavior?

People today are taking every detail of any product too seriously when from the start it is doubtful that any customer would claim that the "Mr." in the name Potato Head indicates inequality. Due to social media and other platforms, it is easy to spread awareness on important issues, but it is also easier to "cancel" or "ban" a brand or a person, along with

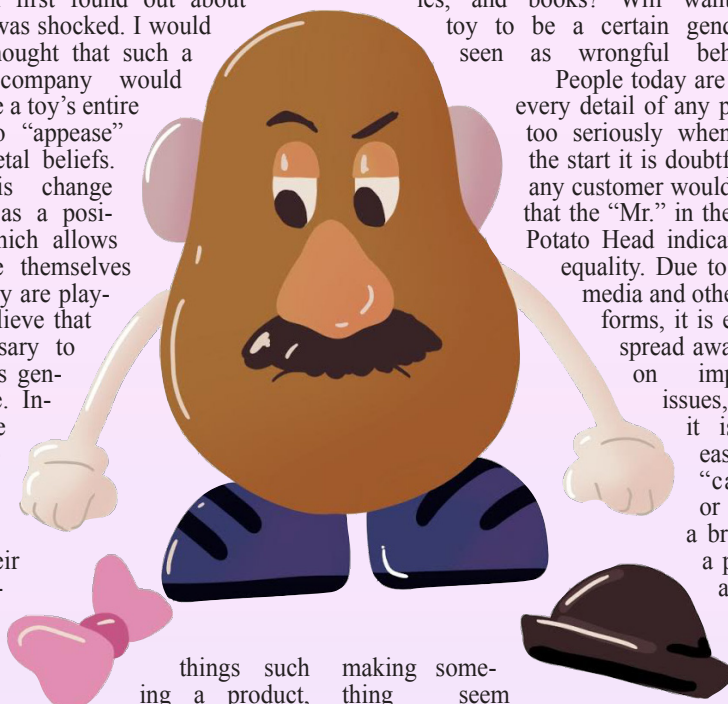
making something seem more consequential than it really is. As a result "people are taking gender issues and blowing them out of proportion by applying them to children's toys, especially one that has been such a promi-

nent character, like Mr. Potato Head," said sophomore Sasha Rubin. A toy as simple as the Mr. Potato Head is purely for children's amusement, no matter if it's a male or a female. However, by now claiming that a gender-neutral Potato Head is being released, it causes what was once a toy to turn into something more than it needs to be.

Gender is a part of everyone's life, and toy brands have the right to choose how they are displayed in their products. "There should be a Mr. Potato Head, Mrs. Potato Head, a non-binary Potato Head, and anything else [people] wants to choose from," said art teacher Mrs. Hasse. However, from my standpoint, when thinking about children who identify as gender-neutral, I do not believe that changing the product will make them feel more included. This is because children are still able to choose how they want to dress their Potato Heads by using the accessories they please.

LGBTQ activists have far more pressing concerns than just removing the "Mr." from the name Potato Head. People are so focused on finding minor inconveniences, rather than concerning themselves on the more significant issues that are transpiring.

This is causing brands to feel pressured into compiling with people's demands and views even though it has nothing to do with the actual toy itself. The next time you think about bringing down a company because of a minor problem, stop and think about actual global issues that should be addressed.



# Equality in the Classroom

**ANGIE TSO '24**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Our society has undergone significant change in the wake of various movements, such as Black Lives Matter (BLM), women's rights, and LGBTQ+ equality. Despite these movements focusing on varying topics such as race and gender, they all have a common underlying theme of equality: an individual's sense of treating every human equally and without discrimination. Generally speaking, the value of equality is bound to have significant effects on everyone. More specifically, it is valuable to students who are still trying to find their place in society and learn how they can create an impact. It is a teacher's duty to educate students and implement important morals such as integrity and equality towards other members of society.

Teachers need to discuss the importance of equality found through current events to help students become more aware of the issues that could potentially affect them in the future. Movements like BLM and LGBTQ+ equality are events that are either impacting students directly or indirectly. The significance of these movements comes from the fact that they are shaping our world and our future through their influence on people's opinions, perspectives, and more. Unlike many adults, most young students

tend to be more accepting of newer values that may have been unwelcomed in the past. Thus, if students are educated now, they can grow up to make responsible and fair choices to incite change, which may have been impossible before.

Social justice discussions should not be limited to clubs and should be held more openly in our community. As important messages involving the acceptance of our differences reach more people, our community will become more educated as a whole. A great way to spread these ideals is through the school's curriculum and discussions in the classroom, a place where children can become more aware of the world around them and learn to be accepting. Granted, everyone has their own opinions which can shape others' judgments as well. Influential figures such as teachers often demonstrate their own opinions in conversations, even if it's unintentional. This can cause students to feel uncomfortable if they disagree with the teacher on topics relating to racism and inequality. Nonetheless, discussions of such topics and treating others equally must be brought up in conversations. They are topics that everyone is bound to face and experience, so learning how to recognize and deal with those situations will help prepare students with a commendable life skill.

An example of a current controversial topic throughout social media and

society is one's preferred pronouns. As people are learning about themselves in a new light, they are starting to question the pronouns with which they identify. I think it's amazing to see that so many people support this change, although there may be some people who don't completely understand the idea of pronouns yet. "If someone is comfortable with [discussing their pronouns], then it is important to know, [but] if they aren't comfortable with it you shouldn't force them to tell you," said freshman Maurice Zalta. Many teachers have

been showing their support by being open about their students' pronouns. Before the school year began, many teachers asked their students which pronouns they prefer through questionnaires on Google Forms or Google Classroom. Additionally, a handful of teachers and students have been putting their pronouns in their names on Zoom. These actions are taken within the classroom to ensure a safe space and a place where everyone feels comfortable, regardless of their differences.

I think that all students should be getting educated on pronouns because, as society is changing, it is important for us to grow and adapt accordingly. Although it should not be mandatory for everyone

to do so, students and teachers should at least create an environment where anyone and everyone can safely share their pronouns without any judgment from others if they want to. "I think that all students should be comfortable with their true identities at school and in our community, but this can only be possible if people can become more educated," said freshman Katie Ng.

We all want to live in a world where people can be who they are without the fear of what others might say or do. However, that cannot be our reality until everyone starts putting effort into changing unjust traditional ideas that continue to be practiced today. Although inequality can never be completely eliminated, we should still make an active effort to combat it. As a community, we should challenge inequality using a resource we are fortunate enough to have: knowledge.





# TEACHER SPOTLIGHT: MR. APPELL

AVISHAI AGHELIAN '23  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Mr. Appell has been teaching at North High for 20 years. He has taught mostly biology and chemistry, but he is leaving an impact on many students' lives throughout the variety of these subjects. Though he is well-known amongst the student body, many do not have insight on Mr. Appell's life outside of the classroom. When he has free time, Mr. Appell enjoys playing the guitar, spending time with his family, and listening to Pearl Jam (or any other music).



Mr. Appell and his wife visit their three children at Camp Blue Ridge during the summers. Photo: Mr. Appell

## Inspiration for going into teaching:

Mr. Appell was inspired to go into teaching because of his high school biology class. He helped some people in his class and loved the feedback he got from them. He also admired some of his teachers. Mr. Appell claims that in the back of his head, he always wanted to be a teacher, but it

wasn't something he ever took seriously.

## Passions:

"I like teaching and talking about science, but it definitely isn't my passion. I have other passions," Mr. Appell said. His real passion is his family, and he enjoys spending time with them. He also credits music to be another one of his passions, as "listening to and playing music (guitar) plays a huge role in [his] life."

## Working at North High:

Mr. Appell started teaching at North High 20 years ago. "The world was a very different world than that

September of 2001 day," he said. He always wanted to teach at Great Neck, as he grew up in Hewlett, which is socially similar to Great Neck. "I always feel like the students are like my peers in some ways because I am surrounded by people who are like the kids I grew up with," he said. Fortunately, he did great on the interview and demo lesson, and he got hired. Bernie Kaplan was the principal at this time, and Mr. Appell said that "Bernie is very much the reason why Great Neck North is as great as it is today." For Mr. Kaplan, it was more about if the

teacher was the right fit for the school, rather than about his experience or credentials. "This is rare; a lot of schools want the most seasoned teacher, but Bernie Kaplan wanted the best people, and not that I think I'm the best person, but I definitely fit into Great Neck in a very good way," said Mr. Appell. "I wanted to teach at Great Neck. It was the one school I always wanted to teach at ... Luckily there was a job opening, luckily I killed my interview, luckily I did my demo lesson well, and luckily Bernie Kaplan saw something in me he liked and made sure that they hired me," he went on to say.

## Favorite class to teach:

Mr. Appell's favorite class to teach is AP Chemistry, as he said it "includes the hardest content, yet it is the easiest class to teach in the school due to the fact that all the students (except for two this year) are brilliant with a desire to learn, so every kid comes into class like

yearning for learning. As a teacher, there is nothing better than when kids want to learn." Additionally, he credits his enjoyment to the students he teaches in AP Chemistry. "The salutatorian, the valedictorian, and Barrett are all in my class," Mr. Appell said. "It's a special place!"

## Facing challenges:

"The only real challenge was in the beginning of my teaching career. I wanted the kids to like me. I cared about that too much. When that's the priority, you're focused on the wrong things." However, Mr. Appell believes that teaching at North High gave him the ability to overcome this challenge as "I learned that the key to being a good teacher is [to] be yourself, teach for most the period and have a positive attitude. I always find it important to let kids see your personality."

Ultimately, Mr. Appell is one of the teachers at North High that students never seem to forget. From his teaching style, to his humor, to his personality as a whole, Mr. Appell remains memorable.



One of Mr. Appell's hobbies and passions is music. More specifically, he loves playing the guitar, especially for his family and friends. Photo: Mr. Appell

# GNN's Own Small Businesses

SOPHIE YELLIS '21  
STAFF WRITER

Several students at North High have embraced an entrepreneurial spirit in starting their own small businesses. These businesses are great opportunities for students to express themselves and their passions, while also gaining first-hand experience.

To express my love for fashion, draw a profit, and hopefully contribute to college commitment celebrations for fellow seniors, I decided to start my own small business. I began drawing inspiration from college merchandise accounts on Instagram and was inspired to take a fashion design class at Yale University during the summer of 2018. My Instagram page, @collegebysophie, attracts college students, high school seniors, and their friends and family to purchase my merchandise. My best-selling item is my "Care Bear Design," which has a college logo and school name in the center of the crewneck and glitter stars down the sleeves. To reach out to potential customers, I direct message Instagram pages of various colleges, and my mother also advertises my business through Facebook; she posts on both her personal account and local groups like "Great Neck Mommies." Promoting my business on social media platforms like TikTok and Facebook has gained me over 100 Instagram followers within

two months of starting my business. To make my designs come to life, I go to local crafts stores to purchase needed supplies. I usually spend two to three hours on each shirt. Although my business stems from my love for fashion, I hope to study marketing in college.

Freshman Skylar Owadepah is another North High student who runs a small business through Instagram: @bakedbysky. According to her account bio, Skylar sells gourmet baked goods that are "made with love." Her business focuses on cupcakes while hosting a variety of flavors like cookies & cream and Ferrero Rocher. Skylar's inspiration for her business came from her love of baking: "I've always seriously enjoyed cooking and baking for friends and family and thought it was a good idea to start selling what I really enjoyed doing," she explained. Skylar's work

is time-intensive; even small orders can take up to two hours because of the effort that goes into the baking, cooking,

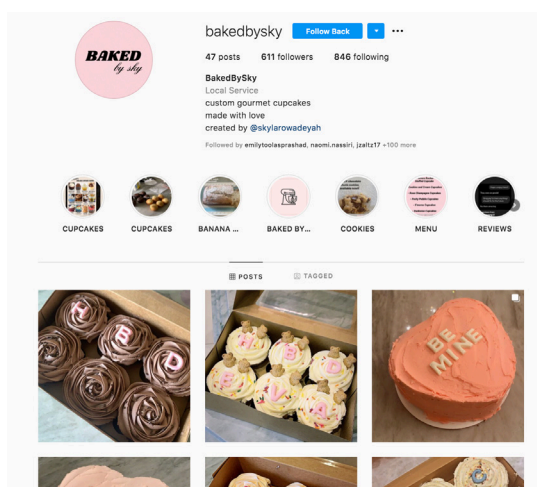
and decorating process. "Even though it takes a lot of time, I enjoy every second of it," Owadepah said. Although Skylar has several interests and is still figuring out what she wants to pursue professionally, Baked By Sky opened her eyes to a potential career in business. From running her small business, Skylar

learned the importance of independence. "It's taught me more responsibility [by] making tough decisions throughout the process," she explained. The boredom and free time brought about by the pandemic was another reason Skylar started Baked By Sky. Right now,

Skylar deems her business a success, as it amassed over 600 followers on Instagram.

North High alumna Ilana Sedaka recently opened up her small business, Rare Wear Studio. It's available through both e-commerce and in-person purchases and is located right across the street from Gino's of Great Neck. Rare Wear Studio sells trendy, high-quality masks in a variety of colors. In addition to masks, Rare Wear Studio sells art and fashion pieces hand-picked by Sedaka herself. Rare Wear Studio is extremely successful, having almost 1,000 followers on its Instagram. Sedaka's uncertainty regarding what she was going to pursue with her business degree, as well as her love for fashion and art, inspired her to create Rare Wear Studio.

"Learning more and more about business in my classes at Macaulay Honors, I often found myself reflecting on how I could use those business skills in a way I was passionate about," Sedaka said. "Ultimately, I was able to eventually do what I wanted with my business degree and tie it to something I was passionate about," she continued. Without the pandemic, Rare Wear Studio would have never existed, since it capitalized on the demand for masks. There are several factors that go into running a successful business; from marketing, website-building, designing, and financing, all of which the entrepreneurial students from North High have never ceased to put all of their efforts towards.



Skylar Owadepah, a freshman at North High, has started her own small business: a custom baking service. Owadepah publicizes Baked By Sky through her Instagram account with over 600 followers. Photo: @bakedbysky



# DECA Competes Virtually

**VICTORIA SAKHAI '23**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Just as it had an enormous impact on all aspects of life, COVID-19 has greatly affected North High's most popular club: DECA. DECA contains about 225,000 members throughout the United States, with the purpose of guiding high school and college students to become strong leaders and entrepreneurs. The club accomplishes its goal by enhancing the members' knowledge of marketing, finance, hospitality, and management.

Students who are a part of DECA have two different ways to compete: either through "written" or "role-play." Written events challenge students to make a presentation and a business manual, with months to prepare for competition. When it's time to

compete, written members have 15 minutes to explain their hypothetical business plans. Students in role-play events receive a business-related scenario that requires them to create a plan. These students have 15 minutes to prepare before presenting to a judge. With both role-play and written events, students begin studying material months before competing. North High offers weekly meetings and the opportunity

to schedule appointments with officers in order to ensure preparedness. Students start by competing at regionals, and then advance to state-level competitions, and finally to nationals. DECA has always brought students to fun places, such as Orlando, Fla. and Nashville, Tenn.. Both students and officers are highly disappointed with the elimination of this exciting travel aspect of the DECA 2020-2021 experience. However, not only have the fun trips been eliminated due to COVID-19, but the way in which

club members learn and the dynamic of the club as a whole have changed. This year, role-play students received their prompt virtually, with a two-hour allotted time slot to submit a video of their presentation. Because the students submitted their videos online, the judges were no longer able to question students after their presentation. Students have mixed feelings about these changes.

"It was much easier this year because, not only did we have two hours to prepare with our prompt, but the judges also didn't ask us on-the-spot questions," explained sophomore Chloe Ganjian. However, other students such as sophomore Kayla Hakimi, feel the opposite.

"It was complicated and stressful to turn in the videos [and] to

confirm there were no technology issues," Hakimi described.

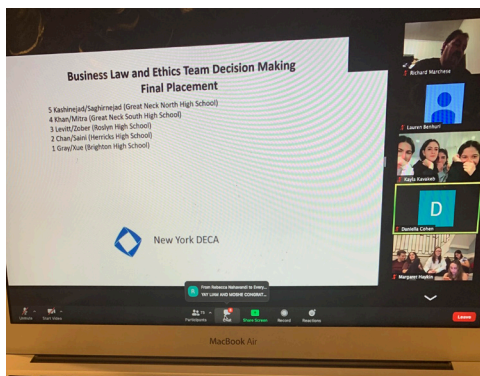
Along with the role-play submissions, traditional written submissions have also been altered. This year, written students were still given months to prepare their presentations and create their manuals. However, students prepared their presentation on Google Slides instead of an actual poster board, and had an extended window to submit a video of them presenting.

"Before, we had weekly meetings in a [actual] classroom and got to work on our projects during the meeting, [but] this year we worked more individually, and as hard as it was, the officers did an amazing job accommodating members." In addition to the alterations that were made to the submission and competition process, preparation for club members was also different. Members have faced many challenges learning the business-related material via Zoom.

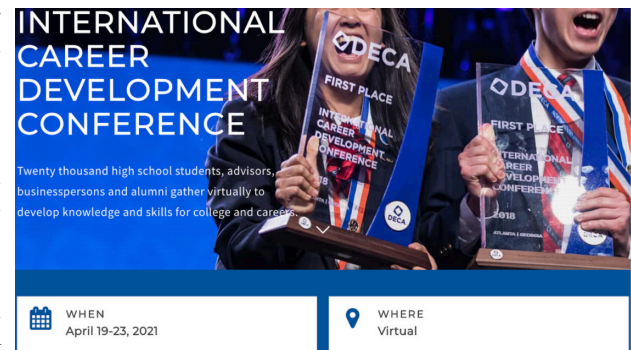
"The club used to be very interactive with students during meetings and extra help, encouraging kids to stay on track, but now it's harder to focus and understand the material," said sophomore Danielle Glucklich. In fact, the Zoom meetings have forced students to feel so detached to the point that Glucklich "was unfamiliar with many people involved in the club."

Although officers have been working extremely hard, they also have been struggling to teach the material. Many officers can't seem to connect with the members the same they would in person.

"It is definitely more difficult to teach the students through Zoom because it's challenging to engage them... and tell if they really understand what we are teaching them," explained club officer Juliette Ahdoot. Officer Michaela Damaghi feels the same way: "It can be tough to teach students since [meetings are] no longer in-person." However Damaghi also feels that "the meetings are a lot more convenient and accessible to attend." Members and officers have faced many benefits and detriments during DECA this year, but it's definitely a year that will not be forgotten.



Members of GNN DECA watched the States award ceremony this year on Zoom, a sharp contrast from the in-person event of in past years. Photo: Lauren Benhuri



DECA ICDC, known among students as being a fun trip to places all around the country, is virtual this year.

Photo: DECA.org

## FACING ZOOM FATIGUE

**RENA GEULA '24**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The outbreak of COVID-19 has brought many changes to everyone's day-to-day life. A major change which has affected most students and educators worldwide is the transition to hybrid learning. This new norm includes students alternating between attending school in-person and online every day. Joining classes virtually via Zoom has caused many students to experience "Zoom fatigue," a state of feeling drained and overworked by the heavy usage of Zoom.

It is controversial whether students feel that online learning on Zoom has impacted their academic ability. "I do not feel I learn as much on online-school days, and I do not feel the same motivation to participate the way I would in school because it is harder to feel engaged," said freshman Chloe Hedvat. Freshman Shirin Zauber has had a similar experience, feeling the detrimental effects of Zoom classes on her ability to learn and understand the material being taught in the classroom. "Over Zoom, I do not feel as obligated to pay attention and become fully immersed in the class because it is very easy to get distracted," Zauber said.

On the other hand, some students "do not think Zoom has affected [their] academic ability so much," senior Alex Geula explained. "I do feel more accustomed to Zoom over the months...it has

been a lot easier to do school," he continued. Similarly, Zauber added, "I definitely feel more adapted to Zoom; it has become a part of my routine and has started to feel less draining compared to my initial thoughts in September."

Although one may think spending a long day in school may cause students to feel lethargic, many students feel otherwise. "Ironically, I feel more drained after a Zoom day," Zauber explained. "Staring at a screen for hours can be exhausting... I do not get to walk around or really have any interactions with others," she continued.

Lizzie Paisner, another freshman, agrees that this lack of student and teacher interaction has caused online school to result in "Zoom fatigue." Paisner said, "It is easier to feel tired when you have the ability to stay in your bed all day because it causes

one to feel lazy and less motivated."

Zoom cannot make up for the student and teacher bonds that are created in-person throughout the school year. Virtual learning has made it harder for students to form connections with teachers and let their personalities shine through a screen. This hybrid model, which allows students to attend in-person school only every other day, forces some teachers to assign tests while some students are at home. Most students feel that taking the traditional paper tests is easier, as it is what they are accustomed to. Hedvat is not fond of taking tests remotely

and through Zoom because it opens up many possibilities for problems to occur: "Due to many app glitches and WiFi problems, there are many things to get in your way," she said. Geula added, "Taking tests remotely is a lot harder. I pre-

fer traditional paper tests because I am more focused at school than at home." The traditional pen-and-paper test eliminates room for technological problems, so it has caused some teachers to do their best to assess students only on the days that they are in the classroom.

A majority of the teachers at North High attend school every day and teach their students in the physical classroom. However, some circumstances have caused teachers to teach remotely on Zoom for quarantine purposes or for snow/remote days. "To some degree, I do find it easier to teach all students using the same platform," said freshman science teacher Ms. Lerner. "In doing so, I'm not splitting my focus in the same way that I have to in the hybrid setting... I wouldn't say that teaching from home is easier or harder necessarily, just different," she continued. She finished off by saying, "If my children are not home (if they are in school), I don't feel that there are any factors that make using Zoom difficult. However, it can definitely be a challenge to teach from home if my children are home too."

Conversely, Mr. Schorn explained, "I generally find it much harder to teach from home.... If everyone is remote, it can feel like teaching into a black hole (very little comes back out at you)." Overall, using Zoom to both join and teach classes online has been new to all students and teachers, and it takes getting used to.



After a full day of Zoom meetings, people often face feelings of exhaustion. This experience has been referred to as "Zoom fatigue," and Instagram accounts seek to offer advice on this struggle. Photo: @thecalmclassroom



# Students' Thoughts One Year Since The Start of Quarantine

"Time has gone slow, but at the same time, very fast."

Owen Roubeni '23

"I've realized how quick time has passed when you're busy. In the past, I've always wanted summer break to begin already, but I barely realize that it has almost been a year because of the workload that I have."

Winnie Chen '23

"It's really given a lot of time for self-reflection and growth. I don't think I know one person who hasn't changed since then."

Nina Zar '24

"I think I have changed my study habits for the better and my time management skills have gotten better."

Liora Kaya '23

"Before quarantine I didn't do my work until the last minute, now I get it done right when I get home. I've also learned to appreciate the smaller things."

Emily Noghrei '24

"It makes me anxious."

Sasha Livian '24

"Something that I never thought would happen is that I have begun to appreciate in person school so much more. What used to be the biggest chore turned into a joy for me as I get to go in every other day now."

Sofia Buziashvili '22

"I've become much more grateful for the smaller things that I took for granted before, like going to school or to a restaurant. I'm super thankful that I get to have these things now."

Brielle Nassi '23

"Virtual school has been quite difficult... I've come to realize that reaching out to my teachers is important."

Liam Klebanov '24

"I think that this quarantine has made me less motivated for school and to do well in it."

Alex Zhuang '23

# STUDENTS INVEST IN STOCKS

KATHARINE TANG '23  
NICOLE NAZAR '23  
GUIDE POST STAFF

High schoolers often look for ways to make money and gain real-world experience. Many students at North High do this through finding jobs, from working at 16 Handles to babysitting and tutoring younger students. However, especially now as the pandemic has limited students' work options, many have decided to dedicate their time to investing money into the stock market.

The stock market is a marketplace in which people buy and sell shares of publicly-held companies. These often-risky financial pursuits are managed and operated in an environment with regulations and securities. This allows buyers and sellers to connect and make trades with hopes that their investments will bring them profit in the future. Once people buy a certain amount of shares in a company at a certain price, they hold ownership until they decide to sell those shares.

The New York Stock Exchange officially opens at 9:30 a.m. EST and closes at 4 p.m. each day from Monday through Friday. During this span of time, the share prices fluctuate based upon supply and demand. If more people want to sell a certain stock than buy it, that would result in a greater supply than demand, causing the price to fall, and vice versa. If people are able to sell the shares at a higher price than

they bought them at, they have successfully made profit; this is where the famous term "buy low, sell high" can be applied.

Beyond the potential of making money, there are many benefits to investing in the stock market from a young age. Taking on the serious responsibility of handling money while taking calculated risks gives students the ability to learn many skills which can be valuable in the future. Many students at North High have acknowledged these potential skills and have begun investing their own time and money into the stock market. Sophomore Eitan Zargari began investing after "seeing his friends and family succeed in stocks, which served as motivation to get involved." The ease of opening a trading account, combined with the ability to see direct results every day, drives students'

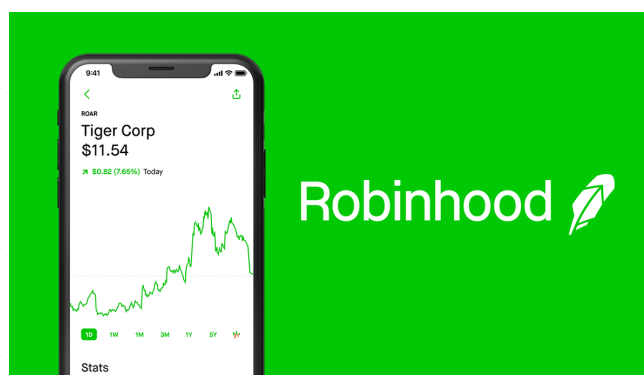
interest in the stock market. Many students use Robinhood, a basic, commission-free platform, to trade stocks, as it is perfect for beginners.

While the stock market seems to be the perfect outlet for students to draw a profit while gaining expertise, it certainly comes with challenges. Senior Matthew Nazar believes that "the most challenging part about the stock market is dealing with emotions. The market is unpredictable, and the constant ups-and-downs can be really frustrating." Due to the fluctuating nature of the stock market, one could lose or make a significant amount of money in the matter of just one day, which can take a serious mental toll on investors. Because of this, Nazar "would not recommend all other students to get

involved," saying that "the stock market is an emotional rollercoaster sometimes, and not everyone can handle that." Ultimately, while investing in the stock market can be time-consuming and extremely stressful, it can also be an extremely rewarding and educational experience. Investing young, like many students at North do, can offer valuable experience and life lessons while one's identity is still developing. The stock market forces students to be independent, strategic, and take responsibility for their actions.

Sophomore Lyell Khalili said that the stock market can teach students to "be patient, and think long-term." She advises students not to "let emotions get the best of you, and don't panic." As investors gain more experience, they become better at their craft, and navigating their way through the stock market becomes significantly easier. Sophomore Eitan Zargari said: "A piece of advice I would give to my past self would be to not sell too quickly; beginners sometimes sell too quickly because of excitement, but I could have made a much greater profit by holding on to some of my investments a bit longer."

Investing in the stock market can seem like a daunting task at first glance, especially for high school students with little experience. But that's part of the beauty of investing: you don't need an official title to invest in stocks, as the stock market is open to just about anyone.



Robinhood Markets, Inc., a financial services company, offers a mobile app that beginners like those at North High often use for commission-free trades of stocks. Photo: Robinhood.com



Student Personal Narrative:

FRIED

NATASHA KHAZZAM '22  
GUIDE POST STAFF

When my mom first brought home the purple straightening iron, it seemed like a godsend. Its two ceramic plates sang to me—a couple of angelic figures that promised to correct any imperfections that crossed their paths. The solution to all of my curly-hair-related insecurities. After passing the iron over coarse, stubborn strands the next morning, I was thrilled to discover that the plates’ promise was true. I stood in front of the mirror for hours admiring my handiwork, enthralled by the idea that having pin-straight hair could be my reality rather than the once-every-six-months-slash-every-time-you-get-a-haircut novelty that it had been for years. I was, in fact, so enamored with the newfound ability to run my fingers through the silky sheen atop my head that I ignored the angry crackles that popped from the iron and the relentless stream of grayish smoke that rose up from the metal plates when I passed them over my damp hair. A minor complication. Art from the complication, the next few months were exactly as I had imagined them to be: my fear of mirrors disappeared, my Instagram feed underwent a new era of growth and prosperity, and my insecurities were now entirely hidden by long locks of perfectly-straight-honey-colored hair. The only other downside was waking up an hour earlier than usual so that I’d have the time to undergo my morning transformation.

But despite the newfound satisfaction that I had gained regarding my appearance, my hair didn’t appreciate being fried. As the weeks passed, I began noticing chunks of broken strands lining the hardwood floors of my bedroom more frequently than usual. I’d begun to remove handfuls of clumps from the bristles of my hairbrush after detangling wet hair, and the slight urge of discomfort that I had felt upon listening to the crackling of the iron against my hair only became increasingly prominent as my hair became thinner and thinner. But it wasn’t until my friends



started commenting on my questionable hair-related decisions that I fully came to terms with the fact that my hair was suffering a terrible fate. As we walked back to the locker room from seventh-period gym class, Sarah asked me why I no longer wore my hair curly. “It’s easier to manage when it’s straight,” I lied, unwilling to expose my crippling self confidence. She went on to lecture me about the dangers of heat damage, and explained that she thought it looked better when it was curly. When I got home that day, I thought about what Sarah had said. Lecture aside, the corners of my mouth couldn’t help but turn upwards when I replayed her words in my head. If she liked the curls, then why shouldn’t I?

I showered later in the evening, with the intent of straightening my hair the next morning. My conversation with Sarah was encouraging, but wasn’t enough to entirely shift my perspective on the matter—that process would take time. But even after I shook my wet hair out of the towel that encased it, the freshly washed curls seemed dull and depressed, weighed down by the fat droplets of water that still remained intact from the shower. I made the mistake of pulling a curl down, only to watch it respond with a pitiful and inelastic sort of half-swing-half-bounce motion. In a desperate attempt to push my disappointment aside, I went to bed, hopelessly hoping that the damage I had done to my hair would magically reverse itself overnight. Of course, it didn’t. Still groggy from my alarm that was set an hour too early, I hobbled into the blue-and-white-tiled bathroom to find the same flattened curls staring back at me with tired eyes. They seemed defeated and helpless; angry that I had betrayed them and disheartened by the fact that I was ashamed of them. A guilty conscience forced me to hesitate as I reached towards the thick cord of the straightening iron. Should I? I thought of my bounceless curls and of what Sarah had said. The iron was an enemy, I realized. A murderer of hair. A destroyer of health. The once-magical ceramic plates that lined the purple contraption now seemed like nothing more than a cheap pair of plastic chopsticks. My grip on the iron loosened. The cabinet door opened and closed with a finite shudder. I didn’t fry my hair that morning. Curls were good enough.

YOUR  
TEACHERS'  
ZODIAC  
SIGNS



Ms. ANASTASIS  
SAGITTARIUS

Mr. BARBACH  
AQUARIUS

Mr. CARBONE  
PISCES

Mrs. LYNCH  
TAURUS

Ms. OSTROVER  
LIBRA

Mr. RAGOT  
LIBRA

Mr. RODRIGUEZ  
AQUARIUS

Mr. SCHAD  
LIBRA

Ms. SILK  
AQUARIUS

Ms. YORK  
VIRGO

Mr. BECKER  
LIBRA

One Year Since the Pandemic Took us out of In-Person School

Sophie Frenkel

With the one-year anniversary coming up since the closing of schools and the massive outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, many are taking some time to reflect on some of the changes they have underwent in this past year. The comic depicts the contrast of early quarantine (filled with nocturnal sleep schedules, Tik Tok trends, and outdoor excersie), with the current COVID-19 situation (of in-person/remote education, vaccines, and opened dining).



# Midseason Report Cards

**JERRY WONG '22**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

From the start of the 2020-21 NBA season, the Brooklyn Nets had mounting expectations. Their electrifying tandem, featuring superstars Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving, opened with +300 odds to win the NBA Finals. These favorable odds are clearly indicative of the expectations they faced entering the season. Despite riveting projections, the Nets were dissatisfied with their performance. On January 14, in a four-team deal, the Nets acquired James Harden in exchange for Jarrett Allen, Caris LeVert, and a bevy of draft picks. Immediately, Vegas took notice, and the Nets' betting odds rose to +270. However, questions about chemistry and depth haunted the team. Either way, James Harden stepped in as the primary ball-handler and took the reins of the team. As of March 9, Harden is averaging a career-high 11.4 assists while maintaining his effortless scoring. Harden has been scorching hot from the 3-point line, shooting a ridiculous 42.2% from three. Nevertheless, with Kevin Durant missing significant time, Harden is not alone in his spectacular performances. His sidekick, Kyrie Irving, has continued performing at an elite level while racking up personal accolades. Irving's 27.2 points per game would be his second-highest; his 51% field goal efficiency would be

his career-high. But the only statistic that matters to this star-studded team is wins. As of the NBA All-Star break, the Nets sit half a game behind the top-seeded Sixers. While teams struggle to find consistency in this COVID-riddled season, the Brooklyn Nets are the golden standard.

Julius Randle's reputation was not always one of hard work and perseverance. His tumultuous tenure with the Los Angeles Lakers led to inconsistent production with future teams. Randle's debut season with the New York Knicks saw him shoot a horrid 27.7 percent from three, leading the Knicks to the 12th seed in the Eastern Conference. However, the death of his long-time icon, Kobe Bryant, energized Randle's work ethic. That grit has resulted in career-high numbers for Randle and a selection to the Eastern Conference All-Star team. Julius is not the only member of the Knicks who symbolizes determination; the entire squad has embraced a gritty mindset. Their 108.8 defensive rating, which is second in the league, is a testament to their active playstyle. As of the All-Star break, the Knicks have a 19-18 record, just a mere game behind fourth place in the Eastern Conference.

New York tries to shed the previous dysfunction, their trust in Julius Randle will ultimately lead them to success. In a recent op-ed in The Players' Tribune, Randle admitted that the front office "having that type of faith in me meant everything." Moreover, the Knicks handing over the offense to Randle unlocked

his newfound playmaking skills. His 5.5 assists per game is a career-high that strengthens his arsenal. The years of ineptitude and failure are gone, and New York is writing a new chapter.

The Toronto Raptors have had an NBA All-Star selection since 2014, but in 2021 that streak came to an end. While young players like Donovan Mitchell and Zach LaVine improved, Pascal Siakam remained unimagineable. In the All-NBA Second Team selection,

Siakam was the bonafide leader of the Raptors. However, this season has been an utter disappointment for Siakam. His 29.5 percent 3-point shooting allows defenders to sag off and pack the paint. Compare that to 2019-20 Siakam's 36 percent from three, and the difference is monumental. Siakam is not the lone culprit responsible for Toronto's season-long struggle, COVID-19 has plagued this team more than any other club in the league. For starters, the Raptors were forced to relocate to Florida due to COVID restrictions. Completely different living conditions culminating with different playing locations decimated any chance at continuity. Secondly, injuries to starters Kyle Lowry and OG Anunoby hindered coach Nick Nurse's ability to pose consistent gameplans. With two starters consistently missing, Nurse was forced to play unproven young guys. The issues for Toronto are curable, and Raptors fans should have no worries knowing that.

After the devastating loss to the Miami Heat in the 2020 Eastern Conference Finals, the Boston Celtics seemed poised to run it back. However, the Celtics currently have an underwhelming 19-17 record at the All-Star break. Firstly, former All-Star point guard Kemba Walker underwent a stem cell injection in his knee and missed significant portions of the young season. Walker's anticipated return proved to also be disappointing due to his putrid shooting woes. The New York City product is failing to convert on 40 percent of his shots as well as being a defensive liability. Secondly, Boston is an uncharacteristic 19th in defensive rating. In previous seasons, coach Brad Stevens had prided his team off constantly locking up opposing teams. However, with defensive anchor Marcus Smart sidelined due to injury, Boston's defensive identity has been sorely lacking. The effort is not consistently put in on a nightly basis to grab loose balls and chase after rebounds. Thirdly, the lack of team continuity throughout the years has resulted in struggling chemistry issues. In the past 4 years alone, the Celtics have lost 4 All-Stars due to either trade or free agency. Without a thriving team atmosphere, players tend to provide less effort. The bright side of this disappointing season is the future. Boston's young superstars Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown are 23 and 24, respectively. They have yet to hit

their prime and still have plenty of basketball to play. Celtics fans should not worry as the brighter days are ahead.

## Emergence of Fall Sports

**ELIZABETH PAISNER '24**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In the midst of a worldwide pandemic, this year's circumstances, both in and out of school, have looked extremely different in comparison to previous years. Many changes have been made, one specifically being that the fall sports season started in March. Students were able to try out for swimming, soccer, volleyball, field hockey, and tennis starting March 1. However, in order to accommodate health and safety regulations, many protocols have been made for each of these sports. Regarding the swim team, students were required to try out on the days that they attend school. Tryouts for swimming were especially unique in that the coaches could only keep 20 girls when they would normally keep a larger amount. When practices officially start, each cohort day will have to attend the practices every day, regardless of the hybrid schedule. Especially since the swimmers cannot wear their masks in the water, the rules regarding COVID-19 are much stricter in comparison to other sports. As for swim meets, they are still planning on proceeding normally, although everyone will need to adhere to social distancing guidelines and keep their masks on unless they are in the water. Changes have been made to the soccer team as well. Similar to the swim team, the tryout sessions will be dependent on one's cohort day. Additionally, de-

spite the days being split up for the tryouts, all team members are together for the practices. Practices are after school every day during the school week, and on Saturday's from 3:10 to 4:30 p.m. Freshman Gabby Feder expressed that "tryouts immediately felt different since half

of them had to be separated." Freshman Rena Geula explained, "The season is still very enjoyable but playing with masks is definitely different." Although the current soccer season is not the type of situation these players are used to, many have made efforts to look on the bright side and make the best of the circumstances. Geula went on, "Soccer games are still occurring, but masks have to be worn." For field hockey, the tryouts were split into cohort days for the first two days of tryouts, and then for the remaining days of tryouts, both cohorts attended. Protocols for field hockey require players to wear masks during practices and games. Furthermore, players must social distance while stretching before practice. For the field hockey games, all players must take the bus. Family members and friends are not allowed to be present for the games. Players also



The boys varsity volleyball team scrimmaging against the JV boys volleyball team.

now have the option to opt-out of wearing goggles during games and practices. In prior years, wearing goggles was a mandatory condition to help protect the players' eyes. However, since the athletes are now wearing masks while playing, most feel as though there may be too much on the

player's face, making it challenging to play. Therefore, parents have been given the option to sign a form to opt their child out of wearing this piece of equipment. Regarding tennis, many of the regulations mentioned for the sports above apply here too. However, the players are required to wear their masks whenever they are not playing. When they are playing, they are able to pull their masks down -- but it still has to be visible. While players are switching sides on the court, they have to pull their masks back up. As for volleyball, the sport was initially going to require athletes to do all remote instruction; since it is likely for teams to come into close contact with each other, all remote instruction was seriously considered for this sport. However, after much debate, this decision was soon changed, and now players can still come to school in-person during the season. As for prac-

tices, they take place every day and both cohorts attend every practice. During games, officials, coaches, and athletes have to maintain social distancing when they are not engaging on the court. Furthermore, only fourteen athletes are allowed to be at a match. Contact between players is not allowed, so the students will not be able to shake hands after the game has ended. Freshman Leah Hagooli feels that there are both pros and cons related to wearing masks at all times: "Wearing masks during practice has brought a bit of a challenge, but it has only pushed the players to work harder." The students can only use the locker rooms before practice, as the facilities are not available after practice. For all of the fall sports, COVID testing is highly recommended -- but it is not mandatory. Testing athletes will ensure that teammates are keeping each other safe, and that minimal transmission of the virus will occur. Due to the pandemic, it was challenging for many of the players to stay in shape before the season began. However, many students completed home workouts and were able to take walks or runs outside when the weather permitted. Even though these times have been far from ideal and sports have had to make major changes, students, parents, and coaches have been extremely understanding throughout the entire process. Although fall sports are not taking place during its normal time, the students partaking in athletics this season will surely continue to make our school proud.



# Magnifying Discrimination in Professional Sports

**KAJAL RAMPHUL '24**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Mickey Callaway. Jared Porter. Dennis Lindsey. Three names, three commonalities. These men are notable coaches or front office members in the sports industry who are allowed a certain amount of power due to their celebrated status. And, in being allowed this power, these men have abused their unmerited influence in immoral, depraved ways. As of March 2, baseball pitching coach Mickey Callaway has faced an ongoing string of sexual harassment and misconduct allegations dating all the way back to 2013. The former manager of the New York Mets and the current pitching coach for the Los Angeles Angels has been suspended due to this behavior; while some support this decision wholeheartedly and believe that the team is doing the right thing, this penalty is regarded by many as too lenient. Callaway has been accused of lewd, vulgar actions towards at least seven women in the field of sports media, and of sending heavily pornographic and indubitably unsolicited materials to at least three of them. One of these victims was repeatedly asked to send her own nude photos in return. Callaway additionally pursued these women through text messages, blatantly ignoring their assertions of nonconsent to his advances. Mickey Callaway is not the only man in the sports industry who has been known to prey upon women. Former Mets General Manager Jared Porter has been accused of repeated sexual misconduct towards a female reporter. This reporter's name has been undisclosed thus far, though it is known that she was a foreign correspondent who moved to the United States in order to cover Major League Baseball (MLB). Porter's continued advances were either met with laughter or ignored entirely, though this clearly did not serve as a deterrent for him. When he later asked for a photograph of her, she agreed, thinking it was something normal for friends to do. At first, she was confused because she did not understand the implication of the pictures she was receiving, but when she eventually realized what the pictures meant and what Porter wanted, she chose to cut off communication with him entirely, believing that it would be best for her. Unreceptive of that nonverbal request, Porter proceeded to spam her with 62 unanswered, inappropriate messages. Although he initially denied all allegations against him, after being confronted with concrete evidence against him, he retracted this falsity. The reporter says she developed sleeping problems and anxiety and has even turned down potential jobs in the media for fear of running into Porter. On the occasion

that she did see him, she felt threatened and compelled to hide. Porter's abrasive and invasive harassment caused her to quit her career, as well as leaving her with lasting trauma that she can only describe as being a "tipping point." Meanwhile, Porter's own career flourished. Only in January was Porter finally fired from the Mets in response to how he exerted his power over her. Though indubitably significant, gender is not the only cause for discrimination in the sports industry. In February, former Utah Jazz player Elijah Millsap took to Twitter to discuss the racist commentary made by the general manager of the team, Dennis Lindsey, during his exit interview. These remarks were made on April 16, 2015 — nearly six years before Millsap made the choice to speak up about the intolerance he faced. He was then observed for 20 days and impressed enough with his skills to lead Utah to propose a multi-year contract to him. However, a year later, the Jazz abruptly waived Millsap, relieving him of his playing duties with the team. On Feb. 24, 2021, Millsap posted a Twitter thread, examining the discriminatory treatment he underwent in his time with the Jazz and discussing the ever-looming presence of prejudice and bigotry. The bigoted remarks in question? Millsap quotes Lindsey as telling him, "If you say one more word, I'll cut your [expletive] and send you back to Louisiana." This was a sadistic, unbridled threat, and one that remained buried until over half a decade later. In a public statement issued to the Salt Lake City Media, Lindsey "categorically denies" having ever made this statement to Millsap. While Millsap has been receiving words of encouragement at the blatant racism, a shocking number of people are taking Lindsey's side without question. The fact that people are refusing to even consider the possibility that Millsap is telling the truth makes the systemic racism in our society painfully evident. Many people view the sports industry — and the individuals in it — as solely entertainment; however everyone involved, every player, every coach, and every reporter, is a human being. Lamentably, discrimination and intolerance are prevalent throughout the field, and as more allegations of racism and sexism come to light, it is clear how much has been ignored in the past. The minority groups who are included on both the playing field and in the media are treated in a dehumanizing manner by those who have more influence, whether it is because they are male or because they are white. With any luck, the accusations that are being made against Mickey Callaway, Jared Porter, and Dennis Lindsey — along with all others — will be taken seriously, and the perpetrators will be held accountable.

CNN



Former Utah Jazz guard Elijah Millsap recently came public about an incident he had with GM Dennis Lindsey, in which racist remarks were said towards Millsap.

ESPN



Mickey Callaway, a former pitching coach for the Cleveland Indians, has had multiple accusations of sexually inappropriate behavior while working for Cleveland revealed recently.

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# BERK'S BASKETBALL ENDEAVORS

**NOAH BERKOWITZ '22**  
COLUMNIST

Following my sophomore year's final basketball game, our team was already preparing as we waited for the next season to come. With only two seasons left of our high school basketball careers, we continued to play in the off-season, making certain we would maximize our limited time left. Just a few months later, however, the possibility of a basketball season seemed absurd.

During that sophomore season, the rumblings of a COVID-19 virus and possible school closures began to surface. Then, just as the basketball season ended, and I started preparing for track, schools were "temporarily closed." With the drastic increase in COVID cases and a rising N.Y. death toll, a long weekend turned into weeks off school, which then turned into the remainder of the school year. The closing of school clearly resulted in the cancellation of spring sports, leaving all athletes devastated and missing one of their precious few athletic high school seasons. Many of us playing sports, despite the unnerving and isolating experience of remote learning, continued to train. Somehow, the training seemed to keep our hopes alive that our teams would play together again next year.

After a lost spring season, we received the sensational news that we would give in-person hybrid learning for the fall. With this new method of learning, many of us who play sports continued our training to prepare for the fall sports. Furthermore, NY state announced a delayed fall season, creating a revised and condensed schedule for each team and season so that every sport would hopefully be able to play. Despite this delayed opening, a lingering hope still remained that we would still get those precious, time-limited moments even in basketball. The relentless rampage of COVID caused immense outrage amongst the players' and parents' in school, particularly with basketball. I tried to accept that I would not have my junior year basketball season and I began to run winter track. Midway through the track season, NY guidelines changed and high-risk sports such as basketball were given the green light. But it was up to the individual schools to ultimately decide about running these sports. While winter sports started, basketball was still in question.

As the beginning of the scheduled date to start the consolidated basketball season approached, Great Neck seemed

less and less inclined to take the risk of having an actual season. Outside of school, many basketball players continued to practice, keeping hope alive about a season. All of the surrounding districts started their seasons. Then Great Neck announced no season, just intramurals. Angered that neighboring schools found a way to safely have a basketball season, students, parents, and others who felt a strong connection to the basketball program at our school, advocated for something that seemed so minimal, yet so vital during these times of distress - a chance at a basketball season. The camaraderie and bond developed through sports were so necessary following months of gruesome isolation. Within an illness-ridden year, in which COVID seemingly destroyed all things familiar, having an opportunity to play a sport you've done your whole life with those you've known your whole life, serves as an escape from the stress and unfamiliarity of altered academics and an altered lifestyle.

Just two days before the start of the proposed intramural basketball season, the relentless advocacy through hundreds of emails, phone calls, and meetings finally paid off. The countless hours of hard work would finally be displayed and proven worthy. We had one month with just eight games to prove that we deserved this opportunity.

Along with the shortened season, other initiatives were taken by the district to ensure that we would be competing in a safe manner while not harming others. Even before the season started, our dedication was tested through mandatory remote learning during the tryouts, which would eventually carry onto the season. One entire month of online learning took an immense toll on our mental and emotional health. Long school days, facing a screen for the entirety of it drastically increased the difficulty of learning. Although be it a single screen, the distance between the teachers in school and the students at home, felt insurmountable.

Along with the strenuous academic sacrifices, many safety precautions were taken while competing and practicing. Weekly COVID testing was provided and mandatory through the school, masks were mandatory during practice and competitions, and no fans were allowed at games. While these were understandable safety measures, empty stadiums and restricting masks destroyed the sense of familiarity acquired from sports. From COVID restrictions to remote learning, no sacrifice could ever be more valuable than the opportunity to play basketball.

While North High implemented various measures to prevent the spread of COVID, ultimately, we, as representative athletes of our school, were able to dictate the outcome of the season. We were the ones to advocate for a season nobody else thought we should've had. We were the ones who trained relentlessly in preparation for a season that wasn't supposed to happen. We were the ones who had the ability to jeopardize the entirety of the season through one carelessly unsafe action. But we didn't: because we cared too much.





# Winter Sports Rebound

**ADELIA DeROSE '22**

STAFF WRITER

This year, student-athletes were faced with an unprecedented challenge. With sports being completely called off for the fall season, students were forced to take a break from playing the sports they adore. Though it was for safety purposes, the cancellation of school athletics had many effects on the mental health of students. In the spring and the fall of 2020, a large majority of students reported increased levels of stress and mental exhaustion. A significant contributor to this mental distress was the lack of access to sports for many student-athletes. However, this winter season, North was able to administer various winter sports with increased safety protocols. With these protocols being a top priority, students were excited to safely resume playing and return to the teams they were previously a part of. Some sports, such as girls and boys basketball, however, required students to

commit to an all-remote learning schedule if they were to play on the team. This policy was due to the fact that basketball is a contact sport and is played indoors. Other sports, such as winter track, did not require a commitment to an all-remote schedule.

Various protocols were put in place to ensure the safety of students while being a part of the track team. For starters, students were required to wear their masks at all times during warm-ups, during talks with the coaches, and while close to other athletes. Once students engaged in strenuous activity, such as a meet or a long sprint, they were allowed to take their masks off. However, it was required and strictly enforced that the runners stay six feet away from the other athletes if they were to take their masks off. Events like relays that required athletes to touch the same baton were not allowed. Running indoors when there was inclement weather was not allowed either, nor was access to the weight room. In addition, all stu-

dents taking part in track only went to practices during the week on the assigned day that they were in person. Day A students stayed with their cohort, while Day B students stayed with their cohort. For virtual students, athletes were assigned to a cohort and attended the practices on the same day as their assigned group. Virtual students were also required to get their temperatures taken before practice, receiving a paper slip with their temperature written on it and giving the slip to the coaches. If a student was supposed to be in person for school on a certain day, but they stayed home, they were not allowed to attend practice.

This year, rather than competing directly against students from other schools, the winter track team held virtual meets. These competitions consisted of select athletes from Great Neck North running against each other and outside officials reporting the times. After the event took place, the results were posted to a Google spreadsheet with the

times of all of the athletes from Nassau County. Furthermore all the winter track meets are held at an indoor track. Adjusting to the cold weather was a challenge, but the athletes were able to layer up and keep warm as needed. Virtual meets also did not allow for spectators at the event.

Some athletes said that it was challenging to compete strictly against athletes from one's own school because it lacked the same sense of competition and rivalry towards athletes of opposing schools. It took more mental strength to reach the same times.

Though the students faced a variety of challenges and hardships, many students were still grateful for the opportunity to compete this year. It was a learning experience that called for adjustments, but everyone was able to take part in the sport they loved. The allowance of winter sports to run this school year helped alleviate a great deal of the mental stresses that student-athletes are forced to confront.



Stephanie Kim

**ADDISON KLEBANOV '23**

STAFF WRITER

This year has been extremely challenging for everyone. From readjusting to the hybrid schedule, to wearing a mask everywhere in school, any sense of normalcy is essentially nonexistent. At North High, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced school sports to be postponed and shortened. Specifically, basketball appeared to be one of the most impacted sports within the winter season. Firstly, the girls basketball program saw a drastic decrease in members from last year. There was only enough to have one varsity team for the girls, possibly due to the extensive COVID protocols. Both female and male basketball players were forced to go fully virtual for the one-month season. Going fully remote was no easy task for most students. Sophie Frenkel, a member of the girls varsity team, describes her new learning situation as strenuous. She states: "Going all remote made it more difficult

to participate in class discussions, and ask questions. It was worth it for the month-long season of basketball, but I don't think I could have done it every day for much longer." Sophie's feelings reflect the feelings of many North basketball players who struggled with remote learning. "It was very frustrating and I was very confused in many of my classes. I definitely struggled academically during the season," added Hailey Toch, another member of the girls basketball team. On the court, basketball players had to wear masks unless the activity was too overbearing to do so. In that case, players had to make sure they were maintaining social distancing to safely take off their masks. At the beginning of the season, COVID tests were mandatory every week. However, as the season progressed, tests became optional, yet recommended. On the bus, every player was required to wear a mask no matter the distance. On the bench, players could take off their masks only if they were six feet apart. The players on each team took

the COVID protocols extremely seriously and did their best to protect themselves and their teammates. Following COVID procedures was very critical for everyone since one person could cause the whole team to be forced to quarantine. Another issue for the boys and girls basketball teams was the limited space in the gym. It is very important for each team to get as much practice as possible with the restricted area. Normally, the big gym could be shared, but not this year. Additionally, the small gym is very compact, so only the big gym was available. Three teams had to share one gym. Each team had to be very flexible with their schedule. Furthermore, the girls varsity team had practice at 3:30 some days, and 5:15 other days. Doing basketball this year certainly was a hefty commitment, but the players are very passionate about basketball. Dylan Mordoff, a member of the boys JV team, claims: "It's harder to learn from home and harder to communicate with others, but it's worth it for me to play the sport

that I love." Dylan's passion overrides the difficulty of not being able to communicate in person. Additionally, Dylan stated: "It's been harder because it's hard to stare at a screen all day." Fortunately for the player's academics, the season only lasted a month. Thanks to the athletics department, boys and girls were allowed to get back on the court and compete. Compared to other sports, basketball was tougher due to its status as a high-risk sport. Soccer is a mid-risk sport, so male and female soccer players can remain on their hybrid schedules. Hopefully, next year sports are longer and everyone can at least have some time in school. Without the cooperation of parents, students, staff, and the athletic department none of this would be possible. Having a basketball season took a commitment from everyone, and there were a multitude of boundaries to work around. The first game of the season was canceled for the JV boys team due to a case of COVID-19 at Elmont. Nonetheless, each team kept persevering with success.