

The Lion's Tale

WINTER 2020

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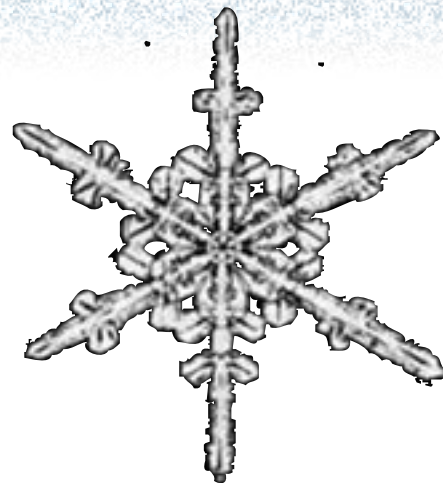
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2020 Gift Guide

Ella Werdell '23
Staff Writer

This year, everything will be different as we head into the holiday season. What better way to cheer people up during this difficult time than with a gift? As the giving season approaches, ideas for what to give to teachers, family and friends are a must have.

This year, COVID-19 has generated interest in gifts that make quarantine more comfortable. Junior Hailey Condrón says, "I think this season, clothes, electronic devices, and room decor are just a few things in style this year due to the pandemic because those items will be useful to kids who are online in school." Sweatshirts and blankets are also great gift ideas. These items not only are less expensive than technology, but can also be customized and made to be more personal. Not crafty? Check out Etsy.com.



Sentimental gifts are a great way to show how much you care. Sophomore Kwaby Kusi identifies meaningful and sentimental gifts as "anything someone put effort into." This could be a hand-written card or a scrapbook. Condrón agrees, "[homemade gifts] usually are more valuable to me because they put effort into it and it will always put a smile on my face."



When it comes to giving gifts, teachers are on the top of the list. They work hard year round to give us quality education. This year has been extremely difficult for teachers as well as students because the curriculum and course work had to be completely changed into more concise lessons. Finding gifts to give teachers can be a hassle, but one gift that will never get old is candy. Chocolate, fudge, taffy, even lollipops — no matter what type, candy is always a good go-to gift to show your teachers how much you appreciate them. Goodie bags full of treats are a great way to show your teachers you appreciate them, but another way is to write them a card. As a teenager, cards and goodie bags may not seem like a good gift, but they really show how much you appreciate them. "My mom used to be a teacher and when she would come home with goodie bags and boxes of gifts she would get so excited," Condrón states. Cards can be mailed to the school, or students can use an eCard from one of several websites.

Everyone on your list can benefit from a gift card, which can be purchased and delivered electronically. Restaurant gift cards are as practical as they used to be with covid limitations, but Amazon gift cards and other e-gift cards to online stores can give the shoppers on your list a little joy as they browse the virtual aisles. Just remember to check that the e-gift card was received and didn't end up in their junk email!



It is possible that you or someone in your family doesn't want to receive gifts, but you still want to show appreciation for them. One way to do this is to make a donation in their name. Solanki states, "[You can] donate to the people who don't normally get gifts and money or just hang out with people." Donating is a great way to give back to the community, especially during the giving season. Another alternative to giving gifts is spending time with the people you love and showing them your appreciation that way.



Hover your camera
over the ornament
for the Holiday Playlist,
selected by staff writer
Alexis Maokhamphiou

Holiday Plans

Madeline Kuehl '21
Staff Writer

Believe it or not, the holiday season is here. Hanukkah begins December 10 and ends December 18, then Christmas is celebrated on December 25, followed by New Year's Eve. As we enter December, the predominant question is: how can we still participate in the festivities during a pandemic?

A fun and COVID-19-safe holiday activity is going to see lights. A great place to see them is the Merriweather Symphony of Lights. Merriweather held social-distanced walk-throughs on November 29 and December 7. The next one will occur on December 31. Except for the 31st, the Symphony of Lights is open every day for drive-throughs until January 2. There is a gorgeous display of lights for both Christmas and Hanukkah that really put you in the holiday mood. Nothing is more exciting than seeing the decorations while staying warm and toasty in your car!

A close location in Baltimore, Maryland is the Miracle on 34th Street. Nutcrackers, candy canes, Frosty and all of your favorite Christmastime symbols are lit up on 34th Street. Although crowds are discouraged, the event is still taking place and can be attended socially distanced, which is what Junior Jake Keller will be doing this year. "I love going to see the Miracle on 34th Street with my family around Christmas Eve," says Keller. This is a great spot to go with friends and family and see a great array of decorations.

Another place for holiday sightseeing is at Longwood Gardens. Senior Natalie Gobell says, "My family and I are going to Longwood Gardens to look at their lights and decorations." Longwood Gardens is a botanical garden in Chester County, Pennsylvania.

The final place to go if you are interested in a lights display is the local house display on Red Hill Way. The family has been showing off their huge display of lights for years and attracts many visitors every night. With lights on the roof, windows, porch and lawn, it serves as a great place for people to come take pictures and have a great time. Due to COVID-19, they will be scaling back this year and not doing the interactive portion of the lights, but you can still come drive by.



ABOVE: The Miracle on 34th Street in Hampden draws crowds with the outrageous decorations on the rowhomes. BALTIMORE SUN.
BELOW: Longwood Gardens is open to visitors, masks required. J. HARE/ LONGWOOD GARDENS via Instagram

While going out and looking at cool light displays is fun, there are also great holiday activities to do in your own house. Senior Holly Buell says she is "making gingerbread houses with [her] family and decorating ornaments to add to the Christmas tree." Gingerbread houses are an exciting and creative way to join the holiday fun. Build the houses up with candy cane windows and gumdrops on the roof — the tastiest house ever! It is also an easy activity to do while you are at home with your family.

Another great activity for inside the house is playing a game. The dreidel game is a really fun game if you are celebrating Hanukkah. Spin the top and see if you can take or add to the pot from the beginning of the game. This can be a really fun game to play with your friends or family to get in the holiday spirit. Senior Corey Abrahams says, "I like playing dreidels with my family because I can win some extra money and stuff like that during Hanukkah."

New Year's Eve is usually a huge celebration to turn over to a new year, with families and friends and big parties. That won't be possible this year with COVID-19, but you can still celebrate 2021 by watching the ball drop on TV with your family.



ELLCOTT CITY, MARYLAND, NOVEMBER 29, 2020- With Christmas just around the corner, Gingerbread houses are in season. MADDIE KUEHL/ LION'S TALE

Celebrate the Seasoning

Johanna Wojewodzki '21
Arts & Entertainment Editor

When the holidays come around at Howard, we find new ways to come together and bond. During this social-distanced, quarantined year, a deeper exploration of cultural dishes becomes a pertinent connector between members of the Howard community.

Click the images for the recipes; the ingredients are listed for convenient shopping!

4 cups plain flour
1/2 teaspoon of salt
1 ounce dry baker's yeast
1/3 cup milk lukewarm
1/3 cup water lukewarm
6 tablespoons butter at room temperature
6 tablespoons sugar
Rind of 1 large orange, grated
2 large eggs
1 tablespoon brandy or rum
1 egg white
2 cups assorted candied fruit chopped in different sizes
1 small ceramic baby figurine



Roscon De Reyes (King's Wreath)

"Roscon De Reyes is a traditional holiday cake, also called twelfth night bread. Dia de Reyes, January 6th, is the day it is eaten and the epiphany is celebrated."

- Kelly Thai, class of 2021, Spanish student



click me!

gs



Bûche De Noël

(Yule Log)

for the cake

4 eggs, yolks and whites separated
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1/3 cup cake flour
1/2 tsp instant coffee granules
1 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp salt

for the filling

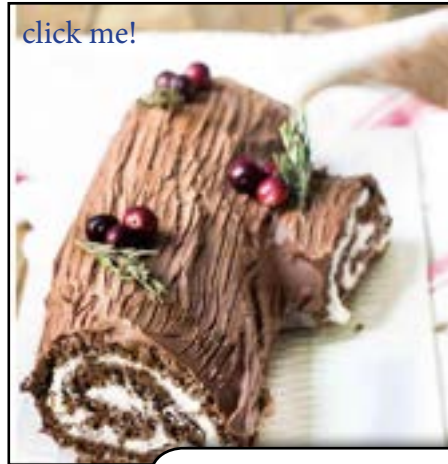
1 cup heavy whipping cream
1/4 cup powdered sugar, plus more for dusting
1/2 tsp vanilla extract

for the frosting

6 oz dark or bittersweet chocolate chips, 3/4 cup
1.5 tbsp softened unsalted butter
1 tsp instant coffee granules
2/3 cup heavy cream
1/2 tbsp coffee
1/2 tsp vanilla extract
cranberries and rosemary for garnishing

"The yule log is a rolled sponge cake. It is a really pretty cake, decorated to look like a tree."
- Holly Merchant, class of 2021, French student

[click me!](#)



der erste Weihnachtsfeiertag

(the first Christmas Holiday)

for the Kartoffelknödel (dumplings)

about 2 1/4 lb starchy potatoes, cooked in their skins
4 slices day old bread
2 tbsp butter
about 1 1/3 cups cornstarch
2 eggs
1 tsp salt

for the Rotkohl (Red Cabbage)

1 medium head red cabbage, shredded
2 - 3 tbsp butter, oil, or lard
1 large onion, diced
3 apples, peeled, cored, shredded or diced
3 tbsp cider vinegar
1 tsp salt
2 tsp sugar
1/2 tsp nutmeg, ground
1/4 tsp cloves, ground
1/4 tsp pepper, freshly ground
2 tbsp lemon juice
2 tbsp cornstarch

"On der erste Weihnachtsfeiertag, [Germans] have a traditional dinner usually with potato dumplings, goose, red cabbage, and a sausage stuffing."
- Sam Carter, class of 2021, German student



[click us!](#)



THE CASE FOR HYBRID SCHOOL

S.P. Singh '24
Staff Writer

The Howard County Board of Education discussed the hybrid model for the next semester, set to begin February 1, 2021, at their meeting on January 14. The board has the option of providing opportunities for in-person instruction, even amid COVID-19. The board voted 5-2 in favor of the Howard County Public School System's plan for the third quarter of the 2020-2021 school year — meaning students would be learning online until April 14. The plan presented by the board would have two days of virtual learning for students starting in mid-March, with one group learning in person on Mondays and Tuesdays, and another group on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Wednesdays would continue to be used for administrative tasks, and Fridays would be used for student activities and lesson planning for teachers. This hybrid model is still up for discussion, and opinions on its effectiveness.

With many advantages, the hybrid model is the best thing for students this school year.

Hybrid learning provides greater access to education by helping to reduce student absenteeism. Absenteeism increases achievement gaps at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, but the hybrid model addresses this problem. If someone is unable to attend in-person classes, they could still attend virtually, meaning they will no longer miss out on instruction.

If an academic institution wants to provide both in-person and remote learning opportunities, they will need to create two separate classes or even two distinct courses. Yet, one of the key benefits of hybrid learning is the ability to blend the demand for both learning styles, meaning a single course can cater to both of these preferences.

Students need more flexibility within education, especially considering the ongoing closures and other effects of COVID-19. Hybrid learning offers this flexibility by allowing those who do not thrive in remote learning environments the option to participate in some of the social aspects of learning, which contributes to them becoming more independent and confident. "I think daily social interaction will benefit students' mental health and being able to learn in a school environment can make it easier for students to stay focused throughout the day," claims Grace Antill, a senior at Howard High School, explaining how hybrid learning will allow more flexibility to students' brains and their learning.

Another plus for the hybrid model is the opportunity for students to socialize. Students have been without significant interaction for many months now, and many are desperately looking forward to going back to school. The hybrid model opens up at least some of that experience they are craving. This aspect of hybrid learning is similar to Mr. Sleichter's thoughts: "I don't see much participation during my online lessons, even to ask a question, and I think the hybrid model is a solution to that, because no one can resist to ask a question when their teacher is right in front of them." The hybrid model will allow students to participate in class and interact with their teacher and peers, one step closer to the normalcy of previous school years.

Another major advantage of hybrid learning is the improved usage of teaching materials. Students will be able to obtain any items that they need for learning. Schools can streamline the distribution of learning resources, because teachers will be able to provide the students with learning aids for their lessons. "For certain classes, being in class gives you access to more materials for learning. For example, I take both photo and guitar this semester, and if we were able to go back to school on a hybrid model, I would have access to more instrumental material and the dark room," Antill says. Students taking specialized classes often utilize equipment, games, tools and other items that can't be purchased at home or transported from schools to students who need them.

Hybrid learning is changing the way we think of education and removing many of the traditional barriers. Not only can it provide students with a greater degree of flexibility and freedom to pick their way of getting educated, but it can also expand student engagement with education and reduce absenteeism. The hybrid model ensures students are on the right track to getting the most out of their studies.

OVERSY:

HYBRID MODEL

the school system's proposed hybrid model for the spring on November 15, 2020. This model could include opportunities. The plan presented was not official; the Board of Education System continuing with a virtual learning environment for long that the majority of the district's students will continue the school system includes two days of in-person school and 1-4 April. Students would be split into two different groups, 2 days, and the other group in school buildings on Thursdays asynchronous work — self-guided learning assignments for model (part virtual, part face-to-face) has sparked a variety of

THE CASE AGAINST HYBRID SCHOOL

Erin Smith '21
Social Media Manager

Although many students are anxious to return to in-person learning, the proposed hybrid model is not well developed. Returning to in-person learning should not occur until there is a better alternative. Many students want to return to in-person instruction to get the hands-on experience that virtual learning denies them, but the proposed hybrid model does not allow this.

In the model, teachers have to instruct students present in the classroom and online at the same time; students will be doing what they would do at home, but in a classroom. Certain lessons that cannot be replicated online, such as labs and groupwork, are not being brought back. For example, many biology, chemistry and physics labs cannot occur virtually because students may not have access to the same materials at home that they would in a school lab. In the proposed hybrid model, these in-person labs are not coming back, making the return to in-person learning not worthwhile. Senior Courtney Pasternak agrees that returning to in-person learning is not worth it if no real instructional changes are being made: "The plan seems pointless to me. The fact is that if students were to return to school in the hybrid model, they would be doing the same work as they would if students remained virtual. The plan suggests that students would be working online and attending the virtual meeting, but in person." Science teacher Mrs. Stephanie Mabrey shares a similar opinion: "Unfortunately, the current plan in place feels a lot like virtual learning but in the school building."

Another part of the hybrid model that is not favorable is the longer class periods. It is hard enough to stay engaged in the isolated learning environment for 45 minutes; doubling this time will make it difficult for a lot of students to stay involved with their courses. Senior Ryan Guth agrees that having longer classes would be a difficult shift; "Since school being online, I can hardly focus for 45 minutes, let alone 90 minutes for classes in person." The longer class duration will be harder on students mentally. With the ongoing pandemic, students do not need any additional challenges to add to their stress.

Additionally, there are a lot of unknowns and underdeveloped parts within the proposed hybrid model. A lot of these unknowns deal with the health and safety of students and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. All people in the buildings will have to wear masks at all times, and students will be seated six feet apart. While these measures are important, there are other health concerns that have not been fully figured out. Mrs. Mabrey brings up some great questions about how health concerns are going to be touched upon during hybrid learning, asking, "How will classrooms be cleaned in between classes? Where will teachers go that share rooms? Will there only be one student allowed in the bathroom at a time? How will the bathroom be cleaned?" Solutions to these questions will need to be figured out before any type of in-person learning can resume; otherwise, the health and safety of students and staff members may be at risk.

Although in-person learning is essential for the development of students, the health and safety of students and staff members is more important. A hybrid-model sounds like a good idea, but the proposed plan is not adequate. Until a safe, effective plan is proposed, it is best for students to continue with a fully virtual school schedule.

Online Learning

Stephanie Samsel '21
News Editor

Why We Can't Let the
"New Normal"
Become Normal

On March 13, Howard County's staff and students began what has been over nine months of conducting most of their academic businesses virtually. In the beginning, it was understandable that no one foresaw the in-person closure surpassing two weeks; after all, not much was known about the coronavirus, so the most logical course of action was to wait until scientists revealed the extent to which it threatened the community and (more importantly) how to respond in a safe, productive manner. It is now December, with the first three quarters of school having been completely virtual. If the aforementioned questions were still left unanswered, the current method of strictly online learning would be understandable. Keyword: If. The infamously called upon science has provided answers, and it is worth noting that none of them include "virtual instruction," let alone lockdowns.

For months, the argument in favor of online learning and lockdown measures alike has been founded on the idea that the greater extent by which one social distances, the safer one is. But is that true? At Brigham and Women's Hospital, researchers collected evidence that supports the "hygiene hypothesis": the idea that individuals who are exposed to germs in childhood develop better immunity. They found that unlike young mice living in an unaltered environment with microbes, the germ-free counterparts "had exaggerated inflammation of the lungs and colon resembling asthma and colitis." This resembles the counterproductive flaw of children residing at home, where microbiomes remain nearly stagnant: Lockdowns do not strengthen immunity, they merely delay inevitable transmission upon reconciliation long-term. According to the International Journal of Molecular Medicine, "A weak-

ened immune system appears to be the main determinant of serious/fatal reaction to [COVID-19] infection." The verdict: Coronavirus cases themselves are not to be feared; however, hyperactive immune systems in response to the virus are. For students in grades K-12 without preexisting conditions, virtual learning only serves as an inexcusable inhibitor to their daily quality of life.

On July 20, the CDC reported, "Children and adolescents under 18 years old account for under 7% of COVID-19 cases and less than 0.1% of COVID-19-related deaths." Every death is and should be considered tragic. What is disconcerting, however, is that the mere contraction of illness — an inevitable part of every life — is being equated to said tragedy when the likelihood of a child's death due to the coronavirus is far less than "each of the last five flu seasons," as well as the H1N1 pandemic. Out of the 9,000 HCPSS staff members, only 11% fall under the age demographic most vulnerable to the virus, with Howard County having one of the lowest numbers of cases in central Maryland. During a White House coronavirus task force briefing, CDC Director Robert Redfield stated, "The infections we have identified in the schools...were not acquired in schools. They were acquired in the community and the household." Sacrificing mental, emotional and social stability for unnecessary fear and strained hours in front of computer screens is unacceptable.

It is important to note that the coronavirus is not the only threat to well-being. As many students and staff will attest — alongside the findings of the Royal Society for Public Health — long-term virtual models are incapable of soothing the

harmful effects of sensory deprivation that take a toll on not just academic motivation, but satisfaction in relationships and the maintenance of overall health. "I think that connection piece, both staff wise and student wise, is just what we're missing the most," shares Ms. Pappadeas, one of Howard High's guidance counselors. "I really feel for people who might be new students this year, and may not know anyone else, or our incoming ninth graders — I imagine how difficult the transition to high school already is — let's add the layer of we haven't gotten to meet face-to-face yet."

What is most surprising is not that 40% of U.S. adults reported in June that they struggled with mental health or substance abuse, nor that there is an increase in suicidal ideation among young adults, nor that a "second wave" of disorders (e.g., prolonged grief, major depressive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder) is reported by the medical journal JAMA to be on the rise, but rather that the freedom to explore treatment options has been abolished, leaving it up to representatives alone to decide how one lives his or her life rather than the individual in question. It is hypocritical to preach about being accommodating to health concerns when virtual protocols ignore quality treatment for pre-existing, life-threatening conditions, exacerbating suffering. Ms. Stark, Howard's nurse, asserts, "When you virtually see your doctor it's really half of an appointment if you think about it because they can't lay hands on you, they can't listen to your heart sounds, your lung sounds, they can't palpate your abdomen, they can't — there are so many things that can't happen. People can't get mammograms, x-rays...there was a long period of time where that was all

Stretches to Relieve Back Pain

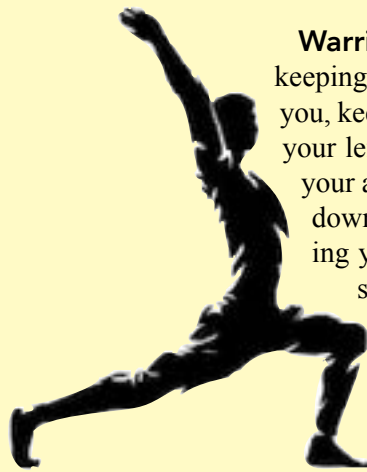
Amanda Silver '21
Staff Writer

being pushed back.”

Contrary to what is being publicized, the argument for reopening schools is one of rational consideration for the well-being of students and staff: Socially, behaviorally, emotionally and even physically. “In general, virtual learning has allowed students to shrink away... that’s not a good thing to happen especially because education and school are supposed to be a time where you are maturing: learning how to speak up in front of a class of 30 kids. You’re supposed to learn how to be presentable. That in itself could be emotionally scarring, maybe in the future when we will return to the norm and you will have to give a presentation maybe in college,” considers Elizabeth Banyas, the Executive President of Howard’s SGA. “Even if we work in breakout rooms, they’re not the same type of breakout rooms that we had before... [Students] don’t want to have their cameras on, we’re not working on the same paper in class, we’re not having class discussions in English classes. I love those,” she added earnestly.

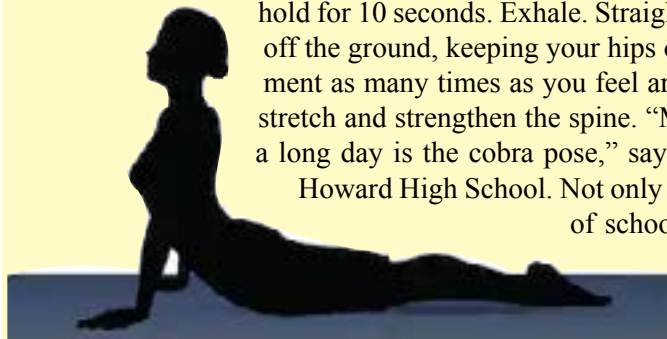
The idea that closing schools will prevent further spread of the virus is misleading because it refuses to acknowledge the irrevocable risk of viral contraction that accompanies members of the community daily during errand runs, work shifts, visits with friends and family and doctor’s appointments. Rather than subject 60,000 students and 9,000 staff members to the same futile attempts of “stopping the spread,” HCPSS should focus on protecting our most vulnerable by allowing them to receive virtual instruction while keeping the education system and safety of tens of thousands afloat.

In the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, many students and teachers experience back pain from sitting at a desk for multiple hours a day during online school. According to Healthline, back pain occurs when there is straining on the disks that help keep your vertebrae from rubbing against each other. A common reason why many people experience back pain is from bad posture. When you sit at a desk for a long period of time, your posture slowly worsens, which aggravates the disks and causes you a lot of pain. As stated in an UC Davis article, “poor posture can easily be reversed and healed with daily stretching.”



Warrior: Start by placing your right foot in front of you, keeping your toes tracking forward. Place your left leg behind you, keeping it straight as you sink into a lunge position. Pivot your left foot approximately 45 degrees to the left and place your arms above your head, keeping your shoulders pressed down. Lift your chin to look up at the ceiling while squeezing your back blades together. Hold for approximately 30 seconds, then repeat on the left side. This pose is used to stretch and strengthen your shoulders, arms and back. Dean Baghdadi, a junior at Howard High School, uses yoga as a way to relieve back pain after sitting at his desk all day. “My favorite yoga pose to do when I am experiencing back pain is the warrior pose,” states Baghdadi.

Cobra: Begin by laying on your stomach with your feet hip distance apart. Place your arms shoulder length apart and bend them at a 45 degree angle. Press your thighs, feet and hips firmly into the ground. Breathe in and hold for 10 seconds. Exhale. Straighten your arms and lift your chest off the ground, keeping your hips on the ground. Repeat this movement as many times as you feel are necessary. This pose is used to stretch and strengthen the spine. “My favorite yoga pose to do after a long day is the cobra pose,” says Anaya Brown, a sophomore at Howard High School. Not only does she do yoga after a long day of school, but she enjoys doing it in her free time as well.



Tips for stretching:

- Hold stretches for 10 to 30 seconds
- Only stretch to comfort, not to pain
- Do not stretch if your muscles are cold
- Go for a 5 to 10 minute walk first
- Do not bounce when stretching
- Do not stretch an injured muscle



EDIT

A

A reader starts with the cover. She absorbs the vivid scene, even noticing the shape of the title. She holds the solid weight of the book as the scent that every reader recognizes blankets her. She flips to the first page, the rustling paper and telltale creak of the spine announcing the beginning of a journey.

Click. Swipe. Swipe. Does that seem like the same experience?

Reading through devices is barren, artificial. It is devoid of life and connection and wonder. Yet, in the virtual society of COVID-19, this soulless online experience is more prevalent than ever. The days of passing out print novels for students to read have stopped, replaced with the lackluster equivalent of on-screen stories with the software *Actively Learn*. In-person library browsing — walking up and down shelves of treasure, discovering new gems to take home — has ended. These changes seem to point toward a world of online reading, but we should not settle for that!

As an avid reader, there is nothing that would make me trade in my collections of beautiful print books for a digital copy. There is satisfaction in being able to physically hold a book, to get lost in the pages. (Most of us have the war wounds to show for it; papercuts always seem to sneak in just when I get immersed in a story.) Reading is a sensory experience — senses that only appear when reading on paper. Any reader knows the scent of books, the sensation of rifling through the pages, the feeling of progress as you turn the pages and the stack of pages on the left grows. As Ms. Mohr, the Howard High media specialist, says, “There’s something about the smell of a book and the whole experience of opening up a book and thumbing

ctively Disliked

Ariel Hammerash '21
Copy Editor

through the pages that you don't really get from reading online." Actively does not even display the page numbers, which is something that many readers like using to track progress. Knowing what page I stopped on — especially when a bookmark isn't handy — and how many pages I have left to go is grounding. "I read 21% of my book today" doesn't have the same ring as "I read 105 pages today." Not to mention, it's a lot more difficult to find your place when you have to rely on a percentage rather than simply flipping to a certain page. Michelle Wagoner, a senior, grimaces as she sums it all up: "I just don't like that it's online, that you're scrolling instead of flipping through the pages of a book."

Actively falls short when it comes to reading for comprehension. A study conducted by Anne Mangen of Norway's Stavanger University showed that "students who read texts in print scored significantly better on the reading comprehension test than students who read the texts digitally." If research shows that readers absorb more information — notably plot progression — when reading print books, is it wise to move books for English classes online with Actively?

Handling technology also poses its own problems. Ms. Mohr mentioned the initial difficulties that students and teachers encountered with syncing and accounts. I can say for certain that this problem is easily avoided: a print book will never kick you out because your account isn't linked! Reading books in print is also easier on the eyes. Senior Abigail John notes that reading with Actively "hurts her eyes because [she's] spending hours just staring at a screen; everything's online already, so staring at a screen to read on top of

that is even worse." Since the lights behind computer screens glare into the eyes while reading, online readers often experience computer vision syndrome (CVS), according to the University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics. Headaches, burning eyes, and neck pain are just the least of the problems.

The solution is to try to get a copy of that print book you've been reading through Actively. Stop in at a used bookstore, order one online from the library, or ask a friend or family member if they have a copy lying around (you might be surprised at the books sitting unnoticed on people's bookshelves.) What would be even better is if schools distributed books once again. Since virtual learning is continuing into the second semester, schools should pass out paperback books to students during the textbook pickup—getting a print copy of a book for English class is just as important as that physics textbook.

And while hunting for those Shakespeare plays for English class, take the time to order a book to read for pleasure. In addition to regular pickup of holds, the Howard County Library System offers book packages, organized by genre and grade level. Take your pick, and your bag of books will soon be ready for pickup. The Howard High media center is also open for contactless book pickup; use [this link](#) to check out a book for yourself!

Actively Learn does its job. After all, an online book is better than no book at all. However, it simply cannot compare to the experience of a print book. When you have the chance to read, take the opportunity to leave behind the screen. Grab a paperback, take a deep breath, and slow down. Relax into the world of print.



A Year in Review

The year 2020 was shaped around thrilling events, stunning deaths, entertaining specials and irksome masks. On January 1, the headline for the New York Times read: "IRAQ PROTESTERS ASSAULT EMBASSY AFTER U.S. STRIKE." 322 days later it read: "ANOTHER VACCINE APPEARS TO WORK AGAINST THE VIRUS." A preliminary outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) in China expanded to become a world-wide pandemic. Living in

the shadow of the virus, social distancing and face masks became the new normal. As if the virus wasn't enough to handle, the U.S. also dealt with uncontrollable wildfires on the west coast, a crash in the stock market, world war three threats, an impeachment trial and hysteria over murder hornets. The rest of the world had drama of its own, including Australian wildfires, an explosion in Beirut, complications to the Olympic Games and the ongoing dispute between the United Kingdom and the European Union.

May 25 saw a video of George Floyd go viral after he was shown pleading for his life. Paired with the deaths of Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery, many Americans joined in protests around the country. While a few protests became violent, the majority stayed peaceful and brought systemic racism to the nation's attention. On June 2, youth-led group HOCO For Justice led a "Black Lives Matter" protest in Columbia that was the largest in Howard County history.

Staying mentally healthy in 2020 was easier said than done. According to the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy, depression rates in the U.S. have tripled during the pandemic. Luckily, the Howard community found ways to cope with all the uncertainty. "I really enjoyed playing the drums and taking bike rides," says junior Nico Drummond. Senior Elizabeth Banyas capitalized on the extra time as she says, "I see this time as a way to recharge before college. I've learned how to be self-propellant and cook, both being important for college." Health and physical education teacher Mr. McGoun adds, "Get outside! It is easy to be stuck on screens all day, so getting some fresh air can really help keep you healthy."

2020 also saw many deaths of prominent figures. "I think that John Prine had the biggest impact on me. He was a simple countryman that always had a positive outlook on life. His music was so joyful and positive. His death set the tone of 2020," says Drummond. The world paused on January 26 when former NBA player Kobe Bryant and his daughter, Gianna, were among nine victims in a fatal helicopter crash. "I was never really a big basketball fan, but Kobe's death made me realize how fragile life is. You never know when it can be snatched up from you," says Mr. McGoun. The African American community suffered the loss of civil rights activist John Lewis (July 17) and actor Chadwick Boseman (August 28). Women's rights activist Ruth Bader Ginsburg also lost her life on September 18. Ginsburg spent 27 years on the U.S. Supreme Court and was the second woman to ever



Columbia, Maryland, June 2, 2020 -Protesters in the crowd pause for a moment of silence during a demonstration organized by HoCo 4 Justice, at the lakefront in Columbia. BALTIMORE SUN MEDIA GROUP/BRIAN KRISTA

attention. On June 2, youth-led group HOCO For



Columbia, Maryland, April 7, 2020 - Monna Youmans with the Howard County Health Department holds up a sign with instructions for motorists arriving at the Emissions Testing Station. The station has begun operating as a COVID-19 test site for patients with scheduled appointments. BALTIMORE SUN MEDIA GROUP/BRIAN KRISTA



Baltimore, Maryland, September 13, 2020 - The Baltimore Ravens open their 2020 season in an empty M&T Bank Stadium against the Cleveland Browns. BALTIMORE RAVENS PHOTOS/JOEY PULONE

ICON RATINGS

Ruby Gifford '23

Features Editor

Edward Calkins '22
Managing Editor

serve on the Court. The entertainment world also lost Mr. Peanut, the 108-year old Planter's mascot, musician Eddie Van Halen (October 6) and long-time Jeopardy! host Alex Trabeck (November 8).

A major source of the world's entertainment was shut down when many sports leagues were canceled due to the pandemic. Freshman Grace Hall says, "It was just weird not seeing sports on TV during the weekend or going to my sister's millions of tournaments." With the lack of visual entertainment, streaming services stepped up their game and brought conversation starters with shows such as Tiger King and Hamilton. Drive-in movie theaters and concerts emerged as the best "out-of-the-house" entertainment. On May 30, many Americans witnessed astronauts Doug Hurley and Bob Behnken become the first Americans to be launched into space since 2011. To raise money for coronavirus relief, NFL stars Tom Brady and Peyton Manning joined golf legends Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson in a televised charity golf match. Many musicians also contributed to relief funds by giving once-in-a-lifetime performances while in a virtual setting.

As a result of the pandemic, families have had to find ways to stay connected virtually. Drummond says, "Our family has been able to virtually see our grandparents every Sunday. It helps me keep my mind straight while enjoying my family." Animals continue to nurture their relationships with humans while in isolation. "My dog helped me stay distracted and passed the time so that I could tune out the chaos in the world," says junior Gregory Heiger. Thematically, events such as birthdays and weddings looked far from normal during 2020. Mr. McGoun reflects on his wedding from earlier this year, saying, "Planning a wedding is hard to begin with, but with the addition of the pandemic, it made it even harder. We had to cut the guest list in half and we actually set up a Google Meet for those most at-risk. The best part was that my 99-year-old grandma got to see the wedding and was amazed with the advancement of technology."

Whether it's the new Google icons, online learning icons or menu icons, students have seen more tiny emblems than human faces this year. Below is the definitive ranking of internet iconography.



evil /10

While this icon initially seems simple and pleasing to the eye, it all takes a turn for the worse when you realize... they're all watching you.



-10 /10

Somehow it's worse that the old green dialogue bubble! The triangle at the front of the camera gave Google an opportunity to make the colors worse, and they certainly took it. Thanks, I hate it.



0 /10

The color isn't bad, but the shape is too basic. It's no longer recognizable as a calendar—one of the best traits of the older version. The "31" in the middle is a feeble attempt to redeem itself.



2 /10

Where did that lovely envelope go? Now it just looks like the letter "M," and the corners look inconsistent for no reason. The colors are awful, too.



3 /10

This is too simple and abstract; it's literally just 3 shapes. I don't think they put a lot of brain power into this one. I gave it one point for each shape.



4 /10

I understand the concept, but it still feels messy and too complicated. I feel like the smaller this icon gets, the more indistinguishable it is. The geometry makes my head hurt.



8 /10

I have a lot of appreciation for this icon, but it has a very specific use. This icon can only really be used for a menu of apps. Symmetrical and clear, but limited applications.



9 /10

These menu icons are a classic! You see it everywhere and it's pretty standard as far as menus go. It's very cute! I love how many names this one has! Peapod, meatballs, kabab - they're all good options.



10 /10

Classic Kahoot! This icon is so enthusiastic and properly conveys the relief of knowing you get to ~~waste class time~~ play a fun, educational game.



11 /10

So cute! Consistent line width and design; the colors are so comforting and cheerful! The pear looks like he's not paying attention (which isn't necessarily inaccurate, as far as Peardeck goes).

AOC IS AMONG US

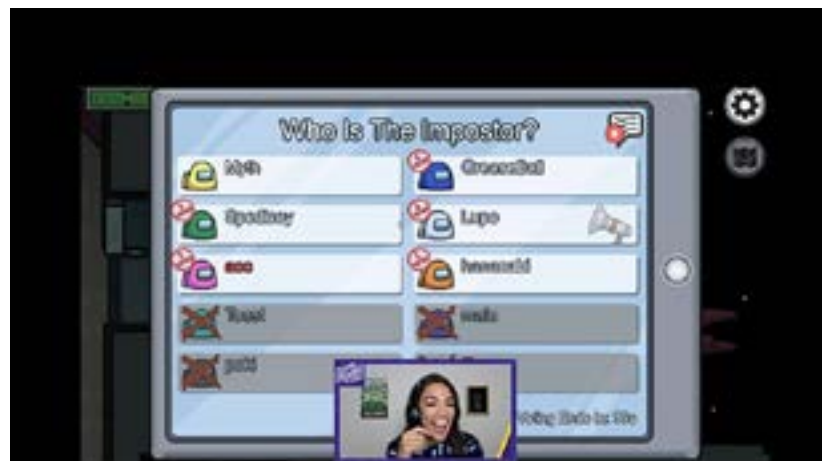
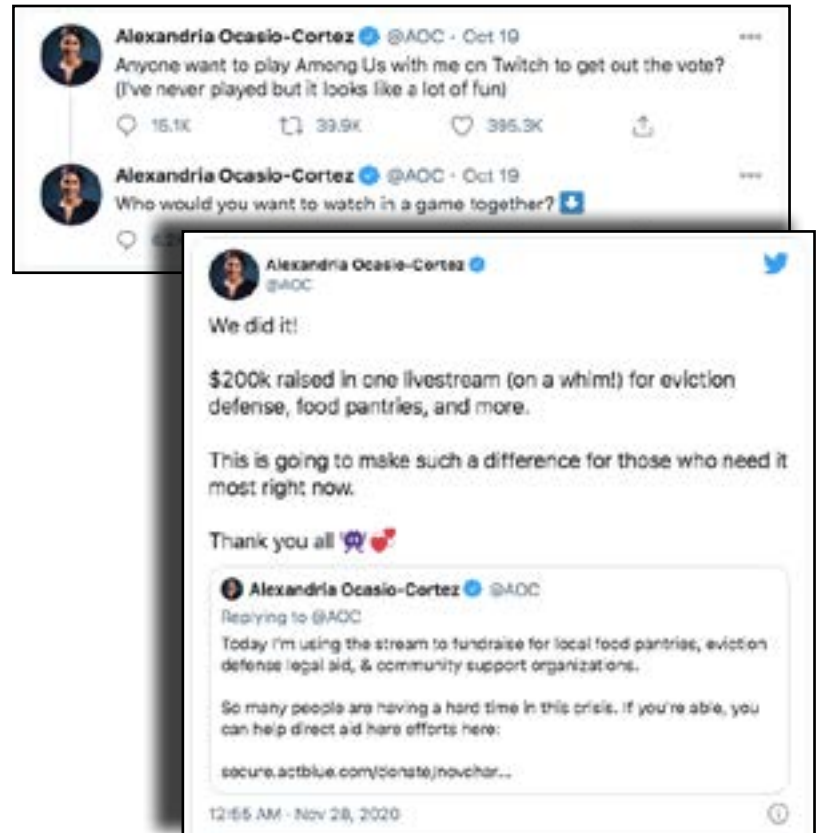
Chijioke Agbam '21
Staff Writer

On October 20, 2020, exactly two weeks before election day, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez streamed the popular social deduction game, Among Us, on Twitch. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, also known for her initials AOC, is an American politician serving as the U.S. Representative for New York's 14th congressional district. She has served in this position since 2019 and was recently re-elected during the 2020 election. After the election, she continued sharing her gameplay, streaming Among Us on November 28 with new streamers such as Félix "xQc" Lengyel and Seán William "JackSepticEye" McLoughlin.

For those that don't know, Among Us is a social deduction game that can be played with 4-10 people. At the beginning of the game, you will be given one of two roles. You will either be a crewmate, who will complete tasks on certain locations of a map, or an imposter, who will sabotage parts of the map. As a crewmate, you can win by either finishing all of the tasks that are given or by voting out the imposter(s) during a meeting. These meetings can be called after finding a dead body or hitting the emergency meeting button that is placed in a designated area on the map. As an imposter, you can win by killing all of the crewmates or sabotaging a crucial area of the map and allowing the timer to reach zero. AOC played Among Us with many popular streamers such as Ali "Myth" Kabbani, Benjamin "DrLupo" Lupo and Imane "pokimane" Anys.

Her stream in October was considered one of the most successful to date, having 300,000 to 400,000 viewers on average. The stream was preceded by AOC tweeting, "Anyone want to play Among Us with me on Twitch to get out the vote?"

AOC's Among Us stream was successful in generating voter turnout, as she was re-elected to her position as the U.S. Representative for New York's 14th congressional district. A graph presented by dataforprogress.org shows that the younger the average age of the voters, the larger the share of votes won by AOC. The November stream of Among Us was a fundraiser for food pantries and eviction relief, which raised \$200,000 to help those in need.



ABOVE: Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez tweets an invitation to play Among Us and watch the first stream, then announces successful fundraising from the second stream.
BELOW: AOC streaming on October 20. TWITTER/ SLATE.COM

RESPECT THE CLASSICS

Meghan Yunkun '23
Staff Writer

“Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to get through this thing called life...” - Prince 1984.

Younger people are likely not familiar with the source of that saying or the identity of the artist who said it. Little did you know, he is an inspiration to many of today's artists. Many students only know classic rock music from their parents or hearing it on the radio. Many would be surprised by how many modern artists sample from musicians of the past, influenced by their beats and lyrics. The rap artist that you listen to today may be inspired by rappers like Eminem, whose inspirations go back to groups like the Beastie Boys and Run DMC. Music is constantly evolving, reflecting different experiences and emotions. While pop music often reflects more positive moods, music that explores slower tempos and minor keys can reflect negatives. The connection of music to emotional experiences is something that everyone can relate to.

We all immerse ourselves in music in different ways: Seeing what friends or family enjoy, finding songs ourselves or just hearing songs on the radio. Jordan Rumsey, a senior at Howard High School, says she got her music taste from “Growing up and watching movies and shows from the 70's and 80's. Then I found a radio station that played music I enjoyed. It turns out it was 80's music. I found some artists I liked and bought their cassettes. From then I started a whole collection.” Jordan says that she seems to stick with “new wave, pop and alternative rock.” Some of her favorite artists include Pat Benatar, Debbie Gibson, Joan Jett and Jennifer Love Hewitt.

A few of my favorite artists are Prince, Motley Crue, Michael Jackson, Cyndi Lauper, Madonna and Queen. Some of my favorite songs are “Let's Go Crazy” by Prince, “I Drove All Night” by Cyndi Lauper, “Don't Stop Me Now” by Queen, “The Way You Make Me Feel” by Michael Jackson and “Love Street” by The Doors. These artists are my biggest inspirations. To find your own inspirations, use the link or QR code to access a [Spotify playlist](#) curated with a mix of '60s, '70s and '80s music!



IF YOU LIKE...

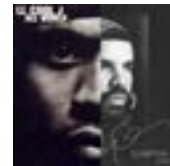
Miley Cyrus &
Taylor Swift



TRY...

Prince &
Michael Jackson

Drake &
Tyler the Creator



LL Cool J &
The Beastie Boys

Hozier &
Pinegrove



The Pixies &
Joy Division

The Struts &
Cage the Elephant



Motley Crue &
Poison

OPINION

Social Media Censorship



Jessica Menk '22
Staff Writer

On October 11, widely popular social media outlets Twitter and Facebook censored an article from the New York Post concerning Hunter Biden's emails written during President Obama's terms. This decision caused an uproar from newspapers and users of social media. Censorship in the media has always been met with tremendous concern in the United States; in today's society, many people get their news from social media rather than news channels, so it is a crucial topic to discuss. There are people who believe that some types of censorship in the media are acceptable, even necessary in certain situations. But that mindset raises the question: how far is too far?

Social media has become a vital part of life in today's society, being used not only for entertainment, but also as a source of news. Teenagers and adults alike turn to social media for news, especially when it pertains to politics. People should be able to trust that when they turn to social media, sites will highlight all sides of controversial topics.

When discussing an issue of this magnitude, there is always the question of what should be considered a reputable news source. Reputable is defined in the dictionary as "having a good reputation." In terms of news, this constitutes well-known, trusted newspapers and media sources. Credibility in a news source comes from the research with facts and evidence as well as the overall truth presented within individual articles. When Twitter and Facebook censor credible articles from reputable sources, that is a problem.

Several Howard students and staff members unanimously affirmed that they believed freedom of speech was essential for democracy. Given that response, the fact that social media is allowed to censor credible sources discussing important issues should be concerning for social media users nationwide.

Ember Anderson, a Howard High junior, says social media should present a balanced opinion on controversial topics "so that every person has equal access to different opinions so they can form their own opinion based on that." Many people use what they see on social media to formulate their own opinions regarding political topics. When social media companies use their own judgement to censor what people can and cannot see, they do not allow people to be informed and discern for themselves, but instead promote limited viewpoints to their users.

Howard High staff member Mr. Doug Kaplan said, "the way the [social media] algorithm is set up is designed in order to promote division and not unity." Instead of bringing the country together and allowing people to talk and share ideas freely as it was intended to, social media has created more issues for our country.

Although many people agree that social media should not be allowed to censor credible articles and statements from their websites, some do not. When asked, Mr. Kaplan said that social media should "absolutely" be able to censor their websites: "They should be able to take down and put up whatever they want to, and if people don't like it then don't use it." Since Twitter and Facebook are both privately owned businesses, he believes that they should be able to censor whatever and whenever they want to, regardless of whether the information is true or false, harmful or harmless. But the companies do have a responsibility to provide information to the general public. Therefore, if they are going to knowingly censor one side of want-to-know topics, they should be required to issue a disclaimer on their page that only one side is being presented, so people can understand the website's bias.

Others believe that social media should be able to censor their websites, to an extent. How-

HCPSS Bans Swastika, Confederate Flag

Kenny Ling '21
Staff Writer

ard High teacher Mr. Greg Bulger says, “as citizens we have the right to free speech as it was intended, but I think they also have a duty to make sure what we’re getting is at least honest information,” and that “if it’s out there just strictly to be false information or confusing, to me, there’s some duty to help people understand that there might be a problem with it.” In response to a question specifically about reputable political articles, he said, “I would have a hard time with just straight-up censoring the articles.” Many others feel the same. Belle Larson, a Howard High junior, says, “I believe censorship is good for younger users in terms of inappropriate language or images, but if you are registered for the account and you agreed to the terms and services, I don’t believe it should be censored.”

Twitter’s terms and services states, “We reserve the right to remove Content that violates the User Agreement, including for example, copyright or trademark violations or other intellectual property misappropriation, impersonation, unlawful conduct, or harassment.” Nowhere in that list does it say anything about being able to remove news articles or even untrue information from their website. When someone agrees to the terms and services, they are agreeing that they can have their posts taken down under certain situations outlined in the terms and services, but none of those reasons include the censorship of an article, or even the censorship of untrue information. In fact, the terms and services also state, “All Content is the sole responsibility of the person who originated such Content. We may not monitor or control the Content posted via the Services and, we cannot take responsibility for such Content.” It clearly states that the content a person posts is their own, and Twitter cannot be held responsible for the content or monitor and control it. Facebook’s terms and services are very similar.

Social media is extremely influential and is a way for them to share their opinions and ideas. When social media is allowed to censor reputable information provided by users of their sites, thereby preventing access to important information from credible sources, they are taking away freedoms granted to Americans in the First Amendment. Twitter and Facebook should not be allowed to limit access of information from people without facing repercussions or first issuing a disclaimer on their websites. Although social media is an amazing resource that helps make life easier, we must understand the biased influences that occur on these platforms, especially as it pertains to our given freedoms.

“Promoting hatred” is never a welcoming sight to see, especially on school grounds. On October 8, the Board of Education unanimously approved a ban that prohibits images or symbols that promote hatred, intimidation or harassment. This ban includes — but is not limited to — the Confederate flag and Swastika. These hate symbols are no longer allowed on HCPSS property, which encompasses clothing, vehicles and school-related events. The approved ban was initiated through the modification of the school system’s bullying, harassment and intimidation policy and the student code of conduct.

Anderson Coreas, a junior at Oakland Mills high school, gives his opinion regarding the ban: “Honestly I thought that the Board (of Education) already had a ban on the Nazi symbol and Confederate flag, so this to me seems long overdue.” Mr. Schroder, a teacher at Howard, also had a similar opinion regarding the timeliness of the ban, saying, “I’m surprised it wasn’t something already enacted. It took them until 2020 to look into it.”

The Howard County Public School system is not the first to ban the Confederate flag and Swastika in Maryland. The hate symbols were banned from Westminster High School property back in 2018 due to many students representing the Confederate flag on their clothing and vehicles. Students agree that the banning of hate symbols creates a unified community in school. “I think that since the people can’t rep the Swastika and Confederate flag anymore, it makes us all a little bit more comfortable around each other,” says Nathaniel Smith, a senior at Howard.

Based on the severity and level of offense, punishments for violating the modified policy will vary, ranging from smaller penalties to expulsion for repeated offenses, in accordance with the school’s code of conduct. Although it was stated in the ban that hate symbols would be banned on school property, only the Confederate flag and Swastika were specified by name. It is likely other hate symbols that become prominent throughout Howard County will be added to the policy and code of conduct. With this notable decision from the Board of Education, there is no doubt that Howard County has taken a greater step in support of inclusivity.

Women Make History: Harris and Ng

Nicole Parker '24
Sports Editor



WILMINGTON, DELAWARE, NOVEMBER 7, 2020- Vice President-elect Kamala Harris made history during her victory speech as the first female vice president-elect of the United States. NBC NEWS



MIAMI, FLORIDA, NOVEMBER 16, 2020- Kim Ng at Marlins Park after being named the new General Manager. JOSEPH GUZY/MIAMI MARLINS

In the course of just six days, two powerful women made history by shattering barriers that have been in place for hundreds of years. After her running mate Joe Biden won the electoral college vote on November 7, Kamala Harris became the first-ever female vice president-elect in the United States. Days later, Kim Ng became the first female general manager in Major League Baseball. These milestones are even more extraordinary because both women are also minorities: Harris' parents immigrated from India and Jamaica, and Ng's parents are of Chinese descent.

Harris and Ng broke through the glass ceiling after decades of hard work and a lot of firsts. Harris was the first Black woman to be elected District Attorney in San Francisco and the first woman, first Black American and first Asian American to be California's Attorney General. She is now second in line to the most powerful office in the world. Ng landed her first assistant general manager job with the New York Yankees at 29, but had to wait 22 years and endure rejections from five MLB teams in her pursuit of the top job before being named the general manager of the Miami Marlins.

Freshman Sage Bryant says, "I think it helps representation and definitely boosts young girls' confidence for one, as well as it gives a different view to the country." Bryant hopes that having women in the highest levels of leadership becomes so common that it no longer needs to be talked about: "I hope to have women's rights removed as a discussion topic. Human rights should not be a discussion topic."

To put Harris and Ng's achievements in perspective, the first U.S. president and vice president were elected 231 years ago. Major League Baseball has been around for 151 years. It remains to be seen when a woman will become president or the first head coach of a professional sports team. Ng and Harris' impact is expected to open doors for women all across the country for more opportunities.

Junior Joey Hilte says, "It's really cool to see women representing some major things in modern times. To see how much we have improved as a country and how far [women] have come to have a bigger role in society is great." Hilte thinks Ng's leadership could be a game-changer: "For baseball, this could finally allow that diverge of softball and baseball to be filled and could also allow other sports to incorporate a mix of male and female team members."

As Kamala Harris said during her acceptance speech a few weeks ago, she may be the first woman to be in this position, but she certainly won't be the last.



Blood Drives in the Pandemic

Abigail Warwick '21
Opinion & Editorial Editor

As hospital beds continuously fill up, blood has become one of the most detrimental shortages brought on by the novel coronavirus. The increasing number of patients flooding hospitals worldwide have resulted in less blood to use — and a higher demand for donations. Blood is not only used for coronavirus patients; it is also implemented in the surgical procedures that have continued since the pandemic put them on pause in the spring. There is always a need for blood donations, but since more ICU beds are being filled, the need has increased.

In addition to patients needing blood for surgical procedures, Howard High's nurse, Mrs. Stark, states, "COVID patients can end up in the ICUs and require [a] blood transfusion, platelets, and plasma."

"Every two seconds in the United States, someone needs a blood transfusion," she mentions. "Regular blood donations by healthy people ensure that safe blood will be available whenever and wherever it is needed."

Blood donation sites are everywhere. By navigating to the American Red Cross website and clicking the "Donate Blood" tab, users can search for a donation site by searching their zip code in the "[Find a drive](#)" page. The American Red Cross's database organizes the blood drives by date and time, and users can easily sign up to donate at the most convenient time and place for them. To encourage more people to sign up to donate, the Red Cross has given donors \$5 Amazon gift cards if they donate during certain weeks throughout the year.

The donation process takes just a few minutes and should go smoothly so long as donors stay hydrated and eat the day of and before. Upon arrival at the donation site, donors will be asked a series of questions and their temperature will be taken, as well as a quick blood sample. After the preparation, the blood donation begins and goes by rather quickly. Donors are given water and a snack, should they want them.

As for students who may be hesitant to donate because of the pandemic, Mrs. Stark assures, "COVID-19 does not pose any specific risks to blood donors during the donation process or from attending blood drives. All practices are designed with your safety in mind, with additional policies around sanitation and increased distance between donors. Blood donors must be healthy and without [a] fever on the day of donations. The risk of exposure to a sick person is extremely low at a blood drive."

Grace Antill, a senior at Howard, donated blood over the summer. Antill, who fainted as a result of her iron deficiency*, says, "The technicians prioritize the safety of those donating. The only instance where I was not wearing a mask was when I fainted while having my blood drawn; the technicians removed my mask for my own safety as they felt [it was] necessary." At donation sites, masks are required and seats are placed 6 feet apart. Donating blood is highly encouraged by health care officials all the time, but it is even more important during this trying period when blood is in higher demand.



COLUMBIA, MARYLAND, October 27, 2020- Blood donation sites adhere to social distancing guidelines from the CDC. ABIGAIL WARWICK/ LION'S TALE

*fainting is not a common phenomenon while donating unless the donor has low iron levels or is not hydrated

LOVE YOURSELF

Cultivating Body Positivity

ALYSSA MCGUIGAN '23
& MICHAELA WALL '23
STAFF WRITERS



Society tells us that if we work out four hours a day, only eat one meal and starve ourselves sick, we will have the ideal body. Once you can wrap your fingers around your waist until they touch, you're beautiful. Once that three-sizes-too-small shirt fits, you've reached your goal. Society says that if you're too big, you're fat. Simultaneously, you're boney and sickly if you're too small. Diet culture and social media, specifically Instagram, flaunt these definitions, knowing that teens will conform. This can't continue as an acceptable way to live.

Body positivity is a widespread rejection of those impossible standards, showing people of all ages that their body is beautiful no matter size, race, culture, gender identification, sexuality or imperfections. Sophomore Prem Doshi defines body positivity as "How one sees themselves. Body positivity is being happy with the body that you have. It also means being in the right mindset to love yourself." Many people struggle with the idea of being perfect. They wrestle the feelings of despair and helplessness when they cannot achieve a perceived idea of perfection.

Achieving body positivity is difficult. Promoting body positivity in our schools can be as easy as putting up posters telling students that they matter, that they shouldn't have to feel the way they do. In virtual learning, promotion can include setting up group discussions — open to all students — with professionals to ensure students don't develop eating disorders.

Eating disorders come in many forms, such as starving oneself (anorexia), binge eating, or forcefully vomiting (bulimia). The National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders shares that 9% of Americans will have an eating disorder in their lifetime, and 10,200 Americans die each year as a direct result of an eating disorder. Also, more than a quarter of people who suffer from eating disorders attempt suicide.

Gender, race, socioeconomic status, age and additional diagnoses can affect the likelihood one develops an eating disorder, recovers from a disorder, or receives comprehensive treatment for the disorder (visit anad.org for more information).

Senior Hannah Watanabe says, “I used to like diets and stuff, and I tried [them] when I was younger when I was really kind of hating my body. And honestly, it didn’t do anything good for me. It ended up spiraling my eating disorder out of control.” Diets used to be just a term for cutting out a food group to improve your personal health. The diets of today are much more restrictive such as Keto, strict vegan diets, raw food diets, and many low-carb diets. Diets and diet culture give young and impressionable teens unrealistic goals, such as losing 20 pounds in one week. When they can’t meet those goals, they feel like failures.

Schools must promote body positivity because in your teenage years, you spend over 35 hours a week in school. No one could argue that school has a large impact on student lives. Some even spend more time there for extra help, clubs and sports. Though these mental health issues are difficult to talk about, schools can do so much to promote body positivity. Open discussion about these ideals in a school can open up discussions at home and make students feel less alone. If schools can provide a safe space for struggling students, it could make a tremendous impact. In the end, it all comes full circle to promoting body positivity, as loving yourself is the best prevention method for eating disorders and other consequences of a negative body image.

Within Howard, our school is congratulated on its diversity, awareness and problem-solving. However, with new problems occurring every day, it is important to stay aware and educated. We conducted a poll for Howard students with the following question, “Has society altered your body image, and has that affected your mental health?” With 16 votes, the overwhelming response via Twitter poll was yes (94%).

Sophomore Gracin O’Connor came forward to say, “Seeing as I am not a 5 ‘10”, size 0, perfect Instagram body type, I would have to say absolutely yes.” Senior Hannah Watanabe says, “I wanted to look like that when I was like 12. I was thinking about plastic surgery, and I should not have been thinking about that at all because I was literally a 12 year old. I wasn’t even a teenager yet.”

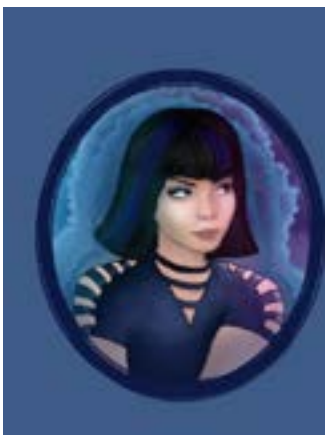
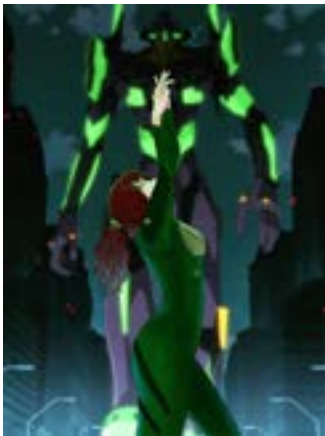
Sophomore Meadow Lockwood says, “I’m not really impacted that much by what strangers think about me, it’s more how my friends see me that matters. I know that all of my friends love me for who I am, so I feel validated.” This is the right mindset for a healthy body image, yet the majority of high school students feel the opposite. A normal and healthy body is going to look different for every single individual. We could all exercise the same, eat the same and live our lives exactly the same. Nonetheless, we would all look different. Each body is built differently. Just as we all have different hair and eye colors, each body has different structures. That’s why it is so important to love your own body the way it is.

We need to promote body positivity at Howard just as much as we promote good grades. Just like the knowledge we get from school, personal body image is something we will carry with us for the rest of our lives.

Artist Spotlight

Holly Larson '23
Staff Writer

GIANNA CASANOVA



Gianna Casanova, a Howard High School sophomore, is a digital artist, photo editor and sketch artist. At the age of fifteen, she has completed several untitled artworks using ibisPaint software. Gianna Casanova is a funny, creative and kind individual whose personality comes out in her art.

When did you start creating art?

“In kindergarten art projects and I just kept doing it whenever I could — it has stayed as mostly a hobby, with the exception of a few commissions. Real hobbies help express your emotion and can make you feel whole.”

What inspired you to make your art?

“It’s fun and I can create whatever I want. I have auditory-visual synesthesia, and by listening to certain pieces of music I could see amazing colors and movement of shapes, which was a really big inspiration for me because I wanted to see if I could put on paper what I was seeing while I listened to certain music.”

What’s your favorite medium to use?

“Watercolors are my favorite paints to work with because I can have fun with ratios of paint to water and they dry slowly so you can take time blending. Since quarantine started I’ve taken up digital art, which has taken a while to get a hang of, and I’m still looking for the best application to use.”

Do you have a favorite art piece?

“Right now my favorite is a digital drawing I did for my friend who needed art and I needed practice. I like it because it allowed me to test out different features in the art application.”

Who is your favorite artist and how does their work reflect in you stylistically?

“I love Andy Warhol and the color he uses, but Brian Kesinger’s work is inspiring me to try new things out and find my personal art style.”

Do you think you will study art after high school?

“Art has always been a hobby. I only took two art classes in middle school and from that, I decided I liked learning on my own — a lot of my art skills are self-taught — but for a time I was interested in going to college for art, but again I’ve decided it’s just a hobby for me.”

JOURNEY THROUGH TIME:

REVIEWS OF 1989'S BILL AND TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE AND 2020'S BILL AND TED FACE THE MUSIC

Alexis Schuster '21
Staff Writer

I decided to watch “Bill And Ted’s Excellent Adventure” on Amazon Prime with my mother, as we were bored and looking around for something intriguing. We ended up watching the trailer for “Bill and Ted: Face the Music,” and my mother had the idea of watching the original and the sequel. Thus, we began our two nights of viewing.

The first Bill and Ted was generally a fun ride. Not thought-provoking or revolutionary in terms of cinema, but in terms of comedy and practical effects, it does well. I like how it does not take itself seriously. Directed by Stephen Herek and written by Chris Matheson and Ed Solomon, the movie portrays two airheaded high school seniors named “Bill S. Preston, Esquire” and “Ted Theodore Logan” (played by Alex Winter and Keanu Reeves, respectively) who travel through time to complete a history report on key historical events and figures. Ted will be sent to an Alaskan military school if he fails the class, separating the two boys. Their time-travelling mentor, Rufus (played by the late George Carlin), arrives to save the friendship, which is the basis for world peace in the future. The pair travels through history, picking up notable faces like Beethoven and Socrates along the way. The two even meet their future selves at one point. The general idea of time travel itself is treated as a comedic plot point rather than a concept with dire effects, and for someone who has seen this exact concept done time and time again, I like the simplicity of it. While some of the raunchy humor may be a bit much for younger viewers, anyone can watch the film. I give this film a 8/10: It is enjoyable, but there is nothing that actively challenges the viewer or brings in something new and original.

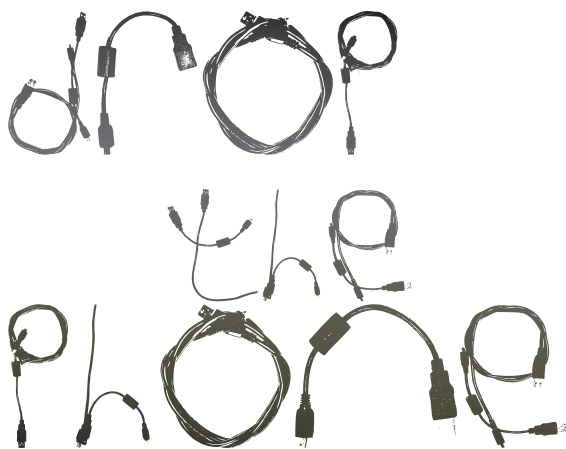


I was quite surprised upon viewing Bill and Ted: Face the Music. I had a sinking feeling that this movie would be nothing but some cheap cash-in sequel that solely milked the nostalgia of the first film, but I am happy to report that is not the case. Directed by Dean Parisot and written by the writers of the first film, it takes on a new plot that revolves around the first movie’s ending regarding a song that will unite all worlds. Bill and Ted (roles reprised by Alex Winter and Keanu Reeves) are trying to find the song to unite all worlds, as the future told them in the first film that they would. The pair initially succeed, but fall into public disfavor when the music they produce is not particularly spectacular. Even as middle aged fathers who have loving wives named Elizabeth and Johanna (played by Erinn Hayes and Jayma Mays) and daughters, Billie and Thea (played by Brigitte Lundy-Paine and Samara Weaving), Bill’s father, Chief Logan (played by Hal Landon, Jr.) has to urge them to get actual jobs and to be good role models for their kids. Rufus’ granddaughter Kelly (played by Kristen Schaal) takes them to the future where they try to steal their own song, while Billie and Thea find various historic music figures to form a band to help Bill and Ted. Add in a killer robot named Dennis Caleb McCoy (played by Anthony Carrigan) and having to play the song by specifically 7:17 PM to prevent total destruction of all worlds, and you have a nice thrill to keep you in your seat.



Like the first film, this one was a fun ride. I felt that it had a more structured plot than the first, with raised stakes that kept me engaged. Focus shifts between Bill and Ted and their daughters, and I felt myself more intrigued by the daughters’ trip through time than Bill and Ted’s adventures and hijinks. The trip to Hell is hilarious. While the plot has been made more complicated compared to the relative aimlessness of the first film, I think the core of the first film was entirely lost on the sequel. The point of the first film was the aimless fun in watching various historical figures walk around a mall and interact with modern ideas and inventions. The one side plot that stuck closer to the original idea was Billie and Thea’s adventures in assembling a team of historic music figures. Aside from these factors, I would still give the film a 7/10. The film kept some of the core of the original and was a surprising watch since it was a sequel to a nostalgic film, but I don’t think it lived up to the fun of the first.

OPINION



Pick Up Your Life

Miles Bell '22
Staff Writer

You might have just read this headline and thought, “Oh boy. Another one of these lectures from an anti-all-technology.” And while I’m not someone who thinks we need to go back to the Stone Age, I realized something a while ago. I want to take some time, if you’re willing, to share that something with you.

It was a regular day. After another day of long, tiring work, I was sitting, quite bored, on my bed. Mindlessly scrolling through Youtube, Twitter and Instagram, I eventually got so bored I was just flipping through my homepage searching for an app to occupy my time. And it was there, in the middle of my search, that I found something unbelievable.

13 hours of screen time.

I repeat. 13 HOURS of screen time.

I stared, partly in disbelief, partly in awe. Somehow, in a day that I thought was draining beyond belief, my phone had been active for over 13 hours that day. Ironically, the first thing I did after seeing that number was fly to Dr. Google, typing in, “Phone Addiction.” Mere seconds later, a page of results showed me that yes — phone addictions do exist.

According to the Pew Research Center, over 54% of US teens say that they spend too much time on their phones, and 31% report that phones distract them from class and work. Because of how social media, and phones in general, are designed, it’s very easy to lose track of time.

But I still didn’t buy it. In my heart, I thought it was impossible. Somehow a device that I believed I had power over, that I controlled, that I could put down at any time I wanted to, had controlled me for years. I did not, could not and would not believe it.

But a number is a number — undeniable evidence of what had been happening, what would have continued to happen. So, to assuage my hurt pride and assure myself that everything was A-OK, I took an online phone addiction test. 20 questions to see if it could potentially be a problem.

I scored 20/20 on the test.

I tell you all of this to make a point. Our phones can be so fun and helpful that it can be hard to look at your phone usage objectively to see if there’s a potential problem. I encourage you to at least check your screen time. Try and take one of the many tests available online; I know personally that Virtual-Addiction has a good one. Analyze the results truthfully. It’s okay to recognize that there is a problem in your life that needs fixing. It’s better than ignoring it for the sake of pride and letting the problem grow.

After reading this rather bleak article on phone usage, you may find yourself asking: what now? Thank the skies and heavens, for I have gathered some steps for you to take to fix this nasty problem. Stay with me!

Step One: Address usage and confront the truth.

Usually, you’ll hear stuff like “Get off your phone,” and “You’re using your phone too much,” from teachers and parents. While they have good intentions (or they’re just annoyed at you), it can come off as a bit naggy and annoying. The first step that I would suggest is to not take this suggestion as an order from some outside source, but as a serious self-reflection of how you want your life to be. Take a look at your screen time, and soak it all in. Step Two: Take steps to help minimize usage

“Out of sight, out of mind” works for many and is worth a shot if you catch yourself distracted. Imagine it’s Sunday night. It’s been a long day of last minute homework, and after a very short time to relax, it’s already time to sleep. You get ready for bed, finish the last check of your phone, set your alarm, set your phone right beside you and sleep. If this sounds like you, then this tip is for you! This devious trap has two consequences right off the bat. One, it’s way too easy to just hit snooze and go back to bed. Two, the very first thing you see and think of is your phone. The list of notifications hits you immediately and before you

know it, you're right back neck deep in your phone. There are two ways to address this problem. The first is that Do Not Disturb is not effective when it comes to waking up, as your phone invites you to turn it off almost immediately. Instead, put your phone on airplane mode. This stops any notifications from coming through and reminds you of why you set it that way in the first place.

The final yet simplest suggestion of the bunch: just set screen time settings on! A screen time setting would remind you that you've hit whatever cap you set. Since you set it (not your parents), screen time settings simply remind you that you hit your cap, and if you need to you can ignore it or extend the limit for that day by a little. In practice, it's quite helpful to keep track of the time that can so quickly slip by you.

Step Three: Recognize the good, the bad, and the purpose

Despite the fact that phones are used by almost everyone, addressing phone usage and potential addiction is a touchy subject. I don't want to solely portray phones as bad, as they have plenty of benefits. They connect us to others we wouldn't otherwise be able to reach, provide easy communication with friends and family, allow us to find the answer to almost any question we have at any time and do stuff we couldn't do before. But our phones, especially social media apps, are designed with the sole purpose of sucking as much time away from us as possible. If you aren't careful, it can be extremely easy to fall into those traps. Prioritize real life, and use your phone to connect with others, organize and take action on issues you care about. The tool you use to facilitate your interests can't become your interests.

Whatever conclusion you reach after reading, I hope that you reflect on what you want out of your life and what you're currently getting out of it. I propose that you seriously reflect on the role your phone has in your life. You're not powerless to make a change in your lifestyle. I promise that if you do decide to put your phone down, you will see endless possibilities for your newfound time when you look up.

Time Management Tips ONLINE SCHOOL EDITION!

Megan Otchet '22 Staff Writer

1

Use a physical calendar

Writing down different events or assignments will help you remember them. Use a calendar to plan ahead and know when breaks are in order to schedule different tasks that come up.



2

Keep a routine

A basic routine will keep you productive and efficient. A routine could include times for:

- Waking up
- Eating meals
- Hobbies or interests outside of school
- Going to sleep

"I'm a big list person, so I made a list of all of my meetings today and I guess that's my motivation because I like to cross it out when I accomplish it... By the end of the day, hopefully that day's list is complete." -Ms. McManus

3

Use given breaks

It is important to balance your breaks in whatever way is comfortable for you. They could take place in the two-and-a-half-hour window between second and third period and/or Wednesday. Wednesdays can be used to get fresh air, exercise, complete schoolwork, communicate or meet with teachers.

"I like to get all of my assignments done on Tuesday and Friday nights, so if I have questions I can talk to my teacher on Wednesday or the weekend, if possible." -Freshman, Logan Ehart

4

Block out distractions

Taking class from a device can allow for different distractions than in a classroom.

- Turn off notifications during class
- Use one device for class and place any others out of reach
- Do not open any unnecessary tabs or apps



5

Reward yourself

Senior Emily Elchynski says, "Since I have work almost everyday, I really have to stay on top of my schoolwork and balance my Howard High and Howard Community College classes. [It] I get all of my assignments done before the weekend, I let myself spend some of my tip money." She finds it helpful to have something other than good grades to look forward to in return for her hard work. This can include watching TV, getting your favorite food, playing video games or any other interest.

Switching between subjects or assignments can cause a

20%

decrease in productivity!

6

Focus on one task

When multi-tasking, it can be difficult to be productive on any of the tasks being done. Focusing on one task can be more efficient because your mind isn't preoccupied with numerous subjects at once.



THE BREAKDOWN

with Ben Fader '21
Editor in Chief

Even over a quarter of the way through the 2020 virtual school year, many students continue to express their displeasure with the current workload. The teachers are expected to give out only 2-3 hours of asynchronous work per week, yet students are still unhappy and even ask for change?

For students taking all of their classes at Howard, they should be averaging between 8-12 hours of asynchronous work plus 12 hours of synchronous class time per week. Junior Sam Brothers says that she has “around 4-6 hours a week... and the workload keeps getting bigger,” whereas Senior John Collins says he receives “textbook work every day and one quiz a week.” These two students both have less than what teachers should be handing out, meaning that guidelines are being followed.

Now that we have the numbers, let's put this into perspective with a normal school year. In person, school is five days a week with around six hours of synchronous learning each day. This works out to 30 hours of just synchronous work each week — already a larger number of hours than total work that students are receiving on the current virtual schedule. When you add projects, studying for tests and quizzes and homework in a normal year, it only leads me to ask once again: Why are students complaining now?

With a lot less work than normal, I cannot wrap my head around how students are unhappy. Sam Brothers mentions that “when we were in school we would do assignments in class instead of homework. Now it all is added to homework which puts a lot more on me.” Although there is more asynchronous work now, the six-hour time window during the day in which work can be completed still exists, simply shifted later. In fact, there is more time than normal to finish all of the work.

On top of extra non-class time to complete work in the virtual school days, students are also getting more sleep. With the first period starting at 9:00 virtually, it is nearly an hour and a half later than the 7:25 start in person. This extra sleep time means students are more rested and have more energy to take on their work for the day. This advantage of the virtual schedule offers yet another reason

to not complain about the current workload.

Most students apparently do not realize that they have a lot less work, since they created a petition protesting the workload. It received a couple thousand signatures in the first month of school. This petition only resulted in the administration having teachers ask the students about the workload through polls. In reality, the course load that we have currently is perfect and fair, especially since we only have four classes per semester, differing from the usual seven.

After the month-long hiatus from school in the spring, we returned for a joke of an ending to the school year. No school work, almost no quizzes or tests and hardly any learning at all. This school year was then followed by a summer of mostly nothing, as people continued to be limited in activities away from home and many remained in quarantine. As young adults, it is extremely important to keep our mind active rather than just sitting around and doing nothing.

This lack of work given to students in the initial COVID-19 time period has made us soft, creating an almost unanimous attitude within the student body questioning the more-than-reasonable amount of school work.



ELLCOTT CITY, MARYLAND, 11/29/20- A lot of homework for the virtual school year has been assigned in textbooks, with students unable to receive packets and worksheets from school-
BEN FADER/ LION'S TALE

Ella Werdell '23
Staff Writer

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E
E

S L A N G

CROSSWORD

Type your letters in!

Across:

2 An app used to make, create, and react to videos

4 Woman who "wants to see the manager"

7 A response to a challenge

9 The decision of the public to dismiss somebody or an idea, "That person should be _____"

10 A word used to tell someone they are lying

11 Suspicious, commonly used in Among Us, "Cyan is _____"

Down:

1 A super fan of a popular celebrity, store, item, app, etc.

3 Tragically mainstream

5 Whens someone opens your message or snap and does not reply, "He left me on _____"

6 Gossip that may be spilled

8 A word used to describe something amazing

3

4

5

6

7

8



10

11

9

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If our readership would like to suggest a correction to an article or write a letter to the editor, please DM our Twitter page @HowardLionsTale or email the advisor, Mrs. Julia Carter, at julia_carter@hcpss.org.

COLOPHON

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