

# The Lion's Tale

WINTER 2020

DIGITAL MAGAZINE

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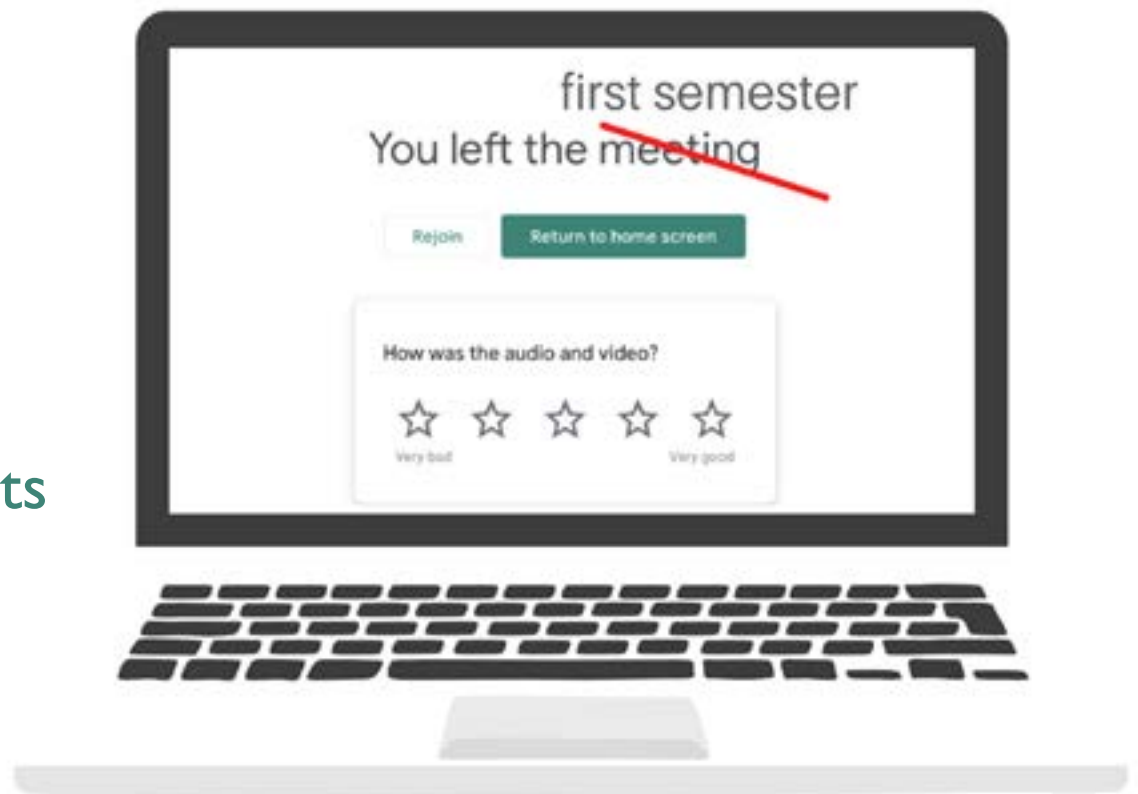
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Kenny Ling	Michaela Wall
Alexis Maokhamphiou	Ella Werdell

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# Covid Vaccine brings hope, questions

Alexis Maokhamphiou '21  
Staff Writer



Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca have constructed COVID-19 vaccines that have been FDA-approved. As the vaccine is being administered around the country, the possibility of preventing the spread of COVID-19 grows; however, the vaccine has not been around for long. Do you trust it enough to get vaccinated?

Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE. developed the first vaccine, and it was administered last month to Sandra Lindsay, a nurse from New York. Pfizer's vaccine has a 95% effective rate against COVID and requires two doses for full effectiveness, the second 21 days after the first. Their vaccine has been approved for ages 16 and older.

The Moderna vaccine has a 94% effective rate and also requires two doses. The second dose is administered 28 days after the first, and the vaccine can be given to those that are 18 years old or older.

AstraZeneca is another vaccine that is being administered in Maryland. AstraZeneca's vaccine is up to 90% effective against COVID. Studies are ongoing for ages 12 to 17 years to receive the vaccine.

There have not been any vaccines approved or administered for children under 12.

Some side effects of the vaccine include soreness at the site of injection, redness and swelling within 1-2 days after the vaccination. Other common side effects include fatigue or tiredness, headache and low-grade fever. Most of these symptoms were resolved in about one-two days after the vaccination. Doctors have stressed the safety of the COVID vaccines and say long-term effects are unlikely.

On December 8, 2020, Governor Larry Hogan said that there is no intention of making the vaccine mandatory or required, "but we're going to do everything we can to encourage it." The idea of getting vaccinated gives hope to Howard's students and staff when it comes to possibly preventing the spread of COVID and eventually going back to normal life. Caroline Otchet, a senior at Howard High School, has been following news about the COVID vaccine and has little to no concerns. She says, "I would feel safer if my peers got the vaccine because at Howard we're all so close together all the time,

since we are a super crowded high school. I think I would feel a lot more comfortable knowing that people were protected against COVID." When Mr. Ho, a teacher at Howard High School, was asked about the vaccine and school, he responded that schools should not open up all the way and that as long as COVID is around, everyone should treat it seriously. He knows that there has not been testing on kids yet and would feel safer going back to school with the vaccine, but would "still feel concerned for the students and does not want to be responsible for the lives of kids." Both Otchet and Mr. Ho plan on getting the vaccine once they are able to.

Since the vaccines are still new and have only been out for a month, some students are uncertain about their effectiveness. Coby Robinson and Alex Marshall, two seniors at Howard High, fall into this category. When they were asked if they trusted the COVID vaccine, Robinson answered, "Not really. The normal vaccine usually takes a couple of years to make and they made this vaccine in 9 months. To me, it doesn't make much sense and I feel like it's not as safe as it could be." When Marshall was asked, he stated, "Kind of. I want to see what happens first but I think I could trust it after I wait a little bit to see if there are any bad effects." Once he is able to, Robinson plans on getting the vaccine, whereas Marshall might wait.

While some students doubt the effectiveness of the vaccine, sophomore Emily Zahn and senior Emily Elchynski have trust in the vaccine. Zahn's reasoning is that a lot of trusted doctors have said it was safe. Elchynski shares that her dad has gotten the vaccine and has not had any difficulties with it. She states, "I do trust the vaccine because there were a lot of companies working on it, and I feel like it is effective based on the people who have gotten it so far and all of the trials."

The COVID-19 vaccine is being administered throughout the country in phases and offers hope in slowing down the spread of the virus. After many tests and research, each individual has to decide for themselves if they will get vaccinated.

# Can Streaming Services Replace the Movie Theater Experience?

Stephanie Samsel '21  
News Editor

Over the past decade, streaming services have become more and more conventional, with today's isolation yielding the success of companies such as Netflix, Hulu and Disney+. The widespread number of entertainment subscriptions to video and music streaming providers alike has led many to speculate whether movie theaters and concert venues will experience a resurgence in customers after there is no longer a concern of contracting COVID-19.

For numerous Howard students, the preference for at-home or public entertainment is based on the release date of the project being viewed. "Movie theaters play movies that aren't on streaming services; they're new and I guess over time [attendance] decreases because the movies come with those streaming services, but once they come out people want to see them then, some people don't want to have to wait. I'm one of those people who doesn't want to wait for a movie, so I'll just go to the movie theater and see it," says junior Amanda Negrete.

Senior Matthew Cheruiyot shares Negrete's decision-making process: "When it comes to the newer movies, definitely... I wanna go to the theater. I don't like watching new movies on my phone or something just because... I know the experience is the movie theater, given the way the movie was built, the sounds, the environment... all that good stuff." In terms of listening to music, he is looking forward to going to concert venues, adding, "I know one thing is for sure: I never want to stream a concert on my phone; that is not a fun experience. That's just me watching a YouTube video more or less. You want to be connected to the artist you're watch-



ing."

Others, however, are more confident that after the pandemic ends, the convenience of streaming will negatively affect movie theater attendance long-term. "I don't see people moving away from streaming services... I think it's just going to keep hurting the movie theater industry [and] drive-in movies," predicts Timothy Mackall, a senior at Howard. "I went to a drive-in movie a few months ago. They were playing *Star Wars: Episode Five*. They got really good attendance — was crazy busy, actually...I think people were just looking for whatever they could do to get out of their house, but I think when people aren't going to be as desperate to find things to do, I could see [theater attendance] numbers going back down because streaming services just make everything easier."

The ease of at-home streaming does not come without its drawbacks. Many students are cognizant of the fact that the countless options of films and TV shows to watch have challenged their patience and need for social interaction. Negrete, a subscriber to Netflix, Disney+ and Hulu, says, "When I'm not doing homework or in school, I'm just binge-watching TV, and it's bad because... sometimes I feel like I should be calling my friends more, I should be talking to people more, but it's just like I have all this stuff, why would I — why would I need to? It can be really negative to be sitting at home and binge-watching this 40-minutes per episode show."

Mackall notes, "I've noticed I'm really lazy. And binge-watching always just decreases your patience because everything is just right there, so you're like, 'Eh, I can just keep watching this next episode.' When everybody has their own show that they're watching, they don't want to spend time together, so they're not all gathering around the TV to watch one show together or waiting for a show to come out weekly."

Whether or not the abundance of streamable content will make movie theaters a dying business may depend on a more modern collaboration. According to Negrete, "People rent out movie theaters to play Netflix movies! It's strange," she says. "You'd think they'd just play a movie that's new... I feel like they could just play it at home. I guess [it is] to get the feel of the movie theater."



# Valentine's

Cuddle up with your sweetheart this February and check out these recommendations from our staff.



## *Titanic* (1997)

Rating: PG-13

This groundbreaking film is set on the infamously doomed ship, the Titanic. It centers around two people from completely different backgrounds who were never meant to be but fall harder and harder for each other each day they are together.

**Where to Watch:** Amazon Prime, Youtube, Hulu, Sling TV, Starz, Philo



## *Love, Simon* (2018)

Rating: PG-13

17-year-old Simon Spier (Nick Robinson) is a typical 17-year-old boy who has an amazing group of friends: Nick (Jorge Lendeborg Jr.), Leah (Katherine Langford) and Abby (Alexandra Shipp), with two supportive and loving parents and a little sister who loves to cook. Though his life seems more than ideal at surface level, he struggles with the fact that he is secretly gay. Simon begins to chat online with a stranger named "Blue" and starts to fall for him. While attempting to identify his perfect stranger, everything starts to go down the drain for Simon when his emails are discovered by a classmate.

**Where to Watch:** Hulu, Sling TV, Youtube, Google Play Movies, Vudu, Amazon Prime



## *The Fault in Our Stars* (2014)

Rating: PG-13

Hazel Grace Lancaster (Shailene Woodley) was diagnosed with cancer at the age of 13, causing her to build up walls to protect the people around her from her inevitable death. When she meets Augustus Waters (Ansel Elgort) at a support group, he begins to help her slowly break down her walls and fall in love. Based on the New York Times best-selling novel by John Green, this film is guaranteed to break your heart a million times over before it ends.

**Where to Watch:** Disney+, Youtube, Google Play Movies, Amazon Prime, Vudu, iTunes



## *Little Women* (2019)

Rating: PG-13

Follow the March sisters — Jo (Saoirse Ronan), an aspiring writer who is rough around the edges, Amy (Florence Pugh), a talented artist who appreciates the finer things in life, Meg (Emma Watson), who embraces the expectations of her and Beth (Eliza Scanlen), a shy but astounding pianist — as these little women navigate the challenges of life and love during the 19th century in Concord, Massachusetts.

**Where to Watch:** Hulu, Youtube, Starz, Amazon Prime, Sling TV, Philo



# Day Movies

Shenell Logan '23  
Staff Writer



## Enchanted (2007)

Rating: PG

If you're looking for a more cheesy romance movie to watch on the Day of Love, "Enchanted" is the perfect movie for you. Just before her wedding to Prince Edward (James Marsden), Giselle (Amy Adams), a young woman who is intoxicated with the idea of true love, is cast out of her animated homeland by the evil Queen Narissa (Susan Sarandon) to the filthy streets of New York City. There, she meets divorce lawyer Robert Philip (Patrick Dempsey) and his daughter, Morgan (Rachel Covey).

**Where to Watch:** Youtube, Google Play Movies, Amazon Prime, Vudu, iTunes



## A Cinderella Story (2004)

Rating: PG

This modern version of Cinderella, starring Hilary Duff and Chad Michael Murray, is a fantastic rendition of the classic Disney fairy-tale. This movie follows the same basic plot as the animated original: Sam is made to be a servant in her own home after her father dies and leaves her with her cruel stepmother and two stepsisters. She begins to chat online with a stranger who turns out to be Austin Ames, a popular boy at her school.

**Where to Watch:** Youtube, Amazon Prime, Google Play Movies, Vudu, iTunes



## Valentine's Day (2010)

Rating: PG-13

"Valentine's Day" is famous for its A-list celebrities featured, including Julia Roberts, Taylor Swift, Anne Hathaway, Emma Roberts and Jamie Foxx. The movie observes very different stories with very different couples, all occurring on the same day: Valentine's Day. We experience the embarrassment and the awkwardness as well as the passion and romance of Valentine's Day.

**Where to Watch:** Youtube, Amazon Prime, Google Play Movies, Vudu, iTunes



Maddie Kuehl '21  
Staff Writer

Millions of Americans begin every year by making their New Year's resolutions. With the goal of improving themselves, many people set the bar high with their resolution. That high bar results in a majority of people not being able to accomplish what they set out to do.

A Forbes study shows that only 25% of American adults are keeping up with their resolution after 30 days, and only 8% fully accomplish their goal. This small number of people that accomplish their resolution is because it is hard to stay committed to a resolution.

2021 may be a more important year to have resolutions than most because of the pandemic, with everyone having been confined and restricted for so long. This is why it is so important to stay true to your resolutions. One way to stick with it is to set a schedule. The schedule can map out when you want to make time for your resolution. Whether it is days of the week or time of day, make sure you always have time for it. Another way is to create a reward system. When you accomplish your resolution, you will have something to look forward to. The reward will make you push yourself even harder.

When making a schedule to discipline yourself during the process, always have an end date for when you want to complete your resolution. If the resolution is losing weight, then give a time frame. If the resolution is something like getting into a college, then make the end date around the time of when acceptance letters come out.

If you have not made a New Year's resolution, it is never too late. Some Howard High students came up with some really good ones to share. Senior Carson Robinson is going to "think more about how the things I say could be affecting those around me." Senior Camren Kovach said that he wants to work on "trying to care less about what other people think of me and those around me." Senior Emily Greisman says her resolution is "to procrastinate (on) my homework less so that I am less stressed throughout the weekend and can spend more time with friends/family." Junior Alyssa Gorny wants her resolution to be "to be more positive and open-minded because I sometimes find myself being pessimistic and I think it's unhealthy for my mental health." All of these resolutions are unique and great things for students to work on to improve their well being as we start the new year.

# Volunteer Opportunities

Meghan Yunkun '23  
Staff Writer

Many students are always looking for ways to help out in their communities. There are so many ways to help out in Howard County, whether it is volunteering or donating. For example, the animal shelter in Ellicott City, Animal Advocates of Howard County, has so many easy ways to contribute. They are always asking for any kind of pet supply donations. For volunteering, they offer many different ways students under the age of 18 can help out: Picking up and delivering adoption picture boards to local businesses once a month, helping out with the website and more. Also, they are always looking for new ideas on how they can spread the word about the animals. If you come up with an idea or would like to inquire about volunteering or donating, you can contact the shelter at 410-880-2488.

Grassroots is another organization in Howard County in need of aid. It's an organization that provides shelter for the homeless, offers 24/7 crisis intervention and helps with suicide prevention. Grassroots is always looking for donations and volunteers. For donations, they are asking for items such as baby products (diapers, baby wipes, baby food), household items (wash cloths, laundry detergent, cleaning supplies), any kind of boxed or canned food items and personal hygiene products (deodorant, toothpaste). All donations go toward helping the homeless that come into the shelter. Grassroots is not currently looking for volunteers due to COVID-19.

Last, there is a group in Howard County called the Community Action Council of Howard County that provides volunteering opportunities such as helping out in a food bank, community gardens and early childhood programs where you can come and help young students with activities. All you have to do is send in your volunteer application [here](#). They will review your application and find a place that is right for you and your interests. If you are between the ages of 10 and 15, you must be accompanied by an adult during your volunteer work. Ages 15 and up are allowed to go to their volunteer work on their own.

Since COVID-19, many places in our community — beyond the few mentioned in this list — have had to change their volunteer procedures, so they can use all the help they can get. And if you can't volunteer, donations are always greatly appreciated by all the organizations.



# Homeschool vs. Virtual Learning

S.P. Singh '24  
Staff Writer

While some may think there is little difference between homeschool and virtual learning from home, there are complex factors that separate the two. Perhaps some students or parents might be at a crossroads when trying to decide between public school and home school; knowing the trade-offs between choosing homeschooling or virtual schooling will help in deciding what is right for each student. It is especially helpful during the COVID-19 pandemic to understand the intricacies of homeschooling and how a student's study performance can be affected by switching to homeschooling.

Virtual school means that learning takes place in an online environment and does not require a student to attend a physical location, such as a school or a college. Courses, classes and other services are all offered and completed via the Internet and generally completed online from home. In a virtual learning environment, parents are assured that their kids are being taught by a licensed teacher who has been trained to educate students. Virtual learning is less time-consuming for parents; this does not mean that parents cannot help their kids and be involved, but it frees up much of their time when compared to homeschooling. However, virtual schooling also has some downsides, including excessive amounts of screen time. Full-time online school requires a lot of screen time to attend classes, read materials, watch videos and complete assignments, which can take a toll on students' physical and mental health. Another downside is that there is less time to provide one-on-one guidance during synchronous classes, as distance learning lessons are more generalized so that teachers can reach an entire class of students. While teachers can be available to help and answer questions, lessons cannot be tailored to each individual student like they can be in homeschooling.

Homeschooling is learning at home, where

the parent takes charge of the child's education. This type of schooling is directed by the parent, and learning is generally done at the child's pace. Homeschool allows the family to control the content and schedule of their child's education because the parents have control of the lessons and the information their child receives, while letting parents integrate family bonding time into their schedule. Ms. Grieve, one of Howard's guidance counselors, says, "Some families may decide to switch to homeschooling so that they feel like they have a better handle on what their child is learning." In addition, homeschooling offers more flexibility than virtual school because parents can control when their kids learn. It reduces the stress of completing assignments and allows students to take more time with concepts that interest them.

As flexible as this option is, it requires a lot of physical and mental organization. Parents need an uncluttered space to be able to teach their kids every day and allow them to keep their materials. Homeschooling can be very time-consuming and stressful for parents. It takes time to plan lessons, put together materials and teach students. Just like teachers, most parents will end up putting in extra work outside the school day, but unlike teachers, parents are not trained in educational strategies or subject-specific content.

Parents who choose to homeschool must withdraw their student from HCPSS and file an intent to homeschool. While homeschooled students do not receive grades, credits or a diploma, they must prove they are being educated through either a portfolio or enrollment in "a state sponsored non-public entity," meaning the student followed a curricular program that is provided to the parent. For more information, go to <https://www.hcpss.org/parents/homeschool/>.

# Obscure Sports to Bring Out the Champion in You (or your toes)

Eddie Calkins '22  
Manging Editor

As quarantine continues to test the creativity of my Google searches, I found some of the weirdest and most obscure sports in which anyone could become the next world champion. These “sports” are strange enough to use everyday skills that can be turned into substantial prizes.

## Cheese Rolling

Do you remember rolling down hills when you were a kid? Well, every year at Cooper’s Hill in Brockworth, England, hundreds of people line up to chase a round of cheese. Yes, chase a round of cheese. A nine pound round of cheese is rolled down the hill and participants ranging from 14-40 years old try to beat the cheese down the hill. The first person over the finish line wins the round of cheese. The event was cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19, but a ceremonial cheese round was rolled at 5:30 a.m. the day of the competition.

## Pea Shooting

It is never okay to throw your food...except in the annual Pea Shooting Championship. The event takes place on the second Saturday in July in Wit-cham, England. Contestants use peas and a pea shooter to attempt to hit a one foot wide target from a distance of 12 feet (archery style). Challengers can bring their own pea shooters (many equipped with laser sight vision). All contestants must purchase a bag of official peas to ensure no peas are “pre-smoothed.” Until pea shooting makes it to the Olympic Games, the prize remains world-wide bragging rights and the John Tyson Shield (named after the founder of the championship). The event was cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19.



## Hot Dog Eating Championship

Are you hungry? If the answer is yes, do you think you think you can eat 75 hot dogs in the next 10 minutes? The annual Nathan’s Hot Dog Eating Contest is on the Fourth of July. The event is held in the heart of Coney Island, Brooklyn, New York. Participants are given 10 minutes to chow down as many hot dogs as possible. The competition is divided into men’s and women’s contests. The winner of each contest receives \$10,000 and the “Mustard Yellow Belt”. Last year’s winners: Joey Chestnut (75 hotdogs) and Miki Sudo (48.5 hotdogs)



## Competitive Sleeping

Sleeping is everyone’s friend. Promoting the new sport of “sleep racing,” the World Sleep Championships in Spain is becoming the next extreme sport. Spain attempted a similar competition in 2010, but has “rebranded.” Founded only last year, the sport is gaining popularity faster than you can fall asleep. Contenders are tasked with getting the best sleep score (using an electronic device such as Oculus). The competition lasts two weeks, starting with a 3 night “round robin”. The winner receives a cash prize that has not yet been announced.



## Toe Wrestling

One, two, three, four, I declare a toe war. Another wild England sport involves two toes wrestling, similar to an arm wrestle. Debuting in 1976, toe wrestling has been denied by the Olympics twice. The sport still holds strong, and many say that it is England’s baseball. Participants set up their feet in a small box and touch toes. To win, you must have your opponent’s foot hit the side board. The competition consists of best-of-three rounds until the winner is crowned. The best part of the competition is the entry fee money is given to charity, leaving the winner with bragging rights.

ELLICOTT CITY, MD, JANUARY 9, 2021 -  
Edward Calkins practices pea shooting, hot dog  
eating, and sleeping. E. CALKINS/ LION'S TALE

# Healthy Tips to Combat Weight Gain

Nicole Parker '24  
Sports Editor

With gyms closed, schools shut down and sports programs cancelled, obesity rates have reached an all-time high in the United States. According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, adult obesity rates topped 40% for adults and over 19% for young people in 2020. Fewer people are moving and working out because of the pandemic, which has been going on for nearly a year. Not only that, but people all across America aren't making healthy food choices and are binge eating. Bloomberg reported that chip and pretzel sales rose almost 50% during May of 2020. Obesity not only affects weight, but it impacts overall health as well. Someone who is obese is at higher risk for experiencing complications and even death if they contract COVID-19, versus someone in shape and average weight.

Teens and children aren't getting the same level of physical activity as pre-coronavirus. Students used to walk between classrooms, go outside for recess, attend after school activities and participate in sports. Now, students are stuck at home, taking classes online and sitting for hours each day in front of their computers. According to the Mayo Clinic website, studies link being sedentary for long periods of time with diabetes, cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure.

Fortunately, there are many resources available to get you moving, staying in shape, and eating healthy. Senior Tyler Nyguen says he "tried lifting and running everyday" to increase his activity since he's not getting his usual exercise. If that sounds like too much, Coach Foley suggests easing into an exercise routine: "I would recommend that people start small. Start with just taking a 20-minute walk every day. Take the dog if you have one, a sibling, parent, or just a really good music playlist or audiobook. Then, find something you love to do, and make time to do it!"

If you want a more challenging workout, there are plenty of videos on YouTube that are available for free. Sydney Cummings, Chloe Ting and POPSUGAR are just some of the popular fitness channels. If you don't have weights or other equipment, no worries. All you need is motivation. You can choose from a variety of online classes ranging from a 10-minute ab workout to a one-hour high intensity cardio workout. Yoga is another great way to increase strength, balance and flexibility as well as improve your mental health. You can find free yoga videos on YouTube. Some recommended channels are Aham Yoga and Yoga with Adriene.

If you want to take your workout outside, Lake Kittamaqundi in Columbia offers a fitness circuit trail located along the path around the lake. While you walk along the trail, there are different circuits that you can use for free. Next to the equipment, there are signs with instructions on how to complete the circuit and an illustration of someone performing the exercises. Some of the fitness challenges include ladder cross, step-up routine and leg lifts. This is a very great resource to use if you want to get exercise while enjoying the outdoors. Plus, the lake and trail are beautiful to look at!



COLUMBIA, MARYLAND, JANUARY 12, 2021 - The Beam, Jump 'n Touch and Parallel Bars circuits. N. PARKER/ LION'S TALE





# Executions Ordered Days Before Inauguration

OPINION

Sydney Corley '22  
Staff Writer

President Trump's insensitive decision to move forward with the executions of five prisoners on Death Row before the inauguration on January 20 has stirred much controversy regarding the morals of condemning someone to the death penalty. Despite protests and petitions, Brandon Bernard and Alfred Bourgeois were executed in December 2020 — the first two of the final five executions scheduled. The last three executed included Corey Johnson, Dustin John Higgs and Lisa Montgomery, all of whom met with a repugnant fate in mid-January.

Before Bernard's execution on December 10, 2020, many people were attempting to get petitions viewed by President Trump. Kim Kardashian was an advocate for Bernard's case and made it known to her followers that she believed Bernard should not have been sentenced to death. However, Trump was unresponsive and moved forward with 13 scheduled executions since July 2020, a record-breaking number. The rush to execute the remaining prisoners sentenced to death stems from the fact that the Biden administration is opposed to the death penalty and will likely never hold an execution. The number of executions Donald Trump has scheduled and carried out continues to push past ethical and moral standards, diving into inhumane waters.

Dustin Higgs, an African-American man born in Laurel, Maryland, was unfairly executed by lethal injection on January 15, just five days before the inauguration of Joe Biden. Higgs was convicted of capital murder of three women: Tamika Black, Tanji Jackson and Mishann Chinn. All three were



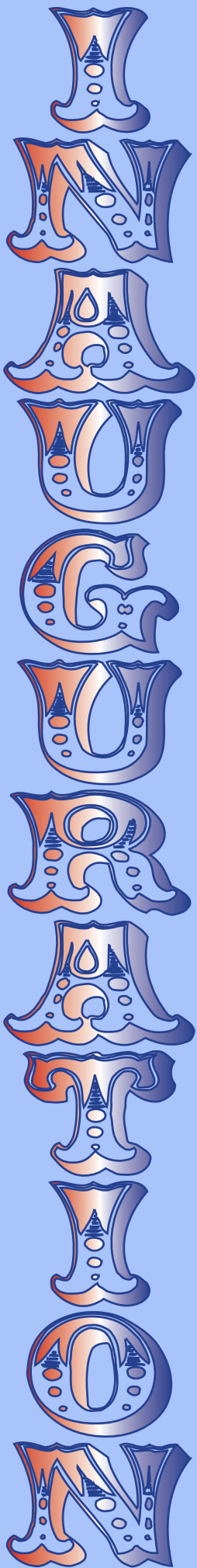
Protesters of the death penalty outside the US Justice Department in Washington, DC on December 10, 2020.

shot near the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Prince George's County, Maryland. The research center was built on federal land, which set the precedent for Higgs to be tried by the federal government instead of the state government.

However, Higgs did not wield the murder weapon that killed these three women, which has encouraged many to consider if he is deserving of the death penalty as a punishment. Willis Mark Haynes is responsible for the death of the three women, yet he was given a life sentence without parole.

Maya Hunn, a senior at Howard High School, believes that the sentence of Dustin Higgs is both unfair and unlawful. She also concluded that, though Higgs' actions were truly despicable, it is inequitable that Haynes be granted a life sentence compared to Higgs's unjust death sentence.

Moreover, the way in which the death penalty is done has been a contributing factor to the opposition of capital punishment. Through this punishment, a person may be put to death from the following: Hanging, electrocution, gas chambers, firing squads and, more recently, a lethal injection. The injection was created by Julius Mount Bleyer in 1888; however, it was first adopted in Oklahoma in 1977. The lethal injection was created to be both cheaper and more humane; however, the pain felt from the injection is described as being buried alive. Maddie Sims, a junior at Howard High School, states, "I think any way [the death penalty] is done is inhumane."



Abigail Warwick '21  
Opinion & Editorial Editor

On January 20, 2021, the 46th President of the United States, Joseph R. Biden, was sworn into office. Biden's administration is historically diverse, especially with the first female, first black, and first Asian-American Vice President: Kamala Harris. Unlike years past, the attending crowd was kept to a minimum because of COVID-19 concerns. Given the events at the nation's Capitol on January 6, there were heightened security concerns for Inauguration Day.

Just one day before the presidential inauguration, 12 National Guard members were removed from inauguration security duties due to possible links to extremist groups. More than 25,000 National Guard troops were deployed to protect the Capitol for the January 20 event. Biden briefly referenced the events of January 6 in his speech, condemning the great polarization in the country and assuring, "For without unity, there is no peace, only bitterness and fury. No progress, only exhausting outrage. No nation, only a state of chaos. This is our historic moment of crisis and challenge, and unity is the path forward. And, we must meet this moment as the United States of America. If we do that, I guarantee you, we will not fail." Biden continually promised the restoration of unity as a key theme in his address.

Many of the traditional inaugural festivities were made virtual, contributing to Biden's main efforts to push for coronavirus safety and influence the country to follow health guidelines. Only about 2,000 people were in attendance, as compared to the usual few hundred thousand. Guests were seen seated apart, as per COVID-19 guidelines. Building on his theme of healing and improving the country, Biden held a moment of silence for those who were lost in the past year from the virus, promising that "We will honor them by becoming the people and nation we know we can and should be." This is possibly in reference to the White House's recommendation to wear a mask, the new mandate to wear a mask on federal property and the administration's commitment to following scientific guidelines in order to end the pandemic.

In his first address as President, Biden was able to bring hope to the nation, as he promised to bring back unity and "to restore the soul and to secure the future of America — requires more than words," since there is "Much to repair. Much to restore. Much to heal. Much to build. And much to gain." His overall speech easily connected to the Biden-Harris campaign slogan to "Build back better."

Within the first 24 hours of being in office, President Biden signed 15 executive actions, including rejoining the Paris Climate Accord, removing the Muslim Travel Ban, stopping wall construction at the south border and rejoining the World Health Organization. Most executive orders signed by President Biden on his first day were direct reversals of previous orders from his predecessor, President Donald Trump.

President Trump promised he would not attend his successor's inauguration via Twitter on January 8, stating, "To all those who asked, I will not be going to the Inauguration on January 20th," making him the first president to skip his successor's swearing-in in over 150 years; however, President Trump's Vice President, Mike Pence, did attend the inauguration to represent the Trump administration.



# NFL PLAYOFFS

Kenny Ling '21  
Staff Writer

The National Football League playoffs have been in full swing these past couple weeks with no shortage of excitement. From heartbreakers and upsets, the limited/ nonexistent fan attendance failed to quell the emotion from players. The regular season has been a complete roller coaster. With concerns about COVID-19 protocols, many people are shocked that the NFL is still going strong.

With the addition of another playoff spot, it has brought the playoff team total to fourteen, with seven from each conference. Only the first seed has a first round bye to play the lowest remaining seed from the Wild Card Round. The AFC playoff teams consisted of the Kansas City Chiefs, Buffalo Bills, Pittsburgh Steelers, Tennessee Titans, Baltimore Ravens, Cleveland Browns and Indianapolis Colts with the seeding in respective order. The NFC playoff teams consisted of the Green Bay Packers, New Orleans Saints, Seattle Seahawks, Washington Football Team, Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Los Angeles Rams and Chicago Bears with the seeding in respective order.

The Wild Card Round opener was the Bills vs. Colts, with Josh Allen leading the way and securing a close 27-24 victory for the Bills, marking their first playoff win since 1995. The Seahawks and Rams battled it out in a NFC West showdown with a stifling #1 ranked Rams defense dominating Russell Wilson and Seattle 30-20. A tremendous performance by undrafted QB Taylor Heinicke saw the Washington Football Team barely falling to the heavily favored Tampa Bay Buccaneers 31-23. The Ravens and Titans game was by far the most anticipated game, with Lamar Jackson seeking his first career playoff win and Tennessee trying to extend their win streak on the Ravens to three. The Titans jumped to an early 10-0 lead in the first quarter, but it was all Ravens after that with defensive and offensive adjustments that allowed Baltimore to move on to the divisional round 20-13. The Saints and Bears game made an appearance on Nickelodeon with the Saints easily defeating the Bears 21-9. The final game of the Wild Card Round ended with the Browns upsetting the Steelers 48-37 after jumping to a 28-0 lead in the first quarter, securing Cleveland's first playoff win since 1995.

The Divisional Round opener began with the Packers, led by Aaron Rodgers, steamrolling through the Rams 32-18. The Ravens' miracle run came to a screeching halt against the Bills due to their offensive struggles and star kicker Justin Tucker missing two field goals hitting the upright. Ravens center Patrick Mekari also botched four snaps that became detrimental to the Ravens' efforts to score. On top of that, Lamar Jackson threw a pick in the endzone to Bills cornerback Taron Johnson who returned the football for a 101-yard pick-six, tying the NFL playoff record. The Bills move on from the embarrassing Baltimore Ravens 17-3 and find themselves in the AFC championship. Another interesting matchup between the Chiefs and Browns found Kansas City leading Cleveland 19-3 at halftime after a controver-

sial helmet-to-helmet tackle no-call that prevented a guaranteed touchdown and resulted in a touchback for the Chiefs. Midway through the third quarter, Patrick Mahomes went down with a concussion, turning the tide for the Browns. The Browns rallied, scoring two touchdowns and brought the score to 22-17. However, their season came to an end after backup QB Chad Henne made crucial back-to-back plays in the final minutes of the fourth quarter to win it for the Chiefs. The final game of the divisional round was a matchup between two future Hall of Fame QBs Tom Brady and Drew Brees. This one was all Buccaneers defense that granted Brady a trip to the NFC championship with the final score 30-20. Many sources have claimed that Brees will retire, marking an end to a legendary career.

At the time of this publication, the Buccaneers and the Chiefs have won their games and will face off at the SuperBowl.



KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI, January 17, 2021 - Mack Wilson of the Cleveland Browns sacks the Kansas City Chiefs star quarterback Patrick Mahomes during Sunday's game. J. SQUIRE/GETTY IMAGES



ORCHARD PARK, NEW YORK, January 16, 2020 - The Baltimore Ravens on offense during the first quarter of Saturday night's game against the Buffalo Bills. B. BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

# From YouTube to the Ring: Jake and Logan Paul

Bryce Banghart '21  
Staff Writer

In the world of YouTube, Logan and Jake Paul are some of the most famous brothers. They both went from being a regular Ohio boy to one of YouTube's biggest influencers. Also, the two Paul brothers both made themselves well known in the boxing ring. Logan Paul, born on April 1, 1995, started his following on a social media platform called Vine, then he moved to Los Angeles, California. After Logan Paul moved to Los Angeles, he started a YouTube channel and was the first YouTuber to reach ten million subscribers within a year. Currently, he has 22.7 million subscribers.

Jake Paul, born on January 17, 1997, followed a path similar to that of his brother: He started his following on Vine, then moved to Los Angeles, California with his brother. Like Logan, he started his own YouTube channel and now has 20.3 million subscribers.

On February 3, 2018, another famous YouTuber named KSI, won a boxing match with YouTube star Joe Weller. KSI called out for Logan or Jake Paul to fight him. Logan Paul, still suffering from a scandal in Japan in 2018, saw this as an opportunity to win his fan base back. On February 24, 2018, it was announced that Logan Paul would be fighting KSI and Jake Paul would be fighting KSI's younger brother, Deji, in two white-collar boxing matches.

August 25, 2018 was the day of the fight. The fight took place at Manchester Arena in Manchester, England. Around 800,000 people tuned in to watch the Paul brothers fight the Olatunji brothers, KSI and Deji. Jake versus Deji ended in a victory for Jake by a fifth-round technical knockout after Deji's corner threw in the towel following a flurry of unanswered punches. In the fight between Logan and KSI, the match ended in a "majority draw," making it possible to ensure a rematch the following year. Both Jake and Logan made over a million dollars from their two fights and announced they both will be starting their professional boxing careers.

On November 9, 2019, the rematch between Logan and KSI would play out at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. The match ended with KSI winning by split decision in their sixth round. Logan's loss is debated due to a referee's questionable call taking away two points from Logan due to an "illegal back of the head punch." The judges scored 57-54 and 56-55 for KSI while the third had it 56-55 for Logan.

On December 21, 2019, Jake Paul announced that he would fight a fellow YouTuber by the name of AnEsonGib. The fight would be held on January 30, 2020, in Miami, Florida. Jake won the fight by a technical knockout only two minutes and 13 seconds into the first round.

In July 2020, Jake Paul announced that he would fight an

NBA basketball player, Nate Robinson, in the ring. The match would be held on November 28, 2020, at the Staples Center in LA. Jake won the fight with a shocking knock-out one minute and 24 seconds into the second round.

The Paul brothers, Logan who is 0-1-1 overall, and Jake who is 3-0 overall, have made themselves well-known fighters in the boxing ring.

On December 6, 2020, Floyd "Money" Mayweather, with his 50-0 undefeated record in the ring, announced that he will fight Logan Paul on February 20, 2021. On December 15, 2020, the four-time world champion kickboxer Andrew Tate called out Jake Paul to a match. He even offered three million dollars to Jake, but Jake had no interest in fighting with Tate and declined. On December 14th, 2020, Jake Paul called out one of boxing's most infamous athletes, Conor McGregor.

82 percent of people have Mayweather winning over Logan Paul and 93 percent have McGregor winning over Jake Paul. No matter the outcome, both of these fights would be some of the biggest fights in the history of the internet.



Above: LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, NOVEMBER 28, 2020 - Jake Paul ready for the boxing match against Nate Robinson. S. MOSTRA/ SPORTSKEEDA Below: LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, NOVEMBER 9, 2019 - Logan Paul fighting KSI. BOXING PHOTOS/ BOXING SCENE





# Graduation 2021

## Still More Questions than Answers

Hailey Gardner '21  
Staff Writer

Unfortunately, Howard High's graduation for the class of 2021 will not look the same as it has in previous years. COVID-19 will likely impede the number of guests each student can bring to Merriweather Post Pavilion, where graduation is usually held. With COVID-19 evolving, there could be a chance of having a completely virtual graduation.

Thus far, no one knows for sure the plans for graduation. Ms. Jeffery, one of the graduation coordinators, states, "We have no information as of yet. We don't know if we will be in-person or virtual. The county continues to work on a solution."

Knowing that an in-person ceremony might not be feasible can be very upsetting news for the class of 2021. Senior Nathanil Smith says, "I hope that we all could have the opportunity to walk across a stage in front of our classmates, teachers, faculty and family members." Smith suggests, "Graduation won't be the same as years prior to class of 2020, but maybe a modified graduation at Merriweather would be very enjoyable. We have already met in decent size gatherings such as senior sunrise and the event held at the farm out in Marriottsville, so graduation shouldn't be much of a problem... maybe to keep the number of people down, they could have waves of people come through and only allow immediate family to join, such as last names A-M graduate followed by last names N-Z." His suggestion of having family members come in waves to graduation with a sanitizing session in between, or having the first and second half of the students on different days, is a proposal that may be considered by Howard County to ensure an in-person graduation.

Last year's graduation was fully virtual, with the personalized touch of staff-delivered yard signs. "The grad signs made for the class of 2020 was a nice gesture," says Smith, "but hopefully we can have some sort of celebration greater than a sign to put in our front yards."

High school graduation is very important to students, especially if they are not furthering their education, in which case this would be their family's last chance to see them walk across the stage.

# Sports Recruitment

Erin Smith '21  
Social Media Manager

College sports recruitment is a long and difficult process, but it is even tougher this year due to COVID-19. Many sports tournaments are being cancelled or limited due to COVID-19, which means less time for athletes to be seen by scouts. Kaitlynne Streets, a sophomore softball player at Howard, says, "As a whole there were a lot less coaches [at tournaments] than usual. Having less coaches makes it a lot harder because you are not exposed to as many programs." There are also very strict rules that Division 1 college coaches have to follow for recruitment, which makes it harder for students to be in touch with these coaches. Erin Gorschboth, a junior softball player at Howard, shares, "Many schools, including all D1's, are not allowed to come out [to tournaments], and other schools can decide not to because of the virus." This lack of exposure at tournaments makes it very hard for athletes to be seen playing in person by coaches of schools they are interested in. College sports camps and campus tours are also occurring less frequently, making it difficult for students to find and visit a school they like. Gorschboth says, "Many camps have been cancelled, which is usually the best way to be seen by specific schools and coaches."

The Howard County winter sports high school season just recently got cancelled, which takes away a lot of practices and games that would have prepared athletes for their travel seasons. This means athletes are having to do a lot more work on their own in order to prepare for college recruitment. It is also more important than ever that athletes have a skills video to send to colleges, because otherwise coaches may never have the ability to see players.

In order to be seen by coaches, you should email them or get a professional recruitment video. Reaching out to coaches is very important because they may not come to you.

Not only is it more difficult for athletes to get exposure during the pandemic, there are a lot of unknowns for college sports in upcoming years. Streets shares, "Whenever I go to camps or anything, [coaches] are always saying how it's so hard because they don't know if their players are going to come back for their extra year of eligibility." Unknown factors like these make it very hard for players to know what kind of situation they may be going into in college. Another huge unknown is whether sports seasons will occur next year or be cancelled again. Gorschboth says, "I also realized I don't want to go to a school that does not have my first choice major just to play softball because if the season were cancelled I would not be getting the education I want." Overall, recruiting is very different and difficult during the pandemic.



# Pandemic Puppies and Covid Cats

## Adoptions are Up, but Donations are Needed

Holly Larson '23  
Staff Writer

The constraints of COVID-19 have led to the adoption of more pets. The pandemic has left us all lonely, and the companionship of a pet may stay that feeling.

According to the sponsor of Howard's Shelter Supporters, Ms. Sharon Sowada, "Due to the constraints from COVID, shelters funding, volunteers and donations have declined. The need for help, such as community food banks, pet care services and transportation of animals (to and from shelters, doctor and surgery appointments, etc.) has increased. It is difficult for skeleton crews to meet these demands." She also suggests that we could help by bringing in old towels, canned animal food, old leashes, collars, dog toys, cat toys, blankets or even taking the time to go to the shelters and volunteer to help them out.

Mrs. Sowada wanted to state, "I'm happy to share that Howard's Shelter Supporters Club had a donation drive in December and were able to collect a huge amount of food, toys, and cleaning supplies for the MD SPCA in Baltimore. The donations were used for their community feed program that provides food and necessary items for families that are struggling to help them keep their pets and out of the shelter. Kudos to this great bunch of kiddos!" If we keep helping out as Howard students did in December, animal shelters will have more hope to overcome this virus. This will allow fewer pets to be put down as a result of decreasing resources. Mrs. Sowada also says, "The best thing to do is look at your local shelter's website. Most have lists posted of items that they are in need of. In general dry and wet food, litter, cleaning supplies, old towels/sheets/blankets, and money. The shelter's website should have a donation button — every dollar helps! Don't forget to make a copy of your receipt for tax purposes."

Ensuring that you give animal shelters the items they actually need means that your contributions will definitely be meaningful. Contributing your time to help with the animals also makes a difference. Another option is advocacy: spread the word! You could send out an announcement about animals looking for adoption at local animal shelters right now, perhaps even using pictures of the specific animals or their profile to show their ages and likes to truly make an impact.

Another teacher at Howard, Mr. Klotz, shares the same opinion as Mrs. Sowada on the importance of bringing supplies to animal shelters in need. He also mentioned the idea of putting up ads for dogs or cats so they can be adopted easier. Mr. Klotz thinks that "most shelters are giving out more animals that do have a lack of companionship, so they adopt animals to help deal with the void of not being able to see friends, family, or co-workers." If you want to help, you can contact local shelters or even our own Shelter Supporters Club to find more ways to contribute.

# ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

Johanna Wojewodzki '21  
A&E Editor

As 2021 begins in America with the entrance of a new presidential administration and only six years left to reach net-zero emissions of greenhouse gases, the once hotly-debated concept of climate change has been left in the shadows of current events. As individuals seek out economic and actionable advice in personal fights for climate justice, a broader look at new policies and their implications on daily life becomes pertinent in Howard's community of educators, students and families.

Tackling climate change in politics is regularly met with opposition due to the extreme costs of most environmental policies. For instance, the proposed Green New Deal could cost between \$51-\$93 trillion over just the next decade. Politicians have the important job of deciding how to best go about making necessary environmental changes, while also deliberating on the price — both on a monetary and societal level. Joe Biden shares on his website his plan for national action that can aid in the global reversal of climate change, and the pursuit of environmental justice by “ensuring the U.S. achieves a 100% clean energy economy and net-zero emissions no later than 2050.” His plan includes rebuilding and modernizing current infrastructure to withstand the effects of climate change, putting in place methane pollution limits on oil and gas operations and protecting the biodiversity of America's lands and waters.

There are multitudes of methods for Howard's students to engage in environmental activism on a personal level that are not all expensive or even far removed from daily life and regular activities. Howard County gives free compost bins across most parts of the county to interested houses, called the “Green Bin,”

which can be used to throw away food scraps in an environmentally conscious manner. 30% of trash and waste thrown into landfills across the county is food waste, but when an option like the “Green Bin” exists, why not give it a try and reduce your carbon footprint along the way? Howard County's Live Green Howard website gives plenty of affordable and accessible options for residents of the county to aid in the fight against climate change.

## Plants in the Pandemic

By Ariel Hammerash '21  
Copy Editor

### Benefits of gardening

Gardening is joyful and cathartic, and science shows plants can elevate your mood and cognitive function. Holly Merchant, a senior at Howard, notes that “it’s satisfying to see [a plant] grow over time, because then you know you’re successful in not killing it.” Houseplants can even be grown for food, such as basil or mint!

Mr. Arnold mentions that houseplants are “cleaning the air and giving us lots of oxygen to breathe.”

### How to Choose Your Plant?

The less finicky your starter plant is, the easier your job will be. Here are some beginner houseplants:

- Snake Plants — Mr. Arnold says, “They’re virtually impossible to kill!”
- Begonias (if you overwater, this one’s for you!)
- Succulents and cacti!

Have a pet? Don’t forget to check that your plant isn’t poisonous!

Stem. Ghezzi recommends, “Find something that someone is giving away for free. Who knows, you could end up with something beautiful. Or if it dies, you won’t feel bad since you didn’t spend any money.”

### How to Keep That Plant Alive

#### The watering dilemma

**Underwatering?**

1. Make watering a part of your routine, or try a watering app.
2. Put your plants in a visible area. Out of sight = out of mind.

**Overwatering?**

1. Please, please get a pot with a drainage hole.
2. Poke your finger into the soil. If it seems damp, don’t water.

#### Everything Else

One size DOES NOT fit all. Research what your plant likes, then experiment. Most of all, have fun with it! Stephanie Choi, a Howard senior, notes that her mom speaks to her plants, because “they’ll grow better if you just talk to them!” What works for you is what you should do, especially right now.



# Creative Writing Tips

Bobby Smith '22  
Staff Writer



Creative writing is a beneficial hobby that can be pursued regardless of circumstance. Anyone can write if they are stressed, angry, have something on their mind, or are just bored. High school students need writing skills, a necessity in classes from English to Science. However, some readers might not know what to do if they want to try out creative writing.

The first question that probably comes to mind when creative writing is: "Where do I begin?" My answer to that question is to know what it is you want to write about. If you have an idea for something to write about, try writing about that. If you can not think of anything, my advice is to take inspiration from something from recent memory. Has something funny happened to you or someone you know? You could write a story elaborating on this funny story or retell it entirely. Maybe you had a weird dream the night before and it's all you can think about. You could write down a retelling of the dream. Have you learned about something in school that

you found really interesting? You can even write about that.

How can creative writing be helpful? In a study conducted at University of Texas, Austin, Dr. James W. Pennebaker, who asked students to write about traumatic life events or trivial matters, discovered that "For six months following the experiment, students who wrote about traumatic events visited the campus health center less often, and used a pain reliever less frequently, than those who wrote about inconsequential matters."

If you have nothing to do and are bored, grab a pencil and paper and write. Creative writing as a hobby can improve one's writing skills, potentially contributing to improved grades as well.

What if you are dealing with writer's block or cannot get their thoughts across? There are methods that can help people with writer's block. Writing drafts will organize thoughts and provide a base to jump off from. Music can also aid in the writing process. In the article "Music vs. Silence: Does Listening to Music Get in the Way of Writing?" author Marylee MacDonald states, "Music opens us to feelings, listening to it can help us get into that zone of deep concentration from which inspired work arises." That

same article used a Ph.D thesis by Kristian Johnsen Haaberg, which stated that students use music "as a tool during study situations to increase well-being and motivation, to isolate themselves in a personal 'bubble', and to avoid other temptations and feelings such as hunger of boredom."

Creative writing is a hobby with many benefits. It can help relieve stress and anger; it can help one collect their thoughts; it can get rid of boredom, and it can improve one's writing skills. However, like all hobbies, creative writing isn't for everyone. Try it out and see if writing "clicks" for you. If not, that's okay, there are many other hobbies you can learn about and try out. If you do enjoy creative writing, you have found yourself a new hobby.

# RECORDING ACADEMY® GRAMMY AWARDS

Megan Otchet '22  
Staff Writer

Many annual events are anticipated in January as an opening to the new year, one being the 63rd Annual Grammy Awards - but not this year. The award show was scheduled to take place on January 31 and will now be held on March 14, 2021, the new date announced on January 5 with the hope that the artists can attend in person.

Sophomore Luca Dorotovics says, "I think if the artists start getting vaccinated soon it's a possibility, however unlikely that all of them will be vaccinated, and I see virtually no chance to have any form of crowd there." The show was originally going to contain pre-recorded performances with live readings of the nominees and winners' reactions. The official presentation of the awards is still unknown, due to the possibility of COVID-19 worsening or getting better, along with the performers. It is rumored that the artists performing will include Beyoncé, Dua Lipa, Taylor Swift and Harry Styles, amongst others.

Along with maybe performing, Beyoncé is nominated for the most awards, with nine nominations. She has had 79 career nominations, which makes her the most Grammy-nominated female artist in history. Although she did not appear at the award show last year, she was still nominated in four categories. Trailing Beyoncé in nominations this year is Dua Lipa, Roddy Ricch and Taylor Swift, all with six. As a fan of Taylor Swift, Dorotovics explains, "Taylor Swift specifically has stated that she would not have been able to release two studio albums had she not been in quarantine. Those albums are what got her nominated for six Grammys this year." There are 81 different awards to be given, covering Country, R&B, Pop, Rock, Rap and other genres. One of the most exciting categories of the whole night is the General Field, which contains Record of the Year, Album of the Year, Song of the Year and Best New Artist.

Comedian and host of "The Daily Show," Trevor Noah, will be hosting the Grammy Awards. He won an Emmy Award in 2017 for his talk show and has been nominated for nine others over the past four years. He also was nominated for a Grammy award in 2020 for his comedy album "Son of Patricia." Trevor is also a public figure who actively speaks out about social injustices.

At the Grammys, many viewers, artists and designers like to observe the elaborate outfits made specifically for different attendees. Junior Sydney Weisfeld says, "I always watch the Grammys with my family. We love to say who we think has the best outfit and make it like a game!" At the 2020 Grammys, Billie Eilish's mysterious Gucci outfit and six awards drew eyes and cameras from all over the world, along with Ariana Grande's dress, which was an astounding 20 feet in diameter.

Although the infamous Grammy Awards will not be the same as previous years, it should still be fun to watch with many different nominees and performances.



Arianna Grande



Billie Eilish

# Students Struggle to Achieve in first semester

Michaela Wall '23  
Staff Writer

The 2020-21 school year has undeniably looked different for everyone. Teachers, students and administrators have all had to adapt to a new way of teaching and learning. Expectations for students, however, have stayed relatively the same as in years past. While teachers have been more understanding during this pandemic, the grade book has been showing some worrisome results. A Washington Post article by Donna St. George about Montgomery County schools states, "Failure rates in math and English jumped as much as sixfold for some of the most vulnerable students in Maryland's largest school system, according to data released as the pandemic's toll becomes increasingly visible in schools across the country." Similarly, Howard High has been seeing some unsettling grade averages as the 2020 fall semester draws to a close.

Assistant Principal Ms. Patterson says, "The data of Howard High School is concerning. There's a much larger number of students who are earning Ds and Es for both a quarter grade and a final grade." Without teachers being an in-person source of motivation, students have been less inclined to perform better academically, resulting in more failing grades. Dr. Saunders, another one of Howard's assistant principals, says, "It requires a lot of intrinsic motivation... because you don't have a teacher who's standing over you holding you accountable."

Including the checking of their grades, students' displays of work ethic have become an independent undertaking. The social aspect has essentially disappeared for students while completing assignments, which for most of them was a big motivator for attending classes and paying attention. Socialization is not the only loss; sports have been canceled for fall and winter seasons multiple times, giving a lot of false hope to athletes at Howard. In order to play sports in the past, students had to keep up with their grades.

Dr. Saunders says, "The more engagement that you bring to the learning environment, the more enriching it will be for you." Knowing the number of distractions around, keeping students engaged during classes has been a struggle. While students know that classes are important, actively participating in class is not always their top priority.

Assistant Principal Mr. Sackett says, "The more you participate in a class, the more engaged you will be, and the more you will learn. Thus, likely, the higher grades you will earn." Without normal motivators and no firm idea of when school might return to normal, students have been having a hard time contributing in their classes. Howard's staff and students are both doing everything they can in a virtual learning environment. As the year continues, administrators are hopeful for grades to increase as students gain more knowledge about how to best help themselves during distance learning.

## Tips for SEMESTER



Alyssa McGuigan '23  
Staff Writer

The first semester was a new and different experience for everyone in the midst of online school. That being said, it's not news that online learning is continuing into Semester Two. We can expect the same situation we've been experiencing the last five months. However, after a long semester, lots of students have learned tips, tricks and things they will do differently in the new semester.

Howard junior Gillan Gallagher says that platforms like Peardeck and Kahoot, often used in our new online world, have helped her a lot: "Peardecks have been helpful because we get the transcripts, and we can review them as notes." Sophomore Lily Wilson says, "Peardeck has been helpful for the teachers and review. Not as much for the students. But it's still something to help run class." While these methods would likely not be as prevalent during in-person school, they have become a daily occurrence during online school to help students to understand and review work.

Sophomore Chloe Meakin finds that writing out her assignments is a helpful tip. She says, "Taking Wednesday as a break has really helped me to manage my stress levels." I'm sure a Wednesday break day is something many students will be taking into semester two.

When it comes to the workload, we can all agree it's been a bit overwhelming. Wilson says in semester two she's going to "stay organized with the classwork and write all projects down in a notebook," which is a simple but effective method for staying on top of online school. Senior Kellianne Rollins says, "do a lot of your work early in the week, so if you finish more work early, you have more free time."

Online school is certainly not forever but it is our current reality. As the semester has progressed, we've all found things that worked better and worse for us, and we take these lessons into the second semester.



### What device do you use to join Google Meets?

80% laptop  
7% phone  
13% other

### How do you take notes during synchronous class?

63% phone/computer  
31% paper  
6% do not take notes



# Juvenile Efforts to Silence Juveniles: SMOB Lawsuit Filed

Ruby Gifford '23  
Features Editor

On December 16, 2020, two Howard County parents filed a lawsuit against the HCPSS Board of Education, requesting the nullification of the Student Board Member's vote. The Student Member of the Board — or SMOB — is one of eight members of the Howard County Board of Education.

The lawsuit claims that the current SMOB and Howard High School senior, Zach Koung, is responsible for gridlocking the Board on any decision regarding the continuation of online school or the return of in-person school. In the lawsuit, defendant Traci Spiegel states her reasoning for filing the lawsuit: "The Howard County Board of Education is gridlocked. When I started watching the meetings and saw every key vote ending in 4-4 ties with no progress, I was in complete shock. When I found out one of the members was a senior in high school, casting stalemate votes as a minor, grinding our school system to a halt, I knew I had to do something."

It is explicitly stated that the motivation for filing the lawsuit is simply because the defendants disagree with a single issue: Returning to school. Former Board member Cindy Vaillancourt, gives her opinion on the lawsuit: "There could be lots of valid reasons to be concerned about whether or not the student member should have an equal vote on any particular issue. The way he votes doesn't seem to me to be a valid complaint. If your only problem is how he votes, well, I think you're missing the point."

In their desperation to fulfill their own agendas, the defendants resorted to targeting what they thought was the weakest link: The student board member. The mere existence of this lawsuit shows the blatant disregard with which student voices are treated.

Soon after the lawsuit was released it became clear that it was only a symptom of a greater disease in Howard County. Many parents who vehemently agreed with the lawsuit chose to "harass, demean, and aggressively bully" the Student Member of the Board online. The attacks against Koung became so extreme that Superintendent Dr. Martirano had to release a statement calling for a stop to the harassment.

Watching these events unfold as a student in 2021, the increas-



Zach Koung, Howard County SMOB (official photo)

ingly familiar question is brought up again: Why should students assume that adults are more qualified to make the decisions?

It is undeniable that the torch of advocacy has already been passed to our generation. The current high schoolers of Howard County grew up hearing stories of pioneers like Malala Yousafzai and Greta Thunberg. After watching the Capital being stormed by domestic terrorists, it can no longer be said that the grown-ups know best.

"I think that we have certainly demonstrated that we have had plenty of adults who haven't been able to be good decision makers," says Vaillancourt. Now more than ever, it is essential that students have a voice in deciding their own education and the tone with which they are taught.

A week after the lawsuit was filed, a statement was released by a group of current and former SMOBs across Maryland, supporting Zach Koung. In the statement, they advocate for all HCPSS students' voices, remarking, "A lawsuit aiming to completely strip voting rights from the SMOB due to a vote on a single issue sends an incredibly disheartening message to students of Howard County: 'Your opinion matters, as long as the grown-ups agree with it.'"

It is indeed disheartening to be a teenager in times like these. There is more to be criticized in this lawsuit — consider the fact that the defendants are treating matters of safety as if the primary consideration would be public opinion and convenience — and it would be shocking if this lawsuit goes through. Yet, it does bring up a very important conversation about the role that students should be allowed to play in deciding their own education: A conversation that should involve students.

# Cyber Attacks

## target Hebrew School, Baltimore County

Amanda Silver '21  
Staff Writer

On December 14, North Shore Hebrew Academy High School, located in Great Neck, New York, was caught by surprise when their school website was hacked.

Students and parents were sent emails encouraging them to look at the school's updated website. According to a Jewish News Syndicate article, "The North Shore Logo was changed to a swastika; the background image was modified to show a Nazi concentration camp; and the school name was changed to North Shore Hebrew Concentration Camp."

Students who attended the school were then flooded with even more emails that exposed various personal information from other school attendees, such as their addresses, credit card numbers and photo identification. Many of the emails included anti-Semitic images, songs and video clips of marching Nazi SS guards, along with threats to the students.

The school ended up shutting down their website completely and changing all of the school's emails. Law enforcement did get involved to investigate the cause of the incident, but nothing has been identified yet. Subsequently, students and parents were devastated by what had happened. The school made the decision to cancel classes for the week and take down their school website until further notice, as well as offer the students emotional support counseling during class time.

What happened to North Shore Hebrew Academy High School was not the first case of a cyber attack. Be-

fore the attack on North Shore Hebrew Academy High School, Baltimore County Public Schools were shut down because someone

had hacked into the school system's computers. "We got an email from our principal letting us know that Schoology, our platform for holding classes, was down... We really didn't know what was going on. Slowly we heard information from watching the news that told us there may have been a ransomware attack," says Kevin Applegate, a history teacher at Eastern Tech. He then explained, "My computer was running at 11:00 p.m. that night when the ransomware attack occurred, completely frying my computer.... The biggest impact then was getting the computers back up to date and making sure everything is protected with new anti virus software.... It's a shame that the same thing happened last year.... They take your information and hold it ransom, and then make you pay money. It's a crazy business model that is hard to protect against." These cyber attacks threaten the safety and privacy of the students who are attending online classes.

These two incidents of cyber attacks present the possibility of more occurring throughout virtual schooling. Howard County Public Schools should be prepared for one to happen at any moment. Principal Nick Novak says, "We need to be aware of when there is an issue or problem and report it.... I have learned from the ransomware that they had been in the system for a long time... so anytime you see something strange you should report it to the teachers or our media staff." He continues, "We also have to be careful about what we are putting online... The stuff we put out online can help compromise us, so we have to be careful how many things we are putting on the internet."

Howard County is doing what they can to ensure students' safety and is improving the security of online schooling everyday. Mr. Novak also states, "It used to be that as soon as you got into a meeting, you just joined it. A lot of people were sharing codes.... Quick access control makes it so teachers have to let the students in and if they didn't recognize a student then they wouldn't let them in. Google did expand the host controls to where now you can remove someone from the meet and once they're kicked out, they stay out."

As technology advances, so does the risk of cyber attacks. Counties around the country are learning from these recent attacks to improve their students' safety and security while virtual learning takes place.



Above: NORTH SHORE HEBREW ACADEMY, NEW YORK- North Shore Hebrew Academy is one of the schools that experienced a cyber attack, shutting down the school's virtual classes for a couple of days. Right: EASTERN TECH HIGH SCHOOL, MARYLAND - Eastern Tech is one of the many schools in Baltimore County that was affected by a ransomware attack, causing the school to shut down virtual learning for a day.





# A NEW DATE TO LIVE IN INFAMY:

## JANUARY 6, 2021

Miles Bell '22  
Staff Writer

January 6 was an unforgettable day, with numerous events unleashing a wide range of unsettling emotions in the short span of 14 hours. It began with Democrats Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock winning their Senate races, resulting in the Democratic party gaining control of the Senate. Following the announced wins, the preplanned rally to “Stop the Steal” moved from the White House ellipse to the Capitol Building, and moved from rally to riot.



2:00 p.m.: Domestic terrorists begin raiding the Capitol. The Senate Chamber is temporarily taken over by protesters, and House and Senate representatives are forced to flee to an unknown location. In response, Washington DC Mayor Bowser imposes a 6 p.m. curfew.



3:29 p.m.: Virginia Governor Ralph Northam announces that he will send in members of the Virginia National Guard and Virginia State Troopers. On Twitter, he states, “My team and I are working closely with @MayorBowser, @SpeakerPelosi, and @SenSchumer to respond to the situation in Washington, D.C. Per the Mayor’s request, I am sending members of the Virginia National Guard along with 200 Virginia State Troopers.”



3:47 p.m.: Maryland Governor Larry Hogan announces that he will be sending the Maryland State Police and the Maryland National Guard for support. He tweets, “At my direction, the @MDSP is sending in troopers to assist the Metropolitan Police Department and the United States Capitol Police. I have instructed the Adjutant General of the @MDNG to call up a rapid response force to support law enforcement and restore order.”



4:06 p.m.: President-elect Joe Biden gives a speech addressing the nation about the events. President Trump addresses his supporters 10 minutes later in a video on Twitter, telling them to go home. He says on the video to his supporters, “Go home. We love you. You’re very special.” This message went out two hours after the riots. Twitter tags the video with a warning, saying, “This claim of election fraud is disputed, and this tweet can’t be replied to, retweeted, or liked due to a risk of violence.”



5:32 p.m.: Governor Ralph Northam announces a curfew going from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. in the state of Virginia. His tweet announcement states, “At the request of @AlexandriaVAGov and @ArlingtonVA, I am declaring a 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew in these jurisdictions, with limited exceptions. I am also issuing a State of Emergency in Virginia, so we can continue to respond.”



5:50 to 6:00 p.m.: The FBI announces that two suspected explosive devices were rendered safe, and one person at the Capitol was reported dead. The curfew in Washington D.C begins and the House Sergeant at Arms reports that the Capitol Building is secured.



6:43 p.m.: In a letter to colleges, Nancy Pelosi writes, “In consultation with Leader Hoyer and Whip Clyburn and after calls to the Pentagon, the Justice Department and the Vice President, we have decided we should proceed tonight at the Capitol once it is cleared for use. Leader Hoyer will be sending out more guidance later today.” The Senate, around the same time as this letter, announces that it is expected to reconvene at 8 p.m.



7:09 p.m.: President Trump’s Twitter is locked, and the President is given 12 hours to remove three tweets that violate their Civic Integrity policy. If they are not removed, he will be banned permanently.



8 p.m.: Senate and House members reconvene and continue their vote on the Arizona electoral vote challenge after shortly addressing the day’s historic incident. The Senate came first in their vote, rejecting the notion with 93 nays and 6 yeas.



11:11 p.m.: The House of Representatives finishes their vote, rejecting the objections to Arizona with 303 yeas and 121 nays.



1:00 a.m.: The Senate votes to reject the objections (raised by Pennsylvania Congressman Scott Perry and Missouri Senator Josh Hawley moments before) to certify Pennsylvania’s electoral votes, 92-7.



3:00 a.m.: The House votes to reject the objections to certify Pennsylvania’s electoral votes, 282-138.



3:46 a.m.: Vice President Pence, having finished certifying the electoral votes, declares President Joseph R. Biden the 46th President of the United States and Kamala D. Harris the Vice President.

# Controversy Brings Controversial Response

OPINION

Eddie Calkins '22  
Managing Editor

On Wednesday, January 6, a domestic terrorist attack took place in the U.S. State Capitol Building as many Trump supporters disrupted the counting of the electoral college votes. Since the events took place on an “asynchronous Wednesday,” HCPSS was given a healthy amount of time to construct an adequate response. Despite this time, many Howard County families were upset at the county’s response, and surprised that their students would attend classes after such a significant event, yet hear nothing of it.

Wednesday afternoon, HCPSS Superintendent Dr. Michael Martirano released a [state-ment](#) including numerous resources to help staff, students and families who needed support. In his memo, Martirano included, “The acts today have illustrated the importance of instruction on civic engagement and the role each of us play in our government.”

In reference to HCPSS’ policy [8050](#) that covers the teaching of controversial issues, the county indicates, “The Board of Education encourages the examination of controversial issues related to Board approved curricula in an impartial and objective manner.” The policy defines “objective” as “[a controversial issue] not influenced by personal feelings or opinions in considering and representing facts.”

Due to the nature and magnitude of the event, HCPSS released special guidelines to teachers on how to handle discussions with students on the event. Middle and high school teachers received a three-page document at 8:00 a.m. the next morning (January 7), only 30 minutes before the school day starts for students. The document specifically states that “teachers and staff should not initiate conversations or lessons on this topic.” The document adds that “It is OK to acknowledge the information” and “one thing we can do is share our feelings with adults in our life that

we trust. We can talk about this to our parents, grandparents, teachers, and counselors.” In regard to when students insist on discussing the topic, the guidelines request that staff “please respond by focusing on [the student’s] feelings and personal coping resources.”

Some people have compared the storm on the Capitol Building to 9/11 and Pearl Harbor. History tells us that it takes weeks and even months for people to become “mentally-stable” after these events. However, HCPSS guidelines explicitly reiterate that teachers should not talk about the subject, rather relying on students to mention it. When the topic is brought up, teachers are then advised to instruct them that everyone is feeling emotional and if they want to talk, they can go see a counselor. As outlined in the document, “the Student Services staff member will contact the student’s parent/guardian.” It seems like the HCPSS solution is to eventually circle back to the parents, so they can help the student. However, middle and high school students don’t always have the best relationship with their parents.

Staff in the Social Studies department received department-specific guidelines on January 6, the day of the event. As opposed to the general guidelines of avoidance outlined in the countywide document, the Social Studies department was encouraged “to support addressing the events with students” as this is a “teachable moment.” The first point in the email expects that teachers “reiterate that HCPSS believes it is important for students to participate in civic engagement, [HCPSS] support students’ freedom of expression and the right of Americans to dissent, and violence has no place in American democracy.” Looking back at HCPSS’ definition of objective manner, it states that controversial issues should only be taught using “representing facts.” Not only was the Social Studies department given permission to address the issue in their classroom, but they were encouraged to discuss the issue using a prescribed opinion. Meanwhile, other staff members were given 30 minutes notice on how NOT to bring up the incident.

It was clear that HCPSS’ focus was directed to the well-being of the county and ensuring that anyone who needs help or support gets it, which is understandable. On the other hand, advising staff to avoid having conversations about the incident with students makes it a lot tougher on students. While students currently taking Social Studies — only a portion of the student body, due to the semester schedule — may have had the opportunity to discuss this issue, many students heard nothing from their teachers, meaning they had to shoulder their feelings on their own.

With all that is going on, students are experiencing unheard of levels of stress. HCPSS’ mission “ensures academic success and social-emotional well-being for each student in an inclusive and nurturing environment that closes opportunity gaps.” Howard High’s theme for the 2020-21 school year is #TogetherWeRoar. How can we do this when HCPSS limits who can discuss and how discussions of controversial issues are taught?

# LGBTQ+ Acceptance at Howard High

OPINION

Alexis Schuster '21  
Staff Writer



In light of a presenting name option appearing last month on Canvas and Synergy, as well as the Gender and Sexuality Acceptance club (GSA) meetings, it is clear that the Howard High community is taking steps to foster inclusion of LGBTQ+ students.

Senior Lena Stipek Sherbert identifies as a cisgender, asexual lesbian, and goes by she/her pronouns. When asked her about her personal school life and whether she faced discrimination from peers, she answered, “I didn’t face discrimination based on my sexuality [but] some dudes were weird around me, saying that I ‘looked sexy today’ knowing it made me uncomfortable, and they only got a seminar that told them to not do that as punishment.” She feels students have less power than staff when it comes to reporting these issues, especially minority students.

Stipek Sherbert recalls an experience in freshman year when she spotted cards lining the walls of Student Resources talking about the Day of Silence, a day where students take a vow of silence for LGBTQ+ people who have lost their voice through shame and violence. She says that the school “hadn’t overly announced it, nor announced the GSA through the club screens. It’s like they don’t mention it.” She said students need more power and agency, especially when reporting instances of discrimination on school grounds, and the school needs to implement more rigid disciplinary actions for discrimination.

Stipek Sherbert would like to see queer education implemented, especially when it comes to sexual education. “We know that both gender and physical sex is not a binary, but we are still being taught that it is so!” comments Stipek Sherbert. As asexuality is a part of her identity, she would like to see more asexuality awareness. She also comments that “some people need to be taught that no means no, and that you can’t turn people’s sexualities.”

An anonymous student who is a trans bisexual male and goes by he/him pronouns said, “An art student mocked me for a perceived homosexual relationship, and I was called a ‘tranny’ by a former friend.” This

incident was not reported, but the student points out that bystanders did nothing: “While I didn’t report it, I thought someone else was going to come up and say ‘hey man, that’s not okay,’ you know?” He did wish to not comment further about his experiences, but he feels the school does the bare minimum when handling LGBT topics: “It’s enough to feel safe, but not enough to always feel comfortable.” What would help with feeling accepted is proper student advocacy and correct materials, as he recalls a time where a video was broadcasted that labeled trans people as “transsexuals,” an offensive term used by Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists (TERFs) and others who do not represent the trans community directly.

Both interviewees felt that Howard High was not doing enough to welcome and accept LGBTQ+ students, and that there should be a more rigid disciplinary system when it comes to discrimination based on identity. They also believe that the school doesn’t represent the LGBTQ+ community, and should reference materials provided by representatives of these communities rather than promoting heterosexual cisgendered identities as the source for understanding all others.

Howard High hosts inclusive activities, such as Trans Awareness Week last year, and lists the GSA as a club. However, little else is done to observe or promote these safe spaces. These empty demonstrations with improper materials and pejorative term use make students feel like a diversity statistic. Using proper terms and having a stricter discipline ladder when it comes to discrimination would help students feel valid and safe at Howard High.

S T A N D A R D I Z E D

T E S T I N G

C H A N G E S

Jessica Menk '22  
Staff Writer

STANDARDIZED TESTING IS A FAMILIAR ROUTINE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS; HOWEVER, SINCE COVID-19 SHUT DOWN IN-PERSON LEARNING, THE WAY IN WHICH SCHOOLS ASSESS STUDENTS HAS DRASTICALLY CHANGED, INCLUDING STANDARDIZED TESTING. ALTHOUGH MANY PEOPLE ASSUME THAT STANDARDIZED TESTING WILL BE CANCELED, IT IS CURRENTLY STILL PLANNED TO BE ADMINISTERED, WITH SOME ALTERATIONS.

In regards to state standardized testing, Mr. Timothy Guy, the Coordinator of Assessment for Howard County schools, states, "Right now, as far as things are going, the train is headed into the right direction and we are supposed to be testing in [the] spring. If we are not able to do that, then the state's going to have to make accommodations, and that could include waivers, and it might also include testing in fall." When asked about how the tests are going to be administered to students, he replied, "With the state testing, there is no online option. Right now for state testing the only option is for in-person and if the testing happens we will administer it to everyone we can." Students who are still learning virtually will not be able to receive the state standardized tests, and there is currently no information about what will happen if a student does not participate in the testing.

In terms of AP tests this year, Ms. Patterson, one of Howard High School's assistant principals, explains, "They will follow the same procedures of social distancing [and] small groups." Ms. Patterson also described a new second semester course added at Howard, AP Mastery: "We are running ... AP mastery class for students who took AP in the fall and don't have AP classes in the spring. It will be a collaborative effort by all of our AP teachers to work on study skills and modules of review for students who are willing. They are going to be looking at taking practice exams and things like that so that students who ended their course in January can prepare for an AP exam in May or April." Mr. Guy also addressed the topic of Advanced Placement (AP) testing. Last year, AP tests were given in the 45 minute format with online assessments taken at home. This year, Mr. Guy says the tests are going to look different: "They are supposed to be full-length exams and there would be in-person options and possibly online options if students are not comfortable coming in or are still in virtual learning." If both online and in-person options become available for test-takers, there will be different dates and criteria for

online versus in-person exams.

People have also been concerned about academic dishonesty during online school and online testing. Mr. Guy is very confident in the testing process and the algorithms that have been created to detect and prevent academic dishonesty, adding, "For the state testing and the AP testing, [there is] a lot of security so there's no one just sitting at home taking that test by themselves. Last year, when [College Board] did their online version, which was 45 minutes at home, they had a bunch of different things that they don't even release around how to then make sure people aren't cheating. In addition to that, the test wasn't a multiple choice test; it was an open ended test, and in an open ended test it is easier to spot cheating because you see consistency between responses of students. You also see when writing styles change."

At the time of the interview, juniors were scheduled to take the PSAT, and Mr. Guy said, "[The] PSAT is something that we give. We didn't give it in October, because the year had really just started and we were just figuring out some of the small things, and so the plan right now is to give that on January 26 to 11th graders who would like to take it for the national merit scholarship program." Now that the PSAT is cancelled, "students [should] use the alternate pathway to then sign up for the national merit scholar program [and] use an SAT score as a substitution."

Applications for colleges have also been affected by COVID-19 and virtual learning. Many colleges have changed their applications or provided a space for an explanation for missing scores, but it is still best to check with the college you are applying for to see if their requirements have changed.

There is a lot of information still to come regarding state testing, PSAT, SAT and AP testing, but there are a few important takeaways for the moment: Spring testing is still scheduled, and people should be on the lookout for communication to ensure they understand the requirements.



# THE BREAKDOWN

with Ben Fader '21  
Editor in Chief



ELLCOTT CITY, MARYLAND, January 8, 2021 - Alabama and Clemson (pictured above) met for the second of four matchups in the CFP's seven year existence here, where Clemson defeated Alabama 35-31 in the national championship game. - STREETER LECKA/ LION'S TALE

Since the very first College Football Playoff (CFP) was held in 2014, questions have come up about the event. When it started, the CFP was only 4 teams, picked by a 13 person committee. They would duke it out to be crowned the best team in college football. Now, in 2021, there are still only 4 teams that participate in the CFP out of 130 total teams in the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS). The question needs to be asked: Why won't they add more teams?

Other main sports have many more teams than football in the tournaments: NCAA basketball has a 68 team tournament, baseball is a 64 team tournament, soccer is a 48 game tournament and lacrosse is a 17 team tournament. The FBS can't place a similar amount of teams as the other major sports because the tournament would run on for too long. Football only plays one game a week to ensure player safety and health, which means the tournament needs to be kept to a smaller number of teams. Nonetheless, four teams is still too few for a league consisting of 130.

Many people have pondered the idea of adding teams, with the possibility of expanding to eight or ten teams being the most common. However, no serious discussions about whether to add teams have ever occurred. Senior Ryan Anderson says, "They should expand to an eight team playoff. College sports playoffs are one of the most exciting games to watch; more games would be great."

Personally, I think that a ten team playoff would be best for the FBS. Six extra teams and two additional weeks of playoff football means a lot more entertainment for the fans and a lot more revenue for the league. The ten team playoff would have the lowest four seeds play a play-in. From there, the teams would battle in an eight team bracket—single elimination to determine the winner. This would allow more teams to have a chance to win meaningful games towards the end of the year. For this format to be completely successful, however, I do believe one more change is necessary.

The FBS regular season is 12 games long, with the division winners in each conference playing one extra game to determine the conference champion. A maximum of 13 games is not a long season at all. If a team is initially perceived as low quality with the preseason rankings, it can be very difficult to make up ground on other teams with very few games. Three teams in the past four seasons have finished the season undefeated and still were not given a chance in the CFP. The FBS needs to eliminate rankings for their teams until at least week four of the season. This will allow for a fair and accurate ranking to every team based on real results, rather than assumptions of how a team will do before ever truly seeing them in action.

The current rankings hold great benefit to the teams given high rankings in the preseason because they are already at the top of the country. It also benefits teams that are in a better conference, basically making it impossible for a school not in a top five conference in the NCAA to ever make it to a playoff game. If the CFP can change their rules to a more just ranking system and expand the playoffs, I assure a more entertaining experience for every college football fan.



# Disney+ Release Schedule

Ella Werdell '23  
Staff Writer

Disney Plus has been a savior this year during quarantine, with a growing collection of movies and TV shows from Marvel, Pixar, Disney, Lucasfilm (the creators of Star Wars), National Geographic and 20th Century Fox. The streaming service has recently released their 2021 schedule for upcoming shows and movies. A timeline of the most anticipated and exciting upcoming releases is absolutely necessary to know what to expect of 2021.

**Marvel's "WandaVision" (January 15)** This series is a perfect mix of classical sitcoms and the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU). It follows the era-hopping duo, Wanda Maximoff (Elizabeth Olson) and Vision (Paul Bettany) as they live out their ideal life in the suburbs. Since this series takes place after the events of *Avengers: Infinity War* and *Avengers: Endgame*, it is unknown how their stories will continue, given the ending of these two movies. Although a lot of explanation will be needed throughout the show, it is highly anticipated as it is a continuation of the MCU that is loved so dearly.

**Pixar's "Pixar Popcorn" (January 22)** This series is created by the animators of *Toy Story* and *Soul*. It follows everyone's favorite, iconic Pixar characters, such as Buzz Lightyear and Mike Wazowski, as they go on bite-sized adventures. This series is full of animated shorts aimed towards a younger audience that are sure to be funny and entertaining.

**Marvel's "The Falcon and the Winter Soldier" (March 19)** This series follows the beloved Marvel characters Falcon (Anthony Mackie) and the Winter Soldier (Sebastian Stan) as they navigate life after the events in *Avengers: Endgame*. They face many trials that test the strength of their abilities and friendship. This is another highly anticipated series that continues the MCU.

**Marvel's "Loki" (May)** In this highly anticipated crime thriller, the audience follows Loki (Tom Hiddleston) as he travels through time using the Tesseract, stolen during the events in *Avengers: Endgame*, while altering human history. In a continuation of the MCU, everyone's favorite villain, the beloved god of mischief is the main character. This show is sure to be full of humorous and sarcastic moments throughout.

**Marvel's "What If...?" (Summer)** This is the very first animated series the Marvel Cinematic Universe has ever come out with since beginning in 2008. This series explores what would happen if major moments from the universe happened differently or didn't happen at all. This show answers many of the questions left after the events of *Avengers: Endgame*. This is yet another Marvel production; however, it is unlike any other movie or show in the MCU.

**Marvel's "Hawkeye" (Fall)** Starring Jeremy Renner as Clint Barton/Hawkeye and Hailee Steinfeld as Kate Bishop, this continuation of the Marvel franchise follows Clint Barton as he passes down the Hawkeye name and responsibilities to Kate Bishop. This show is about the life Clint has outside of being an Avenger and how he deals with the events of *Avengers: Endgame*.

**Star Wars' "The Book of Boba Fett" (December)** Following the events of Jon Favreau's *The Mandalorian*, this series continues the legend of Boba Fett. It is yet to be learned exactly how this will happen, but after the success of *The Mandalorian*, this show is highly anticipated. Robert Rodriguez is the director of this upcoming continuation of *The Mandalorian* timeline and Star Wars universe.



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#### **COLOPHON**

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