

FOCUS

A Blind Brook High School Student Publication

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News Editor: Craig Bergman

News Section

Disconnecting the Cell Phone Policy?

By Hadass Blank

"Updates in Congress..." declared Student Senate and Congress President Frank D'Angelo into the faulty microphone, "...and as for the Cell Phone Policy, it will not change; the current rules still remain in the Family Guidebook." The School Congress proposal to modify the Cell Phone Policy and allow students and faculty to bring cell phones to school was voted down. Throughout the debate, Principal Robert Chlebicki made it clear that he would veto any proposal accepted permitting cell phones on campus. Although Congress voted against the proposal, some feel strongly that the administration's promise to veto any bill on cell phones affected the decision.

On page 29, the school's Student and Family Guidebook 2001/2002 states: "Skateboards, roller blades, laser pens, electronic devices, cell phones and any other equipment that interferes with the educational environment are not permitted in the school building or on the school grounds at any time... Any student who violates this rule may have his/her property confiscated by the administration."

Assistant Principal Michael Mitchell explained that the rule "was proposed to help curb the flow of information in and out of school in emergency situations... We need our students to listen to the directives of teachers and school administrators to

prevent chaos and maintain control in our school during a time of crisis."

Although the document was drafted before the recent rash of school shootings, enforcement of the policy has become

stricter following the incident at Columbine High School. Besides regulating communications in and outside of school during emergency situations, Mr. Chlebicki explained, "Cell phones interfere with the learning environment and interrupt the importance of education at Blind Brook."

Although there is

no New York State Legislation that directly addresses the use of cell phones, Blind Brook's policy does indirectly correspond to the SAVE laws, which require that school administrations develop plans for handling emergencies.

The prohibition on cell phone use was particularly upsetting to students during the early part of the semester when there was no pay phone in the building because of the construction. "After play practice, the offices are locked. How would the school like me to call home for a ride?" a sophomore complained. Many students have voiced concerns about how to order food or contact family in the event of a personal problem. Some people don't understand why they can't keep their cell phones in their lockers, while others question what good the policy against cell phones really does.

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The patriotic patchwork quilt, made by the Fashion Design class, on display in the Commons. Photo by Harry Malles

Students Stitch Together Lives Following Tragedy

By Keith Hanauer

More than two months after the attacks of September 11, the real lives of many of those associated with Blind Brook are still affected by the tragic events. Their stories reflect a range of reactions and attempts to cope.

Former Blind Brook student Aliza Melamed was right there when it all happened. A member of the Class of

2000, she now attends New York University. As Melamed tells story, "My apartment is four blocks away from ground zero. When the first plane hit, I was in my room watching television and killing time before class. I heard a horribly loud noise, like ten trucks backfiring at once, and the television shut off. I went downstairs to see what had hap-

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"One Nation, Under God," Divisible As Pledge Decision Sparks Controversy

By Jeffrey Genova

As the reality of the September terrorist attacks begins to set in, Blind Brook searches for ways to further the healing process. As of Friday, November 2, the Pledge of Allegiance will be recited at the commencement of each high school town meeting, bringing to Blind Brook a patriotic ritual.

The recitation of The Pledge in public schools is mandated by New York state law. But in reality, this statute is selectively enforced by individual districts. New York City recently passed legislation of its own reiterating the state's guidelines. School Congress followed the city's lead, deeming it appropriate to recite The Pledge at all high school town meetings. The theory behind not reciting the pledge every day was that daily recitation would dull the students' appreciation of it.

The introduction of the pledge has evoked a broad spectrum of responses and opinions. Said senior Matthew

Stolzar, a member of the Congress Executive Board, "I think it's a good idea that we say The Pledge, because it's always important to follow state law, and it additionally provides us with a reminder of the importance of loyalty to our county, which is something we took for granted prior to September 11." Wendy Heimann, secretary to Principal Chlebicki and a staff representative to the Congress, absolutely approved the decision. In her opinion, this policy would fulfill "a need to instill dedication and patriotism in young people." Sophomore Flavia Godoy, who is an immigrant to the United States, expressed a strong opinion in favor of reciting The Pledge. She explained that the US has given her family a very prosperous life, and that she is more than happy to show respect to the county by reciting the pledge. Junior Stephen Tsui indicated that "The Pledge is fine as long as you are not obliged to recite it." Sophomore Monica Barreto approved of The Pledge but thought that

most students would fail to derive any insight or motivation from it. On the other hand, sophomore Adam Horowitz explained that he recites The Pledge as a show of respect to those Americans who have died and for those Americans who are involved in the conflict overseas.

Science teacher Jerry Citron understands the need to respond patriotically to the terrorism but disagrees with the school's decision. Mr. Citron explained that he thinks there is "an inherent danger in proposing this because it comes as a result of an emotional response rather than an intellectual one." Mrs. Heimann felt that an emotional response brought the topic to discussion but that the School Congress was discussing it in an intellectual way.

Students expressed a range of objections to the pledge. Some that object to the pledge saw it as being similar to a school prayer controversy and are uncomfortable with the phrase "under God,"

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"Mission Enduring Freedom": A Misnomer?

By John-Michael Grzan

There is a key word missing in the title of the US fight against terrorism, "Mission Enduring Freedom." The truthful name for this war should be "Mission Enduring Our Freedom."

In this war against terrorism, the US has looked to create a coalition. It has sought to ally itself with seven major countries that have influence or strategic position in the Middle East; the US has pushed hard for help from Russia, Pakistan, China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, Jordan, and Iran. These seven countries all have some common characteristics. A major one is that they are all serious violators of human rights and, in return for helping the US, they want America to turn its head to their abuses.

Russia, the only democracy out of the seven, is currently engaged in a merciless war in Chechnya. China has long been notorious for its human rights violations, especially the horrific Tianamen Square incident in 1989, and now it wants the US to keep quiet about its cruel methods of suppressing the Uighur rebels. Uzbekistan is controlled by "President" Islam Karimov, who has stayed in power through brutal crackdowns on other political parties and Muslims who do not belong to the official Islamic organization of the country. Egypt, which receives over a billion dollars in aid from the US every year, has thousands of political prisoners, many of whom were forced into confession through methods of torture, such as beating, rape, and electric shock. Iran, Jordan, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia all follow suit in terms of human rights violations. Not to mention that women have few rights in any of these countries, especially Egypt, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, where they are forced to practice Purdah, a state of seclusion from public society.

America's fear of standing up for that which is right can especially be seen in its recent dealings with Saudi Arabia. Once again the US has been controlled in its symbiotic relationship with Saudi Arabia. Although Saudi Arabia, the homeland to most of the hijackers, could potentially provide possible groundbreaking help to America, the US has done nothing in response to Saudi Arabia's refusal to let the US use its bases, share intelligence, and track down suspects. In fear of upsetting this nation, which supplies 25% of the world's oil, the US has remained quiet about this lack of cooperation.

Although fighting terrorism is noble, in allying with these countries, America is compromising its fundamental principles of democracy, equality, and the freedom that we hold so dearly and are actually struggling to preserve. Currently, the rights of others throughout the world are not as significant as our own security and desire for justice. Under different circumstances, the US would be standing up to these seven countries about their human rights violations, risking the major obstacles that would come its way, rather than ignoring the human rights abuses of these countries.

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IBM Parking Improves But Problems Linger

By Lisa Hamilton

Problems with the parking situation at Blind Brook have become a major subject of both student and teacher interest over the past few months. These problems were controversial as the year began, but they have been simmering down as the year continues.

The IBM Headquarters parking lot, located in the Arbors, is designated as the parking lot for Blind Brook juniors. In the beginning of the school year, the lot was the source of numerous problems for younger drivers. Its opening and closing times kindled many difficulties for those who park there. Throughout last year and in the beginning of this year, the lot would open at seven-thirty in the morning. This made it hard for some juniors who arrive at school early, particularly those participating in early-morning Drivers' Education classes, to get into the parking lot. Many were forced to park in the main lot, in spots that belong to seniors and faculty members. If those juniors were unable to go back into the lot to move their cars before the start of school, they would essentially be "stealing" a spot that belongs to other school members. Principal Robert Chlebicki remarked, "I think there has been unintentional taking of people's spaces, so that when students were arriving in the morning for detention or coming in for Drivers' Ed., they would drive here onto the campus, since nobody's usually here at that time when they come. They would take a spot with the intention of coming back when their activity was over to move their car. Unfortunately, by the time those things are over, people are already coming to the campus and trying to park on the campus and it's creating a problem."

This problem has recently been resolved, however, as the lot is now opened at seven o'clock by the custodians so that Juniors are able to park. Assistant Principal Michael Mitchell stated, "I spoke to the custodians and [the IBM lot] has been opened earlier. It is not part of their job description or duty so they are actually doing us a favor."

However, the "stealing" of spots is still a fairly prevalent problem. Commented Mr. Mitchell, "Juniors have been taking senior spots, and then seniors in turn have been taking teacher spots. It's a domino effect. It has started to get ugly. That's why I had a memo issued to the students and that's why I have Harry [a school security guard], putting the 'You have parked illegally' stickers on the cars."

The construction workers have also been parking in the main lot, where they are not

authorized. "I spoke with the construction workers as well," said Mr. Mitchell, "They've been taking spots, and their cars have been getting stickered also." According to an agreement made earlier with the construction company, the construction workers should not be taking spots on the campus in the first place. Mr. Chlebicki explained, "My understanding with the construction company is that the construction vehicles are all to be driven into the

lessly, and I personally do not. It would be very unfair for [the IBM lot] to be taken away from the people who do not abuse the privilege." Junior Lauren Levinson agreed, "I don't know what reckless driving we can possibly be doing in a parking lot or who is observing this, because I have not been noticing it."

The issue of how construction affects parking at Blind Brook is viewed in many different ways. Mr. Mitchell remarked,

"Actually, as far as parking is concerned, construction isn't a factor. The only factor is the students who parked in spots they shouldn't, but that's been rectified because they've gotten stickers on their cars." Science teacher Jerry Citron felt differently, "[The construction] has certainly made traffic into the parking lot a little more congested."

A problem with littering has led to conflicts with residents of the Arbors and is a factor in the parking controversy. Said Mr. Chlebicki, "There was a big litter problem, and

this took place not only this year but last year as well. The people at the IBM lot were calling and complaining that students might have left wrappers or bags and food outside their cars that was littering the place." Mr. Mitchell added, "When students go to hang out there, they litter all over the place. So I had a garbage can put out there, and it's looking a little better."

As for next year when the new buildings will be ready, the same parking lots will be used so that adequate parking should be available. The real question lies in who will be able to park on the campus and who will not. Mr. Chlebicki explained, "With the IBM lot, we will always have sufficient space. The problem is going to become who is going to be able to park here on campus. Because as our senior class grows and also as our faculty grows, if you add up all of the senior parking and all of the faculty and staff parking, assuming that everybody drives, we will not have enough space here." However, there is a possible solution to this potential space problem. Mr. Chlebicki points out that there is space by the bus garage that might be level for parking places for some faculty and seniors. If that plan does not work, then "the policy may end up becoming only seniors can park in school." Judy Mella adds, "I'm really concerned about student parking, especially if we lose the IBM parking lot. I can really see that seniors will be the only ones driving because the space is just not going to be here for them. That concerns me. It's something that we need to address. I think we need to expand the parking lot."

"Juniors have been taking senior spots, and then seniors in turn have been taking teacher spots. It's a domino effect. It has started to get ugly."

-- Mr. Michael Mitchell, Assistant Principal

construction site."

The IBM parking lot closes at 3:30 PM. This presents a problem that has yet to be worked out. Juniors who have to stay at school for extracurricular activities are forced to move their cars from the IBM lot into the main lot after school to avoid getting their cars locked into the lot when it closes. Junior Rachel Fischer commented, "After school on Wednesdays when I have Drivers' Ed., I have to rush into the IBM lot and park in the other lot so my car doesn't get locked in." If juniors cannot get into the lot to move their cars and they are locked in, they are sometimes then forced to drive over the grass. Junior Lauren Levinson confirmed, "When the lot is closed after three thirty and I am still in rehearsal for the play, I am forced to drive over the grass to get out of the lot."

Juniors are additionally facing the prospect of having the privilege of parking in the IBM lot revoked. There has been a host of accusations made against the juniors who park in the IBM lot, most of which concern the issue of reckless driving. This danger, combined with the problem of students parking in prohibited spots, could potentially result in serious consequences. Stated Mr. Mitchell in a no-nonsense tone, "I will tow cars. I will have students banned from driving. Driving is a privilege, not a right. If I feel that students are abusing it, then they will lose it. I think that's fair." Junior Loren Fishkind saw the situation differently. "I think that it would be completely unfair to lose our privileges. I have never personally seen anyone drive reck-

KONCEPTS by Brett Konner

Pledge Decision Sparks Controversy

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which Congress added to the The Pledge in 1954. Others feel that the pledge may offend non-Americans or may single out students who refuse to recite it. Mrs. Heimann remarked that, "Students should have a right to choose whether to say The Pledge, and others should respect their decision." Mrs. Heimann also believes that even if a student refuses to recite the pledge for whatever reason, then they should at least stand to show respect to their classmates.

It should be noted that the pledge has not been completely ignored in past years. The Pledge has always been recited at the beginning of the high school graduation every year.



Bulletin Board: Club Notes

By Carrie Schmelkin
and Emily Redmerski

This past October 29th, numerous members of the Blind Brook Community Service Club went to Ridge Street School to throw a surprise Halloween party for the first-grade children. According to club adviser, Jane Romm, nearly 130 children enjoyed making "Scary Hands," a Halloween art project, with the help of 30 high school students. A second activity involved an interactive Halloween story. Furthermore, other members will soon participate in a program at the Coachman Hotel, a shelter for homeless children, that involves interaction with the kids in effort to brighten up their day.

November 15th, the Blind Brook High School SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) Club hosted the Great American Smokeout, an event designed to stop student smokers from smoking for at least that day. Those who did not smoke received a piece of the six-foot wedge to carry around and show their determination to stop smoking. The club also sent students to teach middle school classes about the danger of smoking.

During the month of October, the Blind Brook Mock Trial Team held tryouts to select five new members. The team also welcomed its new advisor, Superintendent Dr. William Miles. At present, the main focus of the Mock Trial Team is the plan-

ning of the December 15th tournament during which Blind Brook will serve as the host for nine other schools from around Westchester County.

On Friday, November 2, the Human Relations Club kicked off its Big Brother/Big Sister program with a getting-acquainted pizza party. In addition, the Club held its annual Human Relations Weekend from November 9th-11th at Camp Sloane in Lakeville, Connecticut. The weekend served to bring together faculty and students from different grades in a social environment outside of Blind Brook where they engaged in various activities in an effort to break down social barriers. According to President Frank D'Angelo, "The weekend helps the participants to become familiar not only with each other but also with themselves."

The mission of Blind Brook's AIDS Club is to inform people with information regarding AIDS and AIDS related issues. As in past years, the club plans to work extensively with a group called Bread and Roses, which has a house in Connecticut for the terminally ill suffering from AIDS. During the course of the year, they plan to run a gift drive and organize bake sales and other fundraisers to donate supplies to the organization. Additionally, the AIDS club annually participates in World AIDS Day by attending a conference with other schools in the area.

New Special Education Director Has High Hopes for Future

By Mark Harris

Settling quickly into her role as the school district's new Special Education Director, Mrs. Lynn Allen has already begun to work closely with her CO-workers to pursue new programs and ideas for the current year. Having been hired only last May, Mrs. Allen is making a positive impact on the district. Her staff finds her open to ideas. The feeling is mutual, because Mrs. Allen finds Blind Brook to be warm, welcoming, and receptive.

As her primary goal, Mrs. Allen hopes to develop a Special Education team that includes staff of both Ridge Street School and the Middle/High School. Right now, there are two teams because of the schools' different locations, but she is looking forward to the entire staff working together on the same goals and objectives. Currently, monthly meetings between the elementary and middle/high schools are being held. Mrs. Laraine Wallen, one of the Special Education staff members at Blind Brook, thinks that these meetings are very productive and are something the department has needed for a long time.

Mrs. Allen is very impressed with the "Consultant-Teacher Model" that the district utilizes. With this model, a Special Education teacher and a regular education teacher work together assisting all students in one classroom. Mrs. Allen really would like to expand "the wonderful model that's already started here" so that the school might use it on a wider basis.

This year, the Special Education department will be looking more closely at the uses of technology in the assistance of students. There are several new software programs that they will be able to access through Blind Brook's newly remodeled library. One example of this is a networked "IEP", or "Individual Education Program," which is required for each special education student. Using this program, teachers would be able to access the networked computers so that they can write their IEPs online and easily access their saved documents from anywhere within the two schools.

Mrs. Allen's department is also planning to improve data analysis within different subject areas for Special Education and ESL (English as a Second Language) stu-

dents. Data analysis consists of studying information, such as the exact meaning of specific test scores, and then using that information to decide how to make programs better. Mrs. Wallen says, "[We hope to obtain] better data to then plan where we can improve or maybe [to find] where we shouldn't be doing certain things, so to then change our curriculum."

Mr. Robert Chlebicki, the principal of Blind Brook High School, thinks, "[Mrs. Allen is] extremely knowledgeable about special education... She is a great source of information and a great resource." He considers her a very hard-working individual who "will bring an incredible strength to that area of the school because of her background and her knowledge. ... She can bring ... new resources we didn't already know about." She will further educate the school in areas on which people may need clarification, such as the delivery of special services to the students, among them extra time on tests or the provision of class notes. "Because of what she will bring to the job, she will put an organization to [the special education services] ... and a structure to it," added Mr. Chlebicki.

Dr. William Miles, Blind Brook's new superintendent, was one of the people who helped recruit Mrs. Allen. "I'm delighted that she's able to join us." He went on to say that she is a knowledgeable resource and also has a keen interest in the students. "That is a great combination," he remarked.

Mrs. Wallen feels that Mrs. Allen has many qualifications, not just for Special Education but also for administration. Mrs. Wallen says, "[Her being qualified in those areas] is really good because we're a small district, and we don't have as many administrators." Mrs. Shelley Tager, another Special Education teacher, finds her to be "doing a wonderful job at this point and addressing many of the needs of families and students. I really think she has a good handle on what needs to be addressed in this district."

Mrs. Allen has an open door policy at her office. She likes people to drop in to speak to her or call her when they feel the need. "I never want them to feel like they're bothering me ... that's what I'm here for," Mrs. Allen explained.

Middle School Principal Search Narrows

By Kyle Wirshba

Construction on the new middle school is steadily on its way, bringing changes to the Blind Brook campus and community. This new building is the first step to separate the middle school from the high school to establish two independent entities. Next school year, when students return from summer vacation, a question remains: Who will be in charge in this new middle school?

According to the Administration, a new principal is expected to be chosen before the end of this month. However, as freshman Eric Strauss put it, "We were supposed to have a Middle School principal at the beginning of this year. Who knows what to believe!" In fact, the initial target hiring date was last June, but choosing a principal has proven to be more difficult than was originally expected. First, the selection process is long and tedious because the many factions in our administration and community must reach a consensus. And even once consensus is reached, there is no guarantee that a match is made. In this case, two prime candidates have already been offered the job and have turned it down.

Before any new principal is appointed, the candidate must go through a rigorous selection process. First, applicants responding to the district's advertisements in various newspapers submit applications to Superintendent Dr. William Miles, who reviews the résumés and identifies those whom he would like to see for an initial interview. The first interview is done by a three-member panel, consisting of BMP/Ridge Street School Principal Roberta Kirshbaum, Blind Brook Middle/High School Principal Robert Chlebicki, and Dr. Miles. At the end of this screening period, each applicant thought to have potential is invited to interview with the Board of Education. Assuming the Board approves the applicant, the person must then interview with a group of faculty and parents representing the Rye Brook community. This group then gives its feedback to Dr. Miles, who weighs all available information and chooses a single candidate to endorse for the position. He then takes his recommendation to the Board of Education who makes the final decision.

While this seems like a relatively straightforward process, it is actually extremely difficult to reach consensus among all the constituents of the Rye Brook community, because each has its own agenda. For example, teachers involved with the Middle School are looking for someone who will help design curriculum, while students seem to be pushing for someone who is both fun and relatively lax. Furthermore, not only

is there a difference of opinion between different groups, such as the teachers and students, but some disagreement also exists within the factions. For example, Dr. Miles feels that "Somebody who has experience in Middle School programs with Middle School kids" is ideal for the job while Mr. Chlebicki thinks that this type of experience need not be the deciding factor. Clearly, finding someone to satisfy the main parties has been difficult, and two rounds of interviewing have already taken place with no result. Currently, the third, and hopefully last, round of interviews by the screening committee has identified about five candidates.

Whichever candidate is finally selected, he or she will be serving in a brand new position for this school district. Contrary to common perception, Susan Shirken, who left Blind Brook at the end of the last school year, did not serve as Middle School Principal. She was, instead, the Assistant Principal for Blind Brook Middle/High School. Her job was never to be principal of the Middle School, but many years ago she began taking on many functions of that role. The inquiry then becomes, why didn't Mrs. Shirken get offered the job if she had taken on many of the responsibilities in the past? The answer: she applied for the job and was interviewed but others, who subsequently turned down the job, were offered the position. She subsequently accepted a position at another school in Westchester County.

Currently, Mr. Chlebicki remains the principal of the Middle School as well as the High School, while Mr. Michael Mitchell is the new assistant principal. Given the differences between the two schools and the goal of establishing a separate identity for the Middle School, some members of the faculty and staff are concerned about the delay in bringing the new principal on board. Mrs. Audrey Currie, secretary of the Middle School, says that sometimes, "You get the feeling things might be falling between the cracks."

Another issue the administration is trying to resolve is the total separation of the Middle School and the High School. At first, this seems like a fairly easy task once two separate buildings are erected, but actually certain problems exist, because the Middle and High Schools share many things, such as a lunchroom and the faculty who teach 'specials,' e.g., Home Arts and Technology. The two schools will also continue sharing Assistant Principal Mr. Mitchell. However, Mr. Chlebicki has asked the Board of Education to allow Mr. Mitchell to work only with the High School, but so far no decision has been made on this issue.

Disconnecting the Cell Phone Policy Continued from page 1

"We didn't think that there was any point in passing the cell phone proposal, though some of the issues behind not passing it were really unnecessary," said Wendy Heimann, secretary to Mr. Chlebicki and one of the staff members in Congress. "We all agreed with most of the ideas behind the issue in certain circumstances and the fact that it leaves doors open for potential problems," she continued.

Though some may be passionate about the need for this type of communication, the Blind Brook administration stands behind its decision. Students are always welcome to use the telephones in the office as well as the recently installed pay phone located in the cafeteria. If, at any time, the office is locked, school personal will gladly open the doors, allowing students to use the telephone if necessary.

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Sports

Sports Editor: Frank D'Angelo

Trojan Soccer Ends In Sectional Semifinals

By Eric Strauss

Despite moving from Class D to Class C this season, the Blind Brook Varsity Soccer team had another sensational season, closing out with a 12-4 overall record. Unfortunately, they weren't able to match the magic of last season. While they piled more wins than last year's squad, they ended their season this year after just three playoff games.

Blind Brook was led by seniors Jared Feldesman, the goalie, Rodrigo Carvahlo and Robert Frank, midfielders, and Tsubasa Ishigure, the center mid-fielder. After making it to the Sectionals with a regular-season record of 10-3, Blind Brook won their first game easily. They defeated Hastings by a score of 6-0. In the second round of the Sectionals, Blind Brook went up against Dover Plains in what many have considered their most physical game of the year.

Although Carvahlo, the leading goal scorer for Blind Brook this season, severely injured his shin late in the first half, the Trojans pulled through by a score of 3-2. In the Class C Sectional Semifinals, the Trojans were no match for Rye Neck. The Panthers, the number one seeded Class C team in the state, were led all season long by the county's leading goal scorer, Brian Mazza. Although Mazza scored only 1 goal, the Trojans still dropped the match 5-0.

Feldesman, who received All-League honors, said, "With Rodrigo going out late in the first half against Dover, we as team knew we had to come together and

win that game for him. But facing Rye Neck without him hurt us because we lost an offensive threat."

Feldesman himself incurred an ankle injury late in the season. Feldesman had put up a truly commendable performance prior to his injury, letting in only 18 goals during the regular season. When he returned to the starting lineup after Junior Kevin Aughavin stepped in at goal for the interim, Feldesman was unable to punt the ball from the net.

Adjusting to the new Class was, according to the players, an unremarkable process. Said Frank, "Last year we were able to rest during the Sectionals because no one wanted to play us in D. The transition to C was somewhat of a challenge this year though, because we had to play teams like Keio and Rye Neck. Other than that, there weren't really any adjustments we could make. We just had to keep up our level of play."

Said Senior Tri-Captain Spencer Howard, "Scoring was not a problem for us because we were able to score around 50-plus goals this season and only give up 18."

Blind Brook had two All-Section players in Carvahlo and Ishigure. And with four other All-League players in Feldesman, Frank, Aughavin, and Matt Stolzar, the team certainly received its warranted recognition. After losing five seniors from last year's State Semifinal team, this year's squad was placed in a tough position. Although they exited in the Sectional Semifinals, the season was, according to them, a success in itself.



Senior Spencer Howard in action as goalie Jared Feldesman and junior Michael DiBona look on.
Photo by Harry Malles

What is the Role of a Senior Captain in Varsity Athletics?

Moderated by Frank D'Angelo, Sports Editor

On a Monday afternoon in late October, I sat down with six seniors, three males and three females, each of whom was, or is, the captain of a Blind Brook Varsity sport. I wanted to get a wide range of views on the topic of a captain's role in Varsity athletics. With the fall season already over, and the winter sports season just beginning, Blind Brook sports are in full effect. I think it's important that we all understand how these teams are led—how and by whom they are motivated. For that fairly short conversation, I assembled Jason Stein and Sammy Tager (captains of the Boys' and Girls' Varsity Basketball teams), Stefanie Platt (captain of the Girls' Varsity Volleyball team), Allison Schultz (captain of the Varsity Cross-Country team), Matt Stolzar (captain of the Boys' Varsity Soccer Team), and Spencer Howard (a Boys' Varsity Soccer captain and soon-to-be Boys' Varsity Baseball team captain). The following is the transcript of our panel discussion.

D'Angelo: We all know that Varsity athletics is a huge part of the Blind Brook experience, especially since we're such a small school. We rarely see cuts from Varsity teams, and the few who are unable to participate have an ample opportunity to get experience on the Junior Varsity level. Being captains of your respective teams, each of you has a good amount of experience and know-how. Each of you is a leader. You observe the younger athletes at work and you are expected to lead teammates who may be the same age as you all. Now, we'd like to know exactly what each of you think your role is as a Senior Varsity captain, and what the importance of that role is.

Tager: I think the role of a Varsity captain is to be a leader on the court. Everyone has to look up to that person, and feel comfortable going to that person for advice

or guidance in that sport. The captain is supposed to be the one with the most experience, so he or she should be able to answer the questions of younger players from their own experience.

Platt: As captains, we have to set a good example for the younger players. We would want them to follow in our footsteps and possibly be better than us, so we have to make sure we're doing the right thing at all times. In order to do that, I think the relationship between captains and younger players should be friendly. We have to let them know that they can come to us whenever they want because that's the only way that they're going to get better. If we overpower the younger players and be authoritative, then that creates tension on the team.

D'Angelo: Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of having a friendly relationship with the younger players on the team.

Stolzar: I think that there are two different styles of leadership. Some people choose to lead based on authority and some strive to maintain a friendlier relationship with others. Both have their pluses and minuses. When you're friendly, the players might like you better and respect you more. But you also have to consider that they may be ignoring your position. For instance, if I had too friendly a relationship with a younger athlete on the Soccer team and I told him, "We need you to get the water cooler for us," they might respond with, "Why do I have to do it?" or "I thought you liked me more than that." Players might be more willing to cooperate with captains when there is an element of hierarchy involved.

Stein: I think you need to have a good mix of those two methods. Personally, when I deal with my teammates, I'll tell a player one thing, and if that player isn't listening to the coach or me then I'll yell at him. But

if we're trying to teach that kid something, and he needs help, I'll work with him. I'll be his friend. I don't think you need to choose one method or the other. It can be handled as each circumstance arises.

Schultz: By maintaining a friendly, almost mutual, relationship with the other players on the team, particularly the younger ones, the team can be united in a way and work together.

Howard: I know for the guys' team, sometimes people just don't want to listen to you—

Platt: —That happens on the girls' teams too—

Howard: —And sometimes you just have to go past a point of being nice about it. Sure, people don't like to be told what to do, but as captains we're supposed to know what's best for the team. Our teammates have to invest some sort of faith in us; they have to trust that we have enough experience to know what to do and when to do it.

Platt: The way a captain acts definitely depends upon that person's personality and what that person has been exposed to as a younger player. If a current captain was subjected to that authoritative treatment when they were young, it might be the way she acts when she finds herself in that leadership role. Some people, on the other hand, just like to be captain. They like to let everyone know that they have a higher position than others. That would be an example of a bad captain. That's just not the role that a leader should play, particularly in high school sports.

D'Angelo: How about a Junior captain. As a player who may not be the oldest in the crowd, what type of authority should that person be able to exhibit with others?

Tager: It's certainly easier to be a Senior captain. As a junior, although you may be just as experienced and knowledgeable as seniors, your teammates won't necessarily

let you be as much of a leader. That goes especially for teammates who may be older than you. I know, personally, having been a captain since ninth grade, that you just don't get the respect you deserve until you're a Senior captain.

Stein: I agree. Being a captain as a sophomore, I would try to tell seniors what they should be doing, but they just wouldn't listen.

Platt: In a way, that's understandable. You have to take seniority and overall experience into account—not just ability.

Schultz: With cross-country, it's best that you stress the individual, because people are receiving individual times. You have to encourage everyone to perform to the best of his or her own ability. So I think in order to encourage individual performance, you have to take a different approach. It not as if I'm going to rally the team as a whole to achieve a certain goal, I'll go to more of a one-on-one form of encouragement. In a situation like that, a captain needs to be supportive, and that involves a type of affection, not an aggressive behavior.

D'Angelo: So how do you other captains—those of you involved in more team-oriented sports—go about that encouragement of others?

Tager: For basketball, you still have to encourage individual importance. For instance, if someone's greatest strength is rebounding, you're going to encourage her to work on that and develop that talent. But as a team, you have to be working together at all times.

Stein: I'm not sure if it matters whether or not that team is geared more toward individual or team performance. It all has to do with a team getting better as a whole. If you're a cross-country captain, you're still going to be saying, "Okay guys, let's go

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Sports Editor: Frank D'Angelo

Sports Section

The Greatest World Series Ever?

By Jason Pollens

The 2001 World Series was one for the ages; many have considered the match up of the New York Yankees and the Arizona Diamondbacks as one of the greatest of all time. This year's Series was expected to be the most difficult in the five-year dynastic run of the Bronx Bombers. With Randy Johnson and Curt Schilling, the eventual Co-MVP's and probable first and second lead vote-getters for the NL Cy Young Award, there's not much a team can do.

Having won four of the last five Fall Classics, the Yankees certainly had the playoff experience. In fact, going into the Series, baseball analysts deemed New York's overall pitching staff and bullpen better than that of Arizona. But, in the end, Arizona emerged four games to three. They became the fastest expansion team ever to win a World Series.

One would have thought that this was another year for the Yanks, especially after they rallied from down two games against Oakland in the Division Series; but one would have been wrong. One would have thought that after beating the winningest regular season team ever, the Seattle Mariners, in the League Championship Series, that the Yanks had their fourth straight WS in the bag; one would have been wrong once again.

But facing Arizona, one would not know what to have thought. And that's exactly why this year's Series was so exciting. Down two games to none once again this year, the Yankees rallied to three games to two, winning two home games in extra innings. The final game in Arizona, the clincher, was won by the home team in the bottom of the ninth. One rarely sees such exciting games back to back, especially when those games come in the World Series. Let's take a game-by-game look at the Series—possibly the most exciting seven-game series ever.

Game 1 in Phoenix turned out to be a debacle for the Yankees, as they lost 9-1. Mike Mussina went only 3 innings, giving up 5 runs, 3 of which were earned. Randy Choate got touched up for 4 runs, only one of which was earned. Sterling Hitchcock and Mike Stanton closed the game out without giving up any runs. Defense was another Game 1 sore spot for the Yankees. David Justice dropped a ball that was an easy catch and Scott Brosius booted a ground ball, which opened the Diamondbacks up for a huge inning. On the D'Backs' side, Curt Schilling pitched brilliant baseball, going 7 innings and giving up only one earned run and striking out eight. Arizona had homeruns from Craig Counsell and Luis Gonzalez in that contest.

Game 2 was a breathtaking pitching duel between Randy Johnson and Andy Pettite. Pettite basically matched Johnson pitch for pitch until the 7th inning, when he gave up a 3-run homer to Matt Williams. Before then, Pettite only allowed one run on a Danny Bautista RBI double. Yankees hitters were overpowered by the 6'10" Johnson. Joe Torre's plan of stacking the lineup with right-handed batters was ineffectual. The Big Unit pitched a complete game three hitter and had an astounding 11 strikeouts. The Yanks went back to New York down two games to none.

Game 3 saw President Bush flying in Marine One to Yankee Stadium for the throwing of the ceremonial first pitch. This was the first time a president had thrown out the first pitch in the World Series since Eisenhower did in at Ebbets Field in 1956. The starters were AL Cy-Young-hopeful Roger Clemens and Brian Anderson, a pitcher who barely made the D'Back's postseason roster. Clemens pitched 7 innings, giving up one run and striking out 9. The Yanks took the early lead with a solo homerun by Jorge Posada, but Matt Williams tied the game in the fourth with a sacrifice fly. In the sixth, the

Diamondbacks were mounting an offense and had two men on with two outs for Williams. He hit a liner but Spencer made a diving catch that saved the game for the Yanks. New York took the lead in the sixth when Brosius singled in Bernie Williams. And Mariano Rivera pitched the 8th and 9th innings to close out the Yankee victory. Final score: 2-1.

Game 4 produced Schilling once again,

Down two games to none once again this year, the Yankees rallied to three games to two, winning two home games in extra innings. The final game in Arizona, the clincher, was won by the home team in the bottom of the ninth. One rarely sees such exciting games back to back.

this time on 3 days rest. After seven innings, he only gave up one run, a solo shot to Shane Spencer. Orlando "El Duque" Hernandez, despite not having his best stuff, also only gave up one run, a solo shot to Mark Grace. In the bottom of the ninth, the score was 3-1 in favor of Arizona after Stanton gave up two runs. With two outs, Tino Martinez came up with a man on first. Facing closer Byung Hyun Kim, who blew the Yanks away in the 8th inning, Tino hit a homerun into the bleachers to tie the game in dramatic fashion. In the 10th inning Derek Jeter came to the plate and fouled off pitch after pitch till he hit a ball into right field seats off of Kim to win the game 4-3.

Game 5 pitted Mussina, who pitched 8 innings strong, against Miguel Batista. Mussina racked up 10 strikeouts, and gave up just 2 earned runs, solo homers by Rod Barajas and Steve Finley. However Miguel Batista pitched 7 2/3 of scoreless baseball. With Kim in again in the 9th inning, the unbelievable happened. Instead of Tino, Scott Brosius hit a two-run homer to tie the game. Before this World Series, there had only been three game-tying or game-winning homeruns in the 9th inning with two outs. Sharp defense by Alfonso Soriano

would set the stage for 12th inning heroics. Arizona's Albie Lopez gave up a single to Knoblauch, who was sacrificed over to second by Brosius. Soriano, the defense star, would end the game with a RBI single, driving in Knoblauch from second. The Yanks then headed back to Arizona up 3 games to 2.

In Game 6, Randy Johnson pitched 7 innings and gave up 2 runs. Meanwhile, Yankees pitchers were awful. Pettite started and got hammered for 6 runs through 2 innings. He wasn't the worst Yankee pitcher that night, though, as Jay Witasick gave up 8 earned runs in 1 1/3 innings. Danny Bautista had 5 RBIs for the D'Backs, and Luis Gonzalez and Tony Womack each had 2. The final score of this game was 15-2. The series, tied at 3-3, would be decided by a seventh and final game, a game that this Yankee team had never played up until that point.

Game 7 matched up two 20-game winners, Schilling, who was pitching on three days rest, and Clemens. Schilling gave up 2 runs in 7 1/3 innings while Clemens gave up one run in 6 1/3 innings and had 10 strikeouts. With Schilling tiring, he gave up a solo HR to Soriano in the eighth. At this point, Soriano was looking like the WS MVP for the Yanks. All his team had to do was get 6 outs. Mariano Rivera came in to pitch the eighth and ninth, while Randy Johnson returned in to pitch 1 1/3 innings in relief after having thrown 104 pitches the day before. Rivera struck out the side in the eighth but blew the game in the ninth. Down one run, Arizona's Mark Grace led off the inning with a single and was replaced in base by David Dellucci. On the next play, Rivera threw the ball away into center field after trying to snag an advancing Dellucci at second base. Tony Womack then came up and drove in the tying run with a double to center. After Rivera hit Craig Counsell with a pitch, the bases were loaded with one out. With the infield defense in, Luis Gonzalez hit a single to center to drive in Jay Bell. Rivera's streak of 23 straight post-season saves was broken, and so was the Yankee's streak of three straight Series titles.

Elite Cheerleading Squad Begins Practices

By Ben Solarz

Blind Brook's lively and relatively new Cheerleading squad is all set and ready to rock and roll. With the school rumbling with excitement and anticipation for the upcoming winter sports season, Cheerleading is beginning to kick into action to cheer on our men and lady Trojans. Leading the team are Captains Emily Ware and Alison Schultz, the squad's only seniors. These girls hope to push team spirit into high gear. Although the squad doubts that it will enter any cheerleading competitions, the games and routines should prove to be something to look forward to.

Unlike last year's twenty-three-girl squad, serious cuts were made this year to help improve the team by increasing the skill level. A thirteen-girl elite team is looking forward to a great year. Although many were disappointed when confronted with cuts, the team will be better for it; as a result of rigorous criteria, the thirteen members on the team represent the best our school has to offer. Many new team members, such as Simone De Cicco, were ecstatic to find they had made the cut. Shaking with excitement, De Cicco exclaimed, "You bet I made it!"

"I want us to really have fun and hopefully do a lot of stunts," offered Captain Emily Ware. She, along with Co-Captain Alison Schultz, would also enjoy entering the team into a cheerleading tournament or two. However, if that isn't possible, the

team can still look forward to pumping up the Trojan Basketball Team on both home and away courts.

"I just hope we can lead the boys to victory," added Schultz on her criteria for a successful year.

For the past three years, the Cheerleading Coach has been an individual from outside Blind Brook's walls. With this year's changes, the advisor is Blind Brook Middle School English teacher and past-cheerleader, Cher Treacy. Treacy will help the team with their routines as well as offer hints and tips she learned in her cheerleading days.

On Monday, November 5, thirteen girls showed up for their first practice, ready to learn new moves. Among them were four freshmen, Simone De Cicco, Sandra DiCostanza, Harley Konner, and Simone Vasile. The team is youthful, sporting only two seniors, Emily Ware and Allison Schultz.

Rounding out the team are sophomores Kayla Shaoul, Sarah Woodhouse, and Paola Chaniewicz, and juniors Marta Ducek, Sarah Powell, Serena Stingone, and Sarah Wolff. The team hopes this new group will come together and, as stated by Ware, strive for excellence as "the newer members grow together and gain experience with each year."

"This year I hope the cheerleading squad can work together as one," echoed Schultz.

Where Are the Other Signatures on the Athletic Pledge?

By Jason Stein

A new rule was created last year for all varsity athletes at Blind Brook, requiring each to sign a pledge to refrain from consuming, purchasing, and possessing any drugs throughout their entire sports season. That pledge is still in effect today. All violators face consequences ranging from a one game suspension to expulsion from their team. Being an athlete who participates in a sport year-round, I understand the reasons for this policy and am in favor of its enforcement. Last year, the use of drugs (yes, alcohol is a drug) among athletes declined as a result of the pledge's conception.

While drug use by students is dangerous and illegal, one would be naïve to think that underage drug use does not occur in Rye Brook. It is, unfortunately, an inevitability of high school social life. Blind Brook's administration is well aware of this; this wise policy is a result of their awareness. This pledge does not only benefit the various teams, but, more importantly, it helps individuals by keeping their bodies drug free.

I do, however, pose one question to those who created the athletic pledge: Are athletes the only Blind Brook students using and being affected by drugs?

The students who perform in those great plays throughout the year should be signing this pledge as well. If they are using drugs, then they can not perform their best while dancing and singing. The dancers in these plays are exempt from gym. If their physical activity warrants gym exemption, they too should sign the pledge. It would surely result in an improved dramatic performance and physical well being. All of the actors and actresses go through an immense amount of physical and mental activity which is equivalent to that of an athlete, if not of greater intensity. They spend more time practicing than most teams; therefore, their bodies are even more deserving of purity and rest. Anyone who participates in an activity that requires physical activity should, without a doubt, be required to adhere to a drug policy.

But the issue does not end there. Should editors of FOCUS be required to sign the pledge? If so, then all of the staff writers should have to do the same. Should those involved in the Math team, Chess Club, Spectrum, Mock Trial Team, and Band have to sign? A writer, a mathematician, a chess player, a layout editor, a trumpet player, and an acting defense attorney can not perform their tasks to full capacity if they are under the influence of drugs.

Some may argue that students would only be affected by drugs if used within a few hours or days of a particular event. But this is a false precept. Using drugs often leads to late nights and results in non-regenerative sleep habits. Sleep allows for the regeneration of the body and mind. Rested bodies and minds allow one to perform at one's best, and whether activity is mental (academic) or physical (athletic), one will be negatively affected by a lack of sleep.

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Sports Editor: Frank D'Angelo

Sports Section

October Sports Recap

By Jeffrey Kaplow

The Blind Brook High School Fall Sports Program as of October 31, 2001:

Girls' Volleyball

The Girls' Varsity Volleyball team finished their season with an overall record of 1-15. Rachel Kaplowitz, Tarynne Goldenberg, Shani Ackerman, and Jessica Stein played solid volleyball this season. Despite their record, the games were for the most part extremely close.

Girls' Tennis

The Girls' Varsity Tennis team finished their season 7-3. The standout players on the team were junior Lauren Fishkind and sophomore Lisa Hamilton. Fishkind and Hamilton advanced to the Conference Tournament where they participated in doubles play. In the first round, they surprised everyone by defeating fourth-seeded team in the tournament, but their season ended when they lost to Bronxville in the second round.

Girls' Swimming

The Varsity Girls' Swim Team was not as competitive this year as in past years. They had a number of meets, winning several, but finished the season below .500. Lauren Redmerski and Jillian Blinkoff placed well in the team's tournaments.

Cross-Country

Led by Coach Judith Mella, the Varsity Cross-Country team finished its season despite a few obstacles. The girls did not win any meets because they did not have enough players to qualify. The boys, while entering several runners in league competition, were unable to pull off any wins. On a positive note, junior David Erner had a very impressive season, receiving All-League honors. All-League Honorable Mentions included Joe Sabia, Michael Mihalzco, and Jeff Licitra. Female All-League awards went to Katie Lynch, Angela Criscione, and Lauren Piccolo. Meanwhile, Stefanie Erner received All-League Honorable Mention.

Role of a Senior Captain

Continued from page 4

work out. Let's go run." You're still addressing the team as a whole. I think that in any sport, you're best bet is to stress the team aspect. If you create a sense of unity and togetherness, then that's going to get players thinking. They're going to realize that, whatever they're doing, they're with teammates working toward a common goal.

Platt: In volleyball, the major thing we stress is working together on the court as one rather than individuals. There were a few instances when players abandoned that, and they started playing more for themselves rather than the team. And it showed when that happened. You just don't do as well because not everybody is on the same page.

Howard: Also a lot of times, with other players on the team, they try to take up the role of captain when they're really not. It happens especially with other seniors on the team who feel they should have more authority because they've been there a while. Those people sometimes critique or criticize others' play, which isn't even what a captain should be doing in the first place. That could lead to a sort of snowball effect where eventually you have the whole team getting on this one player's case. It's our job to stop that from happening.

Stolzar: Well, of course it's not good when you have the team ganging up on one player, but if an older player has something constructive to say he or she certainly shouldn't be prohibited from saying that. Like we said before, it's a team effort. If someone can offer some advice that would benefit the team, we should be welcoming that.

D'Angelo: Switching gears a bit, I want to hear how skill plays into the role of a captain. Does the captain, particularly the Senior captain, have to be the best player on that team? Why or why not?

Stolzar: I think it's important for the top player to be at least one of the captains. You always need people to lead by example. That's just one of the keys to any sport. You want your other players to watch and know that that person is the smartest player out there. That player can command respect

simply by being one of the best. In a situation like that, the younger players are more inclined to listen to the captain. I mean, nobody wants to listen to someone who can't play the sport.

Howard: In my case, I talked to my coach throughout the season and learned that I wasn't captain because I was one of the best players on the team—because I'm not. He chose me because I'm aggressive and I'm vocal on the soccer field. I think if player can really get into the game, then that's a sign of a great captain. There's more that figures into it than just skill.

Platt: What you put into your sport and how hard you work at it are definitely as important, if not more important, than how good of a player you are.

D'Angelo: Well, can a player prepare to be a captain, or are those qualities just a part of you? Is it a natural leadership?

Platt: I think you can acquire it over the years after seeing how other captains play and act.

Stein: I'm not sure about that. I've played under some pretty poor captains before—captains who just didn't know how to lead a team. As a younger kid I tried to lead the team myself. I didn't want the bad attitudes of those above me affecting the team in an adverse way. It's not something I practiced either.

Howard: But you can learn from situations like that. You get to see how different captains work over the years. You can see when captains handle their teams poorly. That's something you can learn from. As a younger player, you grow not only learning how to play better but how to work better with a team. You learn from those around you, especially the captains.

Stolzar: In anything you do, leaders will emerge. You can improve your leadership characteristics, but there's always that natural ability to lead that some people have and others lack.

D'Angelo: That's a fine way to leave off. Thank you all for agreeing to participate. Your time is greatly appreciated and I hope others may be able to benefit from what's been said this afternoon.

Sportech Athlete of the Month:



Senior Tsubasa Ishigure (pictured on left) giving an opponent a hard time.
Photo by Harry Malles

Tsubasa Ishigure

By Ryan Pearson and Sports Staff

Although the Varsity Soccer Team's season has come to a close, it has a lot to be proud of—particularly the performance of senior Tsubasa Ishigure. Team members and fans alike agree that Ishigure was a key component to the team's amazing record this year.

"He's a god," remarked junior Kevin Aughavin. "He was this quiet force all season long for us. You wouldn't expect him to be so great, maybe because he's never cocky or showy."

"He's helped us earn our outstanding record," said senior Jared Feldesman, the Trojan Goaltender. "He's always been there when we needed him, and he made my job a lot easier this year. It takes some pressure off me when you have a guy like that out there producing goals left and right."

Ishigure, a center mid-fielder, was the team leader and county leader in assists this year. But when Feldesman was out due to injury against league rival Keio, Ishigure stepped up. Aughavin moved from sweeper to goalie, and Ishigure took to sweeper in what was arguably his best game of the season.

September's Sportech Athlete of the Month, Robert Frank, stated, "Tsubasa is the main reason why we did so well, especially in times of adversity."

Ishigure has played Varsity soccer for the Trojans since eighth grade, and this year he received All-League honors for his efforts. He will place that award to last season's All-League plaque. He will also add to that November's Sportech Athlete of the Month award. FOCUS congratulates Ishigure and his teammates on a fine season.

Each month Rye Brook's Sportech will honor an athlete who has achieved highly during the course of the month.

Where Are the Other Signatures? Continued from page 5

Some may also argue that it is unfair to have those participating in yearlong activities sign the pledge; however, many students are involved in sports all school year. Truly, there is no "appropriate" timing for drug use. By not having a student adhere to a pledge simply because that student's activity goes on all year, we would condone a moderate use of drugs. In essence, those who are committed to an activity yearlong should be the first to sign this pledge. These students will need the most rest, the keenest minds, and the strongest bodies.

Of course, not all participants of extracurricular activities use drugs, yet the fact remains that the majority does. If students are going to harm their bodies at the expense of their team or club, then they don't deserve to participate at all.

This column is not the first time that the anger, confusion, and frustration felt by many student-athletes have been raised. Last year, our student body, teachers and administrators heard John Aughavin, a senior and three-season athlete, voice his concerns during a Town Meeting.

Two months into last school year, I took this issue one step further. I spoke with a member of the Board of Education about this topic after an early-season Girls' Varsity Basketball game. This Board member agreed it was unjust to single out the and assured me that the issue was under discussion and would soon be changed.

Yet the policy remains unchanged a year later. As I had feared, the concerns of student-athletes have been ignored by the Board of Education (but that is another story for another day).

Currently in my senior year, I am the Vice President of the SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) Club and am also going into my third season as Boys' Varsity Basketball Captain. I want to reduce the use of drugs among all students, especially by those performing in any school activities, but I also want policies set by the school to be fair. To single out the athletes in this situation is unjust. I ask those of you who are in higher places to consider these issues seriously, and to modify this partial and inequitable policy.

Write For FOCUS!

NEW WRITING Sections Open to ALL Blind Brook Students and Faculty

"I am a..." **The Diary of a Blind Brookian:** This focuses on what it's like to have a certain title—a Homecoming queen, basketball player, a straight-A student, a straight-C student, a new teacher, a new student, a lead in a play, a high school junior—and sharing the inner emotions, pressures, and responsibilities that come along with it. Entries can be written informally and printed (not submitted) anonymously.

End Page: The last page of FOCUS will be devoted to a featured column, photograph, or artwork (e.g. comic strip) that any BBHS student submits.

If you have any questions, please contact
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Features

Features Editor: Matt Stolzar

How to Get Around the Cell Phone Policy

By Ariel Page

It's between 4 and 6 inches long, you can hold it in your hand, and you can't live without it...the cell phone. It's fast, it's portable, and you don't need a pocket full of quarters. There's no waiting on line to use it. It's your lifeline to the outside world

when you're between classes and you've just got to communicate. How else can you call your mother to ask her to bring the research paper you left on your desk at home? What if you've got a craving for pizza that just can't be satisfied in the school cafeteria? As Doc Novak would say, it's the best invention since sliced bread! Except there's only one catch...it's outlawed at Blind Brook!

If you just can't resist pressing those buttons or listening to your voicemail, there are ways to get around the policy. There are many areas in the school that both serve as good hiding spots and provide quality service. According to sophomore Flavia Godoy, a good spot is "right outside the locker areas in the back, by the doors going down to the gym, because whoever passes there is a sophomore, junior or senior and they won't care about it." She respectfully adds, "I understand why they passed the anti-cell phone bill, even though I voted against it."



Senior Jill Diamond confesses that she has two favorite spots. "Either I use my cell phone outside the LGI or in the staircase behind our locker area. Those are the only places I can usually get service." One brave soul, 9th grader Kyle Wirshba boldly reveals his locations of choice. "I use it in the

commons, out front, and on the side of the building." Junior Lauren Levinson reluctantly admits to occasional cell phone use. "I use it in front of the building or by the stairs above the gym." As a result of this poll, and personal observation, it appears that the stairs going to the gym happen to be a hot spot for cellular activity.

But what callers must all remember is that there is a risk involved, and that risk is confiscation. There are certain individuals in Blind Brook who've be-

come notorious for cell phone confiscation, such as Principal Robert Chlebicki and Biology Teacher Jerry Citron, and it's advised that all potential callers look out for these individuals before engaging in a conversation. Of course stay in secluded areas for the duration of the call and keep your calls brief. And a point to keep in mind for all those potential violators: only abstinence will keep you and your cell phone 100% safe!



Photos by Hillary Berkowitz and Scott Kaplow



A Computer Lab Aide, and So Much More

By Vani Nambudiri

Two years ago, most Blind Brook students would associate Anita Warren with her friendly smile and the basket of candy she left out on her desk. Now, she is remembered for her optimistic personality and willingness to lend a hand. Anita Warren had worked as a Computer Lab Aide for the past two years at Blind Brook High School. On Friday November 2, she completed her last day of work at Blind Brook.

Because her ill mother will now be living with her, Warren needs to spend more time at home.

She decided that the only way to take proper care of her mother was by resigning from her full-time job at Blind Brook. She explained, "It was a really tough decision because I love all of the students at Blind



Mrs. Anita Warren helping out senior Lori Freundlich.

Photo by Eric Bernbaum

Brook, but I had to put my mother first." Although Warren is needed at home, she is already greatly missed by students and faculty of Blind Brook High School.

Mrs. Warren's departure may have been

a surprise to some people, but there was a reason why she did not discuss her resignation. Due to her cheerful nature, she stressed the fact that she wanted to leave on a positive note. Therefore, by not talking a lot about leaving, she tried to keep everyone in high spirits while her time at Blind Brook was running short. Even though Warren kept quiet, she had many things to say to the Blind Brook community. As she put it, "There is so much to say, that I don't even know where to begin!" She thoroughly enjoyed her time at Blind Brook, and felt

connections with most of the students. She also regretted the fact that she couldn't stay long enough to get to know every student in this school. Mrs. Warren expressed much gratitude towards everyone here at Blind

Brook whom she has grown to know over the past two years. She said, "I want to thank everybody who has made my life here so enriched and wonderful, and I loved being part of this school."

Although Warren's official title was "Computer Lab Aide," she has acted as so much more in the Blind Brook community. Students looked to her for technological assistance, and learned to ask her for advice on several other issues. She became a great friend to a lot of the student body. She helped students through bad days, and cheered them on through their good ones. There was a permanent smile across her face which matched her everlasting positive spirit. Freshman Mark Harris remarked, "She was always livening things up, and she was always here for everybody." No matter what was needed, Mrs. Warren was prepared, lending a hand and spreading her radiant smile.

Myopia in 2001: A Look Around

By Brian Rosenberg

A woman opens her mail with rubber gloves. Firefighters protest that New York City officials will not let them do their job. New York City restaurants discount their prices because of a dearth of customers. There is a drop in the number of commercial flights across America. A demand for Cipro, a relatively unknown drug that has become a household name, grows virtually overnight.

Two months ago, these current events would have seemed ludicrous. In America? The land of the free and the home of the brave?

The international repercussions of the World Trade Center bombing and bio-terrorist attacks have been unparalleled since the Second World War. An international coalition headed by the US including Russia and a tentative China? Implausible. Including Arab nations also, when the purpose is to defeat a fundamentalist Islamic regime? Seemingly impossible!

Yet, what if the terrorist attack had occurred in another country? Would there be an international unity like no other before it? Would the United States Military be mobilized against the regime? The answer is quite simply no.

For years, Israel has endured terrorist incidents like the devastating blow that the United States was dealt. The numbers of innocent citizens that have been killed in that small country make the thousands of deaths sustained in the World Trade Center bombing seem a paltry few. Yet what has the world done? Nothing but utter impotent platitudes that have served to embolden those that wish to put an end to freedom.

The warning signs were there, the USS Cole, the bombing of the Marine Barracks, and countless other incidents across the globe. Yet it took a direct attack against Americans to wake the world up. Has humanity failed to learn the lesson history affords? World War II isolationists in Congress fought FDR's drive to get America in the war. Britain was being pushed back and seemed on the brink of defeat, yet it took an attack on America's soil to mobilize politicians who cared only for the welfare of one country.

We must stop failing to look past the end of our own noses, and start taking an active role in the world around us. Could we have stopped bin Laden's machinations? Arguably. But we could have ended the oppressionist regime that everyone now realizes Afghanistan's Taliban is. What right does anyone have to restrict women's rights so much that they can no longer receive medical care because male doctors who are willing are not allowed to see them in this day and age? Why did we not see this before? Only one answer is certain, we must start learning from our mistakes.

There is no lack in current experience.
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New Clubs Offer New Opportunities

By Rachel Barbarisi

"There's never anything to do in school" is a comment often heard here in Blind Brook. However, students have recently taken it upon themselves to address this problem by creating a plethora of new clubs, which range in subject from business to literature. Among the new options for students are The Science Club, The Book Club, The Investment Club, and The Habitat for Humanity Club.

Two juniors, Tori Quaranta and Blair Mosner, felt the school should have an extracurricular activity for those who like to read. The result: Blind Brook now has its very own Book Club. "Why start a book club?" you might ask? Do you need others

to enjoy a good book? Club co-founder Blair Mosner points out that "when people get together to talk about something they've just read it can be just as much of a social activity as an intellectual one. People start up discussions and often begin thinking on a whole different level. Students just don't read enough in this school, and with all the changes going on now, we felt we should encourage students to get lost in a good book." Hadass Blank, a sophomore member of the Book Club, described why she joined the club. "I love reading but I don't usually take the time to start a new book. Reading for a group discussion is often better because you get to hear everyone else's opinions which makes it that much more interesting." The Book Club, whose first project is *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chobosky, will have its first open forum discussion during activity period on November 7th in the library for anyone who

wants to come participate. "We have around 15 students signed up as it is, in addition to many of the teachers. We'll have food, we'll talk about the book, discuss and vote on next month's novel, and generally just have fun," said Mosner.

For those interested in business, The

Yet do these clubs provide students with enough variety? Are they the beginning of a trend that will continue? Or are they the brief inspiration of a few students soon to dissolve into the more typical Blind Brook apathy?

Investment Club gives students the opportunity to analyze the stock market in an interesting and educational fashion. The idea was pitched to Bart Grachan earlier this year by sophomore Lee Waldman. "He was very efficient and enthusiastic about generating interest for this new club, which now has a full following of 9th and 10th graders." The club discusses strategies of investment and will soon begin a project where the students participate in a hypothetical investment plan involving the stock market. Waldman stated, "We're breaking the club up into two main groups. Each of them will have \$100,000 to put towards the stocks of their choice. At the end of the project we'll compare the two and learn from our experiment. The students are interested in seeing what happens to their investments, especially during this economic recession." The Investment Club is already catching on and the middle school is now forming one of their own.

Students looking for more of a hands-on experience can now find their way into Blind Brook's new Science Club. The club members have already planned a variety of unique labs, some of which include, bending glass, forming dry ice, or even making battle bots. The club's adviser, Science Coordinator Pat Stepanovic, stated, "The club has received a warm response from the school and now has around 14 members. Students enjoy being in the club because students see that science isn't all textbook learning, and gain interesting experiences that the time and curricular restraints of a normal class setting don't allow for. Although we're in our fledgling stages right now, we eventually

hope to raise enough funds to go on a trip and possibly join some science competitions." Junior Sanghee Lee remarked on the atmosphere of the club, "We have a lot of independence during the meetings. Everyone knows each other and there are a lot of stations so you can work with your friends or independently. Either way, everyone enjoys seeing the outcome of the experiments."

One of the more ambitious organizations created this year is the new Habitat for Humanity Club organized by senior John-Michael Grzan. The club has had a favorable response among students throughout the high school who are eager to participate in community service. The club's primary goal is to focus on one particular building site, possibly in Yonkers, and help to fully rebuild a house by the end of this year.

Some students have begun organizing
Please turn to page 9

Reopening of Deli Ends Castle Rue

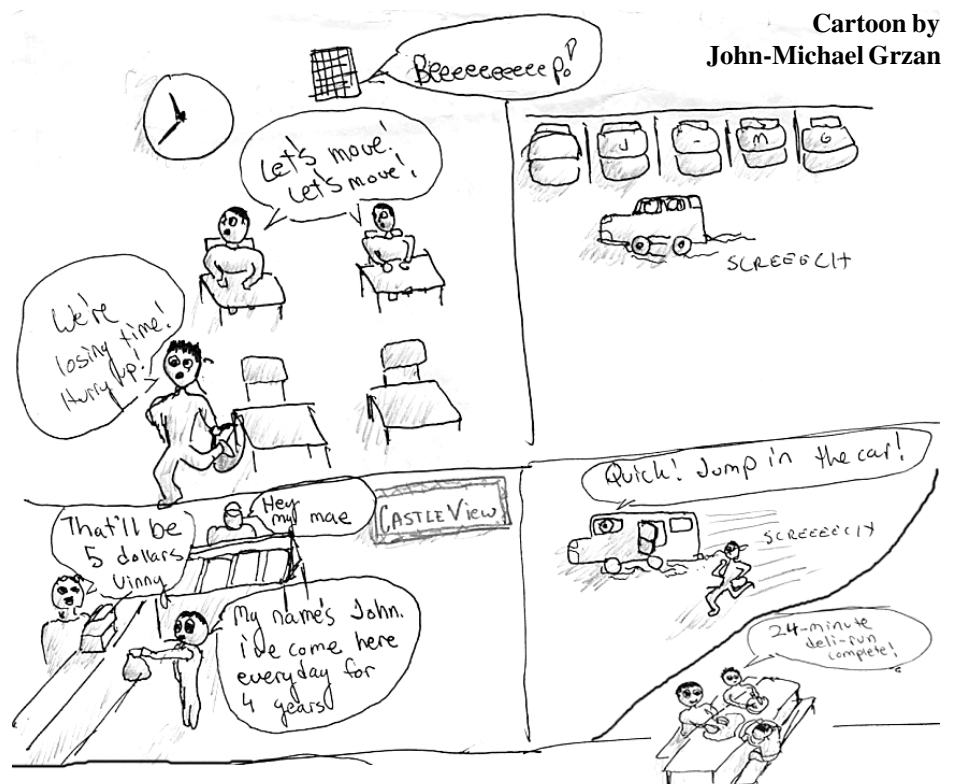
By Jeff Gnerre

Every day many students are dissatisfied with the lunches served by the cafeteria. These students have two alternatives. They can bring their own lunch to school, a popular option amongst the younger students, or they can leave school grounds to seek newer worlds of better food, shorter lines, and lower prices, a choice only available to Juniors and Seniors. One of the most popular spots for Blind Brook students, which satisfies all the desired requirements is the Castle View Deli. But this option was taken away from students for the first month of school.

Over the summer, Castle View was closed down. Students feared the restaurant would be closed for good. However, Castle View has reopened and is once again a haven for high school students. And although the deli has undergone slight renovations, owner Louis Sprio has kept the menu the same as it has always been.

Castle View has always been a convenient location for students, requiring a mere five-minute drive. Make a left after the Church on King Street, and you'll be there in no time. But location is not the only factor behind Castle View's success. Senior Jessica Schultz summed it up by saying, "It's all about the food."

According to student opinion, the food is one of the key things that makes Castle View so special. A favorite on the Castle View menu is their soup. "The soup is amazing, especially the clam chowder," said Senior Jill Diamond. Another daily Castle View sellout is the chicken. Most



Cartoon by John-Michael Grzan

students who go to Castle View order some kind of chicken meal such as Cajun chicken, chicken cutlet, chicken parmigiana, or chicken salad.

Besides the food, another key factor that continues to attract students to Castle View is the quick and friendly service. "The people are always very friendly at Castle View," remarked Senior Spencer Howard. Over the years a bond has formed between the staff and the students. They know most of the students and have memorized their orders. "It's a friendly place; the people are

really nice and the food is great," said Senior Shani Ackerman.

Castle View is clearly more than just a place with good sandwiches. It has become a well-kept tradition of Blind Brook students. Every afternoon, Juniors and Seniors pile into their cars and head to the Castle View deli. As long as the doors to Castle View have been open, it has been a refuge for Blind Brook students. And despite a brief hiatus due to construction, students have remained loyal to the Deli that they know and love.

The Bizarre World of Blind Brook

Do These Students Really Go to Blind Brook?

By Matt Stolzar

The athletic programs and extracurricular activities at Blind Brook are filled with many students, most of whose names are recognizable to the Student Body. When students read the local newspapers, they'll search for their own names as well as the names of their friends. They will likely be familiar with all of the names that they come across. But in some cases, they might come across a name that they've never seen before, and at a school as small as Blind Brook, that is odd.

Recently, a new student, unknown to anyone at Blind Brook has joined the soccer team and become an instant success. Albert Frank has become a fan favorite, as his name has made two stories in a local publication. But who is this Albert Frank? What does he look like? Who does he hang out with? What kind of student is he? Since nobody has ever seen him around school,

nobody really knows.

The reason nobody has ever seen Albert is because he does not exist. Instead Albert Frank is actually Robert Frank, a very recognizable face in the Blind Brook locker area. But Robert is not the only person whose name has been botched by the local newspapers.

Goalkeeper Jared Feldesman has constantly been referred to as Seldesman. Starting Point Guard John-Michael Grzan has been called John-Michael Grazan. All-Section star Tsubasa Ishegure has had his name reversed to Ishegure Tsubasa.

Blind Brook is filled with bright minds, talented performers, and skillful athletes, all of whom will become leaders in the next decades. Some of the students may make a lasting effect on the world that we live in. But for some reason it's imaginary kids like Albert Frank that hog all the coverage.

New Clubs Offer New Opportunities

Continued from page 8

future clubs to add to provide Blind Brook with an even wider range of choices in extracurricular activities. Rachele Tratt is a current junior who is planning to start new club to inform students about physical and emotional abuse, and raise enough funds by next October (Violence Awareness Month), to donate to an organization called My Sister's Place.

Yet do these clubs provide students with enough variety? Are they the beginning of a trend that will continue? Or are they the brief inspiration of a few students soon to dissolve into the more typical Blind Brook apathy? Juniors Lauren Ellenbogen and Melissa Rosen seem to

indicate a continuing interest in new subjects. Said Ellenbogen, "They should break the science club up into more specific interests, like a biology club, or a chemistry club." Melissa echoed her sentiment about new clubs, saying, "Maybe they could even begin an improvisation group as an off shoot of the drama department."

All in all, this new trend might make students a little less likely to look outside of school for activities. Senior Kristen Basset stated, "These clubs are great because they cater to different interests among the student body. With good planning and publicity they should be able to join the other clubs in having a lasting impact on the atmosphere of the school."

In-Depth with Blind Brook's New Staff

Patrizia Varbaro Joins the English Department

By Jessica Levine

A new face can be seen in the English Department this year: that of Patrizia Varbaro. As the freshman class grows every year, the school has increased the size of the staff. Varbaro has become one of Blind Brook's newest additions.

Prior to this school year, Patrizia Varbaro submitted her resumes all over Westchester County. After receiving a copy, Blind Brook gave her a call to set up an interview. Barbara Jackson, head of the English Department at Blind Brook, remarked, "We had about three hundred people who applied for the job, and of those we interviewed about fifteen. We looked for people who have excellence in these areas: outstanding character, competence in teaching, and knowledge of English. We also look for a person who has a lot of passion and who can identify the student needs and connect with the kids. Ms. Varbaro best met this criteria." Varbaro says she chose to leave her former job at Fox Lane High School to enter Blind Brook because she was "familiar with the Rye Brook area and Blind Brook's excellent reputation."

Varbaro graduated from Quinnipiac University and attended graduate school at Manhattanville College. She had no idea that she wanted to teach English until her Sophomore year in college, when she realized that she loved the language and had a passion to teach it. Ms. Varbaro stated, "I never thought I would become an English teacher, but I really enjoy teaching."

Varbaro's teaching philosophy is



Ms. Patrizia Varbaro

Photo by Jake Sussman

to help her students learn, and, at the same time, get to know them as individuals. Stated Ms. Varbaro, "I always identify with the students, as I try to understand their individual styles of learning. I usually adjust my curriculum a lot to meet their needs."

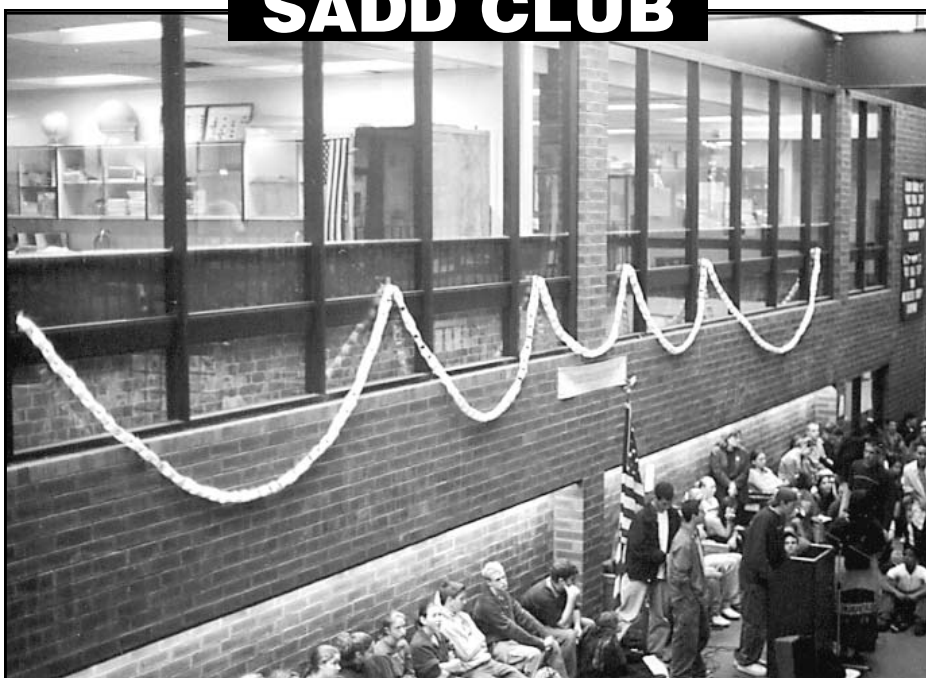
Her greatest role models growing up were her parents, who came to the US from Italy. They came with a limited knowledge of the English language, and spoke "broken" English. It was for this reason that they forced their daughter to perfect the English language.

Like most English teachers, Varbaro loves to read in her spare time, which she refers to as "me" time. She also enjoys walking her two-year old boxer dog named Cyrus.

Freshman John Friedman summed her up by saying, "She has a gregarious personality and usually reaches out to the students a lot."

Next issue's spotlight: Jay Riddick

SADD CLUB



The SADD Club chain sweeping across the Commons' wall.

Photo by Harry Malles

"Don't Let Death From Alcohol or Other Destructive Decisions Break This Chain of Life"

This November, a long paper chain hangs along the wall of the Commons. Constructed by the members of the SADD Club, this chain is a reminder to students to make wise decisions. In an effort to promote strength among students to choose wisely and think before acting, the SADD Club chain shows Blind Brook the power of good choices.

Myopia in 2001: A Look Around Continued from page 8

amples of this lack in forethought. Only yesterday, two teenagers, 14 and 16, who simply seemed to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, were gunned down by a fanatical Arab fundamentalist. A civilian had to kill the man with his own gun before the authorities got there.

It seems that every day and every week there is a story of another killing in the strife fraught place the Middle East is today. And yet, we seemed desensitized by the endless violence, until it becomes all too surreal, afterimages on the retinas of a people that have learned to accept too much, and forget. Again, what if that had happened here?

Yes, there would have been outrage, possibly international condemnation. Measures to track down the terrorist, prevent further incidents, and maybe even track down the fanatic's source and kill him would have been implemented. Instead, some international politician vents his spleen in outrage when Israel is forced to respond somehow to an act like the one we experienced and bombs a terrorist enclave. What happened at Columbine or Santee, or yes, even the World Trade Center is no worse than the daily risk to innocent Israeli lives. For goodness sakes, the children in Israel must wear bulletproof vests to school! Imagine a mother telling a 3-year old he must wear something like that because he is never safe, even on the way to school.

Yet the world wallows in ignorance and merely knows that this is the normal state of affairs in Israel. Our President, over the past few weeks has pressured the Israelis to withdraw from the West Bank. Why? Because, according to one journalist who was at a White House press conference, "The United States is concerned that the increased Middle East tension could interfere with its effort to bring moderate Arab nations into its coalition to fight the Taliban regime and accused terrorist leader Osama bin Laden."

What President Bush is trying to do merely takes the bandage from one wound to staunch the flow of blood from another equally dangerous wound. What is the point of having a coalition to fight murderers if by doing so one increases the chance of other murders in a different place?

Is the legacy of the horrid events that occurred on September 11 truly a warning to hunt down those who would dare attack the vaunted United States? Or is it a more subtle warning, a wake up call to the world, but to America in particular? A wake up call that we cannot be complacent, because the very things America stands for and are being defended in our President's war must be fought for on other fronts. America must not rest, even after bin Laden is found. The only path complacency can ever lead to is the festering of an ongoing problem that is turning gangrenous.

Arts & Entertainment

A & E Editor: Gillian McBride

Casting a Spell: The Magic Behind Harry Potter

By Melissa Rosen

People in our money-infatuated society often long for that one big break that will lead to fame and fortune, but no one would expect it to come looking for them. The huge success of Harry Potter and his magical story of wizards and witches has taken everyone by surprise, but no one more than its creator, J.K. Rowling. The rare and even touching story of author J.K. Rowling is undeniably (even to those non-fans) amazing. So, here is a little background:

Born in 1965 in Chesham, Gwent in England, Joanne Kathleen Rowling was known to have a wild imagination from a very young age. She wrote her first "book" at the age of six entitled "Rabbit." She later left Chesham for Exeter University where her course included one year in Paris. As a post-graduate, she moved to London to work as a researcher into human rights abuses in Francophone Africa. During this time, on a particularly long train ride from Manchester to London in the summer of 1990, the idea came to her of a boy who is a wizard and doesn't know it. By the time she arrived at King's Cross Station, four hours later, many of the characters and the early stages of the plot were fully formed in her head. She continued working on it in pubs and cafes over her lunch hours. Then in 1992, Rowling left working in offices and moved to Portugal to teach English as a second language. After her marriage to a

Portuguese TV journalist ended in divorce, Rowling returned to England with her infant daughter Jessica and lots of Harry Potter notes. She settled in Edinburgh and set out to finish the book before looking for another teaching job. To escape their cold, tiny apartment, Rowling would bring her daughter to coffee shops where she would write when the baby fell asleep. She finally finished the book and was rejected by several publishers (who are kicking themselves now) before the manuscript was eventually sold to Bloomsbury Children's Books. Rowling was working as a French teacher when she heard her book about the boy wizard had been accepted for publication...and the rest is...well, history!

The success story of a single, struggling mother seems like a plot to a bad movie, but luckily for the literary world it is not. With one book, J.K. Rowling has changed the writing industry forever. Unlike most children's books, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (or *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, as it is known in the US) gained critical acclaim, and was able to be thoroughly enjoyed by both adults and children. The four Harry Potter books in print have sold some 116 million copies in 200 countries and 47 languages, and anxious fans await the final three books to the Potter "saga."

For the most part, even the ever-critical

population of Blind Brook enjoys *Harry Potter*. But what really makes the Harry Potter books so amazing? Well, the answer is different for everyone:

Senior Gillian McBride says, "*Harry Potter* was exactly what I had been looking for in books. To me, the series are unimaginably creative and exhilarating." The always-fabulous Mr. Michael Dockwiler claimed the books were "fun, relaxing, and invigorating." Some, such as myself, believe that the intrigue of the books has a lot to do with the humor within them; that famous British humor is always irresistible. Still others find it's the mystery that draws them in. The Harry Potter books are well known for their crime solving characters and surprise endings. One of Harry Potter's biggest fans, junior Carter Niles, who has read all the Potter books available (several times) says, "I couldn't stop reading it. I would stay up late reading." When I asked her one of the reasons the book was so attracting to her she stated, "Every child wants to find out they're a wizard!" I then turned to Mr. Del Shortliffe to learn his thoughts on the renowned book. He admitted he hadn't read one completely but only bits and parts, and for the parts he did read he says he "dug it." He then proceeded to tell me, "It was an aesthetic experience. I am all for the books. They turn reluctant readers into avid ones." The always-exciting Ms. Janet Lobdell

told me, "The book is all about imagination and words. Like Quidditch! It's got a great storyline." I happen to agree with Ms. Lobdell, and firmly believe the magic behind *Harry Potter* (no pun intended) has a lot to do with the new words and phrases carefully crafted by Ms. Rowling. For example, the spell "Petrificus Totalus," used to stun its victims, is brilliant because of the obvious derivation from words like "totally" and "petrify". Other words like Quidditch and Muggle are simply wonderful because of their sheer originality.

For better or for worse, there are many people who do not find any interest in the young wizard and his journeys. In fact, some people, like junior Rachel Tintera, loathe Harry Potter. "It's stupid and childish. It is something to read during commercials on daytime television." Junior Blair Mosner, who is also not a fan adds, "It is something you read because of daytime television." They both went on to say some things that unfortunately cannot be restated in FOCUS but were nonetheless descriptive. Others, such as Mrs. Pat Stepanovic, simply state it's not their genre, and they just never got into it. For the majority of others who willingly announce their dislike, it is because of the simple fact that the book is popular and therefore passé. Most criticize the book without even reading it. An anonymous source, when asked about the book stated, "I don't like to read. I don't read books." Some more passive objectors just aren't interested in investing their time to the book. Yet surprisingly even some non-fans are looking forward to seeing the Harry Potter film.

J.K. Rowling didn't just stop at changing books forever, but she moved on to movies as well. It is well known that the overwhelming media of film has slaughtered many books, but J.K. Rowling made sure no such fate would meet hers. After years of saying no to making Harry Potter a movie sensation, J.K. Rowling finally agreed to let Warner Bros. Pictures create the world that until recently only lived within imagination. The catch: she had to have say in all decisions made about the films. So in this way J.K. Rowling was able to keep the film true to her books. *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* comes out in theatres everywhere on November 16th, and is expected to be a box office smash to make around \$250 to \$300 million. The massive production includes an all-star cast with Richard Harris as Headmaster Albus Dumbledore, Maggie Smith as Professor McGonagall, Robbie Coltrane as Hagrid, John Cleese (from the infamous Monty Python comedy troop) as Nearly Headless Nick and, my favorite, the amazing Alan Rickman as Professor Snape. The film's young stars include Rupert Grint as Ron Weasley, Emma Watson as Hermione Granger, and, of course, Daniel Radcliffe as Harry Potter. In case you didn't notice, all the main characters in the film are British, an aspect that J.K. Rowling refused to budge on. And luckily too, because *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* is the first big-budget British production. Rowling even turned down offers for Stephen Spielberg to direct the film because he wanted Haley Joel Osment to play Harry. Ugh. Rowling did, however, settle with Chris Columbus, an American director well known for such "timeless classics" as *Home Alone*.

Anticipation for the movie is extremely high. Merchandise and magazines for Harry Potter can be seen everywhere. Harry Potter has already graced the covers of such magazines as *Vanity Fair*, *Entertainment Weekly*,

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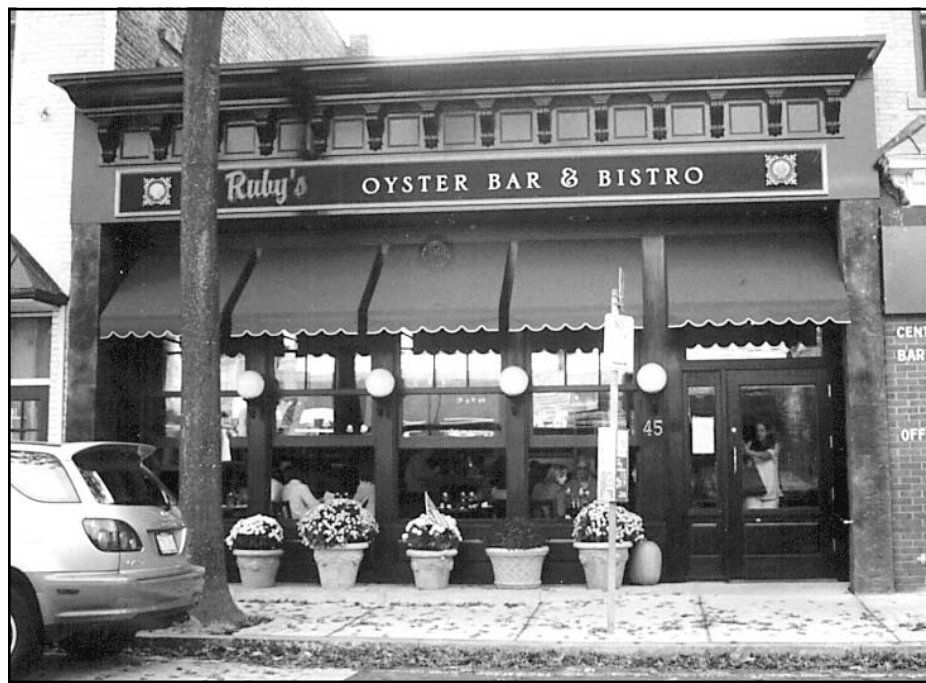
C'est Delicieux: A Night Out at Ruby's Oyster Bar & Bistro

By Melissa Gentile

Ruby's Oyster Bar and Bistro in Rye is a former hardware store turned chic restaurant owned by Jim Sullivan, Jan Favery, Lisa McKiernan, and Billy K., the last of whom runs the nearby Rye Grill as well. Although there are some similarities between the two upscale restaurants, Ruby's Oyster Bar is, with its expensive prices and impressive aura, largely intended for adults.

After dining here myself, I agree with the manager's predictions of an illustrious outlook for this new restaurant. Both my friend and I were very pleased with what we ordered and would definitely return in the future. The creative menu, affable waiters, and excellent service all contribute to the charm and glamour of it. I would highly recommend Ruby's to adults on account of the considerably expensive prices, but I found that it would suit anyone's tastes.

The menu consists of traditional French fare with escargot, French onion soup, and fondues, yet there are some surprises to look out for; "Andouille sausage" translates to large intestine. There are typically six varieties of oysters offered which are derived from places like Vancouver, Maine, Washington, and Rhode Island. The menu is also composed of six different inventive salads, along with numerous appetizers averaging about \$12. Entrées include poached salmon, seared duck breast, Tuna au Poire, and Fillet Mignon costing roughly \$26. Though quite costly, in all honesty, price of the food is definitely commensurate with its quality. My friend and I shared an assortment of appetizers including French onion soup, lobster risotto, pommes frites, and salade nicoise- all terrific choices with elegant tastes. I'd say my favorite item on the menu had to be the French onion soup, which arrived only a few minutes



Ruby's Oyster Bar & Bistro in Rye

Photo by Jessica Nanus

after ordered. I wouldn't get the pommes frites again, as French frites are basically available anywhere. Other than that, the chefs at Ruby's definitely take the inventive approach in creating that European essence.

One distinguishing feature of this restaurant is the beautiful French décor giving it a warm, lively ambiance. Adorned with cultured authentic artwork and Moulin Rouge-style chandeliers that cast a mellow lighting, the European core permeates throughout. Given such a relatively small area to deal with, the owners used space very well, with a communal table that runs through the center, booths positioned all along the walls, and a bar imported from

Paris to the side. This enables the restaurant to seat the maximum number of patrons as possible.

The restaurant held its grand opening only a month ago, yet already it proves to be a success. Ruby's attracts a fair lunch time crowd, but by dinner, it's inundated with lines filing out the door, making it hard to exit when inside. Due to the tight concentration of people, it's at times difficult to hear the person next to you speak. Despite the growing crowds, reservations are neither necessary nor permissible unless you have a party of six or greater, in which case there is a top floor designated for private parties.

Has Napster Gotten Nipped?

By Melissa Matles

As technology progresses and the Internet continues to expand, our society cannot help but change at a rapid pace. With the introduction of numerous capabilities, such as the legendary Napster, the gateway to a period of seemingly endless innovation has been opened. We are moving forward quickly, making it increasingly difficult to absorb the significance of our advancements.

Founded in 1999 by nineteen-year-old college dropout Shawn Fanning, Napster has become a renowned landmark in the media industry, but the center of much controversy. When in operation, it enabled users to convert songs from compact discs into MP3 files, which could, in turn, be downloaded by anyone connected to a centralized server. From there, one could potentially "burn" or copy the MP3 onto the CD. Thus, the simple double click of a mouse has provided people with free music of the utmost quality.

Napster's creation consequentially left

record companies and numerous artists including Madonna and Dr. Dre outraged. Lars Ulrich of the rock group Metallica stated, "The open trading of any copyrighted material is, in effect, the looting of our art." Yet, some people do not sympathize with the artists. When asked if he felt programs like Napster were unfair, Adam Chwick said "I don't think it matters to the artists because they get plenty of money from concerts and other stuff."

Sued by Sony, Warner, BMG, EMI, and Universal, Napster has been idle since its long legal battle in July. We, however, are not suffering without this revolutionary program, as substitutes now exist. Between March and August, other applications grew 492% while the number of people using Napster decreased 49%. Morpheus, Kazaa, Winmx, and Aimster were among the most popular alternatives.

Now, trading anything that can take the digital format, from movies, to computer operating systems, is feasible. MusicCity.com (operator of Morpheus), Grokster, and Consumer Empowerment

(operator of Kazaa) are deemed "peer to peer" services, as the basis of their operation is not a centralized server. Although still up and running, in early October media and entertainment companies filed suit against the three download websites, two of them foreign, giving the case a bit of a twist. Jack Valenti, President of the Motion Picture Association of America said "those named in this suit have sought to profit from works protected by copyright, without obtaining the copyright owner's permission."

In announcing its partnership with InterTrust in late June, AOL evidently exemplified a new trend in the relationship between file sharing programs, and their record and movie counterparts. This partnership will make content from major recording labels and movie studios available in a secure form using Digibox technology, which ensures that copyrights are protected, and artists are paid their rightful fees. Napster itself boasts on its website that it has "made some big strides ensuring

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Denim Venom

By Lauren Levinson

Mom is nagging again. She complains about that favorite antique pair of jeans - the faded fringing pair from two years ago. She demands a new replacement be bought immediately, hands over the trusty Visa and directs you towards The Westchester. Only there, you find yourself again trapped in an overwhelming world of perfect replicas of your faithful slacks. Yet there are major discrepancies between the old jeans and these so-called "new" ones. Prices of these jeans begin at \$100, whereas your trusty, aged denims are completely free of charge.

Distressed denim and other types of "dirty," worn-in clothing are dominating our wardrobes. Is it ridiculous or just a fantastic way to follow a trend by digging right into your own...collection of old clothing?

Blind Brook has numerous advocates of this fashion. Many of us, including myself, are guilty of engaging in this ironic style. Guys are strutting around in their "brand-new", back-to-school Structure, Abercrombie, and Diesel jeans. The basic look is dark denim, with streaks of bleached lighter denim marks around the top thigh and knee, and an occasional fringe at any seam. Overpriced Abercrombie hats, looking as if they've been run over by trucks, adorn male heads. Since when did scruffy become stylish?

Girls' modes mirror the guys' and, in some cases, even exceed them. Leading the denims are Mavis, Miss Sixties, and the legendary Diesel. Risk-takers opt for fades and fringes, but also high slits, rips, and shreds, and some even use safety pins as decorations. Torn edges stream off the seams of denim skirts, jackets, shirts, and even belts. Extra money is spent for pre-cut sweatpants and sweatshirts, as well as paint-splattered tanks and slacks. It is amusing to observe that our brand new clothes are messier looking than our old ones.

Outside of tiny Blind Brook, this fad is found in many forms. Rugged leather has been decorating magazine pages along with store windows. Leather skirts, tops, belts, jackets, and boots are among the many items. Graffiti accessories, especially handbags, in addition to garments, sweep department stores. Expensive, shredded lace also robs buyers of their money; celebrities like N SYNC, Britney, and Destiny's Child live in such vintage attire.

Yet if this trend is so overpriced and outlandish, why is it so popular? Wearing out worn-in clothing is both more comfortable and fun. We all get to feel like punk rock stars for a day, and in so doing, make a rebellious and outrageous statement. However, like the majority of styles, these exist merely in a time warp from the 60's and 70's where Mom and Dad would buy a new pair of jeans, cut the bottom and throw them in the wash waiting for seams to string.

Though these styles prove to be paradoxical in that we are paying more for ragged garments than the classic clean-cut clothing, some find them well worth the investment. The preeminent part about this fad is that, for the most part, we can actually create it ourselves. All you need is a pair of scissors and a bottle of bleach. So before criticizing those for following this fad, take a peek at your own closet. You may find you're just a denim venom victim yourself.

THE LEGENDS OF NINJA NATE by Jeff Gnerre



Oh, What to Wear: Blind Brook's Top Hot Shop Spots

By Diana Landes

Blind Brook High School, home to the most diverse group of people? Perhaps not, but I have found that students here do have a variety of tastes in where they buy their clothing. So where exactly do students at Blind Brook go to spend their (parent's) money? I have set out to answer that question.

(6) J. Crew & Banana Republic

With locations in the Westchester Mall and Greenwich, CT, these two stores sell similar styles of clothing perfect for those casual Fridays. Senior Shani Ackerman likes the "variety of classic, clean, and preppy styles" at Banana Republic. Junior Eric Winter likes the clothes at Banana Republic because "they are trendy, just like me."

(5) Tommy Hilfiger, Epic Designs & d.e.m.o.

Tommy Hilfiger is located at the Westchester mall in White Plains while d.e.m.o and Epic are what seems like a world away at the Galleria Mall also in White Plains. Patrons of Tommy Hilfiger appreciate wearing the classic American look while shoppers at d.e.m.o and Epic prefer the urban trends. Sophomore Montira Touthong declared that she goes to Epic and d.e.m.o. as "I like to have the hottest clothes." And when asked why he liked to shop at those same stores, senior Ryan Solomon spoke favorably of their "illegitimate." Enough said.

(4) Abercrombie & Fitch & Bloomingdale's

Like most other stores popular with Blind Brook students, you can find Abercrombie at the Westchester Mall, just down the road from Bloomingdale's. Sophomore Tal Nimrodi likes shopping at Bloomingdale's

despite the sometimes-high prices because of their huge selection. Being a department store, Bloomingdale's carries a wide variety of items for lots of taste in clothing. It supplies the customer with many options as well as sizes. Abercrombie & Fitch has a more specific style, carrying clothes that are rugged, comfortable and casual. Even though Abercrombie ranked quite high on the list, some students at Blind Brook strongly dislike the style. As junior Alex Harik proclaimed, "Harik says NO to Abercrombie and Fitch." Why, you might ask, does he dislike A&F so much? Of course it is because when you leave Abercrombie you come out looking like Paddington Bear. Hmm... Thank you, Alex.

(3) Structure

Right next to A&F, this store very popular amongst the guys at Blind Brook. Most likely because Structure sells clothes that are comfortable and casual. Junior Mike Klein explains that Structure has "nice clothing at a good price."

(2) Havana Jeans.

With two locations in Scarsdale, NY and Stamford, CT, students endure the twenty-minute ride for their trend-setting needs. The ridiculously high prices at Havana don't seem to stop a multitude of girls to site it as their favorite store. Freshman Alix Weiner said, "It has all the clothes I like and a lot to choose from so not everyone has the same clothes." Perhaps, Havana is the store to go for a few small accessories and guide to the latest styles.

(1) Gap

Conveniently located in almost every neighboring town, the major clothing chain is the perfect store for quick updates in wardrobe and style. From Gap's trademark

crewneck shirts and stonewashed jean jackets to its updated corduroy blazers and retro Gap tees, this place is the ultimate source for fashion, letting students purchase rather generic articles of clothing while enabling purchasers to add their own twist of individuality to them. Always a plus: the clothes are priced to own.

The most commonly said stores were put into the list, most of them being fairly expensive. So what about the bargain hunt-

ers of Blind Brook? Sophomores Kelly Tachdjian and Kayla Shaoul said that "if you can spend the same amount of money, wouldn't you rather buy more clothes for less?" They then explained that they like the occasional bargain hunt at T.J. Maxx and Marshall's. Of course, there are still many students at Blind Brook that don't like shopping at all. Sophomore Keith Hanauer said "I don't like to shop, but when I have to, I do it in as little time as possible."

Britney Jeers?

By Tarynne Goldenberg

This year at the MTV video music awards, Britney Spears delighted audiences with a brand new sound and look. But the recent makeover has left some of her biggest fans cold.

When Britney Spears first came out, she was a 16-year-old, belly bearing, mousy-brown-hair, pop-singing teenager. Preteens and teens everywhere either hated or loved her, but she was quickly boosted into instant stardom, making Britney a role model to young girls everywhere.

However, when Spears reached the age of 18, her rebellious side came out. She pierced her navel, and got a tattoo all showing the public that she was an adult now, and not the same "little girl" that she used to be. Eventually, necklines began to meet the hem of her "shirt," while her skirts or shorts migrated north. She discovered makeup, lots of it, as well as hair bleach.

With the release of her new album, *Britney*, which includes her new single, "I'm a Slave 4 U," comes more controversy concerning her dressing habits and messages through music. This is not, however, the first time people have protested Britney the role model.

A few months after her first single, "Hit Me Baby (One More Time)" came out, the princess of pop did an appearance on Nickelodeon's Kids Choice Awards where she wore a very cropped white shirt. However, the fact that her shirt was cropped was not the issue; apparently, she had grown extremely "busty" over night. A rumor of breast augmentation circulated, and soon spoofs such as, "Make My Boobies One More Size" hit the radio waves. Britney bounced back and claimed these false accusations were indeed incorrect. She toned her dress code a little until she posed for the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine with nothing more than underwear and a teletubby.

In all honesty, Britney's look has not changed all that much. When I asked a few freshmen girls what they thought of Spears' new look, all I got was "What new look?" In the end, all it boils down to is the shift from teenage pop-queen to international sex

symbol. In her latest video, *Slave*, Britney wears shredded, hot pink material that barely covers what it needs to on top and skin-tight black leather pants with a hot pink thong over them—along with provocative dance moves, pouty close ups, and what looks like a semi-orgy with Spears surrounded by some very touchy-feely men, one of whom actually licks her face for every shot of the video.

"I love Brit, but the thong over the pants was a little cheesy," says senior Allison Schultz, who also agrees that her new message is definitely "more to the idea of sex." Sophomore Flavia Godoy comments, "It's a little skanky. I think she's trying to impress people with her looks, rather than being original." However, senior Robert Frank points out that "she's a young adult and she's allowed to do what she wants. She's capable of making her own decisions. Like she says in her new song, 'All you people look at me like I'm a little girl.'"

The point of the song is how people expect her to act a certain way because they still see her a certain way, and that they think it's unsuitable for her to dress a certain way. Spears' new song is saying that she's not such a "little girl" anymore.

Is Spears suffering child star trauma? Is this her desperate attempt to break away from the schoolgirl aren't-my-braids-like-totally-cute mentality? True, Spears will be turning 20 in December, officially parting herself from the pristine-teen-queen image she originally upheld, but is this new transformation the right way to go?

Senior Jill Diamond noted that "people think she can be inappropriate in what she wears, but the truth is, if I looked like her, I'd do the same thing!" Godoy also brought up our school's new no-midriff policy, but what are girls supposed to think when they see it accepted on TV?

However, when I asked people what they thought of her new sound, the response was negative. One junior boy admitted to muting the television whenever her new video comes on. Let all of us hope that "Slave" is the only one of its kind and that some of her other songs aren't all about sex and how she's now grown up.

Harry Potter Continued from page 10

and *Premiere*. Along with spawning posters, bookmarks, Halloween cards, key chains, LEGO sets, action figures and who knows what else? But Warner Bros. promises not to overdue things and ruin the Harry Potter image, though I am sure ruining the image is the last thing on its mind. As soon as Harry Potter hits theatres there

is going to be a mad rush. There have been record-breaking numbers of advanced ticket purchases for the movie, and as for me, I will be first...no second, after Carter...on line. How does the brilliant J.K. Rowling react to all of this? "I still can't believe it, but personally, I can't wait to watch Quidditch."



Announcing
What We Do
on Our Down Time

The Perks of Being a Wallflower

By Ben King

Despite the almost unflinchingly large workload most students and faculty have, Blind Brook is hooked on books! And not only books, but also literature and writing of almost any sort, have surfaced as one of Blind Brook's favorite pastimes.

Along with the rest of my kindergarten class, I learned to read in the back of Mrs. Cesarano's classroom. Ever since then, I've been an avid reader. Now, it seems I happily share that title with many other students as well as the teachers who have helped to nurture a passion for the written word that I see in many of my classmates. And why not? Blind Brook is the perfect high school for a reader.

Students and faculty have access to over 14,500 volumes and 75 periodicals in the newly renovated Instructional Media Center. The English Department boasts a Writing Center where students can conference with teachers or students about writing projects either for class or

otherwise, as well as a group of teachers who have always been more than generous with their time and book recommendations. Blind Brook now has a Book Club, comprising both of students and faculty, meeting once a month to discuss a highlighted book.

This month, Book Club members chose MTV's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky. A rebel favorite, *The Perks* is a compilation of letters from Charlie, a teenager unaware of both his intelligence and emotional instability, to an unknown person. The letters follow Charlie as he deals with a flood of "teen issues" like drugs, popularity, sexuality, and love.

There is both praise and criticism from those at Blind Brook who have read the book. Praise for the ease with which they can relate to Charlie and his relationships, and criticism for the impossibility of many of the situations.

Either way, most Blind Brook students can relate to Charlie in at least one way: he loves to read.

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that great music will be available for file sharing" as they had "reached a preliminary agreement with the National Music Publishers' Association which means songwriters will get paid when their works are shared." Furthermore, news reports have confirmed that record companies are beginning to manufacture copy-protected CDs, and yet it is still possible that somebody will develop a way around this barrier.

Conversely, many believe that downloading music files can be helpful to the industry. Sophomore Caroline Miller said that "it is a good way to get music instead of buying the CDs if you only like one track; it gives you a variety of music, and you can make CDs. I don't think it's unfair to the artist. It just gives them more publicity." Monica Barreto agreed stating, "Some-

times I download music and then just buy the CD because I like it."

Beliefs regarding file sharing, and its implications inevitably vary. Some claim that technology moves faster than lawyers and so song sharing cannot be prevented. What will happen to the media industry in response to this complex matter remains a mystery. In the most extreme of cases, performers could be discouraged from pursuing careers in an industry where their service is of minimal value. When asked about how file sharing programs have affected the amounts of compact discs she purchases, Lynne Desmond, a Blind Brook senior said "I think that burners have decreased the amount of CDs I buy, but not the programs. I do not think that burners will be outlawed, and if they stop one program, there is going to be another."

Students Stitch Together

pened, only to see the first tower on fire. Debris was flying everywhere; shards of glass, chunks of the building, and even pieces of luggage came crashing to the street. The worst part was seeing the luggage and little things, like articles of clothing and suitcases: people's personal possessions. Then, as I was staring up at the buildings, the second plane came flying into the second tower. The fireball that erupted from the tower was absolutely enormous, like something you see in the movies, and more debris started flying. It also got unbelievably hot, like the fire was instantly spreading everywhere. After only the first plane had hit, I thought it was an accident, but when the second one headed right for the tower and hit at such a 'perfect' angle, you knew it wasn't an accident. There were a lot of stupid people just standing around, and some even trying to pick some of the debris on the street. There was a line to get into the subway, so I waited for the campus shuttle instead. After an hour, they had already started to evacuate the area, so we were forced out. Once out, I saw a huge cloud of dust and heard a loud, powerful rumble as the towers fell. I went up to my mother's office. She works at NYU in Bellevue Hospital, which they were preparing for the victims. Bellevue didn't get that many, but the ones they brought in were reported to be horrific, and people were just sitting outside the ER sobbing and throwing up."

Social studies teacher Judy Mella explained that her daughter, Diana, was there as well. "She works at Lehman Brothers, a financial firm, across from the World Trade Center, and lives at 55 Liberty, only half a block away. She was running about fifteen minutes late and walking up the street to work, where she usually passes World Trade Center 1 on the way. As she was walking, she heard an explosion, and suddenly tons of people were running away. There was a frantic woman running by covered in ash and dust, who Diana asked what had happened. She explained about the plane, and Diana helped the woman by taking her to her apartment building and cleaning her up. She watched the news and saw it on the television, and then called Blind Brook to make sure I knew she was all right. She called the doorman to ask what to do, who said her best bet would be to stay in the lobby. The building is right next to the Fed, so they were worried it might be another target. The elevators were shut off, and her neighbor had an invalid and a baby in the apartment, so Diana had the elevator turned back on. The buildings then fell, and smoke poured into her room. Once she got down to the lobby, the people took in a fireman from the street and helped him. He told them that he had just lost five men, and instructed them that once it was safe outside, without debris falling, that they should leave the building. Once she left, it took a six-block walk before she could see the sky. She eventually made her way out of the city safely. The scary thing is that through her life she's always been running late, and I've always nagged her about it. Thank God it never sunk in, because if she had been on time that morning, who knows what would have happened?"

Physical Education teacher Chris Orphanides commented, "The attacks on 9/11 remind me of Lebanon in the early 1980's, when a building exploded, and I was there, among the rubble, pulling out bodies." This took place during the Lebanese Civil War when Orphanides was a marine. At that time, terrorism ran rampant so this seems all too familiar to him.

English teacher Michael Dockwiller explained, "My brother is in the National Guard. After the attacks, he was sent down to the city to guard the waters and aid in relief. His involvement in the situation made me see a whole new dimension to the tragedy and made me personally feel more connected."

Senior Robert Frank's cousin was also involved in the relief efforts. He explained, "She and her husband collected clothing, food, and supplies where they live in West Virginia, and then drove them all the way

Continued from page 1

up to New York to help aid victims and relief workers."

Sophomore Michael Bennett commented, "My father works in promotions for Israel, right across the street from the United Nations. Since the attacks, he's had a very difficult time getting to work with the huge increase in security. Also, one of his partners, the Israeli Tourism Minister, was actually killed in a later terrorist attack in Israel. He was shot on the way to work, and they haven't caught the man who did it."

Sophomore Lisa Hamilton's family was affected as well. As she explained, "My father was eating breakfast just two blocks away when it happened. Luckily, he was able to get out safely and back to his office, but my grandfather's family lost seven employees in the attack."

Foreign language teacher Marcello Marcoccia commented, "A relative of my family was killed, and I went to the funeral. In seeing two or three hundred people attending the funeral, it's a microcosm of the entire tragedy, and one can only imagine that number multiplied by thousands. Seeing that really makes you reevaluate and see how precious life is."

Home Arts teacher Linda Pejkoivic responded by asking her high school fashion design class to come up with a project that would reflect the school's support for those affected. The class brainstormed and decided to make a patchwork quilt with each student designing a square to express her feelings on the tragedy and the class working as a group to sew the quilt together. On Friday, November 2, representatives from the class presented the quilt at a high school town meeting. Sophomore Kayla Shaoul stated, "We wanted to show our patriotism." The quilt will hang permanently on the wall above the elevator in the commons.

Juniors Eric Winter and Michael Klein both agreed that their lives have been affected as well, albeit in more minor ways. They commented, "You really can't go into the city anymore, and most people are too afraid to travel." Similarly, sophomore Brian Shassian explained, "My parents were planning on going to South Carolina for a week on vacation, but after the incident they canceled the trip both out of fear for their safety and wanting to stay near the family after the tragedy had occurred."

Now, months later, those who were very close to the attacks are still seeing the effects. Melamed explained, "I was allowed back into my dorm on September 29, and the city has been dead below Canal Street. They washed the streets every night, but you couldn't get all the dust and ash off. The smell was awful, like burning flesh, and you just couldn't escape it. Even today, the smell is still fairly strong. The buildings still have smoke coming from them, as fires are still burning even today. Ever since we got back, I've gone out every Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday night with my sorority and walked up and down Canal Street and around the city and Ground Zero delivering coffee to the rescue workers. We've met people from all over: state troopers from Buffalo, police from California, and firefighters from Las Vegas. The National Guard is still a huge presence all over downtown Manhattan. While many are still helping, it unfortunately seems as though a lot of it has worn off, and people are starting to forget."

Mrs. Mella added, "Diana wasn't allowed back in her apartment for a month while the building was fixed up. The smell is still awful in the apartment, and she's now relocating to Midtown, still looking for a new apartment. The difficult part is in finding a building in New York that is nowhere near any landmark that could be a potential target for any future attacks."

In talking to various people inside and outside of our school, one learns that nearly everyone was affected in some way. Besides the universal thoughts of the tragedy of 9/11 and the fear that it brought, everyone seems to at least know someone who knows someone that was killed. Many parents' work was affected, many teachers' friends were there, and many people's plans were disrupted.

Enduring Freedom

Continued from page 2

totally condemning America's current foreign policy. As a matter of fact, I support America's war. Fighting terrorism is a necessity right now. In order to win this war, certain sacrifices have to be made. In most cases, these sacrifices are worth that which we forfeit, because the safety and prosperity of America is essential to better conditions throughout the world. Just look at some recent events. American is not the only place that is currently feeling the economic effects of the September 11th tragedy; much of the world's economy is experiencing devastating manifestations of the atrocity as well. As a result of the slowing economy, ten million people in countries outside the US will fall below the poverty line this year because of lower commodity prices, reduced foreign investment, and slowed growth in world trade. Not only has the world benefited in the past from a prospering American economy, but also the US has often acted as a savior to the persecuted, mistreated, and unfortunate throughout the world. It has contributed economic aid, such as the Marshall Plan after World War II, and it has actually used its military might in places, such as Kosovo, where the US military responded to Slobodan Milosovic's ethnic cleansing. The state of the US is important internationally, because without first being assured of its own well being, the US cannot offer global relief.

What I am trying to say is that America should not elevate itself to an undeserv-

ing level of self-righteousness. It is true that terrorism is evil and our country generally plays the "good-guy" in the world, but this fight is not purely a black and white struggle between good and evil; there are shades of gray. Our country has flaws of its own. The United States has imperfections and wrongdoings in its policies – a lot of them! The American people have self-centered desires and interests. I still support the war on terrorism, but I do not believe that the US and, we as its citizens, should continue to compromise the principles that have become the cornerstone of our country by just turning our heads to the human rights violations of countries with which we are seeking alliances.

As an American, one should be committed to the values for which so many have died. Like those that have, we should be soldiers on an everyday basis, committed to not only preserving those values in our country but also to proliferating them throughout the world. It is extremely difficult to make this sacrifice of accepting the consequences that come along with standing up for the freedoms in which we proudly claim to believe. However, keep in mind that regardless of color, culture, creed, or any other distinguishing characteristic, no one deserves to unjustly suffer. Being Americans, we have agreed to this concept when we decided that all people have their inalienable rights: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Let us keep our word.

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Editorials

Has the State Board Crossed the Line?

By Craig Bergman, News Editor

In the latest twist in the state's quest to impose its standards of curriculum on schools throughout New York, State Education Commissioner Richard Mills has publicly reprimanded Scarsdale Schools Superintendent Michael McGill for apparently showing a lack of support for state standardized tests by encouraging a parental boycott. Ordering the Scarsdale school district to write a plan to promote 100 percent attendance at future tests, Mills made it abundantly clear that he and the New York State Board of Education vehemently disapproved of the eighth-grade boycott, which took place last spring.

Although New York State has long advocated conformity to standardized curriculum and testing, this is one of the only occasions in recent memory in which an action as drastic as chastising a district for demonstrating its views has been taken. So the question naturally becomes, has the state gone too far? In deciding to make an example of the Scarsdale school district by singling it out for a stern scolding, the New York State Board of Education has, in effect, chosen to intimidate one district in order to tell other districts and superintendents not to challenge or to question but simply to conform.

In its attempts to eliminate protests to standardized testing, the State Board of Education has finally violated the boundary between influence and interference. As members of an upscale district that takes education seriously and has in the past publicly questioned the state's actions in imposing curriculum standards, we must now ask ourselves how this will affect us. Among the prominent goals announced by new superintendent Dr. William Miles is his winning an exemption from state testing for the Blind Brook school district. How much will this new wrinkle affect Dr. Miles's willingness and ability to pursue such a goal? In light of the State Board's actions, it is more important than ever for those of us who support Dr. Miles's goal to make that support known. There

can be no doubt that it is an important issue and thus a worthy cause. In past years, Blind Brook students, faculty, and administration have repeatedly made noise to the effect that the state-imposed standardized testing too severely limits and restricts teachers' curriculum. Many teachers are now forced to gear their lesson plans mostly towards state tests. As a result, it has become increasingly less common at Blind Brook to have in-depth discussions of fascinating, if comparatively obscure and specific, points and to hear charmingly discursive lectures that include intriguing details and individual, not-often-heard stories.

Scarsdale has taken the lead in challenging state curriculum requirements and standardized testing, and it is now up to us to follow suit. As a school district that has traditionally scored well on state tests and sent an outstanding percentage of its graduates to upper-tier colleges, we must explore all the methods by which we might achieve exemption from state standards. Such a method currently being examined is the International Baccalaureate, a rigorous course of study based primarily on a comprehensive two-year international curriculum. At present, this program is one of the few exceptions to a standard Regents curriculum that is recognized by the State Board.

Perhaps this is the time, more than any other, to make the big push for exemption and strive to return to the higher level of education that has set Blind Brook apart from so many public schools.

Education has traditionally been an aspect of society controlled on a local level. When the separation of powers between the federal and state governments was originally established more than two centuries ago, states were allowed to mandate education. However, given the size and diversity of New York State, it is perhaps counterproductive to control education on a statewide basis. If left up to our district to determine, Blind Brook's curriculum would undoubtedly rise to a much higher level.

Anthrax Vaccine: Will It Reach Common Citizens?

By Matt Stolzar, Features Editor

Mass hysteria has hit the country as US mail has been infected with Anthrax. While the chances of being harmed by this biological weapon are slim, many fear that conditions will only worsen. So how do we stop it? Nobody really knows, but one suggestion has been offering a vaccine to each citizen. But is this really feasible?

Anthrax is an infectious disease caused by the bacteria strain *Bacillus anthracis*. There are three forms of the disease: inhalation anthrax, cutaneous anthrax, and intestinal anthrax. There is currently an Anthrax vaccine; however, its use is limited. It is a cell-free filtrate vaccine, meaning it uses dead bacteria as opposed to live bacteria. Only military personnel entering an area with a high amount of Anthrax are offered the vaccine.

The vaccine is so limited because it's both inconvenient and in some ways unhealthy. The vaccine requires several injections continuous over six months. Side effects include soreness, redness, itching, swelling, and lumps at the injection site. Plus the efficiency rate of the vaccine is only 93%, so there are no guarantees. Therefore it is unlikely that this vaccine will be made available to the public.

Besides all of the inconveniences, probability tells us that unless we are at a high

risk of contracting Anthrax, we'd be foolish to take the vaccine. One out of every 50,000 doses of the vaccine result in hospitalization due to some sort of severe reaction. This is an extremely small number (.002 percent of those vaccinated will suffer a severe reaction), but if you think about it, this .002% is most likely higher than the average US citizen's chances of contracting Anthrax.

The Anthrax vaccine is solely recommended for those between the ages of 18 to 65. All research done to this point has tested these individuals, so the effects of the vaccine on children and the elderly are unknown. The vaccine is also considered dangerous in patients with various forms of allergies, because they'd be more susceptible to an allergic reaction. The vaccine has not been tested on pregnant women, so they are advised to avoid it.

The production of the Anthrax vaccine has increased greatly since the first cases appeared in the US. Scientists are also hard at work to find new vaccines that are safer and more effective. The likelihood that citizens will receive the current Anthrax vaccine is very slim, and is frankly unnecessary under the current circumstances. But it always is reassuring to know that if the Anthrax problem worsens, there is a vaccine potentially available.

The College Search Experience: My Own Spanish Inquisition

By Gillian McBride, A&E Editor

As a senior in November, I know that, no matter how civil they may begin, after a while, the politely engaged conversations will begin to melt. Eventually, all forced pleasantries will yield to the inevitable, terribly distasteful question-of-the-hour: "So, where're you applying to college?"

Distasteful, yes – yet I do love gossip. I admit it's vulgar and rude, but I cannot resist the guilty pleasure of being privy to the occasional juicy tidbit of other people's business. Perhaps, then, my discomfort with the publicity of classmates' college plans is a bit hypocritical. I personally see a distinct line separating what so-and-so said about such-and-such last week, and where so-and-so actually thinks he'll get in to college. Surely, I had thought naively, the college search is one uncomfortable experience that merits privacy from prying friends and judging relatives. But that may be asking too much in a school such as ours.

With 99% of its seniors proceeding to college, Blind Brook High School is no ordinary public school. Pushed forward by a rigorous program of demanding classes, Blind Brook students are intelligent, highly motivated, and often competitive to the extreme. Extraordinary in its small size, the school enjoys a low average class size and teacher-to-student

ratio. Also because of the environment's greater intimacy, students over the years can get a pretty good idea about other classmates' grades and academic standing, sometimes feeling qualified to judge each other's intelligence and worth through this information. Never is this more strongly evident than during senior year's preparation for college.

The inquisitive college question presents to a hesitant senior quite the sticky situation. Obviously, the inquiry itself is innocent enough; nonetheless, a simple question with a simple enough answer, the subject of college can easily be the trapdoor out of an uncomfortable conversation. For now, in the poker game of intellectual appearances, your hand has just been called. Will you hold that strong enough set of colleges and universities? No doubt you'll be judged for whatever names roll off your tongue, that is for certain. For as soon as you, cornered and sweating, begin rambling off names of schools, you'll have already been catalogued and stamped into whatever package they've made you into and abandoned in that corner as the relentless and nefarious search for news on other students' college plans moves on. Sure, that's blatant exaggeration, but then again I understand what I'm trying to say, and frankly, I agree. College is brutal and so are my classmates. So there.

Have Something to Say?

Write To FOCUS: Blind Brook High School's FOCUS
Blind Brook High School, King Street, Rye Brook, NY 10573
or drop in the FOCUS mailbox in main office.



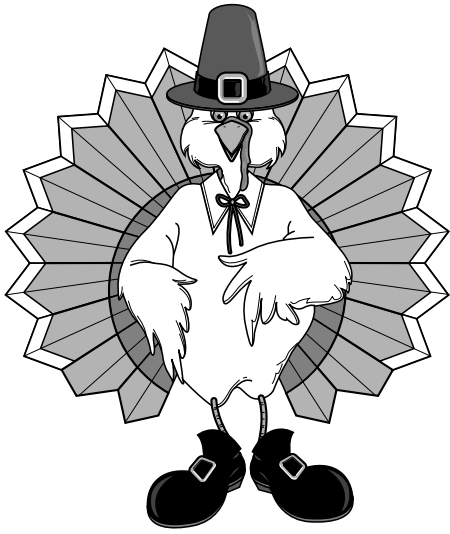
Cartoon by
Spencer Howard

Why do they think that we need a dress code?

Editorials

T **HAPPY** **H**
HANK & GIVING **G**

From the
Staff of
FOCUS



I Sympathize

By Frank D'Angelo, Sports Editor

On November 4, 2001, I discovered true disappointment. My heart heavy in my chest, my head hung low in simultaneous disgust and disbelief, I walked slowly to my bedroom as it turned from Sunday to Monday. I hoped sleep would wash away all the bad memories of that evening, but somewhere in the back of my mind I knew they would rehash themselves in an ugly dream. I sat down on the edge of my bed, reached over and turned off my bedside lamp. I leaned back on the cold pillowcase, and, as my head struck the pillow, had a revelation. I knew then what it was like to be a Mets fan.

My Yankees had lost Game 7 of the 2001 World Series. Even now as I sit and write, the facts have still not registered fully in my mind. It seems like some sort of farce. Like a lie. Like the country got together to play a big trick on me. But it was no trick.

I realized at that moment what it was like to be on the other end. I envisioned walking into school the next day and catching the smirks of Matty Stolz, Andy the Janitor, and all the other vengeful Mets fans. I realized that, for the first time in a long while, I would be the victim of inter-fan ridicule. I would no longer be able to strike back with, "Yeah, well we won 26 World Championships." The comment would be unbecoming in the wake of the Game 7 nightmare. It would be bitterly ironic for me to contest a World Series loss with past victories. But this I did not realize until my head hit my pillow that evening. I realized that, as the dynasty had officially ended, I would have to move on. By sipping past victories I would be living in the past. As brutal as it would be, I would have to live in the present. Of course, living in the present is something that Yankee fans have had no problem doing over the past five years. Then, the dynasty was the present. Now, it is the past.

Tossing and turning in bed, I posed myself a question. "Self," I said, "have you ever heard a Mets fan talk about the 1969 Series or the 1986 Series?" "No," I answered, "because they are too far in the past. While the '69 playoff run may have been remarkable, it is irrelevant to the games of today. And in 1986, the only reason the Mets won was because Bill Buckner forgot to stretch before Game 6. That, in itself, is an

unremarkable way to win."

Then I asked myself, "Self, how often do you and your fellow Yankee fans refer to past Championships?" I shrunk back at my own question.

In my discussion with myself, I concluded that Mets fans are more mature than Yankee fans. Perhaps it is that they are stronger from having dealt with years of defeat (not to mention last year's to the Yanks). Or perhaps it is because their minds are not busied with so many World Series victories. Either way, they are reasonable fans who stick by their team no matter what.

In bed, playing Luis Gonzalez' game-winning hit over and over in my head, I sympathized with the Mets fans of the world. I knew what it was like to lose. But I'm not sure what is more devastating, being a Mets fan who has dealt with continual, almost expected, loss, or being a Yankees fan and having an unexpected, unforeseen dagger driven through your heart.

I will contend that the latter is far worse. Let us consider the circumstances. Since September 11th, baseball has provided a fine distraction from national and international turmoil. New York responded with a movement of solidarity—a movement that may have stunned many people across the country. This togetherness was reflected in the mass exodus to the Bronx in late October and early November. Fans adorning FDNY and NYPD caps crowded the seats of Yankee Stadium. They received naval officers, firefighters, and police captains—all guests in pre-game ceremonies—with unprecedented standing ovations. They sang together in one unified and resounding voice the Star-Spangled Banner and God Bless America before the game and during the seventh-inning stretch. I should know. I was there.

In short, the people of New York—of the Bronx—looked to Yankees baseball as a means of comfort and triumph in this time of national and local attack. That made this World Series all the more important for Yankee fans and for the city of New York. To see this team lose is to feel loss on a deeper, almost subconscious, level.

Thereby, I sympathize with you Mets fans. Now I too know what it is like to be defeated. But (and I wouldn't be a true Yankee fan if I excluded this), we're still better than you.

Pick Up Your Trash!

By Francesca Pomara,
Editor-in-Chief

Maintaining school cleanliness has been an ongoing ordeal where student apathy and sloppiness have allied forces to create a rampant problem plaguing Blind Brook. Students need to change. Perhaps I am wasting my time by writing this—you culprits out there are probably indifferent to my words. Yet, this problem of school cleanliness is extremely critical as the population of our school booms and we're cramped together in small spaces. It is especially critical as our new middle school is being built and we prepare to make the move there in January. If we allow ourselves and others to litter and throw half-eaten lunches, dirty tissues, tasteless gum, and old papers on the floor of our present building, what disrespect and defacement will our new school endure? I am certain that the issue of where garbage is tossed isn't a concern—whether thrown on the new building's floors or on the old's, for many students, it still beats tossing trash in the garbage.

Yet, what can be done? We are faced by a lose-lose situation.

The problem isn't simply eating outside of the cafeteria. The problem is where you put your trash. I have seen many students eating their lunches in their locker area after having found the cafeteria too crowded, and they rarely leave a mess. Individuals eating in the Commons are an obvious source of school filth, but only a minor one. Often, students create a mess independent of eating. Food wrappers are often on the floors in the Commons, but

paper, gum, and junk that has accumulated in people's lockers really contribute to the composition of Blind Brook trash.

While sitting in front of my locker one day, completing an assignment for my next period class, I suddenly felt something grazing my arm and hitting my leg. When I looked up from my book, I noticed a handful of pens being thrown from the sophomore locker area. I leaned over and politely asked the unidentified person to stop pelting pens to the floor and instead throw them in the trash can. I received no response. Within 5 minutes, I took it upon myself to pick them up. Unbeknownst to me, the pens were covered in dried soda. Despite my disgust, I took a tissue out of my bag and successfully disposed of them. A similar incident happened to me while I was changing my books. As I was opening my locker, I saw a pile of crumpled paper next to me and a brown lunch bag. Again, I walked over to pick the garbage up. Again, I was pleasantly surprised. The crumpled paper was in fact filled with pieces of chewed gum and the bagged lunch with a molded sandwich and snacks.

What I did is not honorable but rather something that is expected of all students. How can students be made aware of this expectation? There is no way unless that person is willing and cares.

So whether this editorial was a waste or not, and if you have made it to the end of this piece and have no more use for FOCUS, for the love of God, please place the paper in the closest recycling bin or put it back where you picked it up.

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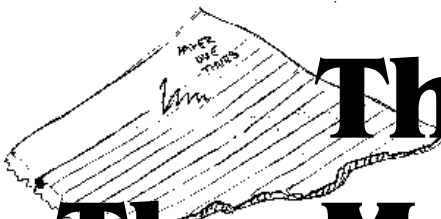
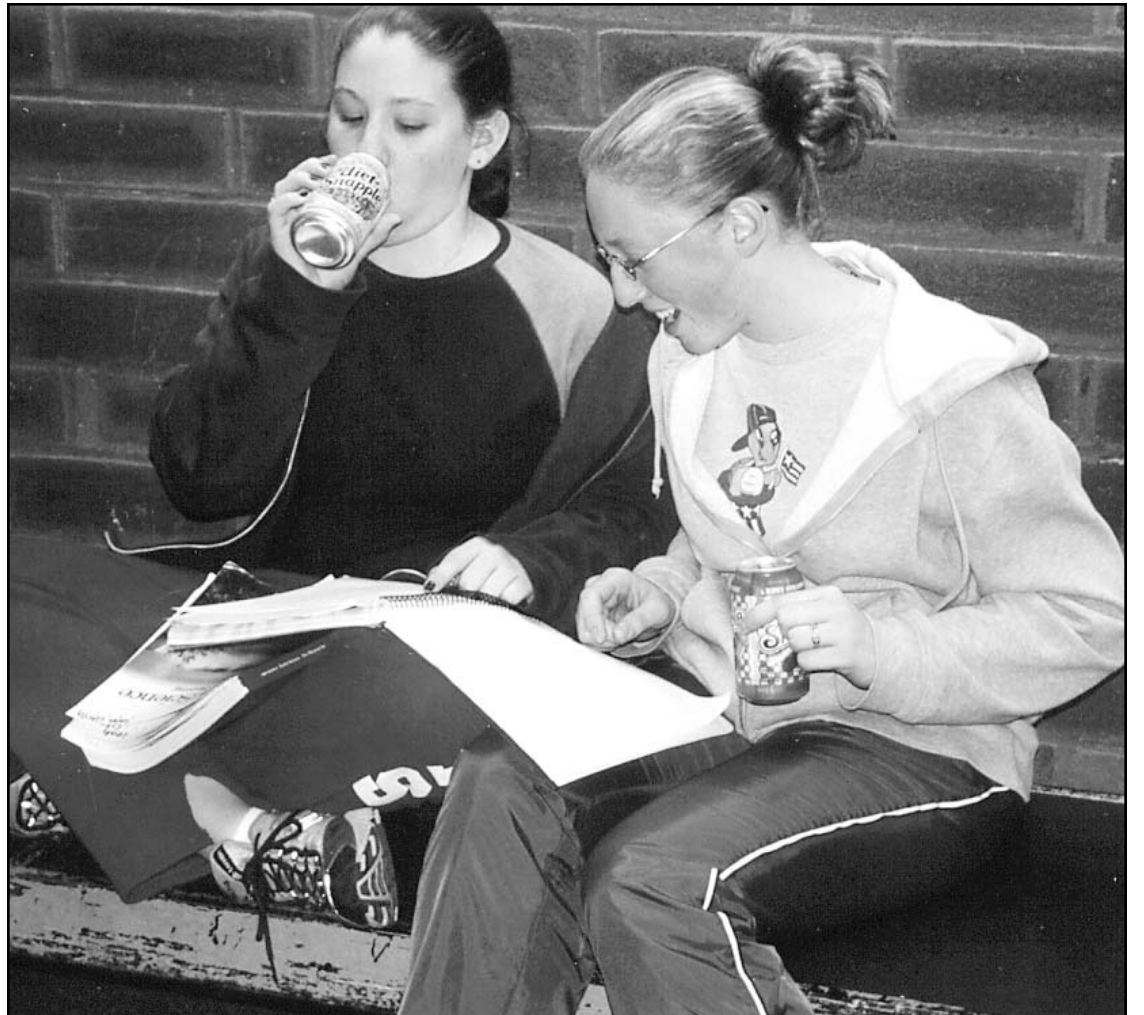
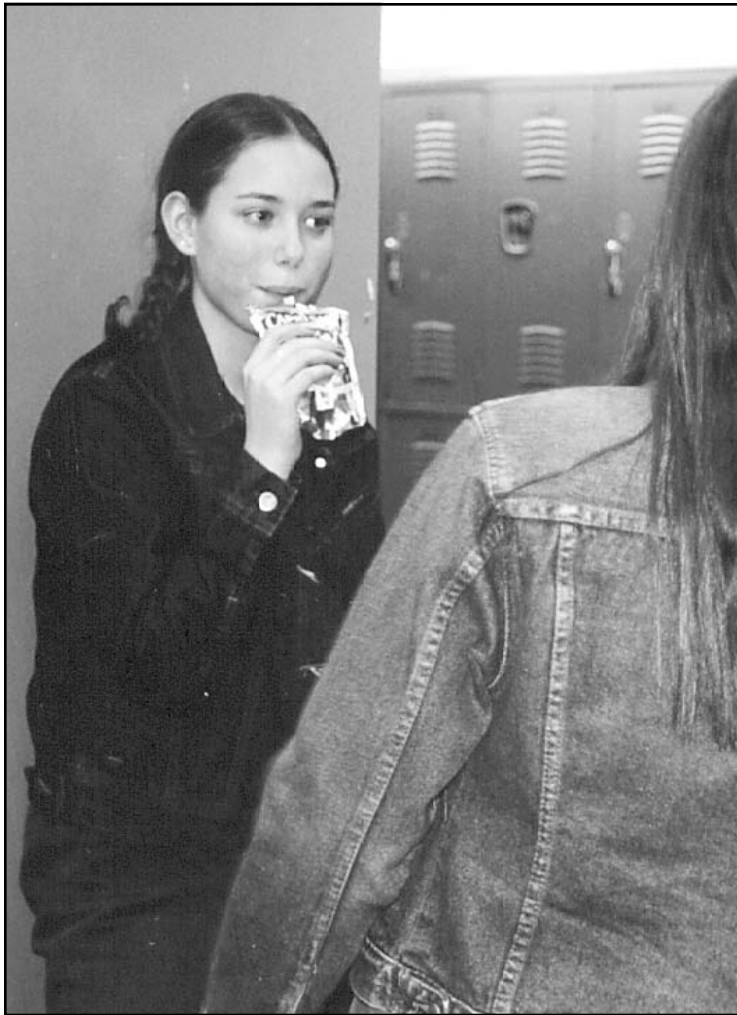
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The More Things Change, The More They Stay the Same

It seems that Blind Brook students are still breaking the rules. After last year's School Congress cleanliness campaign, some are still not trashing the trash and continue eating outside the cafeteria. From garbage "accidentally" missing trash cans, to bags of chips left underneath chairs, the consciences of these perpetrators remain unfazed. Are you guilty of these crimes? Have you walked by litter on the floor and not picked it up? Photos by Hillary Berkowitz

