



The Talon

Gripping News



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Onteora High School

Boiceville, NY 12412

April 2023

A Better Boiceville: Construction of the New Route 28A Bridge

By Liam Bertheaud

When you rode through Boiceville this morning, whether on your bus ride to school or going to work, you might have noticed construction of the new bridge on Route 28A. The reconstruction of the bridge began this spring and is scheduled to be completed by 2025. While it might just seem like another bridge is being replaced, it is more than that. There could be a sign of great change in Boiceville in this \$33 million bridge replacement project.

The project is funded by the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP), the agency responsible for the roadway and bridge, in collaboration with the NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to fulfill its goal of supporting our town's local watershed through investing in the town's infrastructure in and around the reservoir. The cost to replace the two bridges crossing the Esopus is a \$33 million—more investment than our town has seen in decades. The existing bridge is over a hundred years old and was in a state of disrepair. This shows the need for repair in the town's infrastructure. Consideration must be given to roads, bridges, and who we plan our streets for. With this project, Boiceville could become more encompassing to the needs of all its residents.

The project includes a bike lane and a shared-use path along the bridge, as well as a brand-new sidewalk in Boiceville scheduled to be completed sometime in 2023 or 2024. A total of \$385,000 of the budget will be going to fund pedestrian improvements in the hamlet of Boiceville, creating an opportunity for the school and the town to build up its community by giving it something to center around. These pedestrian improvements to Boiceville could increase its connectivity with alternative modes of transportation, with attention being paid to make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

Before Boiceville can become walkable, it has to have the infrastructure to support it. The bridge project, with its focus on adding a shared-use path and sidewalk, plants the seeds for future gatherings and events. Boiceville can become a destination where people feel safe walking around, and this could attract new businesses from the pedestrian and bike traffic. Boiceville already has amenities such as the entrance to the Rail Trail, the Brunel Sculpture Gardens, Bread Alone, and Provisions, in addition to the floodplain plots bought up by DEP through the flood buyout program that could be open for recreational and environmental purposes, the waterfront on the Esopus, and the school district's main campus. Our hamlet has the potential to be a prospering community.

While this bridge replacement project is a great sign for Boiceville as it means more investments are being made into its infrastructure, it has issues with its outreach. For instance, no public workshops were scheduled for local residents to give their input on the reconstruction and the pedestrian improvements in Boiceville. If you are going to spend \$33 million on a project, you should first ask how it can best serve the people it is to benefit. In order for the

DOT to make the most of this project, it has to include the school and local communities in its decision-making. Most of the planned spending has been set in stone. However, it is possible for the project to go out to bid once more for change, but us students and town residents need to request it.

A survey was conducted in February and March of Onteora high school students as an independent research project. The survey's purpose was to identify students' preferences for engineering and design changes to the streets surrounding the school to make it feel safer and more student-friendly. A secondary goal was to gauge students' interest in the school consideration of a Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS). Almost half of the high school student population, 192 students to be exact, responded to the survey online. A majority of the students (about 53.7%) wanted to walk around Boiceville but felt that it had to feel safer and more friendly to students. The pedestrian improvements included in the bridge project could help achieve this. Over 75% of respondents to the survey expressed wanting to see the school advocate for a SRTS program. A Safe Routes to School program is a government action plan that iden-



tifies design changes that could be made that make walking and cycling to and around the school safer and more appealing. Five schools in Ulster County have implemented a SRTS Program. With this information and more students voicing their call for action, it could be used to justify future improvements to the street and build upon a SRTS Program.

The survey was brought up because the bridge replacement project has not done its best in reaching out to students. While it might not seem like it, Boiceville is a student town. Most students spend five days a week in the hamlet. A majority of us have grown up in this town, with major transitions from elementary to middle to high school happening here. Boiceville resides in a school zone, and the school acts as one of the biggest employers for the town of Olive. Students have earned the right to be a part of this town and should be included in its development.

The school administration has met with the project head for the bridge, Kyle Buser, and the NYSDOT about moving the location of the crosswalk outside the school. With future meetings scheduled, communication is being made, which is a great start, but it needs more direct community input. If done to its best, it could

ensure the safety of hundreds of students.

The project has to address the issues highlighted in the survey among students. For instance, the unsafe speed of cars, the lack of cyclist paths, the poorly placed and faded crosswalks, as well as the lack of sidewalks that are separated from traffic and the missing signage have contributed to this unsafe feeling around Boiceville. Of those who responded to the survey, 93 students said it feels unsafe because of the lack of a sidewalk. The sidewalk being built will cover the side opposite the school. Unfortunately, addressing these problems, which have plagued the hamlet of Boiceville for more than half a century, is not currently within the scope of this \$33 million traffic engineering effort, according to the Project Managers at the NYSDOT.

As the shared use-path project stands, the project is adding a curb ramp and repainting the crosswalk in front of the school, but that is the scope of what is being done to involve the school into our town. The crosswalk in front of the school is located between an active bus lane and the entrance to a gas station. More than 50% of the students who responded agreed that the crosswalk outside the school is poorly placed and maintained. The crosswalk being repainted will not even meet the Ulster County Transportation Council's own guidelines in its Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Toolbox which suggests that school zone crosswalks be painted with high visibility yellow paint to indicate to drivers that they are within 500 feet of a school zone. To better improve it, the project could allocate three percent of its budget, or \$9,500, to have a pedestrian-activated Rapid Flashing Beacon installed, which better warns drivers of pedestrians. NYSDOT has looked at this as a possible option and might grant a permit to have one installed.

If an added effort was made, we could have sidewalks on both sides of the road and more conveniently placed crosswalks, which would give the school more of a connection to the town. An addition that could improve the street outside the school could be adding a bike lane that connects with the bike lane being built on the bridge. Of the students surveyed, 75% said that bike lanes would make it safer for cyclists, and 15% would consider biking to school if it was safer, compared to less than one percent of students who do now. Many students do not have cars but still want to be able to participate in town life.

The bridge replacement project is a huge investment in the hamlet of Boiceville. A community and connection to the town can be created if we have the infrastructure and the will to do it by building a safer, friendlier, and more walkable place for students and residents alike. For the bridge project and DOT planners to do this, they must know this is what we want as a community. While the project was a great first step, the next step needs to be taken.

Combatting the Rise of School Shootings

by Iris Koester

In New York State public schools, four lockdown drills are required per year to teach students what to do in case of an emergency, like a school shooting. The number of school shootings has skyrocketed in recent years, and because of that, we—faculty, staff and students—must all learn to protect ourselves. In 2022, 46 school shootings took place in the United States, killing a total of 34 people. That means that, altogether, 43,450 people experienced a school shooting first hand.

These shootings happen all across the country. Just last month, the Michigan State University shooting killed four people. Five were left in critical condition. The killer had previously been arrested on weapon charges and was threatening a similar shooting spree in New Jersey high schools. In May 2022, a shooting took place at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. There, a former student shot 36 students and teachers. Nineteen were left dead. In Florida, the infamous 2018 Parkland shooting happened when a 19-year-old who had been expelled from the school snuck in and shot 34 people. Seventeen were injured and 17 died.

When asked how Onteora is currently protecting its students and staff from potential shootings or threats, Onteora High School principal Lance Edelman replied:

In addition to having functioning district-wide and school-wide safety teams, the district has been supportive in encouraging ongoing professional development. At the high school level, in addition to practicing the mandated drills, we have made a concerted effort to enhance the safety and security of the building. We have reinforced safety procedures with our faculty and staff, revisited and addressed the securing of doors, expanded on the use of our visitor management system, and added an additional monitor. We sent a team for Threat Assessment training and have established a team that reviews potential threatening behaviors. We have also received some useful information from various sources through our Anonymous Alerts reporting system.

Mass shootings are a topic of national interest, and many organizations, politicians, and nonprofit groups are working to find solutions to the complex problem. Debates are heavy and complicated between those who are in support of gun reform and those who support gun rights.

Mr. Edelman believes that to combat this issue nationally “there has to be a multi-pronged approach to address this issue. Addressing the mental health needs of students (and adults) is of paramount concern. It’s also important to teach skills such as mediation/conflict resolution and increasing self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills (which are also components of social-emotional learning). There must be adequate funding and resources to support initiatives, complete background checks, and respond to threats and concerns.”

At Onteora, we have expert school counselors available as well as psychologists and social workers whose doors are always open to those who are struggling and need support. Last but not least, we have Deputy Tom Sharon, Onteora’s school resource officer, who is trained to guard the school and respond to threats. He explained the teams Onteora has put in place to protect its students and faculty, saying: “The School District has a District Wide Safety Team, each building has their own safety team and we now also have a Risk Assessment Team. These collaborative teams are made of different individuals from in and outside of the district to ensure school safety. The building teams meet quite often and talk about student and staff safety and what we can do better.” He believes that nationally there should be a larger emphasis on “mental health services in order to identify those individuals that need help and do not know where to seek it if it’s not available” and “when we talk about threats, I again think it goes back to more services and holding people accountable.”



Rocket Club Launches the "Million Dollar Rocket"

By Vincent Christofora

Giuliana blows the whistle, Austin blasts the airhorn, and the Club counts down: “5. 4. 3. 2. 1. Blast off!” That’s how the Onteora Rocket Club starts every one of our rocket launches. But there’s a lot more that goes into launching a rocket than the countdown. There’s engineering, flight simulations, design work, building, and tests that go into the rockets we fly.

Do you want to know about our launch days? Go or no go? Our launch days start at lunch, when the senior members and advisors have to decide if the weather that day will cooperate with us. No rain, no snow, not much wind—we launch. With the “go,” we take a bus right after school that brings us to the Woodstock Town Highway Facility, where the old reclaimed landfill gives us the largest field around to launch from. On arrival, we spill out of the bus, and everyone gets busy with a job to set up and start launches. Even though we are on a tight schedule, there is always time for a soda and a snack.

Max, Anthony, and I start off by getting the competition rockets, or what we like to call the “Million Dollar Rocket,” ready to launch. Did you know the club participates in a National Competition? We do, and it is a tough challenge! We are given a lot of time to work on the design and construction and to do test launches of the rocket. Much of that time goes into selecting rocket motors, adjusting mass, and selecting parachute sizes.

Gavin and Kai work to put together the two

rail and rod systems we use to launch the rockets, one for the club rockets (the smaller rockets designed and built by club members that are built purely for fun) and one for the competition rail, which is six feet long, heavier, steadier, and designed to launch more powerful rockets.

Nick and Lucas are strategically placed on the launch site and are assigned to be spotters and to keep their eyes on the rocket so we can



make a complete recovery. Giuliana, Ariel, Gabby, and Dustin help assemble the club rockets for launch while helping Gavin and Kai set up the launch pads and control systems. And no launches happen until Austin blasts the air horn to signal all clear and to start the countdown! Before, during, and after the “Million Dollar Rocket” is launched, there is a lot of information to record. Max has the important job of recording all of the data, such as cloud cover,

wind speed, cargo weight, additional mass, total rocket mass, altitude, flight time, and any damage or possible malfunctions during the flight or landing.

For this year’s national competition, the “Million Dollar Rocket” must reach an altitude of exactly 850 feet (which we measure with an onboard altimeter), have a flight time between 42 and 45 seconds, and safely carry an egg back to the ground. If the egg breaks, the flight is disqualified. There is no “Houston, we have a problem” here.

This year, the rocket also had to separate into two sections, with each needing to be recovered by a parachute. For the flight to count as an official launch, it must be witnessed by a member of the National Association of Rocketry. The team gets three official qualifying launches, with the best two being reported to the competition for scoring.

Last year, our team was a National Final Alternate, placing 113th out of 742 schools competing across the US, putting us in the top 15% of schools in only our first year of competition. The top 100 teams go to Washington, D.C., to compete in the National Finals, with the winning team getting \$20,000 and a trip to Europe for the World Finals sponsored by NASA, so this is a serious competition!

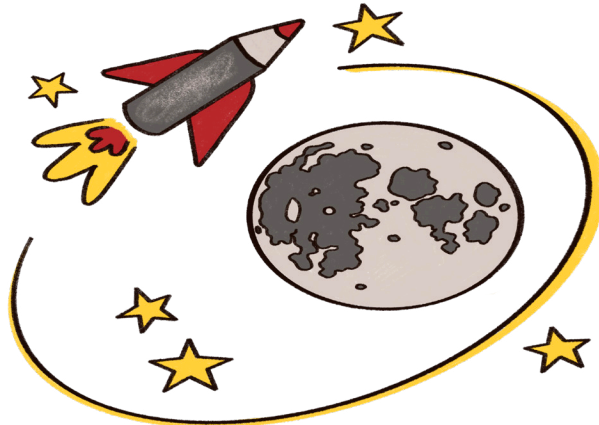
Currently, it is the middle of March, and we are working hard to improve from last year and become a National Finalist. So if you see any members of the Rocket Club around campus, wish us good luck!

NASA's Artemis Missions

By Melanie Milla

Recently the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, or NASA, has launched the first in a series of three missions called Artemis. Artemis I was launched on November 16, 2022, and returned to Earth on December 11, 2022. The success is a step toward the main goal of the Artemis missions: to establish long term presence on the Moon, to enable scientific discovery that will allow astronauts to travel to Mars, and, eventually, to extend human existence beyond Earthly bounds.

During the Artemis I mission, the uncrewed Orion module flew about 62 miles above the surface of the Moon for multiple days. Orion used the Moon's gravitational force to propel itself into a new deep retrograde, or opposite orbit, at about 40,000 miles from the Moon. Objectively, Artemis I was a test flight in order to ensure safety for the future astronauts preparing to be aboard during the next mission. The mission began in Florida at the Kennedy Space Center where the Space Launch System (SLS) rocket and Orion lifted off at 1:47 a.m. EST on November 16, 2022. It splashed back down to Earth in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Baja, California on December 11, 2022, and finally returned to Kennedy Space Center on December 30, 2022. The mission was a great success! Artemis I provided amazing new photos of the moon with new technology called ShadowCam—a high-



end camera created to capture images of shadowy areas of the moon.

The missions are extremely expensive with the cost of Artemis I totaling to about \$93 billion. This first mission exposed the need for improvements to the Artemis II mission, such as minimizing damage sustained during re-entry. The heat shield on Orion was expected to be charred, but some parts of it unexpectedly eroded off. The high costs of the mission could potentially push the next mission to a later date, but let's hope for the best.

The next mission, Artemis II, is scheduled to launch sometime in 2024. During this mission there will be humans aboard, with the objective of bringing them into orbit around the Moon for the first time since the 1972 Apollo 17 mission. A total of four astronauts will go on this monumental trip. Should the Artemis II mission be successful, the Artemis III mission—which is planned for 2025—will take astronauts to the surface of the moon. The Artemis missions have the attention of the world, with many supporters excited about NASA's official statement that they will have the first woman and the first person of color to step foot on the Moon. These missions will provide opportunities for groundbreaking scientific discovery as well as future economic advances.

YESS Summit Plan: Courtyard Could be the New Sustainability Epicenter

By Caleb Frank

On February 12th, students and environmental activists from all over New York State gathered to discuss how best to implement sustainability in their schools. The summit focused on three topics: food, fashion, and energy. The ultimate goal was to help students create an action plan that they could take back to their schools. The summit consisted of talks and lessons given by educators, scientists, and politicians on a variety of environmental topics seeking to provide a foundation of knowledge for these plans. When Onteora left the summit Tuesday afternoon, we had made a two phase, six part plan centered around the revitalization of our courtyards. Our club created a lofty plan that we hope to get parts of approved and enacted within the next two years. The first phase of the plan is proposed to be completed this semester, before the summer, and the second phase would be planned for next year.

Each phase has three parts. The first phase consists of actions that can be achieved relatively quickly and with minimal oversight, while the second phase consists of concepts that must be approved, work in conjunction with the goals of other student organizations, and would take longer to set in motion.

The first action we will take in phase one is to install birdhouses in the courtyard. These birdhouses will facilitate increased pollination and spreading of seeds as well as promote education on local species in the form of heightened observation. The ECO Club has been researching multiple ways to source these birdhouses, and we have decided to propose the idea to the 7th grade tech class as a hands-on project. Not only would this utilize existing education, but it would also be a great way to expose students to these concepts of sustainability and ecology with a tangible goal at the end of the project. Springtime is an optimal time to install birdhouses to ensure that they will be available for

early nesting species.

The second action would be to replace the compost bins. Currently, we have three compost bins in the courtyard, but they have started to fall into disrepair. The ECO Club has proposed a few ideas that we hope to use when installing new bins. For example, they could be built of spare lumber, which we would hope to source from the community, and could be designed to last. Additionally, the bins would have three compartments in order to control the decomposition of food to soil without having matter from



every step along the way in the same container, which minimizes its usefulness. We discussed the possibility of a latching lid made of chicken wire over the top of each compartment to prevent animals from accessing it as a food source.

The third and final action of the first phase we discussed was planting fruit trees in the courtyard. These trees have been purchased already, thanks to the Onteora Student Council, and will be delivered later this year. Once they are delivered, the ECO Club will plant them. The end goal is to provide the school cafeteria with fruit that they will be able to use in meals. This will be a way to use natural and renewable resources to help feed Onteora and will also bring awareness to these concepts.

The second phase is proposed to begin next

year and has three components. The first was to plant a pollinator pathway garden in the courtyard. This would have required a tremendous amount of research to determine which species of plants would be best for pollinators, and those decisions would have great implications on the effectiveness of the project. Unfortunately, though this was a popular choice among the club, it is unfeasible. There are many individuals with allergies who would be negatively affected by a project like this. However, going through the process of fine tuning and improving plans is an important part of large missions like ours.

The second action we hope for is to install a walkway through the courtyard connecting different wings of the school. The walkway could be composed of rock dust in order to be more permanent. This would allow for people to easily enjoy the rejuvenated courtyard on their way to class. The courtyard could also be a nice way for students to get a quick bit of sunshine and natural air in the middle of their day.

The final action we included in our plan and hope for is to build outdoor learning spaces in the courtyard. We looked into weatherproof furniture, which would allow teachers to move some of their lessons outside when the weather permits. Outdoor lessons allow students and teachers to fully enjoy the courtyard, friendly gardens, and an exciting new environment. Luckily, Onteora's Student Government is in the process of actuating this now.

These actions, all centered around making the Onteora courtyards a sustainability epicenter, are full of excitement and possibility and the ECO Club is just beginning on our path to realize these goals. The club meets every other Tuesday in Mr. DeRuvo's room and is always looking for new students eager to take part in this promising and novel path to true sustainability in our schools.



Clawsnaps



"What is your favorite thing about Spring?"



Track. Hailey P

Spring break probably. Jefferson V

Temperature and vibe. Linus D

Tennis and AP Exams. James L

I really like the rain. Serena R

Spring break. Delilah L

Closer to school ending. Lucy J

My fav part is the crocus and the flowers that comes out. Talulah K

Probably just everything getting colorful again. Shelby B

It's my bunny's birthday, my dog's birthday, and my birthday, and it's not sad and cold. Sajani H

The smell. Trapper V

Probably like all the flowers coming out. Arely T

When the leaves come in and the trees are not dead. Maddie M

Everything turning green. Ruby G

The sun, the flowers, going on Poet's walk. Olivia W

The snowdrops, the little white flowers. Pilar P

The weather. Johana R

The vegetation, the blooming. Grace K



The flowers. Jason M

I like it when it starts getting warmer. Sarah W

The BEST Chocolate Chip Cookies

By Talula Kirschner

I have spent hours in the kitchen and online trying to find the best chewy chocolate chip cookie recipe. I tried multiple different recipes and experimented with some on my own, but I couldn't nail it down until recently. Here's what I've found to be the recipe that gives you delicious, pull-apart chewy cookies:



- 2 sticks of butter
- 1 ½ cups packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup white granulated sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- 2 ¼ cups flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 ¼ cups chocolate chips

To start, melt two sticks of butter completely, and then let it cool. Pre-heat your oven to 350 degrees. In a bowl mix your dry ingredients: flour, baking soda, and salt. Set that aside. In a mixer, combine your sugars and liquid butter. Then add two eggs, the vanilla extract, and mix. On a low setting, slowly add the dry mixture bit-by-bit. Once completely combined, add your desired amount of chocolate chips. On a parchment-lined baking sheet place twelve spoonfuls of the dough. Bake them for about ten minutes, but be sure to check on them. Take them out when they start to get just slightly golden brown. This way they will be nice and chewy. Let them cool and then enjoy.

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 ONTEORA MIDDLE/ HIGH SCHOOL

PRODUCTION OF

CHICAGO

Teen Edition

 MUSIC BY
JOHN KANDER

 LYRICS BY
FRED EBB

 BOOK BY
FRED EBB & BOB FOSSE

April 21 - Opening Night, 7pm
April 22 - Evening Performance, 7pm
April 23 - Matinee Performance, 1pm

 Based on the play by Maurine Dallas Watkins.
Script Adaptation by David Thompson
Music editing by Paul McKibbins

 Directed by Geordarna Constant
Choreographed by Amber McCarthy
Musical Director Brittany Carroll

 Tickets go on sale April 1 st on [ticketstage.com](https://www.ticketstage.com) or you can
purchase tickets at the door for each performance.

 CHICAGO: TEEN EDITION is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals
www.concordtheatricals.com

Looking Back: Senior Reflections on Student Theater

By Madelynn Taylor

As senior year comes to an end, we begin to realize how many things we'll be witnessing for the last time: last snow day, last school concert, last spring break. For me, I'm getting ready to take my last bow in a highschool musical. If you had told my seventh grade self—when I was the Act I curtain operator for *Into The Woods*—that I would be playing Velma Kelly in *Chicago* (my dream role), I wouldn't have believed you. *Chicago* has given me the opportunity to push myself past the limits I thought I had, to sing songs from one of the most iconic musicals of all time, and I get to share the spotlight with my oldest friend, Olivia. All in all, it's a great way to close out a chapter in my career.

I plan on pursuing musical theater full time, and that wouldn't have been possible without the building blocks I got from my Onteora shows. On our stage, I performed my first musical ever, where I had my first named role, and my first standing ovation. On our stage, I've met amazing people, made beautiful music, and learned from people who would shape my career. On our stage, I met Tori McCarthy; even though she is

no longer with us, her impact on both the people and drama program she worked with is undeniable. When you guys see the show (which you totally should), you'll be able to see the months of hard work, the hours and hours of dedication, and the sweat and tears the entire cast has put into this production. We've all yelled, cried, and panicked about putting up such an ambitious show, but in the end, it will be worth it when we get to share our talents with the community. Everyone on the stage has a gift for music, and as a senior, it's my job to be a role model for all the underclassmen, to give them the same building blocks that I got so they can get onstage next year and continue sharing music.

Theater consumes my life, whether it's doing shows in or out of school, Onteora musicals in particular have always been the most important part of my year. In a world where we're still rebuilding, music brings us together, so when the curtain goes up this year, I'll take my last bow for the people who helped me, the people who will take my place, and finally, for Tori.

Chess Club Expands Into Bennett

By Jefferson Voelker

Chess is a century old strategy game, and while it is quite popular, many people do not know how to play. In order to teach others, and perhaps brighten the days of a few elementary schoolers, the Chess Club has created a chess clinic for Bennett students and will be teaching them how to play chess. Through this, we can hopefully foster an interest in the game at a young age, giving them plenty of opportunities and time to improve! Currently, three meetings are scheduled with twelve students from Bennett, but we hope to expand it at some point to include more people. The meetings are expected to be April 19th, May 10th, and May 31st. We hope that this becomes a tradition and continues next year. We want to teach them that chess can be fun by playing chess variants with them. Besides just teaching chess, this program serves a much greater purpose. How many of you at the school ever interact or talk with the kids at Bennett? Probably close to none. This program forges cross-school friendships. These relationships will allow them to get a glimpse into what high school is like and help prepare them for their futures. Furthermore, this program provides an invaluable opportunity for the children at Bennett to meet role models and allows us to hopefully shape them into brighter, more responsible people.

Finally, if you are interested in joining any of the meetings at the school, they take place every Wednesday in Ms. Curlew's classroom

(room 100). We are super chill, and we have snacks!

The Chess Club has also recently created a digital club on Chess.com, so if you are interested in joining the club online and playing against other students at Onteora, you can do so with the following QR code:



The Willow Project and its Repercussions

By Trapper Van Dreason

The Willow Project has been one of the more controversial steps that our government has taken in recent memory. The project, run by petroleum refining corporation ConocoPhillips, would entail the use of an Indiana-sized portion of federally controlled land in Northern Alaska.

Once fully operational, the project would produce about 180,000 barrels of oil per day, or about 1.5% of United States oil. This may seem confusing to some, as it would contradict the Biden administration's previously stated goals of reducing dependence on oil and gas in favor of cleaner energy sources. Moreover, one of Biden's campaign promises was that there would be no new drilling on federal land. This shouldn't be surprising though. Biden on the campaign was a very different man than the one actually running the country. The candidate who prom-

ised to stand up for the little guy has bent the knee to railroad companies instead of fighting for their striking workers. The common refrain among the elite class is that this is all a "very complicated situation." Of course, the situation isn't complicated at all. Wherever the moneyed interests are, the government will capitulate.

Many people have looked towards the Ukraine war as the explanation for the increasing oil prices in America. After all, didn't Russia have that big oil pipeline that stopped working? Most people would then be surprised to learn that the United States only gets around 2% of its oil from Russia, and over 75% from countries in North and South America. This nonsense about "supply chain disruptions" is simply an excuse by corporations to increase prices. It would be naive to assume that the Ukraine war doesn't play any part in the inflation, but the number

one culprit is the always reliable: greed.

The end result of this is nothing new. The environment is going to continue circling the drain until we have a rational economic system that is able to handle an imminent threat to the human race. Fortunately, there's things you can do to help, such as composting, recycling, and turning the lights off if you're not in the room. Remember, we're all in this together!



The Paradox of Social Media

By Fiona Green

Social media is woven into the fabric of teenage life. However, I've found that unraveling it can create a more fulfilling one.

Deleting Tiktok, Instagram, and Snapchat has allowed me to become centered in my own life, instead of the lives of others online. Recently, I've realized that without self-deprecating, negative, and critical posts constantly in my feed, I feel more confident about myself. For example, think about every time you open social media and spend hours scrolling. What do you think about when you're done? Is it ever "Wow, I feel confident in my personality, appearance, and everything else?" I don't think so. Insecure thoughts are commonly associated with mindless scrolling. Having thousands of voices telling you what is wrong with you can be draining. Once you free yourself from it, your mind can relax.

Fixating your eyes onto a screen filled with millions of enticing posts sounds ideal at first, but the more you look, the more obvious it is that social media is a waste of time. As a society, we expect to be entertained every second of every day. This expectation is not only unrealistic but damaging as well. How many times do you pick up your phone when you are upset, bored, or dealing with a negative emotion? Most likely many. Distracting yourself from your feelings via your phone doesn't make them disappear. Knowing how you feel in your present state can be difficult, and phones are an easy way to ignore

it, but working towards being in touch with your feelings is invaluable. Social media distracts us from the problems at hand and prevents us from meaningful progression.

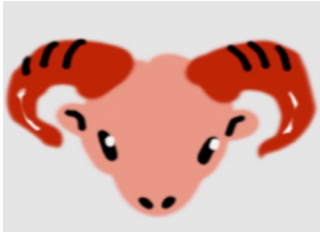
I find the term "social media" ironic. Although it is called "social" media, it seems to tear us away from our friends. How many social situations do you find yourself in where everyone is looking at their phone instead of talking to each other or having an experience together? I can't deny that social media is an easy way out of uncomfortable silences, or awkward conversations, but sitting with other people and truly being with them is more valuable than looking at your phone. Sometimes it can feel isolating without Instagram, Tiktok and Snapchat because I can't see what my friends are doing. However, I know that I'd rather ask them how their weekend was than see it on their private story. You owe it to yourself to delete social media because without mindless entertainment occupying half your brain, you'll have room for growth.

In my personal opinion, I find social media to be one of the countless distractions that prevent you from living your life to its fullest. I feel better and more secure in myself—more than I ever have—without it, and I'm confident you would too. Liberating oneself from the delirium of social media is fulfilling in a sense that social media's promise of instant gratification could never match.



Spring Horoscopes

By Auden Stellavato



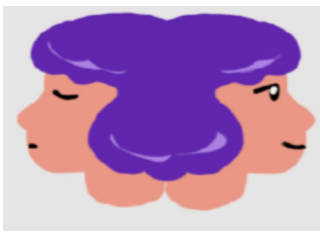
Aries: Winter is coming. Spring might seem imminent, but that groundhog didn't see his shadow for nothing. He saw it for you. A dark future is being foretold, for the cold confusion of blizzardous oblivion will seep into your life like a disease. With ice in your veins, you must try to see the light through the clouded storm. Remember, even as spring flourishes, your destruction is being sewn in the seeds growing around you.

Remember, even as spring flourishes, your destruction is being sewn in the seeds growing around you.



Taurus: Who can you trust? Unfortunately for you, your options are bleak. Have heart, and stay strong, but you must have care—as the moon rises so

too do your greatest enemies. Everything looks different in the dark of the night. Shadows of those you thought you could trust lurk around you in the quiet midnight. Believe in none but your own mind, and even then—always think twice. Never forget that there are things beyond your eyes, beyond the illusions you breathe like air.



Gemini: Golf will be the death of you. Golf, what is it? A sport? A white-male dominated game in which you hit a small piece of plastic with a giant metal

pole, completely removed of any athleticism? A game of randomized luck that the elderly use to validate their existence? If you are a golf enthusiast, or planning on becoming one, as an oracle among mortal men, I am here to tell you that the promise of a clear cut field and polos is, indeed, a false one. Be careful, and, as always, my heart soars with each of your successes and breaks with each failure.



Cancer: Good things may seem like they are coming your way. But do not be overconfident. For this is the season of the monkey's

paw. Any wish may be granted, any goal achieved. But at what price? A great influx of wealth—inheritance collected for the death of a loved one. Inner peace for external violence. The warmth of a fire made with the burning remains of family heirlooms. Not all is as it seems. Beware good fortune, beware the

monkey's paw. On the cosmic scales of balance, yours is tipped towards the throes of despair. Regret is your greatest enemy, and, for once, doubt is your only friend.



Leo: Steer clear of winding roads and dark forests. They may seem comforting but so too is the glint of the rail as the train comes. *L'appel du vide.*

The most tempting things will lead only to your downfall. You will be forced to trade one tragedy for another—to climb a volcano, chased by a hurricane. No way out for you will there be, if you trust the duplicitous happiness—a veneer of guarantees.



Virgo: If you thought life could not get any worse, you would be absolutely correct! Things are only going up for Virgos this month. The old adage

“tortured genius” has always rung true for you, except now you can finally just have the genius bit. Long gone are the days of being misunderstood, under appreciated, and undervalued. The era of the puppet master is dawning, rise up to claim your power and gold.



Libra: Start running from bugs. Unlike Sagittarius, you are facing less of a biblical quandary and more of a literal kind of visceral pain. Spring

is a time of rebirth and growth, and bees. Bees have it out for you. Maybe you were an exterminator in a past life, or maybe you're just really annoying. Either way, bees are on their way and you are in danger. They are faster than you, start running now.



Scorpio: Titans of war are approaching on your horizon. The sun will beat violently down upon you, as you traverse a vast, empty desert. Hellfire

will rain where you least expect and where it burns the most. Fear that which blinds you, fear the vultures that circle overhead. Perhaps from your withered form—the crone—a maiden will be born. The only thing that matters is your survival in the vicious cycle of war. Remember, fire takes no prisoners.



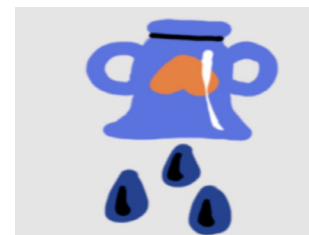
Sagittarius: Sagittarius? More like sagitta-RUN away. Run away from what you might be thinking? Bugs. Everyone has heard of the biblical locusts that are

supposed to swarm before an apocalypse and the subsequent inevitable downfall of humanity. Ordinarily this would be blasphemy, but bad news—biblical plagues are about to become your new reality. The end is nye. The swarm is coming. Buy new window shutters and hope for the best. You are going to rock the color pink this spring! Don't be afraid to be bold, be afraid of the swarm.



Capricorn: Spelunking isn't your hobby. It's for the good of the order. When you inevitably get stuck in a cave half a foot tall, with only a dying headlamp

and a bag of trail mix to keep you alive, don't blame me! You've been warned. This isn't about you. It's about preserving biodiversity in upstate New York. Is disrupting the lives of these peaceful cave dwelling animals worth it?



Aquarius: You are a young person on the outskirts of society, with dreams of becoming a chef. You—a dreamer—meet a young, red-haired man

in the kitchen of a Michelin Star restaurant. You befriend him and put your culinary skills to work. The catch? No one can know. You have a dark secret you need to keep, so your chef friend will take the credit. Keep your wits about you as you navigate the complicated world of chefery, and a family that doesn't understand your desire to break free from the sewer of life that the family business keeps you in.



Pisces: Regrettably, financial devastation is in your future. You may fancy yourself the monopoly man, a property owner, a business broker. But

soon all of that will change. With nothing left but your top hat and monocle, you must figure out how to go on. You might as well start burning money now, you're going to lose it anyways. Not that I am encouraging crime in the school newspaper, but a heist might be in your best interest.

Student Government Update

Dear Onteora Students,

Recently in Student Government, we have been working on our outside initiative, our condom initiative, and have been connecting with Onteora's youth in government! As for our outside initiative, we held a meeting with a furniture representative to select furniture for our soon-to-be outdoor classrooms. We have selected a wide variety of trees and flowers to occupy the courtyard and we will soon be looking for your help to plant them! Stay tuned for details! Although our condom initiative will be a two year process, our representatives are eager to build a foundation for the classes to come. This initiative aims to provide adequate accessibility to condoms and sex education for those unable to receive these resources

elsewhere. The Student Government recently took a trip down memory lane to visit the sixth grade student government at Bennett. We discussed their green initiatives which include a nationwide recycling challenge! We also were able to participate in their pink shirt day! As a reminder, each one of us is dedicated to creating an environment in which students feel they can thrive. Please reach out to us if you have any concerns, questions, or possible new initiatives you would like to see implemented!

Best,
Noelle Crandell
President of Student Government



Troeger's Top Twenty

By David Troeger



The NFL draft is the most anticipated event for football... until preseason. It represents starting fresh; the playoff teams can restock their rosters with fresh talent, and the struggling franchises get to pick up the best players.

This year, the draft has been unusually chaotic. It started with the Miami Dolphins' loss of a first round pick due to allegations that management was tampering with Tom Brady while he was under contract, and that is not allowed. This means that only 31 selections are available in the first round this year.

The NFL draft is set up so that the team with the worst record gets to pick first in the draft, and the worst record belonged to the Texans, until they won their last game. So, the first pick now goes to the Chicago Bears. The Bears, however, have stable quarterback play from Justin Fields, and there are a lot of quarterback-needy teams wanting assurance of getting their choice of a signal caller from a highly talented quarterback class headed by Bryce Young (Alabama) and C. J. Stroud (Ohio State). This means there is likely to be a bidding war between many of the teams to trade for the #1 pick from Chicago.

Anyway, here are my pre-draft predictions!



Pick 1—Houston Texans: Bryce Young, QB (Alabama)

I see the Bears trading down a few times. Many teams need QBs and the Bears have a stable situation with Justin Fields but need to build talent around him. Trading back should give them good picks while the players they need are available. I think Bryce Young is the most NFL-ready QB in the class, and that's something the Texans need.

Pick 2—Carolina Panthers: C. J. Stroud, QB (Ohio State)

Another mock trade: I think Chicago ends up trading back twice before trading back up to four. The two most desirable picks in the draft are Young and Stroud, and the Bears need neither. The Panthers get Sam Darnolds replacement, and the Bears pick up more capital. It's a win-win for both teams.

Pick 3—Arizona Cardinals: Will Anderson Jr., LB (Alabama)

With J. J. Watt's retirement, the Cardinals are in desperate need of a pass rusher. Will Anderson Jr. has proven his skill in containment and pass rushing. It's a good pick for the Cardinals and will help them pick up some skill on a lackluster defense.

Pick 4—Chicago Bears: Myles Murphy, DE (Clemson)

Previously I would have put Jalen Carter here, but due to recent off the field issues, I think the Bears might try to go for the next best player on the board. After trading almost their entire linebacker core last season, they need help rushing on a defense where the only reliable player is a strong safety.

Pick 5—Seattle Seahawks: Jalen Carter, DT (Georgia)

Remember when I said the Bears probably wouldn't draft Carter due to off the field issues? The Seahawks have never really had that problem. Safe to say, the Russell Wilson trade worked out. They have a strong, young defense and will probably let Jamal Adams walk this season, so expect free agency pickups to bolster the offense instead of draft picks. The Hawks have a glaring weakness at defensive tackle, so I see them taking a chance on the best DT prospect in a while.

Pick 6—Detroit Lions: Tyree Wilson, DE (Texas Tech)

The Lions got a steal last season after the Jaguars basically handed them Aiden Hutcherson #2 overall. So why not pick up another edge to complete the perimeter? The Lions are a young team whose offense has shown they can put points on the board. Their defense, however, has rarely shown the ability to keep points off the board. Myles Murphy is the more NFL-ready of the two D ends but Wilson has a high upside and will be a great follow up to Hutcherson.

Pick 7—Las Vegas Raiders: Bijan Robinson, RB (Texas)

This pick fully depends on whether or not the Raiders management can pick up Aaron Rodgers in the offseason. Due to Davante Adams' presence on the team, I see it as the most likely option. The Raiders need to free up cap space to upgrade a failing roster, so I'd expect a trade or outright release of Josh Jacobs before payday. The Raiders pick up a QB later in the draft to develop behind Rodgers, and take the otherworldly running back from the Longhorns.

Pick 8—Atlanta Falcons: Paris Johnson, OT (Ohio State)

With the amount of cap space they currently have, I expect the Falcons to go all-in on Lamar Jackson after releasing Marcus Mariota. Cordarrelle Patterson is still one of the better backs in the league, and they have some developing young talent at receiver. However, I think it might be a nice change for Lamar to not be running for his life like he was on the Ravens. They can pick up the O-Line prospect here and try to get to Lamar before the Jets.

Pick 9—Indianapolis Colts: Will Levis, QB (Kentucky)

After the Bears trade back up, the Colts end up with the #9 pick and some extra capital. I think the rent-a-QB era is over in Indianapolis after the Matt Ryan experiment. Will Levis is a tough, physical quarterback who proved he can rough it during his time at Kentucky. He has an incredibly high upside and gives the Colts a cornerstone to build around.

Pick 10—Philadelphia Eagles: Devon Witherspoon, CB (Illinois)

The Eagles acquired this pick in a trade with the Saints last year. They have a high-tier offense led by Jalen Hurts and a star studded defense. However, they have a cap situation, meaning some of

the defensive free agents will not be re-signed. It's between Darius Slay and James Bradburry, and I think the clear cut there is the former Giant. Bradburry has played well in Philly, but after the "I'll hold you when it matters most" incident at the Super Bowl, it may be best to move on to younger talent, and Devon Witherspoon is the perfect fit.

Pick 11—Tennessee Titans: Peter Skoronski, OT (Northwestern)

The Titans are entering a rebuild. They've lost control of the division to Trevor Lawrence and the Jags, and it doesn't look like they'll be taking it back anytime soon. Ryan Tannehill should be gone soon, and it's too early to draft a QB after taking Malik Willis in the third round last year. Take the franchise cornerstone and develop him while Derrick Henry finishes out his career.

Pick 12—Houston Texans: Christian Gonzalez, CB (Oregon)

The Texans have an extra first rounder, and they need help everywhere. Just take the best player on the board. Gonzales was locking receivers down at Oregon and has great run stopping skills.

Pick 13—New York Jets: Brian Branch, S (Alabama)

The Jets already have a stack of young receivers and a high-tier defense. Their biggest need is at the quarterback position, but I would expect them to deal with this in free agency. They will need to free up cap space for this, however, and that likely means letting a high-tier player, Jordan Whitehead, walk before payday. Brian Branch has been great in coverage throughout his career at Alabama, and his run-blocking skills should improve in Robert Saleh's defense, barely edging him out over Jordan Battle for the pick.

Pick 14—New England Patriots: Joey Porter Jr., CB (Penn State)

Bill Belichick, as always, has a high tier defense under contract. However, that defense is getting older and has a glaring weakness at the cornerback position. Porter was a lockdown corner at Penn State and made it hard to beat the Nittany Lions in man coverage. He's a great young talent and should fit well in the Patriot's scheme.

Pick 15—Green Bay Packers: Michael Mayer, TE (Notre Dame)

During his time with the Irish, Mayer was undoubtedly the best tight end in college football. He's an all around tight end strong in blocking and receiving and should be a good pickup for the Packers, where the depth at position is Robert Tonyan and Marcades Lewis.



Pick 16—Washington Commanders: Anthony Richardson, QB (Florida)

After cutting Carson Wentz and letting Taylor Heinicke walk in free agency, the Commanders don't have a single starting-caliber quarterback on the roster. Richardson is an incredibly raw prospect but has an incredibly high upside—if he can improve his accuracy. It's a hit or bust pick, but he has shown incredible talent and promise in the combine gauntlet.

Pick 17—Pittsburgh Steelers: Kelee Ringo, CB (Georgia)

The Steelers are a team known for their defense and a head coach who somehow always manages to finish at or above a .500 record. Therefore, it's concerning when they have one of, if not the worst, cornerback depth charts in the league. They need to take a swing, and Ringo is probably the best raw potential prospect here. He's incredibly fast, demonstrated by a 4.36 second 40 yard time, and if he can loosen his form, he can be one of the league's top corners.



Pick 18—Detroit Lions: Jordan Battle, S (Alabama)

Due to trades, the Lions have two first-round picks in this year's draft. And while it may be tempting to trade one, Detroit has some needs to address. They need help on defense, and while Kelee Ringo has the highest potential, the Lions will want an instant top-of-the-depth-chart starter. Battle has proven consistent over his time at Alabama and is an explosive playmaker and hard hitting safety that should complement the D-line well. He could go later, though, as he's flown partially under the radar and would be a steal as a second or third rounder.

Pick 19—Tampa Bay Buccaneers: Quentin Johnston, WR (TCU)

The Buccaneers have an aging roster and showed a big hole in the passing game last season. That was with Tom Brady on the team. Mike Evans and Chris Godwin are getting older, and Julio Jones isn't the same player he was on the Falcons. So, they take the best receiver in the draft. Quentin Johnston is a formidable threat, and he helped to bring the Texas Christian University Horned Frogs to a national title game against Georgia after beating Michigan. This should speak for itself.

Pick 20—Seattle Seahawks: Lukas Van Ness, Edge (Iowa)

The Seahawks have a great young defense, a breakout running back going into his second year, and one of the league's best receiving duos in Tyler Lockett and D. K. Metcalf. They have a good current QB in Geno Smith and will want to wait until later in the draft to take on a development project. So, try to plug the main hole in the defense-run stopping. Van Ness was great stopping the run over his career at Iowa and should be a great fit for Pete Carroll's defense.

