



The Talon

Gripping News



Volume V

Issue IV

Onteora High School

Boiceville, NY 12412

June 2023

OCS School Board Elections: A Referendum on District Configuration

An editorial from the point of view of one student, Eleanor Schackne-Martello

On May 16th, my friends and I worked the polls for our second consecutive year. Last year was simple—this year was not. This year people were on edge as this election had more on the line than the usual budget vote and trustworthy faces in important seats. Instead, it acted as an unofficial referendum to decide if the school board's decision to consolidate the district would stand or be reversed. All three incumbents up for election were in favor of consolidating to the Boiceville campus and all three lost.

I am someone who has grown up in Woodstock, and as an active member of the community, I felt strongly about the idea of my hometown elementary school closing. Because I am human, I emotionally leapt to fear before calmly seeking information.

But then I actually went back to Woodstock Elementary School. I sat on the playground, a playground completely different from the one I sat on as a student there. I looked at the bricks, far less vibrant than I had remembered them. I thought of my principal, Ms. Schnell, who has long since retired. I noticed that the building itself seemed so much shorter than it did ten years ago.

This is because I grew up. I grew up, and while all of my memories still see the school one way, in reality it has grown and changed as well. This is all to say that while nostalgia is a power-

ful drug, we are not responsible voters if we let it completely overshadow the facts.

The fact of the matter is, whether the consolidation happens next year or twenty years from now, the benefits outweigh the risks. When we refuse to adjust to the reality of what is happening in our community, we inadvertently hurt our children. Our population isn't going to come back up and full-time residents who send



their children to school often struggle financially to live in Woodstock.

People are leaving their homes because they are being priced out. I'm not anti-tourist—I know our towns have always relied on week-enders. But the days of my high school's halls being full are over. So, we should welcome the sixth graders into the high school. We should let Bennett be a place where kids from different

areas can connect.

With one bus run, as a consolidated campus would allow for, children could get a little more rest because the buses wouldn't be rushing to fit a double run into one morning. Parents with children in different grade levels wouldn't have to wait at the stop with them twice. We could redirect funding for more support staff and modernize our technology.

I would love that. Instead of working to gain more of any of those important resources, so many community members have spent their time fear mongering towards this common goal of keeping Phoenicia and Woodstock open, and to what end? Phoenicia Elementary closing isn't going to be what kills Phoenicia's economy; most of Phoenicia's business has nothing to do with the very few students that go to the elementary school and instead everything to do with the outside visitors.

Children aren't going to get off the bus bloody because they are on a K-12 bus ride. BTW, I learned my curse words on a K-3 bus. It's an important tradition.

Many schools are K-12 and their students have lived to tell the tale. The reason that fear has worked so well in this election is because it is directly linked to our children, an obvious pressure point. The problem arises when this fear is used to mislead and scare a voter base.

Bigotry's Recent Victim: Aaron Martinez

By Oscar Espinoza

On May 6th, I attended a family friend's quinceñera. With the sound of ranchera music playing in the background, I watched how the girl's dress swayed with the fluidity of her dance. The colors—red, white, and green—danced under the bright, colorful cuttings of the picado. With each familiar tradition, I began to think about my own experiences at my sister's quinceñera and of my friend's a few years later. And as the girl's father stepped up for their father-daughter dance, I thought of April Martinez and her father, Aaron, who would never share this special moment.

The Forney community was left shaken when 35-year-old Aaron Martinez was shot and killed by his neighbor, Trevor McEuen, in Forney, Texas. According to reports, McEuen had been harassing Martinez and his family for months, accusing them of selling drugs to afford their ranch. The attack was motivated by racism, and it has left a lasting impact on the community.

The day before the incident, Aaron had celebrated his 35th birthday, making his untimely death even more tragic. He leaves behind his family, including April who turns 15 in two months. The circumstances surrounding the shooting have raised concerns about hate crimes in the community and have sparked discussions about the need for greater awareness and action

to prevent such incidents.

After the shooting, deputies were called to the scene and saw McEuen driving away from Aaron's home. Aaron was found dead inside his truck with multiple gunshot wounds. McEuen was followed by deputies until he stopped, but he refused to exit the vehicle. After a standoff, a SWAT team took him into custody. While in custody, McEuen admitted to shooting Aaron, and police obtained a search warrant for his phone to find evidence of previous incidents between the pair.

Currently, McEuen is being held on a \$2 million bond and is charged with murder. His legal team has asked for a reduction in his bond, claiming that it is "excessive" and that he is "illegally confined and restrained of liberty." However, no hearings have been set for the motion to reduce his bond.

The loss of Aaron Martinez has had a profound impact on the Forney community. Many have been left mourning the loss of a devoted husband, father, and friend. In response to the tragedy, the police have launched an investigation into the incident, and the community has come together to honor the memory of Aaron and to advocate for justice and change.

The shooting has highlighted the need for greater understanding and support for marginalized communities, and it serves as a stark

reminder of the dangers of hate and prejudice. It comes days after Texas Governor Abbott called a permanent resident who lost their life in a shooting "illegal." And it comes days before the signing of a new bill by Florida Governor DeSantis, which mandates the use of the federal E-Verify system to check the status of new employees and requires hospitals to ask patients about their legal status. The bill also includes provisions that could lead to the charging of someone with human trafficking if they knowingly transport an undocumented migrant across state lines. It also prohibits undocumented immigrants from driving a car, even if they have a driver's license from another state.

Despite the resilience expressed through protesting and demanding justice, the voice of the Hispanic community has been subdued by the overwhelming weight of the politicalization of our identity, our right to exist. The process of dehumanizing those who seek better opportunities amidst a broken immigration system, and then profiling any one who looks like them as an "illegal," reflects the unjust systems we are left to confront. Tragically, attacks on the Hispanic community often go unnoticed. But Aaron's story deserves to be brought to light. his life deserves recognition for the loving father and husband he was. And his death deserves acknowledgment for the brutality he endured.

Do You See the Smoke in the Air?

By Caleb Frank

Wildfire season has grown to be a seemingly permanent feature of the upcoming summer; as temperatures rise and leaves begin to dry out, wildfires spike. It is important to note that in this instance wildfires are defined as uncontrolled and highly destructive fires that are too great in magnitude and frequency to be healthy for an ecosystem. This is in contrast to healthy wildfires that, in moderation, play an important role in adding nutrients to a forest and cleaning out dead vegetation. The rise of these uncontrolled and frequent wildfires greatly affects communities throughout the country in myriad ways.

One of the most volatile results of a wildfire are the health impacts. People directly in a wildfire's path can suffer injuries or death from burns, and those affected less immediately can experience adverse effects from poor air quality, including respiratory and cardiovascular ailments. Beyond the human costs, wildfires also destroy properties and livelihoods and often result in large scale housing shortages.

Furthermore, these natural disasters affect different groups of people disproportionately. The elderly are often more vulnerable to natural disasters, being unable to easily escape, and older buildings that were constructed with less stringent codes are often more prone to destruction from a fire, resulting in unequal consequences along class lines.

There are many successful measures in place to minimize the effects of these fires. Many governments are limiting and regulating the use of recreational fires as well as educating people on safe fire practices. Fire stations are also working on detecting fires sooner to have the best chance at stopping one before it grows. These methods have proven to be effective and are becoming more common, with education for tourists about how to most safely light, maintain, and completely extinguish fires becoming standard in areas of outdoor recreation. However, they are only reaching the surface layer of wildfire causes.

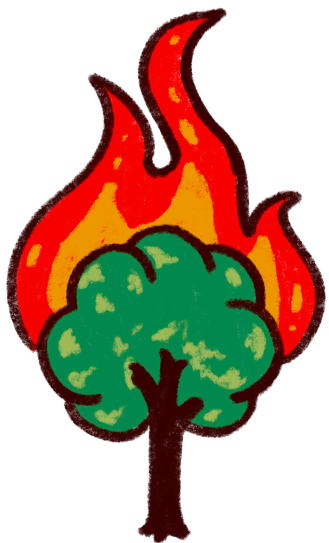
By trying to prevent fires and quickly extinguish them when they do happen, they are not attacking the root cause, the true reason behind why our planet is so vulnerable to these disasters in the first place. That is tied up in weather systems and ultimately in climate change. Attacking climate change is a task often unattainable on an immediate basis. Fire season requires season to season or even week to week results. But if we are to truly heal from this malady instead of only hiding its symptoms, we must understand how the climate crisis is related to wildfires with dire results. One of the most known results of climate change directly causes high risks of wildfires: heat. While heat is not the only result of climate change,

it is certainly a major one and it results in droughts, warmer temperatures, extended dry seasons, and drier vegetation and soil. All of these provide a piece of land with large amounts of fuel for a fire to consume. This causes the area to be very prone to a small initial fire growing into an unmanageable one very quickly.

In addition, some of these issues, like droughts and dry soil, form a positive feedback loop that maximizes an initial input. When soil gets very dry after a period of little rainfall, it solidifies and becomes hard, making it unable to absorb water when it eventually does come. This means that the drier soil gets, the less water it can absorb, making it drier still. These kinds of climate loops cause conditions to spiral and become worse as time goes on.

Climate change also has secondary effects that further cause wildfires. When cold seasons are shortened or even eliminated altogether, non-native species that previously would be killed off by those cold spells are able to survive. One such example is the bark beetle, an invasive species that kills off very large numbers of trees. Then the dead trees become more flammable than living trees, further increasing the risk of wildfires.

Overall, efforts such as education on safe fire usage are currently the most viable way to get immediate results and prevent the danger wildfires pose. However, no matter how successful those measures become they will never truly prevent these fires from happening because they do not prevent the central cause: increasing temperatures and positive feedback loops resulting from climate change. Those efforts should be enacted as they are best steps we can take immediately, but ultimately the way to prevent wildfires from plaguing a future society is not through the temporary Band-Aids we are using to get through the dry seasons of today, but through broader attempts at attacking climate change itself, including emission reduction, carbon capture, and potentially geoengineering. We must use Band-Aids currently, but we can not forget that the broadest reaching, most difficult, and least immediate solutions are our true path to a permanent escape from these calamities.



The Era of Industrial Pollution: Indian Point Disaster

By Iris Koester

Anyone who has lived in New York in the past couple decades can tell you that swimming in the Hudson River is highly cautioned against. The 315 mile-long river, discovered in 1609 by explorer Henry Hudson, is known to be filled with pollution from the city and the era of industrial pollution in which manufacturing plants discharged PCBs (human carcinogens) into the water. It's a given that you just don't swim there. It's also accepted that consuming fish caught in the river isn't a good idea. This pollution in the river has come from various sources over the years, one of which is the waste dump.

Holtec International currently owns Indian Point Energy Center, a nuclear power plant in Buchanan, New York, just over an hour south of Kingston. As of 2021, the power plant, which had previously generated energy for New York City and other parts of New York State, was shut down by former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo because of pressures from New York citizens who had concerns about the environment.

Since its shutdown, the owner of Holtec International has put into motion a 15-year-long dismantling process. A major part of the dismantlement is the company's decision to dump one million gallons of possibly radioactive wastewater into the Hudson River. Holtec planned to begin dumping the waste in May of 2023. The wastewater comes from a process that cools fuel rods after being removed from the reactor. Holtec said that the "water would be sampled, monitored, and filtered before it was released, although it will still contain boron and tritium." These two chemicals are potentially cancer-causing.

After hearing of Holtec's plans, Albany legislators proposed a ban on the "discharge of any radiological waste into the waters of the state." The purpose of the ban is to stop the plant's waste from entering the river in order to protect the water and its ecosystems.

Here in upstate New York, we are lucky to have dedicated organiza-

tions like Riverkeeper, as well as our local and state politicians working to protect and restore our water. Two-hundred miles of the Hudson River has been classified by the EPA as a Superfund Site, the goal of which is "to protect human health and the environment by cleaning up contaminated sites."

Although Holtec's plans are paused at the moment, they are likely to happen at some point in the future. If this does happen, the water of the Hudson River will become more contaminated, making it worse for swimming and causing more damage to the ecosystems within the river.



Summer Days at Lake Champlain: An Appreciation for Camp

By Serena Ratcliff

Of the 52.1429 weeks in a year, three have always stood out to me: the last week of June through the middle of July—the weeks of summer camp. This camp has been my summer home for the past six years, the home where I have built a foundation for my life.

Since age nine I have eagerly waited for my days spent on the shores of Lake Champlain. I feel that any type of sleepaway summer camp, no matter how long, is an influential part of a young adult's life. Summer camp has taught me many skills, some silly like how to make a friendship bracelet, others important, like the meaning of young friendships.

Living in a cabin with 10 of my peers, sharing a bath house with 40 other girls, eating all my meals in one big hall, and hearing laughs and cries from all around has taught me various lessons. For example, keep track of your things because it's a little awkward when you lose your face wash the first week. Another is that you are never alone. There will always be someone willing to share their face wash or give you a hug goodnight if you're a little homesick.

Last summer we played volleyball, and that helped me find my love for a new fall sport. Without camp, I never would have even looked at a volleyball, but now as soon as I see one, my hands are under it, bumping it by myself or with friends.

Summer camp fosters life long bonds, and I have learned how to form deep and meaningful connections. Even though I am only with these girls three weeks out of the year, I have forged my strongest relationships at camp. My camp community is full of 9- to 14-year-olds, with counselors of upper high school and college age. I consider many of them my non-biological sisters, and this has given me role models of all ages. I had the same counselor when I was 10, and then again when I was 14. She re-

mains an inspiration to me, even though I'm now a few inches taller than her.

Camp experiences have shown me that it's always good to get out of your comfort zone. We do overnight hikes every year at camp. When I was nine, these hikes seemed unbearable; however, to my 14-year-old self, these are the best days of my life. There is just something magical about dried chicken Alfredo pasta, so magical that I am going on a two-week long hiking trip with my camp in partnership with the National Outdoors Leadership School (NOLS). Yes, two full weeks, a 40 pound pack on my back, and best of all, 10 of my best friends.



An Exposé: The Dark Truth Behind Summer Camp

By Aoife Bronston

As I sat and read Serena's article, I was hoping to feel uplifted, but sadly, I was not. One thing I know for certain is that I hate summer camp. I hate day camp, sleepaway camp, all of it. Whenever I ask anyone about their camp experiences they always go: "It was so fun but oh my God our cabin got sick, and the food made us throw up, oh haha, and the cabin next to us had a little fire!" The long list of 'and's and 'also's always seemed to outweigh that first sentence's worth of fun.

The idea of summer camp always enticed me when I lived in the city. I watched way too many Disney movies about upstate camps with no rules and summer flings. Little me was so jealous of those girls in their fedoras hanging out with the Jonas Brothers. So when the time came to go to a sleepaway camp, I had a vivid fantasy about what it would be like.

When I arrived at camp, I already felt uneasy. The stress of fever checking and lice searches made me anxious from minute one. I was surrounded by kids who knew the place by heart, but I was completely lost. By the time my parents were getting into the car, I wanted to scream "SOS" and jump into the trunk. I was hoping for my Disney movie camp, but all I got was sweaty kids in a screaming mess hall.

The first issue I had with the camp was the bathrooms. I had been camping before, and I knew the deal, but I didn't know how bad it was going to get. Girls would argue over showers. There were spiders crawling everywhere. And the water was ice cold. God forbid you forgot to bring flip flops. There were strict rules on when you could and could not shower, which went as far as making me get out mid-shower (shampoo still in my hair) because it was "too late" to wash up. When you went to

the bathroom, you had to keep one eye open for a spider and the other for the counselor yelling at you.

Another problem I ran into was the culture of the camp itself. If you hadn't gone to that camp for your entire life, you would be completely shut out from the regular campers. There was an enormous difference between the new-



comers and the people who had attended this camp since they were seven. I felt like an outsider because everyone knew each other.

If I had separated from the few people I knew, no one would have spoken to me for hours. The teenagers would just giggle at each other, and with the people my age ignoring me, I was too small to be a part of anything. If I was going to mess up at flag raising, at least let

someone I know laugh at me, not some random girl from Conneticut.

This brings me to my next point: the chores they made us do were absolutely ridiculous. I understood cleaning the bunks and the mess hall, but the bathrooms hundreds of people used hundreds of times a day were slimy. I was 8 years old, scrubbing a discolored white floor for 45 minutes in 80 degree weather for 45 minutes, feeling like I was in a prison movie. I would hum some old timey melody to pass the time. They might as well have put me in an orange jumpsuit to really paint the picture. I mean, there was a 16-year old counselor telling me I'm not sweeping the right way. What were they going to do? Send me home? One could only dream.

On my last night at camp, there was a giant bonfire where we sang some folk songs (that everyone knew but me) and held candles to commemorate our seven day adventure in the great outdoors along with memories to last us a lifetime. As the ceremony came to a close, campers left and right started crying about how much they would miss their seven day, over-priced, crowded camp experience. Did I cry? Yes, I cried. I cried for joy. There would be no more disgusting food, no more scrubbing the bathrooms, and no more sweaty cabins with shower hogs. It was all over. My prayers had been answered.

As I drove away from the camp with the sign slowly fading into the distance, I turned to my mom and said, "I hate camp." I haven't changed my mind since.

The Murph Effect

By Coco Asada

Mr. Murphy has had an immeasurable impact on the Onteora music department and its students during the 28 years that he's been a band director. He has been dedicated and kind, but above all, he has been so much more than just a teacher to all of his students.

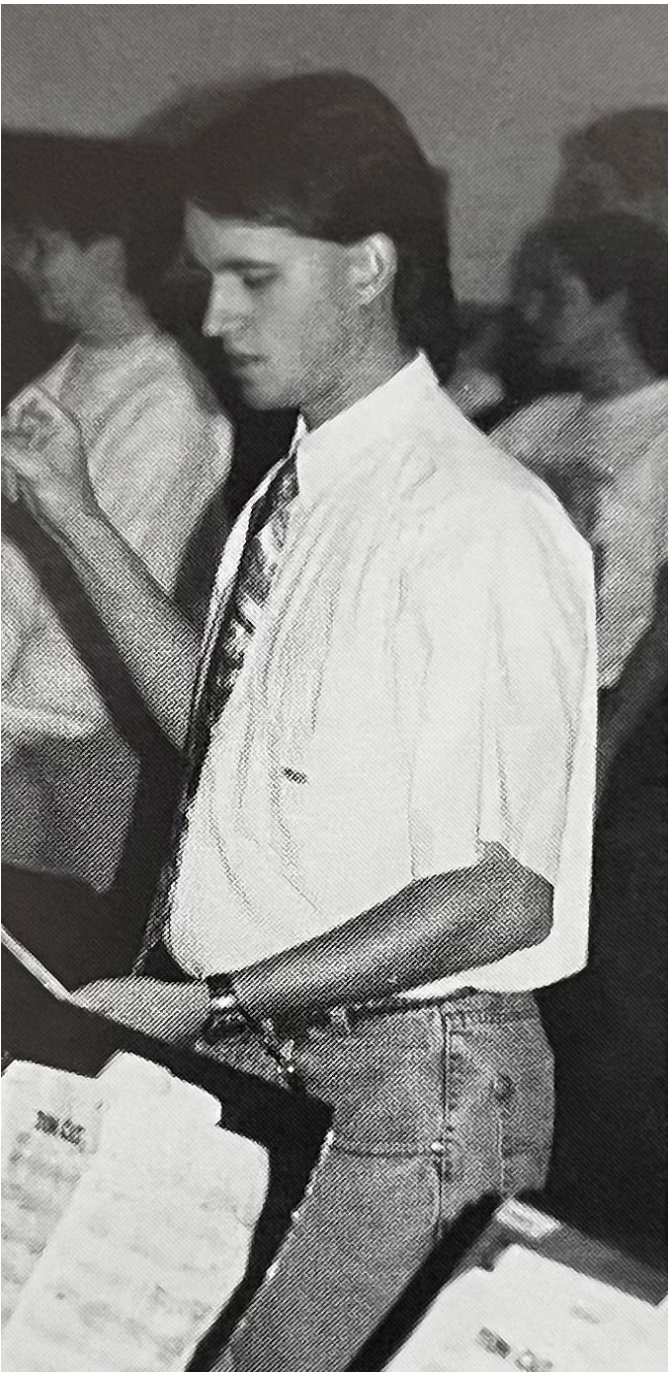
For us current band kids, we won't realize how much we'll miss the little things that Murph does until they're gone. He greets his students early in the morning as soon as we walk through the doors, handing out lesson passes and calling out nicknames like, "Sup, Tre Cole" or "Morning, Hastie." Some people dread music rotations, but, to me, walking into first period and seeing the small paper square on my desk is comparable to the feeling of seeing presents under the tree on Christmas morning. A lesson with Murph breaks up the overwhelming school day and allows you to reset. For me and many other students, the band room is not only a place for musical expression but a hideaway from the pressures of the day.

Ninth period rolls around after a grueling school day, and Murph is perched on his spinny gray chair, arms and legs crossed, wacky socks showing. His face instantly lights up when his band arrives. Sometimes we're riled up, sometimes we're lethargic and look like we've been hit by a bus, and 99% of the time someone asks, "Murph are we playing today?" In efforts to get us to concentrate, Murph has said something like, "Leave all your problems outside of this room, and give me your full attention for 42 minutes." This sums up the band room perfectly.

A sanctuary, free from the stresses and horrors of life.

This month, I tracked down Tracy Lane, an Onteora Class of '99 graduate, who was in eighth grade when Mr. Murphy started his career at Onteora. What Tracy had to say about her time with Murph was similar to what students have expressed about him ever since. She mentioned his unyielding devotion to his job, his kindness, and his dependability. Tracy is a phenomenal flute player and played with the New York All-State and the NAFME All-Eastern Band, both with Murph at her side. I knew that she wasn't just any alum because she was the only student that Murph has ever told a story about. When Tracy graduated, she presented Murph with a notebook full of their memories, pictures, and inside jokes. She visited Onteora again after 24 years to find that Murph had saved that notebook throughout his whole career.

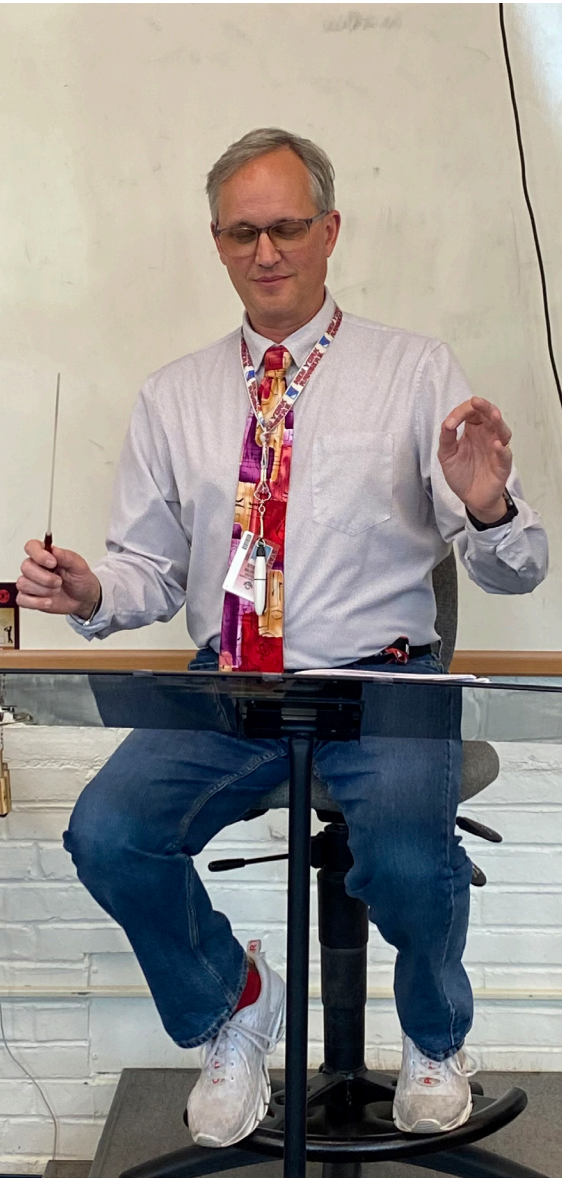
Murph has been a friend from the beginning to the end, and it has been such an honor to have him as our band teacher. We are so grateful for the band family he has created at Onteora and the efforts he has made to have a relationship with all of us. His passion is infectious, and the Murph Effect will be remembered by his students forever. We can't imagine band without Murph, and we can't imagine Onteora without him either.



Farewell Interview with Mr. Murphy

By Talula Kirschner

Our beloved middle and high school band teacher, Steven Murphy, is sadly retiring this year. I have been his student for a couple years and other students even longer. I've learned a lot from him and about him, and I'm here to share that.



What's been the most memorable thing from working at Onteora?

That's a difficult question. There's been so many great memories. I think the first time taking over the high school band was a biggie because I was really looking forward to that. Also, the first year the marching band went to the New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade and all the Music in the Parks trips.

What's special about your position here?

Teaching students who start in seventh grade and who play all the way through twelfth grade. Getting to see them graduate if they stay through the whole program is pretty special. It's part of this unique position. Unlike in other teachers' positions, band students are usually recurring, so that allows our relationship to develop over many years.

Is there any particular student that's just stood out to you?

There was one student, Tracy Lane. She made All State twice and played at Carnegie Hall in the city. She was a drum major for the marching band and played in the jazz band; she just did everything and was a perfectionist. Every year there's so many great students with lots of talent. *What's something you've noticed that has changed in a good way?*

I think it's just been the trend all through my career that the kids who are in this room, they all get along pretty well, and they're all very supportive of each other, even though they're all very different. We have the valedictorian. We have athletes. We have kids who are just straight up musicians. There are students that will leave the band and may never pick up an instrument again. We have kids with varying levels of skill sets, but somehow we make it work, and everyone pulls through for a later common goal. The band is like a melting pot of kids from every kind of social group, but somehow it works when we all come together, and it's pretty fantastic. I don't think there's necessarily a bad trend.

How do you want to see the band in the future?

I'm realistic in knowing that whoever takes over won't do things the way I did. Trust me when I tell you that there have been times I've been kept up at night thinking of what it's going to be like because, yeah, I do things dissimilar to other band directors.

I guess now I'll be putting more of the responsibility on the students. It will be a big change, and that's going to be tough for me, and you guys, and that's what was really the toughest thing, deciding whether or not to retire. So yeah, whoever the next person is, I hope that they connect with the students, and they can have as good a relationship with them as I did with you all, because you're like my extended family. You're my kids and we've got a great connection. I'd like that to continue because it's really enjoyable. I'm gonna miss this, and I'm gonna miss you all.

We've enjoyed every moment you've been here Murph, and you will always have a special place in Onteora's heart.

Former Students Remember Mr. Murphy

Compiled by Coco Asada

Recent graduates from Onteora have kindly shared statements of their favorite memories of Mr. Murphy. We can't possibly convey what everyone has to say about Mr. Murphy but, here are a few to show how much he is loved.

When I was in elementary school, I was obsessed with playing the drums and Mr. Murphy was one of the main reasons I wanted to join the band. When I entered middle school, everything was exactly what I hoped for. Murphy helped me pursue my dream of playing the drums in marching band, jazz band, and concert band. Not only was he a great teacher, but also someone I looked up to. One of my favorite memories of Mr. Murphy had to be at MITP (Music in the Park.) There was a group of us on the Superman ride, Murphy included, and I had been nervous of roller coasters at the time. Once we got to the top, I was so terrified, but all I could hear was Mr. Murphy screaming for dear life. Ilanna Kessler, Class of 2022

Murphy left an impact on a lot of students, and I was lucky enough to be one of them. I want to acknowledge how dedicated he is. I've never seen a teacher so passionate about their job. He worked really hard for the school to let us have those trips. I'm so thankful for his work, and I know the other students are too. P.S. Hello from Holland, teehee! Molly Whitehead, Class of 2022

When I found out that Onteora had a marching band I was SO excited. I joined right away in 7th grade, and it was my favorite extracurricular until I graduated.

I was also in jazz band and regular concert band, and those experiences wouldn't have been nearly as fun or memorable if Murphy hadn't been the one in charge.

In my time at Onteora, my friends and I spent more time in the band room than the cafeteria because Murphy's door was always open. He really took care of us, and I'll never forget it. I was never too confident when it came to music, but even if I didn't think I could do it, he did. He always gave me the extra push I needed.

ed. Our most impressive performances wouldn't have been possible without him and his motivation cards in between songs at concerts.

I think our best performance ever was when we played Vesuvius at Music in the Parks. We all surprised ourselves with how well we did, and Murphy was so proud of us. His endless dedication and hard work, the hand warmers on St. Patrick's Day, for letting me manically organize sheet music, for always being there to listen, and for always believing in me, I am grateful. Shayne Durkin, Class of 2021

When I look back on my days at Onteora, few teachers had a greater impact on me than Mr. Murphy. He shares his love for music (and the Rangers) with every one of his students, and I think he is the main reason why music has remained such an integral part of my life to this day.

Mr. Murphy pushes his students to practice and play as best they can, down to the smallest details, and has never been known to shy away from a difficult piece of music because he thought his students couldn't handle it.

I played mallet percussion in the high school wind ensemble, and my junior year I went to Kingston High School to audition for the NYSSMA All-State band. Murph was so concerned that playing a different instrument would hinder my performance that he wrangled up a van and drove the school marimba all the way to Kingston. Murph also convinced me to let him film my piano audition videos which I think played a huge part in my college admissions.

It was in moments like these that Murph proved that he saw us as more than just high school musicians; he saw us as friends. Mr. Murphy, thank you for sharing your passion for music with us and for urging me to carry music with me for the rest of my life. May there always be a Festivus for the rest of us! Satch Sumner-Waldman, Class of 2019

President's Farewell Address

By Noelle Crandell

Dear Loyal Constituents,

Recently the Student Government has been working toward setting the foundation for our condom initiative, envisioning the future of our courtyard, and preparing for our upcoming elections. Our condom initiative will allow sexual education and contraceptive access to all students. Our courtyard will be home to two outdoor classrooms open to any and all classes! It will also be filled with a plethora of flowering trees and magnificent bushes. The Student Government elections will take place on Thursday, June 8, and Friday, June 9. Voting will take place on Infinite Campus. Eighth and tenth graders will be electing a president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. All four grades will also be electing a new position of a class representative. This individual will not be a member of Student Government but rather solely a member of Student Council and will be a part of planning class activities and fundraising.

We will also have a new student board representative next year! It is super important that you take these elections seriously! These students will be responsible for planning the activities for your class!

As the year comes to a close, I would like to thank the senior class for giving me the opportunity to explore this position and further my passions. It was an honor to be a part of Student Government and I look forward to seeing what the future representatives accomplish. Thank you, and farewell!

With love,
Your Student Government President, Noelle Crandell



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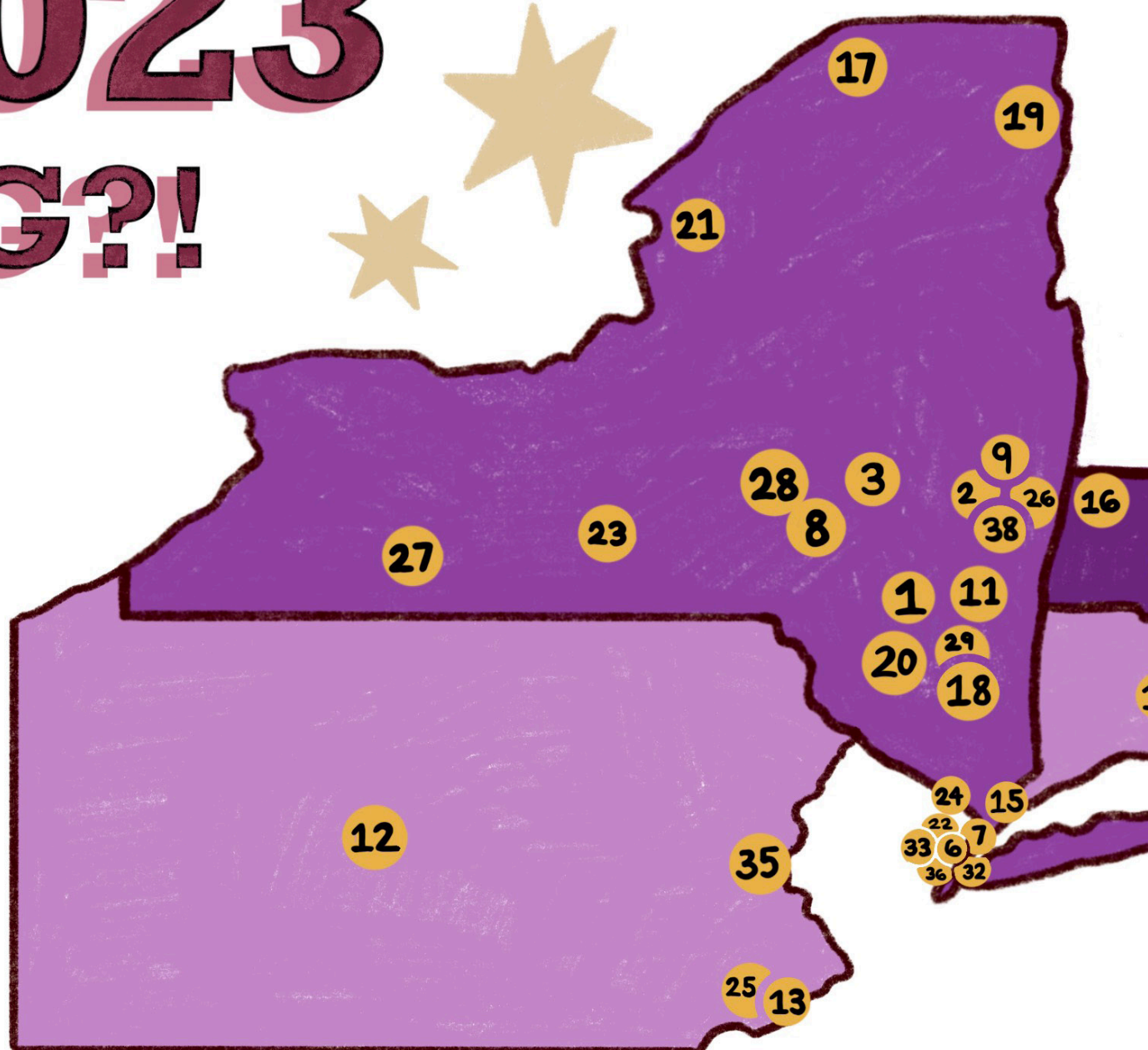
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The Talon would like to acknowledge that journalist Noah Makowski did not receive credit in our last issue for his article titled "Chess Club Expands into Bennett"



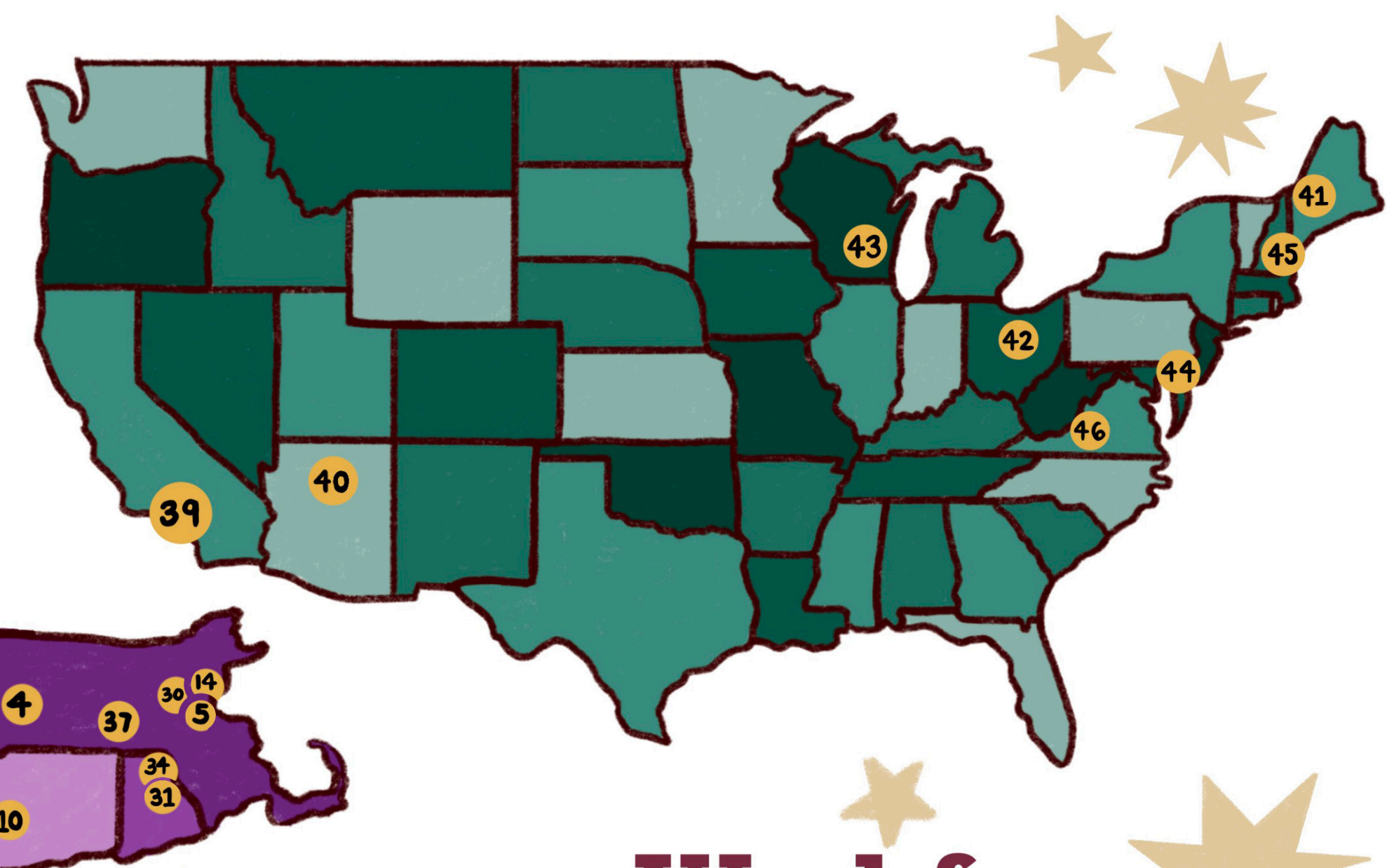
WHERE IS THE CLASS OF 2023 GOING?!



Off to College:

- 1) SUNY Ulster - LilyAnn Avery, Steven Blakely, Aiden Bovee, Jacob Cecelia-Storey, Gianni DeLango, Madison Hommel, Ariana Johns, Nicholas Kasperzyk, Marena Quick, Brenon Thiel,
- 2) University at Albany - Emily Baker
- 3) SUNY Cobleskill - Tyler Bard
- 4) Mount Holyoke College - Charlotte Barry
- 5) Northeastern University - Milo Batista, Oliver Roy
- 6) Barnard College - Amelie Belfiore
- 7) Pratt Institute - Raina Bickel
- 8) SUNY Delhi - Jamison Brown
- 9) Russell Sage College - Mercedes Cecelia-Storey, Alexis Olen
- 10) Wesleyan University - Noelle Crandell, Ari Green
- 11) Marist College - Levi DeGroff
- 12) Penn State University - Joseph Christofora
- 13) Temple University - Nicholas Denton
- 14) Boston University - Campbell Ebbecke
- 15) SUNY Purchase - Noel Fletcher
- 16) Williams College - Zoe Gabriel
- 17) SUNY Potsdam - Jenson Grant
- 18) Vassar College - Maeve Turck
- 19) SUNY Plattsburgh - Kevin Hicks
- 20) SUNY New Paltz - Suzette King, Ada Yang
- 21) University at Buffalo - Aydan Kudaibergen, Trapper Van Dreason
- 22) Pace University - Sophia Mahlkuch

- 23) SUNY Cortland - I
- 24) Rockland Commu
- 25) Union College - N
- 26) Saint Rose Colleg
- 27) Alfred University
- 28) SUNY Oneonta - J
- 29) Dutchess Commu
- 30) Tufts University -
- 31) Brown University
- 32) Fashion Institute o
- 33) Manhattan Schoo
- 34) Providence Colleg
- 35) Lafayette College
- 36) Marymount Manl
- 37) Clark University -
- 38) Siena College - Ar
- 39) University of Sout
- 40) Northern Arizona
- 41) University of Mai
- 42) Kenyon College -
- 43) University of Wisc
- 44) University of Dela
- 45) University of New
- 46) Virginia Tech - Sa



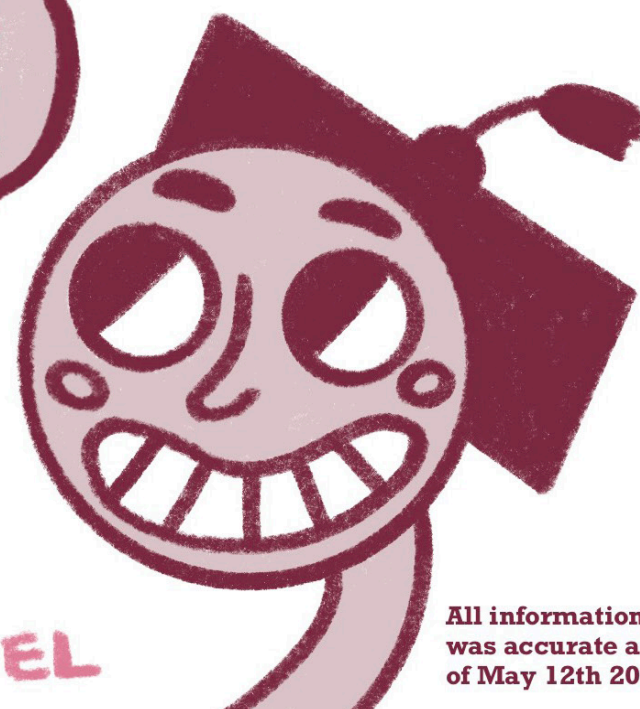
Queens
University
Belfast in
Ireland - Auden
Stellavato

Workforce:

David Absgarten, Clare Boyer, Hunter Bryon, Zachary Cecelia-Storey, Sadie Christian, Giovanni Flores, Thomas Gibbs, Jose Juarez Pineda (U.S Military), Elias Kindinis, Eli Luborsky, Gavin Marburger, Bradley Martin, Jozus Munoz (U.S Military), Nicole Noeth, Olivia Parisi-Brannock, Kristoffer Pettersen, Pilar Piera-Tyree, Madison Quick, Stella Schiavo, Jaden Soto, Darla Stokes, Clare Voelker, Kaydence Whittaker

Paige Matteson
Community College - Jessica Mazariego
Nicholas McMenemy
e - Makenzie Pratt
- Jasmine Rider
Johanna Rubin
Community College - Mia Safuto
Eleanor Schackne-Martello
- Takemi Sono-Knowles
of Technology - Kira Stone
l of Music - Madelynn Taylor
ge - Gianna Tisch
e - Hudson Turba
hattan College - Olivia Weiss
Charlie Weisz-Hoolihan
Andrew Zygmunt
Northern California - Jett Conti
University - Jason Maggio
ne - Klara Buton
Thea Millenson-Wilens
consin-Madison - Ruby Gallin
aware - Abigail Nolan
Hampshire - Lucienne Leonard
mi Sheikh

Congrats
Eagles!!



MADE BY ZOE GABRIEL

All information
was accurate as
of May 12th 2023

The College Admissions Paradox

By Thea Millenson-Wilens



Being a high school senior, I've done a tremendous amount of research about colleges over the past year. I know the niche student blogs which offer you the tell-all about any college, the websites with the most reliable rankings, and the online forums that hold a wealth of information concerning the college search and admissions process (looking at you, College Confidential). But two tremendously important facts stood out to me as I tirelessly researched colleges and rewrote essays. It is harder, and more expensive, to get into college now than ever before.

Elite universities have inflated their tuition at an average rate of around 4.63% each year from 2010 to 2020. Adjusting for inflation, college tuition as a whole has increased 747.8% since 1963. Even in the last ten years, college prices have been increasing at an astronomical rate. SUNY Binghamton has increased their tuition by 43.91% since 2013; more than Harvard, which has increased 39.35% since 2013, jumping over 7% in the last year alone.

Not only must students applying to college contend with the impossible costs of attending school, but they must also face the difficult battle of being admitted to college at all. Although there are fewer students applying to college overall—a trend that will continue through the next few years because of the baby bust of the 2008 recession—there are more students applying to top universities than ever before. A number of factors, including optional standardized testing requirements, COVID-19, rising early decision rate, the ease of applying through the Common App, and the unpredictability of admissions, have led to this applicant increase.

The University of Michigan received 87,776 applications in 2023 with a total undergraduate enrollment of 32,282. UCLA received 145,900 applications with an undergraduate enrollment of around 32,000. This is not just the case for public schools. Private colleges have been receiving a record number of applicants as well. Northeastern University received 96,327 applications for the class of 2027, with a total undergraduate enrollment of 15,156, and Cornell University received 68,000 applications for an undergraduate enrollment of 15,573.

Regular admission rates have also been drastically affected by the number of students who apply and are accepted through Early Decision.

Early Decision is a binding contract where students who apply before an early deadline under an “ED” agreement are contractually obligated to attend that school if they are accepted. This is a highly valued method for colleges because they can guarantee that they have admitted a number of sure applicants before they have to contend with the unpredictability of regular admission. This is because as applications to schools rise overall, yields lower.

A yield is the number of students who choose to attend a college where they are accepted. For example, the yield at MIT for 2022 was 86.2%, which means that out of 1,365 students who were accepted, 1,176 chose to attend rather than going to another institution. Now, this is one of the highest yields in the country, but many universities don't have the same guarantee as a school like MIT. It's much harder for them to predict how many students will choose to attend their institution, and so schools turn to the security of early decision. It's a promise of attendance, an ease to the board of trustees, and a way to assure their admit rates stay low.

Middlebury College and Barnard College, two elite private liberal arts schools, took over 70% of their class via early decision this year. This means that they only need to accept a much smaller pool of students during Regular Decision in order to meet their size requirements, lowering their overall admissions rate dramatically. For context, the early decision admit rate at Middlebury in 2022 according to the Common Data Set was 42.23% (compared to a regular admit rate of 12.7%), and at Barnard in 2021, the ED acceptance rate was 33.38% (compared to a regular admit rate of 11.46%, which has dropped to 6.5% in 2023). The ED acceptance rates are not dramatically high but dramatically higher than Regular Decision rates. Essentially, the key to getting into an elite university these days is to apply Early Decision. But that brings us back to the issue of tuition because another caveat of Early Decision is that you contractually agree to attend that institution regardless of how much financial aid you are offered.

This system is inherently geared toward students from wealthy families who do not require financial assistance to attend college. The knowledge that ED gives a binding advantage to some students while tanking the acceptance rates for others, combined with skyrocketing tuition rates, makes college application a 17-year-old's worst nightmare. And their parents, teachers, mentors, and any adult resources struggle to truly understand or comprehend the cataclysmic abyss which is college admissions. There is no "playing the system." There is only surviving it. The admission system is a racket—a broken machine which needs to be totally overhauled to create a fairer, or at least a less hellish, process.

Strawberry Banana Smoothie Bowl

By Talula Kirschner

When it comes to summer, I imagine coming home on a hot day—maybe after being at the beach—and wanting to eat something delicious and refreshing. A smoothie bowl is the perfect thing. They're healthy, tasty, and made with simple ingredients. You can easily make them at home without spending a lot of money or going out.

My personal favorite is strawberry and banana, but all of these ingredients are changeable based on what YOU prefer. You can use any frozen fruits that you want; the yogurt can be any kind—greek, plain, vanilla, whatever—and the juice can be swapped with any other variety, or use milk if you don't want that extra flavor.

When it comes to making smoothie bowls, I often hear people say that it's not thick enough. But keep in mind, the more liquid you add, the runnier it will be, so try to minimize the amount of juice/milk. It might make it a little difficult to blend, but you'll get an ice cream-like consistency if you're patient. And if you want something to drink or take on the go, just add more liquid for a traditional smoothie. Enjoy!

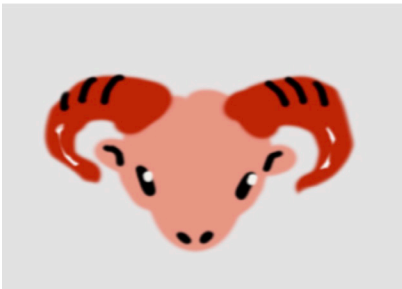
This is the recipe for a strawberry banana bowl, but like I said, all the ingredients can be replaced to your specific liking.



- 2 cups strawberries and bananas
- About ½ cup vanilla yogurt
- About 3 tbsp orange juice
- For toppings:
- Granola
- Berries and fresh fruit
- Peanut butter
- Honey
- Coconut
- Chia or flax seeds
- Anything you want

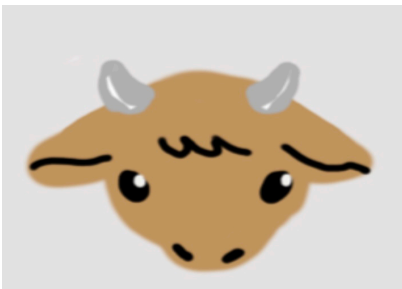
Summer Horoscopes

By Auden Stellavato



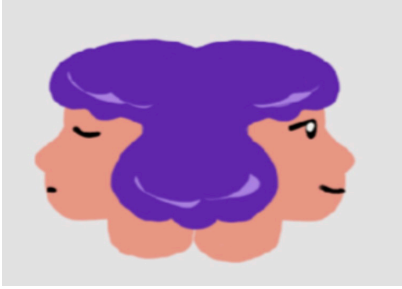
Aries: The great void is upon you. A blanket of shadows, the dead of night, the center of the raven's eye—a convocation

imposing, approaching you from the depths of Tartarus. Beware the blindness of midnight; fear that which is unseen; fear your shadow under the sallow glow of a full moon. If a light goes out in your house, replace it immediately; keep extra light bulbs in stock. Also, remember to buy face lotion this month! You might run out.



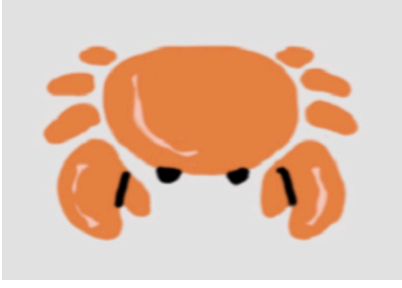
Taurus: Things are going to keep happening to you this summer that will almost cause you to go blind. Literally

blind—not metaphorically blind. Keep your wits about you. Should one of these tragic accidents be successful in their cruel endeavors, you will find yourself lost in a world void of all you once knew. Seriously, avoid like...broken glass, falling debris, anything particularly bright, and also snakes that look like they may cause blindness. Also, consider taking a vitamin A supplement



Gemini: Always remember that pirates have to come on land sometimes. Most people are not afraid of pirates in their

day-to-day lives, as most people do not live in the middle of the ocean. Unfortunately, the stars have spoken, and the pirates have listened. All signs point straight to you. They are coming. They may watch from afar (they have looking glasses), but when they find you, you must fight.



Cancer: The crab which represents you will turn from a grand symbol of your being to your worst nightmare.

People forget crabs can crawl on land as well as in the depths of the ocean. Danger lurks around every bend for you. Your enemies thrive out of

element; expect the unexpected; fear the unseen and its pincers of wrath. Your foes come into your living room from the depths of underwater volcanoes, clad in shelled armor.



Leo: Ever heard of the Santa Ana winds? This is worse than that. The mighty gales of the North are coming. Beware the whistling of

the winds; around bends and over hills, it shall follow you. Seek shelter, but like the fearsome wolf, your sanctity may be blown to pieces. In the wreckage of your material life, you must rise from the debris, the twisted picture of a phoenix, brittle bones—featherless.



Virgo: The winds sing in harmony with your footsteps. Even the grayest skies crack blue when you walk underneath

them. The stars have (literally) aligned for you for this summer. Wealth pours in for you at the drop of a hat, in all its gold and glitter. Reality bends to your greatest wishes. The cosmos smiles upon you, a titan of war and peace, and you need not do anything but smile back.



Libra: Bombs away! Or should I say turkeys away? Because those are what you need to be looking out for this month—or

rather looking up for. Did you know turkeys sleep in trees to protect themselves from predators? You might not have, but you need to. Because now you will become the prey. Turkeys are coming at you from the sky. If you hear nondescript flapping and clucking noises from above, run for the hills.



Scorpio: Quick-sand looks deceptively similar to normal sand. File that away.



Sagittarius: The moon smiles upon all this coming summer. All but you, unfortunately. In its cracks and craters, the seeds

of your destruction are being sewn. Pray to the gods of night. Pray that you will not be lamb to the slaughter, butchered in the pale glow of a full moon.



Capricorn: Watch your back, but forget not the front—do not miss what sits obviously, for that which is in hiding. There

is a balance to be had. Even as the lotus blooms, the petals begin to rot. As its nectar sweetens, the honey bee fattens and dies.



Aquarius: The worm that destroys you is your lack of ability to swim. Or at least the fact that you look like you can't swim. Literal-

ly. Get it together, the summer is arriving, it's a season for adventure, fun, and daring. Not whatever you have going on. I would continue to warn you, but I can't make an Aquarius learn anything—even how to swim apparently. Stay strong, or don't. Just do not drown.



Pisces: Only in the eye of the storm are you protected. Regrettably, though, the eye of a storm is typically in the

middle. You will have to traverse many mighty obstacles, through perilous lands and Druidic forests. Stare not into the hummingbird's eye. Keep your head down and get to safety. As the debris and hail falls around you while you rest stagnant in the eye, remember this: you will—for the next two months—fall into a horrible habit of forgetting grocery lists at home whenever you leave to go shopping. Make extra copies, and work on memorizing the names of common produce because you'll need to.

This space was reserved for an article on senioritis, but unfortunately the senior author never got back to us.

What You Don't See On Game Day

By David Troeger

It's a cold September day on the stadium field at Onteora, and spectators fill the stands to see the football team run together up the stairs and onto the field. The fans watch as the players run a lap around the field, in formation, and head to the home bench to make the final preparations. The recognition of the starters booms down from the announcers box, and the coin is tossed. The kickoff and return teams head onto the field. "Right side!" "Ready!" "Left side!" "Ready!" The kicker runs up to the ball, accelerating as he goes, and a sound, sort of like a heavy book being dropped, rings through the stadium.

The ball flies through the air, 30, 40, 50 yards and is caught by an opposing player. Eight runners on the kicking team sprint down the field to their target. There are seven blockers; one, two, three, four runners get through. The returner tries to find the open space. He tries to get through; maybe he gets around one rusher; maybe he makes one miss, maybe two. Crack! The sound of pad against pad as a rusher hits his target. The crowd cheers and chants for both teams rise into the air. First play. The spectators know many more will follow. What they don't know is what happens behind the scenes.

You will never find a football coach that tells



you to start late. When football season is over, bulking or thinning season begins. If you need to gain, you lift, you run, and you eat. The motto basically becomes protein, protein, carbs, protein. Lift over the winter, lift over the spring, lift over the summer. You want to gain as much muscle as possible to make sure you're always stronger than last year.

On the other hand, sometimes it's time to lose. Usually this is the beginning of the offseason where you lose the excess, then go bulking to gain the weight back in muscle. This is also around the beginning of recruiting season for the next year, although we had already been trying to entice a few guys in (if you're interested see anyone on the team). A few weeks before the spring sport season we started morning lifts. 6:00 a.m. at the school for weight room with the team, divided into uppers on Monday (bench, curls, etc.), lowers on Tuesday (squat, deadlift, etc.), and plyometrics on Thursday (box jumps, med ball slams, etc.).

After a month or so, we start on-the-field practice from 6:30–8:00 on Thursdays and Fridays. While writing this, this is the current stage. Not mandatory, but recommended. Just practicing skills and getting back in shape.

These continue into summer, and once school's out more people usually show up. We run routes, do blocking drills, and other things of

the sort, with conditioning mixed in. This includes hills (running up and down a hill, sometimes carrying someone else on your back), suicides (sprinting back and forth at full speed a specified number of times), or tire flips (self explanatory with a tractor tire). This carries on for a while until the mandatory summer practices. These are four hour, full heat, full pad, and full contact days Monday through Thursday for a few weeks. Also, this is where we usually lose about a third to half of our recruits.

On the first day gear is assigned, you get your helmet, mouthguard, shoulder pads, rib pads, knee pads, girdle (upper leg/that area pads), practice jersey, and pants. You get your own cleats, as well as gloves, socks, mouthguard and helmet visor; however these are not required. A lot of conditioning to get us ready for the season, hitting practice, indies (individuals, linemen, and skill positions, separately), and 90 degree days later, we have our roster ready.

There's usually an unofficial scrimmage game, and once school starts, we're into week one. The first week, Monday is like any other day; however, following it is usually film study (footage review of the last game to see what's working and what's not). Tuesday, Wednesday, and sometimes Thursday are drills, hitting, and conditioning.

Depending on whether the game is Friday or Saturday, Thurs-

day or Friday is a team spaghetti dinner to fill the players up with carbs. Finally, on gameday we head to the locker room to drop off our bags. We start by warming up on the field, first with a lap, then stretches and finally ladder drills. After that, we usually go through the playbook, highlighting the focus plays on offense, then mimicking the opponent's offense so our defense can get a feel for what we're facing. On home games, we go back to the locker room to prepare, which involves coach and captain speeches, padding up, and going over strategy one last time.

The strategy stays for away games, but it is after a one or two hour busride and in one of the other schools locker rooms. We go out and do our dynamics, high knees, A, B, and AB skips, scoops, and frankensteins, then split into indies, with skill position players running the route tree and linemen setting their pads (hitting shoulders against each other) in the endzone. We go back to the locker room and wait, with suspense and excitement hanging over everyone. It's time. We run out onto the field, do our lap, listen to the announcement of the lineups, and finally, the kicking team runs out onto the field. First play.



Prom 2023

Photos



Why You Shouldn't do Three Sports

By Luc Millenson-Wilens

Hello. I am Luc Millenson-Wilens, and this is why you shouldn't play three sports at the same time.

There are lots of reasons why, and I have many things to talk about. A big reason is just because of the mental stress and pressure it puts on you to make sure you do good in school along with playing the sports. I play soccer, basketball, and run track, all at the same time. I run track to benefit in those other two sports because they are my main sports. Track absolutely sucks, like running in general, but if you want to get in shape for a sport, it is the absolute best thing you can do. Juggling schoolwork and sports is very hard. I had to work harder to get the same grades as I did before, and I got less sleep and was more tired in school.

Another big challenge is having crazy busy weekends. An example of this is when I had a basketball tournament in Albany and a soccer


game in Westchester the same day. I had to miss one of them which was very hard for me because I have made big commitments to both teams.

There are some pros to it as well, which I will talk about here. One pro is that you get in great shape; obviously, playing three sports at once will help you physically. Another pro is you get to have fun time with friends. For example, at a basketball tournament in Albany, I am with my friends all day. I play on an Onteora-based AAU team for basketball with many of my friends. There are practices on Monday and Wednesday, which conflicts with my soccer team, which has practice Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday in Kingston. My parents have a hard time getting me everywhere, so usually I miss Wednesday soccer.


My soccer team is very high level and has high expectations for commitment, so I feel bad

missing it. This was my first year running track, and it's very hard to compete with upperclassmen since there is only a varsity team. I would always finish toward the back in my races, and it would just be hard mentally to see myself at the back.

If you are an honors student like me and you have a heavier course load then I don't recommend playing three sports. I know not a lot of kids do but still, don't. I find myself getting tired during the week at school which affects the way I study in class. There was a day I remember I went to track practice, went to soccer, left soccer early, got to basketball late, and got home at 9:00 p.m. Next spring I am not sure if I will run track again because of the way it affects me mentally. I love basketball and soccer, and I am going to keep playing them, but I will also have to make decisions on if I pursue either basketball or soccer long term.



Clawsnaps



Onteora Seniors: what are your words of wisdom for underclassmen?

“Take AP Human Geography, you’ll enjoy it. Also try the soup!” Thea Millenson-Wilens

“Live deeply.” Andy Zygment

“Grades really don’t matter that much, so don’t cry about it too much.” Olivia Weiss

“Never forget your water bottle.” Noelle Crandell

“Don’t procrastinate with your college app.” Jett Conti

“Senioritis hits hard.” Klara Buton

“Apply everywhere.” Oliver Roy

“Get the English teachers to help you with your college applications and join the Art Club!” Zoe Gabriel

“Join lots of clubs.” Nick Denton

“Don’t be afraid to take harder classes, and don’t be afraid to take mental health days.” Emily Baker

“Take APES.” Sami Sheikh

“Try to get college applications out of the way.” Hudson Turba

“You should do coomunity mentorship! There are so many cool things you can do in it.” Eleanor Schackne-Martello

Letter from the Editor

By Eleanor Schackne-Martello

My journey through *The Talon* has been a complicated one. I first joined as a ninth grader, and when the first article I submitted couldn't get approval from Mr. Edelman to print (it was a bit too... passionate), I nearly lost motivation. It was only because of the group of editors that Ms. Conroy had put together that I was able to edit it and eventually see it published. In tenth grade, during the pandemic, I was once again amazed by the community that is *The Talon*. Following an article submission, one of the editors reached out to me independently to congratulate me and encourage me to continue writing the next year. After receiving so much support from past leadership, I have tried to emulate them as editor-in-chief this past year.


This year, we were able to publish four times, with three twelve-pagers and one eight-pager, exceeding the expectations of my timeline. I could not be more proud of everyone who helped make this happen because as much as

I have adored being in charge of *The Talon*, none of it would've been possible without the amazing staff I was lucky enough to have. Every single person who copy-edited an article, submitted a piece of writing, or even just sat in on a layout meeting has contributed something deeply important to this club.

Ms. Conroy, I can never thank you enough for all that you've done for me and the paper, but here's a start: you have gone above and beyond in supporting this paper. From opening your classroom's door to us all periods of the day and well past the last bus to holding our hands through layout nightmares and approval problems, you are truly the most amazing club advisor. You have taught me so, so much about the importance of reflection, interpersonal communication, and of course, journalism, and I'm extremely envious of the underclassmen who get to continue learning with you next year.

Working on *The Talon* is a completely alien experience. We draw on resources and support

from far more people than are involved in our club. We rely on students with minimal interest in the newspaper-making process to write articles, take pictures, draw graphics, and give us leads on interesting topics. Because of this, whether or not you can make it to our Wednesday meetings, you can get involved and be a part of The Talon family. I urge you to get involved with whatever part of the process interests you.



Summer Playlists

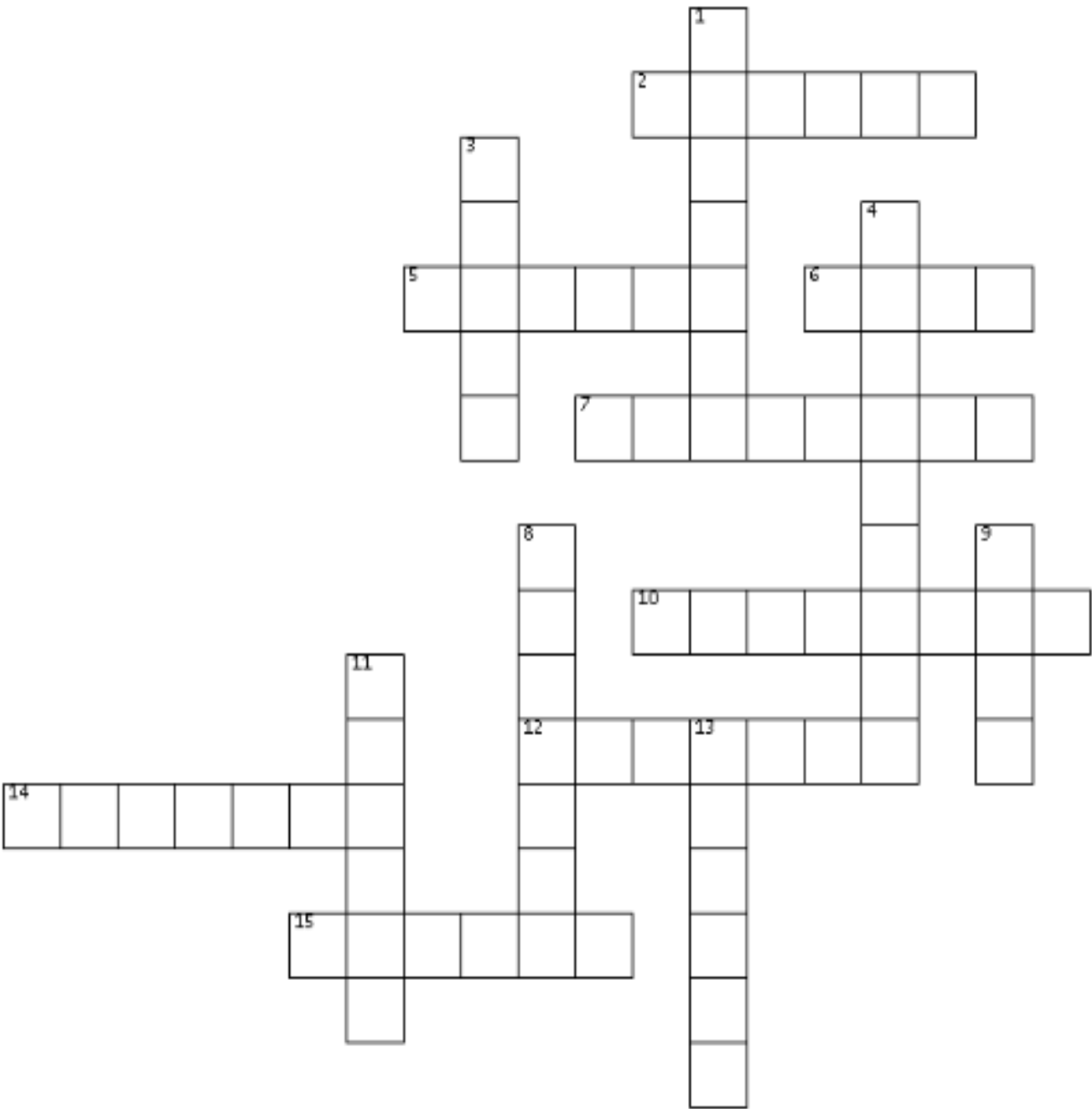
By Kelly Wen

By Ada Helm



Song Lyrics Crossword

By Kelly Wen



Clues

Listen to Kelly's playlist for the answers!

ACROSS

- 2. "Driving slow on _ morning / Well I never want to leave"
- 5. "_ man, burning out his fuse up here alone"
- 6. "You're eyes without a _"
- 7. "In conversation / She spoke just like a _"
- 10. "To take you in the sun / To _ lands"
- 12. "I told you I was _ / You know that I'm no good"
- 14. "Nothing ever lasts _ / Everybody wants to rule the world"
- 15. "Your voice is soft like summer rain / And I cannot compete with you / _"

DOWN

- 1. "When the moon is in the Seventh House / And _ aligns with Mars"
- 3. "Walking _ Street feeling like a stranger"
- 4. "I blinked and suddenly / I had a _"
- 8. "I've been standin' here waitin' Mister _"
- 9. "Where you _, I will follow"
- 11. "I'll stare directly at the sun but never in the _"
- 13. "_ girl / She's been living in her _ world"