

Cancel Culture: Has It Gone Too Far?

by Aidan Lorenzo

Imagine, if you would, there’s a famous person who you really admire. Then all of the sudden, you hear about something that they did, whether it was happened yesterday or years ago. You see and hear people attacking them even though they had no bad intentions and put out an apology video promising to better themselves. But, the damage was done and this celebrity has been dropped from numerous projects and practically blackballed from superstardom. That is just an example of the massive rabbit hole that is known as Cancel Culture. Cancel Culture does more harm than good because it can shorten careers and cause serious problems for the person who was cancelled. For every person that has been rightfully cancelled like Bill Cosby, Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey, Woody Allen, Roseanne Barr, Ellen DeGeneres, and Marilyn Manson, there’s also some that have been unfairly cancelled like Morgan Wallen, Johnny Depp, Jake Lloyd, Brendan Fraser, Laura Dern, and Corey Feldman.

Some people say that cancel culture is actually used as a force for good in this world. According to Alexandra D’Amour, in her article titled: “Cancel Culture: The Good, The Bad, and its Impact on Social Change,” cancel culture has been incredibly effective at combating sexism, racism, or any type of abuse or harmful wrongdoing to others. After all, it led to the conviction of Bill Cosby and Harvey Weinstein, the downfall of big names like Kevin Spacey, Ellen DeGeneres, and Marilyn Manson, and the rise of movements like #MeToo and #SpeakingOut. In some cases, however, people targeted by cancel culture escape cancellation. Country singer Morgan Wallen was caught saying a racial slur earlier this year and many country radio stations pulled his music. Despite that, his music was, and still is, extremely popular and his music returned to country stations as of August 2021. In 2015, wrestling legend Hulk Hogan was caught saying a racial slur on tape and that cost him his working relationship with WWE, the place that made him famous. Eventually in 2018, he was welcomed back to WWE with open arms after apologizing for his actions. The point is that careers can be affected by cancel culture, but it can’t completely ruin a career either.

Despite some of the positive effects that Cancel Culture can have, it can also leave some disastrous results for some people. We live in a time where people get worked up over the smallest things that do not align with their point of view. According to an article in The Northern Star in March of 2021, a massive example of this is the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 when several things ended up being canceled in response to these protests. This included episodes of several TV shows getting banned or edited due to blackface performances, notable sports teams like the Cleveland Indians and the Washington Redskins being renamed, films like *Gone with the Wind*, *Dumbo*, and *Peter Pan* being given content warnings on their respective streaming services, and mascots like Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben’s Rice being replaced. It is understandable that these things can make people feel uncomfortable or angry, but when people are focussed on canceling syrup, rice, and fictional cartoon characters, we must ask if it has all gone too far.

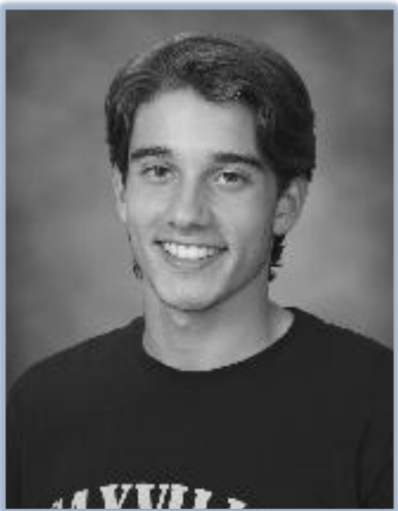
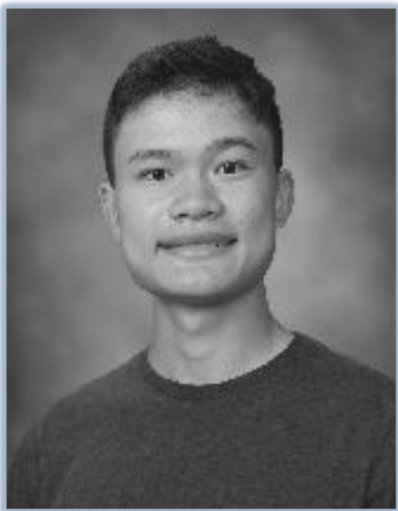


TV host Whoopi Goldberg (top) and podcaster Joe Rogan are two of the latest celebrities to be “cancelled.” Goldberg was placed on suspension from her job at ABC television when she claimed that the Holocaust was not about race, but about “man’s inhumanity to man.”



Several artists have pulled their music from Spotify over the streaming service’s airing of Joe Rogan’s podcast in which he allegedly spreads misinformation about vaccinations and has used racial slurs.

Weng and Moccio Top the Class of 2022



See the full story on page 7

Community Scholarships Applications Now Available!

Members of the Class of 2022 are strongly encouraged to visit the Guidance Department page on www.sayvilleschools.org where they will find links to the many different scholarships available thanks to the generosity of our local community. Unlike many scholarship programs, these awards are available only to Sayville students. There are scholarships based on academics, character, community involvement and career interests. Many are memorial scholarships, in memory of members of our community who have died and whose friends and family wished to support members of the Sayville Senior class. The total prize money at stake is well over \$100,000.00.

Keith Nintzel, pictured right, was a very popular member of the Class of 2001. His family and friends have established a scholarship in his honor.

Application deadline: March 4, 2022

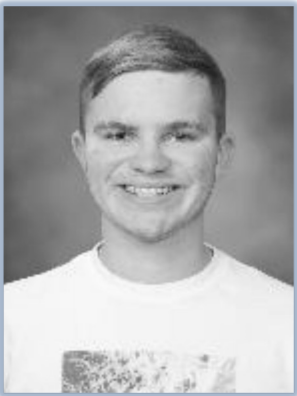


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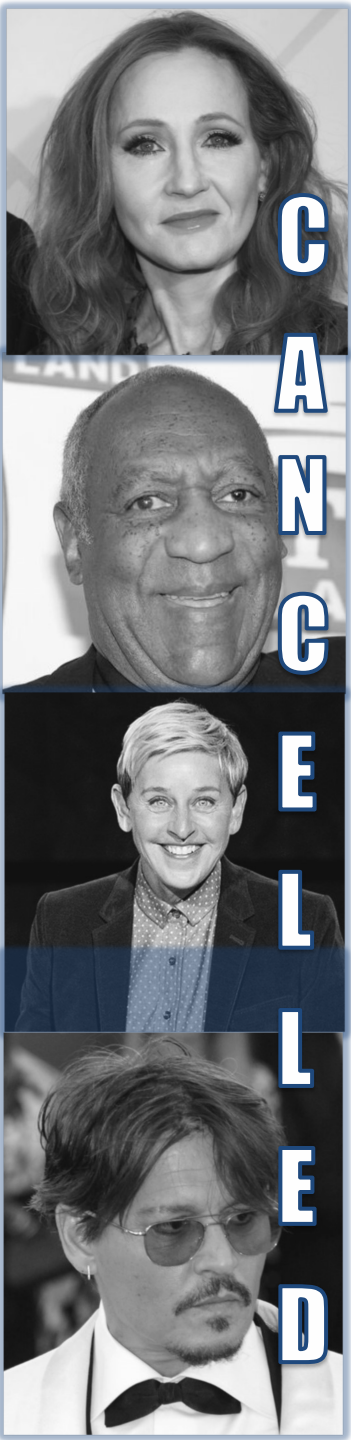
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Another example of these negative effects is when a person is canceled for reasons that are either falsified or beyond their control. Case in point, look at what happened to Johnny Depp. He was one of the biggest stars in Hollywood during the mid 2000s and early 2010s until allegations of domestic violence from his then wife, Amber Heard, were brought to light and that was when his ship began to sink. To make matters worse, it was then revealed that Heard was the abuser and actually admitted to hitting Depp. However, the damage was done as Depp was fired from big gigs at Disney and Warner Bros. while Heard’s career remained intact. Does someone deserve to be ‘canceled’ forever? It depends on who you ask and what happened. David Oliver, writing in *USA Today* argues that “cancel culture” needs to be reframed as “accountability culture.” He offers the example of Jake Lloyd, a rising child actor who got his big break in the mid 90s thanks to films like *Jingle All the Way* and *Star Wars - Episode I: The Phantom Menace*. However, it was the latter film that got him the most attention, but not in a good way. Lloyd’s performance in *The Phantom Menace* was heavily criticized by *Star Wars* fans and the media to the point where Lloyd was being bullied at school because of his performance. The trauma forced Lloyd to retire from acting in 2001, and unfortunately, he would later be diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia following arrests for assaulting his mother and reckless driving. Overall, despite some of the positive effects of Cancel Culture, it can also have some very serious repercussions.

All in all, Cancel Culture has, and continues to be a subject of controversy because of the unjust punishment given to talented people. Granted, some punishments were well deserved for people like Bill Cosby, Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey, and Ellen DeGeneres. However, when you look at the cases of Johnny Depp, Jake Lloyd, Brendan Fraser, and Corey Feldman, that’s when it goes from justified to undeserved.



Aidan Lorenzo, is a member of the Class of 2022, and definitely not cancelled.



J.K. Rowling, Bill Cosby, Ellen DeGeneres and Johnny Depp, all cancelled.

Student Spotlight

Sophomore

Michael Keehner



The news from Oxford High School in Michigan on November 30, 2021 was all too familiar: another school shooting. Only days later Sophomore Michael Keehner told his mother and his Global Studies teacher, Ms. Ferremi, that he felt compelled *to do something* to show the students of Oxford High School that they were not alone. “He came up with the idea,” his Global Studies Teacher Ms. Ferremi said, “of sending small messages of hope and support to the Oxford students from our Sayville students.”

Michael spend a December weekend cutting out seventeen-hundred heart shapes from sturdy paper on his Cricut maker choosing gold paper, a color common to both Oxford and Sayville. He assembled the hearts into packets which would be distributed through each of the Social Studies classes. His goal was not only to show support to the students of Oxford, but to continue to raise awareness of school safety and the tragedy of school violence to his classmates in Sayville. “His hope,” Ms. Ferremi continued, “was that every student in the school would be able to participate so that there would be a message for every student at Oxford.”

The tragedy, in which four students were killed, and six students and a teacher were injured, was discussed in all the social studies courses during which the students were given the opportunity to complete a small message of hope to share with the students of Oxford High School. Nearly one thousand gold hearts were collected from the students and along with the faculty’s messages have since been packed into a protective mailing tube with a letter explaining the activity and a poster, and were all shipped to Oxford, Michigan on December 15, 2021

Everyone at Sayville High School is impressed by Michael’s willingness to stand up and “be that kindness.”

Be That Kindness - Oxford Strong



Sayville’s Digital Detox

Current Staff

During the first week of February, Sayville’s students were presented with messages which asked them to re-evaluate their relationships with screens. The week started with grade level assemblies to watch the video *Like*, which addressed the many ways students interact with their screens in both healthy, and unhealthy ways. During the week, a daily special extended homeroom schedule allowed for videos and conversations on a variety of topics, including cell phone addiction, sexting, and online hate speech. Many students found the videos interesting enough for conversations to continue throughout the school day.

As a follow up to these presentation, high school students were offered a variety of screen free activities after school for the following two weeks. Board games, puzzles, badminton tournaments and local nature hikes all afforded students the chance to power down their screens and reconnect with the people and the world around them.

Senior, Sophia Sanchez said, “it’s really important that the school is educating people about cell phone addictions, but some students are not very receptive towards it.”



Sayville

STRIDES

TWO WEEK

DIGITAL DETOX

DAY 1 Disable Push Notification on all devices	DAY 2 Delete Unused Apps on Devices	DAY 3 No Screens at Meal Times	DAY 4 Put screens in a separate room at bedtime	DAY 5 Establish a "shut down" time for all screens
DAY 6 Unfollow people on social media or gaming that aren't real friends	DAY 7 Only 30 minutes of Social Media or Gaming	DAY 8 Don't check device until mid morning	DAY 9 No device for 2 straight hours	DAY 10 Memorize 5 phone numbers from your contacts
DAY 11 No Twitter or Instagram all day	DAY 12 No Snapchat or Tiktok all day	DAY 13 No phone or device after 5pm	DAY 14 No phone or device all day	Reflect: What was easy? What was hard? What was impossible? Parents: What to do now?

Gene-ius! Weng Wins Big

A Conversation with Gene Weng

by Will Kretz

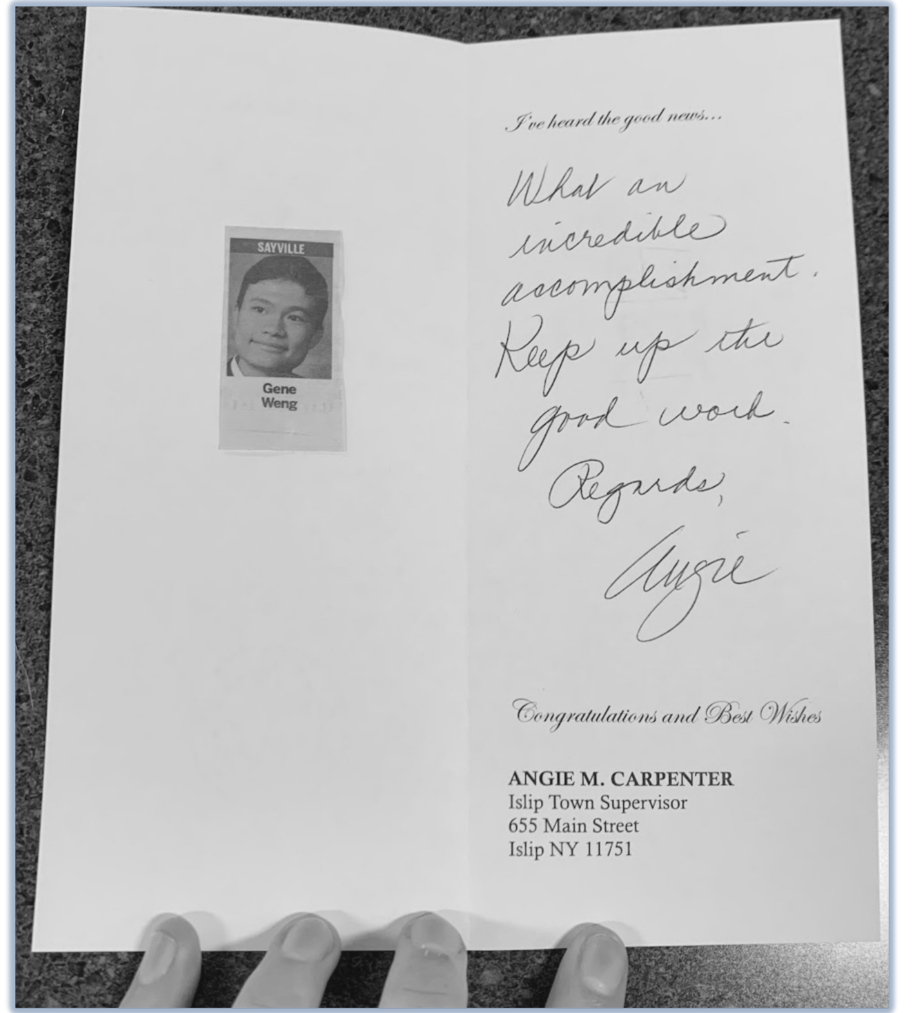
Gene Weng. Some say he stands six foot eight. Some say he figured out the Fibonacci Sequence first but he let the Italians have it (they needed a win). Some say his parents address him as Mr. Weng. All I know is that Gene is a dear friend and that the world needs to know the man behind the myth. We sat down in the Sayville High School Library to discuss his latest achievement, becoming a Regeneron Science Talent Search Scholar. The following is a transcription of our recorded conversation (edited for length and clarity).
Will Kretz: We’re here with Gene W. Weng, recent Regeneron Science Talent Search Scholar, and I was wondering if you could give us a brief explanation of what that Talent Search entails.
Gene Weng: The Science Talent Search bills itself as the most prestigious science program competition for high school seniors and it's pretty much that high school seniors work on a research project and then-

I see Mr. Nielsen, Gene’s former AP Physics teacher, getting copies, I flag him down.
GW: Oh, is he gonna be in the interview too?
WK: Mr. Nielsen, could you, preferably in five words or less, describe Gene Weng as a student?
John Nielsen: If I have five words I have to really think about it.
He takes a moment
JN: Dedicated, intelligent, respectful.
WK: You’re being recorded by the way
JN: I know, I saw. Driven, and it’s a phrase but, fun to be around, a good sport.
WK: Thank you so much.
JN: You’re welcome. What’s this for?
I consider lying.
WK: It’s for the paper.
JN: Oh! Cool.
WK: Yeah.
JN: What are you interviewing him for?
WK: He won the Regeneron-
JN: Oh that’s what it is?
WK [to GW]: Show him the letter from Angie.
GW: Today I got a letter from Angie Carpenter.
WK: Look at this, this is so funny, she cut out-
GW: Will said it’s like a serial killer.
Mr. Nielsen laughs.
WK: That was in Newsday. She cut out that picture. That’s so funny.
JN: She could put the letters from the newspaper together to spell “congratulations.”
Everyone laughs.
JN: Oh man, that is funny. Congratulations though.
GW: Thank you.
JN: Alright, very good stuff, glad I made the paper.
WK: Alright bye.
Mr. Nielsen leaves.
WK: Could you-
Mr. Hoffer walks by and waves. I fail to flag him down.
WK: Could you maybe describe what your project specifically was about.

GW: Ok, so the title of my project was “Using a Carbon Dioxide Producing Reaction in a Low Cost CO2 Vessel to Support the Growth of Mammalian Cells in Culture,” what that means is that I had a little container which I got from HomeGoods and I had a cell culture plate which means I had a little petri dish with growing cells and then I had a reaction in water with baking soda and an acid to produce CO2 and then the CO2 provides an environment for the cells to grow and so I tested it by growing mouse embryonic stem cells in the little device I created, and also in like a standard incubator, so then the one I created only cost \$20 and the standard incubator costs over \$5000, so that was the basis of my project.
WK: I like that affordability aspect of it, I think in the paper you specifically mention its use in schools as a replacement. Could you speak on that?
GW: A lot of high schools don’t have access to cell culture, because like I said, the incubators used cost over \$5000 and require experience and a CO2 tank, but the one I created doesn’t require a CO2 tank, I just have a reaction between readily available materials to create CO2 so that high schoolers can carry out their own experiments, rather than having to go to a lab to do this cell culture research.
WK: I know you’re not a materialistic man, but there was some prize money. I don’t want to make you a target for robbery, but could you talk about it and what you plan to use it on?
GW: I was a scholar so I get \$2000. I’m not exactly sure if there are rules on what you can spend it on, but I’ll probably spend it on further education and college. The top prize is going to be \$250,000 for the other people that are competing.
WK: Could you explain a little bit more about the top level of this competition?

GW: Today I think they announce the top 40 finalists, which I don't think I was a part of, they get \$20,000 and they compete in Washington D.C. for the top prize of \$250,000. There are other prizes along the way too.
WK: Like Jump Rope For Heart? Like a scooter or something?
GW: Yeah kind of, the more stuff you do, the more prizes you get.
WK: What’s your next big project?
GW: Maybe just keep working on this, because I’m also using this to apply to the Long Island Science Fair, which is going to be held in March, and then, if you’re top of that you get to go to the International Science Fair, which is going to be in May, and that’s a really big thing too.
WK: You talked earlier about using your prize money to further your education, what are your plans for the future?
GW: So I just applied to college and right now my top school is Johns Hopkins, they have a really strong science and research program, which, based on my past experiences, I want to further research.
WK: Plan on partying hard?
GW: Yeah, living the life.
WK: Would it be inappropriate to ask what your biggest weaknesses are, if any?
GW: Ok, maybe I’ll try. Sometimes I over plan things out, like I try to ensure everything, you know the Boy Scout motto, “Be prepared.”
I salute.
GW: Sometimes I get overworked because there's a lot of stuff I have to do and some of the stuff I worry about doesn’t even end up happening. While I’m very organized, sometimes I think that’s a drawback.
WK: Let’s end this on a positive note, if you had any words for the next generation of students in science but also in academia and research in general, do you have any advice, any words of wisdom you could give to the youth?
GW: Stick to science, it pays off. I got \$2000, so one day you might be in my place and win money. Also, don’t get discouraged, doing research might not get the results that you want, but as long as you stick with it and keep on doing what you’re doing then one day you’ll get there. Also, I was told to plug Science National Honor Society, they wanted to be in the newspaper, so join Science National Honor Society. It's an honor society for science students and we do a lot of fun activities. I did a presentation there, so consider joining.
WK: Always plugging. Gene Weng, thank you so much for your time.
GW: Yep. Thank you.
WK: Bye.

We get up to leave. We talk a little bit, and both say very profound things that I didn’t record. I start talking about ideas for the article’s title. Gene recommends using the pun “Gene-ius.” He’s always been humble. He also recommends not using the term “drug money” when referring to the \$2000 prize. I argue that Regeneron makes pharmaceuticals so it’s technically true. I suggest we publish all of our conversations. He doesn’t seem receptive to the idea.



Letter from Angie Carpenter, Islip Town Supervisor. Ignore my fingers.

The Current is a publication of Sayville High School.

Staff: Daniel Blanco, Joe Blanco, Sarah Blaskiewicz, Levi Farmer, Shannon Feather, Josiah George, Will Kretz, Maggie Mongiello

Faculty Adviser: Mr. Shaw

The Current welcomes letters to the editor and article submissions.

Please drop off with or email the faculty adviser.

HELP WANTED !

Join *The Current*

Meet us Wednesdays,

10th period in the Little Theatre.

A Review of *Dune*

By Joseph Blanco

Frank Herbert’s 1965 Sci-Fi novel *Dune* takes the genre’s classic tropes and flips them on their head. Where we would usually see “the chosen one” venture to fulfill their destiny, our main character, Paul, struggles with this idea of fate and free will. Earning itself the title of the best-selling book of its genre for over 50 years, and rightfully so, no piece of science fiction has affected the literary world as much as *Dune*.

This novel focuses on one character caught in the turmoil of many issues that can be found in our world today. All while an empire is crashing down upon itself and its houses are struggling for power amongst one another. The story centers around the desert planet of Arrakis, which houses the universe’s only source of the most valuable resource, melange. Also known as “the spice”, this cinnamon-like spice powers the world’s economy, where the empire’s corruption stems from. Melange grows naturally from the giant worms of Arrakis, so heavily sought after because of people’s addiction to it and the pertinent uses it has involving space travel. Without going into greater detail, the natives of this planet, the Fremen, have relied on this spice for millennia, giving them superhuman-like abilities including an elongated lifespan and heightened senses. So what happens when greedy governments want to take advantage of the huge profit opportunities? It sparks great travesty and a story of betrayal that you’ll have to uncover for yourself.

Ever watch George Lucas’ *Star Wars* or read George R.R. Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire*? Well, if not, I’m sure you’ve heard of them. Both of these major works of fiction, and many more, have taken a big influence from what do you know? *Dune*. Its influence on *Star Wars* is obvious, with things ripped straight from *Dune* like their version of las-guns and their desert planet Tatooine. Whereas Martin looks more towards the political side of *Dune* with great houses fighting for control as seen with the coveted Iron Throne.

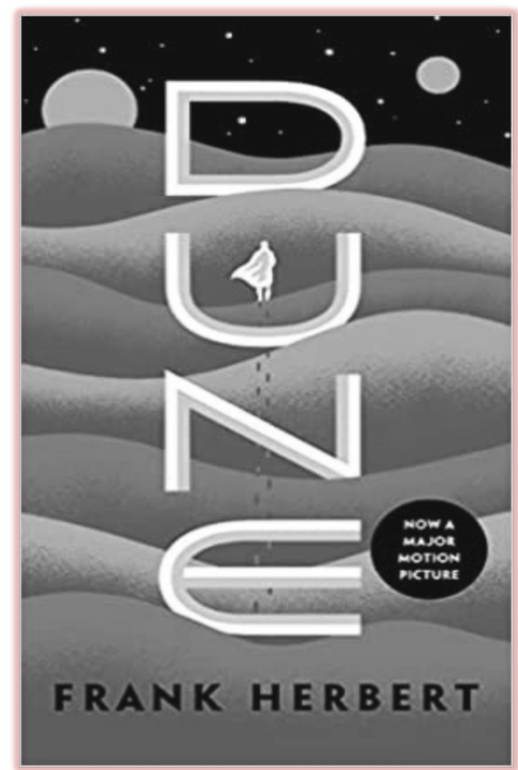
Frank Herbert manages to create a sci-fi masterpiece at a scale that has never been seen before without heavily relying on galactic wars with a good side and a bad side constantly fighting. In fact, all technology that

uses artificial intelligence is banned in this universe, including computers. So how does he do it? How can someone break so many norms and still say it belongs to the genre? By simply redefining what a science fiction story can be while maintaining its appeal to a large audience.

Let’s begin with the world-building of *Dune*. To say the least, Herbert did his research. In preparation for writing his novel, and eventually five more in the series, he studied the harsh landscapes of deserts and the few species that could survive in those conditions. Eventually getting inspiration for Arrakis when visiting Florence, Oregon, during the ongoing threat of dunes essentially engulfing the city. Herbert was left awestruck by how people had to adapt to the sand, leading to the creation of the Fremen, who faced similar challenges. This gives us an idea of all the work put into this story before the pen touches paper. The book throws everything at you in just the first couple of pages, which can be hard to digest and will leave most people confused at the start of it. With the many houses, planets, religions, animals, and even made-up words given to the reader so quickly, it can be seen as a fault in his writing. However, Herbert does not leave you in the dust. Later, everything becomes clear through natural progression in the story. This is an understandable turn-off for some people, but this is a book meant more for discussion rather than leisure. Herbert’s ability to create a world that makes you want to explore yourself inevitably leads to him getting compared to one of the greatest fiction writers of all time, J.R.R. Tolkien. Both are indubitably geniuses at what they do best, forging an environment that invests the reader from the beginning, whether it takes place in a hole in the ground or a palace on Caladnan.

Calling the political system of *Dune* complex is an understatement. Herbert explores a world where religious beliefs and politics are so deeply intertwined to the point that one couldn’t exist without the other. The author takes a more feudal approach when constructing the government. With a great number of houses forming the Landsraad overseen by the Padishah Emperor, both keeping each other in check through a balance of power. Although, as seen throughout the book, rarely does anyone choose to play by the rules. Adding to this, each house has a stake in Combine Honnete Ober Advancer Mercantiles (CHOAM) a conglomerate corporation that essentially controls the universe’s economy. Combine this with the Bene Gesserit, Spacing Guild, and Fremen, you can see how things start to get messy. Frank Herbert crafted a political system so thoroughly and interestingly that he could make six books of it and still keep

the readers at the edge of their seats. 71 percent is the portion of Earth’s surface that is covered with water. Now compare that to Arrakis, where the people’s only natural source of freshwater is the dew lingering on the sand in the early morning, moments before the sun takes it right back. (Reading this book will make you thirsty). The native Fremen’s only way to survive in this environment is by adapting. On this planet, conserving your sweat is more important than trying to find a water source. The Fremen wear “still suits” that prevent any moisture loss from the body. All bodily fluids are collected then recycled back into the user’s system. It’s this invention that limits their daily loss of water to a thimbleful. This gives an idea of what life on this extreme planet looks like and what challenges the protagonist, Paul, will have to face. It’s interesting how Paul chooses to go about solving the problems he runs into. He disregards what is generally suspected of being a hero in this type of story and discovers his own unique path separate from his predetermined destiny. While Frank Herbert was great at storytelling, his ability to write fails to stay timeless in some aspects. Throughout the book, we see unnecessary redundancy, characters changing personalities with little reason, and scenes that tend to drag on unnecessarily. However, that’s made up for in many other areas as detailed, like world-building and a gripping plot. Without a doubt, this book played a critical role in making science fiction what it is today and deserves its praise.

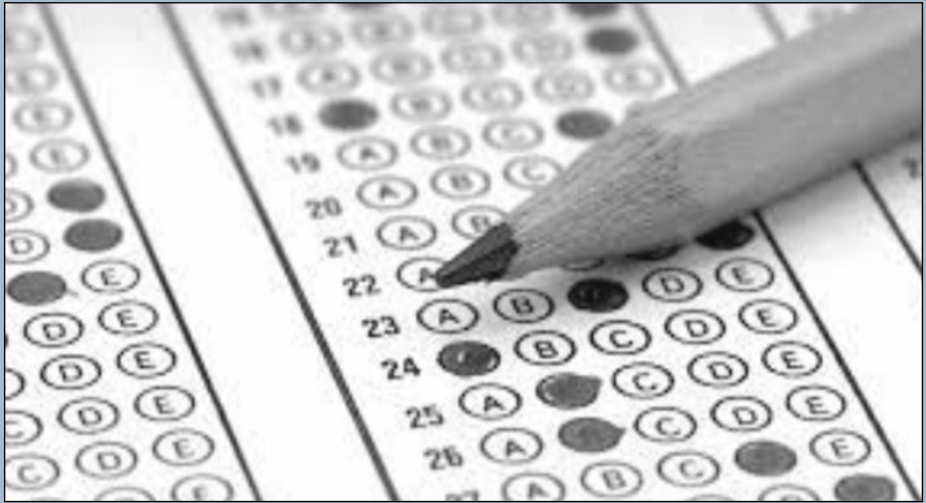


Sayville’s Midterms ... A thing of the past?

By Ben Flaumenhaft

Standardized testing is moving in a somewhat ambiguous direction. Sayville’s 2020 final exams, 2021 midterm exams, and 2021 final exams were canceled due to COVID-19 and at-home instruction. Sayville’s 2022 midterm and final exams have also now been canceled. These cancellations mirror New York State’s Regents Exam cancellations. They do not, however, mirror the actions of the College Board, which has maintained AP Exam administration over the past two years. The College Board is, of course, a for-profit company, so ulterior motives abound, but the continuation of AP Exam administration exists in contrast to New York State’s decision and Sayville Schools’ local testing decision. Additionally, having sat for AP Exams (virtual and in-person) over the past two years, many, but not all, Sayville students have continued to experience standardized testing in some capacity.

The inconsistency of testing experiences amongst Sayville students is reflected in their varying reactions to the midterm cancellations. Although there is general satisfaction with the cancellation, some claim to enjoy midterms week. A member of my AP Research class, for instance, expressed anger about midterms being canceled as the schedule worked out in such a way that she would



have been gifted a three-day weekend. In contrast, a member of my Chorale class explained that she is happy they are canceled and doesn’t mind a full week of school if it means she can avoid sitting for major exams. Perhaps it is a coincidence that a peer in an AP class would have preferred to have taken exams, while a peer in a non-academic class is happy to have avoided them, but this disparity makes sense. Sayville students in AP classes have greater experience with out-of-class test-taking, and likely have less anxiety surrounding the idea of them. However, students who have not been sitting for AP Exams these past two years are less accustomed to the out-of-class testing environment and likely have more anxiety.

This anxiety is and is not the target of Sayville’s 2022 midterm and final exams cancellation. According to both Dr. Criscione, Sayville School District’s Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and Mr. Hoffer, Sayville High School’s principal, the decision to cancel exams was mainly in response to New York State’s decision to cancel the January Regents. The school district must take attendance on a certain number of days each year, and without the administration of Regents exams, the days set aside for midterms and finals weeks

Continued on p. 7

Consumer's Corner: Starbucks' highly-sought-after relocation to West Sayville facing staunch opposition

By Josiah George

Will the aroma of a cup of joe make its way to West Sayville?

It appears that it is steadily becoming a reality.

Here's the gist of what's happening with the Sayville Starbucks:

Over the past two years, Starbucks has been facing strong backlash from residents of Sayville and West Sayville after proposing a move of their Main Street location in downtown Sayville, to a long shut-down Chase Bank. The company states that it was a corporate initiative to move Starbucks outlets out of main street locations into ones that had drive-thrus, in an attempt to maximize convenience and accessibility. While quite a few residents expressed their interest in a location just outside of town due to its convenience, over 2,000 residents have signed a petition seeking to block the Town of Islip from approving a zoning change that would allow fast-food restaurants to operate there. By far, the biggest reason for the immense opposition is that it would cause a major traffic headache for the area as the one-car exit will not allow cars to swiftly move through the property causing a backup onto Atlantic Avenue. This, in turn, will cause cars to not be able to turn off of Montauk Highway, causing congestion. There are also safety concerns with the project, as drivers may not follow signs and try to unsafely cross over to Cherry Avenue, use the West Sayville Fire Department parking lot to turn around, or perform illegal U-turns to continue west on Montauk Highway. Its close proximity to Sayville High School also raises concerns as students pass by the location to walk and ride to school.

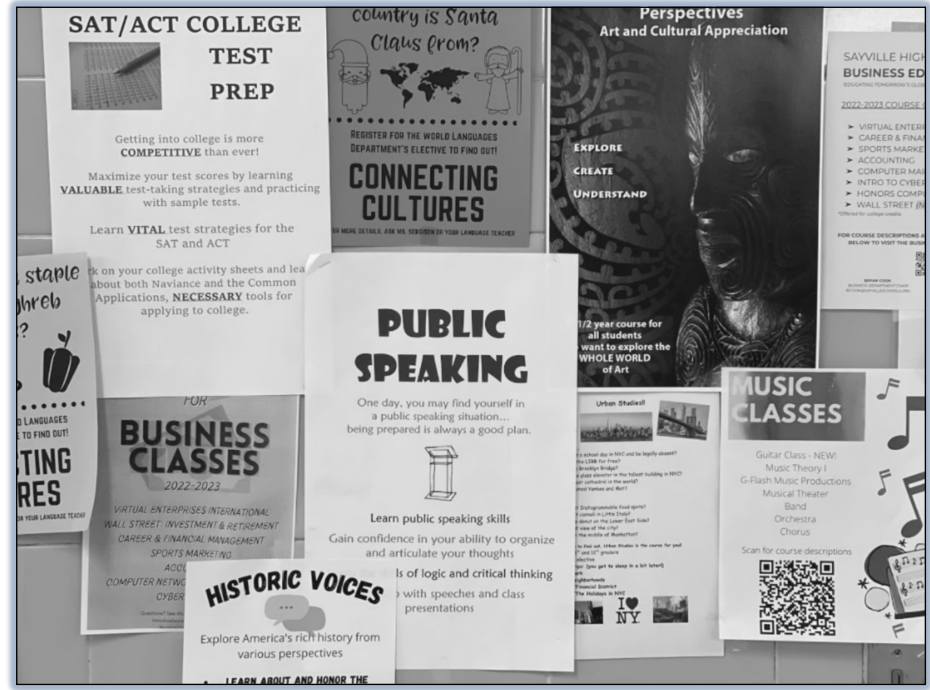
A similar situation in regards to residential opposition and concern for traffic problems has occurred in Patchogue, where it received Patchogue Planning Board approvals for constructing a West



The now empty storefront on Main Street that was, until recently, a very busy Starbucks location.

Main Street location last May. The planned Patchogue Starbucks is in the location that was formerly a Bargain Bilge marine supply store. The Patchogue outlet is currently under construction and while a date isn't specified, it is slated to open soon.

While the West Sayville location appears like it wouldn't be a great fit for Starbucks when considering safety and traffic conditions, there just aren't too many options for the coffee chain to relocate to, as most of the vacant businesses for rent or lease in the area don't have drive-thrus. With that being said, Starbucks seems to be progressing in its plans of opening up shop in the old Chase Bank as the zoning change has been approved and they are now currently waiting to be granted the change of zone by the Town of Islip. The downtown Sayville location has also shut down on December 24th. According to the Sayville Patch, a Starbucks spokesperson has confirmed that the downtown Sayville location will be moving into the 90 Main St. location. Only time will tell how Starbucks plans to adapt and work with the town in creating and maintaining a safe environment for local residents.



High School Departments Expand their Elective Course Offerings

Current Staff

Want to learn how to play the guitar?

How about how to give a speech?

What about a course on different world cultures?

How about a monthly field trip to New York City?

Art History anyone? SAT Prep? Cybersecurity?

Walk down any hallway in the high school these days, and you are practically assaulted with the posters advertising a huge variety of elective courses being offered for the 2022-23 school year. Every department, it seems, has expanded their offerings to include interesting courses which will definitely enhance a student's high school education. Consider taking an elective, rather than filling up your schedule with study halls. Looks good on a college application, and who knows? You might find a new interest!

What's a WORDLE?

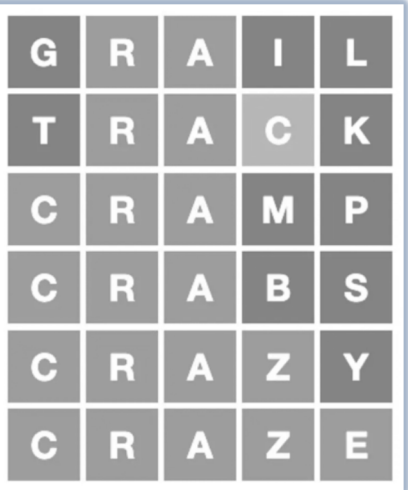
Poke your head into any early morning classroom and you'll hear both students and teachers announcing how many tries it took.

"I got it in three!"

"It took me six! I almost blew it!"

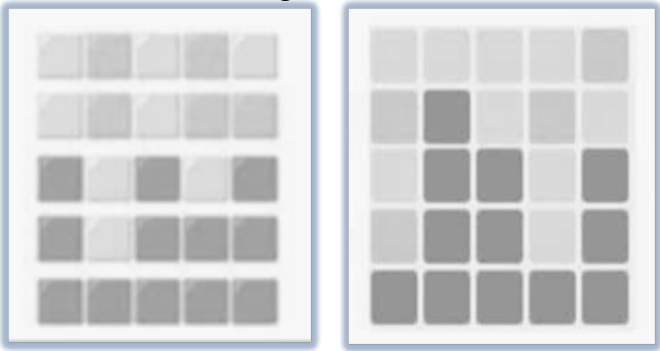
"I got it in one... lucky guess!"

Software developer Josh Wardle, (just one letter off) invented Wordle in October of 2021 as a gift for his partner. Later that month, it was made available to the public, and Wardle thought he was enjoying some success when, on November 1, 2021, 90 people played. Little did he know that only a few months later, his simple game of figuring out a five letter word would be one of the first things millions of users did every morning. Wardle believes a key to the success of the game is that players can only complete one puzzle per day, creating a sense of scarcity.



Wardle noticed in early December that users were posting their results on social media using a series of green, red and black boxes, so he then created the ubiquitous "share" feature, which allows users to notify their online community of their results for that day.

Wardle's Wordle's, (sorry) meteoric rise gained the attention of the New York Times, which purchased the online game in late December for an undisclosed seven figure sum.



Sayville Players Stage Kimberley Belflower’s New Play LOST GIRL



With a huge Palladian window and a simple twin bed dominating the stage, it was clear that the Sayville Players were returning to the world of *Peter Pan*. This time, it wasn’t the story of the boy who wouldn’t grow up that took center stage, as it did in the 2019 production of *Peter and the Starcatcher*; this time it was Wendy Darling’s turn to tell her story in the 2016 play, *Lost Girl*, written by Kimberley Belflower

With double casting, 9th grader Syd Reilly and Senior Katrina Kranzle played Wendy on alternating nights. Bringing the struggles of Wendy, who perhaps has left Neverland and Peter physically behind, but not emotionally, was a real challenge which these two actors took on carefully and with great skill. Surrounding Wendy were her alter egos and the other girls Peter had loved, her mother, played by Olivia Reiss and Alayna Pavao, the lost boys, including Slightly, (Henry Fenyo/James Talbot) who has developed some serious feelings for Wendy. Her therapist, the local detective, her doctor and a young man she hopes to make more than a friend round out Wendy’s world. But it’s Peter’s return at the end of the play that allows Wendy to finally get “her kiss” back, and start to move on with her life. Senior Katrina Kranzle said, “It was a great experience, and I’m glad I got to do it as my last show. I’m especially glad that we are leaving the theatre department with such capable actors.”

Congratulations to the Sayville Players for handling this mature and sensitive play so well.



Cast members of *Lost Girl*. (photos by L. Mittiga)

LOOK FOR UPCOMING ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT

MAY ONE ACTS!

A Colonel’s Account of the (APUSH) Civil War

By Shannon Feather

No experience in my life will ever haunt me more than the five years I spent defending the Union in our Civil War. I started in the middle of 1861 and was brought into the war effort as a colonel due to my reputation. That first year of fighting brought great optimism and hope to my troops. Although battles were scarce, General Bobby Zane was defeated twice, and the Union Troops proved adept at earning provisions from the traitors. The second year, 1862, would prove to be a harsh wake-up call for my soldiers. A previously unknown Confederate Soldier, Private Serena Buono, would gain a reputation for her ruthlessness and aptitude for bloodshed. Buono won ten battles in that year alone and would teach my soldiers that they should never underestimate the loyal Southerners.

The third and fourth years of the war proved to be a time of great contention and uncertainty. These years featured constant battles, as well as a great loss of life. A renowned hero for the Union cause was Private Sophia Bertsch, who won more than ten battles during these two years. However, Confederate Colonel Paige Weber won eleven battles during these middle years and began to be seen as a threat to the Union cause due to her preparedness and her even-temper in battle. Colonel Weber’s strength was one of many factors that caused the fourth year of the war to be a time of difficulties for the Union, with more than 30 losses for our side.

The final year of the war had been delayed, due to difficult weather conditions that didn’t allow for a safe battle. It is my personal belief that this delay harmed soldiers from both sides, who didn’t feel nearly as motivated due to the extra time that the war had taken from their lives. The fatigue that had overtaken the troops led to only twenty-four battles being fought in this final stretch. Although the Confederates fought as well as they could, they were no match for the Union, which ended up victorious. While Confederate General Zane initially refused to entertain any peace talks with the Union, he was eventually convinced to agree to terms of surrender and admit defeat. Though it was a difficult fight, full of sacrifices and hardships, including the losses of Private Kleinman, Private Desjardins, Private Minasian, and Private McCollough, the dedication of the Union soldiers persevered and reunited our great country.



A reputation for
ruthlessness and
aptitude for bloodshed



Confederate Soldier, Private Serena Buono, would gain a reputation for her ruthlessness and aptitude for bloodshed.

Sayville High School

BROOK STREET PLAYERS

present

the wedding singer

The Musical Comedy

Thursday, March 24
7:00 pm

Friday, March 25
7:00 pm

Saturday, March 26
1:00 and 7:00 pm

Special Show for
Senior Citizens on
Wednesday, March 23
at 7:00 pm

Sayville Players and SHS Speech and Debate

Oratory Competition

Prizes for best speeches in the categories:

- Historical
- Dramatic
- Humorous
- Poetry

Listen to the announcements for details.

Best Wishes to Mrs. Cooperman!



Sayville High School Social Worker Mrs. Cooperman will be leaving her position just before the winter break. Mrs. Cooperman will be moving to Pennsylvania, where she looks forward to spending more time with her family, and expanding her online therapy private practice. Mrs. Cooperman has been a high school social worker here at Sayville for the past four years, and will leave with many great memories.

Mrs. Cooperman was responsible for the creating of the Peer Leadership program, which involves anywhere from twenty-five to forty high school students. The Peer Leaders have pushed into the district elementary schools to assist with skill development, emotional regulation, conflict resolution and sharing. They assisted in the Middle School during Digital Detox Week, and are preparing to launch a social norms survey in the high school, the results of which will be presented to the eighth and ninth grade.

When asked about her best memories at Sayville, Mrs. Cooperman quickly responded that she has really enjoyed supporting the students in their theatre performances. “I love watching talented kids be talented,” she said.

Everyone at Sayville High School wishes Mrs. Cooperman success and happiness in her move to Pennsylvania, and we commit to supporting the Peer Leaders as they continue their important work.

Sayville High School Announces Valedictorian and Salutatorian for the Class of 2022



Gene Weng, left and Chad Moccio have been recognized as the top two students academically in the Class of 2022.

When the announcement signal sounded during first period on February 9, every senior in the school waited eagerly for the news. Who would be speaking at their graduation?The first week of the third quarter is when Mr. Hoffer traditionally announces the valedictorian and salutatorian, the number one and two academically ranked students in the senior class. To most seniors, it was no surprise to hear the names Gene Weng and Chad Moccio, who have been at the top of their class since middle school. Weng and Moccio will each take the podium at the high school graduation to give their speeches to the thousands of parents, friends and classmates.

According to senior Brendan Dargis, Gene Weng is the well-deserved recipient of this honor. Recently named a Regeneron Science Competition semi-finalist, Weng believes that the key to his academic success has been his self-motivation. “I always want to to better, and I hate it when I fail, which pushed me to do well.” Weng credits Mrs. Dreyer for motivating him and giving him the drive to succeed, and said that Chemistry class really boosted his confidence. In addition to his academic prowess, Weng plays the trombone, and is a member of both the golf and fencing teams.

Another member of the senior class, Izzy Smith says of Chad Moccio, “music, sports, schoolwork... he does everything well.” Moccio, who also plays the trombone in several of the high school’s music groups and also is a member of the varsity football team, said that the key to his high school success has been making the commitment to staying on top of assignments and doing everything to a point where he felt confident that he was doing a good job. Chad credits the Math Department teachers as being a driving force and supportive of his success.

Says senior Smith, “Neither of them act like they’re better than anyone else.” Matt Bonfanti notes of Weng and Moccio, “they both have an amazing work ethic, and they’re both really great people.”

It’s clear that both Weng and Moccio have earned both the admiration and affection of their classmates and teachers.



Midterm Exams

Continued from p. 4

can not count towards this total. For this reason, Sayville needed to cancel midterm exams and decided to cancel final exams, expecting that the state will soon cancel the June Regents. Dr. Criscione, however, claims there was more to this decision.

The Sayville Board of Education has been gathering high school student perspectives through outreach and roundtable discussions and has come to the conclusion that students are stressed out. Now that this conclusion has been made, steps are being taken in order to decrease the impact of this devastating finding. One such step is the reduction of major test-taking and the establishment of a more project-based curriculum. This step, or more aptly put, this migration is not specific to Sayville, but rather exists on a much grander scale, across New York State. In fact, the New York State Education Department has assembled a committee tasked with the exploration of alternative graduation requirements separate from Regents Exams. So, the cancellation of Sayville’s midterm exams is both in compliance with New York State, as mentioned earlier, and perhaps more notably, in solidarity with the State’s movement towards a more innovative curriculum model.

Evidently, the basis upon which the decision to cancel midterms was made is twofold: out of necessity (in order to meet the necessary number of school days) and in the interest of school-wide mental health. The reaction to this decision, however, is multifaceted. There are no unanimous opinions on the matter, rather students have different views depending on their personal academic backgrounds. Maybe exam reactions are not stress-related school-wide. Maybe stress is not exam-related school-wide. Certainly, the cancellation was in the interest of reducing student stress, but perhaps student stress is too varied for such an action to be considered a net positive. Regardless, the state-wide shift in curriculum and graduation requirements has influenced, and will continue to influence, Sayville’s own testing policies— a trend for which the ramifications are still yet to be known.

New York State

Regents Exams

are currently scheduled for

June 15–24, 2022

Winter Sports Roundup

By Sarah Blaskiewicz

Even in the below-freezing temperatures our golden flashes winter sports teams are hot! With the season starting in late November the athletes are towards the end of their seasons now. Now it is time to tune in, while our Golden Flashes fight to bring home the title, the awards, the glory. This article gets you the inside scoop on your favorite winter athletic teams, quotes from veteran players, and predictions from some of the coaches. To start the ball rolling, Sayville Girls basketball season is going smoothly, as the team is 4-3 as of January 20th. Head Coach Phil De Pompeo has high expectations and “wants to make some noise in the playoffs”. Coach De Pompeo, going on his 24th year as head coach, says that to clinch that spot the team must “improve each game” as well as “to work and be successful [even] when they don’t think it’s possible”. In the end, De Pompeo “wants the team to love to play”. Coach De Pompeo’s goal as a coach is to “have each player enjoy the game to the point that someday they would like to coach it or at the very least play basketball with their own children in the backyard”. Senior Holly Doxey agrees saying that “this group of girls has the aggression and love for the sport”. Doxey admits that the rebuilding of the team at the be-

ginning of the season was difficult due to the loss of four starting seniors last year but the group has “made strides” and now “know what we need to work on to get better” to “get a good seed in the playoffs”. Just like the girls, the boy's basketball team is edging closer to playoffs. The boys have a 2-5 league record and are 4-8 overall as of January 20th. The team is hoping to secure a playoff spot.

Winter track is lapping the competition! The girl's team is running all over Sayville this winter looking to compete at leagues on January 22nd! Senior Rylie Mullaney, sprinter and long jumper, believes that the team is a “top contender to win” and that they “have a very skilled team”. Mullaney says that the team’s current goal is to win leagues and then look towards the future. The boy's winter track team had a good season with many new freshmen learning the ropes. Junior Jack Owenburg says that the team is looking forward to competing in Leagues Sunday, January 23rd. However, the winter track season doesn’t end at leagues, a matter of fact for some, it is just the beginning. A few members of the squad are attempting to qualify for the small school championships and even state qualifiers.

Next up, our fencing team is lunging to finish the season with a .500 record. Martino Albanese says that they need to focus as a team

and “really hone in on our skills, especially when it comes to our point control and paying attention to our opponents”. The girl's team is one and three and the boys are zero and four as of January 20th. Fencing has two more home matches this season one on January 27th and the other on January 29th. Best of luck!

Sayville’s wrestling team is dominating the mats at 4-2 this season. Junior Kenny Lopresti said that they beat Mt. Sinai, only allowing them to score 6 points. For those who do not understand how the scoring works in wrestling, the team only had one of their own wrestlers get pinned the entire match! The Golden Flashes bowling team is rolling at Sayville’s own Bowlero looking to out-strike the competition. The boy's team is currently 7-6 now looking to finish the season without any bump(er)s. The boy's swimming team is lapping the competition in the pools with a three and two record. Keep on swimming!

**BEST OF LUCK TO THE SENIORS ON
THEIR FUTURE ENDEAVORS!
CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!!**



Seniors on the Boys’ Varsity Basketball team, Chisano, Verdone and Skelly. (picture by L. Skelly)



Senior Ava Gross on the high school bowling team. Senior fencer, S. Hinteman and Varsity Basketball player H. Doxey. Below: Sayville’s Varsity Wrestlers took the League VI Championship last weekend at the Suffolk County Tournament.



Winter track athletes M. Clark , C. Babcock and R. Mullaney.



GOLDEN GOODS

Stop by and visit the school store for a delicious variety of snacks, drinks and always good conversation!

Open Mon. —Thurs. during 7th and 10th period.

