

"Life is what happens to us while we are making other plans"

-Allen Saunders

Breaking Beacon



Volume 22 / Beacon High School / December

Beacon Players Does it Again!

The fall production of Little Women was a smashing success!

By Piper Bruno

The Beacon Players performed their production of Little

Women on November 14, 15, and 16. The production was incredible. The set was incredible, very realistic. The orchestra was amazing, very blended and in tune. The cast was absolutely magnificent. Their voices were incredible, as well as the choreography. Overall, this production was great. Jekyll and Hyde will be in April!



When Should Kids Get a Phone?

Diving into the debate on the appropriate age for kids to own a phone

By Marisah George

When I was 11, I got my first phone. Well, it wasn't technically a phone. It was an iPod touch: much smaller, slower, older, and lacking the ability to make calls. It was my parents test run for my sister and me. I got my first iPhone (12 mini) for my 13th birthday. Becoming a teenager meant I finally got access to all the fun teenage perks.

The interesting approach my parents took made me

wonder about the age of other students when they first got their phone. I know some people who got their phone as early as 7 and some who had to wait till they were 16.

Based on a survey submitted by 67 people in BHS, the average age they acquired a phone was 11 years old. The circumstances range from being able to contact parents, entering middle school, having good grades, and growing independence. The ages received ranged from 5 years old to 18.

The average age these students proposed as the appropriate age to own a phone was 11-13 years old. They reasoned this age due to entering middle school and becoming a teenager. One

Continued on page 2

Early Application Decisions – How to Prepare

By Zenia Haris

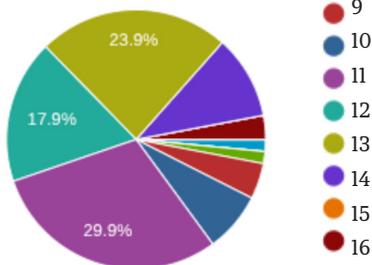
December is the month when a good number of seniors who applied early for colleges will receive a response— either an acceptance or rejection. Take a deep breath. Good on you for taking the initiative to apply early. Trying to figure out your future at such a young age isn't an easy task. Now that you put yourself out there, what comes next?

First of all, prepare yourself for rejection. Be okay with not getting into the school you want at first. That doesn't

determine your worth as a scholar— remember, these colleges have thousands of equally determined students applying, too. You can always reapply for regular and even rolling admissions if it doesn't work out. If possible, it wouldn't hurt to (politely!) request feedback if you've been rejected. While it may sting at first, this is a really good opportunity to learn how you can improve, and maybe even get accepted if you try again! Persistence is key. That being said though, definitely don't bank everything on getting into one school. Each college is looking for something different in their applicants, so make sure you've picked out safety schools to fall back on.

Also, make sure you thank your teachers that wrote those letters of recommendation for you. Writing letters for each individual student is not an easy job! Best of luck to everyone during these coming months!

What age do you think is appropriate to first get a phone?



15 Minutes

Short Story

By Anonymous BHS Student

Local prison, 2012. 8:50 pm.

"You've got 15 minutes on the line. Don't ask for any more, I know how you are." Seomi had sat herself on the cold plastic chair, regretting it all.

"God, why..." she thought to herself. Out of all people, she just had to call the one person who'd never understand what she's going through. Siu Harukawa. The man with zero feelings for anyone but himself. Or at least that's what she thought. Ring... Ring... Ring...Click.

"Harukawa's residence. Hello?"

She sighed before she spoke. "Siu, it's me."

"Seomi? Jesus. How's prison life?" he snickered.

"Just great, thanks for asking, tenderheart." she scoffed.

"Well, why'd you call?"

Her hands shook as she pulled the phone up to her mouth shakily. "I need you to come get me out of here. I can't stay another minute. It's terrible in here."

"Sorry, but you've gotta stay your sentence. Uh... how long was that?"

"3 years."

"See you for Christmas," he sighed.

"Oh, stop it. You've gotta get me out of this joint. I can't serve 3 years if it's barely been 4 months!"

"I'll send letters."

"Shut up, be serious, and tell me... would you actually come get me?"

"No? What kind of question is that?" he rolled his eyes behind the speaker.

"A good one," she sneered.

"I won't get you out of jail, but I can send you things."

"Send me a nail file."

"Good one," he said sarcastically.

"I'm serious, at least tell the guards- or convince them to let me out on probation," she

sighed.

"You're in there because of what YOU did. Actions have consequences, Seomi."

"This isn't fair. Alita did the same thing, and she got 2 days of sentence and probation."

"Well, to be honest, she is pretty... and you're..."

"I'm WHAT?"

"Nothin'," he quieted down fast.

"Alright, well, I already feel guilty enough for doing it."

"Feeling guilty won't get you out of there, y'know." His tone became condescending; it was clear.

"It was awful, I get it... but I just had to."

"It sounds unnecessary. What even was it?" he questioned.

"I can't tell you that..." she sighed softly.

"Sure you can... how many minutes do you have left on the phone?"

"5." She was shocked to see how much time had gone by. In real life, talking to Siu felt like an eternity, so why not over the phone? "5 minutes to tell me what you did."

"No way, it really was THAT bad," she sounded panicked.

"4 minutes, Seomi."

"Stop pressuring me, I'll tell you next time I get a phone call."

"You know you won't call me."

"I will." It was at this time that she now remembered why she doesn't talk to Siu on the phone. Or at all, even.

"2 minutes."

"Don't **** with me, Siu."

"1 minute." She stayed silent.

"30 seconds."

"29."

"28."...

"20."

"16."

"10." She was silent, refusing to talk.

"Just tell me what you did. 5 seconds."

"Okay, okay. I stole a chapstick." Beeeep. Receiver click.

Album Review: Virgin By Lorde

By: Hayden Wilson

Ella Marija Lani Yelich-O'Connor, better known as Lorde, released her fourth studio album this June, marking a statement of reclaiming her body, mind, and sexuality. The album sold 71,000 copies in its first week, reaching No. 2 on the Billboard 200 and No. 1 on the album sales chart. It explores difficult topics in Lorde's personal life, including the end of a long-term relationship.

The album cover features a blue-tinted X-ray of Lorde's pelvic bone, showing an IUD and a pant zipper. Lorde has described the image as the "ultimate nude," reflecting the album's themes of openness, honesty, and

raw vulnerability.

Many tracks address relationships in various forms—romantic, maternal, and even the relationship between Lorde and her own body—topics that resonate deeply with listeners. On track nine, "Broken Glass," Lorde explores her struggles with an eating disorder and her perception of her body, symbolizing the broken mirror she describes. The closing track, "David," which is my personal favorite, reflects on a past relationship and the emotional scars it left behind. She repeats the question, "Am I ever gon' love again?"

This album holds a special place in my heart and will likely remain one of my favorites for years. It continues to inspire young listeners and upcoming artists who face similar struggles.

Phones

Continued from page 1

student said "You're starting to turn into a teenager and you wanna hang out with your friends and go places so you want to be able to communicate with your parents and your family." However, with access to a phone, students still called on "restrictions (including screen time) as to what you can download on the phone."

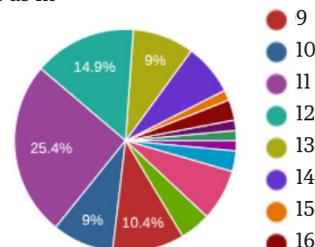
Personally, I think the age should be determined on two bases: circumstance and the individual child. If you have a young kid who walks home from school, a phone or some type of device to communicate may be necessary. Where I waver is giving young kids full access to everything their phone can offer; such things as In-

stagram or TikTok, I think, should be barred until 13.

Another factor is whether your individual child is responsible enough to own a phone. This could vary child to child; if you have a 13 year old who is already addicted to the TV or an iPad, a phone may not be in the cards yet. Maturity and responsibility, I believe, should be weighed more than age.

All in all, phones have become a permanent staple in our lives today. And with the rising amount of violence and uncertainty in society, especially schools, communication is so important. While there's no set point for that age of ownership, communication between parents and students should be something every child has access to.

How old were you when you first got a phone?



Coming to Terms With Who You Are

By Madison Abrahamson

High school is such a strange time in a person's life — you're not a child, but you're not an adult either. There are some things you can't do because you're too young, and others you've outgrown because you're no longer a kid. Regardless of this frustrating dilemma, you currently have all the time to morph into the person you want to be. Yes, there are multiple factors that can stop you from reaching your full potential at this time such as parents, responsibilities, money, etc. However, high school was never the place to max out your abilities; it's a place to build a solid foundation for reaching your fullest potential.

This "foundation" I'm referring to involves developing habits and a mindset that you can apply not only to your academic career, but also to how you navigate the world during this stage of life. The way you interact with others, carry yourself, and regulate your emotions will quickly shape your character — both in the eyes of others and in your own. As you begin to define yourself and others around you, it's easy to compare your experiences to others or even feel like you're lacking something. I can assure you that this feeling is normal and everyone learns how to navigate life at their own pace. Growth is key when it comes to building a foundation that will help you survive mental-



ly in the world. While it may not be comfortable or even bearable in the moment, it's tough experiences that will strengthen you in all aspects. As you begin to build up these defining habits, you may want to focus on your communication skills, how well you can adapt, and self-discipline in all forms. These habits will not only help you become who you want to be but are also key skills that will help you during adulthood.

Coming to terms with

who you are doesn't happen immediately. It's a journey that involves accepting yourself, past mistakes, and reflecting on who you want to be. It's your actions that will create tables for you to sit at and open doors into places you desire to be in. While high school may seem like a collection of different responsibilities and experiences, remember that it's a place of discovery — the true beginning of the journey to discovering who you're meant to be.

Tis the Season...For Stress?

By Payton O'Connell

Are you struggling with gift ideas this holiday season? Too many trends to keep up with? Well, here are some trending gift ideas amongst high schoolers to make gift giving painless this year!

- Kodak Pixpro FZ55: Digital cameras are in! The kodak pixpro FZ55 takes stunning pictures with that digital camera look everyone strives for.
- Ugg Ultra Mini's: Ugg Ultra Mini's are a must have for the upcoming winter season, and they can even be worn as indoor slippers in other seasons because of their convenient slip-on design. They have a plush interior to keep you warm 24/7.
- JBL clip 4: The JBL clip 4 is the perfect speaker for travel with its convenient clip design. The speaker is also pocket size and is perfect if you want to keep a tidy space without a bulky speaker.
- Jellycat Peanut: How can you resist the jellycat peanut? Everyone loves it and its cuteness. Standing at just 5 inches, this little stuffy makes the perfect companion and takes up minimal space in your room!
- Concord Pacifica Cruiser Bicycle: Is your child always asking you for a ride? To prevent the constant nagging, a bicycle is the perfect gift! The Concord Pacifica Cruiser stands at 24 inches tall, and can be adjusted to fit anyone 4'6"-5'6"
- Dubai Chocolate Bar: Once you try Dubai chocolate, you can never go back! This viral pistachio-chocolate sensation is what everyone has been yearning for. Dubai Chocolate offers a unique and luxurious flavor with a crunchy texture.
- The Comfy Original: The Comfy original offers a one of a kind experience as you're able to experience the feeling of a sherpa blanket morphed with a hoodie!
- Apple Airtags: Is something in your house getting lost everyday? Apple airtag will solve all of your misplacing problems!

The Smashing Machine Review

By Gabrielle Khalil

One of the most influential fighters in the UFC was relatively unknown until the movie *The Smashing Machine*. The film is a biographical sports drama about Mark Kerr, a former wrestler and MMA fighter, and his struggles with loss, addiction and relationships.

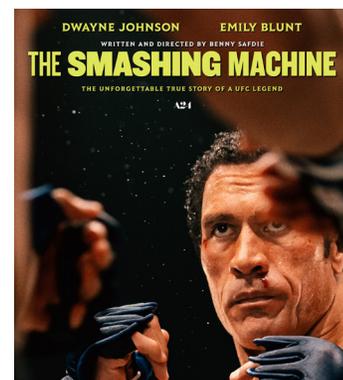
Dwayne Johnson portrays Kerr in the film, stepping out of his typical typecast to take on a serious role. He proves he can act seriously, showing Kerr's most vulnerable moments as he faces challenges both inside and outside the ring. Emily Blunt co-stars as Kerr's girlfriend, Dawn Staples, delivering an equally strong performance.

In my opinion, director Benny Safdie set up the film to prioritize the actors' performances but neglected other key aspects. Major components of the story, such as Kerr's opioid addiction, are barely touched on and feel rushed, hardly showing the impact on Kerr and those close

to him. I also felt that Dawn was written as one-dimensional rather than as a fully realized person, which she is. Blunt's performance nearly saves the character by adding more depth than the script allows.

The film manages to feel both rushed and dragged, as important moments are glossed over while mundane ones linger. Overall, the movie fell flat for me, with underdeveloped characters, relationships and plot points, making it wasted potential.

In the end, Johnson and Blunt delivered Oscar-worthy performances, but the film missed the opportunity to truly explore what it meant to be *The Smashing Machine*.



Get to Know the New AP

By Samantha Johnson

You may have heard of our new assistant principal, Mrs. Tashman, but did you know she's also a black belt in Taekwondo? Mrs. Tashman is one of the newest additions to Beacon High School this year, and it's understandable that many students and staff members may not yet know her well. This article aims to give you the opportunity to learn a little more about our new assistant principal.



An Interview with Mrs. Tashman

Q: Can you tell us about your background and what inspired you to pursue a career in education, particularly as an assistant principal?

A: I began my career as a teacher at Green Chimneys, a school that served students who had been removed from their typical school settings due to various challenges. I greatly enjoyed teaching but later transitioned into a supervisory role at a similar school. Through that experience, I discovered that I preferred the leadership aspect of education. I subsequently earned my administrative certification and began working as an assistant principal.

Q: What has been the most exciting part of joining Beacon High School?

A: The most exciting part has been the energy and activity that come with working in a large, dynamic school environment. I appreciate the independence students have here and have truly enjoyed meeting both students and staff. The entire community has been extremely welcoming.

Q: What do you consider most important in creating a positive school environment?

A: Kindness, consistency, and building strong relationships are essential. Establishing rapport between teachers and students promotes mutual respect and open communication. When people feel heard and valued, they are more likely to resolve issues constructively.

Q: How do you ensure fairness and respect when addressing discipline and maintaining a safe environment?

A: Treating every student with respect is fundamental, regardless of the situation. It is important to understand what happened and why before determining consequences. I work closely with Mr. Dwyer and Mr. O'Neil to maintain consistency in disciplinary decisions so that all students are treated equitably. Listening carefully to students is also a critical part of the process.

Q: Have you met with many students regarding the new phone policy?

A: Not many. During the first week, there were fewer than twenty incidents, and the number has since decreased significantly. Students have largely adapted to the policy. It has been encouraging to see more face-to-face interactions in the hallways rather than phone use.

Q: What is something about you that people might not know?

A: I am a black belt and competed in the Olympic trials when I was seventeen years old.

Q: Would you share a bit about your home life?

A: I am married, and my husband and I have been together for four years. Although we do not currently have pets, I love animals and hope to have one again in the future.

Q: What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

A: I enjoy going to the gym, spending time outdoors, and gardening. I also like to travel, see movies, and explore new places. Staying active and spending time with friends are important to me.

Q: How has your adjustment to the Beacon City School District been so far?

A: The transition has gone very smoothly. Although I was initially nervous about the size of the student body, the school is exceptionally well-run. Both students and staff have been kind, professional, and welcoming, which made the adjustment easier than expected.

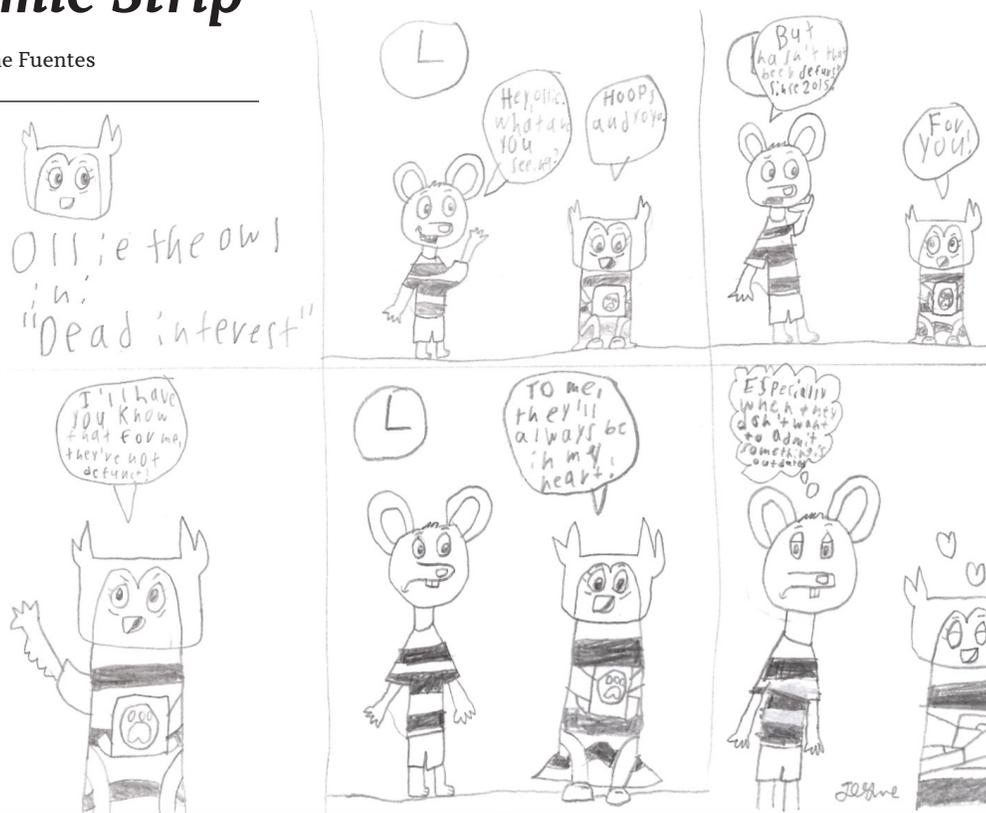
Q: What advice would you give students who want to make the most of their time at BHS?

A: Take advantage of the many resources available. Building relationships with teachers, administrators, and peers can greatly enhance the high school experience. Become involved in sports, clubs, and other activities, and make an effort to connect with others and discover what you truly enjoy.

Mrs. Tashman emphasizes that she has an open-door policy—students are always welcome to reach out. With her dedication to education and commitment to fostering a supportive environment, she is certain to make a positive impact on Beacon High School for years to come.

Comic Strip

By Jayme Fuentes



From Algebra to Adulthood

By Christa George

Former algebra teacher Jessica Henry has been at Beacon High School for 15 years and is now the school's newest transition coordinator. When asked about the change, Principal Dr. Dwyer said Henry is highly respected by parents and colleagues, which was a key reason she was selected for the position during the rigorous application process. He added that the role of transition coordinator is primarily for students with disabilities who need guidance on life after high school, but also for any student experiencing

stress who could benefit from the same support.

When interviewed, Henry explained that the job of a transition coordinator involves helping students prepare for life after high school. "That could mean planning for college, trade schools, jobs, or independent living," she said. She added, "My role is to make sure students know their options, have the support they need, and are set up to succeed once they leave high school."

Going from being an algebra teacher to a transition coordinator is a fairly drastic change. What put Henry on the path to being a transition coordinator is her passion for helping students reach their potential. She

explained that in a classroom environment, she noticed students needing help planning life after high school. This new position gave her the "opportunity to focus on that support, and make a bigger impact in helping students reach their goals."

When prompted, Henry told us that she hopes to "create a system where every student feels supported and confident about their next steps after high school." She also hopes to help connect students with resources such as vocational programs or college support. Her ultimate goal is to ensure students are excited about their future.

Transitioning from high school to real life can be difficult, but Henry's hope is to make it a little less scary and help you feel more in control of what's to come.

SADD

By Willa Staempfli

SADD stands for Students Against Destructive Decisions. The club focuses on the importance of making positive choices for yourself and those around you. SADD raises awareness about destructive decisions, such as driving under the influence or while intoxicated—issues that are unfortunately very real and present and can ruin lives in an instant.

If you want to make a difference and help educate your community, join SADD! The club meets every second and fourth Thursday of the month, and all students are welcome.

Pets Of Beacon

By Hazel Schein

Spreading support and comfort, Odin is proud to be a certified therapy dog. While volunteering at Beacon PROS and Mid-Hudson Regional Hospital, Odin provides solace to those who are unable to reach furry pets. After spending eight weeks in train-

ing, his hard work paid off. He received his certification. Odin was born in Oklahoma but has always considered New York home. He is a pure-breed Shiba Inu and enjoys nuzzling and being pet. When he's at work, he spreads his calming demeanor and joyful spirit to his clients. In his downtime, he loves to spend quality time outside with his trainer. Odin never misses an opportunity to put a smile on someone's face and hopes to continue to light up more people's day.



Breaking Beacon

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Annabelle Notarthomas
Kayla Selander

EDITOR

Marisah George

ADVISORS

Mr. Arbor
Ms. Hamburger

PHOTOGRAPHER

Aron Li

WRITERS

Maddy Abrahamson
Kaylyn Adusei
Nadeen Ahmed
Abigail Atkins
Piper Bruno
Zooney Dedring
Jayme Fuentes
Christa George
Marisah George
Zenia Haris
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Payton O'Connell
Hazel Schein
Kayla Selander
Liliana Rybak
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Hayden Wilson
Luna Yawman

Word Search

By Payton O'Connell

Word Bank:

Arctic	Icicle
Blizzard	Jacket
Boots	Mittens
Chill	Polar
Coat	Scarf
Cold	Skate
Flurry	Sled
Freeze	Sleet
Frost	Slope
Glacier	Snow
Ice	Toboggan
	Wintery

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