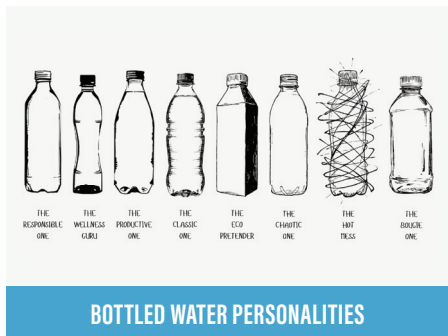


TECHNOLOGY

Turn to **PAGE 7** to read up about A.I. and how it is impacting our lives.



BOTTLED WATER PERSONALITIES

What does your water bottle of choice say about you? Turn to **PAGE 8** to find out.



GET IN THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

The holidays are here! Turn to **PAGES 10 and 11** to read about how we are getting in the holiday spirit!

THE INLET

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SHELTER ISLAND SCHOOL

DECEMBER 2025

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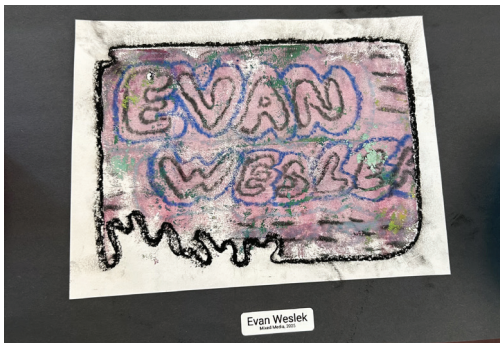


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THE OUTLET BY NATALIE MAMISASHVILI



Evan Weslek



Emily Lupo



Bitsy Weslek



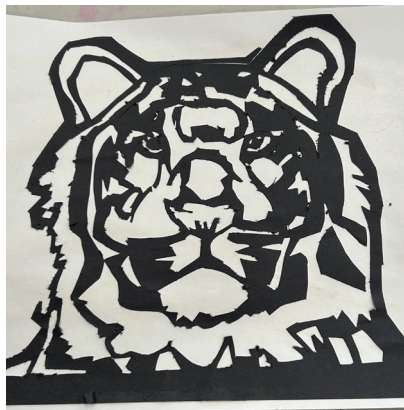
Guild Hall



Margaret Garrett with student Kayla Jones. Photo: Kayla Mattias



Bitsy Weslek



Guild Hall recently hosted a student art exhibition. These students made collages using paint, pictures, patterns, and any other materials they could find. Seven other East End public schools and 10 regional artists also participated in this collaboration. Students' collages were exhibited in Guild Hall in East Hampton on November 15th.

In their art pieces, students are able to create using different art mediums as they pleased. Regina Kolmogorova-Weisenberg (freshman) created a felt dog, Michelle Martinez (freshman) and Jayla Jones (freshman) studied high contrast photography in which they used 2 sharp tones (black and white) that contrast each other.

Jayla's is the tiger, Michelle's is the portrait. Emily Lupo (freshman), Bitsy Weslek (freshman), and Evan Weslek (junior) created gelli prints.

Gelli prints are made from putting paint on gel and then pressing the gel on paper to create fun patterns and designs.

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THE CASE FOR A NEW GYM FLOOR

BY JACKSON ROHRER

When I first moved to Shelter Island, I quickly learned how central the school is in our community. Many teachers once taught, or were classmates with, current students' parents. Our local paper, *The Reporter*, features the school on numerous pages each week. And during those deadly quiet winter days, it's almost a given that the majority of the Island's residents are present at the school on a late evening night to watch a basketball game.

The school and its involvement in our community represents our way of life here. Despite difficult local issues such as a closing of our pharmacy, affordable housing, or the threat of our local paper ending print, as Labor Day comes around, and the craziness of a Shelter Island summer comes to a close, the school and the culture surrounding it comes right back to being front and center.

Even our school logo features the school at the center of it all. Our logo is an outline of the shape of the island and has a star in its center, representing the location of our school. And just like that logo, many aspects of our school building showcase that island pride. For instance, visitors walking in the main lobby are greeted by class portraits dating back decades, or outside our gymnasium, an athletic hall of fame, countless banners, and numerous plaques are hung honoring our athletic sportsmanship, championships, and academic achievements.

While many aspects of our school building positively reflect our island pride, I feel our school's gymnasium, more specifically the floor, is dated and doesn't positively reflect our school's culture.

Since the rebranding of our school in 2020, our gymnasium floor has featured a visually similar design to its preexisting floor—except for the addition of the island logo at

the center court, as well as 'Islanders' and 'Shelter Island' printed across the baseline. Since then, the school has made numerous improvements to the gymnasium. Each summer, the floor is resurfaced following serious wear and tear each school year. Three years ago, the cushioned panels that surround the gym were replaced, featuring a modern print of "Islanders." And more recently, the curtain divider—which runs through the middle of the court to split the gym to be used by multiple groups at once—was replaced last year. Those improvements, added to the addition of new bleachers and updated banners nearly a decade ago, leave the gymnasium with some modern aspects in line with nearby districts.

But where we lack, is the floor design. Despite numerous improvements over the years, and the minor change of a logo and text, the actual's floor's color scheme and design (featuring a basic volleyball and basketball at both ends of the court), are visually dated in comparison to other schools. Recently, nearby schools like Bridgehampton, Greenport, and Pierson, have all invested significant sums into complete renovations of their gyms—which all included new courts featuring modern designs.

But if our floor is still physically functioning, why should we invest in a modern redesign? Aside from the school figuratively being the center of our island's culture, the gymnasium is one of the most utilized spaces on our island, and is by far the most utilized aspect of our school building by students.

Every school day, students K-12 use the gymnasium as the Physical Education classroom from 8AM to 2:30PM—in comparison, rooms such as the art studio or music rooms have high usage, but the gymnasium is the only classroom which is

used by every student. Outside of school, over 10 athletic teams use the gym for basketball, volleyball, baseball/softball, soccer, and a variety of other activities sometime from 6-8AM, or 2:30-9PM daily. That alone, totals to 2,700 hours a school year where students are actively using the gym for school related activities. In addition, this November, it served as the host of a state championship sendoff for the varsity cross country teams, and serves every year as the host of our school's spirit week and accompanying pep rally. The gym is used weekly by the town's recreational department, it hosts open gyms, rec basketball, volleyball, and soccer multiple times a week. In the summer months, the gym serves as the location for multiple different kids camps. And lastly—and in my opinion, one of the most important uses—the gym serves as the host of the senior class graduation ceremony.

While the school serves as the center of our island, our gymnasium is arguably the most symbolic example of our island pride. Which begs the question, why is the floor's design so dated?

To the school's credit, they've done a considerable job maintaining and updating different aspects of the gym and showcasing our school pride around the building. But it's the floor that's front and center, and therefore, it should be made a priority.

I spoke with numerous students in the secondary school to hear their thoughts on the floor. Most explained that the floor was visually unappealing and said they felt the design was gloomy and dated. One student said, "The coloring of the floor hasn't changed for as long as I can remember. The whole thing just looks bland." Another said, "The graphics on the floor look old and sloppy. The clip-art volleyballs and basketballs don't match the

rest of the gym and make the whole design feel outdated."

Not many schools get to call themselves "generational" in the way we do. Not many schools play such a significant role in their community the way Shelter Island School does. And for an Islanders-themed school, it's important to recognize and appreciate what makes us special. Our island identity.

So, I urge the school to consider updating the design of the gym floor in the coming years, not just the usual yearly resurfacing. A redesign should include a new color palette that fits our preexisting improvements, an updated center-court logo, and cleaner graphics. And get the students involved. We have college level art classes, as well as a design and drawing for production course, just to name a few, that could step in to help with the redesign.

Improvements like these can be pricey, but it's a small drop when it comes to a complete gym renovation. Just a few years ago, Greenport High School built a second gym space, to host their elementary gym classes and Junior High sports teams. That project required a \$18 million dollar bond improvement approved by voters. Or Pierson High School, which recently moved forward with a \$40 million dollar improvement project, which included a renovation of their gymnasium.

The nice thing about our situation is we don't need a complete renovation. We have recently updated bleachers, banners, dividers, wall cushions—but why stop with all that? Why not update the floor design, and give our students, parents, alumni, and community members a gymnasium to be proud of. A modern design, in line with neighboring districts, that accurately reflects on our island culture, is overdue.

CORRECTION

In our first issue, we profiled a new class called "Mysteries of the Universe." We mistakenly reported this class is taught by Ms. Cavanaugh, when it is in fact taught by Ms. Callahan. Our sincerest apologies to Ms. Callahan.

We would love to hear from you!
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WINTER SPORTS ARE UNDERWAY

BY EVAN WESLEK



JUNIOR HIGH BASKETBALL:

With the winter season here, so are winter sports! In year's past the junior high basketball program has not rostered enough kids to play, however this year, we are lucky to have a junior high basketball team back on the court. The players and coaches are excited for a fresh start and a chance to build the program back up. Coach Miedema shares, "I'm excited to coach and be a part of the action, as well as see the players execute what they've been learning." Many of the athletes are new to organized basketball, but they're already showing strong effort and enthusiasm during practices. The team is looking forward to competing and

representing our school. Students, staff, and community members are encouraged to come out and support the team as they start off their first season.

VARSITY BASKETBALL:

With the winter season approaching, the varsity basketball team is starting another year of competition. The program hopes to draw committed athletes who are prepared to work hard and improve each game. This season brings a mix of returning players and one new player stepping into bigger roles. Coach Mundy notes, "The group has been focused, and we're looking forward to seeing that translate on the court." Practices have been steady and

disciplined, with players adjusting and building chemistry. The team is ready to take on a long challenging schedule and represent our school well. Come out and support the varsity team as the season begins.

JUNIOR VARSITY GIRLS BASKETBALL:

The JV girls basketball team is set to begin their winter season, bringing together a group of athletes ready to build on last year's progress. The team has shown steady commitment early on, setting the tone for what they hope will be a strong year. This season's roster includes both returning players and new players hoping to gain experience. The players have been concentrating on teamwork and building confidence on the

court. The JV squad is ready to take on their schedule and represent our school with effort and consistency. The girls would love to see the community fill their stands.

CHEER:

This year, the cheer team is coming out strong and bringing a ton of energy to every game. With winter sports starting up, the team will show off new skills and a level of teamwork that's hard to miss. Cheer team member Lily Brigham shares, "I like cheering at all games, decorating for the pep rallies, and especially spirit week." As the season goes on, the cheer team stays ready to hype up the crowd, support every athlete, and keep the gym atmosphere alive.

REINDEER GAMES 2025

BY JULIANA MEDINA

Every holiday season Shelter Island Student Council puts together various holiday-themed activities for grades 6-12 to participate in called "Reindeer Games." It is yet another special thing that our small population at this school allows us to do.

This year, all students will be given lunch during the 7th period at the Shelter Island Fire Department. Then, students will be separated into randomized groups with a mix of grade levels in each group and given various activities to participate in with their group. Groups

will be encouraged to do the best they can in each activity so they are able to win the entire Reindeer Games. After individual group activities, all students will report to the gym to participate in a big competitive game that will help determine the winner of Reindeer Games.

Reindeer Games might seem like simply silly fun, and it is, but it also allows younger students and older students to bond and make new relationships amongst peers. Student Council looks forward to hosting another successful Reindeer Games!

A NEW VOICE IN THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT

BY LILY BRIGHAM



PHOTO BY LILY BRIGHAM
MRS. SPRINGER SITS AT HER PIANO DURING SELECT CHOIR.

I was fortunate enough to speak to the new chorus teacher, Mrs. Springer recently about her first quarter as our new music teacher here at Shelter Island School. Mrs. Springer started her career in music education around 10 years ago. She got into music education because in high school, she was a chorus and "theater kid." Mrs. Springer majored in music in her undergraduate studies, and decided to go into teaching because she "loves working with kids and being in school, so it was a perfect fit."

Mrs. Springer attended NYU, and explained that she enjoyed it a lot, but was raised in a small town, so being in the city was a culture shock. Despite having to adjust to city life, Mrs. Springer made sure to say she received a great education at NYU. Before joining the faculty at Shelter Island School, Mrs. Springer music education taught at both Mercy High School and

Our Lady of the Hamptons. So, she comes to us with a wealth of experience. Mrs. Springer hopes that her students "all try something outside of the box" this year. By this she means she hopes music students will take on a song from a different culture, language, or experiment with soprano if they are alto and vice versa. She also has a goal to develop strong ensembles.

During Mrs. Springer's free time she enjoys doing needle point/cross stitch and she loves a good book. Mrs. Springer also spends a lot of time supporting her kids, Henry, Maeve, Caleb, and Jack in their after school activities. Being a mom of four is like another full-time job, after all. If you are in the chorus program, you probably already know Mrs. Springer, but if not, be sure to say hello and consider joining the chorus to step outside of your comfort zone.

COMMUNITY PROFILE: AMELIA CLARK

BY CAYMAN MOREHEAD

Amelia Clark, a Shelter Island High School alumna, who recently celebrated her 24th birthday, spent most of her childhood moving back and forth. “I spent the first few years of my life on Shelter Island, then we moved away to Virginia. We moved back when I was nine,” she shares. Even after initially moving, Amelia and her family continued to return to Shelter Island for the summer. So, when she came back for third grade, “I knew a decent amount of kids from my class.” And, since the island is small, she remembers her grade as feeling “less like a group of classmates and more like one big family.”

Amelia has always valued Shelter Island’s tight knit community. Growing up on the island she felt secure and connected, and teachers weren’t just educators, they were friends, or another family because everyone knew everyone. “You form a kind of secondary family with them,” she says. Amelia’s memories of elementary school offer a glimpse into a more peaceful time, before technology and social media dominated most people’s childhoods. She recalls what phones were like before Apple’s

iPhone. “My first phone was a flip phone, so you had to pay per text... You had to be deliberate with your phone use.” Researching school projects meant instead of Googling, learning the Dewey Decimal System was necessary. When describing her younger self, Amelia remembers her intensity. “I was definitely very theatrical... I’ve always been very expressive, and I’ve always been very emotional.” She admits she was an “overdramatic kid,” and jokes that she’s “probably still an overdramatic adult.” Whether she was participating in theater, playing sports, or joining the National Honor Society and DECA, she kept herself busy. Her expressive nature wasn’t just performance, it is how she truly experiences life.

Several teachers have shaped how Amelia is to this day, she says, mentioning history teachers Peter Miedema and Sean Brennan. “I’ve always had such a love for history just because of how passionate they both were about it.” Yet, it was her middle school English teacher, Mr. Bocca, who she says had the greatest influence. “He’s one of the reasons why I went into writing in college,” she said. His Luddite ways, refraining

from any type of technology, inspired Amelia to primarily look to books for entertainment.

College was always one of Amelia’s primary focuses. Growing up on such a small island, she desired to explore the world. “The world is so much bigger than Shelter Island,” she said. She attended the University of Rhode Island, where she briefly majored in communications, but instead focused on professional writing, and enjoyed journalism, medical writing, public relations, and more. Today, Amelia works in her family’s business, The South Ferry, and recently acquired her OUPV and 100-ton captain’s licenses. Her favorite thing about her job is, “working with good people.”

As she reflects on her growth, Amelia believes she has changed, while staying true to her core foundations. “Fundamentally, I’m very much the same person... I’ve always been a very trusting and open person.” Over time, she has learned to trust her gut and to foster a community wherever she goes. “How can you expect people to show up for you if you’re not consciously showing up for them?” she said. In so many ways,



PHOTO BY ALEXIS BARTILUCCI
NEW SCIENCE TEACHER MS. ZUMPOL AT HER DESK.

Amelia embodies the heart of Shelter Island: expressive, connected, hardworking, and deeply human, carrying her honesty and creative spirit into everything she does.

SHELTER ISLAND SCALLOPS: A COMPLICATED HISTORY

BY SADIE GREEN CLARK

It’s finally November on the East Coast, which means scallop season has officially begun on Long Island. The season runs from November 3rd to March 31st. Scalloping plays a major role in our local economy, providing many fishermen with their primary source of income during these months. However, if you are a scallop fan, you might have noticed how hard it has been to get scallops for many seasons now. (And how high the prices can be as a result.) Long Island has a long history with scalloping. In the early 1990s, the region ranked second in the nation for scallop sales, yet before and since, scallop fishermen have struggled due to population die offs.

In the 1980s, a “brown tide” caused by the microscopic algae *Aureococcus anophagefferens* resulted in the bay scallop industry’s collapse, nearly driving the bay scallop to extinction. These harmful blooms darkened the water and blocked sunlight from reaching eelgrass, a habitat and food source for shellfish, which also damaged hard clam fisheries. Back in the 1980s, the Fishers Island Oyster Farm hatchery attempted restoration. They used scallops sourced from the Chesapeake Bay. After the brown tide, local towns invested heavily in restoring the scallop population, and thanks to community effort and funding, progress was made. Then again in 1995, the brown tide returned and nearly wiped

out the recovering scallop population. Again, restorative interventions were made and the struggling scallop population began to grow.

In 2019, however, bay scallops suffered a near total extinction once again. This time, it was believed to be due to high water temperatures in the summer of 2019. (The loss was so significant that the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration declared the event a fisheries federal disaster in 2021.) With companies and fishermen alike suffering again, Cornell University stepped in. Cornell University, through the local Cornell Cooperative Extension operating on the East End of Long Island, has

been working to rebuild the scallop population through selective breeding since 2019, using scallops from Moriches Bay and Martha’s Vineyard and seeding them into the Peconic Bay. Unfortunately, scallop fishermen have yet to see population increases resulting in impressive harvests. According to local scallop fishermen, this season has been a major disappointment so far, even though it has only just begun. Cornell’s selective breeding program does give many people hope that the bays and the scallop populations can recover once again, but in the meantime, staying patient is hard.

FAHRENHEIT 451: JUNIORS EXPERIENCE BRADBURY’S DYSTOPIAN FUTURE

BY CAYMAN MOREHEAD

The 11th grade went on a field trip to the Bay Street Theater to watch a live theatrical adaptation of Fahrenheit 451 shortly before Thanksgiving break. Chaperoned by English teachers Mrs. Colligan and Mrs. Treharne, juniors took the short trip to Sag Harbor to experience Ray Bradbury’s novel live on stage through Bay Street’s Literature Live program, which offers access to theater for students at no cost.

Ray Bradbury’s Fahrenheit 451 was written in 1953, and the gist of the story revolves around fireman Guy Montag whose responsibility is not to put fires out, but to start them. Montag must find and burn books as a firefighter in Bradbury’s dystopian future. A series of events leads Montag to reevaluate his life and makes him wonder if what he’s doing is really for the

greater good. Bradbury’s novel was heavily inspired by Nazi book burnings that took place in 1933, which Bradbury said “horrified” him, and the ever-growing civil unrest which made him fear something similar could happen in America. The book tackled themes such as censorship, suppression of knowledge, and government control. One of the most interesting things about the play was seeing how many future technological advancements Bradbury predicted. In the show we see smart homes, GPS/tracking devices, and even AI and deep fakes. It is amazing to think in the 1950s all of these things were considered science fiction. Overall, it was great to get out of the building and experience live theater and see a play that really made us think and sparked very interesting class discussion.

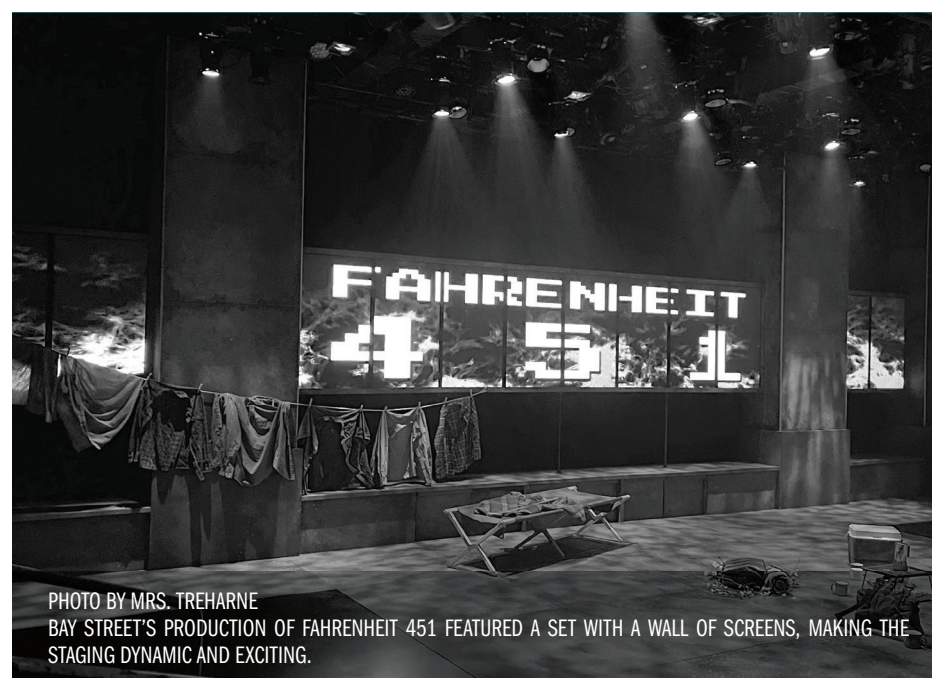
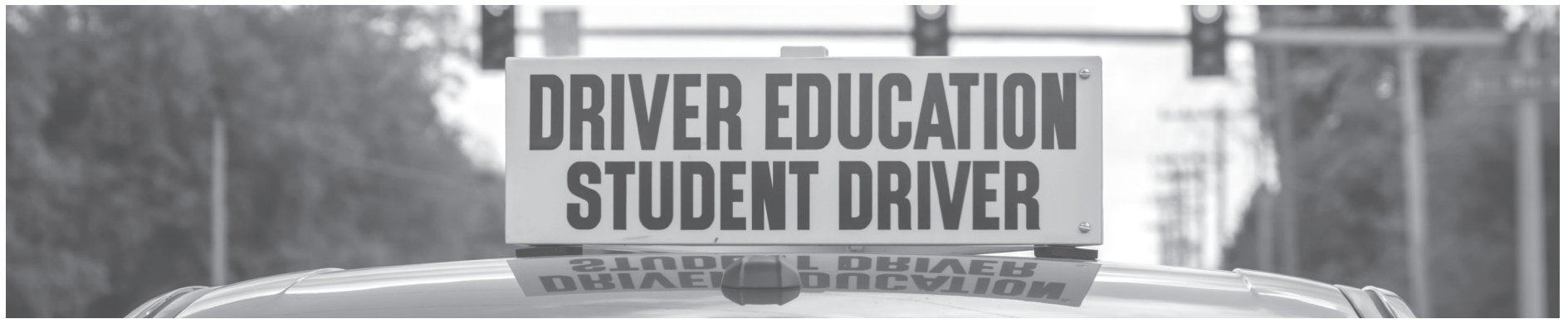


PHOTO BY MRS. TREHARNE
BAY STREET’S PRODUCTION OF FAHRENHEIT 451 FEATURED A SET WITH A WALL OF SCREENS, MAKING THE STAGING DYNAMIC AND EXCITING.

DRIVERS ED DAY IN THE LIFE TODAY

BY JULIANA MEDINA



Here at Shelter Island High School, students are given the opportunity to take Drivers Education without charge. This is a special opportunity many of us probably take for granted, because at all other schools students pay hundreds of dollars to get the Drivers education certification needed to get a NYS license at 17 years old. Also, there are long waitlists to even get into Drivers Ed. courses.

At Shelter Island, Drivers Ed. takes

place throughout the week at 7:15am and is taught by Technology teacher, Mr. Christopher Conrardy. There are two sessions offered throughout the school year: one in the fall and one in the spring. Currently there are 6 students taking enrolled, mainly from the class of 2027. The students are broken up into 2 driving groups, consisting of 3 students each, which offers plenty of personalized instruction. Each of the groups have 2 driving days each week during which they

enjoy their morning driving around the island. On Mondays, students have an in-class day when they learn about driving safety and road rules, they also watch many crash videos to learn what not to do and what caused the driver to crash. I asked a few students who are currently taking this class to give some feedback on their experience so far. Sadie Green-Clark (junior) had only good things to say: "It's been pretty good, I'm learning a lot about how to be safe when driving." Abraham

Roig (junior) also was nice enough to share his opinion stating, "It's been great so far, Mr. Conrardy has been very helpful with teaching me the rules of the road." Students recently started venturing off the island on weekends with their driving group to learn about driving on more populated roads. We are very grateful that here at Shelter Island School driving instruction is provided to us and easily accessible. The Class of 2027 will see you on the roads!

CROCKPOT FRIDAY: A NEW SHELTER ISLAND SCHOOL TRADITION

BY LOGAN PORZIO

Something new has been cooking at Shelter Island School! It's "Crockpot Fridays," and is the creation of Mrs. Catherine Brigham and Mr. Theinert. Mr. Theinert has pulled out the crockpot before on special occasions such as

birthdays or Pi Day, and in his Financial Literacy course, he covers how to cook at an affordable price...hence the crockpot. Mrs. Brigham has done Crockpot Fridays intermittently the past and since they both obviously enjoy a crockpot, they decided

to join forces and create affordable and nutritious food for students on a larger scale with a more regular schedule. A few recent crockpot favorites include macaroni and cheese and pulled pork. If you haven't checked it out yet, you should and if you

have any suggestions for crockpot menu items, get in touch with Mr. Theinert or Mrs. Brigham! We truly appreciate this fun way to connect and have some great food with our teachers.

2025: A BRIEF LOOKBACK

BY ARI WAIFE

As the 2025 school year draws to a close, it's a perfect time to reflect on the experiences, milestones, and memories that shaped our community this year. The school's New York City trip in April was a standout highlight. Students spent the day exploring some of New York's most iconic sites, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the American Museum of Natural History, the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, the 9/11 Museum, and the One World Observatory. After the structured visits, everyone enjoyed some free time to explore the city on their own.

2025's AP exams were fully digital.

Maybe taking AP exams isn't a highlight, but many students appreciated the format, noting that typing essays is far faster and less stressful than handwriting them. Then, came prom. The 2025 prom was held at the Ram's Head Inn. The food was great, the venue was beautiful, and kids loved being able to take pictures at the gazebo. The DJ also had us dancing all night. Overall, the prom was a great success. The 2024-2025 school year wrapped up smoothly in June, celebrated with our seniors' graduation and the entrance to the summer break.

This July was the Spain trip to Cadiz,

which rising juniors and seniors had the chance to attend. This trip was funded in part by the Ed Foundation. The experience was filled with cultural exploration, meaningful activities, and even day trips to Gibraltar and Seville. For many, it was truly life-changing.

This school year started with the 2025 "Everything Goes," which featured an escape room and activities such as ghost tag, headbands, a scavenger hunt, and reverse trick-or-treating. High schoolers went down to the elementary wing to give candy bags to the little kids in this fun twist. This year's Cardboard Campout raised lots

of money for Habitat for Humanity.

Most recently, the juniors had the chance to see Bay Street's Fahrenheit 451. The play, about a dystopian society that burned books and refused to let people read to keep them ignorant, was very thought provoking and had a lot of modern ties. Ray Bradbury predicted smart homes, deep fakes, and AI in 1953! It was a great play that left the student audience with a lot to think about.

As we wrap up 2025, we're grateful for the experiences that shaped us and eager for the opportunities that await us in 2026.

CLASSIC CHRISTMAS PLAYLIST

BY KYRA SCIACCHITANO

Get ready for the holidays with this Christmas playlist! Full of festive songs perfect for decorating, being with family, or just getting in the holiday spirit. Hit play and enjoy the holiday cheer!





What spring play do students really want to see at Shelter Island School?

By Maeve Springer

With the changing weather and beginning of winter sports people are beginning to talk about what the spring musical might be this year. Here are what some students said:



LEXI BARTILUCCI, SOPHOMORE: "I WANT IT TO BE INTO THE WOODS BECAUSE I LOVE THE MUSIC IN IT AND I WOULD WATCH THE MUSICAL GROWING UP."



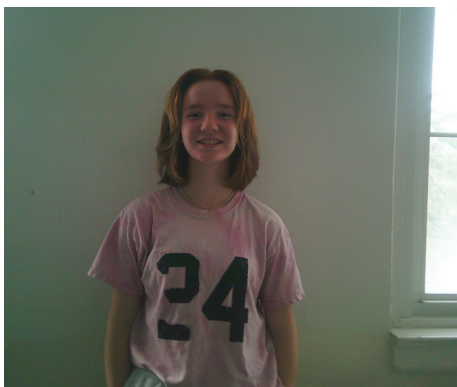
KYLIE KUHR, SOPHOMORE: "I WANT WEST SIDE STORY BECAUSE I FIND THE MOVIE VERY ENTERTAINING AND I THINK IT WOULD BE A CUTE PLAY TO DO."



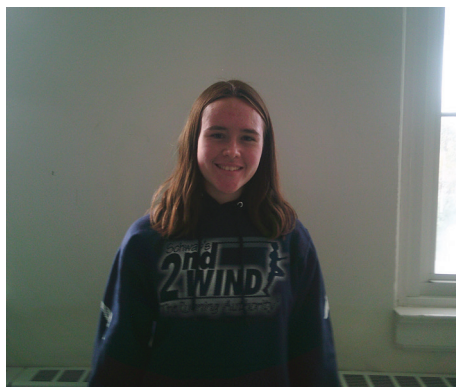
REGINA KOLMOGOROVA, FRESHMAN: "I WANT GREASE BECAUSE IT HAS A LOT OF GOOD CHARACTERS AND I THINK IT WOULD BE SO FUN AND THE SET WOULD BE COOL."



CALEB SPRINGER, SEVENTH GRADE: "ALADDIN BECAUSE I WANT TO SEE MY OLDER BROTHER BE THE GENIE."



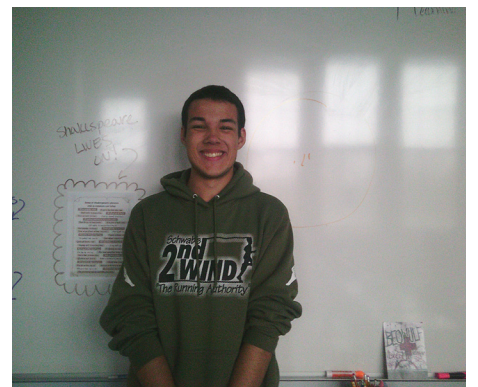
LILY POTTER, SOPHOMORE: "I WANT IT TO BE INTO THE WOODS BECAUSE IT HAS A LARGE CAST AND VERY FUN SONGS."



MARY-KATE LABROZZI, SENIOR: "I WOULD LIKE LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS BECAUSE IT SEEMS LIKE EVERYONE REALLY LIKES IT."



MICHELLE MARTINEZ, FRESHMAN: "I THINK IT WOULD BE REALLY COOL IF WE DID INTO THE WOODS BECAUSE I LOVE THE MUSIC AND THE CAST WOULD BE REALLY COOL."



ELI GREEN, SOPHOMORE: "I WOULD LIKE TO SEE LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS AND I THINK DANIEL HERNANDEZ WOULD BE ONE OF THE LEADS."

AROUND THE SCHOOL: WHAT'S YOUR HIGHLIGHT OF 2025?

BY NOEMI TORRES

As the year comes to an end, it's important to reflect and cherish the good. Here at Shelter Island School, it's been an eventful year (check out Ari's story on page 5). In anticipation of the year ending, I asked students and faculty to share their favorite part of this past year.



MRS. ALYSSA PRIOR (GUIDANCE COUNSELOR): "MY HIGHLIGHT OF 2025 WAS I WENT BY MYSELF WITH MY 3 KIDS TO FLORIDA FOR 2 WEEKS! I WENT MOST OF THE TIME WITHOUT MY PHONE BECAUSE IT BROKE AT A WATERPARK AND I AM SO PROUD THAT I COULD GO THAT LONG WITHOUT MY PHONE."



ELLA FUNDORA (9TH GRADE): "MY 2025 HIGHLIGHT WAS FOR SURE GOING TO SEE SABRINA CARPENTER!"



CHARLIE PARENTO (6TH GRADE): "I WOULD PROBABLY SAY MY FAVORITE PART OF THE YEAR WAS WHEN I WENT TO SPLISH SPLASH WITH MY FRIEND EVIE."



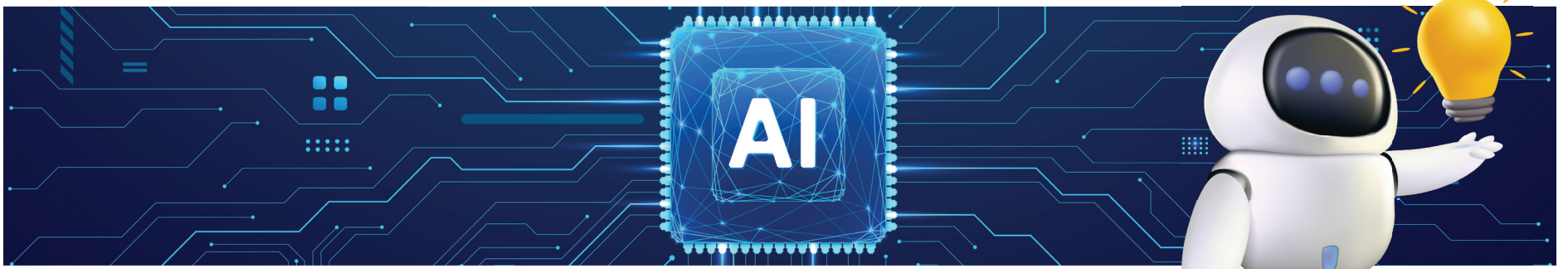
MAEVE SPRINGER (10TH GRADE): "MY FAVORITE PART OF THE YEAR WAS GETTING CLOSER TO EVERYONE IN THE SCHOOL."



CAYMAN MOREHEAD (11TH GRADE): "MY FAVORITE PART OF 2025 WAS WORKING AT SOUTH FERRY. ONE DAY, ONE OF THE CAPTAINS, ERIK KURKO, GAVE ME MY OWN HOLE PUNCHER. IT WAS A HIGHLIGHT BECAUSE IT FELT REALLY COOL TO BE AN OFFICIAL MEMBER OF THE TEAM!"



ELIZABETH WESLEK: (9TH GRADE) "MY FAVORITE PART OF 2025 WAS GOING TO SEE TYLER THE CREATOR'S CONCERT."



AI: AN OVERVIEW

BY NATALIE MAMISASHVILI

Artificial Intelligence, also known as AI, has taken over the internet in the past few years. It is used for everything, from homework and classwork, to commercials and movies. AI is a field of computer science that focuses on creating systems that perform tasks that normally need human brains, like decision making, problem solving, reasoning, learning, and recognizing patterns.

In the 1950s, Alan Turing published a paper

titled, "Computer Machinery and Intelligence," in which he introduced the Turing Test. This test is used to see if a computer can think like a human, it is key to the AI process because it provides a benchmark for how well the computers' conversational skills are. Today, the Turing Test is seen as outdated because not all versions of AI are built to pass conversational tests. Then, in 1956, there was a conference at Dartmouth at which the field of AI was officially created, this

is why Dartmouth is widely accepted as the "birthplace" of modern AI.

The first "boom" in AI was in the 1980s, in this time there were significant breakthroughs in expert systems and knowledge based systems. Eventually, there was a decline in research due to low funding. In the 2000s, there were major breakthroughs in machine learning due to the new computing powers. Today, we see AI in our smartphones, digital

assistants, chatbots, and in social media. Electronics you use at home also use AI, like Roombas or other robot vacuums, security systems, Siri or Alexa, and navigation apps like Google Maps. A few popular AI websites are ChatGPT, Meta AI, Gemini, Grammarly, Gauth Math, and Microsoft Copilot. AI also comes in forms of photos or videos, so be careful because you never know what is real and what is fake.

IS THIS REAL OR AI?

BY MAE BRIGHAM

We used to question if things were real or fake but now we have to worry about AI too?

In the past few years, artificial intelligence has transformed how we create and consume images. AI-generated pictures are flooding social media, news outlets, and even classrooms. What once took hours of photo editing can now be done in seconds with a text prompt. But as the technology becomes more advanced, it's getting harder to tell what's real and what's not.

AI photo tools like Adobe Firefly, Canva, and ChatGPT's image generators can create

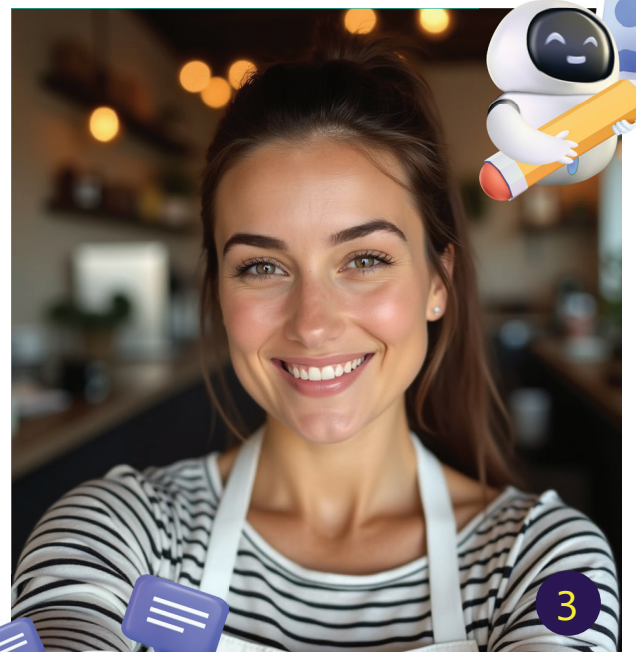
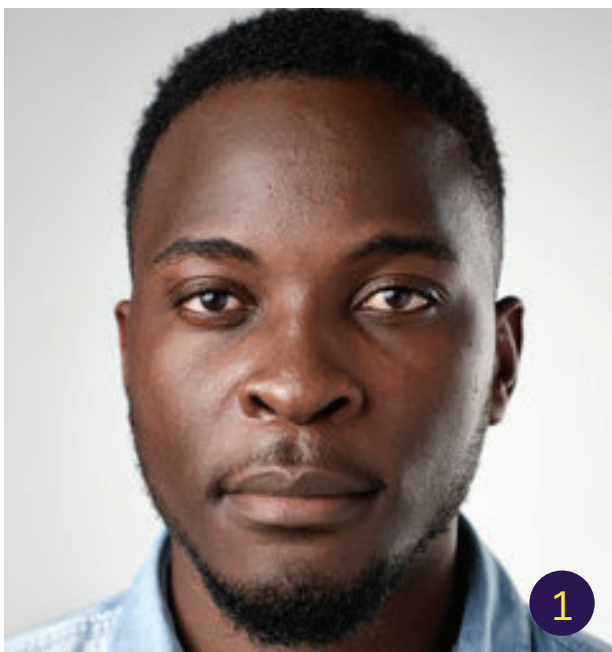
incredibly realistic pictures using only written descriptions often in just seconds. These tools can produce faces of people who don't exist, places that were never photographed, and events that never happened. While this opens exciting opportunities for artists, advertisers, and students, it also presents a major challenge: knowing what's genuine and real. It can be a smiling celebrity at a protest, a perfect vacation snapshot, or a "breaking news" image that is completely fabricated. This blurring of reality makes it harder than ever to trust what we see online.

So, how can you tell if something is AI-generated? There are a few clues but even those are becoming harder to spot. AI images often have small mistakes that might not seem obvious to a computer, but look off to the human eye. You can find that fingers or toes may have the wrong number, jewelry or background objects can appear warped or blurry, and written text is often distorted or unreadable. Lighting and shadows might not make sense, and faces can appear too perfect. You will see flawless skin, identical teeth, and perfectly symmetrical features that

rarely exist in real life. These are all tells for if an image is artificially generated or not.

As times go on these tells are slowly disappearing because of Artificial intelligence progressing and becoming more advanced. This is why learning to question and verify what you see online is real is more important than ever. There are many ways to verify if something is real or not like reverse image searches, checking news sources, and finding the origin behind a photo. These are just some ways we can try to separate the fact from fiction.

CAN YOU TELL WHICH OF THESE PEOPLE IS REAL AND WHICH ONE WAS CREATED BY AI?



KEY ON PAGE 9

APPLE MUSIC FINALLY ADDS SEAMLESS TRANSITIONS

BY ABRAHAM ROIG

If you've ever been deep in a playlist and suddenly hit with that awkward silence between songs because of a lack of transitions, it's your lucky day. This year, Apple finally figured it out. Their newest update has introduced music transitions, a long awaited

feature that let songs smoothly blend into each other instead of stopping cold. The feature is called Crossfade, and was added to Apple Music earlier this year after being one of Spotify's most popular tools for years. It works by fading out one track while fading in the

next which gives your playlist a steady flow. This long awaited feature is what Apple Music users have been wanting ever since Spotify has had this feature. So, while some may argue that Apple is late to the game, this update represents an important step toward closing

the gap between Apple Music and Spotify. It's a subtle, but meaningful improvement that shows Apple is paying attention to how people actually listen.

BOTTLED WATER PERSONALITIES

BY LEXI JERNICK

Forget zodiac signs and phases of the moon—your bottled water choice says everything we need to know about you. Some are classy, some are messy, and some are one missed paycheck away from being Deer Park. If bottled water brands were people, here is who they would be. So, consider your choice carefully.

KIRKLAND: Kirkland brand waters from Costco are the responsible friend who always pays their bills, keeps a snack bag on them at all the times, and wears Kirkland brand activewear everywhere, but no one shades them for it. Kirkland waters know where every deal is, meal preps on Sundays, and is proud of it.

CORE WATER: Core Waters definitely wears matching workout sets, posts inspirational quotes on their story daily, and will convince you to meditate when having a crisis. Core water is a gym rat, makes sure everyone around them knows the difference between “balance” and “alignment,” and takes hot yoga very seriously.

ESSENTIAL: Always “booked and busy,” Essential water is currently reading the newest popular novel, has a 12 step skincare routine,

and declares they are “in their productive era.” Essential loves an iced coffee and knows where the best matcha can be found.

POLAND SPRING: Poland Spring is an East Coaster, hates change, and thinks Dunkin’ is superior to Starbucks. Poland Spring gives “classic American household” energy. Poland Spring grew up on road trips, and family cookouts, and says “I’ll be there in 10,” and actually means it.

BOX WATER: Box water says that they are eco-friendly, but leaves trash in their car for months, buys plants and lets every single one die, and has bangs they cut themselves at 2 a.m. Box Water is the friend who lectures you about recycling, but throws their gum on the ground. Box water’s tote bag smells weird, but they pretend that’s just because it’s “vintage.”

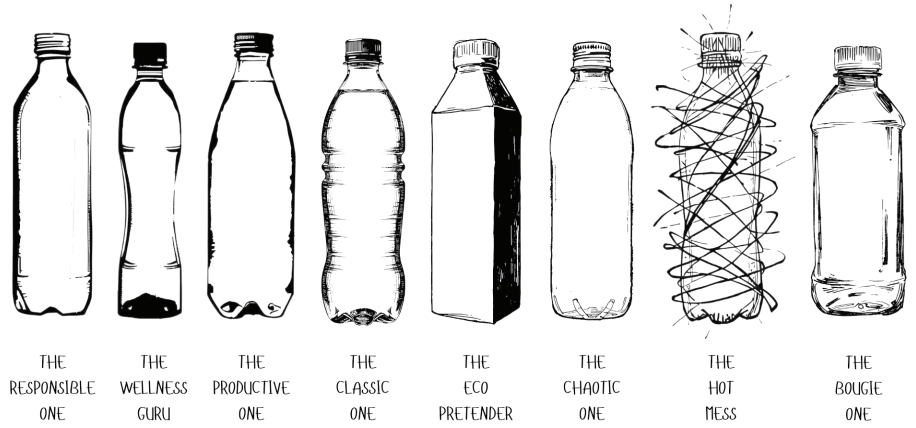
DISANI WATER: Poor Disani tries to be mysterious, but isn’t. Disani has main character energy, but in a chaotic way, always starts new hobbies they never finish, gives unsolicited advice which is never original, and tries to look more expensive by carrying knock-off designer

bags.

DEER PARK: Deer Park’s bank account is overdrawn. They’re the friend who somehow always has a cracked phone, mismatched socks, and a half eaten snack in their bag. Deer Park lives on gas station snacks, always speaks at too high a volume, and shows up looking like they slept through their alarm. Deer Park is chronically late, unpredictable, has drama, but is also impossible not to love.

FIJI: Oh, Fiji. Fiji is that bougie friend. Yes, Fiji

will be late, but will always look perfect. Fiji lives for spa days, luxury skincare, and \$18 smoothies. Fiji is judgmental, smells expensive, takes vacations exclusively for the ‘gram, and says “I only drink imported water...” and truly means it. As a whole, Long Island is a very good place to spend time during the fall, between the nice weather, beautiful foliage, and overall cozy atmosphere. So, check some of these places out! You will not regret it!



WINTER FORMAL: BRING IT BACK!

BY REGINA KOLMOGOROVA-WEISENBERG

Shelter Island’s prom is a highlight of our year. Students love dressing up and looking their best, then enjoying a night dancing with friends. Let’s face it, winters on Shelter Island are bleak (check out Abie’s article “Shelter Island winters: The season nobody wants”) and bringing back a winter formal for Shelter

Island Students would really be something to look forward to!

Shelter Island last had a winter formal about five years ago. Why it was abandoned, I am unsure, but I would love to see it make a comeback. To limit expenses we could hold

it in the gym or maybe the American Legion. Imagine twinkling lights and decorations...the theme could be so much different than our spring prom. It could be a way to celebrate the winter sports seasons and brighten up the grey winter.

*So, who’s in?
Can we make a
winter formal
happen?*

ELECTRIC BIKERS BEWARE

BY LIO NAPOLES

I feel there’s one thing that a person really strives for as they grow up: freedom. I remember the first time I drove by myself, the music up all the way, and no need for anyone to backseat drive. Being able to get around on your own as a teenager feels euphoric. To have something that takes you from point A to point B with minimal effort is pretty awesome, but something that does the exact same without any effort is even more awesome! E-bikes do just this.

I do think e-bikes are a good alternative to cars in the summer, as they help fight against climate change since they release no emissions. Yet, e-bikes have many drawbacks: they are very expensive, they aren’t ideal in

bad weather, and don’t get in an accident, it won’t end well. And, here’s the thing. It seems on this island kids of all ages ride them. The law in Suffolk County is that e-bike riders must be at least 16 years old and wear helmets at all times. There are many kids riding e-bikes on the east end of Long Island not adhering to these rules. The freedom is amazing, but these bikes are dangerous when kids are speeding on them, helmetless, in traffic. To operate a car, I had to be 17 and pass Driver’s Education. Yet, with the holidays around the corner, there are sure to be 14 and 15 year old kids asking for e-bikes and jumping on them with no experience other than their bikes with pedals. To me, this is a recipe for

disaster. Recently, a 14 year-old was killed in North Bellmore, Long Island when he was hit by a car on his e-bike. The day I began this article, a 13 year-old from East Islip hit a deer at a high speed on his e-bike and is now in critical condition. (Think about how many deer we have on Shelter Island!) It is heartbreaking that young people are getting in these accidents when they should not even be on an e-bike in the first place since they are too young.

Electric bikes need a closer look and better enforcement from police to make sure kids stop getting seriously injured. And, if you have one, ride carefully and don’t forget your helmet.



GUESS THE AI KEY: THE LADY WITH GLASSES IS THE REAL IMAGE.

WINTER CROSSWORD KEY

ACROSS:

- 1. Christmas
- 4. Presents
- 6. Snow
- 8. Skiing

9. Snowball

- 10. Saint Nicholas
- 11. Mittens
- 13. Hanukkah

DOWN:

- 1. Christmas tree
- 2. Sledding
- 3. Snowman
- 5. Shovel

7. Hot chocolate

- 10. Scarf
- 12. Jacket

WINTER CROSSWORD

BY LOGAN PORZIO

IN ANTICIPATION OF THE SEASON, TRY OUT MY CROSSWORD AND GET IN THAT WINTERTIME MINDSET!

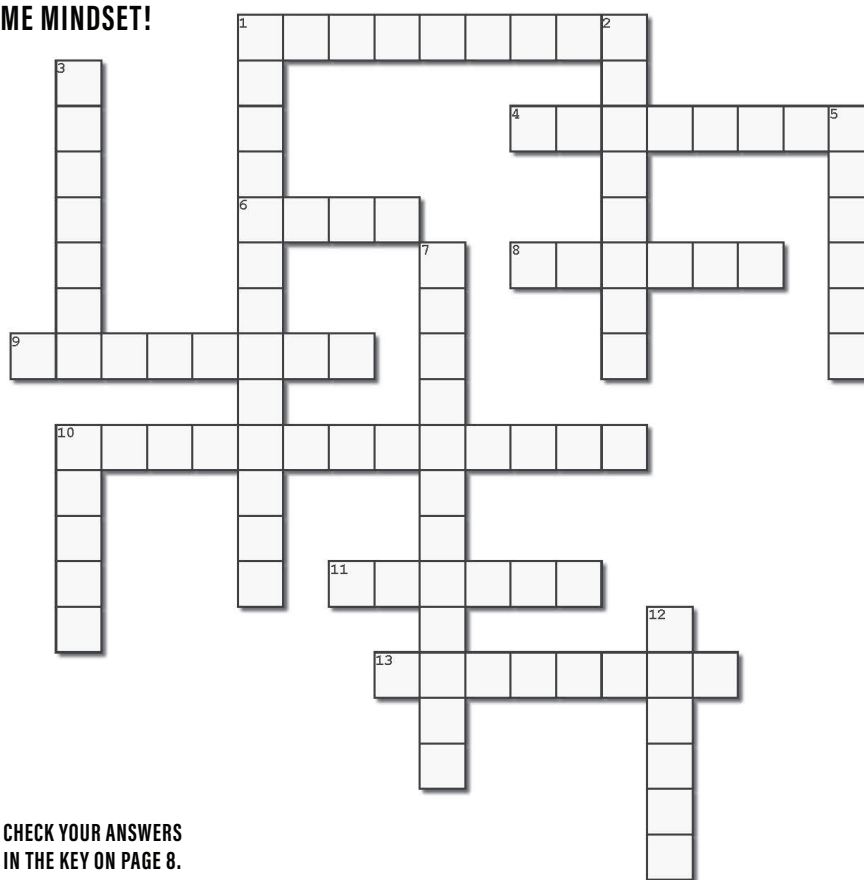


ACROSS

1. Winter holiday
4. The fun part of Christmas!
6. Frozen rain
8. Activity that you strap long boards to your feet.
9. Something you throw at your friends when it snows
10. Santa Claus is also known as
11. Keep your hands warm
13. A holiday where people will light the menorah

DOWN

1. Something you decorate
2. sliding down a hill, usually on a piece of plastic
3. Something you build after it snows
5. Tool used to remove snow
7. A warm drink that people usually drink in the winter
10. Something you wrap around you to keep warm
12. Something you will need to go outside so you don't freeze



CHECK YOUR ANSWERS IN THE KEY ON PAGE 8.

WHICH SHOW IS BETTER: THE NUTCRACKER OR THE RADIO CITY CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR?

BY MIRANDA MARCELLO

Holiday traditions come in many forms, and two favorites for many are heading to Manhattan to watch *The Nutcracker* or the *Rockettes* at Radio City's Christmas Spectacular. I asked around the high school to find out which one of these productions people enjoy more.

SADIE GREEN-CLARK (GRADE 11):

Sadie Green-Clark says she likes the Rockettes better than The Nutcracker because the show is "more exciting." She enjoys the "fast dancing and bright energy" they bring to the stage.

LAUREN GIBBS (GRADE 12):

Lauren Gibbs says she likes The Nutcracker more than the Rockettes because it's full of "music and really entertaining." She recommends watching it, especially with your family. She thinks it creates a fun holiday experience for everyone.

ABIE ROIG (GRADE 11):

Abie Roig says he likes The Nutcracker more than the Rockettes because the story is "magical." He enjoys the "music and the characters in the ballet."

MARY-KATE LABROZZI (GRADE 12):

Mary-Kate says she likes the Rockettes better than The Nutcracker because their show is "exciting and fun to watch." She also thinks their "dancing makes the performance really enjoyable and unique."

MAE BRIGHAM (GRADE 12):

Mae Brigham says she likes The Nutcracker the best, but choosing which show is the best really depends on the person, because some people may find the ballet boring, but I find it exciting.

LEXI JERNICK (GRADE 12):

Lexi Jernick says she likes the Rockettes more than The Nutcracker because their dances are "more exciting." She likes how "fast, fun, and energetic the show feels."

JACKSON ROHRER (GRADE 11):

Jackson Rohrer likes The Nutcracker better than the Rockettes because he enjoys the story. He thinks "the ballet has a more interesting storyline." He also likes the way the dancers "tell the story with their movements."

ARI WAIFE (GRADE 11):

Ari Waife is a Radio City Rockettes fan because the show is lively and entertaining. He likes "watching the dancers move together perfectly on stage."

WINTER BREAK TRIPPING

BY LEXI JERNICK

We've got two full weeks of holiday freedom this year, and everyone's ready for it! Let's check out what fun adventures our staff and students are planning on!

LEXI JERNICK (SENIOR): "I am going down to Auburndale Florida, spending time with family, going to Bucces and getting another tattoo. Then, coming back up to Shelter Island for the New Year to spend it with friends."

ABIE ROIG (JUNIOR): I am headed to Daytona, Florida to spend time with my dad." Abie is also looking forward to going to Bucces, Sea World, and Port Orange! He says he'll be spending time seeing family and going on lots of boats.

MANDY MARCELLO (SENIOR): Mandy is jetting off to Arizona for some family time and tons of mall damage. Every year Mandy and her family drive around checking out the

Christmas lights while drinking tons and tons of hot chocolate. The New Year will be spent with family, catching up and making memories that will last a lifetime!

EL SHACK (SENIOR): Every year El heads to Cape Cod for a holiday filled with activities. Ice skating, book stores, long walks on the rail trail are part of the itinerary. He might even take the trip to go see Boston. Mostly though, he is spending his vacation relaxing at his grandparents and watching movies.

MRS. LANG (GUIDANCE): Mrs. Lang is off to Florida! With her kids and their girlfriends coming along, it's sure to be a full, lively house. Christmas Eve means the seven fishes

and Christmas Day calls for the beach and a traditional dinner. Ending the break off with a New Years celebration with a big group of friends is Mrs. Lang's plan.

MRS PRIOR (GUIDANCE): Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party is how Mrs. Prior will kick off her break! She plans to hotel hop to see all the decorations and gingerbread houses around Disney World, plus visit the Kennedy Space Center. She swears it's all for the kids, but we all know she's the one who loves it most!

REGINA KOLMOGOROVA (FRESHMAN): Regina plans to spend the break hanging with Juliana, taking trips into the city, and seeing

family who's in town for the holidays. Expect plenty of Christmas walks and lots, I mean lots, of cookie baking.

KADEN GIBBS (JUNIOR): Kaden is staying local for the most part and going over to his super cool Aunt's house for their annual Christmas party. He also will be heading the Aquarium.

MRS. TREHARNE (ENGLISH): Mrs. Treharne will have house guests until the new year and then she is headed to the Berkshire Mountains in Massachusetts to downhill ski with her family. With her two oldest kids home from college, she's excited to spend the holidays all together!

FAVORITE CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

BY ARI WAIFE

Christmas is the most festive time of the year, and we all have tons of memories that are dear to us.

What are your favorite Christmas memories?

NEOMI: Going to New York City and seeing the Rockefeller Center, going to Bryant park, ice skating and shopping.

EVAN: Snowboarding in Vermont, spending time with family.

JULIANA: Going to Florida to a family condo, which had a dock on the water, Going fishing, enjoyed the luxuries of the beach.

KYRA: When she was sent home

on Christmas break in preschool with oatmeal and glitter to feed the reindeer, but instead she ended up eating it.

KYLIE: On Christmas eve, her and her siblings have a sleepover with hot chocolate and popcorn and watch Christmas movies until she falls asleep.

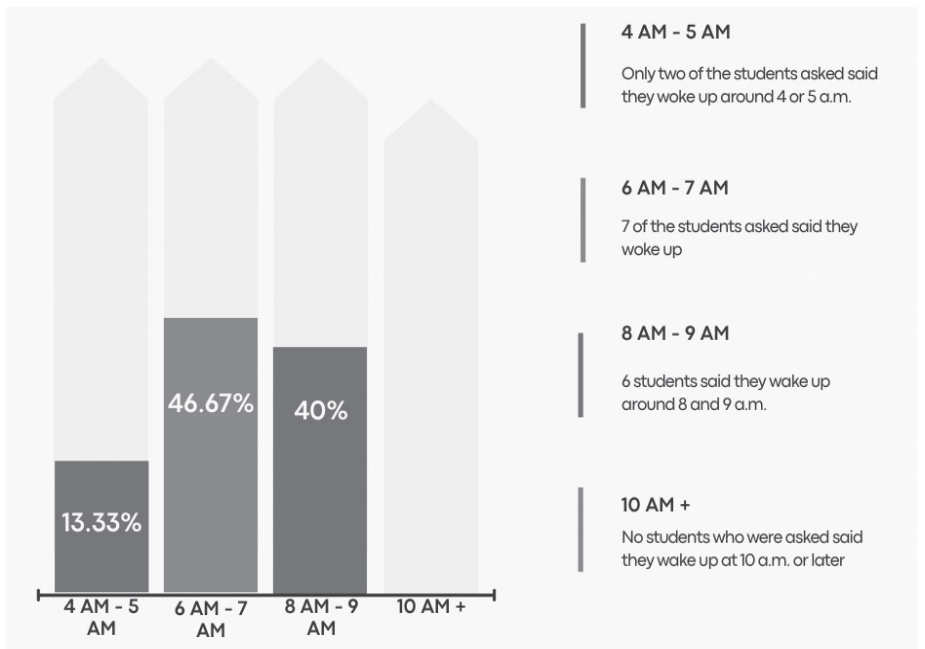
SEBI: getting a dog for christmas in 2013.

MRS. PRIOR: When she got the stuffed animal max from the little mermaid.

MRS. GOFF: When she would have family over and split christmas crackers.

WHAT TIME DO STUDENTS WAKE UP ON CHRISTMAS MORNING?

BY MAEVE SPRINGER



A GIFT GUIDE FOR PARENTS

BY ALEXIS BARTILLUCCI

The holiday season is coming up, and it can be hard to get your parents a present. So, I have some recommendations for you! If you have a mom who loves to read I recommend getting her a Kindle, a book light, a personalized book mark, or a Barnes and Noble gift card, depending on your budget. If you know your parents love to just relax and watch a movie, you could get them slippers, a popcorn

bucket, or a blanket so they can be comfy watching their favorite shows or movies. Sophomore Natalie Mamisashvili likes to get her parents something cozy. She says, "I usually get my parents a nice smelling candle, or a bathrobe, basically something that is relaxing."

If your parents are more the active type and like to fish or hunt, you could get

them a new fishing pole, new bobbers, new boots, or a nice hunting jacket. If your parents are more artsy, could get them some new paints, new canvases, new coloring pencils, and a new coloring book. I have also seen pocket watercolor kids at a cheap price; those would be fun. My stepmom loves to cook, and if one of your parents likes to cook, you should buy them non-stick pans, a new cookbook, or

a nice new cutting board.

These, of course, are just some ideas for material gifts, yet we all know a present that most of our parents would like is to spend more time with you and their family, so be sure to put aside some family time over the holidays to give them just that.

WHAT'S YOUR CHRISTMAS AESTHETIC?

BY MAKAYLA CRONIN

As the holiday season begins, I wonder: What is everyone's go-to Christmas aesthetic? With Christmas aesthetics trending all over social media, I never really realized how many different decorating styles there are, so I set out around Shelter Island School to ask some of our favorite teachers what holiday decorating style they would say they fit into and what their favorite Christmas decoration is.

MODERN CHRISTMAS



MRS. SWEENEY: Her style mixes traditional and modern elements, and her favorite piece is a large garland she hangs annually.

WHITE CHRISTMAS



MRS. GOODY: Mrs. Goody says traditional is her favorite and her custom-made decorations that have pictures of her kids on them are the decorations that she loves the most.

BEACHY CHRISTMAS



NURSE MARY: Her favorite Christmas Aesthetic is traditional and the decoration she loves the most is a Snoopy on a sled musical snowglobe.

TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS



MRS. COLLIGAN: A mix of traditional and modern and her favorite decoration is a paper mobile from Sweden from the 1940s that was her mom's. It has little elves twirling around in a circle.

MS. PITCH: Her holiday aesthetic combines modern and classic elements, and the decoration she loves most is her Christmas village.

MS. ZUMPOL: Her style is traditional, and she treasures a small ceramic, light-up Christmas tree handmade by her great-grandmother.

MRS. LANG: Her Christmas aesthetic is traditional, and her favorite decoration is a Waterford crystal tree topper—beautiful and unique since it's not the typical star

These results from our school's staff surprised me, as there was far less variety than expected. While a few people preferred a mix of modern and traditional styles, most simply chose traditional. Overall, traditional clearly comes out on top, and among those surveyed, no one favored beachy or white aesthetics.

HOLIDAY HITS AND MISSES

BY NATALIE FERNANDEZ

The holiday season brings many surprises, some in the form of gifts...gifts that bring us joy and gifts we secretly wish came with a gift receipt. We all know it is the thought that counts, but isn't it fun to hear about some gift fails? I think so.

Starting off strong junior Abie Roig, he shared his worst gift, which was coal from his grandma.

That year Abie was on the naughty list, obviously. Junior Cayman Morehead shared his worst gift was a tether pole that still hasn't made its way out of the box. Senior Elliot Shack was given an ultra moisturizing lip balm by their dad because "it looked like they needed it," while the rest of the family was gifted fun flavored lip balms. Mrs. Callahan once received a tie dye sweatshirt

from rock band Grateful Dead, which led to a breakup. Ouch.

Now, on to the gifts that have made our holidays. Spanish teacher Ms. Kotula was once given a trip to Silver Dollar City, a theme park in Missouri with an exciting glassblowing performance. Ms. Zumpol has gotten some excellent "experience gifts," such as concerts

and cooking classes. Mrs. Lang says the best gift "definitely has to be jewelry from my husband."

Senior Mae Brigham loves the pink iPad her dad got her so she can live out to her full "iPad kid potential" and watch "Real Housewives." Gifts are always tricky, here's to hoping we all get some wins this year.

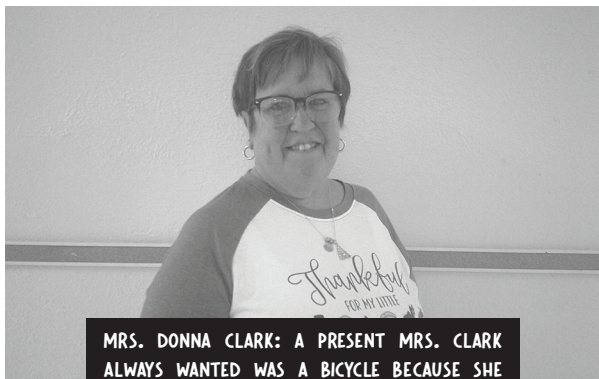
SANTA DOESN'T ALWAYS DELIVER

BY MAKAYLA CRONIN

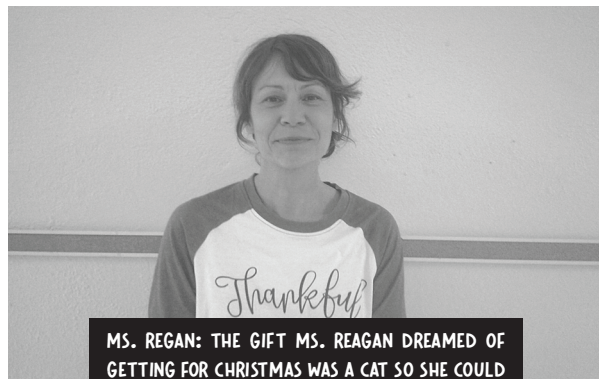
With winter holidays on the horizon, I went around Shelter Island High School asking students and staff to reflect on their childhood holidays and I asked: What's a gift you wanted as a kid but never received? Take a look to see who's dream gift never made it under the tree.



MRS. RANDO: MRS. RANDO ALWAYS WANTED A HORSE, AS SHE RODE FOR FUN AND COMPETITIVELY.



MRS. DONNA CLARK: A PRESENT MRS. CLARK ALWAYS WANTED WAS A BICYCLE BECAUSE SHE GREW UP ON A FARM AND WOULD HAVE HAD A LOT OF ROOM TO RIDE IT.



MS. REGAN: THE GIFT MS. REAGAN DREAMED OF GETTING FOR CHRISTMAS WAS A CAT SO SHE COULD FEEL THE JOY OF OPENING THE BOX ON CHRISTMAS MORNING AND HAVE A CAT COME OUT.



MR. BRIGHAM: MR. BRIGHAM WANTED AN ATARI 2600 BECAUSE IT WAS THE MOST POPULAR GAMING SYSTEM IN THE COUNTRY.



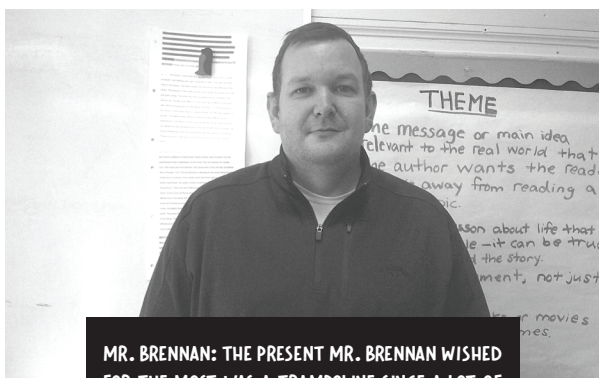
MAE BRIGHAM: SAMANTHA THE AMERICAN GIRL DOLL WAS MAE'S DREAM GIFT BECAUSE SHE THOUGHT IT WAS THE PRETTIEST DOLL AND HER COUSIN VIVI HAD THE SAME ONE.



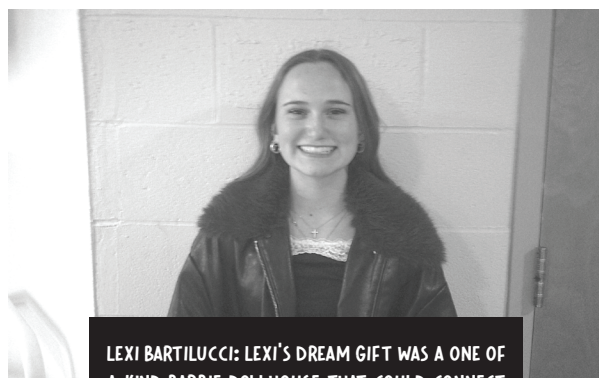
THOMAS BECKWITH: THOMAS ALWAYS WANTED A SHED SO HE COULD HAVE HIS OWN LITTLE SHOP TO FIX AND BUILD THINGS IN.



RYAN SANWALD: THE GIFT RYAN WANTED MOST WAS A PET DEER SO THAT HE COULD WATCH IT GROW ITS HORNS, THEN MOUNT IT ON HIS WALL.



MR. BRENNAN: THE PRESENT MR. BRENNAN WISHED FOR THE MOST WAS A TRAMPOLINE SINCE A LOT OF HIS FRIENDS HAD ONE.



LEXI BARTILUCCI: LEXI'S DREAM GIFT WAS A ONE OF A KIND BARBIE DOLLHOUSE THAT COULD CONNECT TO WIFI AND WAS VOICE ACTIVATED.

CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

BY REGINA KOLMOGOROVA-WEISENBERG

Christmas is a global holiday and though many countries celebrate Christmas, the traditions vary greatly. Here in the United States, we are well aware of our traditions. Christmas trees, lights, and wreaths are typical decor. And, in the U.S., it is typical to wake up on Christmas morning to see Santa Clause has come and filled your stockings and left you gifts under the tree. Yet, in other parts of the world Christmas looks different.

In Sweden, for example, the holiday season

kicks off on December 13th for St. Lucia's Day. Girls wear candle crowns and everyone enjoys sweet buns. Also in Sweden, it is more traditional to open gifts on Christmas Eve. In Mexico, families celebrate Las Posadas. Las Posadas tells the story of Mary and Joseph seeking shelter on the night of Jesus's birth. Children break bright, star-shaped piñatas filled with candy, toys, and other fun goodies to mark the occasion.

In Germany, Christmas markets are how

most locals shop for gifts. The markets (now popular with foreign tourists) are a community event and feature pretty lights, yummy treats, and handmade gifts. German children get to celebrate a bit early when on December 6th, also known as St. Nicholas's Day, they leave their boots out so that St. Nicholas can fill them with candy.

Christmas in Ethiopia is called Ganna and is celebrated on January 7. Preceded by fasting for 43 days, Ganna is an all out celebration.

People wear traditional white clothing, go to church, and celebrate and eat with family and neighbors. A game called genna (similar to hockey) is also played.

Around the world there are many different ways to celebrate what we in the U.S. call Christmas. Each way to celebrate sounds fun, exciting, and very special. It would be fun to try celebrating another culture's holiday tradition to brighten up winter this year.

Shelter Island Inlet

Bryant Park

WINTER VILLAGE

By Elsie Mae Brigham

Check out this awesome guide to Bryant Park Winter Village, packed with tips for festive shopping, ice skating, and more!

What is the

Bryant Park Winter Village

The Bryant Park Winter Village, officially the Bank of America Winter Village at Bryant Park, is in full swing for the holiday season. Located between 40th and 42nd Streets between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, the market opened on October 24th and closes on January 4th. The Village is open daily from 11am-8pm and is a seasonal installation which includes a holiday market packed with food and merchandise, as well as an ice skating rink, making the park a must-visit winter wonderland.



Ice - Skating
Rink

There is a 17,000 square foot ice-skating rink. This rink is notable for being one of the only free-admission outdoor rinks in Manhattan (if you bring your own skates). Skate rentals and lessons are available, as well as free skating shows and events. The rink is open daily throughout the season.



Food

The Winter Village is just as much about indulging in seasonal and international food as it is about shopping and skating. You can find vendors who serve things like cheese-wheel pasta, Dubai chocolate strawberries, thick Italian style-hot chocolate, and a wide range of sweet and savory treats from around the world.



Holiday
Market

The real attraction for most is the shopping! The marketplace is lined with over 150 "jewel box" shaped kiosks. The space offers everything from gifts, to handmade jewelry, winter fashion and festive décor. Whether you're browsing for unique holiday gifts or simply enjoying the festive spirit, the Bryant Park shopping center is the perfect place to do so