



The Talon

Gripping News



Volume VIII Issue III Onteora High School Boiceville, NY 12412 May 2026

Editor's Note

Inspiration for this issue of The Talon came from exploring old Onteora high school newspapers from the '70s and '80s, and from our own research to define and understand nostalgia in its entirety. As our student journalists talked with each other and the adults in our lives, we continually returned to the question: "Is it just nostalgia, or was the past really better?" This led us to write about various takes on the past within specific categories. We hope this issue evokes emotion and memory as we explore the theme of nostalgia.

Onteora Reigns as Champion; A Historical Win OHS Basketball

By Evan Pizer, Junior

THE ONTEORA EAGLES ARE SECTION CHAMPS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 25 YEARS! A voice booms in an electric gym. The players are running across the court, hugging and dapping. The student section is going berserk, and Luc and Coach Wilens are hugging—on the verge of tears. You look to the left and see Bickel lying on the ground. You may think he is dead until you realize he just got a killer calf cramp during the celebration. You see the athletic director crack her first smile of the year. You see proud parents, teachers, and alumni giving a standing ovation to the brothers embracing on the court—a historic moment for Onteora basketball.

Let's take a step back: How did we get here? This season wasn't a stroke of luck; it was a long, difficult path to success marked by discipline, hard work, and adversity. To reach this peak moment, the team embarked on an epic journey full of twists and turns.

In November we reviewed our standards from last year and built on them; we reviewed our team values of gratitude and resilience, but one topic lingered in the back of everyone's mind. Coach Wilens addressed us saying something along the lines of, "There is one goal that is above all others, and that is the sec-

tional championship. I believe that we can do it. We have the players to win it. You just have to believe. After today, I'm not going to mention the Sectional Championship again for a while. We are just going to come in every day and work hard towards that goal."

In the back of everyone's mind was what happened against O'Neill last year. We had a great season, dominating the regular season, and earning a home playoff game. Then disaster struck. We had an off night; we were supposed to roll over O'Neill but crumbled in the heat of the high-stakes game. Just like that, the season was over. It was devastating; the team was not going to let that happen this year. A sectional title—and getting revenge against O'Neill—was the overarching goal.



The Cornwall game put us on the map as a legit team. In the second quarter, a play for the ages electrified the gym: Luc launches a lob from nearly the opposite basket, Ryan soars to catch it in a swooping fashion, snatching it out of the air like an eagle grabbing a fish as it jumps out of the water, and yams it home. The crowd's cheers shattered the noise barrier in the gym. This flashy dunk from an alley-oop led to the demoralization of Cornwall and a monstrous upset over a team two classes above us.

The game against a very strong Marlboro team marked a turning point for us. We were being overpowered and found ourselves down fifteen at the start

of the fourth quarter. But Onteora is a team full of dogs who weren't going down without a fight. Onteora started to slowly chip at the lead. Then came a blur of a fast break—fans could've sworn they saw Little Orphan Annie come flying in for a layup. In reality, underclassman Calvin Peck, with his curls bouncing, scored a monster layup through contact. Momentum started to grow. Ryan scooped up countless rebounds and a few blocks. Jameer scored yet another big layup in the paint and Calvin hit a clutch three-pointer. Just like that, we are down by two, and back in the game as Marlboro starts to shiver.

With fifteen seconds left, the ball goes out of bounds. We are inbounding the ball knowing this will be our last chance to tie the game. Bickel throws a whistling pass to Ryan in the paint that, to fans, seems to move in slow motion. It slides just past the defender's fingers into Ryan's hands. Ryan pump-fakes once and goes up for the game-tying layup, forcing overtime.

With two minutes remaining, we're down two—Luc locks in and catches the ball two steps back from the three-point line. He's deep, NBA-range deep. Luc starts to look at the rim and sits down in his shooting position. Everyone trembles, even Coach Wilens reportedly whispers under his breath, "Oh no, Valentine, that is not the shot at this moment." Luc decides to fire away. BOOM! He buries the deep three-pointer with ice in his veins. Marlboro could not recover from that dagger. Onteora took control and closed out the massive win. This game revealed how far the team had grown from the previous year. We found toughness, and a competitive edge of the highest degree. We found our inner beast.

Continued page 3.

The Psychology Behind Nostalgia

By Shelby Buryk, Senior

Senior year has prompted countless thoughtful conversations about the past and a reflection on the earlier years of our education and childhood in general. As we discussed our longing for the carefree days of being a kid, the fashion trends of the past decade, or the long-lost days of cheap concert tickets, we would return to a central question: why do we feel this way?

We understand that nostalgia brings us both comfort and sadness, but how does our brain produce such a complex, sap- py feeling? My personal interest in neuroscience and psychology inspired me to explore this topic in a more in-depth light. In lieu of a convoluted and likely uninterest- ing research paper that sums up the entirety of nostalgia as we know it, a scientific article to preface this themed edi- tion of *The Talon* seems a perfect way to answer this trying question in mildly simple terms.

As reflective individ- uals, it's natural to be overwhelmed with feelings of longing for the past, even for a time we nev- er experienced. Nostal- gia is a complex emotion we struggle to thoroughly comprehend; it is a sen- timental sort of happi- ness, a bittersweet af- fection for the comfort of a time that has since passed.

Nostalgia was ini- tially thought to be a medical or neurological disease accompanied by symptoms including anx- iety, insomnia, fever, and even pain. By the end of the 20th century, it was regarded as a form of depression, a consistent misunderstanding that progressed the belief that nostalgia is dys- functional. However, our current understanding is a largely positive one. It boosts well-being, creates meaning, provides comfort, and combats loneliness. Today, there

are various accounts of the ways in which nostal- gia may benefit our psy- chological well-being, though there are only a few that address the neu- ral basis for this emo- tion.

According to a 2022 study by the National Library of Medicine, the core components of nos- talgia include self re- flection, autobiographical memory, regulatory ca- pacity, and reward. The brain activity involved in these processes occurs in such regions as the medial prefrontal cortex, the posterior cingulate cortex, the precuneus, the hippocampus, and the striatum. These parts of the brain play central roles in self-referential thought, imagination, vi- suospatial imagery, mem- ory consolidation, and habit formation, respec- tively.

Nostalgia is accom- panied by reflection and consciousness of one- self—this emotion re- volves around you. It originates from meaning- ful experiences, those that tend to hold oneself or one's situation in a favorable light. The me- dial prefrontal cortex (mPFC), with assistance of the posterior cingu- late cortex(PCC), inte- grates stimuli in regards to personal thoughts, traits, and goals. Both the mPFC and the PCC ex- perience heightened ac- tivity when individuals reflect upon self-relevant and self-descriptive in- formation.

Autobiographical mem- ory involves the main- tenance of one's sense of self over time, acting as a self-referential mem- ory system. In compar- ison to other uses of au- tobiographical memory, its role in nostalgia is strongly correlated with amplified self-esteem, so- cial connectedness, and boredom reduction. As such, nostalgic recol- lection is considered a unique case within this form of memory. The pro- cess revolves primarily around the hippocampus's function of combining details to form episodic memories, which are sim- ply specific, personal ex- periences.

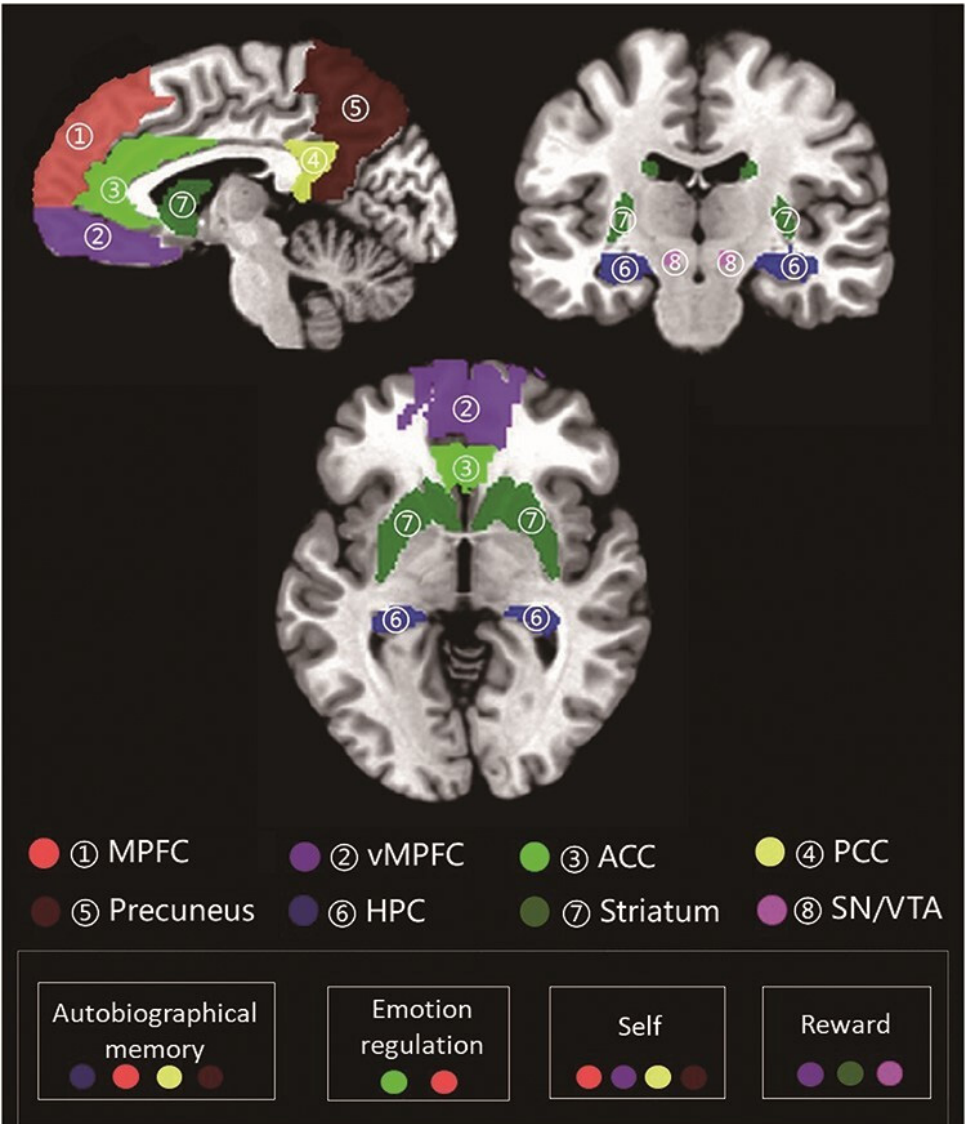
The emotional strength of one's autobiographi- cal memory corresponds to the level of nostalgia experienced. The affec- tive signature—emotional

footprint—of nostalgia is ambivalent, as it often simultaneously involves a positive and negative af- fect, though the positive generally dominates. As a result, nostalgia can al- leviate emotional conflict and act as a form of cog- nitive reappraisal, which is the reinterpretation of a situation to change its emotional impact. It can also overcome a dis- comforting state by evok- ing comforting memories. From our personal ex- periences with nostal- gia, we can recognize our tendency to reframe the memories in an often un- realistically optimistic light.

In addition to foster- ing a positive affect, or the experience of pleas- ant emotions, nostalgia is related to motivation and reward-seeking. Em- pirical studies have in- dicated that the emo- tion encourages healthy risk-taking towards re- ward and the overall pursuits of one's major goals. The key structures of the rework network in- clude the striatum, the substantia nigra (SN), the ventral tegmental area (VTA), and the ven- tromedial prefrontal cor- tex (vmPFC). The striatum acts as a bridge between motivation and action, while the SN encodes re- ward prediction errors that signal the difference between predicted and re- ceived rewards. Each of

these brain regions are activated by satisfying stimuli and are sensitive to primary and secondary rewards.

Though nostalgia re- mains an elusive emo- tion, approaching it from a cognitive neuroscience perspective can provide explanations for its psy- chological benefits. We understand it to be a personal experience, one that evokes memories and emotions only meaning- ful to us individually. Yet, the content of nos- talgia is highly social. A 2022 ScienceDirect re- port shows that when peo- ple experience nostalgia, they often reflect on peo- ple and social gather- ings. The social aspect of nostalgia occurs re- gardless of age, and is even present in narcis- sists; social connected- ness is a basic psycho- logical need. Nostalgia's social content, in addi- tion to our tendency to reflect on nostalgic expe- riences to escape feel- ings of disconnection, has hopeful implications. It may serve as an en- couragement to overcome reluctance of social en- gagement, even providing the courage to seek help. While further research is necessary to fully ascer- tain the effect and pur- pose of nostalgia as a whole, we can recognize and appreciate its role in enabling us to cherish the past and connect with others.





The Cycle of Fashion

By Nico Stackpole, Senior

According to Heuritech Fashion Trend Forecasting, the life cycle of fashion trends consists of five stages: introduction, rise, peak, decline, and obsolescence. Even though trends fade out of mainstream fashion and are no longer considered current, they may later reappear in a reinterpreted form; fashion is cyclical after all.

This cyclical pattern that fashion operates on is one of the most enduring theories in the industry and is known as the "20-year rule," as noted by Popular Science in 2026. Every two decades, fashion trends tend to resurface as the cycle allows a new generation to discover and reinterpret past styles, making them relevant again. But what truly drives this pattern? The answer is the irresistible pull of nostalgia!

The fashion cycle has especially accelerated

at an unprecedented pace due to the rise of social media. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have allowed influencers to post their interpretations of trends and reach global audiences within seconds.

This visual nature of social media also allows for rapid dissemination of trends which makes it easier for fashion trends from past decades to gain traction.

An example of this is the resurgence of '90s and Y2K trends, such as lowrise jeans. The return of these trends is a testament to the cyclical nature of fashion and the enduring appeal of nostalgia.

People often look back fondly on past decades and associate them with simpler times and cherished memories. In turn, fashion brands and designers tap into these emotions to create fresh yet familiar collections. This trend forecasting contributes to an extra level of precision in collection-making, and encourages a fresh perspective on fashion trends.

Informational Generation Chart

1883-1900	Lost Generation	☆ Defined by reaching adulthood during WWI and widespread disillusionment.
1901-1927	Greatest Generation	☆ Adult lives were defined by surviving the Great Depression and winning WWII.
1928-1945	Silent Generation	☆ The smallest and most prosperous in U.S. history with a reputation for being non-rebelling conformists.
1946-1964	Baby Boomers	☆ The largest U.S. generation due to the post-war baby boom, with over 70 million people still living.
1965-1980	Generation X	☆ Known as the "latchkey generation" because they frequently grew up unsupervised due to rising divorce rates and dual-income households.
1981-1996	Millennials	☆ The worlds digital pioneers and currently the largest generation in the U.S. workforce.
1997-2012	Generation Z	☆ Our truly "digitally native" generation, having no memory of a pre-cell phone world.
2013-2025	Generation Alpha	☆ The first to be entirely born in the 21st century, fully engulfed in the rise of social media.

Continued from page 1

SECTIONAL FINALS: Our opponent: none other than O'Neill, our nemesis, and the number one seed in our bracket. This game was the biggest of every single last one of the players' lives. This was our chance. From the start of this heavyweight matchup, both teams went punch for punch with each other. Going into the fourth quarter, the game was still neck and neck. It looked like we were running away with it. But this was a sectional final and O'Neill was not going out that easy. They immediately struck back with a layup and two free throws to cut the lead to three. Soon after they scored another layup.

With under a minute left, Onteora dug in and forced a turnover after a long fought defensive possession. A timeout was called and all we had to do was inbound the ball with ten seconds left, knock down some free throws and finish it. That was when our world got flipped upside down. O'Neill's guard, number four, kicked the inbounded ball mid-air and then stole the pass, before getting fouled. Just like that, the game took a brutal turn.

Now, number four was sent to the line for two free throws with ten seconds left down by one. If he made both, O'Neill would win the championship. If he made one, they would tie it. He did his free throw routine and, to the sound of Onteora's

jeers, bricked the first shot. A sigh of relief was heard from the Onteora side. With the fate of Onteora history on the line, rowdy fans stomped and yelled as he lined up for the second free throw to tie the game. The shot went up ... and bounced up and bounced again ... and fell off the rim. He missed! Onteora grabbed the rebound and was fouled. With only five seconds left in the game now, O'Neill could not do much. The final buzzer sounded. Then "THE ONTEORA EAGLES ARE SECTION CHAMPS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 25 YEARS!" We made it; that was the journey. Through success and adversity, Onteora reigns as champion. The 25-26 Onteora boys basketball team will be solidified in the history books forever.

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Stop and Read
The Clock

By Austin Otis, Sophomore

Time is a wondrous thing. It is limited, yet infinite. Nostalgia of the past, longing for the past. Old and new, new and old. Analog and digital, digital and analog. Analog timekeepers include a big hand (the minute), a little hand (the hour), and a clock face with mechanical parts underneath that make it work, along with batteries that will last for months. Old analog watches are covered with a glass screen. This is better because the parts last longer, as they are not cheaply made.

Digital watches include a screen, and a digital display with hidden electronics and a hidden battery underneath. This is better because it is easier to use, but cheaply made for mass production and mass profits. You may have to charge them every 24-48 hours.

With analog watches, you may only have to replace the batteries every few months, depending on the model type. An analog watch or clock makes you stop for a moment to think, while a digital clock does not. The little hand is the hour hand, while the big hand is the minute hand. And the lines and dots around them? They are one minute markers, with the space between every number totaling five minutes.

The big numbers are not just hour indicators, but are five minute increments as well. So, if the little hand is on the four and the big hand is on the third mark before big number five, it is 4:23. To know whether it is a.m. or p.m., well, you just have to remember that. This also makes telling time with analog clocks not just nostalgic, but fun.

Time in the universe is infinite, but not for us, or at least not yet. Maybe buy an analog watch while you are at it, though. I can say from experience that it is a fine investment. Why? Because of watches, even digital ones (if you use them), you will almost never be late. So get out there, and enjoy life. But remember, time is limited. It is ticking until the day you die of the symptoms of old age many years from now, so use your time wisely, and have a wonderful, timely day.

DECA Girls Bring It Home

By Gemma Holstein and Alexandra Young, Seniors

Many have heard news about the Ontario DECA Club on the announcements or in school updates, but you may be wondering, what is DECA? DECA stands for the Distributive Educational Clubs of America. DECA is a business competition in which participants select a topic from four different categories: Hospitality, Marketing, Finance and Business Management. Within those categories there are team events, and individual events that students participate in. In January, Ontario DECA members took a 100-question exam related to their chosen topics, and had one hour to complete it, which was worth half of their score for the regional competition.

Then, on January 9th, they each competed in a roleplay event, where students have 10-20 minutes (depending on if it is a team or individual competing) to read and form a presentation using a unique business scenario, making sure that they hit specific talking points called performance indicators (PIs). Then, they have ten minutes to present to a panel of judges and are graded accordingly. That role-play score, plus the test score, equals the students' competition score.

On January 9th, Ontario DECA members, seniors Gemma Holstein and Alexandra Young competed in the Business Law and Ethics Team Event, where they placed among the top six team events overall to advance to the DECA State Career Conference (SCC) in Rochester, New York, at the beginning of March. At the state conference, Holstein and Young were among three thousand other competitors from schools across the state, as they competed in the Financial Services Team Decision Making Event, which many have said to be the hardest team event. During their three days in Rochester, they participated in another 100-question exam, roleplay scenario in front of professionals in the field of Finance, and leadership classes hosted by various guest speakers. They were chaperoned by Ms. Goho, who was once also a member of DECA in high school, and a competitor at the national level.

At the competition, Young scored an 84 on the exam, and Holstein scored a 93. When asked to describe the testing experience Young stated, "I felt a lot of pressure, because everyone sitting at your table is your competition. Overall, I think I will never forget DECA; late-night studying vocabulary with Gemma in our hotel room, and frantically completing role-play practices as we prepared for states. It was a great learning experience for us both."

They would like to acknowledge Ms. Goho for her incredible mentorship and guidance throughout this experience. When asked

about it, Holstein stated, "Ms. Goho really helped to ease our nerves throughout this experience and we really could not have done it without her support. DECA States 2026 was an amazing experience for both Alex and I, and it felt really good to be there as one of the few girls in a heavily male-dominated competition."

Overall Holstein and Young solidified their place amongst the top 20-30 financial services teams in the state! Way to go girls!



Clawsnaps

Compiled by Fiona Turck

Q: "If you could choose to be born in any decade, which would it be, and why?"



Julia Young, Junior: "'80s. Eight is my lucky number."



Delilah Lieberman, Senior: "I'd want to be a teenager in the 2000s because 2000s movies look really fun."



Noah Drucquer, Senior: "'70s for sure. The Dead were at their best. Music was pretty good."



Christian Ordonez, Junior: "2010s. You've got good music, prime Fortnite—you've just got everything."



Oskar Baron, Senior: "Probably the '90s."

Lucia McDonagh, Senior: "Be born in the '50s, teen in the '60s."

Luc Millenson-Wilens, Senior: "This decade because it's great."



We would pick the 2000s because the fashion style and the lifestyle was better, and it seemed like a good time to live.
-Destiny Parker and Miley Gaddis

I would want to be born in the 2000s so I can marry Justin Bieber and be a pop artist that's still popular now and go to Hollister but not have to pay \$10,000,000!
-Haley Schmidt



I want to stay in this decade because I'm content with my life and history isn't fully written yet so I can change things. There are problems with every decade but I still have a chance to fix things.
-Esmé Drucquer



I would want to have a childhood in the 2000s because, to me, they had the best childhood.
-Emma Bodnar



If I had to choose a decade, it would be the 2010s because that's when the world felt peaceful.
-Tori Cordedo

I would want to live in the early 2000s. There wasn't as much conflict then. Technology wasn't as advanced and people were truly themselves. We had privacy and a life outside of our phones.
-Angely Lemus.

I would want to live in the 80s because everyone had good hair. - Leo Davis



I'd want to be born in the '90s because there weren't phones, the music was good, and people were unique.
-Kira Jule

Interview with Mr. Epstein; A History of Film

By Rama Gabriel, Sophomore

This issue of The Talon explores ideas of the past, and people’s nostalgia for the twentieth century. This interview with Mr. Epstein shows his thoughts regarding films gone by, seeing as he is the Film History teacher in our school.

What was the first movie you saw?

I know that my parents took me to see movies sometimes without reading about the movie, so I definitely ended up seeing some films that were inappropriate for little kids. I do have a memory very strongly burned into my brain of the first time I saw a certain commercial for a film as a kid. I’m like “Oh, spaceships, I love spaceships,” and they were really cool spaceships. They looked really great. “Oh wait, swords, I really like swords too,” and it was *Star Wars*.

Star Wars was genre-changing. I don't think we would appreciate that now what that movie was. It’s not particularly well acted, and the dialogue is not always great. However, what really made this a super important film, to ten-year-old Mr.

Epstein, was that it absolutely defied genres.

“A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away”



Wait: it's a long time ago, but it's also the future? Swords, but also spaceships? There’s a guy growling (without understandable language) but the other guy understands it? It's really sort of genre-defying, so that's a big memory for me. I’m sure I saw movies before that, but to ten-year-old me, that was a really big thing.

Do you have a favorite movie from the '80s?

My favorite comedy from the '80s would be *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* and my favorite horror movie from the '80s would be *A Nightmare on Elm Street*.

Who is a director you particularly like?

In the '80s I would have loved Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Stanley Kubrick, and those big directors. I am a huge Jim Jarmusch fan. There’s also the French director Jean-Pierre Jeunet who did *Amelie* and *City of Lost Children*, and Sofia Coppola—beautiful filmmaker.

If you could star in any movie from the '80s, what would it be?

Blade Runner. I would be a replicant in *Blade Runner*.

Do you think there was a “Golden Age” of film?

Obviously the 1940s produced some really beautiful films. The film noir period during World War II up until 1950, I really love the look of that, and that look gets reproduced very often in films. Like *Blade Runner*, it's sort of neo-noir, or *Sin City*, and it's very dark and rainy. That sort of look is beautiful.

And then in the '40s there are all these beautiful women and beautiful men, and beautiful dogs, and everyone’s just so

beautiful. Definitely the '40s and '50s had this moment of costume design. There was this costume designer, Edith Head. Look her up—she is who Edna Mode from *The Incredibles* is modeled after. She had



that haircut and the big glasses that Edna has. If it's a beautiful dress in a 1940s or '50s movie, Edith Head designed it.

When we talk about the ‘Golden Age’ of storytelling, I am going to say the '90s and early 2000s. We, as an American audience, were finally way more accepting of films from other countries. We watched movies that fit into a trope because that’s comfortable. We know those stories and we like those stories.

For example, a biopic like *Ray*, about Ray Charles, and a biopic like *Walk the Line*, about Johnny Cash, are exactly the same movie. Talented young man encounters difficulty as a child, brother dies, drug problems, overcomes drug problem to become a great musician. It's exactly the same story! But we like it, both times, because they are comfortable stories.

But in the '90s and early 2000s, we, as an American audience, started watching other people’s stories, and lesser told stories. It's kind of awesome. So for me, that’s sort of a personal ‘Golden Age’.

Presidential Newsletter

My Dearest Subjects,

April showers have turned into lovely May flowers! We have finally come out of the long, frigid cave of winter and liveliness has finally been restored to the student body of Onteora. Our student government continues to work for high schoolers by updating the feminine hygiene products in the bathrooms, improving mental health resources, and planning fun events for our seniors.

The date of prom is approaching, so mark your calendars for May 29th! Onteora seniors and those invited will find themselves at The Chateau in Kingston on the last Friday of May for an exciting celebration of their high school careers. Additionally, I would like to remind seniors to place their cap and gown orders as soon as possible (the link can be found on the news section of Onteora’s website)!

I hope everyone is having a nice start to their spring and the last quarter of the academic year. The end may be in sight, but that doesn’t mean it’s time to relax yet. Remember to study hard for your AP tests, finals, and Regents Exams.

As always, let us know if you have any ideas to improve student life at Onteora, or if you simply want to talk!

Sincerely,
President Green

“Onteora Indians”— Nostalgic or Naïve?

By Jack Goodman, Sophomore

We know Onteora today as a rigorous yet community-based school district, but what does Onteora really mean? Onteora derives its name from a local dialect of Lenape, known as Munsee, meaning in short terms “The hills in the sky”. Onteora was named to reference the majestic appearance of the Catskill region, with its rustic wilderness, bellowing riverbeds, and misty, recognizable peaks. Since its formal opening in 1952, Onteora’s staple mascot was named “The Indian” as a tribute to the area’s Native American heritage, from its significant occupation of the Esopus tribe—a sub-group of the Lenape people—to the deep historical relevance of Native American culture still prevalent in the Catskills today. However, in the early 2000s, conflict arose regarding the everlasting Onteora mascot. Parents, students, even community members found the mascot offensive, describing it as stereotypical, and even a form of bullying. The first initiative began in 2000-2001, when an attempt to change the mascot was applied. Following that, a new school board had been elected, overturning the decision. This was soon followed by a 2001 referendum barely voted 1,940 in favor and 1,868 against to keep the mascot. Later, in 2016, a student-led initiative argued the mascot was offensive, disrespectful, and did not properly portray Onteora’s message of inclusivity. Due to that infamous initiative, the Onteora Indians were no more. Instead, the famous Onteora Eagles we know today took their place. Although agreed by a 5-2 school board vote, community members and Onteora peers blew up in retaliation arguing that the Onteora Indians were a staple to the school. Even today, the debate whether Onteora Indians is a better mascot than Onteora Eagles is extremely prevalent, creating a division of discourse between Onteora’s community. However, preserving equality in Onteora will forever outweigh what mascot dictates our community. While still maintaining respect to the area we know and love, The Eagle continues to reflect our school’s strengths and diversity with a tribute to the exquisite Catskill region.

We Deserve The Same Representation

By Alexa Hull, Senior

It’s 2026—women’s sports are now provided with their own uniforms and their own space to practice. Before 1972, and the enactment of the Title IX Federal Legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, it was a battle for women’s sports to be considered more than just an “intermediate sport.” One can say we have come a long way in the journey for women to be treated equally in an athletic sense, but still there is blatant sexism and a lack of acknowledgement of the success achieved by women in sports. Is it too much to expect high school students and faculty to act accordingly in the equal distribution of social media, playing times, and overall public attention? Title IX says, “Each game, practice times and scheduling, ... must be equal.” yet girls’ teams play before boys’, as if they are the warm-up act. These inequalities are outside of Onteora too, and even at the Olympic level. For example, both the women’s and men’s U.S. hockey teams won the 2026 Olympic gold medals, but the women were publicly laughed at and mocked for being invited to the White House to honor their achievement. Conversely, major network news broadcast the men’s visit to the White House. Of course, the women of the hockey team never intended to share McDonald’s with the president, but this lack of respect is entirely disappointing. It is in this regard that I ask you how a high school can be expected to respect women’s sports in the same light as men’s when they aren’t even at the Olympic level? The U.S. Women’s Olympic Hockey Team won the Gold in 2018 and again in 2026. All of a sudden, there is a “holier-than-thou” mindset from the Men’s Hockey Team—even though the 2026 win was their first since 1980. In 2026, it is extremely shocking and unfathomable how such behaviors and attitudes are tolerated. This professional disrespect greatly echoes the mindset seen in the environment produced throughout high school. This year, the Girls’ Varsity Basketball team qualified for MHALS and faced the highly competitive Our Lady Of Lourdes, a city school that recruits carefully selected basketball players. Despite our loss to that team, we fought a lengthy and strenuous battle. I take that game with me as a token of accomplishment, and opposing teams now see Onteora as a great threat for the next season. At this competition we received much support from Onteora faculty and even some students, but I ask you if the school’s social media highlighted this achievement with more than half a sentence? Did local photographers capture the spirit of all games with equal distribution to media? Of course, after this loss, the feelings of defeat were brief, and the team remained unbothered by lack of media portrayal. After the unimaginable amount of commitment, sweat, and hours put in every day to get this far, we rebuilt an entire team and made it to the final game of sections. That deserves the same representation as our male counterparts. Of course, these inequalities don’t just end and begin within the walls of Onteora; they stem far beyond, even to the professional level.



Horoscopes

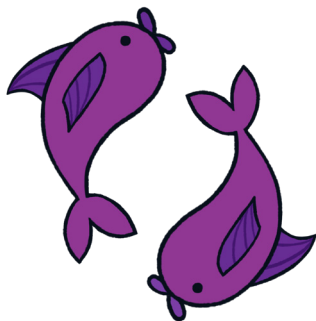
By The Talon Staff



Capricorn (December 22 – January 19) (1901–1910)
Jump on your horse,
Gallop your way into town
Just beware of the hurricane
For it might bring you down



Aquarius (January 20– February 18) (1911–1920)
The year is 1912
But there’s no need to panic
So long as you avoid the water
And don’t board the Titanic



Pisces (February 19 – March 19) (1921–1930)
Hooray ladies!
It’s time to celebrate; you can finally vote!
Put on your flapper dresses,
Don’t forget your pearls and fur-trimmed coats



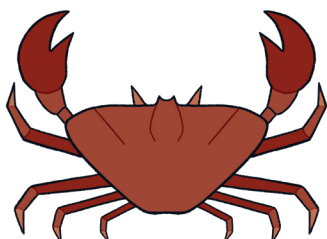
Aries (March 20 – April 18) (1931–1940)
The stock market crashed,
But don't get too depressed
The New Deal will save you
From your economic troubles and stress



Taurus (April 19 – May 19) (1941–1950)
G.I. Joe is returning home
To rid us of despair and gloom
Families will soon be growing
You can expect a great boom



Gemini (May 20 – June 19) (1951–1960)
Elvis is a worldwide star
Keep an eye on your wife
His hips are swaying
It will change her life!



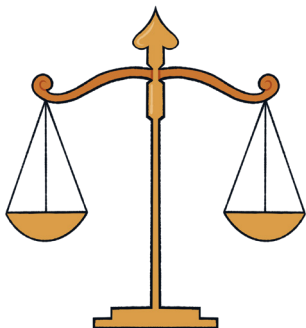
Cancer (June 20 – July 21) (1961–1970)
“I Have A Dream”
Bands are on the stage
We are all here in Woodstock
Ready to rage...



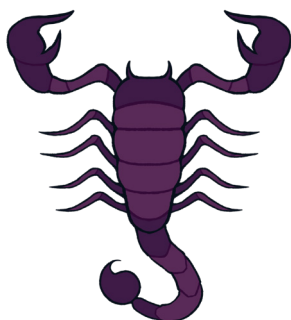
Leo (July 22 – August 21) (1971–1980)
We’re in a galaxy far, far away,
And times are pretty groovy
Hop in your Chevy, go on a Chase,
Or perhaps see a new movie...



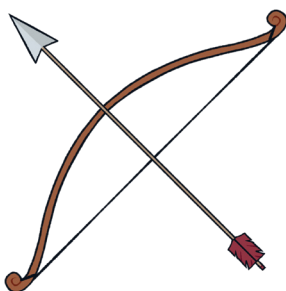
Virgo (August 22 – September 21) (1981–1990)
Virgo, buckle up
You’re in for a Thriller
New wave is thriving
And it’s pretty killer...



Libra (September 22 – October 21) (1991–2000)
Your friends will “be there for you”
Even through the fear of Y2K
When the clock strikes twelve
Let’s hope for another day...



Scorpio (October 22 – November 20) (2001–2010)
You’ll soon be receiving a call
At night when you’re all alone
It won’t be coming from the wall
But rather from your new iP-hone



Sagittarius (November 21 – December 20) (2011–2020)
Get your reusable straws
and save the turtles
The 2020s are on the way
And there are gonna be some hurdles (sksksk...)

A Lack of Thankfulness for Modern Technology

By Azarax Tehrani, Junior

Your life sucks—or at least a lot of people believe theirs do. I'm not here to tell you it doesn't. I have no idea. I have found that people often blame the internet for their problems. Please, for your sake and for my mental health, don't do this. The internet is one of the greatest tools ever created, and when you say something like this, you sound like a blithering idiot to anyone with a rational thought in their head. There was once a time before the internet; people want to go back to that. What I'm trying to say is: that is not realistic, and the idea is fueled entirely by nostalgia, not rational thought.

Can the internet help you?

It already has. You know how you go to the doctor's office, or maybe the hospital? Most processes that are used in these medical institutions have been incredibly streamlined and advanced by the internet. In fact, a lot of people have the internet to thank for their lives. Aside from medical practices, the internet also benefits your ability to communicate with friends and family. If they live in a different house than you, it increases the communication between one another, which can altogether increase mental health. Also, having a magic rectangle in your pocket that has access to almost all of the information in the world is incredibly helpful for your health, and your safety.

Unseen benefits of the internet...

Some people don't acknowledge how great access to information helps you in your daily life. All factually incorrect information is harmful, and although the internet is a petri dish for this, if you know how and where

to look, you can find many, many good resources that tell you commonplace things—like, for example, horoscopes are complete and utter science-denying nonsense. This security of information helps society become a more educated society, and it is undeniable that a more educated society is a better one. Another underthanked fact of the internet is how many good jobs it creates in most fields, and how this, in turn, benefits the economy.

A.I.

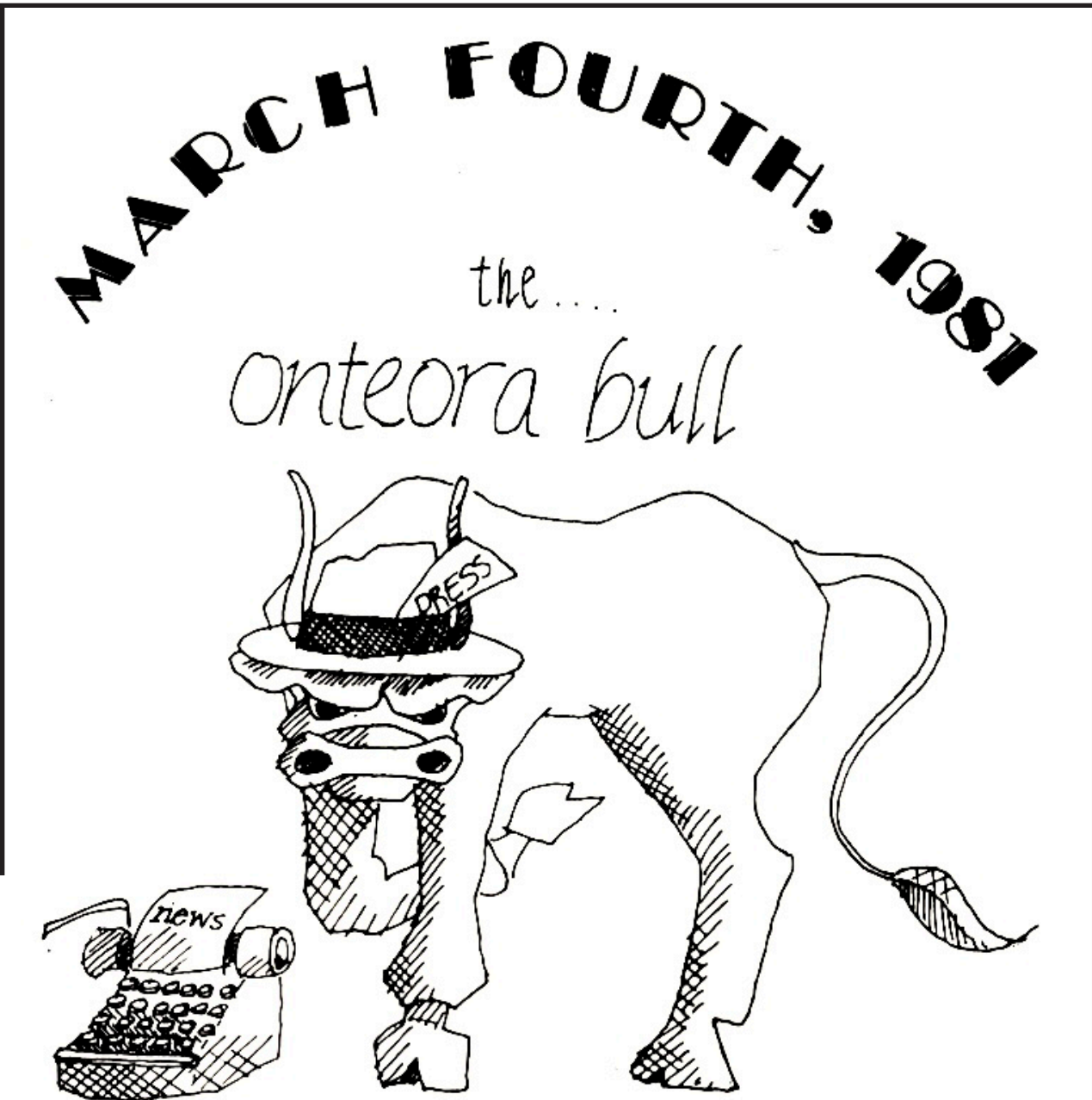
My grandma always said that if you wanted to hear a lot of people talk confidently about something they know nothing about, start a conversation about Artificial Intelligence. A.I. is a byproduct of the internet, and we should be thanking our lucky stars that it has come about. Artificial intelligence has and will benefit the frontiers of science more than we can understand. So far, it has helped in the development of cancer vaccines, space travel to the dark side of the moon, and other things too complex for any high school student to write about. A guaranteed sign that somebody doesn't know what they're talking about when it comes to A.I. is their saying that A.I. will take over the world. You've seen too many movies. Please pay attention to real life for once.

Common misconceptions

A bad carpenter blames his tools. And if you are blaming the internet for your problems, you need to start taking accountability. The internet is nothing more than a chainsaw; it is helpful in a lot of circumstances and makes your life 1000 times easier. If you misuse it, it can cut your leg off, but we don't blame the chainsaw for that. Did you know that 5G causes cancer? This belief is so incorrect that, in regards to the perpetrator of this poppycock, believing the opposite of whatever they say is likely the best option.

"We should go back to the '80s when we didn't have the internet and life was so much better."

This erroneous and deluded statement should not be uttered as much as it has been. If you genuinely believe this, then don't bother taking medicine that has been discovered in the last 40 years. Cut off all of your communication to anyone not in speaking distance whilst away from your home. Decrease your ability to access all information at the tips of your fingers and be forced to go to a library if you want to know a simple fact. Obviously, no one is going to do this; living in ignorance is for ignorant people. And if you are an ignorant person, why are you reading this article?



Hand-drawn illustrations (pictured to the right and on page 1) courtesy of *The Bull*, 1981; former title of Onteora's newspaper.

Was It Actually Better?

By Jenny Albright, Senior

If you wear a band t-shirt out in public, especially to a town like Woodstock, NY, there’s at least a 50% chance that some old person with blown-out tattoos and a faint scent of cigarettes will come and strike up a conversation with you. Whether they were with the band, saw them live, or any other odd tidbit that you never could have imagined, these people always have some crazy stories. And, if you’re like me, these evoke two key emotional states: jealousy and FOMO. For example: Every time I hear about someone having a grand time in Woodstock ’94, blind rage covers my mind, because I wish I were them.

But, when I’m taken aside from the strong emotions that come when thinking about the alternative, specifically metal, scenes from the past, several questions pop up for me: were bands back then really that good? Was it actually that grand a time? Let’s consider a few key points comparing then and now. Specifically, by “then”, I mean the 1990s, but to illustrate a few points, let’s reach back into the ’70s and ’80s.

MONEY MONEY MONEY; Then: Cheap tickets!

More than once online, I’ve seen blessed screenshots circulate: old concert tickets, always for general admission. Nirvana, \$19; Mudhoney, \$12; The Pixies, \$15; Def-

tones, \$21; Lollapalooza 1994, \$31; No Doubt, \$21; hell, even Woodstock ’94 for \$135! Back in the day, a person could actually afford a ticket to a band they wanted to see. And these numbers aren’t from the debut days, but from times when the bands were popular: that Deftones ticket, for example, was from June of 2000—right before they dropped a major hit album. Compared to now, it seems like a dream. And while of course the argument could be made that venues may have been worse, or inflation wasn’t as bad, the fact still remains that these tickets were *affordable for the time*. Sorry, I’m getting jealous again...

Now: Two balcony tickets? That’ll be... \$500

Trying to buy tickets for a decently popular band is now a struggle tantamount to financing a semester at college. General admission? Forget it. I mean, just recently, the ticket prices for Nine Inch Nails’ “Peel It Back” tour started at \$120. A hundred twenty dollars for a balcony seat? Uhm, not now, not in this economy—that’s groceries! Tickets for popular bands have left the affordable range for the average person, and made concerts something ever rarer for people to enjoy. Maybe the ’90s did something right, keeping the prices down.

TYPES OF MUSIC

Then: Truly, the ’90s were the decade to be in for the expansion of metal (call me biased, I am). Early '90s had a fun blend of thrash's tail end, heavy metal, and the first big boom of grunge, leading to bands like Soundgarden and Alice in Chains. They had a sound that took influence from others— but was turned into something entirely

new.

Also at this time, though stretching more into the mid-’90s, was the rise of industrial music coming from the rave scene into more of the public eye: Ministry, Nine Inch Nails, Marilyn Manson (EW!), White Zombie, etc... These loud, heavy, factory-esque beats began to dominate in ways they hadn’t before. Then, finally, in the late ’90s, came nu-metal: Korn, Slipknot, Limp Bizkit, Coal Chamber, Kittie—so many bands! All ten years of the decade had something better than perfect come from them in a way that, in my opinion, hasn’t been seen since for metal.

Now: Metal is still pumping, that I won’t deny. Is it my kind of metal? Not in the slightest. Is it still new music that is bringing new people to the scene? Yup! Regardless of personal opinion about the actual music itself—I HATE metalcore—there is undeniable good coming from the fact that it brings new people to the scene, thereby keeping it alive. Gatekeeping and goose-guarding subcultures, while sometimes useful, generally just wards away new fans, something that only ever ends in a dead scene with a bunch of old purists fussing over each other: in short terms, LAME!

By getting new people interested and invested, the scene only grows, something good for both its longevity and its members. And, to make a final point, sub-genres outside the mainstream “metalcore” are very much alive and thriving; some of the best grunge, doom metal, and industrial I’ve ever heard is from the last five years.



The Golden Age of Basketball

By Vaughan McDonagh, Sophomore

In the late ’80s and early ’90s professional basketball became more popular and globalized. Intense rivalries between Larry Bird and Magic Johnson sparked viewers' interest—then Micheal Jordan’s rise to stardom as he led the Chicago Bulls into an age of dynasty.

This era led to rise in talent level and media growth, and basketball became more mainstream. High flying and physical play boosted the popularity domestically. The growing worldwide popularity of basketball was greatly due to the global marketing of Micheal Jordan.

The public bought into the dominant superstar icons—and tough competition. Also, personal drama between players and teams created devoted fanbases based in regional pride that could turn a regular-season game into a playoff atmosphere.

In today's NBA there are those who will talk about how ’80s and ’90s basketball was lower skill, worse shooting, and relied on physicality more than skill. This may be true but you can't discredit a whole other era as being incompetent. It’s not fair because all sports are constantly changing and evolving.

Twenty years from now people will be sure to make the same arguments about today’s players.

’80s and ’90s players were maybe not as skilled as today's, but it was a critical time as they developed modern skills used in today's game. The three-point shot is an example of this. The three-point line was introduced in 1979. Fast forward 47 years and players such as Steph Curry and James Harden are much more capable shooting from that range than any player in the ’80s and ’90s.

The entertainment is what matters when it comes to the overall success of the NBA, not just skill. Some would argue that the physical style in the ’80s and ’90s is more entertaining than the back-and-forth three-point shooting of today's game. Many people that lived through that time would say they would rather see Michael Jordan come down the court and dunk on somebody, or a scuffle between the bad boy Pistons and the Lakers, than Anthony Edwards shoot a step-back three over two people.

It’s undeniable that players in the ’80s and ’90s modernized the sport, increased global interest in the game, and brought a more intense style and form onto the court, ushering us into The Golden Age of Basketball.

Political Climate Change

By Hazel Haynes and
Lucia McDonagh, Seniors

Twice in our American presidential history, candidates have won 49 out of 50 states: Nixon in 1972, and Reagan in 1984. Landslide elections peppered the 20th century, with Roosevelt, Hoover, FDR, Eisenhower, Johnson, and Bush joining Reagan and Nixon in winning over 40 states. So far in the 20th century we have not seen a landslide. The last one was when George H.W Bush won 40/50 states in 1988.

No president since 2000 has won more than 31 states, displaying just how close recent elections have been. This competitiveness has left half the country feeling angry, unrepresented, and hateful in the four years that follow. Gone are the days of a consensus and acceptance of election results.

The rise of personalized media serves as another factor to part the sea of voters even further. Digital algorithms show consumers only what they want to see, rather than a well-rounded variety of news and information to challenge and build in-depth outlook on politics.

This new-age is spurred on by the 24-hour news cycle, constantly broadcasting a variety of stories and national updates designed to evoke emotions and instantaneous reaction from those at home.

Politics, as a topic, is divisive and increasingly complex. The chasm between the left and right widens by the day, and our human capacity for empathy seems to be dimming rapidly. The art of putting oneself in another's shoes is lost, and the repercussions of this impact resonate throughout civilization. Relationships can crumble, business deals sour, and family gatherings are tainted with the taste of hostility brought on by disagreement.

The worst part is the inescapability of it all. Politicians scream slogans from every screen, opposing rhetorics fight for space in your mind, all vying for attention and support. Your neighbor puts inflammatory signs out in their yard, joining the masses of people desperate to declare their designation, to not be mistaken as "the other side". Every conversation with a stranger feels like beating around the bush by politely dancing around with shallow words and meaningless nothings in an attempt to avoid baiting any sort of government-focused conversation. And yet, we try our best, because this is how it has always been. Or is it?

We have grown accustomed to the polarized nature of the public, so much so that it is easy to forget that

things were not always as tense as they are now. "Them's fighting words!" describes just about anything other than a bland evaluation of the weather at this point. But in the past, opposing political views were nothing more than a difference in opinion, akin to a favorite color or debate between song albums. Married couples would simply skirt around the topic entirely, choosing to leave their spouse's ballot choice a mystery. It simply... didn't matter, at least not on the everyday scale.

So what changed? Did we as a society become more critical, less accepting of non-conformity? Did the game of government morph into becoming more impactful and less predictable? Did politicians grow hungrier, craving more power, more money, more devotion? The answer, in usual political fashion, is an ambiguous all of the above.

The disjunction of political parties and those within them also seems to be a pendulum-like result of the extreme isolation experienced nationally during the COVID pandemic. As we rebuilt and people interacted more, the desire for connection and fear of seclusion pushed people to dogpile onto the popular views, if for nothing more than to feel included. This has bred a 'die-on-this-

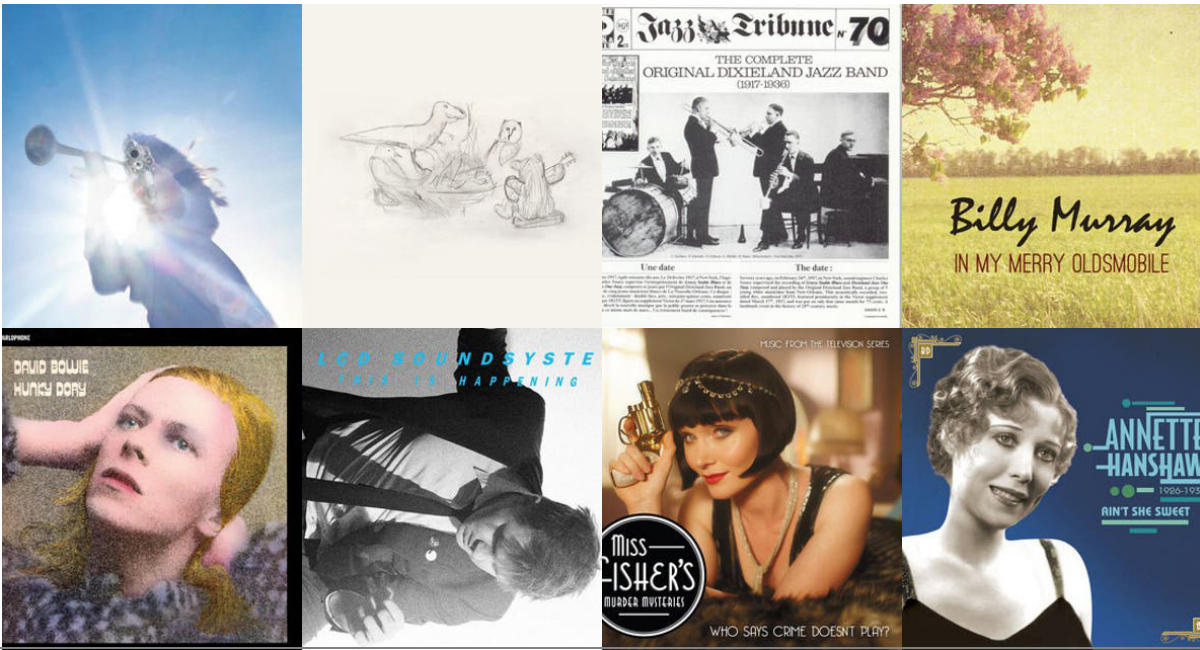
hill' mindset adopted by many citizens today—that is the intense, unwavering dedication to an idea, person, or platform—that drives us further apart than ever before. There seems to be a distinct lack of moderate or center-lying opinions, accentuated by the extremity of beliefs and personalities weighing down either end of the spectrum.

This distinct differentiation can be seen in election statistics as well. No longer does the country as a whole sway back and forth between poles. Instead, we have vacuums of power on each face of the coin, pulling individual opinions every which way. Yes, there have been close races in the past, but it seems to have become a part of our 21st century political culture for races to be competitive and close.

It is no longer a majority consensus, but a contest of who can raise and spend the most money, promote their beliefs and trash the other side. Presidents have been winning by smaller and smaller margins, and the intense dislike of one side by the other has controlled the political narrative. The distance between political parties has been widening for years and we see society becoming brittle with the stress of ongoing dissent.

Playlists

Playlists by Shelby Buryk, Senior



The Talon Time Warp

ACROSS

- 1 Bicep workout
- 5 Wooden beams for oxen
- 10 Looping memes
- 14 Lump in your throat
- 16 ____ Little, "The Wire" character portrayed by Michael K. William
- 17 * 1970s Beatles ballad that was their "last song" released in 2023, or when taken literally, a hint to 30, 48 and 62 across
- 18 Backyard hangouts with grills, for short
- 19 Surround completely
- 20 Female artist that sang "On The Floor" with Pitbull
- 21 On this date, you may wake up with shaving cream on your face or to some other devious troll
- 27 Taylor Swift's partner
- 30 * "No cap that's peak"
- 31 Class for non-native speakers, in brief
- 32 "These ##### love ____", lyrics from a lit Cheif Keef song
- 33 Doctor in the rap world
- 34 Bunk bed option
- 36 Org. whose recent issues have caused massive lines at airports
- 39 Kwik-E-Mart worker
- 42 Sicilian volcano
- 46 "That ship ____ sailed"
- 48 *"Trippin' OD"
- 51 Actress Maya of "Stranger Things"
- 52 What a student might look at when they forgot to read the chapter Mr. Castle assigned

- 54 Neither here ____ there
- 55 Dream job for a food lover
- 60 Stereotypical dog name
- 62 * "W respectmaxx bro"
- 65 Nifty transportation method in London similar to a trolley
- 66 George Orwell novella with Napoleon in it
- 67 Packaging of The Switch drinks from the cafeteria
- 68 Jewelry fastener
- 69 Stair unit

DOWN

- 1 Willy Wonka didn't actually need this item
- 2 Thick Japanese noodle
- 3 Unedited image
- 4 That's too funny (Abbr.)
- 5 When said three times, "and so on"
- 6 Choose
- 7 Unit of speed in Eur.
- 8 Sad songs
- 9 Biden's old occupation (Abbr.)
- 10 Creature in a flying barrel in Clash Royale
- 11 Statement often said during a double period lecture
- 12 Acronym for online help
- 13 OCS uncs
- 15 "Weekend Update" NBC skit show
- 20 NYC airport
- 22 This TV network airs Sesame Street and has a fire kids' program

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60	61					62		63	64					
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67						68					69			

- 23 ____ Speedwagon (old truck)
- 24 Test for an aspiring atty.
- 25 To be, in Spanish
- 26 Annoying African fly with a duplicative name
- 27 Middle Eastern dish that is meat on a stick (Pl.)
- 28 Winter time zone in the Midwest (Abbr.)
- 29 Chess rating system
- 35 Ivy League school in Philly
- 37 What a student gets told if they speak in the Learning Center
- 38 Highest Minor League Baseball level
- 40 Young pooch
- 41 Kampala resident
- 43 Lost a basketball game, for example
- 44 Potential lunchroom allergy hazard
- 45 Did a great job, in Gen Z lingo
- 47 Makes repeated attempts on the answer to 26 down
- 49 Men on their wedding day
- 50 Slang abbreviation that means "That's so true"
- 53 Deputy Tom keeps one of these on him (slang)
- 56 "You've got Mail" company
- 57 Initials on a sunscreen bottle (plural)
- 58 Jane of British literature
- 59 An easy win
- 60 Org. to which to report a phone scam or "____ Flight Team Stand Up"
- 61 Financial planning option, for short
- 62 OCS traditional lunch
- 63 ____ de los Muertos - Sra. Gallin's favorite holiday
- 64 Canadian Leaders, for short

By Evan Pizer, Junior