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# the inkblot

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BLOT GRAPHIC BY KARA PETROSINO

Volume 19, Issue 2

Communications High School, Wall, New Jersey

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## CHS's competitive spirit remains despite hybrid schedule



BLOT PHOTO BY ABIGAIL FULLER

Members of the freshmen class compete in a Kahoot! trivia game on Monday, Oct. 26. This was the first lunchtime event of Fall Spirit Week, with questions ranging from chemistry to literature to CHS facts. Monday's event was supposed to be a socially-distanced outdoor challenge, but inclement weather caused a change of plans. Both in-school and at-home students participated in the event. See the backspread for more pictures and the final scores.

See SPIRIT WEEK, page 12

## New academic integrity issues arise with midterms

By LUKE SASSA

Throughout the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, many of the procedures followed by teachers have been noticeably different from previous years due to the coronavirus pandemic. The way in which midterms were administered at the end of the first marking period was no exception to the widespread changes that have taken place.

Like many teachers throughout the school, English teacher Jaime Vander Velde opted against utilizing a traditional testing format for midterms, instead choosing to give a writing assignment.

"In non-pandemic times, the English IV midterm would be an exam consisting of objective questions and short answers," Vander Velde said.

Her reasoning for assigning an individually-based task was partially due to the obstacles posed by having a mix of hybrid and fully-virtual students. Students on a hybrid schedule can be monitored during a test by an in-person teacher in order to prevent cheating, whereas at-home students cannot effectively be prevented from using

forbidden resources.

This dilemma prompted Vander Velde to design an open-ended assignment where students could apply learned skills in place of a test with concrete answers.

"I wanted [fully-virtual students] to have the opportunity to complete an assessment task as closely aligned with their [hybrid] classmates as possible," Vander Velde said.

Not every teacher chose this route, however, and those who did decide to stick with the original testing format were presented with a different set of integrity-related issues.

"[Sticking to the original testing format] required me to make two versions of the exam, one for the [Cohort] A kids and one for the [Cohort] B kids," said Forensics and Biology teacher Leah Morgan.

Morgan explained that this step was taken to mitigate the risk that Cohort A hybrid students, who took their in-person Forensics midterm earlier in the week, would share answers with Cohort B students. She hoped that fully-

virtual students, who had no choice but to take an online version of the test, would not engage in cheating and meet the expectations of the district's academic integrity policies.

"I do expect academic honesty on all tests where students cannot use permitted materials, and I think with the CHS population, it is a reasonable expectation," Morgan said.

Junior Marissa Perez of Aberdeen, a fully-virtual student, also found this expectation to be reasonable, saying that "it is realistic to expect academic integrity because the kids here are very hardworking and honest, and everyone completes their work [in order to] learn and benefit in the future."

Senior Michael Rau of Manalapan seconded this notion, pointing out that any violations related to academic integrity would likely be taken very seriously by the district. In addition, he argued that CHS students adhere to the policy on their own.

"It's a hard-working group of kids at CHS, so I think academic integrity would be taken seriously," Rau said.

## CHS welcomes back virtual students for marking period 2

By EMMA BAROFSKY

With the beginning of the second marking period starting on Monday, Nov. 16, many students who originally opted to learn fully remote switched over to the hybrid schedule. If they made the decision to continue learning virtually instead, this choice would be binding. The

students joined others at CHS who are divided into two cohorts and either attend school on Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday.

In order to return to school for the second marking period, guidance counselor Melanie Sambataro explained that students needed to take certain measures.

"Parents and students were emailed by Mr. Gleason for steps to take," Sambataro said. "A form needed to be filled out indicating the student's intent to return for marking period two. Forms were turned into building principals."

Many teachers at CHS have encouraged students to return to school for learning purposes. Science and health

See RETURNING STUDENTS, page 2



## New Jersey's teaching tradition continues virtually



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIN WHEELER

Wheeler participates in an exercise at the Nov. 2014 NJEA Convention in Atlantic City, NJ.

By BEATRICE KARRON

The New Jersey Education Association Convention has been canceled only twice in its more than 100-year history – once during World War II and again during Hurricane Sandy. Though the convention was not canceled a third time due to the pandemic, it was held virtually for the first time: and saw its highest ever attendance.

“Making this decision now allows us and our partners to focus on providing a virtual convention that lives up to the high standards we have set over the last century,” said NJEA President Marie Blistan in a statement on [njea.org](http://njea.org). “We will do everything we can to ensure that our members have the professional learning resources they value even in a new format.”

Normally held in Atlantic City, this year the convention took place via Zoom from Nov. 5-6. CHS students enjoyed a long weekend while teachers could attend the conference if desired. The MCVSD does not require teachers to attend the convention like some districts, especially due to the nature of the specific fields of some CHS teachers, but teachers are encouraged to go and improve their classroom skills.

CHS students were all virtual for the week of the convention, rather than Cohort A attending in-person on Monday and Tuesday as usual. Tuesday, Nov. 3 was Election Day, which contributed to the decision to make the whole week virtual, as Gov. Phil Murphy encouraged schools to go remote on Election Day.

“Because Wednesday is our typical remote day, it just made sense to make the whole week remote because then we would’ve had an imbalance in our cohorts,” Principal James Gleason said.

According to chemistry teacher Erin Wheeler, much of the convention focused on virtual and hybrid learning in lieu of the current learning adaptations. Wheeler, who serves as a chairperson on the Vocational Career and Technical Education Committee, has attended the convention every year since the beginning of her career.

Wheeler noted that while there were some advantages to having the convention online, many aspects of the convention were missing.

“The disadvantage was that a lot of the convention is a social aspect, seeing other teachers, talking with other teachers, they also have a lot of luncheons and dinners and after activities that were missing, which is the fun part of the convention,” Wheeler said.

Wheeler added that the usual camaraderie and network expansion were absent from this year’s convention, as well as the vendors, colleges, and booksellers that usually attend to add to educational enrichment in New Jersey.

“It’s kind of a networking thing too, so you missed that as well,” said Wheeler. “Not as effective, but at least it was something.”

While the convention lacked usual in-person activities, the 2020 Keynote Speaker was Ruby Bridges, the first African-American child to desegregate a school in Louisiana in 1960, amid violent backlash. She has continued to fight for equal educational opportunities for children through her foundation, the Ruby Bridges Educational Foundation.

“If we are to get past our racial differences, it will come from our young people,” Bridges said during her speech. “But we, as educators, have to do our part.”

## Seniors offered the opportunity to take an in-school SAT

By ELLA LUKOWIAK

Instead of showing up to take a seat at an unfamiliar school, on Wednesday, Oct. 14, CHS seniors were given the opportunity to take the SAT at one of the places they know best: CHS.

“With all the talk about a second wave of COVID, I had no idea if I’d even be able to take it again,” said Senior Nate Riehl of Wall Township.

Many of Riehl’s classmates found themselves in the same position: New Jersey test centers were closing left and right, many with little forewarning.

Senior Rachel Fisher of Ocean said that both her June and August SAT dates were canceled only a few weeks prior to testing day. Senior Francesca DiMiceli of Middletown added that some test center closings were not only last minute, but also were communicated poorly to the students.

“I knew a couple of people who were finding out days before that their testing location was closed by friends... not by [the] College Board or the host school,” DiMiceli said.

Due to these unexpected closings, many students decided to take advantage of the opportunity that not only CHS, but the entire MCVSD district was providing to them.

“It’s beyond a school decision... we wouldn’t have been able to have the SAT without the other academies



BLOT GRAPHIC BY DANI McLAUGHLIN

SAT statistics from the CHS Guidance Department.

being able to as well,” said guidance counselor Sandra Gidos.

Gidos went on to explain how the decision came to be. “This is the first time that we offered it. Usually [Oct. 14] is the day for the PSAT... they are also offering a PSAT this year in January. That enabled us to be able to do a school day SAT in October and then we can offer our juniors the PSAT in January,” Gidos said.

Gidos also explained that with a school the size of CHS, there were some complications with spacing and supervisors.

“One of the things you may not realize is that [when] enabling to do a test you need to have teachers and proctors as well, and space,” Gidos said. “We had over forty students for just the seniors.”

Despite about half of the Class of 2021 opting to take the in-school SAT, most schools have gone test-optional for the upcoming pool of applicants. Some may see this as a way out of testing again, and Riehl explained his confusion about which path was the best course of action.

“I disliked the fact that most of them ‘encouraged’ submitting scores,” Riehl said. “I wish it was either submit scores or don’t, not your own choice... almost all of the schools I researched and attended virtual tours at didn’t really explain the benefits or negatives to submitting or withholding test scores.”

Whether students decided to take the test at CHS or not, Gidos explained that they will most likely not be given that opportunity again in the future.

“Although I think it was a great opportunity for our students to take [the SAT] at a test site I think they are more comfortable with, this is a... one time decision, and it’s not something that they were planning on doing in the future.”

### [RETURNING STUDENTS]

teacher Leah Morgan said she feels that there are several benefits to taking advantage of the hybrid plan.

“I think the hybrid schedule allows students to have face-to-face time with their teachers which helps most students learn better,” Morgan said. “Students also get to socialize with each other which is very important. Overall I feel like some school experience is better than fully virtual school.”

These factors have led sophomore Skyler Glusman of Middletown to return to CHS, a change in routine for which she is thrilled.

“I’m most excited to meet my teachers in person and be able to see my friends when I return to school...I think that I have been learning pretty well doing virtual but I think in school I’ll have less distractions,” Glusman said.

Senior Michael Rau of Manalapan attended school virtually during the first marking period because he wanted to see how the hybrid plan would play out. He made the decision to return to school because if he decided to not go back, then his decision would be binding. He plans to

see how school goes and then decide if he wants to change his mind and return to all-virtual learning.

“Undoubtedly going to school is a higher risk than staying home... so if there’s something bad that happens, we are not going to hesitate to go home but we want to stay as long as possible,” Rau said.

Aside from the potential risks of attending school, Rau is excited to return to CHS.

“I cherish every time I could see someone virtually or outside far apart but it will be different seeing people every day and I’m looking forward to that. It seems like the school has been doing [the hybrid plan] very safely.”

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### CORRECTION

The Oct. 9 issue of *The Inkblot* erroneously reported that the CHS chapter of the Junior State of America (JSA) was among the clubs approved by the district thus far. The story has been changed on the website, correcting JSA to the Student Government Association (SGA).

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## Pandemic restrictions force a break with tradition Councils and advisers plan changes to CHS events

By LILLIAN CHEN

Communications High School dealt with event cancellation after event cancellation when the COVID-19 pandemic hit last spring. As the school enters a new year, students and staff are trying to find ways around the COVID-19 restrictions that have the power to shut down and cancel classic CHS traditions.

"Thankfully, our class was able to run our main event for our sophomore year, Winter Ball. We were able to make significant funds from that event that set us up well heading into our junior year. At the moment, we've struggled to come up with fundraising events and our main junior event of Coffeehouse will likely be moved or less profitable," said junior class president Liam Stemetzki of Wall Township. "We're brainstorming ways to make Coffeehouse a COVID-friendly event, but those ideas haven't been completely developed yet."

The juniors aren't the only ones struggling to find alternatives to events they had looked forward to planning. Profitable, yet engaging fundraisers that adhere to COVID-19 guidelines have been hard to come by for student councils.

"All of our fundraisers from last year got canceled because of the pandemic, so we are trying our hardest to raise the money that we didn't get the opportunity to raise last year," said sophomore class council member Marina Berger of Marlboro. "I think this could possibly affect the budget we have for future events, but I also believe that we can make the best out of it... Usually council would be planning events, such as the Winter Ball, and it's upsetting that we can't, but we are trying our best to think of fun alternatives."

The sophomore class recently held a COVID-friendly fundraiser called "Cards For a Cause" to make up for some of the money they're losing. They made over \$1,000 selling boxes of cards to students' families.

The senior class has also been largely affected by restrictions imposed due to the pandemic. In addition to losing their junior prom last spring, they are now looking at the possibility of having to modify many of the other events they had looked forward to for much of high school.

"The senior class wasn't able to host the back-to-school dance this year, unfortunately. But we are actually doing well in terms of money," said senior class council member Francesca McCaffrey of West Long Branch. "We've been talking about senior dinner, a senior picnic, and a modified senior trip. Although it's not going to be anything close to seeing a Broadway show in NYC, we still are trying to do our best to come up with something fun and engaging for the class to do together."

The class advisers have been doing their best to help their councils through this unfortunate time. Boosting morale and brainstorming alternate fundraisers are their top priorities right now.

"We will be looking for another major fundraiser during the spring to continue to grow our class account... Since we can't really do anything in school we are looking for fundraisers that involve the parents more and also those that can foster class spirit and unity," said Sharyn O'Keefe, an adviser for the Class of 2023. "It is hard to have the same feeling of class spirit when everyone is not in the building at the same time."

Karen Britto, the Class of 2022 adviser, has also been working with her council to find solutions for some of the monetary issues presented during the pandemic.

"Our council met with the freshmen, junior, and senior class councils this past Wednesday to discuss the challenges associated with student leadership during this time and potential full school fundraisers. The meeting was productive and a true sign of the spirit at CHS," Britto said. "The Class of '22 is unique, hardworking and fun and even a global pandemic can't change that."

## CHS reflects on almost two months of hybrid learning

By NINA KOLODCHAK and TIM WILBURN

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the teachers and students of Communications High School carry on with classes in an unprecedented fashion. Computer screens have replaced the school's once congested hallways and those who have returned to the building must follow strict regulations to prevent the spread of the virus.

Despite the unfamiliar situations, students and staff members are determined to make this school year as enjoyable as possible. Even so, many are struggling with classes that have become more difficult under these new circumstances.

"I think that my creative writing class, among many others, is harder not because of the assignments, but because there are often WiFi issues and I miss being in the classroom," said senior Jacynth Apora of Manalapan. "Mrs. Vander Velde is a great teacher, and she knows how to ask questions and start conversations with students. She's made the circumstances so much more bearable. I miss that person to person connection, and it definitely helps to have those days where I'm actually in

school... I just love getting to say 'hi' to everyone."

While hybrid learning has its benefits, virtual students are often at a disadvantage due to classroom dynamics, among other difficulties. Sophomore Brooke Sherokee of Keyport has been learning solely through technology.

"I'd definitely say that online classes are harder," Sherokee said. "It's a lot more awkward from home, especially when you're trying to get help from a teacher. When we're doing discussions, it's a lot more complicated. For example, we had a graded discussion in English and it was hard to get a word in, which affected my grade. That being said, I'm thankful to have teachers that take everyone's input into consideration, and they're definitely making the most of a difficult situation."

Teachers at CHS also have their fair share of mixed opinions about the hybrid learning system. Several staff members appear to have adjusted to this new way of teaching, but still face challenges when creating lesson plans and making sure all students are engaged.

"I'm doing a mix of both whole-class activities and in-person activities," said English teacher Emily Crelin.

"But, I think in the future I will stick with mostly virtual activities. The class just seems to run smoother when everyone is on the same page."

Crelin also noted the difficulties of creating these activities, explaining that, "I'm essentially lesson planning for two classes within one period."

Journalism and mass media teacher Wayne Woolley also utilizes a mix of activities, with the cohort learning online collaborating with the cohort that's physically in school.

"Plans to engage all students have become simplified by my decision to keep everyone learning in synchronous fashion," Woolley explained.

Despite the challenges that students and teachers have been facing while navigating this "new normal" and the uncertainty of how long it will last, the reality is that at some point, like all things, this too shall pass.

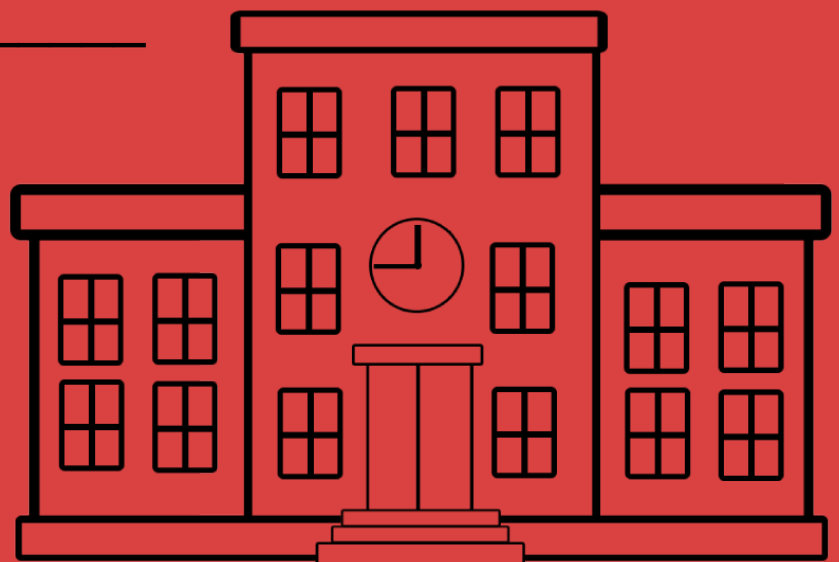
"I think the biggest advice I have is to be patient," Woolley said. "We are all going to get through this together. And while it may not feel like it now, at some point, CHS is going to be like it was, with everyone in the building, being loud and laughing a lot."

For students taking part in the hybrid schedule:

I prefer \_\_\_\_\_



22% Virtual



78% In-person



1 in 300



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN YOUNG

Young pitches the ball on the baseball field at Neptune High School on May 14, 2019.

Young hits it out of the park earning athletic scholarship

By JULIA GRAU, JUSTIN LONGO and GARRETT STEMETZKI

Senior Brian Young of Neptune started playing baseball when he was four years old. His years of hard work are paying off now that he received an athletic scholarship to Rider University, making him one step closer to the big leagues.

Young found a passion for baseball at an early age and has been playing for over 13 years. He played about eight years of Little League and continued to play for various travel teams throughout high school. Young's favorite baseball team is the Mets and he has dreamed of going pro since he was a child.

"It would be the ultimate goal, but it's pretty unrealistic for a lot of people. If that's what it came to I wouldn't pass it up," Young said.

He committed to Rider University, a division one school in Trenton, on a partial-ride baseball scholarship on Aug. 15.

"I've always loved playing [baseball]," Young said. "I noticed I was pretty good at it, and I thought if I kept working at it I could be really good," he said.

During a normal school year, Young would drive to the gym everyday before school to workout and get ready for after-school baseball practice. Young's workout routine is extremely thorough and consists of mainly lifting weights and jump training. The pandemic continues to pose challenges for athletes all over the country, but even through quarantine Young made sure to stay in shape and not fall behind on his exercises.

"Knowing there are other kids not doing what I am right now [keeps me motivated]," he said.

Young plans to take this hard work to college and beyond, and believes that college will only bring him closer to his goal of playing baseball professionally.

"[I'm] always with [baseball] through everything," he said.

Buckle up: COVID-19 guidelines impact student bus rides to school

By JULIA HOMZA

With the number of COVID-19 cases growing in many states across the country, the safety of schools, especially school buses, is an ongoing point of contention between parents, students, and government officials. Many CHS students are still taking the bus this year as they normally would.

"While there's no temperature check or hand sanitizer, that doesn't concern me because we already fill out a form before school telling the school we have a low temperature," said sophomore Joseph Wicke of Freehold.

He also noted that in order to social distance, everyone has their own seat.

The impact on some students' bus routes have been greater than others, according to sophomore Ayumi Skyes of Tinton Falls.

"Most of the Tinton Falls/Eatontown kids get picked up in one of two buses and transfer onto the same bus at [Monmouth Regional]," Sykes said. "Then we pick up one more Tinton Falls kid, and then pick up Neptune kids which is a royal pain."

Last year, Monmouth Regional had two buses that went straight to CHS and did not pick up the Neptune students.

Other students are choosing to be driven to school. Sophomore Alexa Chicon of Shark River Hills is being driven for the sake of convenience and said that she doesn't think driving and riding the bus are equally safe.

Sophomore Mary Jodry of Neptune City also said that driving puts her mind at ease.

"When riding the bus, you don't know if it has been properly cleaned, if the bus driver is conscious of COVID restrictions, or if the people on the bus are willing to follow the given safety guidelines," she said.

Many juniors and seniors that are able to drive themselves this year are taking advantage of that opportunity.

When students were asked how they felt about the safety of buses in comparison to driving, there were mixed responses.

"I don't really think there's a definitive answer to that," senior Francesca McCaffrey of West Long Branch said. "Personally, I felt safe on my bus last year, I just prefer to drive alone."

Freshmen face isolation starting high school

By FRANCESCO THORIK-SABOIA

For the Class of 2023, the bonding trip to Thompson Park on Sept. 6, 2019 had an unexpected change. Last year's freshmen went to GoodSports USA, a year-round sports complex due to inclement weather. Now, for the Class of 2024, it's more different than anyone could have anticipated, with the new freshman losing any sort of bonding trip altogether.

"I definitely think it did affect them," said freshman class advisor Emily Crelin. "They didn't meet each other for a month, but yet they had to have class elections and meetings, but no one shows up, and no one's really interested in anything."

One sentiment that is unanimous amongst the new students is that socializing with their peers is very troublesome.

"There's no real time to socialize. Everybody's really awkward to begin with since we're all freshmen," said freshman Logan Clarke of Howell. "It's just been a really annoying experience trying to talk with people. Just with lunch, everyone's so far apart, it's literally impossible to talk to anyone."

Many freshmen, including Kara Gallagher of Sea Bright, agreed that starting high school virtually was a difficult transition and was very different from what they had anticipated. "I didn't really know anyone," Gallagher said. "So it was not really a social thing, it was just like 'do your work,' and that was about it."

However, many of the students of the Class of 2024 are getting used to CHS very quickly, with many of them saying that navigating the school with one-way hallways has not been a challenge. "Surprisingly, it hasn't," said freshman Lydia Oliveri of Colts Neck. "The school's not that big so it's pretty manageable and I've been getting used to it."

There is no doubt that starting high school during a pandemic is an unfavorable experience, but freshman Ethan Wen of Marlboro is keeping a positive outlook on the situation.

"Everything being online makes it hard to find close friendships," Wen said. "But I think if we keep going down this path of hybrid learning and slowly introducing more and more people, as time goes on it'll be pretty easy to find those close friendships."

ROVING REPORTER

Q: How have you changed from the person you were on March 15th?



Freshman Kaitlin Brice of Wall

"I have changed by becoming more responsible and organized. I don't procrastinate as often and I try to do my best in all of my work."



Sophomore Joseph Doyle of Farmingdale

"I began to work on my skills and hobbies, as I had more time to practice them."



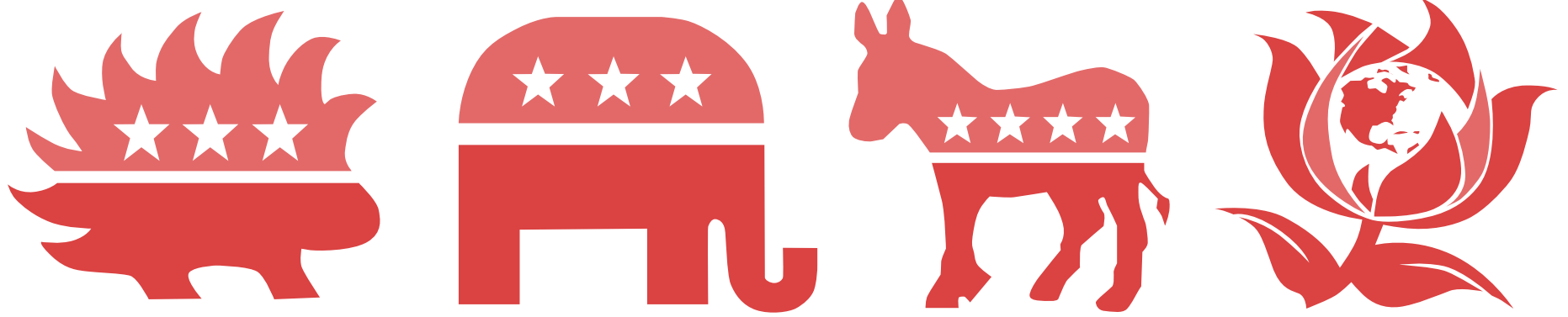
Junior Brielle Karolak of Brielle

"I try my hardest not to take anything for granted...the whole situation of the world has showed me that you never know what will happen, so enjoy everything."



Senior Sara Burgi of Aberdeen

"I found that I appreciate seeing other people much more. I value my friends more because I see them less."



## CHS Students Elect to be Politically Aware

By LAKSHYA VEGIRAJU and BRIGID McCARTHY

As the tension surrounding the presidential election came to a peak the first week of November, students at CHS took action and took sides, through social media platforms and various other outlets.

Many students analyze the overall climate of the school to be progressive, and an Inkblot survey of 70 CHS students from Oct. 26 to Nov. 12 found that 68.6% of students lean left. "I feel that CHS leans left from what I've seen," said senior Matthew Sherwin of Middletown. "A lot of people I talk to have left leaning opinions, and a lot of social media posts I've seen confirm that to me."

"CHS is definitely more left leaning," said senior Francesca DiMiceli of Middletown in agreement. "You just see that a lot of people in the school have been very open in their support of Biden this past election season and even prior to that have had more left stances on things."

Seniors Madeline Williams of Wall and Luke Sassa of Aberdeen both also commented on the effect that CHS's demographic might have on the political climate.

"I definitely think CHS leans more left in terms of political views. I think this is mainly because the CHS population is widely composed of women and LGBTQ+ individuals, and due to current conservative policies their rights are being jeopardized," Williams said.

"Although our school is more socially progressive than others, it really just has to do with creating a culture that supports all kinds of people," Sassa said. "Until the right side of the aisle becomes more tolerant, many people in our generation feel like they have no choice but to support leftist policies."

Though the political climate leans left, students with republican or conservative views contribute to the school's debate culture: healthy debates and conversations, political or not, are commonplace and encouraged, according to sophomore Marina Berger of Marlboro.

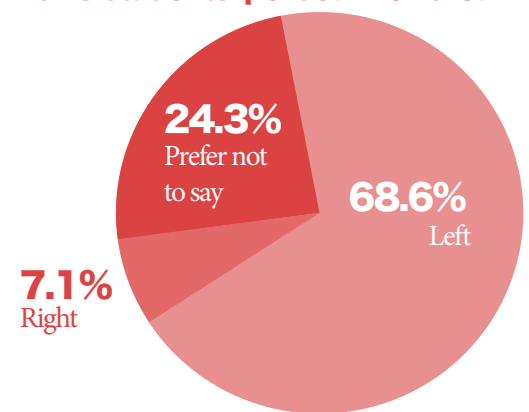
"Debating about politics can get a little heated sometimes," Berger said.

Sassa confirmed Berger's statement, adding that before COVID-19, when in-person club activity was more prominent, "our school did a great job of fostering debate through clubs like the JSA and other avenues such as the opinion section of The Inkblot," Sassa said. "Many of our history classes have also had policy debates, which mostly lead to healthy discourse amongst the student body."

Some seniors, like DiMiceli, turned eighteen before this November and voted in this year's presidential election.

"I can vote. I did vote. I feel that it is very important to vote in general, especially this election," DiMiceli said. "It's especially important

CHS students' political views lean...



for our generation because we are the future and we need to lay our stake in what we will be a part of for the rest of our lives."

While many seniors at CHS this year are still not able to vote, they understand the seriousness of this election and the importance of voting in general. Williams turns eighteen in late November, just missing out on voting in this year's presidential election.

"With so many issues at stake, such as the handling of the coronavirus, racial injustice, and women's rights, I wish that I could express my own views through voting," Williams said. "I guess I can only hope that those who can vote will use this right wisely."

I feel like I'm mainly left-leaning because of my parents. They've definitely influenced a lot of my opinions.

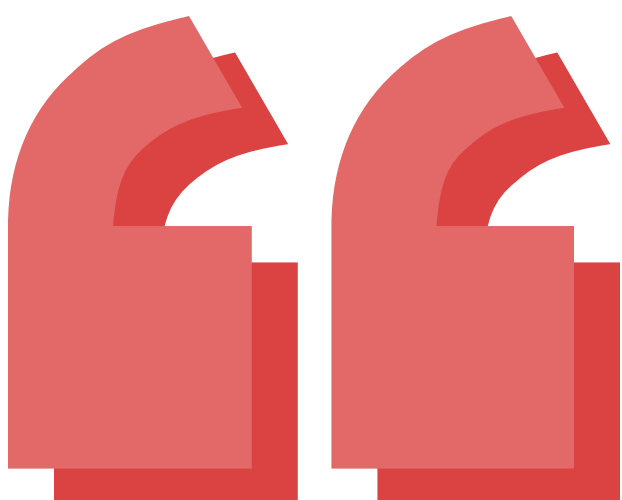
having rights is pretty nice

I agree with more left-wing ideas, as I want things like equal rights for everyone, which seems to be uncommon in right-wing ideas.

I lean Libertarian Conservative, but not necessarily Republican.

I consider myself very moderate since the current political parties are very polarizing

I agree with many concepts on both sides and I don't consider myself significantly leaning toward one side.





a projected  
**161 million**  
 Americans voted in the  
 presidential election  
 - Bloomberg

“Where haven’t I seen rivalry from supporters of Trump and Biden? Even my own neighborhood has been flooded by signs and flags with their names.”

- Junior Hannah Schwartzberg of Ocean

around  
**239.2 million**  
 Americans eligible to vote  
 - Bloomberg



## 2020 presidential election amplifies a nationwide political divide

By ISABELLA JI

As junior Hannah Schwartzberg of Ocean walks home from her bus stop, she notices her neighborhood engulfed in campaign signs. Different campaign signs to be exact. She shakes her head knowing that the billboards, railroad signs, and cars that she passed on her way home were also labeled with stickers; the streets filled with honks and shouts of distaste expressed by pedestrians as they pass specific candidates’ names. This presidential rivalry is apparent everywhere.

The idea of two neighbors with different campaign signs on their lawns wraps up the election season as a whole – a divide in communities or even families due to political views.

Election season brings out campaign signs and raises tension from political views in neighborhoods. However, unlike other years, some say that this rivalry is stronger than others. In 2018, Harry Enten, a CNN reporter, wrote about a debate between this year’s presidential candidates, Donald Trump and Joe Biden, and titled the article “Why the Biden-Trump feud of 2018 might be a preview of 2020.”

“In fact, Biden versus Trump is probably the highest probability matchup compared to all the others at this moment in time, though it’s still a relative long-shot,” Enten said.

Across the country, households are participating in this rivalry by placing lawn signs or flags marking either Trump/Pence or Biden/Harris in front of their houses. Schwartzberg has seen this support all over.

“I would say more importantly, where haven’t I seen rivalry from supporters of Trump and Biden?” Schwartzberg said. “Even my own neighborhood has been flooded by signs and flags with their names.”

Sophomore Cameron Fleming of Oceanport disagrees with Schwartzberg, commenting on how lawn signs are the extent of common people’s place in this rivalry.

“The most I ever see are signs on people’s lawns and ads on the internet,” Fleming said. “I believe that these are the most common ways that people express their support for either candidate.”

On the other hand, Schwartzberg adds that not only have people been taking sides in their front lawns, but also on social media.

“I would say the biggest area I see supporters clashing is in the media. Whether on TV, the radio, or especially social media, where people can say and share anything they want,” she said. “Even if the validity of the statement is false. Once again, people take to social media most commonly to repost, tweet, share, etc., from the comfort of not having to speak their beliefs in person in fear of being ridiculed by the ‘other side.’”

According to history teacher Bill Clark, this kind of rivalry between presidential candidates is not the first.

“Rivalries are beyond common. Going back from John Adams and [Thomas Jefferson], [there was] pure dislike, pure animosity on a personal level and ideological,” Clark said.

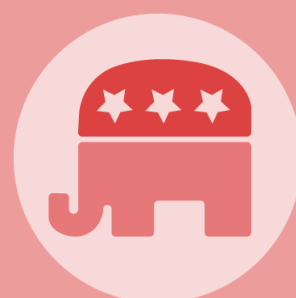


### Among all registered voters...



**49%**

identify as Democrats or lean toward the Democratic party\*



**44%**

identify as Republican or lean toward the GOP\*

- Pew Research Center  
 \*Taking into account independents’ partisan leanings

# Prioritizing voter safety amid COVID-19 pandemic

By SABRINA LIDING and ANDREW SECKULAR

This year has been one with many changes, the election process being one of them. Nov. 3 is no longer Election Day, instead it is the deadline of all voting. Mail-in ballots showed up in mailboxes across the country and there is a limited number of polling stations opened for voting.

In New Jersey, it is still required that one polling station is opened in each municipality to make voting easier. Though polling stations are open, the New Jersey State Department sent ballots to the houses of every eligible voter. According to Tim Harper, Rachel Orey and Collier Fernekes of the Bipartisan Policy Center, this led to a surge in mail-in ballots, putting a strain on poll workers who have to scan the barcode on each mail-in ballot to verify the signature of the voter. "Cure letters" or the "Signature Cure Process" have also allowed voters to correct their signature if there is a mistake. It is a process that individuals can follow if their signature is denied or is missing.

Senior student and recently eligible voter, Steven Ostrom of Middletown, opened up about his first voting experience.

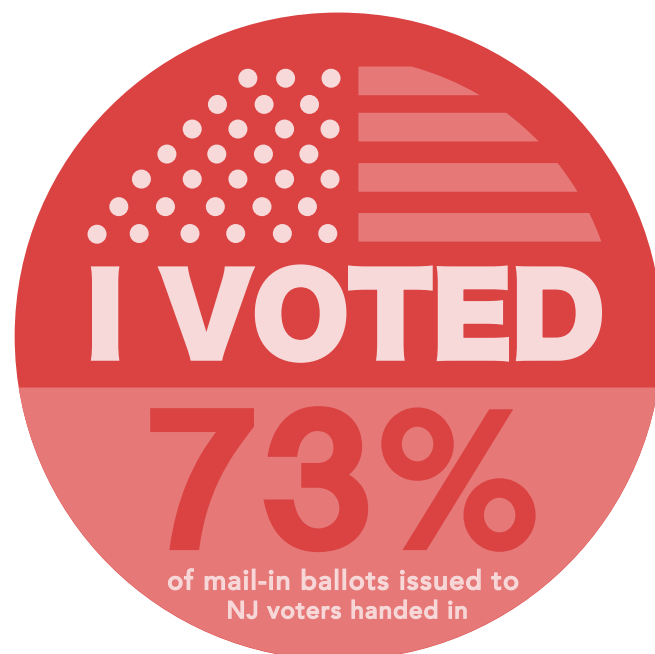
"My first voting experience was definitely a little scary, as it's a lot of responsibility to have as someone who just turned 18," Ostrom said, "Mail-in voting scared me a bit as well, especially with all of the fraud that is talked about in [the] media. However, I'm... happy that I'm able to vote... and... can make my voice heard."

Instead of voting by mail, English teacher Anne Kelterborn explained why she prefers voting in-person.

"There's something about the act of pushing the button that makes me feel like I'm exercising my right to vote." Kelterborn said. "I've found it so stressful to complete the mail-in ballot"

Likewise, Communications Technology teacher Amanda FitzPatrick also favors in-person voting.

"I typically bring my kids and I think it instills the importance of taking time out of the day to get this civic duty done." Fitzpatrick said. "in this dumpster fire of a year, the mail-in-ballots are so important. Some people still aren't comfortable going into public places ...at home voting [lets] every person... cast their vote. This is a very important election year and it would be a shame for people to skip the voting process."



- northjersey.com

# ELECTION 2020

## Candidates appeal to young voters through social media campaigns

By NICOLA DeGREGORIO



As the presidential election nears, many have kept up with the candidates' campaigns by watching major news networks, reading a variety of newspapers and diligently viewing each debate. But, as a new voter demographic of young people emerges, social media is a resource now utilized by campaigns to further their reach.

In an effort to target young people, campaigns are collaborating with celebrities on social media to attract young voters. From one scroll through either now President-elect Joe Biden's or former presidential candidate and Sen. Bernie Sander's Instagram profiles, pop culture figures such as Cardi B and Jimmy Fallon are seen conversing with and endorsing the presidential candidates.

Senior Matt Sherwin of Middletown said that he not only sees posts from the candidates' official social media accounts, but from a variety of other accounts he follows as well.

"I do often see posts on social media having to do with both of the [presidential] candidates' campaigns. Most of the content is informational posts whether it be text posts or videos, I even see a few memes here and there," Sherwin said.

According to The Wall Street Journal, presidential candidates utilize Facebook most because it is the best direct-response platform. Republican nominee and President Donald Trump utilizes social media more than any other candidate – aside from Sanders, who dropped out of the race – as Trump averaged about 20 Facebook posts per day in the month of Dec. 2019.

When it comes to different age demographics, Pew

Research Center reports that social media is the most popular way for young people to get their political news, however local, cable and network television still remain the primary ways that adults aged 50 and above receive political news coverage. Coinciding with these studies, mass media and public relations teacher Wayne Woolley still believes that the best way to reach people is through traditional television ads regardless of their inability to reach a specific demographic.

"If you are trying to reach a general audience as a candidate, the best way to do that is by general advertising," Woolley said. "The general, large mass of people still watch cable television."

From simply observing what is occurring in the world today, and reported in TIME Magazine, there is no doubt COVID-19 has affected the campaigning process this year. Conversations between former President Barack Obama and Biden have occurred virtually this year, yet the pandemic has had seemingly little effect on the Republican Party's campaigning efforts.

In an article by TIME Magazine discussing the campaign changes in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Republican National Committee claims Republican party supporters knock on millions of doors every week to spread the word about their campaign. On the contrary, the Biden Campaign and many of the campaigns run by liberal groups have suspended this practice as they deem it to be unsafe.

Social media campaigning is more omnipresent in the 2020 election than ever before, and because of its efficacy, it will remain a tool in the campaigns of years to come.



## Businesses of all sizes look to social media for marketing

By KEIRA MACDERMOTT

Aspiring artists and fashion entrepreneurs have begun using social media as their main source of publicity, and it is undoubtedly working in their favor.

While the pandemic carries on, small businesses are finding new ways to keep their companies afloat. Though Instagram and Twitter have always been useful platforms for artists, a new and possibly more influential medium has emerged: TikTok.

Since its creation in 2016, the app has settled itself at the very top of the app store as one of the most popularly downloaded apps of this year. What began as an inclusive platform for lip-syncing and dancing has transformed into a gateway to any one person's big break.

It doesn't take much to make a TikTok video go viral and that is exactly what many artists and fashion designers are striving for.

TikToker and fashion designer Brianna Genthe first began making TikToks in March 2020 and immediately gained notoriety. This is because of widespread interest in her studies abroad in Italy, where she sketched for a significant fashion brand. She currently has around 130,700 followers on her TikTok, 4.5 million likes and has gradually begun to promote her business account on Instagram.

Many personalities on TikTok are using this approach: sneaking promotions for their business into entertaining videos of them during their process.

Resin crafts are one of the most popular types of online businesses right now, "#resin" having five

billion views on the app. Cynthia Capota has been wildly successful with her colorful resin crafts made to resemble the phases of the moon, with around 51,300 followers on TikTok.

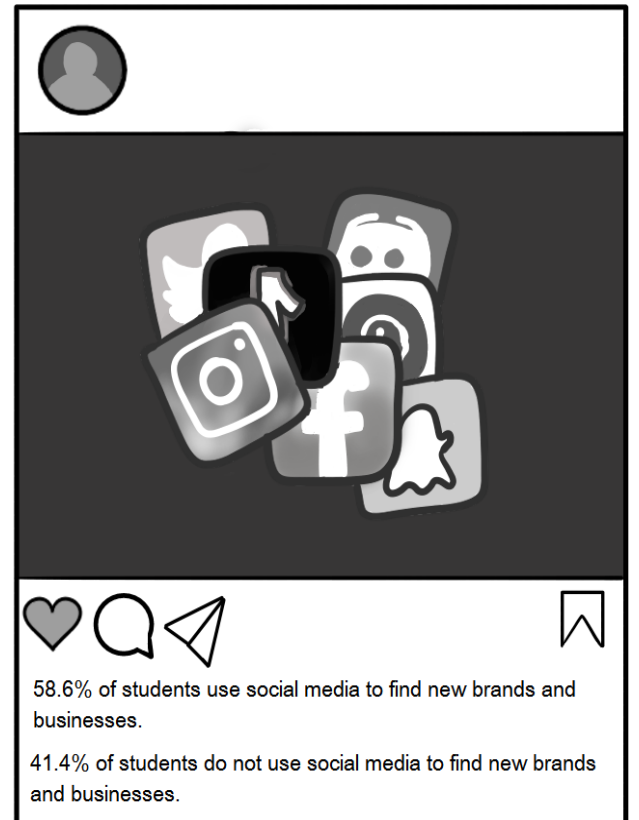
TikTok aside, there are many established companies that have decided to test the waters of social media. The French jewelry company Leibl Laurentius, established in 1998, has now begun to build an online presence by contacting and offering ambassadorships to young people on Instagram in order to promote their business.

More mainstream companies include Boohoo, a clothing and style company, which has increased its sales by 45% since May of 2020, utilizing a powerful tool in media these days — celebrity endorsement.

There is no business boost as powerful as the celebrity endorsement. The psychology behind this phenomenon is quite simple, in that if the famous person has it, everyone wants it.

The company Depop has been decently popular for the past two years and has kept up a consistent social media flow, but since the spring of 2020, the interaction with their social media has skyrocketed, mainly because of user-generated content. Followers of the account are more inclined to visit, in hopes that an image that he or she submitted might make it.

Social media has always been a useful tool, but never before has it been so heavily relied on. No matter how big the chain or how small the business, during such trying times, everyone must support the entrepreneurs and creators that they love most.



BLOT GRAPHIC BY SABRINA LIDING

A survey of 70 CHS students from Oct. 26 to Nov. 2.

## In a growing virtual world, the future of bookstores becomes uncertain

By ELLA LUKOWIAK

Literature is an art that has been adapting alongside humanity forever. It has been scrawled onto walls and written in ancient languages. Throughout time, how it is displayed has evolved, and with the rise of online services, this is happening once again.

Amazon kickstarted the most recent era of change with their release of the Kindle in 2007. Since then, e-reading has grown substantially, and generations of readers have become divided between the standard hard copies and online versions of books.

In CHS, many students claimed that they prefer hard copies to digital supplements.

Junior Guilina DeFabritus of Freehold Township explained that, for her, having a hard copy is essential to the way she reads.

"I usually prefer a hard copy because I like to mark them up sometimes or put notes in them," DeFabritus said.

Sophomore Elle Mountford of Wall Township agreed with DeFabritus, saying that she also prefers to read from the hard edition of a novel.

"There's something about a hard copy that almost gives me more motivation to keep reading... I know exactly where I am. But with digital it's hard to know where you are in the book, page-wise," Mountford said.

Aside from the rise of Kindles and other electronic reading services, companies such as Amazon have made it difficult for individual bookstores to keep their doors open.

According to Bloomberg News, Amazon is the largest book retailer in America, making up 42% of book sales and 89% of e-book sales in 2018.

However, when the COVID-19 pandemic swept its way across the world, a website built to help indie bookstores began to grow.

The website Bookshop.org has been trying to give a voice to independent bookstores since January 2020. When all bookstores began to close due to the pandemic, the website found its platform and started to thrive.

The site is an online bookstore in which users can click on direct links to shop at independent bookstores. The profit can go towards the bookstore of the user's choice or it will be evenly distributed across many indie stores.

According to The New York Times, the website sold over \$11.5 million in books throughout May and June, and over 750 bookstores have joined. Overall, Bookshop has generated more than \$3.6 million for stores.

Although these types of sites are making a

significant impact, indie bookstores must still adapt to the new world around them.

*"There's something about a hard copy that almost gives me more motivation to keep reading..."*

Annie Philbrick, the co-owner of the Bank Square Bookstore in Mystic, Connecticut agreed that staying alive in the digital world consists of using social media and online resources along with becoming part of the community through events and personalized service.

In an interview with the Huffington Post, Philbrick discussed what she has done to adjust during this new time and her opinions about how the future may play out.

"I don't have a crystal ball, and there's no doubt the rise of e-books has had an impact. They're not going to go away, and we do have a partnership that works. It's very hard work to do what we do, but we do it because we're passionate about books and love what we're doing," Philbrick said.



**91%**

of CHS students believe that a virtual audience affects the quality of a show/performance

BLOT GRAPHIC BY ARIANA ORTIZ

A survey of 70 students from Oct. 26 to Nov. 2.

## CHS artists are among those trying to adapt to a virtual audience

By SARAH RAU

Jimmy Fallon is getting himself ready to do his show. However, he's not in his regular dressing room. Fallon is sitting in his basement, showing his wife how to hold the camera.

Fallon, like many performers, had been doing his show virtually from home from Mar. 17 to July 13. Directors, schools and organizers have been forced to cancel shows or make them virtual over the past few months. While it may appear normal to the viewers, performing virtually is not the same.

There are two vital parts to theater: the actors and the audience. Actors on stage draw energy and confidence from the reactions of audience members, making it hard for performers to adjust to this "new normal."

Sophomore Danielle Lirov of Marlboro, who is taking part in a virtual play, touched on how much an audience helps a performance.

"Not being able to see peoples' reactions I think makes me even more uncomfortable than being in a gigantic room filled with people," Lirov said. "[I] feed off of the audience's energy. When there's a good audience, it changes the entire pace of the show."

Many CHS students are learning to adapt to performing with no audience including sophomore Mary Jodry of Neptune City who talked about the struggles that came with hosting her yearly benefit.

"I found it honestly challenging to keep myself entertained enough to keep a high energy," Jodry said.

Even the most well-known performers are experiencing this problem. In Jimmy Fallon's first episode out of the studio, he mentioned how hard it was, between his kids being in the room with him and the striking silence after each joke.

Another late night television host, Seth Meyers had a similar opinion and had found the lack of audience as uncomfortable as Fallon did.

"We're programmed to work in front of an audience and you don't want to talk over laughs," Meyers said in a virtual interview with Jimmy Fallon.

People are remaining hopeful about the future of performing. In an interview with Deseret News, Thomas Schumacher, the chairman of the Board of The Broadway League, mentioned his hope for the future.

"One thing is for sure, when we return we will be stronger and more needed than ever," Schumacher said.



“The Haunting of Hill House” is the eerie sister series fans hoped for

By DANIELLE HANNAH

If you devoured “The Haunting of Hill House” after Netflix released it in 2018, you’ll love “The Haunting of Bly Manor,” the newly released sister series that is just as terrifying.

The show follows the inhabitants of Bly Manor as they navigate the haunted walls of the great estate. These inhabitants include a chef fighting his own demons at home, a groundskeeper who is dedicated to the plants but skeptical about the house, a housekeeper experiencing strange dreams, and a new au pair who is seeing shadows in mirrors and ghosts around the house. This staff works tirelessly to serve the orphans of Bly Manor, Flora and Miles Wingrave: two young, bright children who have witnessed far too much death for someone their age.

But to answer the question on everyone’s mind: Is the new show as good as “The Haunting of Hill House?”

A resounding yes.

If you loved the original series, “The Haunting of Bly Manor” is worth a watch. While it is not a sequel or a second season, “The Haunting of Bly Manor” recognizes some of the more popular elements of “The Haunting of Hill House.” The sister series maintains the structure of flipping between past and present events, ignoring a chronological sequence and at times repeating scenes from different perspectives. This works as well as it did in the original show to slowly explain the past as the audience questions the present. The show also thrives by presenting scenes from multiple perspectives. Every episode of the series shows a new character’s experiences with the paranormal in the manor. These components are revived for another thrilling show that will have you bingeing episodes late into the night.

Perhaps the best part of “The Haunting of Bly Manor” is that the director and producers achieve the goal of spooking the audience. While the show is not terrifying or full of gore, it presents enough eerie circumstances and images to keep viewers on the edge of their seat, reaching to pull up their blankets as they watch another episode in their own house.

## Online and hybrid festivals provide a space for artists to learn and to share their work



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRAD BARKET

Jimmy Fallon talks with Ariel Levy about his journey from “Saturday Night Live” to “The Tonight Show” during the 2018 New Yorker Festival. The New Yorker held similar panels virtually for the 2020 festival.

By KATHERINE MANATOS

As online arts festivals are becoming the “new normal” for artists everywhere, showcases, festivals and arts contests have all taken virtual form in order to spread participants’ work to all.

One new factor of online festivals is that they are more accessible to participants and viewers. People from all over the world can participate in festivals that were previously only offered in certain areas.

Senior Ravenna Gemignani of Oceanport explained her experiences with the new accessibility.

“It’s so easy to submit, anyone can do it, it’s open for everyone, and I really like that,” she said.

Gemignani took part in The Summer Arts Space, which is run by Monmouth Arts.

Senior Anabell Mazzan of Fair Haven also took part in The Summer Arts Space.

Another festival that was open to all was The New Yorker festival, which took place, entirely online, from Oct. 5-11.

Nevertheless, all online festivals such as these pose problems for viewers who want the more

genuine feeling of getting to view art in person.

Gemignani discussed the struggles of fully virtual events by expressing that art is “really about the experience of seeing the pieces in real life.”

However, some believe virtual events cannot replicate the feelings and emotions taken from real life events. As a result, many artists are longing for in-person festivals, however, with guidelines lifted, festivals are able to hold hybrid events with online and in-person events, in order to satisfy all attendants.

The Downtown Brooklyn Arts Festival was one such hybrid festival and took place from Oct.15-18, with events were organized into time and day slots.

The in-person events included music performances by many bands, dance classes and art galleries, while the online events included virtual music, and virtual workshop conferences, lectures and panel discussions.

“Everyone has found really good ways to engage everyone online,” Mazzan said. “I believe incorporating online elements on top of in person events would make it even more accessible for people in this modern age.”

## THE ARTIST’S BLOCK



“This was the first piece that I made in AP Art this year. The piece serves as a metaphor for how I have felt throughout junior and senior year. The background represents the fun events that previous grades got to experience such as prom and the senior trip. The character in the foreground represents how I (and many others) have missed out on these events due to the world’s current climate. The subject matter in this piece is a little bit on the darker side, but I felt that it needed to be expressed.”

-Senior Ravenna Gemignani of Oceanport

### “The After Party” by Ravenna Gemignani

#### Media Used

Polymer Clay, Fish Bowl, Acrylic Paint, Photoshop, Autodesk Sketchbook

#### Time Spent

One week

#### Interesting Fact

“The character in this piece was based on some concept art that I created for an animation over the summer. I never ended up using the character in the animation, but at least I made use of this design in another media.”



## With hybrid scheduling, mental health is important

As the novel coronavirus continues to plague countries across the world, so does the stress and anxiety caused by the deadly disease.

While some people are getting tired of mask-wearing, social distancing and restrictions in general, others are overwhelmed by the uncertainty that has surrounded their everyday lives since early this year.

According to a survey from the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health services have been disrupted or halted in 93% of countries worldwide due to the pandemic, despite the increasing demand for them. They also mentioned that even before the pandemic, countries only spent about 2% of their national health budgets on mental health.

Around 91% of students said that the closure of schools and colleges last spring negatively impacted their lives, according to a survey conducted by the National Center for Biotechnology Information.

Remote learning last spring, and even this fall, has called for extensive time management from students and teachers alike, piling onto the already heightened stress. While most schools have since reopened for the 2020-2021 school year, the hybrid schedule in use requires even more time management skills.

At CHS, most teachers now use their in-class time with each cohort solely for teaching as opposed to giving students work time as well. In turn, virtual days are used to work on assignments based on content learned in class. If a student falls behind on classwork, it's virtually impossible to catch up on missed assignments as homework keeps piling on, and with countless deadlines, oftentimes overlapping, to keep track of, assignments are commonly pushed to the last minute.

In previous years, students could feel a clear and distinct separation between school classes, homework and free time. Yet, with classes being taught online and taken from home, that separation between classwork and homework no longer exists if students are being asked to spend long hours at their computer. Additionally, distractions that are present at home can impede overall productivity and make it harder for students to stay on task.

This constant screen time can also affect students' sleep schedules because the blue light reduces melatonin production in the brain and forces them to stay awake longer, according to SleepFoundation.org.

The article found that when students spend time on electronic devices, especially at nighttime, it can delay the release of melatonin and make sleep more challenging. When teens are sleeping for fewer hours, it can eventually lead to depression-like symptoms.

Sleep schedules are also subject to change due to the hybrid schedule. Through waking up earlier on in-person days and sleeping in on remote days, students are most likely getting different amounts of sleep every night, even if they go to bed at the same time. Kendra Cherry of Very Well Mind wrote that other mental health concerns, including anxiety, arise with sleep problems.

"One study [by the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry] found that problems with sleep were a predictor for generalized anxiety disorder in children and teens between the ages of 9 and 16," Cherry said. "Those who struggle with sleep problems may be more likely to develop an anxiety condition, particularly if their sleep problems are prolonged and left untreated."

During a time when students are facing unprecedented hardships, in both learning and their own lives, it is important that teachers are understanding of these challenges and the additional efforts students have to put forth to meet them. It is crucial for everyone to step back and look at the bigger picture: that health and well-being are of utmost importance, especially during a pandemic.

## Democracy decides, not debates

By ZAINA SAIF

"Will you shut up, man," President-elect Joseph R. Biden, Jr. uttered to President Donald Trump just twenty minutes into the first presidential debate of the 2020 election.

The first debate of 2020 rewarded the American people with precisely the opposite of what we were looking for in a president. Instead of showcasing intelligence, knowledge and empathy, the debate came close to resembling a professional wrestling match.

The climate of recent presidential debates makes them no longer helpful to undecided voters. This small section of voters is typically the target audience of presidential debates, but it's unclear whether the back and forth helps to distill anything for people who haven't backed a candidate yet. A recent NBC News poll found that just 6% of voters were undecided, suggesting little room for the election to dramatically swing either way following a debate. Monmouth University polling shows that 87% of undecided voters say it's not likely that a candidate's performance in a debate will sway their opinion.

When presidential debates were first established in 1960, they were held to serve as an examination of a candidate, their policies and how

they are able to respond to criticisms of those policies and of themselves. However, we have gotten to a point in modern politics where the moderators can't hold much control of the debate at all. Chris Wallace, moderator of the first Trump-Biden debate of 2020, said that he had wanted to be as invisible as possible. In an interview with the New York Times, Wallace conceded that he had been too slow to realize that the president's tactic was to disrupt the event and ignore the rules his campaign had agreed to.

Media coverage of the debate doesn't do much good to voters either. The media's obsession with who "won" and "lost" has had a measured effect on voters over the years. Journalists tend to award the title of "winner" to whoever gets in the best punches, insults and snipes, rather than the candidate who explains their policies with greater depth.

Even with extensive media coverage, debates do not play a major role in election outcomes. Each party believes that their candidate "won" the debate, leaving the 6% of undecided voters with nothing but a giant mess of biased media coverage.

The polls don't shift and media bias and sensationalism certainly don't help. In short, it's unlikely that the debates have much of an effect on eventual votes.

## Gen Z speaks out through politics

By CARLA VREELAND

In an ever-changing landscape that presents new uncertainties and developments every day, it should not come as a surprise that Gen Z, considered to be "the most diverse and digitally connected generation in the U.S.," according to NPR, has become highly politically involved.

Due to changes in immigration, a higher likelihood of having a college-educated parent and holding less jobs in their teenage years, Gen Z is likely to become the most well-educated generation, according to Kim Parker and Ruth Igielnik of the Pew Research Center.

The emergence of social media and internet platforms have also vastly contributed to that superlative. With an abundance of resources in our back pocket, it takes very little to gather information. Moreover, Gen Z is able to easily share their political opinions online and educate themselves on those of others.

In such a divided political environment, as well as an election year littered with civil unrest and a global pandemic, having the ability to connect and learn through a variety of online resources greatly contributes to the preservation of democracy.

Further, with such unpredictability, Gen Z has a larger percentage of individuals who are looking for an active government who will propose and pass societal reforms, according to the Pew Research Center.

"Members of Gen Z are more likely than older generations to look to government to solve problems, rather than businesses and individuals," Parker and Igielnik said.

This has become even more evident in recent years, with nation-wide protests in response to



PHOTO BY INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND OBTAINED THROUGH CREATIVE COMMONS  
 According to a survey by Politico, 66% of Gen Z is disapproving of the current presidential administration.

police brutality and the increase of gun violence in schools, among a variety of other issues.

Despite the majority of Gen Z being unable to vote, they are using resources that are available to them and speaking out in order to pressure government officials to make change.

Junior Hannah Schwartzberg of Ocean said she believes that Gen Z has effectively used the media in order to continue to strengthen democracy.

"So much good has been done by Gen Zers who are able to see and learn about the issues that have been going on for years," Schwartzberg said. "It is evident, especially now that Gen Z has made a serious impact on the world and the fact that we have already done this at such a young age gives me great hope for future leaders."



c/o Communications High School  
 1740 New Bedford Road  
 Wall, NJ 07719  
 (732) 681-1010

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## Students discuss their views on the hybrid schedule

*Do they feel safe returning to the halls of CHS after eight months?*

By RYAN LEMBERGER

In the darkest of times, CHS is changing everyday habits using a hybrid schedule. For upperclassmen, this schedule is very different and unfamiliar compared to what was seen in the past. Junior and senior elective courses have less in-person opportunities for students to learn and create.

The schedule consists of slightly shorter class periods and more time to move in the halls, creating more space to promote social distancing. Throughout the day, students and staff are required to wear masks at all times.

When arriving at school, students must show their "GO green light" from the MCVSD COVID-19 symptom checker, a form that students fill out before arrival to prove they do not have any symptoms of COVID-19. Then, students get their temperatures taken and use hand sanitizer before entering the building.

For teachers it creates difficulties as they now have to teach students in-person and online simultaneously. This creates inefficiencies in teaching material, as all students need to learn the same material regardless of their location. Television teacher Jennifer Cornine is experiencing these difficulties with her class revolving around in-studio productions.

"There is a whole lot of challenges teaching remotely television production," Cornine said. "We were able to overcome that by taking the processes and procedures that we have in place and tweaking them a little bit and changing

the technology up. We are still putting the heart of the show together, but it is just remotely."

Another change to the schedule includes the lunch period being different. While lunch is still an hour, there are a lot more restrictions. The "new normal" does not allow for many typical CHS clubs and other lunch activities to continue. Students have assigned seats during two separate 20 minute periods that allow for contact tracing and social distancing. For the freshman, there are difficulties creating friendships because they are unable to participate in the CHS tradition of eating in the hallway your freshman year and being able to bond with peers.

Another difficulty that students face with a hybrid schedule are if you are entirely remote in Cohort C. Teachers don't have the chance to interact with these students to do in-person activities, some of which aren't possible online. Sophomore Max Karp of Brielle plans to return to CHS for the second marking period, after beginning the year remotely.

"While teachers are available during class a lot of the time, it's just not the same as interacting with them as at school. It's just like there's kind of a wall between you and the rest of the people at school physically," Karp said.

While many difficulties are faced with the hybrid schedule and the CHS experience is very different, it is the safest way to bring students back to school.

## Was the Supreme Court nomination constitutional?

By SAM SKOLNICK

While Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Justice Antonin Scalia had opposing views on politics, the two had many things in common: both enjoyed the opera, both traveled to India and rode elephants together and both passed away during an election year.

Former Justice Scalia passed away of natural causes on Feb. 13, 2016, during President Barack Obama's second term in office. This was a little over eight months before the 2016 election. Former Justice Ginsburg passed away on Sept. 18, 2020 after a long battle with pancreatic cancer, exactly 46 days before the 2020 election.

This is where the similarities end. President Obama was blocked from having his Supreme Court nominee confirmed by the Senate, while President Donald Trump's nominee was confirmed by the Senate in a 52-48 vote, according to NPR.

The nomination of a Supreme Court Justice when there is a vacancy in an election year is immoral. Both reputable Democrats and Republicans agree, or at least agreed, during the 2016 election year.

In 2016, Republican South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham said "I want you to use my words

against me. If there's a Republican president in 2016 and a vacancy occurs in the last year of the first term, you can say Lindsey Graham said let's let the next president, whoever it might be, make that nomination." Yet now, Senator Graham has supported President Trump's nominee for the Supreme Court vacancy.

Junior Quinn Hoagland of Colts Neck agreed that a Supreme Court Justice nomination during the 2020 election year is immoral.

"I think, especially in regards to a court of law, it is very important to uphold, not ignore, precedent. Towards the end of Obama's time in office, he was prevented from appointing a new Supreme Court Justice. It is only right that Trump follow that precedent and let the winner of this election decide on the appointee," Hoagland said.

Judge Amy Coney Barrett was the nominee that President Trump put forth to be a part of the highest court of the United States. When she was confirmed as the next justice on Oct. 26, she became only the fifth woman to serve on the bench, but she might reverse what Former Justice Ginsburg did in her life's work for equality.

When asked about her views on LGBTQ+

rights she recently replied using the words, "sexual preferences," a highly offensive term to describe the LGBTQ+ community. Her views on abortion rights are also a cause for concern for many Americans, due to her continuously opposing Roe v. Wade.

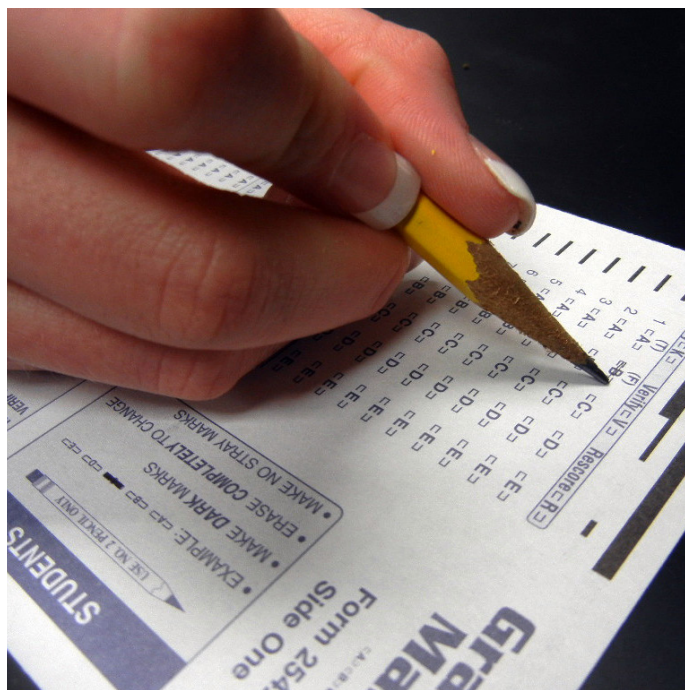
President Trump has reportedly chosen Barrett to reverse Roe v. Wade according to NBC News. As this monumental decision which protected abortion risk is at risk, so is birth control, contraceptives and in vitro fertilization. In her legal history, she has tried to push for a law that would notify parents for minors looking for an abortion, according to CNN.

Judge Barrett is also affiliated with the small church of the People of Praise. This Catholic group's devolved community has strict views on: human sexuality, traditional gender norms, and it also does not agree with an openly gay population, according to The New York Times. This causes concern for everyone when we are still unsure of her agenda and she will be deciding our fate.

A nominee from any president during an election year is wrong. It must be the decision of the next president. Judge Amy Coney Barrett's confirmation to replace the iconic trailblazer Former Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is wrong.

## The SAT and its role for students in today's society

*Is the standardized test still necessary for college admission?*



By JACQUELINE LITOWINSKY

The SAT: a test feared by juniors and seniors alike. Many students worry about low scores affecting their chances of getting into college. Since the SAT's inception in 1926, countless high school students have submitted their standardized test scores to colleges. But along the way, many students face problems including unfair disadvantages and heightened stress. So why should colleges require the SAT when they can get to know prospective students in alternative ways?

In addition to SAT scores, students applying for college submit their high school transcripts and a personal essay. These are much more telling of a student's success than a singular test could ever be.

Many students end up taking the SAT multiple times in order to get a better score, which can lead to students not putting as much of a focus on their regular schoolwork.

Junior Liam Stemetzki of Wall took the SAT in December 2019 and talked about the downside of students taking the test under so much pressure.

"The extra stress brought on by the SAT combined with schoolwork can be too much on many students, which in many cases can cause students to underperform in the SAT, school, or both," Stemetzki said.

Although many colleges heavily base their admissions on SAT scores, studies show that the SAT is not the best indicator of a freshman's success in college. According to the Los Angeles Times, research shows that grades are the single best indicator of college performance, and aren't as heavily influenced as standardized testing by financial status, race, and parent education levels.

The SAT's issue with bias is also a cause for concern. Students at a financial disadvantage are often found to get lower scores, since many can't afford to take test prep classes. The racial difference is also cause for concern, given that in 2018, combined SAT scores for White and Asian students averaged over 1100, while all other groups averaged below 1000, according to Forbes.

Even though the SAT has been the precedent for college admissions for almost a century, during the coronavirus pandemic, many universities have created test optional or test exempt options for seniors to take advantage of. However, schools like Washington & Lee University and the University of Florida still require SAT or ACT scores even with the various problems with standardized testing.

The skewed nature of the SAT and the pressure it places on high school students outweighs its claimed benefits, making it clear that the SAT has to go.

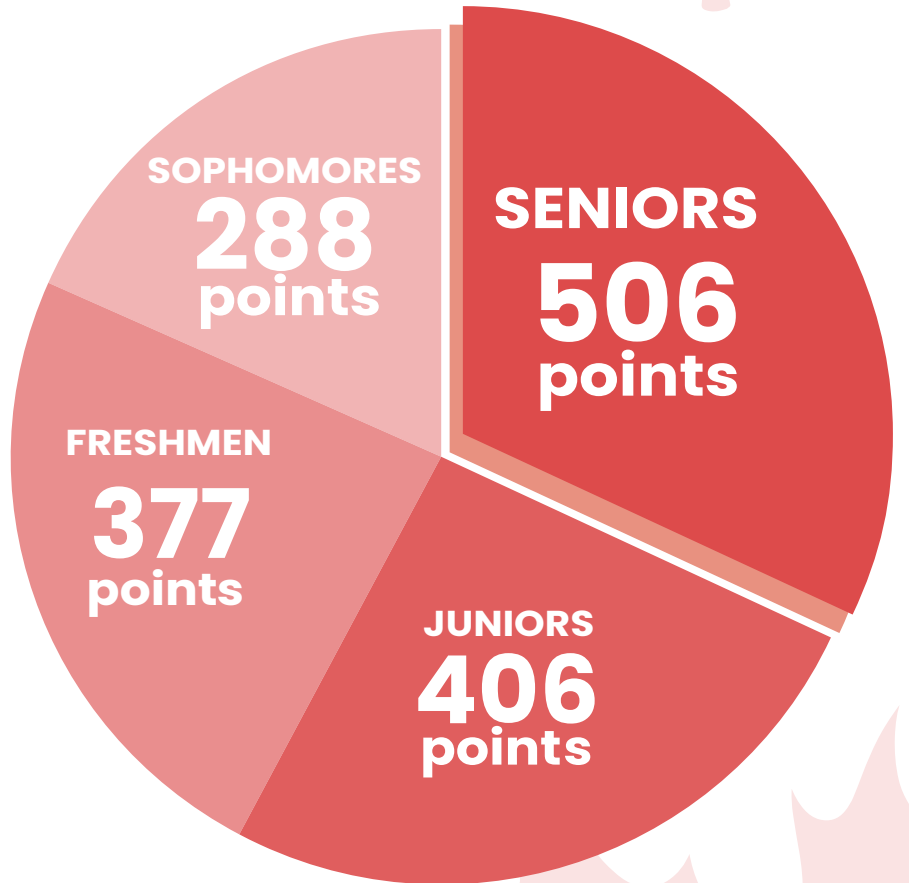
PHOTO BY BIOLOGYCORNER OBTAINED THROUGH CREATIVE COMMONS

According to a study by Harvard University, 69% of students cite getting into a good college as a source of stress.



# FALL SPIRIT WEEK 2020

## SCORES



## MONDAY



**BLOT PHOTO BY CHARLOTTE FRICK**  
Sophomore Lucy Battista of Tinton Falls plays Kahoot Trivia during lunch on Monday. All students participated in the online trivia challenge after the relay was canceled due to weather.



**BLOT PHOTO BY CHARLOTTE FRICK**  
Junior Gina Dige of Howell dressed red from head to toe on Monochrome Monday. Students wore all one color to complete this challenge.

## TUESDAY



**PHOTO COURTESY OF CAYLA CARSON**  
Freshman Cayla Carson of Neptune wins "Best Overall" for her "Here's Johnny" pumpkin on Tuesday. Pumpkins were painted by students at home and photos were judged by a panel of teachers via survey.



**BLOT PHOTO BY CHARLOTTE FRICK**  
Seniors Fran McCaffery, Riley Forrester, Maddie Beekman and Zoe Conner-Bennett strut through the halls as "The Plastics" on Tuesday as Cohort A had the opportunity to show off their Halloween costumes.

## WEDNESDAY



**PHOTO COURTESY OF MAHITA DASU**  
Senior Mahita Dasu of Middletown kisses her bicep in imitation of a stereotypical high school jock to virtually participate in Wednesday's High School Stereotype Day.



**PHOTO COURTESY OF JESS SKOLNICK**  
Sophomore Jess Skolnick of Hazlet dons a pair of fishing waders with an open umbrella to complete the most difficult virtual scavenger hunt requirement that took place directly after classes ended on Wednesday.

## THURSDAY



**PHOTO COURTESY OF MARISA PEREZ**  
Junior Marisa Perez of Tinton Falls poses like it's 2007 on Decades Day, complete with a 'Panic at the Disco' album and a Justin Bieber t-shirt. Each grade was assigned a different era to emulate on Decades Day.



**BLOT PHOTO BY ERIN HARDIMAN**  
Junior Brielle Karolak of Brielle, left, and sophomore Mary Jodry of Neptune, right, rapidly sort M&M's as part of the relay activity during lunch on Thursday.

## FRIDAY



**BLOT PHOTO BY BEATRICE KARRON**  
The seniors took first place in the mural competition on Friday with their magical mural completed by ten members of their class. Each class was assigned a prompt to be completed by individual students that had to come together to create a cohesive image.



**BLOT PHOTO BY ERIN HARDIMAN**  
Senior Ravenna Gemingani of Oceanport wins "Best Costume" in her scarily good handmade Mike Wazowski costume on Friday during the Halloween parade at lunch.



**PHOTO COURTESY OF CHLOE ZENKER**  
Senior Chloe Zenker of Middletown captures Jack and Sally from "The Nightmare Before Christmas" in an intricate pumpkin carving for Friday's pumpkin carving contest. Students carved pumpkins at home and submitted photos to Google Classroom.