

## Letter From The Editors: January 6, 2021



COURTESY OF THE WASHINGTON POST

Here in the Fieldston bubble, discussing the impending apocalypse from afar, it's generally easy to believe that decency and democracy will prevail regardless. We believe, perhaps as a means of coping, that justice will come out on top, and that despots always topple under their weight. But now, as armed extremists storm the Capitol and the President responds to their attempted coup by telling them "We love you. You're very special," we are left to wonder: will it work out in the end?

If there had been lingering doubt about the Trump Presidency, today confirms what he stands for: himself and the preservation of his power. Today, January 6th, 2021, will be remembered as one of the darkest days in our nation's history. To echo Senator Chuck Schumer's description, it was "a horrible stain on our country that will not so easily be washed away." Today's events were about more than just the political partisanship that divides us into blue and red; about more than the myriad identities each of us possesses and more than the lived experiences of differ-

ent communities. Today was about the tearing of America's most basic, most guaranteed fabric: freedom and democracy. The right to peaceably assemble was corrupted by rioters attempting to invalidate the people's will and vote.

America's decline into fascism is becoming more than intellectual classroom fodder—it's been made real by the political violence that has grown steadily more common leading into this year. Dangers that have long existed relatively comfortably in the realm of the hypothetical are becoming tangible, as the most terrifying 'what-ifs' imaginable loom ever-closer to our reality. A fear lingers that our irreconcilable differences will soon become too vast, too extreme, for us to coexist as "one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." Although we wish that the statement from Senator Mitt Romney urging "colleagues to move forward with completing the electoral count, to refrain from further objections, and to unanimously affirm the legitimacy of the presidential election" could quickly restore faith in the

U.S. Constitution, this feat will take time. And although we wish to believe Mitch McConnell when he says that "they try to disrupt our democracy, they failed," we know that as a nation, the restoration of our government will, too, take time.

Today's events struck perhaps the most savage blow to America's reputation as a paragon of liberal democracy. Our current political climate has seduced and reduced us to the superficially satisfactory "blame game" across the board. Yet now more than ever we need to overcome the temptation to throw ourselves deeper into division and instead, take on this atrocious threat to our democracy with unity – not the unity that belongs in an ideological realm, but one that authentically brings Americans together on the necessary notion that we will prevail and preserve democracy.

Our generation is now faced with the task of healing a fractured nation in the aftermath of Trump's polarizing presidency. A task, we might add, that is an obligation rather than

a choice if we want a safe and just world for ourselves and our children. We must remain committed to restoring our democracy and to the principles of unity and freedom. As written in an email by our Head of School, Jessica Bagby, "As citizens of conscience, we will not be cowed by a lawless rabble, but are more committed than ever to knitting together our divided country and empowering [ourselves] to strengthen our democracy through [our] moral imagination and will."



### IN THIS ISSUE:

*Hope Lost and Regained: Capitol Assault Followed by Inauguration*

Page Five

*Fieldston Student Government Check-In*

PAGE TEN

*Everything You Wanted To Know About Mozart's Requiem*

PAGE FOUR

*The Story of Fleetwood Mac*

PAGE TWELVE

## Fieldston's Economics Class Takes a (Virtual) Trip to Africa

BY: ASHER ZEMMEL AND RYAN SPIEGEL



Dr. Blaney's Economics class is a History elective available to Juniors and Seniors. The class focuses on fundamental economic principles, concepts and definitions and applies them to historical and current events. Settlers of Catan tournaments, analyzing the Dutch East India Company, debating solutions to the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic on New York City, a Presidential debate and comparing the successes and failures of Chinese and American cities are all projects that were completed in the Economics class this year.

The final project required students to apply the knowledge they accumulated throughout the course to ar-

gue economic policy from a select country's perspective. The project set the People's Republic of China and the USA's economic policies head to head. Students acted as representatives of the PRC, the USA and three unique African countries; each African country was given time to question the global superpowers, eventually deciding whether trade with the United States or China would be more beneficial for their country. Four students made up the delegation from the United States, four students represented China, two students were Nigeria, two were Kenya and two were Zambia.

While the project's focal point was China's One Belt One Road initiative, each team had to research their respective countries. The Chinese team had to research their foreign policy towards each of the aforementioned African nations and the American delegation had to do the same. The pairs representing Kenya, Nigeria and Zambia had to research the economic policy and condition of their respective coun-

try, as well as trade relations with both the United States and China. After each group had ample time to conduct their research, the next step of the assignment was to write a formal dossier chronicling the research findings. After the report was submitted to Dr. Blaney, the class used the time set aside for History finals for a town hall style debate. The two students representing Kenya asked questions to both the United States and China, followed by Zambia and then Nigeria. During the time allocated for the US and China to respond, a more free-following debate was able to ensue - with the representatives of each African country filling the role of the moderators. At the conclusion of the debate, each of the three African countries decided if their nation would join/

continue with China's One Belt One Road Initiative, or build and strengthen economic ties with the United States. The teams representing Nigeria, Zambia and Kenya in both of Dr. Blaney's Economics classes unanimously decided, from the perspective of the country they were representing, that the best economic decision would be to forge a stronger trade relationship with the United States as opposed to China.

The project gave students an opportunity to shift their gaze from a Western-centric perspective to a more globalized point of view, focusing on Chinese policy, specifically China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative. The OBOR is a Chinese led infrastructure development plan that spans over 70 countries. The OBOR's intended

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 AND 7

## What Is The Future For Kelly Loeffler and The Atlanta Dream

BY: BEN LINDENBAUM

Players in the WNBA were an important reason for Georgia electing its first ever black Senator. The players used their platform to help bring Rev. Raphael Warnock from being a candidate polling at 9% to the Democratic candidate in one of the two Georgia runoff elections, and eventually to the United States Senate.

The WNBA has been very vocal in its support of social justice movements. Over the summer, the WNBA announced that it would dedicate its 2020-21 season to social justice. The league partnered with the WNBA players association to create the Social Justice Council. As written on the WNBA website, "The mission of the Social Justice Council is to be a driving force of necessary and continuing conversations about race, voting rights, LGBTQ+ advocacy, and gun control amongst other important societal issues."

The WNBA has been especially involved with the Black Lives Matter movement. Players are wearing uniforms with Breonna Taylor's name on them. Warm-up shirts for the players have "Black Lives Matter" printed on them, as well as "Say Her Name." Players have also spoken at games and to the media about their support for Black Lives Matter.

A critic of the support for Black Lives

Matter within the WNBA is the owner of the WNBA team Atlanta Dream and former opponent of Rev. Rafael Warnock in the Georgia Senate race, Kelly Loeffler. Loeffler has publicly denounced Black Lives Matter in a letter to the league's commissioner. In the letter, she describes Black Lives Matter as a "very divisive organization" that promotes "violence and destruction across the country."

This criticism of Black Lives Matter has caused many WNBA players, specifically players on the Atlanta Dream, to protest Loeffler. The WNBA players association tweeted "E-N-O-U-G-H! O-U-T!" in response to Loeffler criticizing the WNBA's support for Black Lives Matter. Renee Montgomery, a guard for the Atlanta Dream made a statement that she was disappointed in her team's ownership, and that was a reason she decided to sit out for the year. On July 10, the players on the team responded to Loeffler with a statement that said, "We are the women of the Atlanta Dream. We are women who support a movement. We are strong and we are fearless. We offer a voice to the voiceless. Our team is united in the Movement for Black Lives. It is not extreme to demand

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

### The Fieldston News

Ethical Culture Fieldston School  
3901 Fieldston Road, Bronx, NY 10471

[www.FieldstonNews.com](http://www.FieldstonNews.com)  
[editors@fieldstonnews.com](mailto:editors@fieldstonnews.com)

**Editors-in-Chief:** Rebecca Kopelman, Carolyn Finerman, Olivia Becker and David Porges

**Executive Editor:** Maria Grabowsky

**Digital Editor:** Andrew Ross

**Managing Editors:** Gillian Butler, Daniel Racz

**Editors in training:** Asher Zimmel, Emma Siskind

**Sports Editor:** Jack Noveck-Holmes

**Layout Editors:** Sophia Gutierrez, Nick Shiland

**Staff Manager:** Sarina Chitkara

**Contributors:** Maria Grabowsky, Noah Greer, Ben Lindenbaum, Elizabeth Walker, Sophia Gutierrez, Eliza Kelly, Alex Brooks, Erin Saunders, Emma Siskind, Asher Zimmel, Nina Kronengold, Calder Stokes, Tony Lumer, Daniel Racz, Catelin Bromfield, Lucy Troy, Ryan Spiegel, Morium Begum, Izzy Casdin and Yadna Prasad

**Photo Editors:** Camile Newman

**Printing:** Kirk Ruebenson and Carl Smith

**Faculty Adviser:** Bob Montera

## The Tate Library: Pandemic Edition

BY: ELIZABETH WALKER



The Tate Library, like most of the school, has been adjusted to accommodate the Fieldston and CDC COVID-19 safety guidelines. Librarians, administrators and members of facilities all came together before the start of the 2020-2021 school year to ensure that the library would continue to be a safe and productive environment during hybrid learning. Not only has the actual space been rearranged, but the online resources, scheduling processes and book-checkout procedures have also been altered since the start of the pandemic.

The librarians met three times a week over the summer to prepare in-depth online resources for student and teacher usage. During their meetings, the librarians redid the library cataloging and came up with a new covid-safe floor plan for the library. The librarians always thought that the Tate would be open this year because it has a recently-redone air conditioning and filtration system and it is quite spacious, making it one of the safest buildings on campus. In late August, the librarians were finally allowed back on campus. Then, before hybrid learning started in October, facilities went into the library and shifted the tables, separated

cubicles, transported several study carrels downstairs, and moved bookcases all while mapping out a six foot distance between individual study areas.

The main floor of the library is now only open during certain bands with a maximum capacity of 35 students working there at a time. In previous years, the upper floor of the library was another space that was open to students for studying, but this year it is used by faculty only. It was necessary to reserve the upstairs floor for faculty because most faculty offices are in close quarters with one another. Furthermore, proctors are able to go to the upper level of the library during their off time. Given the fact that the top floor is now for staff use only, the group study rooms are no longer available to students. Now, these spaces are instead used for teacher meetings. The entry floor of the library recently became a place with study carrels in order to increase the number of areas where students can work. This section of the library is able to stay open during all bands.

Scheduling was also a ma-

major factor in rethinking the library, and this job was left to the administration. There are now classes that take place in the library every day. One class can be held at a time on each floor, including the bottom floor because the former test center now functions as a classroom. Due to scheduling conflicts and safety precautions, no middle school students are able to use the library. Also, in order to fully utilize all open spaces on campus, the library is now a place where students and faculty can eat lunch. Overall, Fieldston administrators have made the library a more structured place to guarantee that the classes scheduled in the library always have a place to go.

The librarians are usually scheduled to attend the various grade orientations that take place at the beginning of the school year, however, this year instead of visiting orientation, the librarians were scheduled to host their informative presentations during school community days. Unfortunately, the schoolwide community days were later cancelled. The librarians have still been invited to many virtual classes to inform students of different online research tools. Over the past few months, the librarians have been busy creating an abundance of online LibGuides. The school community has made the switch to use more online resources instead of print because currently many students are learning virtually. LibGuides are a popular study tool that include audio recordings, videos, online

books, and databases. All of the Fieldston LibGuides can be accessed through the Tate Library website, which can be found by going to [libraries.ecfs.org](http://libraries.ecfs.org).

Many classes have been using online library resources as opposed to physical books because all books must be quarantined for seven days before they can be returned to the shelves. Students cannot touch the books while they are browsing in the library, but they are still able to checkout books. Because of the seven day quarantine rule, there are no more communal math and science textbooks available at the library. In addition to making LibGuides to compensate for the unavailability of print resources, the librarians have also made it possible for students to reach out for help without being in-person. Students can email any of the librarians to get their assistance in finding research tools even if they are not on campus.

During these quieter times in the Tate, many librarians miss the hum of students doing schoolwork throughout the day. The librarians have also noticed that it is harder for students to do collaborative work in the library now, which they previously enjoyed witnessing. Fieldston students and staff are still extremely grateful that this wonderful space continues to be made available to them, even at reduced capacity. It can be expected that the library will continue to function this way for the rest of the school year.

# The Fall of Mozart: Everything You Wanted To Know About Mozart's Requiem

BY: SOPHIA GUTIERREZ



Tchaikovsky once said “I love Mozart as the musical Christ. I do not think this comparison is blasphemous. Mozart was as pure as an angel, and his music is full of divine beauty...the culminating point of all beauty is in the sphere of music.” Tchaikovsky wasn't wrong. The sheer harmonious perfection and technical genius of Mozart's work remains central to our notion of a musical Eden. He is perhaps the most famous composer in the world. So familiar that some performers have gone out of their way to defamiliarize him as they begrudgingly prepare for another performance of “Eine Kleine Nachtmusik.” And why shouldn't they? Almost 270 years after his birth, why does Mozart remain extraordinary? Looking past the sentimental adoration and cult-like following that classical music snobs scowl at, Mozart is our foundation and inspiration. When celebrating his work, we celebrate ourselves, and the best humanity has to offer. Throughout his illustrious career, Mozart masterfully composed in every musical format. Operas, choral works, concertos, symphonies, chamber music, solos

and sonatas all by the time he was 35. Although, one piece in particular represents the height of the composer's maturity and undoubtedly stands as a great monument to human creativity. This piece would be his infamous Requiem in D minor. The Requiem has five main sections within its eight movements: Introitus, Sequentia, Offertorium, Sanctus, Agnus Dei and Communio. The Requiem begins with a soaring seven-measure instrumental introduction in the Introitus. The woodwinds present the principal theme of the work which is revisited throughout the remainder of the piece in variations. The trombones announce the entry of the choir, breaking into the main choral theme leading into the Kyrie. The Kyrie masterfully incorporates polyphonic writing inspired by Mozart's much admired baroque predecessors. With the end of the Kyrie comes a slower tempo lifting the movement into the mighty cries of the damned in the multi-sectioned Sequentia. This movement is filled with vivid and often horrifying imagery. Mozart writes breathlessly summoning trumpets and drums that imitate God pounding his fist as he pronounces judgment. Yet the sweet lamentful harmonies of the Offertorium renew our confidence that our prayers and sacrifices may indeed be enough to receive a pardon. The Sanctus brings home the Requiem's divine glory through its lofty homophonic textures. After the ominous

charisma of the Agnus Dei, we return tenderly to the main themes of the Introitus in the Communio. The story surrounding the composition of this piece is shrouded in mystery and chronicles the deterioration of a historical icon. We're in 1791, and Mozart has been considerably ill for over a year. Problems have been piling up for Mozart in recent years. In the late 1780's, his *Don Giovanni* was considered a triumph, but the times had changed in Vienna, and not in the composers favor. Following the French Revolution, tensions were escalating throughout Europe, and Austria was preparing itself for war with Turkey. Culture was the first to suffer the consequences of a new political climate. The number of concerts were cut in half and Mozart who was already known to fritter away money from an extravagant lifestyle, was consumed by financial debt. While working on “The Magic Flute,” Mozart received a shady commission from a stranger at his door to compose a Requiem under conditions of secrecy. One of these conditions was that Mozart must not attempt to uncover the identity of the person making the request. Little did he know the commissioner was Count Franz von Walsegg. Walsegg was a fan of trickery who often commissioned works by composers to then pass off as his own at private concerts and

salons. To honor the memory of his wife, and show himself as a brilliant composer, he made Mozart his next mark. Intrigued by the rules surrounding the commission and financial incentive, Mozart obsessively threw himself into the piece and worked on nothing else for several months. However, throughout this time, his health was in decline and would ultimately prevent him from finishing what he started. Mozart wasn't sound of mind when he received the commission, which led him to believe he'd been cursed to write the piece as a swan song and would shortly die after. When Mozart passed on December 5th, 1791, he had only succeeded in completing the Requiem through the Kyrie in full. He left basic sketches covering the voice parts and bass lines to be performed during the Dies Irae to the Hostias, but the piece was nowhere near completed. This left his wife Constanze to inherit a myriad of issues. Struggling to make ends meet as it was, she desperately needed to collect the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

# Hope Lost and Regained: The Capitol Assault Followed by The Inauguration

BY: MARIA GRABOWSKY



The month of January has been a whirlwind for American politics. On January 6th, rioters attacked and invaded the United States Capitol postponing the certification of President Elect Joe Biden and leaving the country in total shock. Scenes of Trump supporters shattered windows, carrying guns into the capitol, and placing their feet over Nancy Pelosi's desk fostered feelings of hopelessness, waves of despair and the illusion of an anarchist state.

Two weeks later, President Biden's inauguration seemed to have restored hope, stability, unity, and democracy in the United States, but not fully. The assault on the capitol marked a terrorist attack on this country and like previous attacks, the nation will need time to heal and process until it fully recovers.

"I felt saddened, angry and deeply disturbed by the events that unfolded on January 6th. I was saddened to see the capitol building, the seat of our democracy desecrated and to know that so many people believe the lies they are being fed by right-wing media," wrote Rob Greenwald,

math teacher at Fieldston. Vincent Drybala, english teacher at Fieldston, shared a similar sentiment: "In all, the Capitol is a sign of the US government, but more than that, it theoretically represents the highest ideals of the country: equality, freedom, democracy. This act felt like an assault on not only that landmark and the elected officials inside, but also an assault upon many of those ideals," wrote Drybala.

Antika Singh, history teacher at Fieldston, shared that the attack felt personal given her time spent living in Washington, DC. She said, "all I can say is that my first reaction was just how close to home it hit. I lived in DC for 4 years and taught there and I lived really close to the capitol and to think about that big mob and that group of individuals doing what they did just invoked a lot of fear to be honest... it just brought on a feeling of hopelessness, anger, and so many things."

Furthermore, the event cannot be seen as an accident, but rather a symptom of the country

that President Trump and the Republican Party created. "My biggest fear is that this is not over. This will only embolden these radical right groups that are being given such open encouragement and succor by a president and so many members of a national party," said Greenwald, "the Republican Party has been flirting with these people for quite some time beginning with Nixon's southern strategy, continuing with Reagan's launching of his candidacy in Philadelphia, Mississippi, site of the murder of three civil rights activists, G.H.W. Bush's Willie Horton ads and now has culminated in an open embrace of them by Trump and his acolytes." "I was both angered and shocked; that the protests were allowed to get to that point - certainly wouldn't have happened at a BLM march; that a significant portion of the American population - we call them "Republicans" - not only encouraged this anger, but were also shocked when it manifested in anger; and the facts that have come out since suggest that we were very, very lucky it wasn't worse," said Drybala. While moving on from these events has proven difficult, President Biden's inauguration on January 20th undoubtedly brought a glimmer of hope for the country. When reflecting on the inauguration, Singh said, "I think there is a hope for change just given the last four years and how polarizing everything has been."

President Biden presented himself as a symbol of stabil-

ity and unity which is what our country needs during this time. However, our country is also in need of the diversity, representation, and change that Vice President Kamala Harris represents. Singh, who identifies as Indian-American, said, "I think Kamala Harris represents so many different intersections of identity and growing up I didn't see many people that looked like myself in the media, in entertainment, in positions of power... You can now look to the highest office in the country and see someone that looks like you; it opens up the door to so many young women, Southasian women, Black women, multiracial women [telling them] that you can defy all the odds and know that it is possible to attain that."

Even though white supremacists and members of the Republican party are still present in the United States and its government, at least the oval office is occupied by someone that believes in progress, democracy, and freedom. As a nation, we should not forget of the Capitol assault, but we should be grateful for the new era in American politics that we have entered.

## **Mozart (cont.)**

final payment. Out of these circumstances, Constanze devised a plan to deliver a finished work and claim Mozart had completed it before he died. She then would be able to collect the outstanding payment. To set the plan in motion, she secretly recruited the composers Joseph von Eybler and Franz Xaver Süssmayr to finish the piece. Eybler orchestrated the music following the Kyrie but was unable to finish and returned the Requiem to Constanze. Luckily, Mozart's pupils held a lot of knowledge about how their teacher originally intended to finish the piece. This allowed Süssmayr to start where Eybler finished and he added his own orchestration to the Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei while completing the Lacrymosa. Süssmayr rewrote the entire Requiem in his own handwriting in order to make it more difficult to tell that it had been pieced together by various composers. He delivered the piece himself to the messenger who requested it. Then to top it all off, he forged Mozart's signature with the date of 1791.

The presence of the incomplete Requiem has fascinated and delighted scholars, commentators, playwrights,

## **Kelly Loeffler (cont.)**

change after centuries of inequality. This is not a political statement. This is a statement of humanity. Black Lives Matter."

No one knows what is in store for Loeffler and the Atlanta Dream. Although in the past Loeffler has said she does not intend to sell the team, this may not still be the case. It is difficult to think of reasons why Loeffler would like to remain the owner of a team whose players had such a pivotal role in taking her out of office.

Lebron James has expressed inter-

novelists and artists to the present day. The Requiem along with Mozart's death has resulted in an aura of legend and dramatization which has produced works like Alexander Pushkin's Mozart and Salieri and Milos Forman's Amadeus. While these artists have taken creative liberties to embroider their stories, the level of intrigue and mystery is highly authentic. These last few years of Mozart's career have long caused puzzlement. Less prolific than before, he seemed to have been gravitating towards a more experimental style. Nevertheless, what Mozart might have done next is impossible to guess. The pieces that emerged from a suddenly productive year in 1791-- "The Magic Flute," "La Clemenza di Tito" and the Requiem--all form diverging paths. Mozart was still a young man, not yet at the height of his powers. In an unimaginable alternate universe in which he lived to an older age, scholarly articles might have read sentences such as: "We tend to focus on the great works of Mozart's maturity. Yet we should not overlook the lively works of his youth such as 'Don Giovanni.'" As we unfortunately don't have this luxury, this last year of his life is the closest connection to the composers final musings and showcases a full character that is fascinatingly vast and complex.

When asked about Mozart's

est in buying the Atlanta Dream. He wrote on twitter, "Think I'm gone put together an ownership group for The Dream. Whose in? #BlackVotesMatter". While this is only a possibility, it would be beneficial to both the Atlanta Dream and the entire WNBA.

Requiem, middle/upper School music teacher Russel Currie shared some insight. "Tragedy and loss are associated with Mozart's Requiem" Currie said. "Like the untimely deaths of rock stars at an early age, Mozart's death has been romanticized in literature and on film. Milos's Forman's extraordinary film Amadeus ends with Mozart on his deathbed and his fictional nemesis the composer Antonio Salieri (who in reality would have been his student Sussmayr) feverishly copying the Requiem that Mozart is dictating to him. A rumor at the time was that Salieri poisoned Mozart. While there is no evidence of this, Salieri spent the rest of his life denying the rumors eventually suffering a nervous breakdown -- continuing the agony associated with the piece. While the Requiem was never completed by Mozart, it remains a time tested masterpiece. His completed sections, fragments and ideas are reminiscent of ancient Greek mosaics where miscellaneous shards are assembled encouraging our imagination to create the complete picture." His music portrays the highs and lows of life experience in their entirety, yet it's hard to top the emotional depth and intricacy of the Requiem. Before the composition of his

## **Economics Class (cont.)**

purpose is to expand Chinese hegemony and economic might, while also improving the infrastructure of underdeveloped nations. The initiative has been heavily criticized for its predatory tactics: it forces the economically unstable countries to accumulate massive amounts of Chinese-owned debt, with no way for the country to repay it, leaving the nation at the mercy of the Chinese government. The assignment highlighted the importance of China's increasing economic domination and emergence as a global superpower - opposing

Requiem, Mozart wrote to his father Leopold "As death is the true goal of our existence, I have formed during the last few years such close relationships with this best and truest friend of mankind that death's image is not only no longer terrifying to me, but is indeed very soothing and consoling." This sense of calm and acceptance towards death can be felt throughout the Requiem. The piece swings between accents of anguish and soft melodies, ultimately balancing a gravely solemn and melancholic tone with a soothing transcendence. For me, the opening Introitus of the piece represents this dichotomy masterfully. The opening plaintive melody soars into a harrowingly beautiful chorus that puts us face to face with our creator. Such an exquisite piece of music is only fitting as the consummation of an imposing and immortal man's career like Mozart's.

the likes of the US. Through this project students not only gained a more comprehensive understanding of foreign and economic policy in Africa, but they grew to understand the influence of the One Belt One Road Initiative and the negligence the United States has shown in the region.

As students at the Ethical Culture Fieldston School, it's vital that we incorporate ethics into our academic classes. An important facet of this project was understanding the ethical issues

## Spotlight on Kyle Wilkie-Glass

BY: NOAH GREER

This week, I had the privilege of virtually sitting down with Kyle Wilkie Glass, the Chief Operating Officer and Assistant Head of School for Strategic Initiatives at Fieldston, for an interview. The main focus of our discussion was COVID-19 and how it has affected the school-year at Fieldston. To fully understand Kyle's approach to education during a pandemic, I first wanted to put this year in perspective.

Kyle talked about his personal approach to handling issues at the beginning of the Pandemic, in early March of 2020. "When I think back to that point in time, information was emerging so quickly and we really didn't know a lot... The international health community didn't know very much..." about the virus. As a member of the Fieldston Administration, Kyle explained that he was concerned with understanding how the virus was transmitted and how to best ensure that everyone stayed safe and healthy.

Naturally, that was the top priority for the school last March, and health remains the number one concern for the school Administration, nearly a year later. Kyle told me about the struggles of establishing and maintaining a pandemic-modified educational system. With few instructions on how to do so, Mr. Wilkie-Glass said that he and the Administration had to act swiftly and without external help. Adaptivity became more necessary than ever before, as the school had to take in new health and safety information every day and use it to create a safe return to in person education plan, and communicate that plan to Fieldston families.

For a short while, our conversation deviated a bit from school information. Kyle and I discussed his experiences as a college-level educator during the H1N1 Outbreak of 2009. "As educators...we have dealt with something somewhat similar, the 2009 H1N1 crisis...quite different

from this Pandemic, but some of the playbooks were already there." Fascinatingly, Kyle has many years of experience in the emergency management field, serving as a volunteer on ambulances for more than twenty years. He even became a FEMA certified Emergency Manager.

Kyle expressed to me his positive attitude towards handling the pandemic. "It's easy to feel defeated, but in reality, people are doing heroic things every day." He noted that just by doing simple things like commuting to school, members of the Fieldston community have been brave in combating this virus. Kyle indicated his disdain for the phrase 'new normal' that is very often used in the context of the unusual nature of the world that we currently live in, "this is not the new normal, nobody thinks this is normal, nobody wants this to be normal, and this will eventually come to an end...things will get better."

From a student perspective, it seems that every last detail was considered in preparing for on-campus learning this past Fall: masks in the hallways, new sanitizing stations, desk shields, and new capacity policies for the Cafeteria and Library. During our interview, I asked Kyle how the Administration kept track of all these individual details. He expressed gratitude towards everyone else that helped. The division of responsibilities is the only reason that we can go on campus at all this year. The Nursing Team was placed in charge of all health-related policies for on-campus learning, such as coordinating the Magnus COVID-screening. The amount of work that the nursing team put into this process is "remarkable," he said. Kyle specifically noted

the incredible "leadership of Joe Piselli," the Director of Facilities here at Fieldston.

For example, he told me that in early February of 2020, when the Coronavirus reached the United States, Joe Piselli suggested the use of Virex, a new disinfectant that has since been placed on the EPA's list of approved products to fight COVID-19. Additionally, Kyle told me about the extraordinary work of Fieldston's Evening Custodial Team, whose cleaning of the school has taken on heightened importance this year. Effectively, the entire process of education and "school" had to be reshaped in a matter of weeks last Spring, and Kyle thanked all of Fieldston's teachers and the Division Leaders in particular for their work towards creating a new model for the curriculum. Lastly, he highlighted the work of the Director of Campus Services, Teddy O'Rourke, "Teddy O'Rourke is a phenomenal person who digests new information and quickly turns it into action." When I asked Kyle for specific changes that had to be made at Fieldston this year, he responded: "literally everything." This year, "there have been so many challenges in making this work." But for Kyle Wilkie-Glass, "the greatest challenge is the greatest opportunity." As hard as Kyle's job has been over the past nine or ten months, he has enjoyed the chance to rethink communication and transparency from the school. In this, Kyle has also found his greatest challenge. Dozens of questions from students, alums, administration and faculty come to his office every day. This means that Kyle has had to divide his time between many different lines of communication.

Many in the Upper School, especially those in the Class of 2021, are nervous as to how the rest of this year will unfold. Sadly, this year's Seniors have missed out on many

quintessential aspects of a typical Senior year. During our interview, however, Kyle shared some good news with me: "as long as we are permitted by New York State, we will deliver an in-person graduation for the Class of 2021...nothing will stand in the way of us celebrating their remarkable accomplishments." Like everything else this year, the school expects that this ceremony will have to be physically distanced and will require masks. Kyle added that "last year, no one thought graduation was possible," but graduation did happen. If we could have a graduation ceremony last year, we can have it this year, he told me.

As with every school year, it is the responsibility of the administration to calculate the success of an academic year using any number of metrics. Most notably this year, the success will largely depend on COVID-19 statistics. As of right now, the school seems to be doing very well when it comes to the virus, as we have seen little on-campus spread, and contact-tracing protocols have been effective at containing outbreaks. As we near the halfway point of the 2020-2021 school year, Kyle told me that he hopes to keep COVID-19 numbers low in school.

Exciting news came out on January 10th, 2021: New York State has proceeded in its vaccination program, and vaccines are now available for all educators. Kyle was kind enough to share his greatest hope for the Spring, saying that his "most realistic wish is for a successful vaccination program." At the end of our interview, he asked me to pass along a short message to all Fieldston students on behalf of the Administration, "we are here for you all and we want to support you." Mr. Wilkie-Glass was incredibly generous with his time and I am so grateful to have had the chance to speak with him.

### *Economics Class (cont.)*

that relate to both the OBOR and US foreign and economic policy. For example, portions of the debate were centered around accusations of human rights abuses in Chinese owned mines, the Uighur genocide, predatory lending practices and respecting national sovereignty. For this reason,

much of the final decision regarding which country the African nations should partner with, revolved around the intersection of ethics and economics.

Dr. Blaney's Economics class gives students insight into the world of Economics, improv-

ing their critical thinking skills and diversifying their world view. When asked why students should sign up to take Economics, Gerald Blaney said "Students should take economics because it influences many things in our lives: from our careers, our choices (including

college choices), our standard of living and is a major factor in both politics and public policy. It is difficult to understand much of what goes on in society without accounting for economic factors." Economics is offered as an elective course every year.

## A United States Intervention That Lives on Undebated

BY: MARIA GRABOWSKY

### Marxists Are Organizing Peasants in Brazil

#### Leftist League Aims at a Political Army 40 Million Strong

Following is the second of two articles on a tour of northeastern Brazil by a correspondent of The New York Times.

By TAD SZULC

Special to The New York Times.

GALILEIA, Brazil, Oct. 24—

"We fight for the happiness of all of the 40,000,000 Brazilian peasants and until it comes we shall fight beside you and you must help us," the thin, hollow-cheeked man said.

He was speaking to sixty or seventy men, most of them bare-foot, pressed tightly around a table in a hilltop shed here. The men applauded and there were shouts of "Muito bem!" (Very well!).

"You must remain united until total liberation comes," the speaker went on. "If we cannot win a peaceful solution for your



The New York Times (by Tad Szulc)

Inhabitants of Recife make meager living by picking crabs out of sand near Jordal River

Like many military dictatorships in Central and Latin America during the Cold War, Brazil's military coup in 1964 was heavily influenced and supported by the United States despite its human rights violations. The intervention, however, was subtle making it difficult to analyze just how much power the United States had in installing and maintaining Brazil's military dictatorship.

When I spoke to Professor James Green who teaches Brazilian history at Brown University about the amount of influence that the United States had in establishing the military regime, he revealed to me that his opinion is not common among Brazilians: "This is a big debate in Brazil and in this regard I disagree with many of my Brazilian colleagues on this. I believe that the military was prepared to overthrow Goulart and would have done that independently of whether the United States would have intervened," said Green.

Since military interventions are common in Brazilian history, it was likely another one would have happened with or without support from the United States. "They did that many times before so they had a feeling that it was almost their right to do that," said Green referring to the military coup. Military intervention has been part of Brazil's government since its origins

from its first emperor, Pedro I, giving himself the power to intervene to its second emperor, Pedro II, using the military in response to popular revolts to the institution of the Getúlio Vargas dictatorship in 1937 and finally to the coup in 1964.

Pedro I, gave himself the "poder moderador" or the power of the moderator which gave the emperor or the fourth branch of government, the right to intervene whenever he deemed necessary. Pedro II, Pedro I's son, worked to continue this legacy. "In the 19th century where there were a series of popular revolts, Pedro II gave a lot of power to the person who became Duque de Caixas who was a very powerful head of the military who then went in and repressed all these regional revolts and then developed a notion that the army ultimately would be the arbitrator. This led the army to overthrow the empire in 1889 and then intervene successfully," said Green. In 1937, Vargas issued the Estado Novo or the New State which marked the beginning of a dictatorial period from 1937 to 1945 where he dissolved the congress and elections pronouncing himself a permanent leader.

However, despite how recurrent military overthrows are in Brazil's history, there is no doubt that United States support sped up the process of the coup. Brazil's economy was on a downward trajectory and both President Kennedy and

Johnson refused to lend money to Goulart's government. The United States, however, promised the military that this would quickly change if they took power. "The fact that the United States government reassured them that they would give immediate military and economic assistance probably encouraged some of the military leaders that were vacillating and not sure that they could pull it off to decide to go ahead with the main military conspirators and overthrow Goulart," said Green.

At the time, the United States worried about Brazil as a second Cuban Revolution. "There was a general notion that Latin America was being threatened by communists," said Green. In 1964, the New York Times published a series of articles suggesting that 40 million peasants from the Northeast of Brazil were preparing themselves to revolt. One article written by New York Times correspondent and Pulitzer Prize finalist, Tad Szulc, is titled, "Marxists are Organizing Peasants in Brazil," and refers to the peasant league as, "the closest thing to an organized "Fidelista" movement in Latin America outside Cuba." Szulc indicates that a revolution in the Northeast was inevitable and bound to be detrimental: "the Northeast will go Communist and you will have a situation ten times worse than in Cuba if something

is not done." In another New York Times article titled "The 'Fidelistas' of Brazil" that responds to the reports conducted by Szulc, the writer writes, "Mr. Szulc's findings do suggest that it is time that the United States took a far more positive part in aiding our neighbors south of the Canal."

These articles most likely incited fear into the minds and chills down the backs of intellectuals or political leaders reading the New York Times at a time where mentions of Cuba and Fidel Castro called for instant repulsion. It was these articles and the anti-communism paranoia at the time that made it reasonable for the United States to meddle in Brazil's political affairs.

The United States infiltrated by funding political candidates and oppositionists of Goulart's government. Lilia M. Schwarcz and Heloisa M. Starling wrote in their book, Brazil: A Biography, about the Brazilian Institute of Democratic Action that worked with the Central Intelligence Agency to finance 250 candidates for federal deputies, 60 candidates for state deputies and 8 candidates for governors in 1962. Furthermore, the authors write of how the United States was responsible for investing in the conspiracy against Goulart in the hopes of preventing a leftist dictatorship. "The objective of the large-scale sponsorship was strategic: to build an opposition in congress, stop the government, and give way to the coup," wrote Schwarcz and Starling in Portuguese. The growing fear of communism from Goulart's government eventually results in the success of this objective.

In a telegram written by Lincoln Gordon, the United States ambassador for Brazil from 1961-1966 on March 28, 1964 to the Department of State, it says, "my considered conclusion is that Goulart is now definitely engaged on campaign to seize dictatorial power, accepting the active collaboration of the Brazilian Communist Party, and of other radical left revolutionaries to this end. If he were to succeed it is more than likely that Brazil would come under full Communist control." In his evidence, he cites the repression towards Goulart's oppositionists through media censorship and withholding of federal funds. He argues that Goulart's true intentions are not social and economic reforms but to get rid of the existing constitution and the Congress.





In the same telegram, Gordon also writes of his support for Castello Branco as a leader for organized resistance groups against Goulart's government. "Castello Branco is a highly competent, discreet, honest, and deeply respected officer who has strong loyalty to legal and constitutional principles," wrote Gordon. He further assures the Department of State that Castello Branco will only act in response to, "unconstitutional provocation," and uses the example of closing congress which is ironic given that the military dictatorship ultimately does exactly that.

Colonel Vernon A. Walters, the American military attaché in Brazil, then telegraphs the State department communicating that the Brazilian army generals have decided to act, thus leading the United States to prepare its support. On March 30th, the United States sent a task force of aircraft carriers and destroyers with arms as well as oil and petroleum products to Brazil. Gordon feared that a civil war would erupt between the military and popular forces which would cause the labor unions to deplete all the arms and petroleum that the military would need to fight. These measures, however, were revealed to be ultimately unnecessary. The intervention was never direct since Goulart quickly fled the country once the military threatened to take over. "When it became clear that there was not gonna be significant resistance, they ordered the task force to return... There was never direct intervention where the marines landed and occupied a city and then caused some kind of concern," said Green.

Brazil also tried to maintain the exterior image of a democratic government to hide the reality of a right-winged

dictatorship which made the support from the United States seem more justifiable. Castello Branco, the first military leader, stripped the opposition of political rights but kept political parties and the congress in session. The gubernatorial elections of 1965, nevertheless, lead the government to pivot slightly. Since the opposition wins in both the states of Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro, the government decides to eliminate political parties and create only a majority and minority party to preserve the illusion of a democracy but prevent the opposition from growing in power. "Brazil's government is very concerned with creating a PR campaign to make it look like Brazil is a democracy and to allow certain institutions to continue to exist even though it's not a democracy, it's a dictatorship," said Green.

When Institutional Act Number Five is passed, however, Brazil's PR campaign wavers and the illusion of a democracy no longer stands. "That's when they [Brazil's government] close congress and that causes some crisis in the Johnson administration," said Green. The United States suspended aid in December of 1968 but resumed it five months later in May of 1969. In regards to the torture afflicted on government oppositionists, Green believes that while the United States did not train Brazil's military to torture, they still incentivized it indirectly by supporting the military dictatorship. "Brazilians were torturing people in the 1940s or in the Estado Novo with Getulio Vargas. Brazilians were torturing

slaves for 300 years. They didn't need to be taught how to do that," said Green, "what the United States did was reassure them that this was ok when they knew about torture and didn't actively denounce it."

Ralph Della Cava, who taught Latin America history at Queens College here in New York City and was a member of the Brazil seminar at Columbia University, wrote an article called 'Torture in Brazil' published in April 24, 1970, where he shames the United States for its involvement. "In view of the wide-scale tortures and the increasingly fascist militarization of Brazil, what explains the official silence of the United States government?... Its silence is a resounding reaffirmation of its policy of complicity in regard to Brazil," wrote Della Cava.

In his article, Della Cava questions the silence from American newspapers as well as from the government stating how Europeans and Chileans have publicly denounced the torture in Brazil's government while Americans have kept their mouths tightly shut. Della Cava also calls out Gordon for being responsible for this policy of complicity. He describes him as, "the architect of that policy" and blames him for convincing the Johnson administration to recognize Brazil's government, "within 24 hours, even though the regime's policies were largely unknown."

In response to Della Cava's article, Gordon claimed to have been unaware of the torture taking place. He writes that his participation as Assistant Secretary of State in official American policy-making toward Latin America ended in June, 1967 and that, "during the period before mid-1967, no cases of torture were brought to my attention." He also writes of how he condemned the Fifth Institutional Act since he, "considered that Act an unnecessary and arbitrary reversal of the Brazilian Government's announced intention to restore full constitutional processes." After the act, Gordon asserts that he advised the U.S. administration to halt any aid allocations in order to refrain from endorsing the act.

Della Cava, however, refuted Gordon's argument. In his reply, Della Cava writes that, "in the six months immediately following the military coup of 1 April 1964, the public record alone fully documented about two dozen cases of torture." He then goes on to note various newspapers that documented torture during the

time that Gordon was still actively participating in his position. Della Cava further proves how the dictatorship stripped myriad individuals of political rights and freedoms in 1966 whilst Gordon was still in his position meanwhile the United States doubled its monetary support, rather than acknowledging the government's fascist behavior.

I find it difficult for Gordon to have been fully uninformed and short-sighted to the point where he was unable to predict that granting the military with power would not have led Brazil's government into the opposite of a democracy. Green attributes Gordon's lack of foresight to the cold war climate. "To a certain extent he kind of had a notion that the military was honest and was going to be democratic but the military had no intentions of doing that... He really was caught up and blinded by cold war ideas and therefore made the wrong decisions not based on fact but based on the ideology," said Green.

In his statement against Della Cava's claims, Gordon writes of his concern of Brazil's leftist tendencies at the time thus proving Green's point about the ideology. "There were several candidates who openly spoke of themselves as would-be 'Fidel Castros' of Brazil. Given the size and location of Brazil, such a course of events - evidently hypothetical, but not implausible - might have made all of South America an area of left-wing totalitarian regimes," wrote Gordon.

Regardless of whether Gordon was cognizant of the human rights violations and of how the cold war ideology blinded him, it remains true that he persuaded the United States to support a fascist dictatorship. The consequences of this persuasion have been proven fatal and both Gordon as well as the United States should have been held accountable.

It is often the case that the United States intervention in Brazil is forgotten since it can seem harmless when compared to other United States' interventions where they invaded, created civil wars and maintained a large presence militarily. However, we cannot disregard the fact that the United States supported a government that tortured its citizens, took away their freedoms, and governed with terror.

# Fieldston Student Government Check-In

BY: NINA KRONENGOLD AND CALDER STOKES

Hello, fellow Fieldston reader! As our first semester comes to a screeching halt and our second semester commences, we are excited to share with you some of the work we have been doing, as well as our future initiatives. Even though we don't have a crystal ball, and can't say that this year will end on a great note, we're all in this together. Despite having such an unforeseen year, we have done our best to make sure that your voices have been heard and that we use our position to ensure the best for our Fieldston community. Running a student government during COVID has been challenging, but we have used student surveys, video speeches, affinity discussions and our cabinet to talk to students, relay their needs to the school administration and keep

them in the loop on updates in the school's administration and board. We want everyone to feel like they know what's going on. Throughout the summer we worked with administration, faculty and parent representatives as part of a school-wide COVID Task Force to facilitate a safe transition back into the school year, while planning virtual and socially distanced community events. This fall, we established a separate student-run COVID Task Force with two representatives from each grade to address grade-specific COVID related issues. We also have been running a weekly cabinet meeting with 26 student secretaries who collaborate on student needs pertaining to both the academic and non-academic

concerns of our community. Student mental health has been a particular focus of our cabinet. We have assigned a mental health representative for each grade and have encouraged cabinet members to consider the importance of students' emotional well being in their specific disciplines. Our amazing secretaries have been working hard to address the concerns and topics in the realm of their respective positions, and they updated the student body with a brief video describing what they've done this semester and what they hope to do in the future. Moving forward, we plan to continue our long term goals of focusing on student voices and transparency between us, the students and the administration, as well as a larger

emphasis on communication. As observed by many of our surveys, this is a difficult year for students to feel connected and for our final semester as Presidents, we will be focusing specifically on creating opportunities and spaces for students to have fun and feel a sense of community. Get ready for more advisory challenges, gradewide activities, and spirit and schoolwide events! We are excited for all that is to come and hope that these initiatives can help us get through the year as a strong community. If you are reading this right now, and have any points, concerns, or initiatives you would like to see covered this year, please reach out to us, we would love to hear all of your voices!

## Performing Arts in the Online World

BY: ELIZA KELLY

Like every other department at Fieldston, the Performing Arts department has had to make several changes and compromises in the wake of an unconventional school year. Normally at this time of year, students interested in acting would be taking classes in the DTL and Dance Studio, or going to after school rehearsals for the spring musical. This year, however, students join Google Meet calls from their bedrooms and various workspaces to act and dance. So much of performing arts (especially at Fieldston) thrives because of the community that forms between the students and faculty. Having to switch school and extracurricular activities to an

online space created a concern for myself and other students who do theater and dance at Fieldston. How will we be able to connect and bond as a cast for each show? How will we be able to cry to our arts teachers if we can't be with them in person? Won't it be awkward to act and dance over Google Meets? Although trivial in the broader context of the pandemic, these were genuine questions that I had when the world shut down last March. Something I had not considered was the pure strength of the Fieldston performing arts department and how powerful it truly can be. Of course, it is disappointing that we can't perform on stage or hug each

other during the long hours of tech week, but in the past year, the performing arts community has found ways to bring light to such a dark time. Though always true, but especially in the past year, I have realized the importance of art in not only maintaining sanity but inspiring creativity. 2020 was an incredibly challenging year for everyone, which means that the need for art and art communities ought to be more of a priority than ever before. As the secretary of performing arts this school year, I knew that I needed to ensure a strong presence, because I know how many people at Fieldston rely on theater and dance. My central focus

(as secretary and member of the theatre and dance advisory board) was to take advantage of the online space to promote community engagement. In a normal year, there would have been a fall drama and two studio theatre performances already. This year, we have had two studio theatre performances, a pop-up event led by Alison Rodgers (VI), and an open studio led by Fieldston faculty, with much more to come in the next few months. Because of the dedication and inspiration of the performing arts community and the use of a virtual platform, we have been able to create community engagement in a complete-

## Coming to Terms with Math Midterms

BY: EMMA SISKIND AND ASHER ZEMMEL

The unprecedented school year Fieldston is experiencing has forced the fall end of semester assessments to undergo adjustments. Specifically, the traditional “math final” has been changed from a cumulative test to alternative forms of assessment. From projects to problem sets, math teachers have gotten creative with their methods of assessing their students during COVID-19. Though this year’s math midterms are new territory for many to navigate, teachers and students alike have risen to the occasion and proved that neither COVID nor the challenges of remote learning will prevent them from learning and thriving in math class.

Many math students voiced their appreciation for the hard work of their math teachers’ creative assessments, stating that the absence of a cumulative test has allowed them to have a less stressful midterms season. When asked about his mental health during finals week, Josh Sugarman (VI) said “Finals were a challenge to do during the hyflex model, but I think Fieldston rose to the occasion. My math final was reasonable, but in a way that was fair to the students. The teachers understand the stress levels we all have during the coronavirus pandemic and were available to meet during finals week.”

Many math students voiced their appreciation for the hard work of their math teachers’ creative assessments, stating that the absence of a cumulative test has allowed them to have a less stressful midterms season. Naomi Schatz (V), a student in seven math, was concerned about how she would be able

to balance her responsibilities as captain of the swim team and a dedicated math student during finals week. She was able to stay organized by making herself a daily schedule, setting out time for her problem set. Schatz ended up appreciating the experience, “We had to pick from three complicated problem sets (whichever we found interesting). We had to work through a bunch of difficult problems within it. It was definitely challenging to be online but I was happy to be doing a project instead of a test because it required deeper thought rather than just a drilling exercise. While I don’t love online being online I liked the actual content of the final more than past finals.” Margot Gordon (V) concurred with Schatz, saying, “I had a successful math final about longitude and latitude. It was a group project and I think it was a unique final for a unique year.”

Students who have been at Fieldston for longer periods of time are used to the traditional three hour test as a math final. A significant portion of the students interviewed for this article expressed an interest in permanently using this method of finals going forward. Pointing to a more relaxed finals week. Ryan Spiegel (V) wonders about the future of math finals, while also understanding that returning to the previous test format is likely. “Taking a math final during the pandemic was definitely an interesting experience. My class had a problem set with

questions from various topics that we covered during the first semester. It was a great way to test my math skills without it being an online cumulative test. It’s a method that many students would like to see going forward, although I understand why the math department might want to transition back to traditional finals”

To Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors, these math projects and problem sets are unusual in comparison to the annual midterm test, however freshman are starting off their finals career with these unusual assignments. Lucy Goldsmith (III) reflects on her first math midterms experience, explaining, “For my final, I had a problem set and a meeting with my teacher. I enjoyed this because I was able to showcase the math I learned throughout the semester through a non stressful means and I had the ability to talk to my math teacher about my growth throughout the semester.”

While the future of the country might be uncertain regarding vaccinations and COVID-19 case levels, one thing is certain: Fieldston’s math department is equipped for whatever comes next. Clearly, their hard work and creativity has paid off this midterms season. Students of all grades and math levels expressed their gratitude for the tenacity of their teachers during finals week.

## Update from Secretary of Science

BY: NOAH GREER

Hi, I’m Noah Greer and I am the Secretary of English for the 2020-21 school year. So far this year, I have been working closely with the English Department to make sure that all Fieldston students have a great experience within their English classes. We have had multiple discussions concerning the work being done to adjust the Form III and IV English curricula to ensure that the diversity of our student body is fully represented in the books that are being taught. Additionally, with the help of Mr. Donahue and Ms. O-B, I was able to get the Writing Center up and running on Google Meet. I look forward to pursuing further initiatives this spring to ensure an both educational and enjoyable second semester! I want everyone to know that I am open to feedback on the work that I am doing and would love to hear new ideas!



# Sex, Drugs, n' Rock n' Roll: The Story of Fleetwood Mac's "Rumours"

BY: ALEX BROOKS



Though Adam and Eve may have invented the concepts of romance and betrayal, almost 6,000 years later, three English blues artists and two California hippies owned the concept of heartbreak. The story of how the Fleetwood Mac five recorded the album *Rumours* sounds a lot like *Spinal Tap*, minus the spontaneous combustion. But make no mistake, this one also goes to eleven.

Christine and John McVie had just been divorced, Mick Fleetwood had been recently cuckolded by his best friend, and Lindsey Buckingham had just called it quits with Stevie Nicks. Coming off their eponymous 1975 hit, the stakes were higher than ever to produce something great. In addition to taking it out on each other, each band member fueled their stress, mania, and artistry into their music. *Rumours* was not a masterpiece in spite of the drama, it was a masterpiece because of it.

Before Fleetwood Mac defined the west coast sound of the seventies, it was a popular English blues band. In the mid 1960s, all that mattered to the world were the Beatles, ushering in a period of classic rock

dominated by the British. American music, and specifically, the blues, as practiced by Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, Little Walter, Sonnyboy Williamson, Willie Dixon and Buddy Guy, elevated an otherwise weak British music scene. Enter John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, featuring a star-studded cast including Mick Taylor, Eric Clapton, and Peter Green, that would later form parts of the Rolling Stones, Cream, and Fleetwood Mac, respectively.

When Eric Clapton who was then a little known "slowhand" guitarist left the band to form Cream, he was replaced by Peter Green. Thought by many to be better than Clapton, Green was a virtuosic guitarist with a strong voice. He left the Bluesbreakers in 1967 to found a new band. He named his band Fleetwood Mac, as a combination of their drummer Mick Fleetwood and bassist John McVie's lastnames. Green then recruited a strange, introverted guitarist, Jeremy Spencer, to counteract his lugubrious guitar playing.

Little did they know that only two of them would last.

The group immediately rose to fame in England, but a strange combination of psychedelics, lunacy, and religious cults took out many of their key players. Peter Green was becoming increasingly unhappy as the band's leader, and in a blues scene dominated by Eric Clapton, he hired eighteen year old Danny Kirwan to be his third guitarist and the band's teenage heartthrob. However, LSD eventually drove Green over the edge. He began to dress like Christ and act erratically, until he suddenly left the band and was diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1970.

Besides two solo albums in the seventies, his career fell with Fleetwood Mac. He passed away this July, and is now known as one of psychedelic rock and the blues' greatest lost potentials. Green's absence caused a power vacuum in the blues and a tremor in The Mac. He was replaced by singer, songwriter, and keyboardist Christine Perfect, whose marriage to John McVie officially secured her contract. Jeremy Spencer, who rarely interacted with the others, spearheaded their first record without Green, 1970's *Kiln House*. On the American tour for this album, he disappeared from their hotel in Los Angeles. When they found him, he went by the name Joshua and had joined a religious cult, the Children

of God. In a time where they were trying to redefine their sound, the loss of Spencer was a huge blow.

Danny Kirwan and Christine McVie emerged as leaders, pushing them towards mainstream rock. However, he too collapsed under pressure and turned to alcoholism and addiction. After smashing his guitar and refusing to play at a concert, guitarist Bob Welch replaced him, and the era of the Mac that followed, though largely forgotten, was crucial in developing the band's characteristic west coast sound. He, too, became an alcoholic and started his own band, Paris. This left Mick and the McVie's desperately searching for a seventh guitarist in seven years. This is when steamy, pot-smokin' California lovers Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham entered the picture. However, no one joined Fleetwood Mac without surrendering their sanity at the door. Fleetwood and McVie first heard the soft rock duo's album *Buckingham-Nicks* when they were auditioning engineers for their next album. Fleetwood, who was the de-facto leader, wanted Buckingham on the guitar, but he claimed he and Stevie were a package deal. Legend has it that when Fleetwood was looking for a studio, he pressed a random button and along came the angelic voice of Stevie Nicks. After listening to all of their records, he hired them.

Not only did Stevie and Lindsey bring back the screaming girls and sold out shows that

The Mac had experienced in the sixties, but they gave the band a new face and sound. Lindsey was a beast on the guitar, and had a Cali pop vision that gave them a distinct yet catchy sound. “He can sing the rainbow,” said Tess McGarvey (Form IV). Stevie, a hippie gypsy with a sexy voice and wild curly hair, had a powerful stage presence and a mystical witch persona that made her the face of the band. The two of them could both write music, but their real talents emerged on stage: their sexual tension and pure musicianship soon turned them into rock’s favorite couple.

Their first chapter with the band, 1975’s eponymous album, was the Mac’s first true west coast record, that combined the folk and pop backgrounds of Stevie and Lindsey with the blues of the original Fleetwood Mac. Riding on the success of singles such as “Over My Head,” “Rhiannon,” and “Say You Love Me,” the album gradually became a number one hit, selling over five million copies in the US alone.

Though business was booming, the band was as fragile as ever going into the production of *Rumours*. On top of the pressure to produce another hit, each of their personal lives were crumbling behind the scenes. John, a struggling alcoholic, and Christine McVie divorced in 1976 after around six years of marriage.

At the same time, Stevie and Lindsey broke up. Their relationship, which was on and off since she joined him singing “California Dreamin’” at a karaoke party in 1966, was practically a marriage.

While John and Christine took the English approach of silence, Lindsey and Stevie had frequent screaming matches during production.

And as if that wasn’t enough, Mick Fleetwood left his wife, Jenny Boyd, when he learned she was having an affair with his best friend and former colleague Bob Weston. To spice things up even more, Mick fell for Stevie, and Christine fell for the lighting director. As John McVie said, “about the only people in the band who haven’t had an affair are me and Lindsey,” and, knowing Fleetwood Mac, it wouldn’t have been surprising if they had.

With all the drama and artistic clashes, and the pressure to succeed hanging over it all, the studio felt more like Guantanamo Bay than the Golden State. Confined to a windowless wood madhouse on the outskirts of San Francisco, the band spent every waking moment together until the end of time (when Mick removed all the clocks).

To endure the long hours of psychological torture, the band resorted to alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine. Ken Caillat, *Rumours* producer and engineer, describes a continental divide in the drug scene: “There were the blues Fleetwood Mac from England – they were the boozers and that was pretty much what they did. And there was the California Fleetwood Mac – they were the pot-smoking hippies with Lindsey and Stevie. Then the cocaine entered the picture. So it was booze versus pot really, with a little cocaine cocktail.”

Amidst their purple haze came a range of wild tales, from the brilliant idea of crediting their drug dealer on the album cover

to the report that Stevie preferred ingesting cocaine up her... But this was just a symptom of the rock n’ roll lifestyle to them. At the time, there was a sense that anything was possible in the music industry. Being isolated, with hours of darkness in the studio, there was talk of a rebellion brewing against the establishment and a rivalry between the life of rock n’ roll and authority. Whether this reflection was sincere or a just a psychedelic trip, to Fleetwood Mac, it was the perfect excuse to do drugs. The sheer volume of emotion in that studio combined with substances, sex, and the sting of betrayal, gave the artists so much to write about. Thus, *Rumours* essentially became a collection of each of their individual stories, as opposed to a conventional record. Each song was a shot at another member of the band, but they were all forced to play. Unlike other great breakup albums, this is the only example where you can hear the couples singing and playing alongside each other.

The band was not confident that this approach would work. Sarah Abenante (Form IV) describes it as taking “two steps forward and two steps back,” referring to the offbeat yet masterful flow of one song to the next. With the thematic similarities, and musical genius, they were able to tie together these seemingly disparate memoirs into one cohesive album.

Lindsey Buckingham fires three shots at Stevie Nicks with “Second Hand News,”

“Never Going Back Again,” and “Go Your Own Way” in *Rumours*. He kicks off the album with a groovy yet grim bop in, ‘Second Hand News’. Temporarily titled “Strummer,” the song was intended as an instrumental to spare Nicks’ feelings. Though it takes on a playful California flavor, in reality, it is a call to Nicks, to the band, and to all broken hearts, to take it easy and move on. The first words of the album, “I know there’s nothin’ to say, someone has taken my place,” show just how quickly he thinks he can get over Stevie.

“Never Going Back Again” might just be Lindsey’s most beautiful and arrogant song. It is his pledge to leave Stevie in the dust after meeting a woman who meant nothing to him, and even Lindsey himself has called this naive. However, once again, he masquerades his true motives behind a breezy acoustic. Finally, he unleashes the fury and pulls the plug in “Go Your Own Way.” Instead of another catchy soft-rock tune, he channels his angst into fierce drums and guitar, ripping Stevie to shreds and calling game over.

Lindsey’s music would mean nothing without Stevie to shove it right back in his face. One day during production, she plopped into someone else’s bed, and wrote “Dreams” in ten minutes. “[In ‘Go Your Own Way’] Lindsey is saying go ahead and date other men and go live your crappy life, and [I’m] singing about the rain washing you clean. We were coming at it from opposite angles, but we were really saying the same exact thing,” said Nicks.

Her dark and husky vocals, with a powerful message and an unforgettable beat, turned this simple doodle into the band's only number one hit. However, what she thought would be her greatest moment on the record, "Silver Springs," was too long to make the cut. A somber reflection on what she and Lindsey could have been, it was replaced by "I Don't Want to Know," a cheery love song from the days of Buckingham-Nicks. The final song on the album, "Gold Dust Woman," might just be her masterpiece. An ode to her own struggles, it is a tale of surviving the life of sex and drug addiction. Before she leaves, she asks the listener, "Is it over now? Do you know how to pick up the pieces and go home?" When she poses this question, she asks whether moving on is possible, or if she has already sold her soul to drugs and rock n' roll. Like the band itself, Stevie was made of gold dust, shiny and successful on the outside but broken on the inside.

Though Stevie and Lindsey may have been the crowd favorites, Christine McVie was at the heart of Rumours. The positive attitude she poured into her songs, even though she had just been divorced, made Lindsey and Stevie seem like twisted ghouls. Instead of roasting her ex-husband, John McVie, she wishes him the best in "Don't Stop." Her wishes for him mirror her dream of a future where her divorce is merely an afterthought. When Bill Clinton selected this as his official campaign song, he reunited the band to perform at his inauguration in 1993. Her genius as a pianist, singer, and songwriter truly shines through in Songbird, a love song about nobody that resonates with everybody.

Her ex-husband said, "When Christine played 'Songbird,' grown men would weep." Far from a tear-jerker, Christine sings about how great it is to have sex with the lighting director in "You Make Loving Fun." Not to be confused with a stupid love story, this is a woman claiming her rugged rockstar sexuality, and making a hell of a song out of it in the process. "Oh Daddy" might be the darkest song of Chris' career. Though it may have been hinting at Mick Fleetwood, the band's only father, it tells the story of a woman in a degrading and loveless relationship, likely in reference to her fling with the lighting director.

Though Rumours is known for its breakups, the one thing that never broke was "The Chain." In an album characterized by three strong solo voices, it's impossible to tell who's who and what's what in "The Chain." The only song in their history to be written by all five members of the band, it consisted of many parts jumbled together into one powerful piece. Each member had their heart broken that year, and for the first time, they came together to make one joint epic of betrayal. Though angsty and intense, brimming with energy in its screaming solos and dramatic harmonies, it is a beautiful song with a beautiful message at the end of the day. Despite the hell that Rumours put them through, they were not planning on breaking up any time soon or so they thought. Rumours is both Fleetwood Mac at its greatest and at its worst. Fleetwood Mac was never, by any means, a stable band. With the revolving door of drug addicts, lunatics, and cult members, John McVie and Mick Fleetwood were

the only artists to appear on all of their albums. Yet, by the time the five had settled in for Rumours, the damage was irreversible. Though the album was the second biggest success in US history, and the tour was a hit, it was all downhill from there. Despite the release of big hits through the eighties, they never returned to the glory of Rumours. However, at the same time, Rumours would not have existed without the drama. And though it may have led to their downfall, it was definitely worth it. Fast forward to today, and Fleetwood Mac has clawed its way back to popularity. McGarvey describes "tote bag wearing, Kombucha drinking, flower crown people," referring to the older generation of hippies that keep the old school and blues Fleetwood Mac alive. Of course, due to its historic success, Fleetwood Mac is no secret, and maintains its reputation as one of classic rock's greatest bands. Abenante describes Fieldston students as students with a general love for the arts and that appreciate classic rock, although they may only know the songs as background music on the radio. Though the majority of Gen Z brands classic rock as "old dad music" and throws it aside, Rumours recently found its way back into the top ten. Thanks to a TikTok trend of a man drinking Ocean Spray cranberry juice on a skateboard while listening to "Dreams," classic rock has finally infiltrated Gen Z. Honestly, Fleetwood Mac has seen a lot weirder stuff in their day.

## The Unknowns of the Spring Sports Season

BY: TONY LUMER

The uncertainty of 2020 has undoubtedly followed us into 2021. Since last spring, student-athletes at Fieldston have not been able to participate in competition. However, the final sports season of the 2020-2021 school year is up in the air. As the Secretary of Athletics, it is my responsibility to communicate with Gus Ornstein and propose to him my ideas of how sports can return to Fieldston this year. In a conversation with him last week, he stated that there is currently no final decision on the spring season. However, beginning in late February and early March, spring teams will commence practices. Though competition is still up in the air, students should have faith that our Director of Athletics is working as hard as possible to give our spring athletes some competition in the coming months. The CDC has labeled which sports are low, moderate, or high risk for athletes, and as of now, lacrosse is the only sport on the high-risk level for activities, making it the most uncertain of the spring sports. The upcoming month is a critical period for the final decision on the spring sports as our athletic enjoyment is balanced with our health and safety. In the meantime, we can only hope that we will have a season, knowing that Gus will keep us informed on the latest updates.

# Taylor Swift and the Misogyny within the Music Industry

BY: ERIN SAUNDERS

Taylor Swift: You either love her or you hate her. For some people, she exemplifies feminism and girl power in the music industry. But for others, Swift represents a different symbol: one that is more negative. There is no doubt that Swift has faced an immense amount of sexism in the industry, so why are her experiences often invalidated? How did Swift's image shift from a beloved country-pop star to a two-faced, annoying liar? One Medium article puts it perfectly: "Hating on Swift is basically a universal hobby, at this point."

Swift's documentary, *Miss Americana* (2020), gives us insight into her personal struggles and experiences as a woman in the music industry, including eating disorders, sexual assault and one man that almost ruined her entire career. The film was made as a clapback to the criticism she receives every day. The goal of the documentary wasn't to derive sympathy for herself, but instead to show us that she, one of the most influential artists in the music industry, experiences similar struggles to an average woman.

According to Swift, women are held at an impossible standard in the music industry. She has realized over the years that any move she makes will be harshly criticized and that the expectation is not for women to achieve success on their own. "As a female in this industry, some people will always have some slight reservations about you: whether you deserve to be there, whether your male producer or co-writer is the reason for your success..."

Swift said in her acceptance speech at the Billboard Women in Music Awards in 2019.

"It's a little discouraging that females have to work so much harder to prove that they do their own things. I see Nicki Minaj and Iggy Azalea having to prove that they write their own raps or their own lyrics, and it makes me sad, because they shouldn't have to justify it," she said. This gender disparity is the reason why Swift speaks out against male privilege in the industry and stands up for other female artists. By calling misogyny out, she helps others realize the music industry's disparity and helps to dismantle people's internal biases. Calling out gender inequalities is what separates Swift from other (specifically male) artists. While some male artists do speak out and amplify female voices, they have not been personal targets of sexism in the industry, so many don't feel an obligation to advocate. For Swift, experiencing this sexism and speaking out about it is necessary. In her song, "The Man," Swift sings: "They'd say I hustled/ Put in the work/ They wouldn't shake their heads and question how much of this I deserve [if I were a man]." This song received harsh criticism across the world. One USA Today article writes, "This type of feminism isn't empowerment. Grasping at a fake victimhood and complaining about it to the world is not empowerment."



The invalidation of other women's struggles is toxic to society. While it is undeniable that Swift has achieved success in the music industry, it is also undeniable that Swift has faced struggles in her career that she would not have faced if she were a man. Tom Christensen, the Head of the Music Department at Fieldston, teaches a course on American music. According to him, the criticism "is mainly due to our male dominated society and the unfair bias we have toward women in general." He also believes that there isn't a fine line between the music industry and the rest of society, but that the music industry might even experience more misogyny. Instead of writing about how Swift's obstacles are nothing compared to those of other women, we should be listening to what she has to say since unfortunately, most women face similar struggles, regardless of fame or wealth.

Fieldston's own, Abena Koomson-Davis is a musician in addition to being an Ethics teacher. She has been on Broadway, been in several bands and performed with famous musicians, like Kesha and Stevie Wonder. In 2018, Koomson-Davis, along with other members of the Resistance Revival Chorus, performed with Kesha at the

Grammys. Kesha performed her song "Praying," written about the challenges that she has faced as a woman in the industry. She also performed with her sisterhood of other female artists, like Cyndi Lauper, Camila Cabello and Andra Day.

With the performance around one year after the Women's March in Washington D.C, it was a powerful moment for women across the world. For Koomson-Davis, the challenges she faces as a woman in the music industry are similar to the challenges she faces as a woman in society. Things like belittlement or assumptions about a woman's ability exist in society which the music industry is ingrained into. Famous female artists like Taylor Swift and Kesha have a platform to speak out against the challenges they face in the music industry, and sharing their voice is critical for women all over the world who can relate to these issues.

One infamous example of conflict includes Swift's feud with Kanye West, starting in 2009 at the MTV VMAS. Taylor Swift, just 17 years old at the time, had been announced the winner of the best female video award. As it turned out, male rapper Kanye West had other ideas

## Taylor Swift (cont.)

about who should have won the award. West got up on stage and confidently told the audience that Beyonce should have won the award, stealing Swift's deserved feeling of victory and celebration away from her. This was an embarrassing moment for everyone involved: Swift, West and even Beyonce. Years passed, and West had still never personally apologized to Swift. The situation only escalated when West's song "Famous" dropped in 2016. "I made that b\*\*\*\* famous," raps West, referring to Swift. According to Swift, she was never aware of this rather misogynistic line in the song. This accusation started a series of back and forth tweets between Swift and Kim Kardashian, West's wife. Kardashian claimed that Swift did approve the lyric, even referring to Swift as a snake in one tweet, suggesting that she was a liar. After many more messy Twitter arguments and released phone calls, it was revealed that Swift had been telling the truth the entire time. This pop culture drama represents a much larger gender issue. Why is it that a man's side of the story is more likely to be listened to and believed than a woman's? A study by Pew Research found that the word "honest" was used two times more when describing men than when describing women. When you relate this research to a topic such as sexual assault, the pieces come together. In 2017, Swift famously won a lawsuit against a man who groped her at a meet and greet in 2013, winning \$1. This process, which she described as "dehumanizing," took around 4 years. "This is with seven witnesses and a photo. What happens when you get raped, and it's your word against his?" she said. The \$1 that Swift won was a powerful statement that demonstrated her

support for other victims of sexual assault. The unjustified disliking of Taylor Swift around the country has to stop. How many times have you heard someone hate a male artist 'just because'? Swift has rightfully earned her spot as a successful musician, so society must stop doubting her achievements and work towards dismantling misogyny in the music industry.

## Performing Arts (cont.)

ly new way. For instance, small pop-up events and open studios allow for people to participate in arts without having major commitments or extra work that a mainstage show or class may have. As someone who has been a part of the performing arts community at Fieldston for a couple years now, it has been nothing short of incredible watching theater and dance take on new forms this year. In the remainder of the school year, look out for more pop-up events, a spring play and studio theatre show, a website and more!

All members of the Fieldston community are welcomed to participate in theater and dance, and coming from someone who knows the ins and outs of the department, I can attest to the brilliance and power of it all.

## Becky Hammon Makes History as First Woman to act as Head Coach for an NBA Team

BY: DANIEL RACZ

On December 30th, 2020, the San Antonio Spurs made history when Becky Hammon became the first woman to act as head coach for an NBA team. She took over for all-time-great coach Gregg Popovich after he was ejected in the second quarter of the Spurs' contest with the Los Angeles Lakers. When Popovich walked by his team's bench, he pointed to Hammon and said, "You got it."

While the Lakers went on to defeat the Spurs by a score of 121-107, it was still a momentous day for the National Basketball Association. Hammon, a former WNBA player, has long had a vital role in the Spurs organization. Hammon already broke the barrier of women getting any coaching role in American professional sports when she became an assistant coach for the Spurs in 2014. Her six years of assistant coaching made her a more than qualified candidate to take over, and while Popovich did not choose her because of her gender, he certainly knew his selection's significance.

In his post-game presser, Pop told reporters, "I'm not here to make history." Lakers coach Frank Vogel chimed in by saying, "I've talked to her a bunch. ... She knows her stuff. She's here for a reason. ... I think she's going to be a head coach someday." That day may come sooner rather than later. The Bucks interviewed Hammon in 2018, and while she did not get the job, many expect her to earn a head coaching opportunity in the coming years. Lakers star player LeBron James also weighed in, saying, "Anytime you put in the work, you're rewarded with op-

portunities. Tonight was the case where she got to step in and show her worth, talent, and love for the game. Congrats to her and congrats to our league."

Hammon came into the year as the likely second in command to Popovich due to Hall of Famer Tim Duncan no longer being on the Spurs' staff. However, Hammon said she did not expect the coaching role if Popovich was ejected. "We don't have a lot of discussions like that. We just roll with the punches. When Pop gives us an order, we go with it." Hammon said she came into the game to help the Spurs win. She said while she acknowledged the game's significance, it was a disappointment because the Spurs lost. The Fieldston community took note of the day and its broader implications. Ryuichi Nitta (IV), a member of the varsity tennis team and an avid sports fan said, "Diversity comes in all shapes and sizes. It is great to see Becky Hammon get this role, but the eventual goal should be for this to not be such a spectacle. Eventually, people of all identities -- in this case, gender -- should be given professional sports opportunities based on their qualifications and ability to guide a team to championships. When that time comes, I am confident that the Fieldston community will be there to cheer on whoever gets an opportunity."



# Keep School Open

BY: CAELIN BROMFIELD

Education during the age of Covid-19 has been a hot political football. It's also become a case study in local politics and grassroots organizing. In December, as the surge of Covid infections in the United States became undeniable, many leaders throughout the country called for school closures.

Source: Hospitalization data from the Covid Tracking Project. Currently hospitalized is the number of patients with Covid-19 reported by states that are in a hospital on that day. Dips and spikes could be due to inconsistent reporting by hospitals

Mayor Bill De Blasio and New York City public schools initially chose to close the nation's largest public school system.

Since then, however, states such as New York have revoked those decisions because of large amounts of criticism they faced from parents and educators who pointed to significant data suggesting that infection rates and community spread between children, staff and parents are much lower compared to the numbers of cases outside the school community. "Over the past few months, the data has overwhelmingly supported that children are not a major source of spread in our schools. The state will not force New York City school buildings to shut down if the citywide coronavirus positivity rate exceeds 9%," said Governor of New York Andrew Cuomo during his weekly briefing.

My aunt, Michelle Naylor, a full time English teacher at PS. 154, in Ridgewood, Queens, and the parent of a public school student, discussed the balance of guiding her sons through their zoom classes as almost an impossible task to manage. "I feel

as if there aren't enough hours in the day. It's impossible to help my five year old son get on his Zoom classes on time [and] complete every assignment/homework while balancing my own instruction of my high school students," said Naylor. She continued, "my older son, Trevor (6th grade), has significantly suffered from online learning and benefits tremendously from being at school. At night he gets so overwhelmed and can't fall asleep."

Updated CDC reports show that students between grades 3 and 10 scored lower in national percentage rankings compared to last year. In particular, students in low income schools scored significantly lower than previous years, especially in elementary school grades when compared to average or higher income households. The massive disruption from school — not to mention mounting evidence that kids and their parents are increasingly experiencing depression, anxiety and trauma during the pandemic — is causing students, such as Trevor, to experience devastating impacts for years to come.

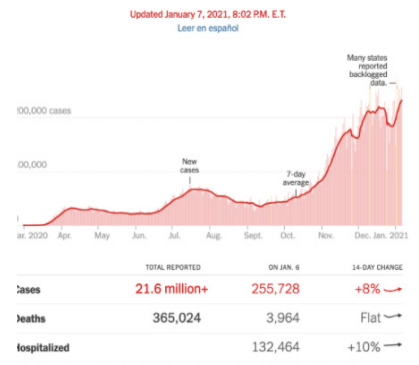
Naylor said, "I also know that my child is still so fortunate to have someone to help him navigate technology let alone have access to technology at all. There are still over 6,000 students who don't have any means of access to Wifi or teach services."

Naylor also discussed her experience working in a large Facebook group effort to protest Mayor Bill DeBlasio's decision to close schools due to the statewide positivity rate. They spent hours analyzing the data to conclude how

states are able to determine the exact infection rate for a school shutdown. Naylor said, "it is not specifically outlined clearly, as each state appears to arbitrarily derive their new threshold of positivity rates for closing schools. New York City for example has declared that schools might close if positivity rates reach 3 percent, while cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles have much higher thresholds, leaning closer to 10 percent."

Naylor worked closely with other parents to put pressure on the Mayor's office to reverse the decision on in-person learning, given countless infectious disease experts disagreed with this decision. She discussed the coalition of parents and how they focused their advocacy efforts towards children for whom in-person learning is not only a lifeline, but also essential. "Schools are not simply just for education. They are how thousands of children receive their meals and are critical to childcare services for families. Keeping my own children home is nevertheless challenging, but for so many families across the country this is detrimental," said Naylor.

Her work continued to outline the importance of safety and advocated the essential focus of 'risk vs reward.' "All of us here take this virus very seriously. We have seen the impact and understand the data and the numbers centered around schools and children. We also understand the impact on faculty and teachers and never want to create an environment where anyone is forced to be in-person or feels uncomfortable. On the other hand, in-person teaching is essential to our kids, and the



mayor's decisions are outrageous considering [that] the research proves that almost always children (K-8) are not creating an environment for a super spread event," said Naylor.

In the end, the Mayor decided on only sending back half the kids, kindergarten through fifth grade and district 75. However, Naylor writes, "we're hugely grateful for that. But it's only 190,000 of the 335,000 kids that were eligible to return to school. This is a step in the right direction; however, there are still thousands of students that must return to the classroom."

Tamara Bonilla-Rosa, a fifth grade teacher in Fort Lee, New Jersey and the mother of Narissa (Form V), also witnessed the struggle of many younger students' engagement during online learning. "They are simply not engaged, sad, as their lives have been uprooted in ways that [they] clearly can't comprehend at the moment," she said. Students often sent her emails in the early days of March and April asking "when we would go back to school or when life would transition back to normal." In total, close to half of the student body in her classroom has dropped two levels in grade marks and attendance has been drastically reduced. When speaking to other families in the district, Bonilla-Rosa noticed that, "this has been an extremely problematic factor for parents

# How Engineering Made a Comeback

BY: SOPHIA GUTIERREZ



Electives such as ‘Neuroscience’ have secured a permanent spot on the Fieldston course catalogue, while others such as Engineering have slipped through the cracks over the years. Upper School Biology teacher and Science Department Chair Paul Church has remedied this reality through his revival of the engineering course at Fieldston Upper this semester. For the first time since the 1970s, engineering was offered as the “STE(A)M” elective this year. I had the opportunity to sit down with Dr. Church and gain insight into the course.

Gutierrez: What brought the re-emergence of the engineering course at Fieldston? Why wasn’t it taught for such a long time?

Church: In the area where I’m currently sitting there used to be a shop. When I was a kid, people took shop or automotive repair in school. They used to have a real car engine down here that people would work on during shop class. Then, as the makeup of the school started to change and the way we interact with things like cars in society changed as well, there wasn’t a need for shop class anymore. This allowed for the demise of shop and engineering at Fieldston. This past summer I received a summer curricu-

lum grant to develop a brand new course entitled STE(A)M Engineering. This is a very hands-on course where students learn to use a number of tools and design projects to complete a number of tasks. This was a particular challenge this year given the restrictions imposed by this pandemic. So I designed a course that could be performed safely at home while still accomplishing the goals of the course. The course is modeled in part after the very successful Engineering Club that I have run for the past 6 years. That club included students from a wide range of backgrounds, with an equal wide range of skills. I was very curious to see what kind of students would be interested in this as a course. I have been overjoyed by the mix of students I have this year. The diversity of backgrounds and skills is amazing.

One of the Engineering Club’s Rube Goldberg machines 2019

One of the Engineering Club’s Rube Goldberg machines 2020

Gutierrez: What is your background with engineering?

Church: My doctorate is in Neurobiology and I have a background in Biophysics. Before coming to Fieldston

I was an assistant professor at a medical school. So my background is not in formal engineering. That being said, as a kid I was a tinkerer. I was always taking things apart and putting them back together, trying to figure out how they work. So I have always enjoyed taking apart things, putting them back together and building things from scratch.

Gutierrez: Can you give some information about the class and curriculum?

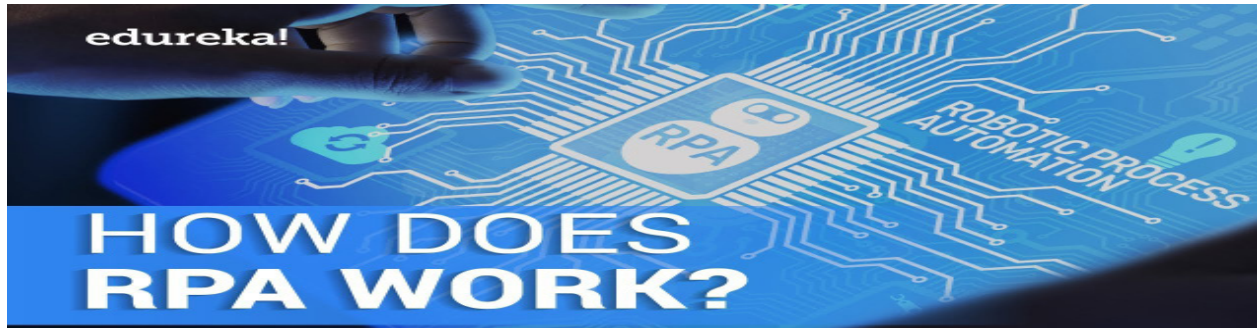
Church: Briefly, students would acquire a number of skills such as problem solving, collaboration, proper tool use, project design, etc. All while building a number of fun and useful projects. The course truly embodies all of the elements of STE(A)M. Students have already completed a few projects and their enthusiasm has been terrific. Some of the students came in without any knowledge or experience of simple machines and tools. Yet, each student has embraced and successfully completed each task. These tasks require a great deal of trial and error and the joy expressed when they get a project to work is overwhelming. In a recent unit, students learned about magnetism and electricity. Then, they learned the physics behind  $v=ir$  and

how an electrical current generates a magnetic field. Using these principles, they were able to build an electromagnet from scratch using only a battery, some wire and a metal nail or similar object. We then tested to see how many paperclips could be picked up by each of their electromagnets. This was followed by building a simple motor based on the same principles. They started with a kit, but it still took some engineering and understanding of the principles to get it to work. Again, each student was able to complete the task successfully. Here is a slow motion video of two of the motors. In another unit, they learned about Archimedes screw which was originally designed to move water uphill against gravity. They built one from scratch which was used to move marbles uphill since they were restricted to materials that were safe to use at home. They could also design other methods to move marbles uphill and some of the results were extremely creative. If we were on campus this semester they would be using more substantial material, but the truth is, in the real world engineers first build

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

# Robotic Process Automation: The Future of Efficiency

BY: RYAN SPIEGEL



Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is a lucrative new technology, seemingly hailed as the vanguard of efficiency and productivity. The technology has recently skyrocketed in popularity and there is much talk of its potential to revolutionize business productivity. But why? What is RPA, and why is there so much talk of its potential? Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is a form of process automation that allows for the robotization of repetitive, rule-based tasks and processes. In Layman's terms, it enables a person to have a 'bot' or software complete a task for them. The software is used to automate once grueling and tedious tasks such as data processing and data management. Nonetheless, what makes the technology so crucial is its ability to greatly reduce the time taken to complete previously burdensome tasks to less than a second without making a single error.

While RPA is revolutionary in its ability to create efficiency, there is one central drawback: its strict criteria for use. According to David Landreman, the CTO of Olive, there are four musts when using an RPA:

The process must be rule-based. The process must be repeated at regular intervals, or have a pre-defined trigger. The process must have defined input and outputs.

The task should have sufficient volume

This strict criteria for use drastically reduces the real life applications of RPA. So, how is RPA actually used? And, who uses it?

Companies utilizing RPA are Coca Cola, Google, CVS, and Best Buy, among many more. In Coca Cola's case, the HR department was struggling to accurately and quickly format reports and check for errors, so they instituted an RPA to 50 of their 150 'automatable' processes. This improved efficiency as it allowed for these reports to be completed 24 hours per day compared to the previous 8 hours a day - with no additional staff. Using an RPA also allowed Coca Cola's employees to focus on higher value tasks than formatting reports. According to Coca Cola, this allowed them to improve their customer and employee experience.

Another company using RPA is the People's United Bank. The company was previously wasting up to three weeks of work to merge just one customer's online profile. So, they instituted RPA to automate the process. Now it takes only 24 hours to merge a profile, and an employee doesn't have to oversee the process. The company also uses RPA to reduce the time taken to look

for discrepancies in deposits, decreasing the time per deposit from 15 minutes to 8,000 deposits in 48 hours. These two cases of RPA use are among thousands of possible RPA usages. Some others include returns processing, sales orders, storing customer information, processing refunds and many more.

RPA has already and will continue to transform business as we know it. The bustling technology has disrupted business across the board and led the way into an era of unparalleled efficiency and productivity. RPA can increase customer and employee experiences, reduce costs, save time, eliminate error, increase scalability and security and allow companies to allocate resources more effectively. Given these benefits, it is no surprise that the RPA industry is expected to grow more than 20 percent per year (CAGR), reaching a market of \$6.2 billion by 2027. Currently, most major organizations automate around 14 percent of their processes and this number is only rising. According to analysis by leading RPA companies, RPA can automate upwards of 40 percent of business processes and with advancing technology, this number is only increasing.

## Keep Schools Open (cont.)

and students whose play-book for keeping schools safe has been widely misunderstood for several months. Data from top universities over the last several months have overwhelmingly leaned toward a conclusion that when appropriate safety measures are followed and put into place, the transmission level between abiding students and faculty is substantially low."

"People from all across the city from all walks of life were coming up to us and saying, this is my story with my child and this is why it matters to me," she said. There is no doubt that the mounting pandemic deaths and cases are alarming, but the decrease in the quality of education for students of all ages is also cause for alarm. "We must get our kids back to school," said Bonilla-Rosa.

## Engineering (cont.)

models out of materials such as cardboard. Gutierrez: Would you consider this first semester of engineering to be a success under the circumstances? Will you be teaching it again in the future?

Church: I would say under the circumstances, it went very well. I think the kids had fun, learned new skills and were able to use their creativity in ways that they normally are not able to in school. My priorities for the class were met and I will definitely be teaching it again in the future.

# The Future of Food: Lab Grown Meat

BY: LUCY TROY



Globally, we consume about 350 tons of meat each year. Americans alone consume 26 billion pounds of beef annually. Due to the high demand for meat products, industrialized agriculture has been a cornerstone of society. Now, we are seeing its downsides. It has contributed to the climate crisis, with livestock worldwide accounting for about 15% of greenhouse gas emissions. One cow requires up to 11,000 gallons of water each year.

Furthermore, studies have linked red meat to cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity. The use of antibiotics in animal agriculture has contributed to the spread of antibiotic resistance. The agricultural industry also utilizes unethical practices towards animals, which have pushed some consumers to become vegetarian or vegan. Although plant-based proteins have gained popularity over the years, nothing has been able to replace real meat - until now.

Lab-grown meat is a promising alternative that does not require slaughtering animals to produce genetically real meat. It is synthesized through the cultivation of animal cells in vitro in a controlled environment, free from bacteria and diseases. In 2002, the first edible lab-grown meat - a fish filet made from goldfish - was produced. Since then, numerous start-ups have

worked to create lab-grown meat products, and although they are not yet commercially available, they should be marketable within the next few years.

Analysts project that the plant-based and lab-grown meat markets could be worth up to \$85 billion by 2030. According to Matt Simon from Wired Magazine, the promise of lab-grown meat is not to stop eating animals, but to eat much less of them. If lab-grown meat fulfills this promise, it could have major effects on the environment, the agricultural industry, and society as a whole, making it a technology that will be instrumental in our future.

Although the precise methods by which cultured meat is produced varies between labs, they are generally similar. Lab-grown meat starts with animal cells (typically muscle, fat, or stem) that are cultured using an appropriate growth medium. By using the growth medium, which contains nutrients to promote growth and survival, and providing warmth, oxygen, salt, sugars, and proteins, the animal cells divide and expand into meat.

The idea behind it is to trick the cells into thinking they're still inside of their owner. Using this method, scientists can theoretically create an

unlimited amount of meat from just one piece of meat. Food technology company Mosa Meat says that one tissue sample from a cow can yield enough muscle tissue to make 80,000 quarter-pounders.

There are several dozen cell-culturing companies worldwide, and the US is home to at least 9. The companies receive a lot of individual funding from people including Bill Gates and Richard Branson. Some of the more well-known companies include Meatable, Just, Finless Foods, Mosa Meat, and Future Meat Technologies. Meatable is a Dutch startup that claimed they could produce cultured meat from the stem cells of animal umbilical cords, hence never needing a dead animal in the first place.

The CEO of Just, Josh Tetrick, has been testing lab-grown Foie Gras at the Just test kitchen in San Francisco where regular Foie Gras is illegal. Tetrick says that Just has made the process cost-effective enough to take to market. According to CEO of Finless Foods, Mike Selden, FF takes a bit of fish meat and looks for stem-like cells called progenitor cells "that have the ability to differentiate into different lineages."

Mosa Meat claims that their cultured meat generates up to 96% lower greenhouse gas emissions, while Future Meat Technologies claims that its products take up to 99% less land, 96% less freshwater, and emit 80% fewer greenhouse gasses. Despite their slight differences in production, all the companies share a common goal: to combat climate

change.

There are many ways in which lab-grown meat could make a positive impact on the environment. The meat industry has contributed to the severity of climate change, and according to Slow Foods, "just in the second half of the 20th century, global meat consumption increased fivefold, growing from 45 million tons of meat consumed in 1950 to almost 300 million tons today. If not stopped, that number could double by 2050." This could cause even more devastating effects, given that one-third of the world's arable land is used to grow and feed livestock, which has led to deforestation, and that beef accounts for about 41% of animal agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions. An Oxford study showed that similar to the start-ups' claims, lab-grown meat could be produced with up to 96% less greenhouse gas emissions and water than conventional meat.

Producers face another key issue in having to convince consumers to stray from traditional meat. Surveys have shown that the public has a low interest in eating cultured meat, much less letting it replace regular meat. Research published by the University of Sydney and Curtin University on September 8th showed that 72% of Gen Z is not ready to accept cultured meat, although 41% believe it could be a viable nutritional source.

Participants had concerns regarding taste, health,

safety, and whether it is a more sustainable option than regular meat. And, although the federal government initially promoted meat alternatives, state governments have not; Missouri, for example, passed a bill in May of 2018 limiting the use of the word “meat” to an “edible portion of livestock or poultry carcass.” These are all barriers that meat labs must overcome before their products can hit the shelves.

To learn more about the implications of lab-grown meat and its possible impacts, I interviewed history teacher Lou Resnikoff, whose knowledge of food and agriculture has allowed her to make informed opinions about the topic.

Lucy Troy: Does the lab-grown meat industry put farmers and agricultural workers at risk of losing their jobs?

Ms. Resnikoff: “It causes instability to workers who are already at a disadvantage... I can describe slaughterhouse jobs as some of the worst jobs in the US economy. They’re effectively unchanged from the way that they existed since the 19th-century. So the idea that those jobs would go away gives a wrenching amount of instability for the people currently working in that industry. And on the other hand, those are already really horrible jobs.”

LT: Will lab-grown meat have a significant effect on climate change?

MR: “All tech won’t have any impact on its own... It’s society’s choice to make a difference... Lab-grown meat may maintain business as usual because it doesn’t build a culture of consumption that shifts meat from being the center of our con-

sumption... We still don’t know what kind of carbon footprint [lab-grown meat] will have, but there’s a way of raising animals and building cuisines around meat that have less harmful consequences on the environment.”

LT: What are some examples of ways we can reduce the footprint of animal agriculture?

MR: “We need a massive re-centering surrounding animal agriculture... We can build smaller farms, use less land, implement rotational grazing, use forested areas for grazing, and use silvopasture... All these practices can take CO2 out of the atmosphere.”

LT: How will the shift from our reliance on farms to labs impact our society?

MR: “It depends on what animals you’re talking about, but this would create instability for people who are already in marginal positions [in agriculture].”

LT: Should the government help fund start-ups that are working to produce lab-grown meat?

MR: “I feel like that money is better spent elsewhere and I also feel like the extent to which those startups are going to be super profitable is going to be hard to access and reproduce... it’s going to take an incredible amount of capital and grant to build and develop these technologies... I don’t feel like it’s concentrating power in a way that replicates the inequalities that already exist in animal agriculture instead of disrupting that inequality in a concentration of power.”

MR: “There’s a lot of support for industrial agriculture... If we thought about how to grow

meat sustainable and justly, there would be a lot more jobs.”

The future of lab-grown meat holds hope, fear, and anticipation, and we must embrace these feelings as we begin to encounter cultured meat in our grocery stores and homes. Lab-grown meat could transform the way we eat food and could spearhead other green innovations in agriculture and cuisine.

It has already shown promise in being able to ameliorate the effects of climate change and could be a more sustainable option than traditional meat. On the other hand, it is hard to assess the future of cultured meat without having data regarding its large-scale production.

As Ms. Resnikoff alluded to, it might be more worthwhile to put our efforts and trust into sustainable agriculture, given our ongoing reliance on it. Furthermore, cultured meat producers must overcome an abundance of challenges before their products will be ready for consumption. Still, meat labs are racing to make their green meat the first to make it into consumers’ mouths, and there is no telling what will happen when society is met with this culinary revolution.

## The Unknown Extent to NYC’s Homeless Crisis

BY: EMMA SISKIND

As the country settles into January, New York City is experiencing a new wave of the deadly coronavirus pandemic. Undoubtedly, the homeless population has been amongst the worst hit by the pandemic, which the Fieldston News has chronicled over the last Spring and the Summer. According to the Coalition for the Homeless, as of June 1st, the mortality rate due to COVID-19 for New York City was 200 deaths per 100,000 housed people; for the sheltered homeless population, 321 deaths per 100,000 people, a staggering 61 percent higher.

Joseph Loonam, a Vocal-NY advocate for NYC’s homeless population, responded once more to the growth of the homeless population during the pandemic, this time stating the reason why the number is now so unknown. During last spring, the mortality rate in shelters rose to overwhelming heights. Due to the mortality rate, the streets become more appealing for thousands of the homeless population. Now, as we approach winter, we are seeing the same trend. Loonam states, “This is the season where the numbers should be going up across the board, cause it’s too cold to stay outside, but I think a lot of that is not happening because of fear of the virus.”

This creates more concern to the already established issue of counting those who are homeless and figuring out the increase in such. Loonam explains that the DHS shelter system is the main source of information regarding the number of homeless people in New York City. This is due to the city being a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

# Harry Styles, Gender-Fluid Fashion and Fieldston

BY: MORIUM BEGUM



When I was told that my assignment was to write about a passion, I knew that I wanted to write about Harry Styles. It's safe to say that I'm a passionate fan. Why wouldn't I use this opportunity to research and write about the cutest, brightest, and most innovative person in the world? Although Harry Styles has a plethora of amazing qualities, traits, and achievements, I chose to focus on his gender-fluid fashion style. As I started researching, I learned about the rise of gender-fluid fashion and the people behind it.

The term "gender-fluid" is used to refer to someone who chooses to have a non-binary identity. More specifically, the individual is not identifying as one specific gender, allowing room for change over time and eschewing typical gender norms. Similarly, gender-fluid fashion takes away preconceived associations of gender and sex within clothing and style. This means that there are no distinct "male" and "female" categories, for example a man can wear a skirt and a woman can wear a tuxedo. This goes off of the idea that clothes should have no boundaries as they are a form of personal

expression.

Styles recently made history as the first-ever solo male cover star of *Vogue*. During his interview, he revealed, "As a kid, I definitely liked fancy dresses." Speaking about his appearance in a school play, he stated, "I was really young and I wore tights for that. I remember it was crazy to me that I was wearing a pair of tights. And that was maybe where it all kicked off!" For his shoot with *Vogue*, Styles dressed up in a gorgeous, puffy, lace Gucci gown with a Gucci blazer on top, showcasing the intersectionality of his masculine and feminine sides. Additionally, he appeared in wide-legged pants, kilts, skirts, overcoats and trench coats, and blazers. He spent hours working alongside stylists Harry Lambert and Alessandro Michele to decide how he wanted to present the wide range of his style. His confidence and comfort in a dress is a demonstration to all cisgender men that there is no need to conform to typical gender norms when it comes to fashion.

Styles believes, "I think if you

get something that you feel amazing in, it's like a superhero outfit. Clothes are there to have fun with and experiment with and play with. What's really exciting is that all of these lines are just kind of crumbling away. It's like anything—anytime you're putting barriers up in your own life, you're just limiting yourself. There's so much joy to be had in playing with clothes. I've never really thought too much about what it means—it just becomes this extended part of creating something." As always, Styles' advice offers a meaningful message for us all; we should all aim to be like him and have fun with our clothes. At the end of the day, the people who judge the message Styles sends are closed-minded to the ever-evolving concept of fashion. (People like Candace Owens, but that's a topic for another day.)

Although Harry Styles brought a new wave of attention to gender-fluid fashion, it is important to acknowledge all of his predecessors. Gender-fluid fashion is not a new concept. Members of the queer community, ranging from drag queens to transgender people to non-binary individuals,

have been the blueprint for musicians such as Prince, Styles, Young Thug, and more. The courageous queer community has worked hard to express themselves and their identities through fashion. They brought in new terms and ideas, such as androgyny (partly male and partly female in appearance) and more. Currently, some prominent LGBTQIA+ designers include Eden Loweth, Saul Nash, Hana Holquist, Ella Boucht, and more.

Designer Rick Owens once said, "I don't understand why this generation thinks that they invented gender fluidity. They did it harder, stronger, and louder in the '70s." Much of the current genderless fashion trends, such as men wearing flared pants and eyeliner, can be traced back to the '70s. More specifically, these trends can be traced back to Prince, a widely-known American musician from the time.

Prince boldly expressed himself with blatant disregard for gender norms. When he opened for The

Rolling Stones in Los Angeles in 1981, he wore black bikini briefs and thigh-high stockings on stage. Prince's decision was ahead of its time. During his performance, he was hounded by racist and homophobic slander. The audience started throwing anything they could find towards the stage. Despite receiving harsh criticism, Prince never stopped expressing himself in the way that he wanted. He unapologetically wore eyeliner, lace gloves, clothes with distinctive feminine touches, and inadvertently fueled all his haters. For all these reasons, perhaps he should be given the proper acknowledgment for paving the way for our modern, musical, gender-fluid fashion warriors.

Current gender-fluid warriors in the music industry include Young Thug and Jaden Smith. In the world of hip-hop, Young Thug has been working towards dismantling the hypermasculinity that defines the culture and style. His album cover for *No, My Name Is JEFFERY* features him in a gorgeous skirt-like garment. The designer, Alessandro Trincone, revealed that the look was inspired by Japanese kimonos and trousers. Over the years, he has had many gender-fluid fashion moments, highlighting him as one of the most well-known celebrities to defy gender norms. Other celebrities, such as Jaden Smith, Frank Ocean, and Lil Uzi have also made many appearances in traditionally feminine clothing. These celebrities truly helped normalize gender-fluid fashion. They wear nail polish, makeup, skirts and blouses and they wear them with confidence.

The recent spotlight on gender-fluid fashion has caused teenagers to become more open-minded with their fash-

ion choices. On TikTok, it is common to see boys wearing nail polish and makeup. It is also common to see people who identify as female in clothes that were traditionally designed for men, such as suits and tuxedos. The boundaries that set men and women apart are becoming blurred and more people are switching over to gender-fluid fashion. Overall, celebrities are helping people become less judgmental as evidently more teenagers are embracing gender-fluid clothes on social media.

As I worked on this article, I couldn't help but notice that there is limited gender-fluid fashion here at Fieldston. In fact, you don't see a lot of different styles at Fieldston. A traditional Fieldston outfit consists of white shoes (typically Air Force Ones.) Some students spice things up and wear high top Air Force Ones or with a black Nike stripe instead of the plain white stripe. The pant options are limited to: Lululemon leggings, Nike grey sweatpants, and the occasional jeans in case the student wants to look put together. Lastly, Fieldston students will wear their Canada Goose jackets to garnish their outfits, truly highlighting the Fieldston look.

Overall, within Fieldston, most students tend to dress the same and follow gender conformity. In order to further understand the reasoning behind this, I spoke to a former Fieldston student. This student currently goes to a public school in the city. I thought it would be interesting to get the perspective of someone who experienced two vastly different types of schools.

While describing her experience with fashion at Fieldston, the former student states she felt self-conscious and judged

at Fieldston when she wore clothes that did not conform with others. She articulates, "Overall, I thought that the Fieldston environment was extremely judgmental. I think the elite background plays a role in making the kids very judgmental. There was this very specific standard of beauty and fashion, which was also a very expensive standard. If you didn't wear something considered acceptable by the majority of the student body, you would notice stares and comments."

Current senior Kia Rogers shares similar sentiments. In her belief, Fieldston students feel validated through commonality. "By dressing like everyone else, there is a sense of fitting in and doing/wearing the right things." Like the rest of the world, Fieldston students tend to choose their style from social media trends. From there, it becomes an endless cycle of students copying each other and what they see on Instagram. After a point, the mimicry of style becomes common and "basic." Since the Fieldston crowd strictly adheres to trends, there are norms of what is acceptable. Due to this, it can be difficult for students to dress the way they want. Kia states, "In order to have your own style, you need to have confidence, especially if you are stepping beyond the Fieldston norm."

In a school that preaches individuality and independence, we don't seem to have a lot of that in our styles. As Fieldston stu-

dents, we must work harder to create an environment where everyone can feel confident and comfortable with their style. The first step towards creating this environment is opening up new conversations about identity expression and exploration. We need to become mindful and aware of the various ways people feel comfortable expressing themselves. We need to learn how to dismantle harmful stereotypes of body images, gender norms, and more. By doing so, we can allow ourselves to access the endless possibilities of self-expression. Celebrities such as Harry Styles have accepted themselves for who they are and by doing so, they have created a beautiful form of art and self-expression in the fashion industry. We should also learn and accept ourselves for who we are, and when we're able to do that, we can truly have fun with clothing, just like Harry Styles!



# Next Stop: Mars

BY: LUCY TROY



Adding to its multiple successes this year, SpaceX, owned by business tycoon Elon Musk, is on track to continue testing for its newest project, Starship. Starship's latest flight test was SpaceX's first attempt at a high altitude suborbital flight test with Starship SN8 (Starship number 8), the most complex Starship prototype so far, in Cameron County, Texas. After delaying the initial launch, the SpaceX team executed a successful test flight on December 9th, although the rocket exploded upon landing. Ten starship prototypes have been built, and two low-altitude flight tests have already been completed with SN5 and SN6. In the description of the test's live stream, SpaceX representatives disclaimed that, "success is not measured by completion of specific objectives but rather how much [SpaceX] can learn about [Starship] as a whole."

Starship is a revolutionary rocket; it is fully reusable and is designed to carry crew and cargo to Earth orbit, the Moon, Mars and beyond. Starship may even be able to assist in the clean-up of space junk, which can be a hazard to active satellites and spacecraft. According

to SpaceX, "[Starship] will be the world's most powerful launch vehicle ever developed." Elon Musk hopes for Starship to be operational in a few years, with plans to send humans to Mars within the decade, whereas NASA plans to have astronauts on Mars by the 2030s at the earliest. At the International Mars Society Convention on October 16th, Musk said, "I think we have a fighting chance of making that second Mars transfer window"; this window arises every 26 months and he is referencing the upcoming window in 2022 with the 2024 Mars launch opportunity. Musk could finance the operation by selling services from the Starlink constellation, a satellite internet constellation being constructed by SpaceX to provide internet access around the world. Additionally, the reusability of the rocket makes it much more cost-effective, as, according to Inverse's Mike Brown, reusing boosters saves about 75% of the overall cost.

SpaceX's ambitious initiatives come as a surprise following virtually no major space exploration efforts within

the past decades. During the Asgardia Space Congress in Darmstadt, Jeffrey Manber, the CEO of Nanoracks, explained that this lack of progress since the first man landed on the Moon is an effect of humans' inability to overcome their limiting mindsets. He described this phenomenon as, "a tragedy of the will of the species, not technical innovation." According to Canadian astronaut Robert Thirsk, there has been a lack of visionary leadership, and therefore little willingness to dedicate resources to space exploration; it is hard to unify citizens in America and around the world under a common cause without a passionate spokesperson. Space companies such as NASA have struggled to overcome additional barriers such as insufficient funding, conflicting programs and goals, lack of continuity in objectives, and lack of public interest. University of Antwerp Professor of Physics Floris Wuyts blames the lack of progress on the risk of disconnect: "if you are on Mars and don't even recognize Earth among the other stars, that feeling of being so lonely can have a great impact."

Although Starship seems like the solution to spearheading space exploration progress, the spacecraft will likely face some challenges in the near future. According to space journalist Robert Zimmerman, government regulators in Texas and at the federal level may want to start slowing SpaceX down. The Federal Aviation Administration, which is responsible for overseeing commercial space launches, granted environmental impact approvals when SpaceX was planning to launch their family of Falcon rockets such as the Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy. According to The Hill, since SpaceX has begun testing Starship, environmental regulators have raised concerns about how launches and landing could affect the surrounding wildlife and ecosystems. Furthermore, The Hill's Mark Whittington claimed that under President Biden, the government-SpaceX alignment may end, with the government re-assuming its position as an adversary to the commercial sector. Therefore, SpaceX will have to go through environmental impact tests again, which, according to Zimmerman, could take years. Even though Biden has not put space exploration at the forefront of his policies, that won't necessarily stop SpaceX from achieving its goals as a private company, although it may hinder NASA's progress.

Another obstacle SpaceX faces in its quest for Mars is the pre-existing government



regulations regarding space, which space lawyer Antonino Salmeri discusses in his op-ed, “No, Mars is Not a Free Planet, No Matter what SpaceX Says”. Embedded in SpaceX’s terms of service agreement for beta users of its Starlink satellite broadband service is Clause 9, which requires users to agree that Mars is a “free planet”. According to Salmeri, this means that, “disputes concerning Starlink services provided on Mars or while en route to the red planet via a SpaceX Starship — will be settled through self-regulation.” Clause 9 disregards the US’s international obligations under the Outer Space Treaty, which asserts that international law applies in outer space. Therefore, Mars cannot be left to self-governing principles, because it is subject to the rule of law, and the treaty takes precedence over contractual terms of service. However, SpaceX does recognize in its ToS that international law may apply to the Moon although there are no grounds under international space law to make a distinction between the moon and other celestial bodies. This implies that SpaceX may be making a certain claim over Mars. Since SpaceX has plans to send humans to Mars, its refusal to conform to international laws puts its passengers in danger, since it puts their lives in the will of a private corporation.

In Salmeri’s opinion, refusing to comply with Government regulations is counterproductive, since it makes SpaceX an unreliable partner. This is especially detrimental to SpaceX’s progress since it relies on government contracts and caters to a government-heavy customer base. His overarching sentiment is that “there can be no doubts that applying international law on other celestial bodies is the

best way to preserve the exploration and use of outer space as the province of all humankind.” Salmeri believes that “SpaceX’s defiance of international law should be taken very seriously and stopped now, before the company is able to push it to the point of establishing its private domain on Mars.”

Starship may be the long-awaited breakthrough that will launch us into the new age of space exploration; yet with an expansion of possibility for human space travel and settlement comes a new era of Earthly disputes. While SpaceX might seem like the most cost-effective and time-efficient solution for sending humans to Mars, the capabilities of an unregulated, private space company are distressing to fathom. SpaceX is rapidly accumulating power in our society, and it is hard to say whether it will choose to abuse that power through environmental means, space colonization efforts, or claims over celestial bodies. It is important to consider where to draw the line and whether government intervention is necessary when it comes to space travel, even if it disrupts our nation’s fundamental separation between the private and public sectors. Whatever the future may hold, we must begin to brace ourselves for the real possibility of humans on Mars.

### ***NYC Homeless Crisis (cont.)***

“right to shelter city”, where all who desire to be in the shelter can. Loonam states that many would state that the 65,000 people registered in the DHS shelter system comprise New York City’s homeless population, however as an advocate he estimates another 10 thousand

people on the streets.

Loonam highlights another problem with the counting system, which is that the homeless population is only counted once a year in February, ironically 1 month before the city went into pandemic lockdown. So, estimation is the best tool we have in calculating the rise in the homeless population for the next 3 months.

Loonam expresses his anger in the problems within the counting system, as it doesn’t do the homeless crisis justice. “...the 65k is [expletive]. It’s like asking how many people are sick, and the number you get is the folks already getting treatment.”

What further complicates understanding the homeless crisis is how we ourselves define homelessness. Loonam explains that we have to challenge our definition of homelessness to truly grasp the effects of the pandemic. Loonam asks the simple question, “Who is homeless?” More specifically, what qualifies as homelessness even if it is not the public perception of it?

Many don’t realize the extent to which homelessness is within New York City. Loonam states, “When the quality of life of a society improves overall, we change our definitions of destitution.” This also applies in reverse; when the quality of life of a society decreases overall, a reality of the pandemic, we are forced to change our definitions of destitution to encompass those who we previously disregarded.

Loonam points out less known examples of homelessness existing before the pandemic. Illegally converted homes, for

example, housed dozens per night in conditions worse than the ones at DHS shelters. And, three quarter houses are examples as well; these houses, often serving as re-entry points into society after prison or abuse, commonly have little supervision and lack the services they are intended to provide.

COVID-19 proved disastrous for people living in these situations, as whether they were kicked out by landlords scared of being busted for illegal housing or due to safety precautions, many found themselves in what would be considered a “traditional” homeless scenario.

Consequently, individuals in shelters are at the highest rate ever recorded, due to the fact that the city’s eviction moratorium does not include illegal housing. On the other hand, families in shelters are at the lowest rate they have been due to the eviction moratorium in New York City.

Whether it be due to a lack of counting or the overarching question of who we identify as homeless, the extent to the homeless crisis in NYC, Loonam proclaims, is only starting to be exposed due to the pandemic, and will not be fully known to the public until the city takes action.

# American Capitalism During the Covid-19 Pandemic

BY: IZZY CASDIN

It's a crisp March afternoon in Morningside Heights; breeze blowing faintly, trees laying low and dull, the sound of pedestrians shuffling their dogs across the street. I stare blankly at the scene stopping for a moment before entering my apartment building. A light push from my sister behind me and I quickly snap out of my trance and hurry inside. We ride the elevator like on any other day, but this time without realizing it would be our last time doing so - we would soon be evacuating. In the apartment I sit in my room pondering what the next few weeks will look like; will the school be closed? Will COVID-19 get worse or better? Will I be able to see my friends again soon? Just a few minutes later my mom frantically rushes into my room. Immediately, I see her panicked expression, and my heart drops. She tells me: "Pack your stuff. All schools just closed and we're going to the Berkshires. I'm not sure how long we'll be there but it's definitely going to be a while so make sure you bring lots of stuff to keep yourself busy." I don't think twice about what she says, get up and pack as fast as I can. The next thing I knew, I was helping my dad load the car with duffles full of canned food, supplies, and first aid kits. On The ride north from New York City I'm frantically texting with friends, conversing with them about where they were going and what their plan for the next few months was. Almost everyone I know was going to a second home of sorts, so I just assumed it was the norm. This assumption did not last long as I soon started to see in the media how a majority of Americans and people all over the world were actually living and struggling through COVID-19.

Growing up, money has never been something I've worried about or put much thought into. For the most part, when I want something my parents are able to provide and/or buy it for me without hesitation. I have been on various trips outside the U.S and have done activities like skiing and going to a summer camp. Of course I have always understood I am privileged. I never really thought of these things as truly abnormal until COVID-19. My family owns a car as well as our apartment, has health care, are all college educated and both parents are employed with a stable income. But I never really understood the extent to which I was privileged until I saw the havoc this pandemic wreaked on so many families. Millions of Americans could not afford child care or the technology needed for distance learning, while I was complaining about being bored and not getting to see my friends. Given that the epidemic has ripped the veil off the many inequalities, such as the class divide, income gap, and disparities in economic opportunities, it got me thinking about the nature of American capitalism. If this epidemic is truly representative of today's capitalist society, I set out on my journey to investigate what our current government has done to fix it. While in quarantine I started to read *The New History of American Capitalism* by Sven Beckert and Christine Desan, which builds on the work of French economist and professor Thomas Piketty's analysis in his book *Capitalism in the 20th Century*. Piketty states: "If democracy is someday to regain control of capitalism, it must start by recognizing that the concrete institutions

in which democracy and capitalism are embodied need to be reinvented again and again." This article states that the American capitalism today takes a "global perspective." However, within this "global perspective," Beckert and Desan emphasize that only acknowledging capitalism as a "political economy," counterbalances some of the more enthusiastic globalization narratives." *The New History Of American Capitalism* continuously reiterates the importance that all states see "the global market not as an area outside public authority but as one shaped by rules, laws, treaties, and the distribution of power between states." In other words, "globalization and state formation constitute one another." The arguments listed in this article, regarded some huge topics I was not familiar with at all. I could tell right away that Beckert and Desan's view of capitalism as "political economy" and their take on the global market wasn't so cut and dry as they're described. I knew there was a lot more research I needed to do in order to fill some gaps. Lets just say... as I embarked on my journey to understanding capitalism, I had no clue what I was getting myself into. I started by looking at what the social and economic disruptions caused by capitalism have impacted. The virus has exposed flaws in America's economic structures, the increasing unpredictability of maintaining a job, and the rise of the "gig economy." For most people, working from home is simply not an option, especially for front line workers, as well as service industry, construction and labor based fields.. Although the govern-

ment has tried extending (some) assistance to workers with "regular contracts," many self-employed and front-line workers have found themselves without the ability to provide for themselves and their families. Now came the real question at the heart of my curiosity; where does capitalism come into play? I decided it would be useful to look at times in American history where capitalism has failed in a time of crisis. Of course, my first instinct was the Great Depression; arguably the most well known economic crisis of the 20th century. A major question I've heard floating around today has been whether or not only the Great Depression was more economically catastrophic than the COVID-19 pandemic. One Fieldston teacher suggested that, in America, the Great Depression was seen as the end of the ruthless phase of boom and bust capitalism. Roosevelt's New Deal helped to reinvent or arguably "save" capitalism by creating safety nets, regulations, greater societal participation and mobility, and government involvement instead of "laissez-faire." FDR's policies were one of the main reasons regulation came in, wages went up, more people became homeowners, income was redistributed, society became more democratic and America became a middle class society soon afterwards. This new and thriving model held until the "Reagan Revolution" of the 1980s, where Reagan began to deregulate reintroducing the especially fast development that has now become "The

economy of the 1 percent.” For Reaganites, The New Deal and Post-War America was seen as too liberal, even “socialistic.” Another history teacher noted, Reagan wanted to return to “laissez-faire” principles: smaller government, and greater self-reliance. But there was also something meaner about Reaganomics--instead of waging a war against poverty, it felt like it waged war against the poor themselves, and a good deal of that war was also being fought along racial lines.

While researching I came across a popular film of the era directed by Oliver Stone, called *Wall Street*. This film really captured the spirit of the era in its tagline: Greed is Good. These conservative revolutionaries began to rewrite the tax codes to favor big businesses, environmental regulations were challenged, and civil rights gains were rolled back.

As John Manzella wrote in the *Hartford Courant*, “labor’s share of national income, the amount paid out in wages, salaries and benefits, has been declining since the 1980s, according to the McKinsey Global Institute. This has contributed to income inequality that is now greater in the United States than in other advanced economies, notes the Pew Research Center.”

I interviewed a Fieldston student, Krishna Gupta, who has a passion for economic history and business. Krishna argues that while both The Great Depression and COVID-19 saw massive spikes in unemployment, he believes that “The Great Depression was something that could have been prevented and definitely predicted” while no one expected a global pandemic. Krishna also notes, “businesses must make more money than they spend, otherwise they will go bankrupt - and the issue [during The Great Depression] was that people weren’t spending money for companies to collect, which

is similar to what’s happening now.”

In an article published in the *Hartford Courant*, Larry Glickman, professor of American Studies at Cornell, argues something similar while also commenting that “the aftermath of the Great Depression — relief, recovery, and most of all, reform — may once again be necessary to create a better economy for the future.”

America’s system of free-market capitalism has brought millions of Americans out of poverty and produced what some say is “the world’s greatest economic growth.” However, when evaluating the bigger picture, more Americans are struggling in today’s economy than are doing well. As Brookings Institute details, “44 percent of all U.S. workers ages 18 to 64 hold low-wage jobs with median hourly wages of \$10.22.” Other statistics also show that these jobs are not workable from home, meaning there’s then potential for 44% of Americans to become unemployed during COVID-19 - that’s approximately 53 million people struggling just to survive.

The cause of these huge rates of unemployment has to do with a continuous loop brought up in my interview with Krishna. He states, “Because of the quarantine we are in and the fear of getting the virus, people are not spending as much money. Less money being spent means that companies are losing money. Companies losing money means laying off more employees which means fewer jobs. Fewer jobs means fewer people with money to spend which feeds right back to the beginning. This loop is what is killing the global economy.”

In addition to reading books and talking to peers, I also spoke with Dr. Gerald Blaney, from History, who teaches economics, and with Mr. Walter Levis, who teaches “Money and Morals” in the Ethics depart-

ment.

Dr. Blaney spoke about a specific idea that came out of the Great Depression called “Keynesianism.” Keynesianism came out of this idea that when there’s market failure, the government has to raise the economy back to where it was before. He explained that “If the market drops 20% then the government has to reinflate demand back to 100% - when it’s down to 80% that now means that 20% of people could potentially be unemployed. With [unemployment] shrinking market demand, companies will produce less and likely shrink - that’s what was happening during the Great Depression and something similar is happening now.” Because COVID-19 is a unique situation, it’s not necessarily about moving away from the free market but about as Blaney says “fixing the clock rather than replacing the clock.” COVID-19 is a situation in which we don’t necessarily know what’s going to happen, and there are some people who just expect demand to rise back up once things open up again. While the market is not working as it normally should, the government is creating an artificial demand/safety net - stimulus checks. Stimulus checks help keep businesses open because people use the checks to go and buy things, hence keeping production levels stable. However, there is also the argument that the market allocates resources the best, and the government should not be in the business of stimulating the economy, because it distorts demand, etc. Mr. Levis explained to me that original economists were in fact philosophers, meaning the relationship between the economy and society is a fundamental human concern. To understand this he begins his class with the question “what is money?” The invention of money starts with the limits of barter and the limits of trade: “as long as

you’ve got what I want everybody’s happy... but what happens when it’s not that way?” These essential questions of how humans can get what they desire puts this notion of our humanity at the center of all our economic questions. The heart of his class is seeing the tension between money and morals as an existential question relevant to all human life...and how much do humans even know about their own desires? ... Nothing is more existential than the crisis we are facing now, where not only people’s existence but the health of our democracy, feels dependent on the health of our economy. One way of interpreting my research leads to the view that the inequalities in our current society stem from a Reagan Revolution that ushered in an economy of the 1 percent. The COVID-19 pandemic has made the problems of such an economy more clear than ever before. And the inequalities and suffering are global in reach. Our focus should be, as Mr. Levis points out, on how economic inequalities are coming out of moral and ethical questions. While some disagree with the government artificially stimulating the economy, as Krishna points out, without economic stimulus the system collapses. Even those who believe in the “laissez-faire” approach must understand that you have to care about people as well as the economy. Meeting the needs of individuals will lead us to meet the needs of the economy.

# Behind the Time: Designing a Schedule For a Global Pandemic

BY: LUCY TROY

In anticipation of a complex hybrid model this year, the administration was committed to designing a schedule that kept everyone safe and reflected growth from last year's "emergency mode." In order to do so, Dr. Kenny Graves, the Upper School Vice Principal for Academic Life, communicated with the middle school, coordinated with teachers, and responded to feedback from the student body.

Dr. Graves used information gathered last year from students and teachers to make some key changes. The administration completed four different drafts of the schedule so the school could evaluate all options and select the best one. The schedule prioritizes the health and safety of the Fieldston community, while also allowing for the best education possible given the circumstances. In addition

to academic classes, Dr. Graves needed to account for arts, electives, PE and ethics courses. He said, "It's easy to take shortcuts by cutting things and taking arts out. It was really difficult to keep everything but we managed to do it. To give the students the best experience [we] possibly can."

A main concern was high-traffic areas such as the cafeteria, where students filter in and out. There needed to be ample time for the dining staff to clean between the two lunches. In order to determine the right amount of time, Dr. Graves measured the time it took for students to go through the entire lunch line, and then how long it took for the dining staff to disinfect the whole cafeteria. This resulted in a 25 minute time

between the two lunches each day. Though this doesn't cross students' minds, it was a major concern for those creating the schedule.

Many have noticed that most days, classes don't start until about ten o'clock -- that is not a coincidence. Considering that many students have free periods during A and B bands, Dr. Graves and the scheduling committee decided to put them at the beginning of the day and encourage students to arrive later and reduce crowding.

Another notable change is the increase in transition time between classes. Five minutes is not enough time for everyone to get to class on time while social distancing. To accommodate for this change, class times were shortened to 35

and 55 minutes. This was also based on feedback that virtual learning makes it more difficult to engage and concentrate for long periods of time.

The shorter class periods caused problems for the final assessment schedule. Unlike years past, there was not enough time for teachers to hold exams during class. The solution: Tuesday was added to finals week and Wednesday remained Study Day, despite the unusual timing. As Dr. Graves said, "We decided to keep study day this year because you all deserve a break. It's been a long semester so we thought it was important." Dr. Graves left no stone unturned in creating a schedule that promoted both safety and rigor.

January 2021

