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ONLINE SOURCE

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◆ e cineribus et ad astra ◆

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Pretty flowers! Yum.
MARIA PAUNESCU / Spectrum Staff

Fast Fashion: We Should Be Furious About It

By ALICIA GU '23
Spectrum Staff

From \$500 Shein hauls to knock-off House of Sunny dresses surfacing in Goodwill bins, fast fashion has taken over the fashion world. Brands like Zara dominate the consumer market, with flashy advertisements luring shoppers to open their wallets. Although this enticing market offers a wide range of trends at a bargain, what is the true price of discount vogue?

Simply put, fast fashion is a design, manufacturing, and marketing method built to rapidly produce high volumes of clothing. Because their goal is to make high fashion trends easily accessible to the public, companies lower production costs by utilizing cheap materials and underpaying workers. Social media’s growing influence on consumer behavior has popularized this multi-million dollar market; buyers rely on fast fashion to adapt to modern trend cycles, making it critical to understand and circumvent the industry’s appeal.

Like any other industry, the world of clothing evolves alongside the social climate. Recently, trend lifespans have contracted; mi-

cro-trends, which recede within five years, have crowded out long-lasting macro-trends, such as bell bottoms in the 70’s or bandanas in the 2000’s. Social media’s newfound role in fashion has fueled these trends: previously, movies and magazines introduced off-the-runway couture, and trendsetting remained exclusive to experts. Today, however, companies oversaturate users’ feeds, generating pressure to keep up with micro-trends. Consequently, consumers migrate to fast fashion companies like Shein and YesStyle, which offer cheap, trendy products. However, these websites’ so-called deals encourage unnecessary purchases, creating a cycle of overconsumption and waste. While social media allows innovative designers to advertise for free and has popularized upcycling and thrifting, it also compromises sustainability and encourages people to toss outdated clothes in order to adapt to weekly trends.

Beyond inciting wasteful spending, the fast fashion industry is notoriously unethical—outsourced production enables unchecked environment and labor abuses. Still, practical reasons exist for the industry’s success. Although some

brands have joined the “slow fashion” movement by producing eco-friendly pieces, their products are pricier, compensating for the cost of quality control and fair wages. For many consumers, this cannot compete with fast fashion’s affordability and convenience. Consumerism provides funding, but the companies are ultimately at fault for prioritizing profit over ethics; their growth relies on the exploitation of workers, small designers, and the consumer. Nevertheless, shoppers too often argue “there is no ethical consumption under capitalism” as an excuse for fast fashion splurges. While most million dollar corporations refuse to shift away from profit-orientated models, the greatest force of change often occurs at an individual level.

Adjustments in consumption habits have shown a promising start for a greener fashion industry. For example, you can begin developing sustainable shopping habits by investing in quality pieces. Do research and choose eco-friendly brands; from there, select products that can evolve with your wardrobe. Timeless styles are usually adaptable, such as neutral coats or black handbags, whereas short-lived trends are less

versatile; if you’re looking for statement pieces, choose styles that come in and out of style often, like neon windbreakers or plaid pants. Additionally, donate instead of throwing outgrown clothing away, and read up on fashion theory such as Laver’s Law or the 20-year trend cycle to aid your future purchases. Occasionally indulging in retail therapy is inevitable, so thrifting may be another option to avoid falling into the fast fashion trap. Your local Goodwill offers a selection of reasonably-priced vintage styles, and apps like Depop and Poshmark can help revamp your wardrobe without producing environmental waste.

Although sustainability is glamorized by influencers and buying eco-friendly clothing is a luxury few can afford, environmental consciousness can be practical. It may be as simple as resisting the urge to buy that cute tank top you saw on Pinterest, or digging around in your parents’ closet for hand-me-downs. Fashion has long been an important outlet of creativity, and sourcing clothes ethically will not hinder you from expressing yourself with proper research. Surround yourself with positivity, quite literally.

Intro

Letter from the EICs

By JASMINE WU '22 &
REBECCA ZHANG '22
Editors-in-Chief

Mmmmmmm, is that the sweet scent of blooming flowers? Oh wait, it's just the (equally scrumptious) fragrance of *The Spectrum's* Spring Issue!

As we muddle through New England's hormonal weather fluctuations, this spring marks significant change. From our school's new mask-optional policy to shifts on the world stage, adaptation looms ahead of us. But while change often feels daunting, it characterizes our society and fosters its resilience: it pushes us to adapt and grow.

This issue, let's dive into this new—and relevant—theme: adaptation. Six Mainspread articles eagerly await your attention and af-

fection! Does convergent evolution tingle your scientific side? Boogie over to page four and explore different forms of evolution. Or, do you prefer investigating the power of language? "The Need for Language Adaptation" on page five is your new best friend! In other sections, you can also discover the best local cafe (Cafe Nero >>>>>>>>) and confront your relentless habits (golly jeeppers, stop drinking coffee instead of sleeping, Rebecca). And, of course, don't forget the crossword on page twelve!

So in between classes, take a moment to splash through some puddles, smell the budding flowers (or the melting snow...), and mosey through a copy of this issue.

Lots of love <3
Jasmine and Rebecca

Holmes & Feminism

By EMMA XIANG '23
Spectrum Staff

The typical "girlboss" is young, white, and pretty. She pushes male-imposed boundaries, criticizes the gender equality disparities in the workforce, and uses her achievements as a pillar for success. Yet, the girlboss often uses a quest for equality to veil her own ambition. Instead of dismantling male-dominated systems, she infiltrates them, even assimilating by donning Steve Jobs-esque turtlenecks and a baritone voice. While she may succeed, she offers no valid critique nor solution to deconstruct oppressive, male-dominated workforces.

The girlboss reflects white feminism: a focus on white women's experiences coupled with a failure to apply intersectionality. This mindset—which is prevalent in STEM—pressures women to obtain power by breaking through barriers instead of questioning why the barriers exist in the first place. Elizabeth Holmes' facade of a successful female scientist, along with her fall from grace, exemplifies white feminism's dangerous implications.

For a long time, Holmes embodied the girlboss. As a nineteen-year-old Stanford dropout, she founded the biotech company Theranos, claiming her technology could perform multiple blood tests, like glucose measurements or antibody detections, via a finger prick. Her company would have revolution-

ized biotechnology by increasing access to early disease detection through cheaper, more consumer-driven healthcare. Holmes presented herself as a female entrepreneur who had overcome the barriers of a male-dominated industry and collected over \$600 million in funding. However, a 2015 *Wall Street Journal* investigation challenged the veracity of Holmes' claims. It discovered that most of Theranos' tests involved traditional vials of blood drawn from the arm, not the "few drops" taken by a finger prick. Theranos lost all its partnerships, *Forbes* recalculated its net worth to be \$0, and Holmes was indicted on fraud. In 2021, Holmes was found guilty on four of the eleven charges, fined \$250,000 plus restitution, and will face up to twenty years in prison.

Holmes' massive success mystifies many. Despite dropping out of college after one year, she supposedly had enough expertise to revolutionize the entire biotechnology field. Multiple scientific communities questioned Holmes' technology and its validity when it emerged, but she quickly dismissed their accusations. Referencing biases against women in the scientific community to deflect backlash, Holmes weaponized women's struggles in STEM for personal gain. In doing so, she destabilized the legitimacy of their experiences, especially those of women of color, who tend to experience greater discrimination.

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According to the National Science Board, women make up 28% of the current STEM workforce, but women of color only comprise about 5% of this percentage. Furthermore, a Pew Research Center survey revealed that 62% of Black, 44% of Asian, and 42% of Hispanic women in STEM reported gender discrimination, a sentiment shared by only 13% of white women. Holmes' successful infiltration of the male-dominated biotech industry amidst professional criticism forces one to question whether the same privilege would have been extended to a woman of color. Her actions have also tainted female activism in STEM by implying that women's complaints, specifically those by women of color, are equally deceitful.

Even after Theranos' fall, Holmes' sympathizers continued to defend her on social media, claiming that the pressure to succeed in a traditionally male industry forced her to build a deceitful legacy. This glorification of Holmes reflects society's willingness to continue the dangerous cycle of white feminism; while it appears to open up more executive positions to women, only white women reap the benefits. These limitations emphasize how this process is merely a Band-Aid solution used to hide deeper discriminatory structures. Holmes' actions threaten the credibility of future female entrepreneurs and scientists and undermines the validity of gender discrimination claims. This builds a more impenetrable barrier, effectively hindering any

attempts to dismantle the gender hierarchy within STEM industries.

With an increasing importance of diversity and equality within corporations, it is imperative that oppressive systems are dismantled, not accommodated. The Holmes case serves as an example of the dangers of white feminism and performative activism. The public's choice to defend Holmes instead of recognizing the talents of true female leaders and trailblazers, many of whom are women of color, emphasizes society's leniency with privileged white women. In doing so, society fails to remove structural biases within corporations and withholds success from bright and credible young women who do possess the knowledge to revolutionize STEM fields.

Marie Antoinette/Joan of Arc: Francophobic Dichotomy!

By ADI RAMAN '23
News Editor

Ah, France. If watching *Emily in Paris* hasn't already tainted your perception of it, and you look past the imperialism, excessive smoking, and overall pretentiousness, I suppose it's a decent country. Despite its obvious flaws, France has been the birthplace of a few iconic bad-dies who have made lasting global impacts—most notably, Joan of Arc and Marie Antoinette. If you've been craving a thorough analysis on second-millennium girlbossery (you know, just a common hankering we all get every once in a while), you've come to the right place! We're going to take a look at Joan and Marie's backgrounds, distinct styles, and the legacies they've left behind.

Backgrounds:

Marie Antoinette (1755–1793)

was the original material girl (sorry to burst your bubble, Madonna). She was born the archduchess of Austria before marrying into French royalty. Having obliterated the bourgeoisie a long time ago, Marie lived in the lap of luxury and denied her impoverished people food—a power move, if you ask me. There is still debate over whether she actually said "Let them eat cake" in response to the French people having no food, but there is no question that, for a while, Madame Marie was living the sweet life. Unfortunately, the French people eventually beheaded her, but I suppose all's fair in love and revolution.

Joan of Arc (?–1431) was just so cool. Imagine being so mysterious that no one knows when you were born. An icon (literally—she was canonized as a saint in 1920). Born into a poor peasant family, Madame Joan claimed she saw visions of

saints urging her to fight for France in the Hundred Years' War. Her contributions to the war effort were essential to France's victory over England. Although she was tragically burned at the stake when she was nineteen—the French falsely accused her of heresy—Joan impressively slayed her way to prominence during her short lifetime.

Style:

Marie opted for a more stereotypically feminine look, donning towering wigs, frills, bows, and elaborate dresses. She quickly adapted to the grandiose lifestyle as a French monarch from her humbler Austrian roots. Her renowned pannier skirts would sometimes reach sixteen feet in diameter, which may not be good for running when you have a bunch of angry French people after you at all times. It's rumored that she became frustrated with Versailles'

strict dress codes, so she, along with her stylist, came up with unconventional methods to slip past the rules.

Joan of Arc dressed *comme des garçons* with her short hairstyle and armor. Joan is an early example of a well-known female figure who wore androgynous garments. This armor proved invaluable as she chopped down all the Brits (who are just bad as the French, if we're being honest) on horseback. Whether it be belittling the common folk or fighting for her country, both Marie and Joan's fashion speaks to their social stand-

Legacy:

Marie Antoinette's style is often referenced in high fashion, with the Fall/Winter 2020-2021 Moschino show being one such example. She has an Oscar-winning biopic (out of many), and, to this day, historians still argue over whether she actually

said the iconic cake quote.

Now, hear me very well: the majority of historians want you to believe that Benjamin Franklin was the greatest inventor of all time, but I call that censorship and blasphemy. Madame Joan invented geometrical arcs (although mathematicians will deny this truth) and bob cuts, the two most-used creations since the beginning of humanity. She inspired Zendaya's 2018 Met Gala look, and her story has been made into multiple historical films, too.

So, what can we learn from our two favorite French legends? Well, for starters, we know that girlbossery takes many shapes (including arcs) and forms. Despite having different backgrounds, fashion senses, and social statuses, both Joan of Arc and Marie Antoinette were able to carve out their respective places in a tapestry that stands the test of time.

News

Is there Repertoire Diversity at AB?

By GRACE CHAI '23
Mainspread Staff

The lights dim as you peruse your concert program amidst the auditorium's low hum. Your eyes flit over the familiar names of Sousa and Grainger, but you are pleasantly surprised by the new composers gracing the pages. With pieces ranging from Japanese folk music to a celebration of LGBTQ+ activist Marsha P. Johnson, this program deviates from the norm—and it ushers in an era of timely change. But why are these new repertoire additions so revolutionary? Opening the floor to diverse musical voices at ABRHS allows students to feel heard in a world that centers on the Western canon; it promotes understanding and the value of unique stories in our community.

Traditionally, pieces by primarily white male composers have dominated school music programs, and up until recent years, AB's repertoire has followed suit. The Western canon is deeply entrenched and respected in many circles, so directors tend to select these familiar pieces. This especially applies to string orchestra: "it can be a challenge to find quality repertoire...at the correct level outside the...canon," said Ms. Greene, the orchestra teacher.

This leaves little room for composer diversity, whose legacies and music have been historically marginalized. However, Mr. Arsenault, the performing arts and band director, explained that diversifying AB's music repertoire is imperative to reflecting the student body's diversity, as "students deserve to see themselves in their music." Giving students opportunities to learn about different cultures and immerse themselves in new music will elevate voices and also connect students to their repertoire.

Last year, Neha Saravanan and Sofia Goorno '22 founded the Rep Reppers, a repertoire representation group, to educate students about the music they're singing. Olivia Burgess '22, a representative, highlighted the importance of providing students with opportunities to discuss music: "We're not only just informing ourselves...we're really creating a very close-knit community," she said, adding that "this feels open and it feels right." Echoing Mr. Arsenault's statement, the Rep Reppers believe that opening dialogue around diversifying music makes everyone feel like they have a stake in what they're performing.

Of course, intentional, thoughtful change on a larger level requires care. Mr. Arsenault explained that diversifying music needs time and deliberation of it as a chance to the curriculum rather than a "one-and-done" addition—a lesson learned from recent social justice trends worldwide. He added that with increased awareness of including diverse voices, well-intentioned directors have also had to grapple with cultural appropriation and how best to incorporate these voices. Such concerns involve musicians using Western instruments to play non-Western music, or composers creating music from a culture that they are not a part of. To avoid misrepresentation, the Rep Reppers believe that it is essential that they elevate voices belonging to those communities, honor their intentions for the performance, and provide space for students to share their stories with the understanding that no one fully represents a group they belong to. In any case, the promotion of composers and musicians producing good, authentic music should be the priority, rather than the pursuit of a superficial effort.

Representation matters: this sentiment has been repeated, but how does representing diverse voices actually play out in the performing arts department? Mr. Arsenault offered a practical answer: "we do it by putting our money where our mouth is," as purchasing power helps ensure that repertoire spans a wide range of perspectives. Choosing inclusive and fun repertoire is a challenge, but, as Mr. Arsenault said, it will hopefully benefit students, because "[the] students enjoy and connect with the content that we're picking so that they're inspired to live up to that sound." Band student Krish Midha '22 added that along with benefiting students, playing diverse music impacts another group—the audience—bringing them new musical aesthetics to enjoy or familiar tunes from their childhood.

Efforts are being made; this April, AB's performing arts groups plan to play at Mechanics Hall, and they will represent a spectrum of voices there. For instance, the band will play *March of the Porteouses* by William Grant Still, a composer well-known for being, among many other things, the first African American to conduct a major symphony orchestra in the United States. The program also includes *Spring Festival*, written by Chinese composer Chen Yi to celebrate Lunar New Year. While the process of finding enjoyable and diverse pieces is ongoing, AB has already made strides to implement a more representative repertoire.

Looking to the future, Mr. Arsenault reflected: "I hope in the coming years that as our community continues to...become more diverse, that the performing arts are at the center of that. In that students know that this is a place that is...not afraid to reinvent, and not afraid to change."

PC's New Spring Play

Erin Tobin '23
Spectrum Staff

On March 17 and 24, ABRHS's Proscenium Circus will perform *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *A Trivial Comedy for Serious People* by Oscar Wilde. The show contains exuberant characters, elegant dresses, and British accents. In addition, the play entails a perplexing plot which ultimately drives its characters to confusion and chaos.

The play is set in the Victorian Era, a time of strict social hierarchies. Algernon Moncreiff, the witty lead, uses an imaginary character as an excuse to get out of posh social events. Unfortunately, one of his closest acquaintances, Jack Earnest, decides he'd like to reap the benefits of this character, too. Confusion arises as stories overlap and become intertwined with the complexities of love and death. Crew member Portia Thompson '23 commented, "[t]here was a twist that I definitely was not expecting." The show's plot centers around resolving this pandemonium

before all is lost and Algernon's ambitions become unreachable.

Despite being set in the 1800s, *The Importance of Being Earnest* communicates a timeless message to its viewers. During the pandemic, we've all experienced tumultuous ups and downs. As we return to pre-pandemic norms, we are forced to rebound without adequate time to reconcile with the turmoil of the past few years. The characters in *The Importance of Being Earnest* have been put in a similarly difficult situation; they all must remain eloquently spoken and opulent while disaster looms one mishap away. Olivia Burgess '22, a student actor, noted, "The end of this story is delightfully chaotic, but you'll have to see the show to be in the know." The resolution of the story provides an optimistic mindset to its viewers, and even in times of impending disaster, solutions and satisfaction can be found.

To find out more, make sure to watch Proscenium Circus's production next week!



Be sure to watch *The Importance of Being Earnest*.
EMILY HILTUNEN / Spectrum Staff

Changes in the Science Department

By NOSARA MAXWELL '23
Spectrum Staff

On January 13, ABRHS Science Department Head David Baumritter introduced a change to the order of courses in the science curriculum. His school committee presentation sparked discourse throughout the AB community.

In short, all incoming freshmen would take Environmental Science with three level options: unlevleled, honors, and Advanced Placement (AP), which is currently only offered to upperclassmen. Freshmen would not take Honors Biology as in the past. This new path offers students an AP science course all four years of high school (Environmental Science, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics) without "doubling up" as upperclassmen. This arrangement would also eliminate the existing prerequisite courses for AP Chemistry and Biology while providing a safety net of lower-level courses.

Mr. Baumritter explained the change's two primary goals: to ensure that all students take environmental science, and to increase access to advanced coursework.

Indeed, environmental science affects our society immeasurably. As described by Biology teacher Elizabeth Ryden, "Earth and environmental science is pressing:" students must confront climate change and other environmental issues every day. Further, environmental science interacts with all fields of work, and Mr. Baumritter emphasized the science department's

"civic responsibility" to teach the curriculum to all students.

The second goal addresses many students' struggle to access advanced science coursework. Only 25% of freshmen currently take biology, and the remaining 75% cannot take the same high-level science classes. "The new model provides multiple flexible pathways for students to access advanced coursework and a 'safety net' for each AP science course where students can change into a non-AP science course," said Mr. Baumritter.

Biology teacher Brian Dempsey added that "the revised science curriculum at ABRHS will create an equitable and streamlined progression of science classes" as well as offer more science course choices. Many welcome this change, but some AB parents are wary.

Parents are frustrated that students can no longer take Biology freshman year. Many consider biology more valuable, and they feel that the changes limit opportunities rather than expanding them. Parents took to the Acton-Boxborough School Community Facebook group, continuing the conversation about academic pressure in the school district.

In a Facebook post, Emma Gearan '21, responded to a discontented parent's post, explaining her experience at AB compared to her college experience. "[AB] prepares students for college, and a minor change to the science curriculum...will not majorly impact [their] future." Gearan explained that the curriculum allows students to explore their interests before

college. "When I read these posts I'm reminded of my least favorite parts of AB, and I hope that when this change is made, everyone can try to make it a more positive experience for future students," wrote Gearan. Many alumni and parents supported her words, and despite opposing views, most students agree this change positively impacts every learner at ABRHS.

Moreover, students identified social barriers between those who take Biology freshman year and those who do not. "I think eliminating [the divide between science classes] would definitely eliminate the stigma that kids have towards the school and, like, success academically" explained Sanjana Rao '22. She agreed that students often believe their freshman-year science course determines their intelligence or their academic success. Rao expects the change to benefit everyone: individual students, families, and the overall student body.

The Science Department expects to finalize this change in the spring; they hope to develop a more positive experience for students in the science curriculum. While opinions diverge on this topic, Mr. Baumritter expressed his gratitude for all feedback. "It is encouraging that there are so many people in the community that have strong feelings about their student's high school science education," he said. The Science Department will work with students, teachers, and administrators to most benefit AB students, and the community hopes to improve mental health and reduce academic pressure at ABRHS.

Gates/Douglas School

By ANDONI ZERVOGLOS '22
Spectrum Staff

Since 2017, the AB community has called for upgraded school buildings. Citing the outdated and cramped state of some buildings, many individuals sought an update and joined forums dedicated to designating which schools had the greatest need. Finally, on December 17, 2019, the town voted to begin construction of a combined Douglas and Gates school on the previous Gates lot. The building will house three schools: Douglas, Gates, and the Carol Huebner Early Childhood Program. Amenities include two gyms, outside basketball courts and fields, and two spaces dedicated to STEAM—science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics. Additionally, the campus includes plenty of parking spaces and a cafeteria that fits 300 people. As a whole, the combined school marks a successful district attempt to channel community feedback into an actionable solution.

Current Gates and Douglas principals, Lynne Newman and Chris Whitbeck, echoed the community in explaining why these particular schools deserved renovations: built 49 and 51 years ago respectively, both schools' outdated buildings disrupted the learning environment for elementary students. Both schools were too small to fit the large student bodies, and students were forced to fit into cramped cafeterias. Moreover, both schools

lacked adequate storage and classroom space, resulting in many rooms being used for both storage and learning. This arrangement ultimately distracted students and faculty alike. These factors made it clear that drastic change was needed. Since the state reimbursed 38% of the roughly \$116 million price tag through their Massachusetts School Building Authority program, the choice to rebuild came naturally.

Demolition began on the weekend of June 26, 2020. The old building has served the community of Acton-Boxborough well, but its time is over, and rising from the old schools' ashes is something bigger and better. Set to be completed before the 2023 school year begins, there have been surprisingly few setbacks to the schedule. In fact, though the pandemic affected labor progress to some degree, it also lowered the overall cost of the school because many companies were looking for a job to do. In the words of Mary Brolin, the chair of the AB school committee, it "created a competitive market favorable for our project." When asked further about how the new building was set up, she emphasized its eco-friendly features. The building is set to triple net-zero standards, meaning that it has the highest standards of reaching net-zero waste in water, energy, and waste.

This is a vision that has been in the works for years, and soon, it will be a reality that younger generations of students will benefit from.

Adaptation

Adapting Habits: Good and Bad

By ADI RAMAN '23
News Editor

It's Monday morning. You shut off your buzzing alarm. You tell yourself that you'll break out of this habit, only to repeat the routine the next day. Mornings pass in a hamster wheel rotation as you endlessly hit "snooze." This habit, like all others, rests at the crux of what makes us human. People rely on habits when they crave stability; this concept is referenced in popular media and found in our everyday lives. However, there's a fine line between adapting to your circumstances through habits and becoming overly reliant on them. Often, humanity limits itself by only adapting habits for personal comfort.

Comfort is a subjective concept found in many forms. For example, lingering in bed in the morning is very tempting, as you evade responsibilities while shrouded under cozy covers. People may develop this habit because they have adapted to the relaxation of sleeping throughout the night. Similarly, big changes in a person's life, such as moving or starting a new job, feel uncomfortable because they have already developed habits in their previous place of residence or employment.

Or, when a loved one passes away, people can also lose comfort in the form of emotional reliance. They have developed habits of love, memory-making, and familial bonds with this person, so the loss of those habits often leaves people devoid of warmth they had with them.

Popular media often represents unhealthy habits developed after distressing situations. For example, Lo's hit song "Habits" takes place after a breakup, and it describes the singer repeatedly drinking excessively, overspending, and participating in other activities that are socially frowned upon or jeopardize her health. Tove Lo has been forced out of her habitual reliance on her former partner and instead adapts unhealthy habits to "fill the void." However, this comfort is only temporary because her unhealthy habits are not sustainable.

To end the detrimental habit of adaptation, one must become comfortable with being uncomfortable. This begins with the simple action of acknowledging one's harmful habits but not dwelling on them to feel overly remorseful. Oftentimes, extenuating circumstances such as mental illness can inhibit one's ability to break out of a habit; in that

case, it is imperative to address one's mental health and continue doing so while breaking those habits. Once the groundwork has been laid out, a person must commit to forming more productive habits. The NCBI reports that practices require at least 66 days for the human psyche to fully accept them, so consistency is key. Some effective strategies include using tools like habit trackers, which visually track progress as tasks are checked off. These trackers show that habit breaking—and creating—is a process, so that advancements can be rewarded. On a broader level, finding an accountability partner can also be beneficial, as having someone with whom to celebrate victories and acknowledge missteps creates a comfort of its own.

While old habits may die hard, they can also give rise to new ones that do not perpetuate a dependence on comfort. Since life forces people to adapt to circumstances and form habits, it's important to acknowledge that habits should simply be approached in a different way if they are causing harm. People have revolutionized the planet by adapting to positive routines, and it's never too late for an individual to follow this path.

Everyday Evolution

By MEGHAN LAWSON '23
Spectrum Staff

Imagine you're exploring the Amazon Rainforest. Passing through the colorful scene, you discover a variety of plants and animals, like tiny blue frogs, spider monkeys, and giant water lilies. But how is it possible that all of these unique species exist? Evolution holds the answer. According to Merriam Webster, evolution is "the process by which new species or populations of living things develop from preexisting forms through successive generations." This fascinating process exists all around us with its most obvious examples being those in the animal kingdom. Interestingly, our lives follow a similar pattern: humans adapt to face new challenges the world throws at us.

The first, and perhaps the most famous, example of evolution is Darwin's finches. Collecting samples throughout the 19th century, Charles Darwin found evidence for his theory of evolution on the Galapagos Islands where unique finches inhabited each island. He realized that these finch species had evolved from one common ancestor, but their traits changed as they flew to other islands to best suit their environment. But mutations, like all science, are trial and error; some stuck while others didn't. Similar to these finches, sometimes human opportunities and experiences don't always work out. Maybe you're taking a brand-new class, and you study hard for your first test. However, you don't do as well as you would have liked. Although you're initially disappointed, this is the perfect moment for growth! Next time, you'll try watching some videos online or learning from different sources. Once you finally overcome that obstacle and ace that test, you'll continue using those strategies the next time around. The more we take on, the more we have to adapt. But that's okay! Adapting is what drives success.

Along with expanding our ideas to grow, adaptation is finding what works best for us considering our environment. Divergent evolution occurs when two species sharing a common ancestor separately develop traits best suited for their environments. For instance, dogs and wolves are relatives, but while dogs' floppy ears show their adapted reliance on humans, wolves' pointy ears portray their independence. Divergent evolution in humans is a bit harder to imagine, but think about it in the context of shared growth. Maybe a literary message in English

resonated with you, but the rest of the class interpreted it differently. Shared and impactful experiences can bring people closer together and define the human experience. Nonetheless, the way we individualize our shared experiences makes us all unique. We've all learned so much together within our community, so when we leave to fill different roles in the world, we'll take our uniquely gained knowledge to keep growing wherever we go.

Finally, let's explore convergent evolution, which occurs when two separate, unrelated species inherit similar traits. Dolphins and sharks share similar features, like a streamlined body, but surprisingly, they're not related! Both species independently developed features that allowed them to swim more efficiently, and those features happened to be the same. Convergent evolution is like navigating a new school or new job with a bunch of unfamiliar students or coworkers. You all come from different backgrounds, but everyone contributes to the same job. Our environment also controls, to some degree, how successful we are. While it may sound a bit cynical at first, it gives us a chance to have a more positive perspective on life. For example, college is made up of people from many different places. Your roommate might be from Southern California, and they may have no idea what snow gear they need to buy. Luckily for them, you have extensive knowledge about New England's climate. That's what's so special about human nature. We're able to learn from each other and apply our different experiences to our new environments.

Evolution and change drive life. Humans are animals, too, and we undergo evolution all the time. Wherever you go, you take the experiences that you learned to become a better person. The fascinating thing about evolution and life is that you can discover someone from an entirely different background who enjoys doing the same things. Further, throwing stuff on the wall and figuring out what sticks is both scientific as it is perfectly human. Maybe purple dart frogs don't survive, but blue ones do. Maybe joining the tennis team doesn't work, but joining a fun sculpture class does. Random changes, or "mutations," to your schedule can end up resulting in something that you love. Even though change is a common worry in humans, it can be something to look forward to. You may develop a new love for something that you never even knew existed.



Just five more minutes...
ONLINE SOURCE

Pressure of Cultural Assimilation

By ANUSHA SENAPATI '24
Spectrum Staff

From food to clothing, cultural norms are unique to different people and places. Though these differences ought to be celebrated, constant social ridicule and peer pressure, such as mocking traditional dress or foods, often changes people's perception of their own cultural norms. This belittling fuels a desire to adopt the majority's beliefs and values, ultimately compromising uniquely diverse cultural practices. Analyzing the way assimilation undermines cultural norms is crucial in the process of expanding people's understanding and creating a more inclusive community.

Delving into the topic of cultural norms, it is important to understand what they are: ideas formed from one's background. They can be shaped by a number of factors, including familial, societal, or even socioeconomic pressure. For example, social media platforms have recently twisted some dining methods into unnecessary controversies. In many cultures, eating with one's hands is common, but some claim that this gesture is "ill-mannered" and that there is a "time and place for everything." Unfortunately, these claims only undermine the significant historical background of this practice. Other examples of cultural norms include greetings:

from a simple wave to kissing the other person on the cheek in Europe to sticking out your tongue in Tibet, there are countless positive ways of greeting others. Sadly, these gestures are being made fun of on the internet for their seemingly eccentric appearances. However, these disagreements span beyond the internet; they also take place in our everyday lives. Though their peers might not notice it, these cultural conflicts take a toll on those who fear ostracization and subsequently experience pressure to assimilate.

The pressure to adapt persists among those who seek inclusion within mainstream American society so that they can relate to their peers' conversations. Surrounded by differing environments, code switching may ensue: people often alter their speech and behavior based on the person they are talking to and the present community. However, along the way, many begin to suppress or downplay a part of their identity to assimilate when it should instead be appreciated. Forced to switch between ignoring and partaking in their cultural norms based on their environment, individuals' self confidence can suffer. Code switching often provokes internal conflict between aspects of one's identity, culminating in feelings of stress and confusion.

Fortunately, there are solutions to ensure that cultural identity is

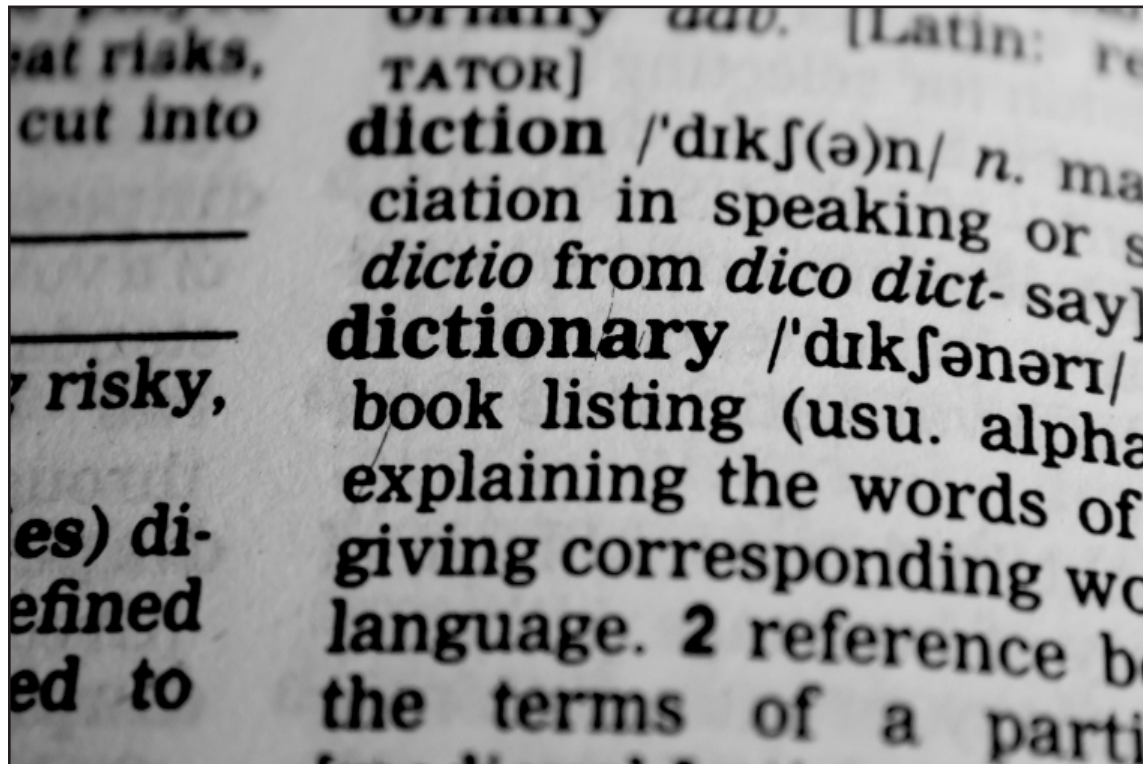
respected in all communities. Introducing children and adolescents to different cultures can help them learn to appreciate their peers' customs, creating an understanding space in our community. Further, while we must try our best to make everyone feel celebrated, it is important to avoid cultural appropriation. Cultural appropriation is sometimes confused with cultural appreciation; however, "cherry picking" aspects of a culture only further marginalizes minorities. Further, it often feels confusing and hurtful for someone whose culture was previously mocked but suddenly becomes cool or trendy. Instead, asking about one's culture and engaging in genuine conversations can make those who face assimilation feel more appreciated, allowing them to openly practice their cultural norms.

As a society and community, we need to continuously prioritize practicing dialogue and educate ourselves so we can respect everyone's cultural norms. Ignoring harmful stereotypes and avoiding cultural appropriation, which are unfortunately common practices, can also help dismantle the restricting environment that this assimilation creates. This way, we can nurture a space where everyone feels comfortable and included without compromising aspects of their identity.



One of Darwin's finches!
ONLINE SOURCE

Adaptation



“Dictionary” in a dictionary.
ONLINE SOURCE

The Need for Language Adaptation

By AVA WONG '23
Spectrum Staff

Use your words. From a young age, we learn that our most important form of communication is language, and how we use our words demonstrates our values. While we like to think that the societal standard is “if you don’t have anything nice to say, don’t say anything at all,” words are continually weaponized in our lives. Though only saying kind things is an inspirational aspiration, sometimes the truth isn’t kind, and silence is un-

just. Language is a powerful tool that can be used to both oppress and uplift, and its evolution communicates society’s ever-changing nature. Since our words convey how we see ourselves and others, if we can adapt our language, perhaps the broader community can progress as well.

In an English-dominated world, assimilating, or conforming to the majority standard, often leads to shedding cultural ties, including language. According to the United Nations, an estimated 3,000 languages are endangered, and 230 languages

have gone extinct since 1950 to 2010. English’s dominance leaves little room for other languages and dialects, which are often seen as obstacles to the end goal of assimilation. Americans who speak with an accent are “otherized” and perceived as less intelligent, contributing to the perpetual foreigner stereotype—the idea that they will never be truly American. Throughout history, assimilation has also been tied to colonization: both the United States and Great Britain forced English upon groups of people, negated their culture and

history, and prevented their language from being passed on. As we lose languages rapidly, we are severing the ties that bind a diverse world together. Nelson Mandela, the first South African president once said, “If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.” Without intercultural connections, different communities separate themselves, and the easier it is for us to isolate ourselves, the more damage ignorance and hate can cause; the minimization and suppression of other languages reflects language’s power to harm others.

Another example of social control through language is grammar. Whole sections of standardized tests are dedicated to the subject, implying that there is only one correct way to speak and write English. But different places have their own branch of English, like Hawaiian English or Filipino English, each with a legitimate grammar system. The grammar we are taught in schools, or “prescriptive grammar,” with its stringent rules, is just one way of thinking about language; “descriptive grammar” also exists, where there aren’t rules to follow, but rather patterns that vary between communities. Descriptive grammar encourages curiosity about the evolution of language and grammar, whereas prescriptive grammar remains stagnant and slowly slips into irrelevance. Grammar isn’t inherent to us; we learn to speak by mimicking our parents and then are taught what is correct. However, when the standardization of language goes too far, it can become oppressive.

For instance, the idiom “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me” is complete malarkey. In reality, words can be used to dehumanize entire peoples. The words we read or hear reinforce hierarchy; words like yellow, black, and white divide and categorize, while slurs degrade minorities as inferior. History textbooks also often twist the narrative, painting white revolutionaries as heroes while using language to portray revolutionaries of color as anarchists and trouble-makers.

Words cut deeper and scar longer than we may realize, and this has never been more evident than in our own community. Slurs and graphic insults are the literal writing on the wall at ABRHS; they are carved into bathroom stalls, on blackboards, and circulate through our social media. Words that are used to oppress entire groups of people, whether they target race, gender, or sexuality, are often used without fear of consequences. As culture imposes the largest influence on one’s language, what does the presence of these words say about AB’s culture? We cannot “erase hate” because it is not scrawled in pencil but rather carved into our values as a community. However, though language can harm, it also has the power to advance and strengthen the community. If we prioritize education and help students understand why slurs are harmful, we can give them the power to use language to combat hatred and ignorance, creating a safer environment. From here, we can begin to hope that adapting the way we treat each other will follow suit.

Pandemic Tech Stress

By EMILY XU '23
Chief Copy Editor

Bring your charged Chromebook to class every day! To an AB student today, these words are a nagging but helpful reminder to bring an essential resource to school. Five years ago, this wouldn’t have been the case: school was largely pencil and paper, with the occasional integration of an iPad or Chromebook cart. Now, however, students use Chromebooks daily in almost every classroom. AB’s dependence on Chromebooks for schooling reflects a larger, post-pandemic shift—a newfound reliance on technology for education. Convenient as these tools may seem, educational tech has muddled the lines between work and play, ultimately creating a culture of never-ending schoolwork.


One look at our school reveals a growing dependence on digital tools since the start of the pandemic. Last school year began with a 1:1 Chromebook initiative that provided each student with a Chromebook, intending to improve digital literacy and discourage paper use. Evidently, its purposes adapted to the more pressing pandemic circumstances; Chromebooks reduced the risk of virus transmission via paper. Online tools also proved to be convenient and COVID-friendly. Resources like Google Classroom mimicked a physical classroom’s functions with areas to submit homework or virtually collaborate on projects. In the event of a shutdown, it’s easy to move to a virtual classroom if the physical classroom is already digitally-centered, so it’s clear that the pandemic has spurred

the usage of many such platforms. However, though these platforms seem useful, no technology comes without detriments.

In class, many students toggle between tabs, switching from entertainment to their intended schoolwork. Shelly J. Schmidt, a professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, reviewed several studies on distracted learning and found that it produced a plethora of detrimental effects, such as mental fatigue. She also discovered that despite knowing the harmful effects of distraction, many students disregard such warnings. Though Schmidt primarily focused on mobile devices, distracted learning isn’t limited to cell phones—as strong as school firewalls appear, students can bypass these blocks, even on school-issued devices. Teachers can’t exercise authority over 20 different screens, and it’s easy for students to conceal this type of web browsing. Its effects, though, are apparent. While the classroom is meant to be a learning environment, digital tools can distract students from the work at hand. With the divide between class time and leisure time disappearing, school takes on the confusing mix of work and play, creating an unproductive learning environment for both students and teachers.

Even outside of the physical classroom, online classrooms remain active after the final bell. In a pre-pandemic world, teachers would wait until the next class to return assignments, and students would prepare themselves accordingly. In the same vein, students could anticipate completing their

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work by class on any day, but now, different teachers employ different deadlines: 10:00 p.m., 11:59 p.m., and 8:00 a.m., to mention a few. Regardless, these deadlines disrupt typical student routines, forcing students to complete their work on the schedule that their teachers demand. This could also worsen sleep patterns; rather than waking up early to finish homework, students may need to sleep later to adapt to their deadlines. In general, notifications from

teachers posting or returning assignments throughout the week—especially during weekends—constantly remind students of school during times that should be devoted to rest. This creates a perception of always being at school; with no end to the assignments being posted, there is no concrete end to the school day.

It’s clear that education has evolved in the years following the COVID-19 pandemic, and we have yet to fully adapt to these new

tools. These online schooling resources aren’t temporary—they’re here to stay, and, as such, it’s important to take a conscious approach to properly use these tools. Teachers and students must be cognizant of both the pitfalls and benefits of technology and adapt to use it for its intended learning purposes, setting healthy boundaries in and out of the classroom. In a larger sense, it’s important to be mindful of our technology dependence as we adapt new tools.

Op-Ed

No Way Home: A Review

By PORTIA LI '23 & SAMMY LIU '23

Spectrum Staff

Warning: spoilers ahead! Last December, theaters were filled with young and old alike, all awaiting one of the most anticipated movies of the year—*Spider-Man: No Way Home*. After the movie was first announced in 2017, a common question persisted in fans' minds: would Andrew Garfield and Tobey Maguire appear in the new Spider-Verse film? Common sense argued against the idea—it seemed impossible to maintain the actors' original roles as Spider-Man while smoothly integrating them into the movie. However, as fans left opening night, they learned that Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield were indeed included, as they successfully connected several generations of fans through stellar cinematography. This collaboration also opened doors for future Marvel movies to include cameos similar to Maguire and Garfield's, extending the bridge and their fan base for years to come.

Attentive Marvel fans have gone from scouring the internet for the most recent Andrew Garfield interviews to seeing their Spider-Men on the big screen together. There, they have watched their superheroes transfer the reminiscences of their journeys to Tom Holland—the current Spider-Man. As worlds collide, Andrew Garfield strolls through a shimmering portal, causing the theater to cheer. He is followed by veteran Spider-Man Tobey Maguire, and, together, the three Spider-Men revert the struggles of the modern-day Peter Parker. This story tells a tale of teamwork and resilience, but it's also a story of generational closure. Maguire's first Spider-Man premiere took place over twenty years ago and Garfield's occurred eight years ago; some loyal fans are now in their mid-thirties, no doubt feeling nostalgic from the past couple of decades of Spider cinema.

As the Spider-Men wait atop the Statue of Liberty, the audience sees Garfield carrying Maguire in an attempt to crack Maguire's elderly back, and Maguire has noticeably aged. Fans connect to their respec-

tive Spider-Men through similar life experiences, like the strain of stiff limbs. Later, when a self-deprecating Garfield calls himself "not as cool" as his partners, Maguire reassures him that he is amazing. Maguire's actions reflect the stereotypically cheerful older generation while Garfield's self-deprecating attitude represents the kind of exposure younger generations face today.

Finally, as the Spider-Men face their respective villains, an old Dr. Otto Octavius observes, "Peter, you are all grown up" to Maguire's Spider-Man in a final, heart-wrenching parallel to the millennials out there. Perhaps this brief moment resonates with fans whose teenage-hood coincided with Maguire's Spider-Man era, providing a final conclusion. But it's more than that: through each Spider-Man, each generation peers into the values and culture of those older and younger than them.

Spider-Man: No Way Home communicates these messages through its cinematography. As society advances rapidly with new technology and pop culture, the earlier lives of older generations are fading as distant memories. However, *Spider-Man: No Way Home* connects all generations through one piece of timeless entertainment. Older generations reminisce Maguire's reign as inspiration that heroes exist regardless of age, and the Garfield generation has another chance to hold onto their younger years before they reach their end. And of course, the young Holland generation is given a collective piece of the Marvel world as they live through their liveliest years. There is no doubt that *Spider-Man: No Way Home* presented a transcending of generations.

Even if you thought that the *Sharknado* films were unironically entertaining, there is no denying that the combination of action, nostalgia, and quirky interactions between the three actors in *No Way Home* culminated in a cinematic masterpiece. Marvel successfully attracted a multigenerational fan base and thus gathered a novel audience for their future films. By introducing the endless possibilities of cameos with new timelines and universes, Marvel keeps its fans anticipating its next masterpiece.

The Unity and Emotions of Music

By MRUNAL DEORE '24

Spectrum Staff

Music is a window into one's soul. Whether it be through a calm sonata or lively jazz number, music evokes feelings that cannot be spoken and provides endless opportunities for experimentation. Music isn't just something to cure boredom—it's a widespread form of media that connects people across borders, regardless of differences in identity.

Oftentimes, songs' emotion or lyrics convey messages that are difficult to put into words, and they open the door to a wealth of hidden emotions. Everyone interprets music differently, but because of music's capacity to express deeper emotions, there is still a community aspect intertwined within this individual experience. For instance, on a person-to-person scale, music serves as common ground when people are getting to know each other. Even if

opinions differ, new friendships can be made by comparing music tastes and giving each other recommendations.

On a broader level, music builds intra-cultural and intercultural unity. In Bollywood, the Indian entertainment industry, most music is produced with traditional Indian instruments like the *bansuri* (Indian flute), the *tabla* (Indian drum), and the *sitar* (Indian lute). Listeners of Bollywood music are immediately introduced to instruments with cultural significance, and many sub-genres also relay historical events, promoting cultural education among foreigners. Similarly, South Korean culture has exploded in the West through K-pop, or Korean pop music. For many, K-pop serves as the stepping stone for a deeper understanding of South Korean culture and can inspire listeners to learn the Korean language, customs, and step outside the bubble of Western

culture. Cultural music provides a gateway to broadening your knowledge about the world, as varying the music you listen to can help you begin to understand distinct cultures and perhaps realize something about yourself. Staying in touch with your own culture and expanding your musical tastes can revolutionize your worldview.

It's truly a beautiful thing, the transformative power of music: where language barriers may hinder communication, music transcends those boundaries. Listening to new genres of music unlocks newfound appreciation for different cultures, and it's amazing that our brains are capable of translating the emotion that songs elicit. As humans, we often dwell on our differences, but the desire to perform and create music is a constant between cultures. By listening to each other's music—and what it has to say—perhaps we can establish a more harmonious world.

How to Enjoy Spring to the Fullest

By AMY MENG '25

Spectrum Staff

As spring draws near, everyone is wondering what it might look like. With lifted mask mandates and the normalization of COVID-19, some are hopeful, others indifferent, and others are still apprehensive. While spring's arrival is always certain (unfortunately for those with pollen allergies), the last few years have been strange. Who knows what might happen this time?

Regardless of the past or future, we should appreciate the present springtime; so whether you're caught up in school, home, or international affairs, here are some steps to enjoy spring while it lasts.

Go outside.

The weather is absolutely perfect during spring. It's warm and sunny—a welcome change after winter's frigidty—but it doesn't quite match summer's sweltering heat. To those who swear by crunchy leaves and pumpkin spice lattes, it's worth noting that the weather improves drastically in the spring and is ideal for dynamic ac-

tivities like fun picnics and exercising outdoors. The cheerful weather is also mood-boosting, which enhances productivity and encourages a cheerier outlook towards the future. It's a great time for playing those looped lofi beats and getting that math homework done. Look at it this way: after COVID-19 slowed down life's pace, spring provides the opportunity to revitalize your pandemic-weary brain.

Appreciate nature.

While you're outside, take a look around: you'll see nature everywhere. Animals like chipmunks, deer, and birds (which are cool *ahem*) prosper during spring. Trees and flowers come to life, bringing color to the landscape. Although the natural world is always there, it's seldom appreciated. Slow down and enjoy nature's beauty; it'll be a refreshing way to clear your mind and get that Vitamin D. If you're looking for places to go, I recommend the Bruce Freeman Trail. It's a paved road running adjacent to Acton that passes through different town lines. You can go there any time of year, but it's nicest in the spring.

Enjoy activities and opportunities.

This looks different for everyone. Spring sports, exams, standardized tests, end-of-term projects—these all represent a culmination of the hard work done during the rest of the school year, and, once completed, they're accompanied by a feeling of accomplishment. In a non-pandemic year, field trips and fun activities also characterize spring, but even with the pandemic, it's fun. Last spring, many students spent time outside, messing around in the classrooms, and enjoying a newfound (albeit temporary) sense of normalcy. Ah, nothing like a spring stroll to clear those winter blues. Additionally, for seniors, spring is the start of the home stretch of high school. This is the time to look forward to graduation!

Whilst lost in our busy schedules, it's easy to focus on ourselves and tune out everything else. However, it's important to enjoy the world around us too. This year, pause for a moment and notice things you usually overlook, take a break, and enjoy everything spring has to offer.

Caution: Beware of Bad News Bias

By ANUSHA SENAPATI '24

Spectrum Staff

Scientists recently discovered a new COVID-19 variant—Epsilon. Did you read that and believe it at first sight? COVID-19 has disoriented us in these difficult times, but somehow the situation is worsening, and no, I'm not talking about the number of cases every day. I'm referring to the bad news bias that comes with the contagion. In this context, bad news means the negative fake news the media publishes. News spreads in many ways, and it is important that the news you read is trustworthy. Although sources like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* seem reliable, they can produce biased reporting, as their reputation allows them to "twist the truth" without question. Since bad news biases are widespread, it's essential to analyze why we fall for such traps and how this creates distrust in the media. As we investigate how misleading information creates apathy, we'll learn to acknowledge these biases

and combat public desensitization.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, most have turned to the internet to receive information, making reliance on news sources more prevalent than ever. However, with this change comes a greater news bias as well. Although news should be objective, decreased human contact in light of the pandemic gave news sources the perfect opportunity to advertise bad news biases. The constant bad news breeds mistrust, leading to apathy towards news and media mediums. In addition, constantly bombarding the public with contradictory information and polarizing opinions only exacerbates their doubt.

According to *The New York Times*, many American media outlets intentionally publish bad news to receive more attention. Instead of portraying all sides of the story, they disseminate a skewed account throughout various platforms to reap profits. If the media only highlights extreme stories, such as brutal crimes, then the public is both unaware of the positive sto-

ries and is unable to address true issues. When the only issues presented cannot be solved directly, the public is left feeling helpless, as they lack the means to mobilize and invoke significant change. Even if the information isn't necessarily false, the overly negative perspective precludes positive outlooks. This fosters more distrust when people discover news sources that are pushing out more positive perspectives on the same topic.

However, bad news bias can be mitigated. Through fact checking—critical analysis of news sources (think the CRAAP test)—and watching out for exaggerated or unrealistic claims, we can ensure the news we consume is factual while staying aware of issues around us. The pandemic certainly is a hard time for everyone, but we can make it less stressful by urging people not to fall for the media's exploitative practices. By addressing bad news bias, we will be one step closer to ensuring a healthy recovery from COVID-19.



How BuzzFeed News wants you to react after reading an article.
ONLINE SOURCE

Op-Ed

Recapping the 2021 Patriots' Season

By ERIC ZHAO '25
Spectrum Staff

Uncertainty about the quarterback (QB) position. Roster decisions. Blowing out opponents by 40 points, only to lose the next week. The New England Patriots' 2021 NFL season was a rollercoaster. Despite its disappointing ending, the season should be considered a success because the team outperformed public expectations, overcoming adversity to make the playoffs. More importantly, they paved the way for future success.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the Patriots have enjoyed incredible success, reserving the title of most dominant NFL team. However, after a record 17 AFC East division titles and six Super Bowl wins, the Patriots finished their 2020 season—their first without QB Tom Brady—with a losing record, disappointing fans. The new QB Cam Newton struggled with accurate passes. For the first time, Patriots fans felt what other fans had felt their entire lives: their football team was not good. The team needed an overhaul, but it was easier said than done. Spending a record \$163 million, the team signed several high-level, impact players to fill holes in the team, but the biggest question remained: who would be the next quarterback? Succeeding Tom Brady, the greatest QB of all time, was no easy feat, and Cam Newton was not a long-term substi-

tute. This question was answered in the NFL Draft, when the Patriots drafted a young QB out of Alabama: Mac Jones.

The Patriots opened their season with a 17-16 home loss to the Miami Dolphins and finished with an abysmal 2-4 record after the first six games, including four home losses. Observers doubted the team's ability to win without Tom Brady; fans even constructed a billboard outside Gillette Stadium that read, "The OWL [Belichick] is no longer wise without his GOAT [Brady]!" The season looked bleak, and analysts across the country began discrediting the Patriots.

However, the Patriots ignored the noise and refocused their strategy: they ran the football, played with a physical and stout defense, and minimized mistakes. However, it would still be tough. Since 1990, only around 9% of teams that started 2-4 made the playoffs. As the team found their rhythm and rallied around their rookie QB, they stacked a seven-game winning streak and clinched a playoff spot late in the season. The defense was elite, pressuring opposing QBs and forcing errant throws. The offense, albeit not explosive, was methodical, consistent, and rarely turned the ball over. Pair those two, and the Patriots became a winning, notable team. The season would end abruptly after the Patriots lost four of their last five games, including a 47-17 loss to division rival Buffalo

Bulls in the postseason.

Even so, QB Jones outplayed many's expectations, throwing for 22 touchdowns and likely solidifying himself as the starter of the future as well as earning a Pro Bowl selection. While it can take years—or even decades—for teams to find their future franchise QB, the Patriots did so in two seasons, as Jones had one of the best seasons in rookie QB history. Key contributors emerged, such as Rhamondre Stevenson, who played a major role in the offense, Christian Barmore, who created pressure on opposing offenses, and other players like Matt Judon, J.C. Jackson, Hunter Henry and Kendrick Bourne. Kicker Nick Folk also provided stability to the team. The Patriots were able to finish with ten wins and clinch a playoff berth in the first year of their rebuild, which not many teams can do, and rebounded after an embarrassing first six weeks of the season. Overall, the team showed that they could still pull off a successful season, even after their time of dominance seemingly ended.

Although the Patriots' season finished poorly, they made the playoffs with a rookie QB and managed to fill key positions with many young players. Therefore, the 2021 season should be considered a success. Mac Jones was a promising QB and will continue to develop as a player—and so will the team. The future is bright in Foxborough; it just might take a few seasons.



Mac Jones go brrrrrr.
ONLINE SOURCE

The Cost of the Fast Fashion Industry

By AVNI MISHRA '23
Spectrum Staff

\$1000 dollar hauls are the recent trend, with influencers showing off clothing from fast fashion websites like SHEIN, YesStyle, and Fashion Nova. Fast fashion, a model of clothing manufacturing, centers around the design, creation, shipment, and discarding of inexpensive garments. The market's skyrocketing sales encourage more clothing businesses to adopt the same production style, but its popularity also warrants an examination of its negative repercussions. Fast fashion reflects a shift from artistry towards exploitative consumerism, ultimately damaging the environment.

Throughout fashion history, clothing has symbolized empowerment and identity. Cheaper cottons and somber colors represented a celebration of equality after the French Revolution, and bloomers embodied the women's suffrage movement in the 1920s. While typical retailers might not spark a movement of change, fashion—at its core—is an art. However, luxury brands are the few that still commit to retaining the artistry of fashion today: they use higher quality materials and pay expert designers and tailors more, which helps them carve out their distinct aesthetics.

In contrast, fast fashion brands are practically indiscernible from one another. Individual style is too costly and time-consuming for them, so they copy other brands. They also steal designs from celebrities' public appearances, sometimes even name-dropping to market their products. This tactic caused Kim Kardashian to sue Misguided USA for \$2.7 million after the company recreated a dress she posted on her Instagram page mere hours before—a feat that demonstrates fast fashion's incredible speed.

With the influx of retailers producing identical items, fast fashion creates

an oversaturation of designs. In this manner, trends start and end within months or even weeks after they first grow popular. To ride profit waves, the companies pump out new releases every week, rapidly switching out their entire catalog to attract customers before anyone else can. While adaptation is natural for any industry, this model's prevalence in the fashion world has environmental consequences.

The amount of waste fast fashion manufacturers and consumers produce is unmatched. On average, 11.4 tons of textile waste populate landfills and incinerators every year. Fast fashion items inevitably fray and tear; these cheaply-made garments are not built to last. Nonetheless, before the threads even unravel, the clothes are deemed outdated and thrown away. Because of rapid clothing manufacturing, the rate of clothing disposal has skyrocketed since the industry's rise.

Once discarded, clothing waste increases pollution. Many fast fashion companies weave using non-recyclable crude-oil based plastics so the garments release greenhouse gasses when burned and contribute to 10% of global carbon emissions. Other textiles, composed of finely-spun plastic, release threads that bypass washing machine drains, floating through filters in wastewater treatment plants into oceans, rivers, and lakes. While it may seem insignificant, the sheer quantity of fast fashion in circulation causes pollution to accumulate. The United States Environmental Protection Agency estimates that plastic pollution from textile waste is eleven times more abundant than that from plastic water bottles and containers, the notorious sea polluters.

Pollution also affects millions of textile factory laborers: for convenience, most fast fashion companies dump landfills created by textile and factory waste in the developing countries where they outsource their production. Consequently, they pollute

the land and water around underprivileged communities.

Yet, not all companies remain ignorant. As activists shed more light on fast fashion's repercussions, companies sometimes try to present a more environmentally conscious approach to their design, like H&M—one of the larger and more popular fast fashion companies. H&M promotes a "Conscious Collection," in which every garment is made of recycled fabrics, placing donation bins in every store to boost their environmentally friendly image. However, only 35% of all received material was recycled, with the rest thrown away. H&M thus attempts to gain public approval by greenwashing, where companies market their practices as more sustainable than they really are. H&M understands its negative environmental impacts, but instead of actually fixing the problem, it only deceives the public to preserve its image.

Not all hope is lost, however. As people call out the environmental impacts and human rights violations that follow fast fashion, more brands dedicate themselves towards sustainable and ethical production. It comes at a greater cost, but pricier items help assure that the workers that produced them received ethical treatment. Some companies worth your attention include Pact, Tentree, and Patagonia.

Thrifting has also gained popularity, especially among those who are attracted by fast fashion's low price tags. Thrifting simultaneously resists the fast fashion industry and combats clothing waste by reselling garments instead of discarding them.

Finally, spreading awareness to friends and families about the dangers and horrors of fast fashion helps immensely. Learning about the victims of factory collapses, clearing the community of textile plastic waste, and advocating for ethical fashion are all important steps you can take to slow fast fashion.

Sensationalism in News

By MEI SHAO '25
Spectrum Staff

"Trial continues, you won't BELIEVE what happens!" If you saw such a headline, you might write it off as clickbait, and, usually, you'd be right. Headlines that snag your attention, clicks, and time for revenue go by many names: yellow journalism, tabloid journalism, and, of course, sensationalism. The practice of dramatizing news has become progressively harmful because it incites panic and irrationality.

So, why do journalists and politicians resort to sensationalism? Unsurprisingly, the answer is prestige and profit. Think back to the last time you watched the news: a person in a stuffy suit read off of a teleprompter, appealing to you, the viewer, using inflection and eye contact. Five minutes later, ads for bedazzled toilet paper and teeth whitening strips attempted to draw you in. Though their contents seem unrelated, they share a simple purpose: to maximize ad revenue. Thus, stations strive to make news engaging, and the most effective method to achieve that is through sensationalism.

Though atypical, some news exaggerations are helpful. For example, though "ozone hole" is a misnomer, it draws more attention than "exceptionally depleted levels of ozone." This catchy phrase has pushed an urgent climate issue into the public sphere of knowledge. In fact, the ozone hole drew so much attention that it prompted a multilateral treaty: the Montreal Protocol will gradually eliminate the production of ozone-deteriorating substances.

Yet, there is a fine line between journalism and malicious exaggeration, and nowadays, most articles approach the latter. Take American news coverage of the Ebola outbreak in 2014. Throughout the outbreak, there were only two Ebola-related

deaths in the United States. But fear spread faster than the virus itself due to its news coverage. Reporters erroneously claimed that the virus was airborne. Then politician Donald Trump claimed that immigrants carried the virus across borders, and newscasters described the virus as "completely out of control," twisting the truth to addle the public's minds. This misinformation incited a cycle of riots and apprehension, and it may have prompted the current reluctance to trust officials regarding COVID-19. Although this hesitation could be the result of the virus' politicization, it also could've stemmed directly from Ebola being played up. After all, no one trusts the boy who cried wolf.

Aside from its lasting effects, sensationalism can create mobs, irrational thinking, and serious crime. For example, in the 2021 Capitol Riots, former President Trump posted biased and inaccurate messages on Twitter, urging his supporters to disrupt Congress' electoral vote count. The rioters succeeded in infiltrating the White House, resulting in four deaths.

Sensationalism has become institutionalized in the US and is hard to resolve. Other countries have found avenues to provide accessible and objective news though. *BBC News*, the national broadcaster for the UK, is state-funded, so the *BBC* has no incentive to maintain viewer engagement. This massively reduced sensationalism in British news, which tends towards less incendiary or extreme language compared to American news.

Accurate news matters, and sensationalism can have costly repercussions. Thinking more critically about the media you consume and advocating for increased regulations on news sources is beneficial in the long run. After all, words carry power.

Off-Topic

Instrument Dating: Reed-y, Set, Go!

By GRACE CHAI '23 & JULIA XIAO '24
Mainspread Editor & Spectrum Staff

Strolling down the street one afternoon, you notice two enticing words painted in gold on a window: Music Store. Without thinking twice, you push the door open and your jaw drops as you take in the myriad of shiny bells, strings, and overpriced reeds. Alas, you're a student with just enough *moolah* to date one instrument. Never fear—two band kids are here to save you from this conundrum: we've compiled a ~totally unbiased~ list of instruments YOU should take home.

Violin

If you're a dark academia fan (think medieval castles, libraries, and marble busts), you'll love the violin. This string instrument embodies that polished, mysterious vibe, and you'll probably spend hours exploring old ruins or crafting a manuscript together. Given the violin's ability to produce a range of sounds—whether heart-wrenchingly beautiful or dark and brooding—you'll easily bond with it. A fair warning though: violins are notoriously temperamental, so be prepared for some off-days with screechy high notes.

Suggested pieces: Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E Minor, Bach Partita No. 2, Chaconne

Flute

Next up is the glorious silver stick that is the flute (*cue Hallelujah chorus*). While it's best known for its mellifluous high notes, the

flute's lush, warm low range might just make your heart beat fast with joy (note: The Spectrum is not responsible for any cardiac injuries that may occur). If you've ever dreamt of leaving the city for a woodland adventure, the flute is an ideal companion; it's a free spirit, so you'll enjoy listening to birdsong and sharing secrets beneath a starry sky together. A beautiful relationship with a beautiful instrument—what more could you want?

Suggested pieces: Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun, Poulenc Flute Sonata

Piano

Placed in the back of the music shop, the sleek piano is a popular pick. Some might argue that pianos are too stationary and boring for adventurous dates; we disagree. Pianos start off reserved, but once you two strike a chord, the relationship will soar to the next octave. Sampling a seven course meal, attending fashion shows, and visiting museums are some date activities that showcase the piano's classy life. One warning, though: many pianos have attachment issues to their piano stools, so be prepared to accommodate a persistent third-wheel...

Suggested pieces: Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto in C Minor, Metamorphosis by Philip Glass

Banjo

The sky is a brilliant blue, and the crisp air ruffles your hair as you coast down the highway with your banjo buddy. With parchment stretched beneath four to five strings that are plucked to produce sound, banjos simply cannot make sad noises. Thus,

they are the perfect partners for a spontaneous excursion. Think camping trips, hiking, and cozy bonfires—the possibilities are endless with the banjo!

Suggested pieces: Quasheba by Rhiannon Giddens and Our Native Daughters, Wildwood Flower by June Carter Cash

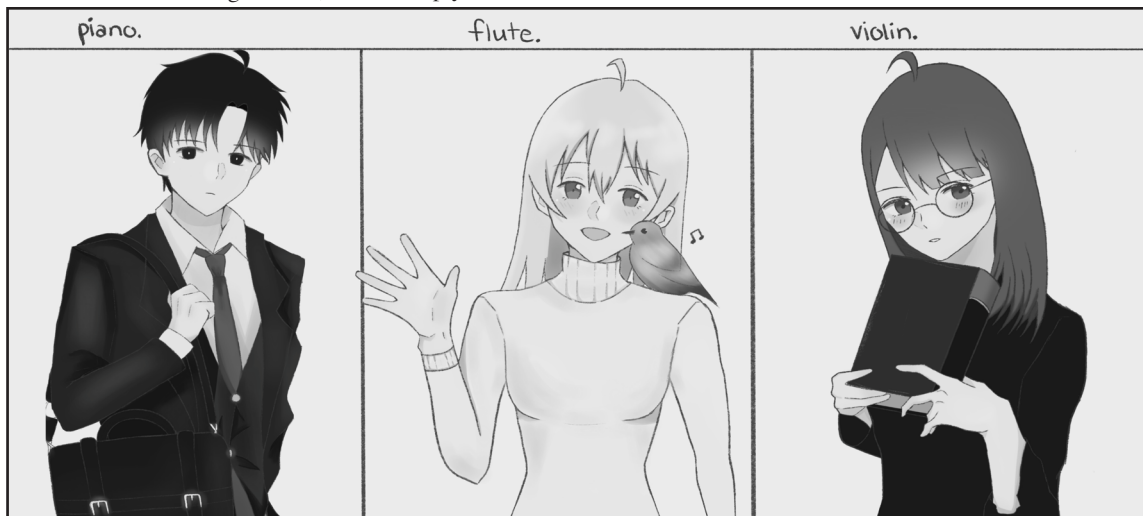
Mellophone/French Horn

Now, let's talk about the elephant in the room: the mellophone. The mello is a spunky firecracker of a brass instrument, and dating it will require lots of patience and a steadfast commitment to defending your partner from mello jokes. On the bright side, mellophones will stand by you during an existential crisis because they know exactly how that feels.

However, if you prefer a more refined instrument, consider its relative, the French horn. When masterfully played, this instrument can produce majestic melodies, perfectly complement your main character persona. You could enjoy reading Regency era novels together or take a trip to the opera, both worthy dates of the horn's grandeur.

Suggested pieces (for French horn only): Tchaikovsky's 5th Symphony Horn Solo, Mozart y Mambo by Sarah Willis

Well, have you made up your mind yet? You're still staring at that harp in the corner? Forget about it; it costs a small fortune. Don't worry though—any instrument would be lucky to have you. Whatever you decide, we wish you lots of delightful duets ahead :D.



Notice me senpai owo >>.<< uwu
VERONICA KWON / SPECTRUM STAFF

Reviewing Kids Shows

By HARSHINI MAGESH '23
Spectrum Staff

When was the last time you watched a program made for four-year-olds? We're all in high school now and are considered "too old" to watch Dora the Explorer, but nonetheless, let's take some time to reminisce about the past. Join me in ranking my most watched kids' cartoons!

Arthur - 10/10

The basic plotline: A third-grader finds his way through school, dealing with different relationships. The program tackles issues like bullying, mental health, and changing friendships. The characters' relatability—whether it be in DW's meme potential, Binky's character development, or Muffy's brutal honesty—is the best part of the series. We can all see parts of ourselves in the characters. For example, Arthur's best friend, Buster, a master procrastinator, food-lover, and struggling comedian, really is the epitome of an AB student.

Sibling relationships summarized: "It's ONLY children, DW, not LONELY children. Lonely is what you'll be after I sell you" - Arthur Read

Caillou - 2/10

Oof. You could watch the very first episode or the last episode from the fifth season and you would still end up with the same plot: a spoiled four-year-old brat cries about nearly everything. He says he learns something new each day, but I never really saw any character development. From pinching his newborn sister's face or abusing his cat to throwing tantrums 24/7 and accepting food from random strangers, Caillou is a good example of everything a kid shouldn't be. As for my rating, -10 points because of how unbearable it was. +2 points, because it was, I admit, quite entertaining at times.

Adolescence sucks: "Growing up is not so tough / except when I've had enough"

Blue's Clues : 20/10

A human host along with his dog sidekick Blue solves puzzles with the viewers' help.

This program is most likely the reason why I can't socialize. Whenever Steve or Joe paused and asked the viewer to help them figure out a word they had "forgotten," I was ready to shout out the answer at my TV, convinced that they could hear

me. This show deserves extra points for making me feel like Sherlock Holmes solving a mystery, which is why I gave it a 20/10. Let me be honest: when Steve, the first host, left for "college," I cried. When he returned for the 25th Anniversary Reunion a few months ago, I teared up again.

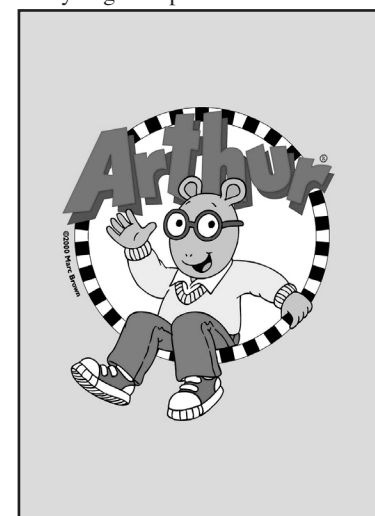
The feeling of being appreciated: "Hi! Come on in! We're so glad you're here!"

Teletubbies: -1000/10

To be honest, I'm not sure what the plot was. Here's an irrelevant fun fact: did you know that the Teletubbies are actual music artists? If this is your jam, their latest full-length album, "Ready, Steady, Go!" was officially released on music platforms a few months ago. This show scared the living daylights out of me, to the point that "Sun Baby" still haunts my dreams. Not surprised that this show also has a cult following. Though it was advertised as an educational show for toddlers, there was absolutely nothing that kids could be learning except for how to speak in gibberish. I truly believe that every minute I watched that show rotted a million of my brain cells.

Pretty self-explanatory: "Be careful, Tinky Winky. Don't step in the tubby custard. Oh, dear! Tinky Winky slip in the tubby custard!"

Overall, regardless of what we watched when we were younger, we can't deny that our favorite shows have played a huge part in making us who we are today. I hope you took a lovely trip down memory lane and reminisced about some of the shows that you grew up with.



Arthur wants to be your friend!
ONLINE SOURCE

The Most Superior Milk: Rating All the Non-Dairy Milks

By SHREE JAYAKRISHNA & ELSA LEWIS '25
Spectrum Staff

Did you know a carton of non-dairy milk went to the moon? Of course you did, it was legendary. We are here to tell you that normal milk is overrated. For anyone who is lactose intolerant (or simply wants to try something new), get ready to explore a couple of the non-dairy milk options in existence, all of which can be found in the dairy aisle of your local grocery store. Whether it be almond milk, oat milk, or coconut milk, we'll help you find your non-dairy soulmate.

Even most dairy drinkers have heard of this popular plant-based drink: almond milk. Almond milk obviously tastes like almonds, and it perfectly substitutes milk in cereal, coffee and baked goods. It's occasionally watery, so you're better off pairing this

milk with food items like cookies, oatmeal, or brownies instead of drinking it plain. Despite its thinner texture, its versatility has earned this simple non-dairy staple a spot in many people's refrigerators. Thus, we rate almond milk a 9/10.

Oat milk is definitely one of the most reliable non-dairy beverages. Grab any drink with oat milk instead of regular milk at your local coffee shop, and you will see that its light texture and satiating qualities are unbeatable. We recommend using oat milk in a cup of coffee or as the base for a smoothie. One of our favorite variations of oat milk is ice cream, which comes in an abundance of flavors. Some fan favorites include coffee, oreo, and mint. Oat milk's taste and versatility bring it to a solid 9/10, with a one point deduction for the occasional inconsistencies in its taste.

The heavy, creamy, texture of

this amazing beverage rivals that of regular whole milk. Coconut milk is used mainly for cooking due to its creaminess—it's a perfect addition to soups and baked goods. However, this drink is a bit too sweet and, at times, questionably chunky. Alone, coconut milk can't really be consumed at different temperatures, and warm coconut milk has a rather off-putting taste. Coconut milk is good but not great, so we give it a 7/10.

We hope you found this article not only informative but also amooooosing. Many agree that normal milk just doesn't hit the spot like a nice, cold glass of iced coffee with a splash of oat milk or a delicious bowl of cereal with almond milk. Some non-dairy milk connoisseurs even go as far as saying that cow's milk is just gross. Non-dairy beverages are udder-ly amazing, and will always, without a doubt, be the superior type of milk.



Milk, but from almonds. Revolutionary!
ONLINE SOURCE

Off-Topic

Local Library Review

By MARIA PAUNESCU '24
Spectrum Staff

Napping? Are you catching up on missing assignments or avoiding your crumbling social life? No matter what you're doing, the library can help fulfill all your wants and needs. For all that they do for us, local libraries do not receive the appreciation that they deserve, and I'm here to change that. Thus, here are some of the most bewitching libraries in the greater AB area!

Acton Memorial Library - Best Seating

Community Contributions: 10/10
This library promotes community involvement and actively showcases upcoming opportunities for patrons, which range from book clubs for avid readers to workshops for budding artists. The Acton Memorial Library also values education about social justice and allocates space for human services resources, civil rights, and shelves of diverse multicultural media.

Design/Vibes: 9/10

With its grand staircase and curved ceilings, there's no question that this library is stunning. The exterior color scheme remains consistent inside the building, and there's plenty of uniquely shaped furniture spread throughout its spaces. Across the board, there are different levels of privacy, with all the available seating offering different levels of privacy, and there are many hidden nooks tucked behind shelves perfect for introverts.

Sargent Memorial Library - Best Historical and Study Resources

Community Contributions: 10/10
Sargent Memorial Library emphasizes the importance of diverse reading, with "Read Harder Challenge" signs on display throughout the library. This program includes books from 24 different genres and aims to challenge readers to expand their worldviews. The library also provides easily accessible educational resources through their app, YouTube channel, and "Library of Things" program, which lets patrons borrow items like telescopes and bird-watching kits. They also have a room dedicated to the Boxborough and the surrounding area's history.

Design/Vibes: 8.5/10

Sargent's cool, angular exterior is a stark contrast to its warm-toned and soft interior, which employs ambient lighting. This one-floor library utilizes its small space in the most creative ways, packing in intricate styling while preserving the capaciousness of the space with its subdivided slices and high ceilings.

However, the shelving is more practical than it is aesthetic, which took away from the overall vibe.

Cary Memorial Library - Busiest Library

Community Contributions: 10/10
With a whopping 72 upcoming events, this library ensures that everyone has access to a wide range of programs suiting a variety of interests. The library is partnered with the Black History Project of Lexington and is a great resource for those looking to learn about the Civil Rights movement. It's clear that Cary Memorial Library is highly valued by its community as it was the busiest library out of all that I'd visited.

Design/Vibes: 9/10

Cary Memorial has a nice selection of furnishings, including coffee-shop-esque counters. The designated reading room, filled with magazines and comfy sofa chairs, is a cozy escape from commotion of the main library. The exterior is also absolutely stunning, with walls made to mimic a stone wall and vines ornamenting the sides.

Concord Free Public Library - Most Aesthetically Pleasing

Community Contributions: 10/10
The Concord Free Public Library covers all of its bases for any patron—no matter their backgrounds and perspectives, and it offers a range of showcases, scholarships, and community events (including group meditation!). The historic core of the library has a shelf exhibiting native Concordians, such as Henry David Thoreau and other transcendentalist authors. The Concord Free Public Library strives to serve as a hub of historic and modern activity for the community.

Design/Vibes: 9.5/10

If you haven't seen this library yet, you are missing out on its dark academia vibes. Organized logically and conveniently, each room in this library is ~aesthetic~ in its own right. From the carved wooden tables to the use of clocks in every room—which adds the dash of practicality needed to ground this fantasy—this library is beautiful. I only docked points because of the inconsistent systems used to label the shelves, particularly on the upper levels.

The libraries surrounding Acton-Boxborough have so much to offer yet are so often underappreciated for their true diversity in book selections and available opportunities for the people of these communities. In the end, remember to take some time to visit your local libraries, and see what you can learn and do to help



That's a lot of books!
ONLINE SOURCE

George Ranks Every. Single. Thing.

By GEORGE JI '23
Spectrum Staff

Welcome readers, to my new column where I rank, review, and explain everything! Instead of just another Top Erasers or a Darkest Colors review, I'll be releasing one of these every issue, and in doing so, rendering all other reviews and ratings on The Spectrum obsolete since I'll be covering it all. The best movies, the greatest albums, the finest cuisine, you name it! I'll even rate you: seven. With our first review out of the way, let's get started!

Conan O'Brien Needs A Friend (2018)

In a series of long-form podcast episodes, Conan O'Brien interviews people who are supposedly celebrities. Listen in as Conan cracks jokes, reads ads, and talks with guests in segments that can last up to an hour long. His longtime assistant Sona also makes an appearance, and if you've ever seen her Instagram, you'd know she looks fabulous while doing it, too. Sona's dry sarcasm paired with Conan's over-the-top riffs in a weekly interview make this one of the best podcasts available today.

Retrospective: The Best of Buffalo Springfield by Buffalo Springfield (1969)

Released in 1969, this album showcases the best of Buffalo Springfield in a complete retrospective of his career.

Coconut Milk

Hydrating, sweet, and nutty, coconut water seems like an improvement. Look around the back at the sugar con-

tent though, and you'll realize it pales in comparison to mineral water. See *Rating Different Non-Dairy Milks* for the actual coconut milk review since I can't cover it.

Jake Gyllenhaal (1980)

Next in line for an autograph, I stepped forward. "Mr. Gyllenhaal, I'm a huge fan, would you please sign this? It's for a friend." "Of course!" A smile slipped from under the mask. "It's not for a woman, right?" I paused. "Um... no." "Good, that's good." He picked up the pen and pressed it onto the poster. "Mr. Gyllenhaal, I loved you in Far From Home, and you were great in Nightcrawler, but was Taylor Swift's Red really all about you?" He stopped. "Mr. Gyllenhaal?"

Spider-Man: No Way Home (2021)

It was okay. See *Spider-Man No Way Home Review*. Apparently they're already doing this one, so instead, I'll talk about its predecessor: *The Amazing Spider-Man!*

The Amazing Spider-Man (2012)

There's an article called *Spider-Man Movies Ranked*. No more Spider-Man.

Dark Gray (?)

A personal favorite of mine, dark gray is definitely one of the darkest colors out there, though it could afford to be more vibrant in its execution (think olive green or navy blue).

Tay to Z: A Taylor Swift Podcast (2020)

Check out *The Supreme Podcasts for Your Listening Experience* from back in December. I didn't even

know that was real.

Boring Baked Macaroni and Cheese

Your ordinary mac and cheese. Takes way too long to prepare, not worth your time, and really makes me wish there were a more convenient alternative.

The Waist Chop (1734)

See *Execution Methods, Ranked*. Who does that. Who does that.

Is there nothing that has not already been ranked, reviewed, or explained?

Bernie Sanders Mittens (2021)

2021 Meme Review in December

Ikea Furniture Buzzfeed Quiz (2016)

See *The Good, the Bad, and the BuzzFeed* from the fall

Fancy Mug Mac and Cheese (2020)

See *Current Food Trends Put to the Test* of the Fall 2021 Issue.

Clarinets (1690)

See *Are You Reed-y to Choose Your Instrument? Instrument Dating*

Caillou (1997)

Favorite Kids Shows got there first. I thought it was pretty good.

George Ji (2004)

See *Greatest Tragedies*. Wait, what?

Unfortunately, it appears that everything in existence has already been reviewed by *The Spectrum*, and thus, this column cannot continue. It's been an honor, but I've been rendered obsolete. The master has become the student, if you will.

Calm and Cozy Cafes to Check Out!

By NAKISA RAZBAN '23
Off-Topic Editor

You stare out the window as rain patters on the sidewalk. The cozy scent of coffee and fresh pastries drifts through the room as you sip your Earl Grey tea. Suddenly, inspiration strikes for your essay, and you start typing, creating a pleasant *click-clack* that compliments the smooth jazz playing over the speakers. It's a perfectly rainy spring day, the ideal kind for visiting a coffee shop. You could make a hot chocolate at home, but it's so much more fun to have someone else make it for you—and to eavesdrop on strangers' conversations while sipping it. Not to mention the infinite picture opportunities coffee shops offer! Driftwood coffee tables, latte foam art—is this heaven? Or just a white woman's Instagram? Help Bo Burnham figure it out by visiting my selection of the ~vibiest~ cafes around.

Nashoba Brook Bakery in West Concord. This place has embraced a vintage and cozy atmosphere, harboring an assortment of colorful seats that are reminiscent of a 16th century merchant's living room. You can peek into the kitchen and smell the fresh bread. Once you have your food, you can enjoy it while overlooking a bubbling brook and lush forest. Ah yes, this is the life. Chai latte in hand, head out the back door to an old bridge framing the river and admire the beauties this quaint New England town has to offer. There is no doubt about it; you are the main character. Although I've included this location for its vibe, we cannot overlook the glory that is Nashoba's rugelach. A dessert that originated in the Jewish community in

Poland, this filled puff pastry is worth the ten minute drive to Concord.

Caffe Nero in Concord. Two words for you: dark academia. Have you ever wanted to be a student at a university in London? Perhaps you've dreamt of reading Sherlock Holmes under glowing lights while mist cocoons your cozy haven of a coffee shop? Caffe Nero is the place for you! Large armchairs and leather sofas surround the perimeter of the coffee shop and at its center lies a long table where a meet-cute is just begging to happen. If you find yourself hungry after sharing your life story with a complete stranger, you can wander over to the display case full of appetizing cakes and pastries. Immediately order one of the cheesecakes. No, you don't have free will. Yes, you will order the cheesecake because I told you so, but I promise you won't regret it!

Harvard General Store in (you guessed it) Harvard. Probably the most picturesque coffee shop around, Harvard General Store is located in the historic town of Harvard. In fact, it is so picturesque that the 2019 remake of *Little Women* was filmed down the road at Fruitland Museum! That's right, you can enjoy a delicious snack while walking the same earth as both Emma Watson and Timothée Chalamet. What more could you want? Across the street lies a pretty little winding road called "Lover's Lane"; which is lined with classic New England-style houses, giving it a very fairy tale feel. In terms of food, I would HIGHLY recommend the TBLT (turkey bacon lettuce tomato) as it is by far the best sandwich I've ever had.

Acton Coffee House. Right up the

road from ABRHS, Acton Coffee House offers some of the most creative drinks I've seen. From loose-leaf teas to every smoothie flavor you can imagine, ACH has it all. They also have a bajillion milk options so you'll never have to drink your latte with plain ol' whole milk again. They offer some incredible seasonal drinks, with my favorite being the Mexican hot chocolate; it's a thick mixture of chocolate, whatever milk tickles your fancy, and many aromatic spices. You can get the warm gooey feel of drinking hot cocoa while still getting that coffee kick from the sheer amount of spice.

Concord Tea Cakes. This bakery at the heart of west Concord has the best desserts around. One specific one has my heart: the mint brownie. When I wake up in the morning, I think of the mint brownie. When I fall asleep at night, I dream of the mint brownie. What is love? A mint brownie in each hand. They also have majorly upgraded grocery store-style cookies, as in they're actually good and don't suffocate you after every bite. With beautiful decorations for any occasion, these make for great gifts. However, if you aren't too keen on sweets, Concord Tea Cakes also have a wide selection of what I like to call "things you can put cream cheese on," including bagels, braided breads, muffins and so much more! Essentially, this cafe has every flavor for every palette, so indulge yourself, my friend!

Folks, we've come to the end of our coffee shop stroll. You must now fulfill your main character dreams of writing a screenplay in an aesthetic cafe! Pinterest relies on you~

Off-Topic

Absolutely, Positively Stupendous Book-to-Film Adaptations

By KÉRA MATTHEWS '24
Spectrum Staff

As a certified book lover, I often fall for television adaptations of my favorite reads. After all, who doesn't want to see their favorite characters come to life on the big screen? Though my "high-reader-expectation" syndrome has raised my standards for said adaptations, I've managed to find a few that anyone would enjoy!

Pretty Little Liars

Pretty Little Liars is a chaotic mess of a show, but it's undeniably entertaining. The show centers around the aftermath of teenager Alison DiLaurentis's disappearance. Her best friends—Spencer, Emily, Aria, and Hanna—move on with their lives until they receive blackmail threatening to expose their darkest secrets signed by a mysterious "A." To protect their reputations, the girls band together to get to the bottom of "A"'s true identity.

I read the many, many installments of the original book series in middle school, so I had high expectations for the show. Luckily, it didn't disappoint, and I'd even consider it better than the original series. However, as engrossing as the show is, you can't take it too seriously. The different ways that "A" messes with

the characters are at times unbelievable, like the insertion of a paper message between the girls' teeth during a dentist appointment. Both the show and the book series are easily binge-able, and though the thriller elements first your attention, the insane romantic subplots will leave you reeling at their audacity.

Little Women (2019)

This movie is one of many adaptations of the classic novel *Little Women*. It follows the March sisters and their lives in a Civil War-era America. This adaptation jumps between their childhood during the war and the present day in a post-Civil War world. The movie highlights the ups and downs that each sister faces, emphasizing that family is the one bond that can never be broken.

This movie seamlessly integrates word-for-word quotes that any close reader will notice, but it's done so masterfully that, to a first-time watcher, these quotes seem like they were written for the movie. What sets the 2019 adaptation apart from other adaptations is its originality; its juxtaposition of pre-war and post-war scenes creates a clear path of character development that viewers can easily follow. These time skips don't feel forced or awkward at all, and the subtle changes in lighting, angling, and character outfits are

only some of the many small details that epitomize the movie's ingenuity. Stellar production, along with outstanding acting by the star-studded cast, makes *Little Women* (2019) one of the best book-to-movie adaptations.

The Fault in Our Stars

The Fault in Our Stars is a tragic love story about teenagers Hazel Grace and Augustus Waters who meet at a cancer support group. As the movie progresses, their connection flourishes into a rare bond. Despite having little time left together, Hazel and Augustus embark on an adventure that, although risky, could be the last thing that changes Hazel's life.

Usually, I read the book before watching the movie, but, for this one, I made an exception, and I am very glad that I did so. The romance was admittedly pretty corny, but by the end, I was drenched in tears. It's hard not to sympathize with a story as heartbreaking as this one, no matter how it's presented. It may feel a bit predictable but, in this case, the predictability actually adds to the emotional build-up of the storyline. By the end of the movie (and book!), you'll want to take life by the reins and experience all that it has to offer before it's too late.



team-oh-tay shah-lah-may.
ONLINE SOURCE

Anne With An E

As the television adaptation of *Anne of Green Gables*, a coming-of-age story about Anne, a thirteen-year-old girl, *Anne With An E* is a wonderfully whimsical TV show that transports you into Anne's world. Anne is just trying to find her place in the world after she is mistakenly adopted by siblings Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert, and both the book and show tell the story of her trials and tribulations through adolescence.

The best thing about this show is the quality of acting from Amybeth

McNulty, who plays Anne. Her eccentricity, kind heart, and character growth make the show what it is. This show has a perfect ratio of side character development to main character development, and it excels where the book falls short by fleshing out emotional depth. The worst thing about this show is that it was canceled. I'm glaring at you, Netflix.

That's all for my raving! Whether you're a reader, a television lover, or both, you won't be disappointed by either form of these stories. I recommend reading their books anyway, though :).

A Definite Ranking of Spider-Men

By AVNI MISHRA '23
Spectrum Staff

Spider-Man: No Way Home has caught the attention of comic book fans, film critics, and casual movie enjoyers alike. To prepare myself for the spectacle, I binged all the Spider-Man movies back in November, from Tobey Maguire's *Spider-Man 1* to Tom Holland's *Far From Home*. I present to you: A Spoiler-Free Ranking of the Spider-Verse movie series!

4. The Original Trilogy

Before you get your pitchforks, hear me out. These movies are great. This trilogy introduced us to some of the most recognizable superhero villains in media: Green Goblin, Doc Ock, Venom, and Sandman. The themes explored in these movies diverge from your standard superhero movie, especially in *Spider-Man 2*, which depicts Peter Park's internal struggles between his superhero responsibilities and his own mental health. That being said, returning to the series 20 years after its debut allowed me to view it in a different light. *Spider-Man 1* tends to drag on, considering the disproportionate focus on Peter figuring out how to live his life as Spider-Man. Some aspects did not age well, like the apparent "China" themed party in *Spider-Man 1* and or MJ's frequent promiscuity in relationships. Despite its meme-culture relevance, *Spider-Man 3* definitely lowers the trilogy's ranking with its ridiculous and sometimes frustrating plot developments.

3. The Amazing Spider-Man

Say what you want about the *Amazing Spider-Man* movies, but I genuinely enjoyed them. As far as love interests go, Gwen Stacey is a strong-willed, supportive, good-natured, and in my opinion, better than Kirsten Dunst's MJ. Gwen has her own arcs and plot significance that were not as deeply incorporated in the original trilogy. While *The Amazing Spider-Man* tackled Peter's

comfortably summarized and then jumped straight into the action, *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* bit off more than it could chew. It introduced a somewhat unnecessary conspiracy surrounding Peter's parents and juggled with two villains (Electro and the Green Goblin) without devoting adequate time to either character arc. But to its credit, the story also addresses topics of grief, mourning, and a hero's responsibility to the ones around them more thoroughly than the trilogy before.

2. The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) Spider-Man

Tom Holland's performance as Spider-Man is my favorite of the three live action actors. He combines the kindness of Andrew Garfield's Peter with the dorky-ness of Toby Maguire's Peter. He seems like any other high schooler who happens to save the world a couple times over. Especially because he and his friends spend so much time in school, I feel like I can really relate to them. My love for these movies is also influenced by their involvement with the rest of the MCU, since Peter interacts with many other beloved characters. *Spider-Man: Far From Home* was a great movie to patch up our hearts after *Avengers: Endgame*, with Peter and MJ's awkward (but incredibly relatable) relationship. *Spider-Man: Homecoming* was even better, showing Peter's first steps as a hero amidst a world of super-powered crime fighters. Obviously, *Spider-Man: No Way Home* takes the cake for the best live action Spider-Man movie, with the best parts of all the previous movies combined into one nostalgic and emotional masterpiece.

1. Into the Spider-Verse

While *Spider-Man: No Way Home* is the best live-action Spider-Man, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* is hands down the best Spider-Man movie. Switching from live action to 2D animation opened

up a world of possibilities that this movie utilized flawlessly. For example, each Spider-Man character comes from a different universe and is drawn in a different style to match their origins, creating a visually stunning experience. Despite the shifted focus from Peter to Miles Morales, the film still captured the classic Spider-Man movie themes: the importance of family, responsibility, and finding your own path. The beautiful use of art and music really tie everything together, pushing this movie into first place.

At the end of the day, all of the Spider-Man movies have webbed a special place in my heart. With all the gateways of opportunities that have opened after *No Way Home*, we're far from the end of seeing our favorite web-slinging hero on the big screen, and I cannot wait!



Upside-down Spidey.
ONLINE SOURCE

Spring Spotify Playlist

By NAKISA RAZBAN '23
Off-Topic Editor

Fellas, spring has sprung. That means it's time for you to beastmode your way through the 4th quarter, SATs, and not ruining your new white Converse in the mud. To help you on your misadventures through this colorful season, I present to you: a playlist for every occasion!

Whether your vibe is "I am a garden fairy and this moss is my bed" or more of a "bruh, did I really just ignore a whole section of my review guide -_-," I've got you covered. Enjoy, my little flower buds~

Scan the Spotify codes (using the Spotify app) to listen now! Each title corresponds to the Spotify code directly above it.



CUTTING FRESH HERBS FROM A RAISED GARDEN BED



SLUDGY DIRTY STREET SNOW



IT'S ABOUT DRIVE IT'S ABOUT (FLOWER) POWER



HAY FEVER CORE



-50 ° F --> 87 ° F

Off-Topic

How to Have an Absolutely Timeless, Tasteful Tea Party!

By BEATRICE MAXWELL '25 & PHOEBE SEIDMAN '25
Spectrum Staff

Ever wonder where tea parties originated from? In the early 1840s, the Duchess of Bedford, Anna Maria Russell, complained of a “sinkful feeling” between a formal luncheon and supper, so, to quell her cravings, she had tea with some light appetizers around 4 pm. The duchess was friends with Queen Victoria, and once the queen attended, the tradition spread. Tea consumption shot up dramatically once these tea parties became popular, solidifying them as a key ritual in many homes to this day. Through the careful implementation of these simple steps, you will find

yourself hosting the perfect tea party in no time, whilst maintaining appropriate decorum, of course.

First, impeccable manners and dress are essential to tea party etiquette. As the host, you must carry yourself with poise and remind your guests to do the same: semi-formal or smart casual attire is a must—picture cocktail dresses or collared shirts. You must maintain such decorum throughout your social gathering, ensuring that you always graciously accept gifts from your attendees and express your gratitude for their company. You should also drink your tea quietly without letting your spoon clink on the side of your glass. Finally, use proper table manners—that means resisting the temptation to

lick fingers, utilizing the appropriate utensils, and, contrary to popular belief, keeping your pinky down.

To host a proper tea party, your tea and food must complement each other. Similar to pairing wine and food, putting thought into what flavors work together is of utmost importance. Black tea pairs nicely with heavier food, so it’s a good beverage to pair with finger sandwiches, which usually contain meat. Green teas, on another note, go with lighter and more fruity flavors, whereas strong herbal teas complement simpler flavors like those in scones. Generally, the food served at tea parties is light, not filling. In the Victorian era, cucumber sandwiches held the honor of being the best finger sandwiches at tea parties.

Sweet and savory pastries, cookies, scones, and fruits are also popular picks. If you find yourself drawn to a more elevated ambiance, however, consider serving mini decorated cakes and elaborate tarts.

First impressions are everything, so while deliberating upon a theme for a proper tea party, consider the venue, food, time, and guests. Your theme must cater to your guests’ preferences; for example, if your friends are interested in foreign matters, a Parisian theme with pastries might satisfy your company. However, with an elderly group, a simple array of English treats will work just fine. Another thing to keep in mind is the location; most tea parties are hosted outside your own home, but, as with everything, context

is key to deciding upon a location. A garden party is an excellent option to enjoy mild weather and integrate a floral theme, or you can create a relaxed atmosphere in your sitting room, decorated accordingly, of course. Choosing a theme for your tea party is an important step in the planning process, but it is also critical to note that you should feel at home in the ambiance you create. As the host, you must allow yourself the space to accommodate for your own preferences on occasion.

By following these simple instructions, you can successfully host a tea party worthy of the Mr. Darcys of the world. So, when you need a classy way to enjoy an afternoon with your friends, remember these tips and tricks.



Never again?
ONLINE SOURCE

Death of the Snow Day

By EDDY ZHAO '24
Spectrum Staff

It’s nearly spring-time, but that doesn’t mean winter fun is over! Don’t be fooled by the 60 degree weather; a snow storm will inevitably sneak up on you. With snow storms nearing on your weather app, your whole being is consumed by one activity, and one activity alone: feverishly waiting by the phone for Superintendent Peter Light to give you a phone call canceling school the next day. A snow day! Finally some rest amidst your seven-page English essay and three tests coming up next week. Here in New England, we can rest assured that we will get at least one impromptu break day every year, but what if this one constant is robbed from us? What if the one thing we can rely on in this ever-changing world is suddenly gone? This post-apocalyptic world might just become our reality with the realization that we can go to school at home. That’s right, dear reader, I am insinuating that the death of the snow day may be upon us—and its murderer is the evil Zoom.

While AB hasn’t gotten rid of the snow day permanently, a policy change would lead to us having to say goodbye to these wonderful

surprises. I see several problems with this approach. Allow me to elaborate: first, virtual classes are simply impractical. You can’t replicate a classroom setting with a screen, and students just end up tired from pretending to pay attention in class while simultaneously playing Wordle. Second, unexpected time off from school clears the immense academic pressure that we have been expected to endure. For a day, we can place the burden of tests and stress off of our shoulders and just be children prancing through the snow. If AB decides to replace snow days with Zoom days, instead of sledding and skiing, holiday lights, and snowball fights, you would be getting prolonged screen time, often going without screen breaks, and teachers would feel like they are talking to a brick wall because literally no one turns on their cameras!

Aside from preventing an extra day in the summer, I don’t see how online learning will be beneficial to our education. Either rework the entire system of learning (which is already impractical and boring), or let us keep our deserved snow days. I mean, we deserve something for putting up with school for 180 days a year! Final thoughts? Go out and play in the snow WHILE YOU STILL CAN 0_0

Love Doc: The Spring Fever Edition

By JULIA KUANG '22
Columnist

Good morning. Or afternoon. Or night, or whatever, whenever, and wherever you are at the moment. I hope this article finds you well (that’s what I put at the start of every dry, boring email I have to send, and sums up the amount of excitement I have in my life at the moment). I hope your love lives are much more exciting than the next few weeks of school we’ll trudge through before April break. My god...April seems EONS away. Best of luck to you all.

Q: How can I get someone I’m interested in to notice me?

A: Sheeeeeeeeeesh. In a pure, unfiltered answer, engage in some out-of-pocket-borderline-vagrant behavior. Crazy actions definitely attract attention. It’s a classic, unclassy move. You could do a belly flop off the roof, scream out your undying love in the middle of the

busy cafeteria, or another wacky, attention-seeking, cringey move. Maybe your crush will think badly of you, but hey—at least they know you exist, which is probably a major upgrade.

Q: How to get hot?

A: Wow, the question of the century. I gotta admit, this is probably one of the tougher ones I’ve ever answered. To start off: “beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” Are you trying to get hot for yourself, or for some judgy loser? If it’s for the judgy loser (or, as I like to call it, the lurking claws of societal expectations and social media), I don’t really know how to help you other than 1) give in, do what you gotta do to make yourself happy and comfortable in your own skin or 2) ignore the haters (much easier said than done), and climb through Zuckerberg’s mansion window, commit a heinous crime, and crown yourself as the ruler of Facebook—or, I’m sorry Meta—to take

over social media. Another quick solution to this is to win the lottery and stay exactly as you are. Money can’t buy hotness, but money CAN make you a sugar daddy/mama/person. And that, my friend, will definitely make you hot to a certain demographic. If you wanna get hot for yourself, you gotta figure out what you think defines “hotness.” Go for it!

Q: Who’s the new Love Doc after you graduate?

A: LOL GOOD QUESTION. Next.

(But, uh, hmu if you’re interested)

I kinda foreshadowed that there was another question, but it’s late, and I’m lazy, so that’ll have to wait until next time. Have a lovely day!

With lots of love,
Julia <3

Crossword Answers

Are you looking for the crossword? GO AWAY! COME AGAIN ANOTHER DAY! Or when you finish the crossword. Because these are the answers! No peeking, please and thanks! Now, if you’re actually looking for the answers, you’ve come to the right place! Please keep reading:

Congrats! You did it! Are you proud of yourself? Unless you did the crossword in English class, you should be! Below you’ll find the answers to all your life’s questions. Are you ready for it? Are you sure? Your life will forever be changed. You’ll look in the mirror tomorrow morning and see someone who has learned of the realities of life—or, in this case, *The Spectrum’s* crossword answers.

ACROSS

- 3. Lion
- 4. March
- 6. Peep
- 8. Puddle
- 9. Primavera
- 10. Butterfly
- 11. Hay fever
- 14. Spring roll
- 16. Prune
- 17. Jerry Springer

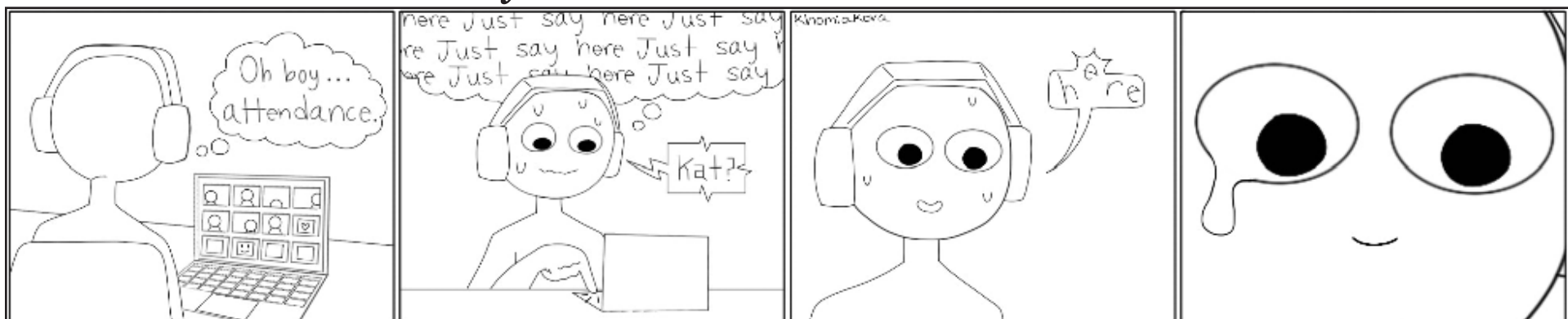
DOWN

- 1. Worms
- 2. Black-eyed susan
- 5. Forsythia
- 7. Vernal
- 8. Pisces
- 9. Persephone
- 12. Galoshes
- 13. Moles
- 15. Pollen



Bouncing off to do the crossword!
ONLINE SOURCE

Attendance Anxiety on Zoom



When you see someone you know, and they ask you how you are and you just have to say that you’re fine when you’re not really fine.
KAT KHOIAKOVA / *Spectrum Staff*

Off-Topic

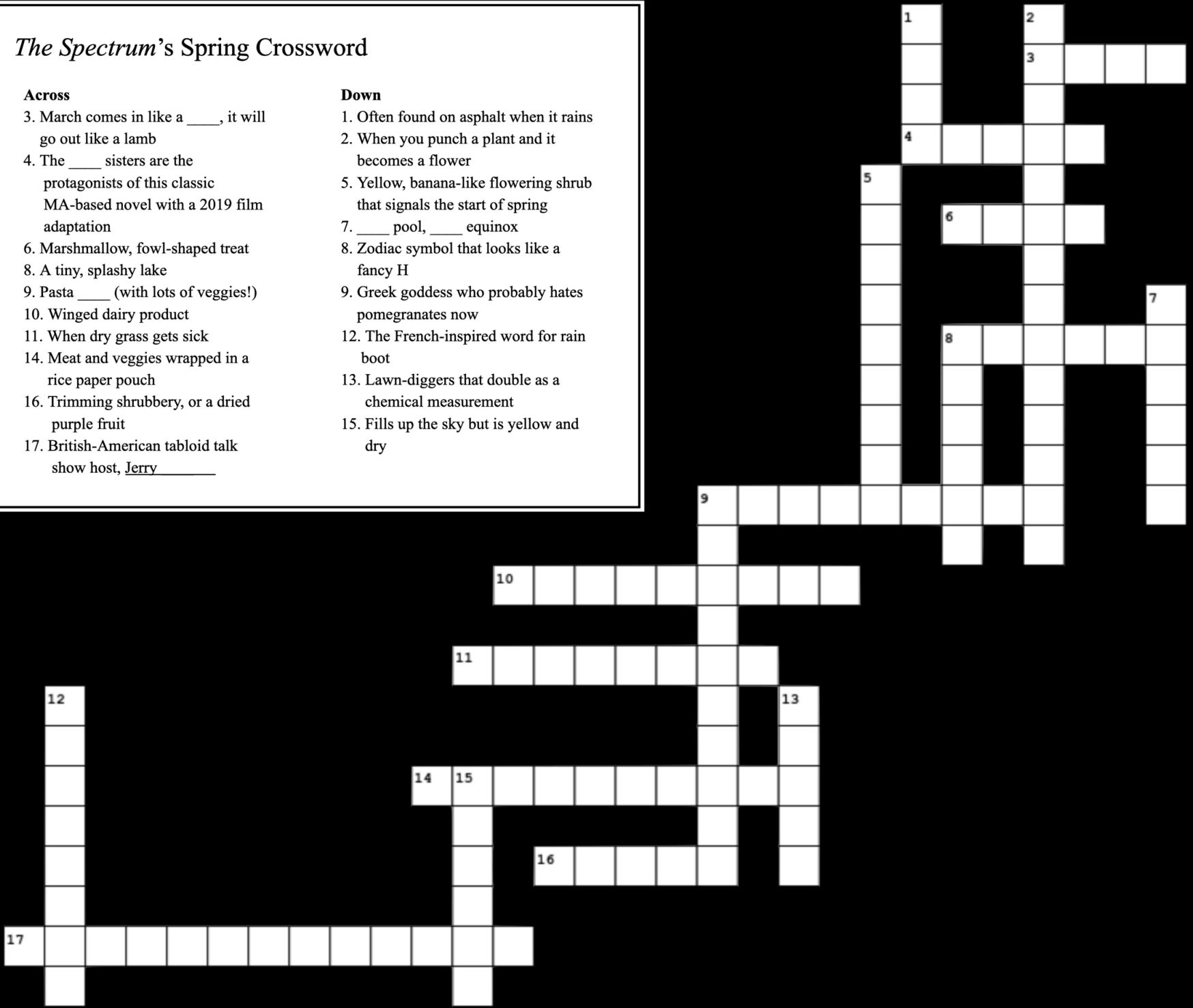
The Spectrum's Spring Crossword

Across

- 3. March comes in like a _____, it will go out like a lamb
- 4. The _____ sisters are the protagonists of this classic MA-based novel with a 2019 film adaptation
- 6. Marshmallow, fowl-shaped treat
- 8. A tiny, splashy lake
- 9. Pasta _____ (with lots of veggies!)
- 10. Winged dairy product
- 11. When dry grass gets sick
- 14. Meat and veggies wrapped in a rice paper pouch
- 16. Trimming shrubbery, or a dried purple fruit
- 17. British-American tabloid talk show host, Jerry _____

Down

- 1. Often found on asphalt when it rains
- 2. When you punch a plant and it becomes a flower
- 5. Yellow, banana-like flowering shrub that signals the start of spring
- 7. _____ pool, _____ equinox
- 8. Zodiac symbol that looks like a fancy H
- 9. Greek goddess who probably hates pomegranates now
- 12. The French-inspired word for rain boot
- 13. Lawn-diggers that double as a chemical measurement
- 15. Fills up the sky but is yellow and dry



Spring Precipitation with Archibald Bartholomew Chang



Rain, rain, go away!
PHOEBE ABADI / Spectrum Staff

“What, you egg!”—Springtime Funsies with Mac & Beth!



But maybe it could also be time to steal Dun's food.
PHOEBE ABADI / Spectrum Staff