

Marching Band Conflict
Should the Marching Band requirement be removed? Read to find out our opinions!

Off-Topic - Page 8



College debt...
ONLINE SOURCE

The Struggle of College Tuition
College costs are higher than ever before. Where is all this money going?

Graduation - Page 4



Do you think matcha tastes like grass?
ONLINE SOURCE

The Matcha Copycat
Learn how to make the new and improved version of Blank Street's Strawberry Shortcake Matcha!

Off-Topic - Page 10



The Spectrum

◆ *e cineribus et ad astra* ◆

JUNE 2025 • VOL. 44, GRADUATION ISSUE ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL www.thespectrumabrhs.com

Future of the Papacy of Leo XIV

The new papacy's road to succession. Who is this new pope and what will he do?

Graduation - Page 6



Congratulations Charlotte!

We are so proud of your accomplishments. We are excited to see what the next chapter brings. Wherever your path leads, we will always love you and be here to support you every step of the way.

Love, Dad, Mom, Philip, Grace and William

Mass Deportations

Large-scale deportations are on the rise. Read on to learn about the history of deportations and its current effects...

News - Page 3

Notable Alumni: Wes Schroll

Fetch, the savings app that gives you more for your dollar. Read more to learn about their CEO Wes Scroll and his origins at AB!

News - Page 3



We're free!
BY TINALI

Post Graduation: High School Connections

By COURTNEY ARNETT '26
Spectrum Staff

Many people believe that graduation means saying goodbye; goodbye to teachers, the school building, state tests, and to high school life entirely. However, this step in life does not have to mean saying goodbye to friends, rather it's just a new chapter in our life. To get a better sense of how high school friends stay in touch after graduation, I interviewed several college students and recent grads. Some told me they still keep regular contact and meet up when they can, while others mentioned they've drifted apart due to moving, different interests, or busy schedules. These conversations showed that maintaining those high school friendships really depends on individual circumstances and effort. Overall, it was interesting to see how different everyone's experiences are when it comes to staying connected after high school. Especially because after college, you stop seeing all of your friends almost every day of the week. While it might seem sad at first, what is important to remember is that keeping a strong connection by putting in effort is the key to ensure that it will last. It might be hard, but that is just the effort that is needed in order to make sure that they last and you don't drift too far away.

I started with people I know

who are currently in college such as my cousin, Maeve, who graduated in 2022. Maeve lives in Southern California but goes to college in Providence, Rhode Island. She was concerned about keeping contact with her friends, due to the distance, but said it was not as difficult as she imagined. However, she put great emphasis on the importance of "go[ing] out of your way to make plans" if you want to stay in touch. She also stated the time where she lost touch with people the most was during the summer before her freshman year, as it was a time of immense and quick change and many were unable to prioritize their friends. A recent AB alumni, Patrick Li, stated simply that "if you care enough to keep in contact with them, then you will". However, he did state that he has an advantage due to his college being closer to home. Another AB alumni, Josie Hanlon, said that "the technology we have makes it super easy to stay connected", but also warns that one should "not overdo it right when you get to college so that you can make new friends". Overall, it is all about maintaining a healthy medium so that you are able to make new connections, while still keeping the old ones.

To ensure I got a variety of opinions, I then interviewed people who have recently graduated college and adults who have maintained friend-

ships from high school. My two sisters, Lauren and Megan Arnett, graduated in 2018 and 2020 respectively from a high school in Colorado and both went to colleges in Upstate New York. They both agreed that it is possible to keep friends from high school and that it is simply a matter of how much effort is put in by both people. Megan said "If you don't want to keep contact with people, there is nothing stopping you from drifting away, so you have got to be motivated if you want to stay close". I ended my research by contacting one of my dad's friends who has known him since childhood. He said that the key to staying connected to my parents for more than 50 years was simply "showing interest in their lives and taking initiative when wanting to see them". Across both groups, the general consensus was that connections only fade due to lack of effort.

However, the anxiety of graduating does not end with trying to keep old connections, but in making new ones too. I asked the same groups how they made friends and all of them agreed, once again, that the key was effort. Patrick commented that "it was hard not to meet new people, especially in the first few weeks of college" and that he has not found making new friends at college to be difficult. Both Megan and Maeve expressed the importance of joining clubs as they let them meet people

with whom they shared interests and acted as a social lubricant. However, Maeve noted that one should only sign up for clubs that they "actually want to be in" as there is not much of a point in signing up for "a ton of clubs that you will never go to". Roommates are also a great way to meet new people. Lauren stated "even if you do not like your roommate, you can meet people through them and they are a built in friend for the first couple of days". She also expressed that "the more open you make yourself, the more people you'll end up meeting", meaning that the more events and social opportunities you say "yes" to, the more people you will meet and the quicker you will make friends.

Though graduating high school often evokes nervousness and uncertainty in regards to the future, the bottom line is that nearly everyone else is feeling the same way. Keeping a connection is not only a way to remember your past, but also to insure a life-lasting friendship as long as clear communication is always followed through. Use this knowledge to your advantage and be willing to put yourself out there and extend the olive branch of connection to any and all you wish, potential new friends and old ones, because you will only get back from others what you give to them.

Intro

Letter From the EICs

By MATTHEW LIU ’27 AND VANI MITTAL ’26
Co-Editors-in-Chief

Hey everyone,

It’s Matthew and Vani, your new Editors-in-Chief! We will be missing Isabella and Shree and wish them the best in this new chapter of their lives (keep up the Spectrum spirit at North-eastern and Wisconsin!). We thank them for all of their hard work and hope they will continue to remember all that they learned in this time!

With many of our beloved readers graduating soon, we want to wish them the best in whatever may follow suit. Our amazing seniors are going everywhere across the country and around the globe. Make sure to check out our senior map to learn where all our graduates will continue their next chapters.

Need any college advice? Read our articles on school tuition and roommates! If that’s not for you, we have many other options. There’s plenty to read in news about current

events such as Mass Deportations, or our wonderful interview with famous AB alum Wes Schrull who created Fetch which is a money saving app! We also talk about the viral Blank Street Coffee shop’s matcha recipe! Be sure to check it out! Additionally, we have a wonderful Love Doc article about savoring the last summer together.

Additionally, be sure to check out the last page of our issue to enjoy a revamped “The Other Side,” where we have a page full of fun games!

With summer coming up, it’s time for everyone to relax and slowly move away from the stressful AP and academic filled days. To relax, unwind, and enjoy some snacks, be sure to join us in the library alcove on Thursdays. Though the year is ending soon, it is never too late to start contributing to The Spectrum!

Make sure to follow us @theabspectrum...

Happy reading,
Matthew and Vani

School Budget Updates

By LUCAS ZHANG ’28
Spectrum Staff

I’m sure everybody here is aware of our school’s budget situation. Maybe you noticed it via the decreased class sizes and cut staff members. In fact, our school district is facing severe financial strain due to a growing gap between rising expenses and stagnant funding. This deficit comes from increased costs and declining revenues, and its effects are already being felt by students, teachers, and families alike.

According to the Superintendent’s Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26), total expenditures are projected at \$116,135,080 which is an increase of 3% over the previous year. Despite this rise in spending, revenues have steadily declined over the past two years, pushing the district further into a financial hole. As the AB Schools website notes, “The reality of the present day is that costs keep rising ahead of revenues. We anticipate this pattern to persist for a minimum of a few years—unless the state modifies its funding formula.”

One of the main drivers of the falling budget is declining student enrollment. With fewer students, the district has been forced to reduce teaching positions and increase layoffs. This change will increase class sizes and reduce course offerings, which ultimately sacrifices mentorship and learning opportunities. According to The Acton Exchange, the reduced staffing is equivalent to about 90 full-timers in just over four years. But staffing cuts aren’t the only consequence. Some clubs are no longer being approved, reducing the scope of student engagement. All students are required to pay a fee in order to participate in clubs as well, further highlighting the struggle for clubs to stay afloat. Athletic teams and arts clubs now compete for funding for new equipment and money for travel. Even enriching experiences like field trips are being reduced or canceled altogether. In the past, language classes like Chinese would travel to Beijing, China. Even classes like United States History would travel to Washington DC. In addition, some students are left to use loaner Chromebooks for extended periods due to

delayed repairs. In response, the School Committee voted unanimously to set the new school district budget at \$116.8 million.

To fund the new budget, the towns of Acton and Boxborough are carrying an even heavier financial burden. Acton’s contribution will rise to \$79,835,435, a 0.97% increase from last year and Boxborough will see a sharper hike of 5.25%, contributing \$16,798,204, likely because of an effort to even out the amount paid per person in AB. However, even with these increases, our district is still losing money, and the aforementioned programs are still underfunded.

Although the overall budget has grown, revenue hasn’t increased at the same rate largely because of reduced state funding tied to declining enrollment again. Meanwhile, operational costs like utilities, contractual obligations, and salaries continue to climb. Inflation has also played a huge role in AB’s budget struggles. Perhaps most critically, the state’s school funding formula has not been updated to reflect Acton-Boxborough’s current needs. As a result, the district must do more with less jeopardizing even the most essential programs.

Currently, discussions and debate about next steps are crucial to the future of our schools. District leaders are now urging the community to stay informed and united. They are lobbying for an updated funding formula and exploring cost-saving measures that maintain vital services, as well as pursuing alternative funding sources like grants. Without action, they warn, the impacts of the budget deficit will only worsen in the years ahead.

Community members can play a vital role. Attending School Committee meetings and budget hearings is a great way to stay informed and make your voice heard. Contacting state legislators to push for school funding reform is another powerful step. Supporting local fundraising efforts for athletics, the arts, and extracurriculars can also help preserve important opportunities for students. With these budget challenges ahead, only through the collective efforts of students, parents, teachers, and community members can we ensure that Acton-Boxborough remains a strong and vibrant place for education.

The Spectrum

Founded 1982
e cineribus ad astra

Matthew Liu
Vani Mittal
Editors-in-Chief

Lukas Kanics
Mahima Ramesh
Chief Copy Editors

Gyan Sreejith
Chief Layout Editor

Nathaniel Kim
News Editor

Lucia Sabatelli
Mainspread Editor

Tina Li
Op-Ed Editor

Abhijit Sanal
Off-Topic Editor

Tina Li
Reporting Team

Lukas Kanics
Photography Team Lead

Gyan Sreejith
Nathaniel Kim
Henry Wang
Publicity and Finance Managers

Contact Us

36 Charter Road
Acton, MA 01720
www.thespectrumabrhs.com
theabspectrum@gmail.com
Facebook and Instagram @theabspectrum

Content Staff

Lucas Zhang, Lukas Kanics, Courtney Arnett, Lucia Sabatelli, Retal Said, Henry Wang, Vani Mittal, Matthew Liu, Tina Li, Nathaniel Kim, Tori Bell, Andrew Moon, Gyan Sreejith, Niobe Veloz-Mendoza, Connor Leo, Mia Kim, AKA Mike Joyce

Copy Editors

Isabella Hill, Shree Jayakrishna, Matthew Liu, Vani Mittal, Mahima Ramesh, Lucia Sabatelli, Tina Li, Gyan Sreejith, Nathaniel Kim, Henry Wang, Lukas Kanics, Abhijit Sanal

Layout Editors

Isabella Hill, Shree Jayakrishna, Matthew Liu, Lucia Sabatelli, Vani Mittal, Mahima Ramesh, Tina Li, Gyan Sreejith, Nathaniel Kim, Anna Urzua, Abhijit Sanal, Henry Wang, Niobe Veloz-Mendoza, Nathaniel Kim, Lukas Kanics

Publicity and Finance

Gyan Sreejith, Henry Wang, Nathaniel Kim

Acton-Boxborough Parlay Addiction

By AKA MIKE JOYCE ’27
Spectrum Staff

Parlay, also known as sports betting, has gained popularity among Americans in recent years thanks to the increasing number of states legalizing it. The demographics of sports bettors have traditionally been middle-aged men, but younger generations have begun to find a special bond with online gambling, especially at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School.

Despite legalization, sports betting is legally restricted to adults over twenty-one. Yet, students still manage to find loopholes by signing up for parlay websites like DraftKings, Stake, and BetMGM, impersonating their parents to dodge the age requirement. After passing the surprisingly lax security, teenagers now have the ability to gamble any time they would like to, including in class.

Students have developed a taste for sports gambling through Fantasy Sports, which are online games where you act as team managers to invest in players. The primary goal is outperforming your peers, winning prizes, and avoiding “Fantasy punishments,” an extreme penalty set by your league beforehand to motivate you for the imaginary season. If Fantasy Sports is fun for students, parlaying is essentially Fantasy on steroids: a game where you can practice your sports knowledge with an opportunity to gain real money with even higher risks, pumping immense dopamine for every win. However, the fun comes with consequences.

Another factor that fuels the desire for sports betting is the number of social media influencers advertising for gambling websites. It does not take long to find popular sports betting websites, such as Stake, being subtly placed as watermarks on viral videos uploaded by sizable accounts across major social media platforms. Heck, there are even massive “BetMGM” and “DraftKings” logos stamped on the Green Monster of Fenway Park.

The growing industry of sports betting is seeping into the public’s daily lives without them even noticing; the subtle psychological familiarity only makes individuals become fonder of gambling and forget the harmful consequences. Once you start noticing the sports betting advertisements, you’ll never be able to stop.

The myth of parlaying is not one you might imagine for a corrupt district: it’s a reality for many in AB. One of the student gamblers, whose identity I’ve kept confidential, is now \$400 in debt from just sports betting: “I started parlaying last year because everybody else was doing.”

Some, like this student, didn’t necessarily start in hopes of gaining money, but to not stand out against their friend groups. “I’m into other stuff like dropshipping clothes and perfumes. They bring in a lot of money.” As expected, getting the taste of sports betting led this student to be curious about other sources of quick cash that will never be stable enough for them to sustain. Such activities will only get these students hooked on “easier” methods of earning money than actually committing themselves to anything, meaning this addiction can lead to negative impacts on their school life and future careers.

The most obvious problem is that gambling can cause economic losses. Students are spending their allowances, wages, or even their parents’ money to bet on sports; with all of the potential gain comes an even higher potential for loss. Another major problem is that sports betting can become an addiction. Many students report that they do or have seen students parlaying or discussing it in school: sports betting has rooted itself into the student body. The dangerous part of addiction is that sports betting may not seem so serious a problem now, but it can become a gateway into real gambling where one bad decision can change your life. Craving larger profits, some are even indulging in alternative

gambling activities such as day trading stocks and indulging in real poker games.

The problem does not stop at developing gambling addictions or economic consequences; many parents are neglecting the issue and overlooking it as part of having fun. Profiting through such a simple task can relieve stress for many, especially students burdened with hours of schoolwork. Many parents condone parlaying for those reasons, the very same figures who should correct such harmful activities are becoming part of the issue.

Fortunately, there are ways to reverse this dangerous addiction, but further involvement can make it irreversible. The most important solution to prevent future addiction is conscious parenting. Instead of letting your child participate in illegal addicting activities, you could instead stop and educate them on the potential dangers of sports betting. States like Virginia are required to educate their students on the dangers of sports betting, but Massachusetts have been late on fixing the parlaying crisis among teenagers. There are laws passed by the Massachusetts Legislature such as, S.240, an Act establishing a standardized problem gambling disclaimer and helpline; S.302, an Act addressing economic, health and social harms caused by sports betting; and H.2416, an Act relative to gambling addiction, but there is yet to be a law directly addressing the issue of easy access to sports betting itself.

Parlaying has been around for centuries, but its engagement with the now vast online world has led to problems that past generations could have never imagined: easy access to the sports betting platforms, increasing economic consequences teenagers have to manage, and the spark of craving many teenage gamblers experience to find larger profits with greater risks. As abysmal as these problems may look, there are stronger and effective remedies to them that everyone could follow to contribute to fighting off the new American crisis.

News

AB Notable Alumni: Wes Schroll

By NATHANIEL KIM '27
News Editor

In high school, he was known for towering over his classmates: literally and figuratively. At over 6’3” tall, he was a dominant student athlete, earning MVP honors in both football and basketball at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School. But for Wes Schroll, class of 2009, it was what happened off the field, on the long bus rides, in casual and serious conversations, and late night brainstorming, that shaped the future founder and CEO of Fetch Rewards.

“I was more of a standout athlete than I was a student,” Wes admitted with a smile, remembering how sports came naturally to him. While training and competing occupied much of his time and passion, Wes never lost sight of the bigger picture. “I still knew it wasn’t something I was going to go professional in,” he said. His parents were his biggest supporters, but they also helped keep things in perspective, encouraging balance and pushing him to think about what came next.

What came after was something few could have imagined: a mobile app that would go on to transform how millions of people save money and interact with brands. Fetch Rewards, the app Wes founded, allows users to scan receipts to earn points that can be redeemed for gift cards. But the seeds of that idea were planted long before Wes stepped foot on a college campus.

As early as sixth grade, Wes was a businessman with a car washing service, for example, but by sophomore year, he had filed his first patent and formed two LLCs. “I didn’t have a lot of peers around me that were interested in [entrepreneur-

ship],” he said, “but I was super interested in this idea of creating a company.”

The spirit of initiative led Wes to choose a quote from Thoreau as his senior yearbook quote: “Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined.” Looking back now, he says his high school self would be proud. “It would very much be within the vision that the high school Wes had.”

His first invention was a phone case that combined a wallet, stemming from a simple annoyance. Wes noticed that he would often find himself forgetting his wallet before driving or his phone when getting picked up. Though it never reached mass production, it introduced Wes to patents, prototyping, and persistence. He talked to local leather workers, asked teachers for connections, and refined the networking skills that would later become essential.

Networking, Wes says, is a skill many overlook. “It’s being comfortable passionately talking about an idea without worrying someone’s going to steal it,” he explained. Teachers at AB, some of whom had run businesses themselves, played a vital role. “One teacher would say, ‘Did you know this other teacher ran a business?’ And I’d go talk to them.”

The habit of reaching out by starting conversations and following up helped Wes overcome one of the biggest challenges when launching Fetch, which was the fact that he was not a developer. He needed a mobile app but didn’t have the coding skills to build one. So, he did what he was good at: he told a compelling story.

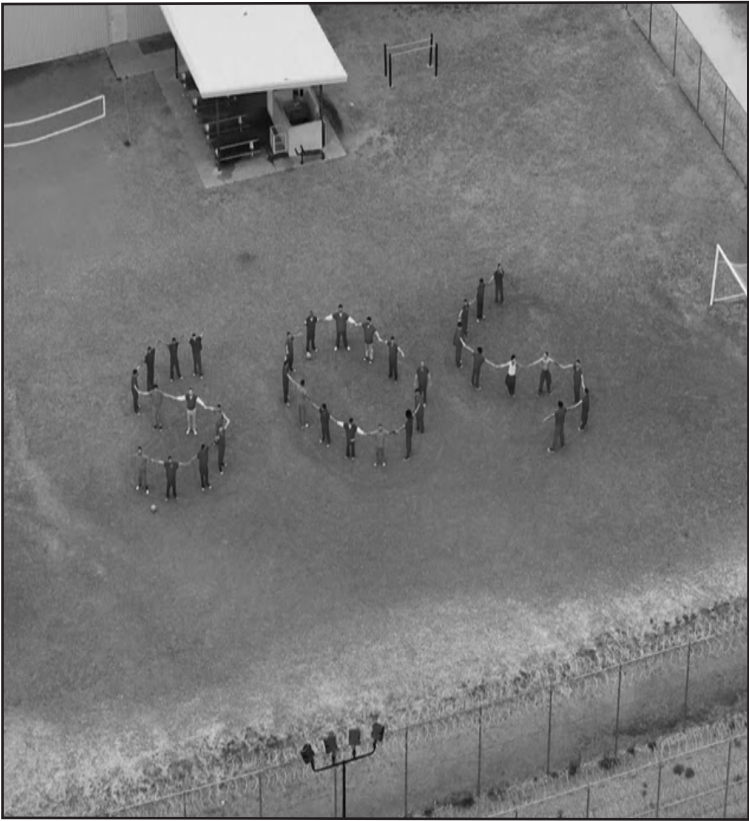
Wes entered business plan competitions at his university and then recruited friends at other colleges to do the same. He flew around the country and won \$185,000 in prize money, which he used to hire a development team. “I didn’t have to give up any equity in the company,” he said proudly.

Fetch Rewards was born from a common student experience of moving from dorm life to an off-campus apartment. Suddenly, Wes was shopping at new stores, buying different brands, and wanting recognition for his purchasing choices. “I signed up for all the loyalty programs I could,” he said, “but I didn’t spend enough at any one place to earn something meaningful.” His solution? One unified platform that rewarded users no matter where they shopped. Long story short, that idea would eventually turn into Fetch.

Over a decade later, Wes remains grounded in values he picked up at Acton-Boxborough. He emphasizes that while he stood out as an athlete, what mattered most were the moments between the games. The leadership lessons from coaches, the friendships formed on bus rides, and the curiosity that drove him to ask questions and build ideas.

To current students with big dreams, Wes offers a reminder: “You don’t have to be exceptional at everything. Just be curious. Be willing to talk to people. And if someone helps you, follow up.”

And to my question about his first patent, Wes smiled as he unfolded an old printout of his phone-wallet case. “It was a simple idea. But simple ideas, done right, can lead to something big.”



Mass deportations protests
ONLINE SOURCE

Mass Deportation Status

RETAL SAID '26
Spectrum Staff

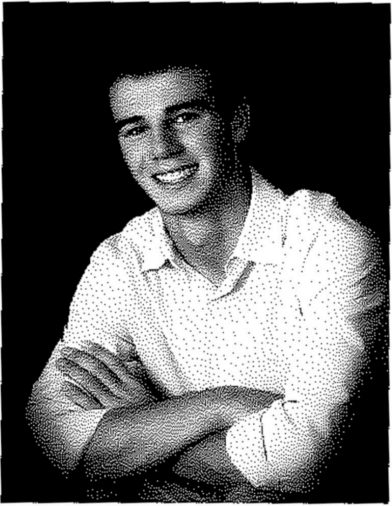
One of the most intensely debated aspects of immigration in the United States is Mass Deportation. Mass Deportation is an effort to remove undocumented immigrants or individuals without legal status from the country, mostly done through agencies like Immigration and Customs Enforcement, most commonly known as ICE. ICE is a federal law enforcement agency under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that carries out aggressive tactics to enforce immigration laws. Some people argue that such aggressive tactics are necessary to uphold national security, while others emphasize the inhumane treatment of immigrant communities.

The concept of pushing people away from where they live has always been in the US and is prevalent throughout history. An example of this is the Indian Removal Act, which was authorized in 1830 and led to the forced relocation of thousands of Native Americans from their lands. Many know this event to be related to the Trail of Tears, where 60,000 Native Americans were removed from their ancestral homelands. Another infamous example of Mass deportation is an Eisenhower-era campaign called Operation Wetback. Operation Wetback targeted Mexican immigrants and is the biggest mass deportation of undocumented workers in US History. This campaign was designed to kick Mexicans out of American society. The operation used military-style tactics to remove Mexican immigrants, some being American citizens, from the US, even though millions had entered the US legally. In more recent years, especially after 9/11, the government has expanded the immigration agencies.

In 2003, created under the Department of Homeland Security, ICE was created to enforce immigration laws. Their role in the government is to locate, detain, and deport people who are in the U.S illegally. Before, they

used to focus on the southern border, trying to capture those trying to illegally cross from Mexico. However, recently, ICE has been shifting its focus from targeting criminals to targeting families or residents who have no criminal records. This is due to a revoking of a policy that limited ICE’s power by the Trump Administration, allowing them to go to places like schools. An example of this is the arrest of Mahmoud Khalil, who is a Syrian, a 30-year-old man, and a current father to a newborn. Mahmoud Khalil is a resident in the US on a green card, studying at Columbia University, when he was arrested for exercising his free speech rights in support of Palestinians in Gaza. Many believe this arrest to be illegal due to his green card status. This arrest sparked global outrage as it raised questions about free speech. Another example is Rumeysa Ozturk, a 30-year-old doctoral student at Tufts University on a student visa who was detained for more than 6 weeks for writing an op-ed that criticized Tufts’ response to the war in Gaza. A Department of Homeland Security spokesperson said, without providing evidence, that investigations found Ozturk engaging in activities in support of Hamas, a U.S.-designated terrorist group. Ozturk was recently released on the orders of a federal judge.

One of the most recent ICE operations has been here in Acton, MA, where several arrests were made. Senator Jamie Eldridge wrote on Facebook, saying that “From the information, pictures and videos I was sent, ICE arrested people living in one of the Great Road apartments, and arrested people driving in their car near Trader Joe’s.” Acton Chief Police James Cogan made sure to emphasize that Acton Police were in no way involved in any action relating to immigration. The arrests led to protests outside Acton Town Hall, where hundreds of demonstrators chanted and held signs speaking out against ICE.



Wesley Schroll

"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined."
-Henry David Thoreau

Wes’s High School Senior Yearbook Picture



Wes Schroll: CEO and Founder @ Fetch



DR. SVEN SUPPLIES, ORTHODONTIST

"Where Braces Are Fun!"

Sven Supplies, DMD

Orthodontist



Member
American
Association of
Orthodontists



Scan to schedule your complimentary
appointment today!

179 Great Rd (Rt. 2A) #206

Acton, MA 01720

Telephone (978) 263-8358

www.drsuppliesortho.com

info@drsuppliesortho.com

Graduation



Senior Speaker: Connor Leo

A Roommate Roulette

By TINA LI '27
Op-Ed Editor

When it comes to living with someone in college, your roommate can be either a dream or a disaster. We’ve all heard the horror stories— someone’s roommate left moldy food on their desks for weeks, stayed up until 4 AM playing loud video games when you have an eight AM exam: or they became lifelong best friends who now go on summer vacations together. Your fate depends on one crucial decision: random roommate or someone you already know?

If you choose a random roommate, it’s like spinning the wheel of fortune. Meeting people of different backgrounds is what makes college so refreshing, so living with a stranger can open you up to new perspectives and experiences you might never have encountered otherwise. It can also be a way for you to grow socially, which can lead to unexpected steadfast friendships. Of course, the downsides exist too. You and your roommate might clash over cleaning habits, sleep schedules, or even sound levels. It can test your communication skills through challenges that may snowball into emotional stress. In worst cases, you might feel stuck living with someone whose values or behavior make your life miserable. After all, your dorm is the place where you can retreat to after a long day of socializing and classes. Finding middle ground with your roommate is essential to creating a safe space in your dorm, which can be hard to do with someone so starkly different compared to you.

Whether it’s a friend from high school, a new friend through ori-

entation, or someone they met through social media, the major benefit is predictability. You already know what the general dynamic will be like, which can make the transition into a new environment easier. Chosen roommates often serve as a built-in support system during the whirlwind of freshman college life, and having a shared history can lead to smoother day-to-day interactions. Despite this, familiarity can come at a price. When conflict arises, it can feel personal. It’s much harder to set and enforce boundaries with a friend, and disagreements can strain or end friendships. Additionally, choosing someone from your existing social group can limit exposure to new people and ideas, creating a ‘bubble’ that can become stale over time. Networking and meeting new people is essential in college, and having someone you already know as a roommate can reduce those connections.

Whether you’re placed with a stranger or your bestie, the key to a comfortable and peaceful living situation is communication. Set expectations early on, talk about cleaning duties, quiet hours, and deal breakers. Avoid letting resentment build up and deal with any arising problems at the root. Respecting privacy, keeping common areas neat, and checking in with each other can maintain a positive atmosphere. Both random and chosen roommates come with their own sets of perks and pitfalls. Just remember that whichever path you choose, empathy, communication, and a little patience can go a long way in making a shared living space feel like home sweet home.

Senior Speech: Becoming Connor

By CONNOR LEO ’25
Senior Speaker

Now, traditionally, commencement speeches are given by accomplished professionals. Founders of companies. Community leaders. Owners of patents. Yet today, you got me, someone who can’t even parallel park with confidence. Perhaps I should not be up here right now. No really. I shouldn’t.

Eleven years ago, at a youth soccer session, our coach, Mitch, asked for our names, I looked him dead in the eye and boldly replied “my name is Thomas.” Now, my name is not Thomas. It has never been Thomas. Thomas isn’t even a nickname. In case you didn’t hear our wonderful announcer, let me clarify, my name is Connor. Connor Gerald Leo. So why Thomas? Why, at the age of 7, did I commit light identity fraud on a suburban soccer field. Well for a simple reason. At the time, I could only say 25 out of the 26 letters of the alphabet and the one I couldn’t say? The letter ‘R.’ This becomes a problem when your name is Connor. But, not being able to pronounce over 10% of words goes beyond mispronunciation, it affects confidence. As a second grader, I sat in the very back of the class. I was the person who didn’t want to raise their hand, make friends with classmates, or talk. And while I crafted my persona around being “Thomas” a kid who didn’t care about school, friends, or responsibilities. I was struggling inside. I lost my name, yes, but more than that, my identity.

Then came speech therapy. You haven’t lived until you spent every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon with a speech therapist named Denise and her perky puppet Mr. Squeaky. Denise would aggressively spin Mr. Squeaky in circles yelling...

“Red Rabbit! Say it with me!”

“Red Rabbit!” “Red Rabbit!” “Red Rabbit!”

Eventually, my trauma of that puppet overcame my physical incapacity to say my name because, 2 years later, I reclaimed the full alphabet. And more importantly, I reclaimed Connor. But, my journey to reclaim my voice, my fight to overcome something that held me back, is something I know I’ve shared with all of you. Because every single one of us here has faced their own set of challenges. Some of us have battled through concussions, broken bones, and bruises to achieve dominance in the athletic arena. Winning DCLs, winning states, and winning sectionals. Some of us have battled through the musical notes blurring together, the lines seemingly impossible, but eventually, beautiful. And some of us have faced struggles no one saw. Depression, loneliness, anxiety. Struggles whose victories aren’t accompanied by applause or trophies, but are no less important. And for the majority of us, we still deal with these struggles, but each day we persevere is a victory in itself.

I ask you now, what was your moment? When your struggles seemed insurmountable. When you felt hopeless. But now, remember how it felt to triumph. And nowdays, we do face a new set of challenges. What is my major? Where am I going to live? Can I put diesel fuel in my Subaru? (Spoiler alert: No. Please don’t. Your car will thank you). Meanwhile, the world is asking a lot out of us.

We are often told “we are the future” the “new generation,” it will be us that drives change, and they are right. We are the future. But as we find ourselves in a world where polarization is at all time high,

where new crises emerge each and every day, many can’t help but grip their seats in fear. But if there’s one thing I know about this class and this community, It’s our strength when we use our talents, collectively working together. I’m not just talking about when the seniors won the Senior vs Staff basketball game. Which we did win by the way and didn’t tear any ACLs in the process. (Sorry Mr. Gwin. glad to see you back up and running...or...limping)

In seriousness, we will scatter. To new cities. To new campuses. Some even to new countries, and while we navigate a landscape of uncertainty, we also encounter a world rich in opportunity. What makes ABRHS special is our diversity. Diversity, not just in background, but in thought, talent, and dreams. That’s what made us stronger. That’s what made us better. Class of 2025. Our struggles are different. But our resilience unites us. Class of 2025, our talents are different, yes, but together we can accomplish.

So when it gets difficult, remember that moment when your challenges seem insurmountable, and yet here we are, graduating together. So as we step into a new age, take this memory. Go out into the world and be the leaders. Be “the future.” Be the “new generation.” Be the ones who seek to develop a better world for all that live in it.

So, should I be standing up here today? If you asked my seven-year-old self, the kid who called himself “Thomas,” who was stuck with a name he couldn’t even pronounce, he would’ve said no. But what about your 7 year old self? Look at you. Look at us. Friends, we’re just getting started. Thank you, and congratulations, class of 2025.

The Struggle of College Tuition

By TINA LI ’27
Op-Ed Editor

Whether you’re applying to a Top 20 university or a local state college, the number of zeros in the price tag is enough to make you and your wallet cry. According to the College Board, the average cost of in-state tuition at a public university is now over \$10,000 per year. If you’re coming from out of state, the cost would jump to \$28,000. Don’t get me started on private colleges. It’s \$40,000 per year excluding room, board, and other essentials. Meanwhile, the U.S. Census Bureau finds that the median household income is around \$75,000. Coupled with the tuition and room fees, students need transportation, new tech, food, and basic essentials. It’s no wonder that the media is flooded with valid complaints, stories of students working two or three jobs and skipping meals to afford textbooks, all just to keep their enrollment status: if you have more than one kid in a middle-class family, good luck.

However, college wasn’t always this expensive. In the 2000s, the average cost for a four-year public college was about \$3,500 per year and at private schools \$15,000. The massive price gap is due to private universities’ massive investments, such as flashy campuses, large alumni connections, and the bigger adminis-

trative and instructional costs. However, public colleges have also become increasingly out of reach for the average household due to state funding decreasing, leaving colleges to make up for the shortfall by raising tuition. Actually, some schools are stuck in debt repayment cycles. Universities borrow to expand campuses, then use tuition revenue to repay those loans. They’re stuck in a cycle of building facilities to attract students, taking on debt, raising tuition, rinse and repeat. Still, there are some colleges out there that offer tuition free education. Community colleges are also an option with the cost averaging out to be \$3,900 per year while allowing students the luxury to save money, live at home, and transfer to four-year institutions later. However, these schools don’t have the same resources or opportunities students look for when committing to college, which can impact their long-term career goals.

Moreover, there has been a significant decrease of public funding, resulting in cuts in education budgets, forcing colleges to pass the cost onto students. All facility upgrades and new buildings are paid by students, which universities use to try to outshine each other. The increasing number of administrative officials are also paid for using tuition. Ironically, federal financial aid contributes

to the problem too. Because students can borrow more money from the government, colleges feel comfortable raising their prices under the assumption that the government foots the bill upfront. Nevertheless, often student loans leave adults drowning in financial struggle for years after college, making this presumption dangerous for future generations. Then what about scholarships? Sure they can help if you can get one. Merit scholarships are highly competitive, need-based aid is often not enough, and even a \$10,000 scholarship can barely make a dent if the total cost is \$60,000 a year.

Colleges used to be affordable, but now we see a different story. Public and private institutions have all raised prices either gradually or aggressively. State funding cuts, administrative expansion, exploitative loan systems, and unnecessary facility upgrades all play a role in the hole colleges put in your wallet. Students are now graduating with an average of \$30,000+ in student debt, with some cases the number being exponentially higher.

But honestly, college should not be the biggest stressor in your life! Try your best to work around these increasing rates, but let’s always attempt to advocate for better.

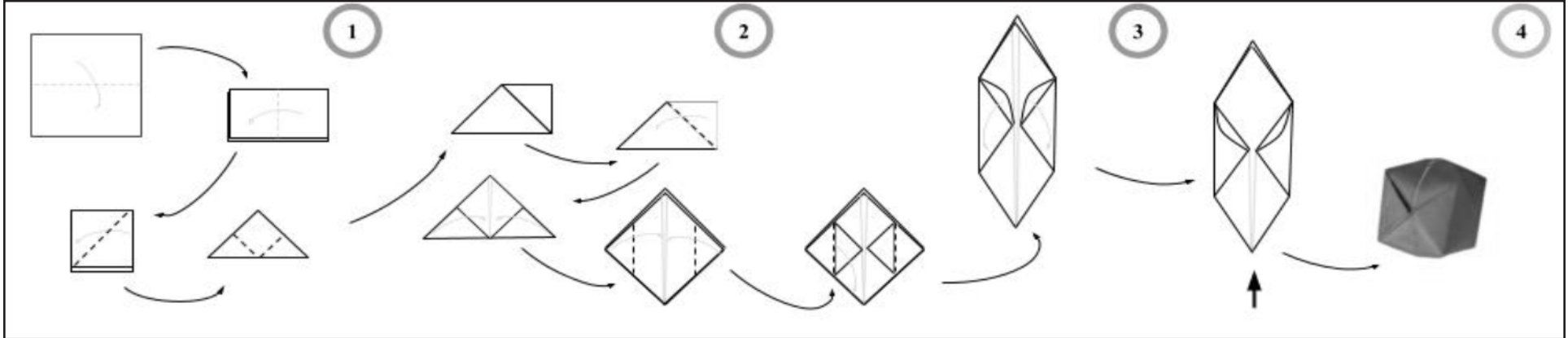
Graduation

AB Graduate Destinations Map



HENRY WANG

How To Create An Origami Graduation Balloon



GYAN SREEJITH

Senior Speech: Jeong

By MIA KIM '25
Senior Speaker

I don't remember much from my first day at Gates Elementary—just a backpack too big for my back, waving to my parents through the bus window, and the confusion of not understanding the language around me. Even then, I was learning what it meant to live between two languages.

Over the years, being bilingual has taught me that words only hold meaning within layers of culture, context, and memory. This often leaves gaps, where some words don't have a direct translation. There are countless of these between Korean and English. But if I had to choose, my favorite would be *jeong*.

English dictionaries struggle to capture *jeong* with all its nuance, beauty, and weight in a single word. *Attachment*, perhaps? *Warmth*, *intimacy*, or *compassion*... these are all very similar, sure.

Still, no combination of definitions quite captures the shapeless pull of *jeong*: a kind of attachment that happens before you even realize it has. I imagine *jeong* spreading like ink in water—barely visible at first, but impossible to extract once it's there. It flows into every corner, staining you quietly, completely. It's an involuntary tenderness. A pre-existing condition.

Oftentimes, *jeong* passes by me as if a myth. 6,880 miles away, a whole ocean, and years of diaspora separate me from those who hold *jeong* innately. *Jeong* seems to belong to those who share a laugh over bowls of rice or walk

through the streets of Seoul. Instead, I grew up in Acton, a town whose name evokes an austere Anglo-Saxon affluence—manicured lawns, vacation homes on the Cape, new cars at sixteen.

Treading this space between often felt lonely when I was a kid, venturing alone. Yet somewhere along the way, *jeong* found me at AB.

I've felt *jeong* for this very building—in the way the halls sound at 11:03, in the flood of students heading to Santa Fe on \$5 Mondays, and in that one door in the upper west girls' bathroom that only locks if you kick it with your foot angled upward.

I've seen it in the warning look from the kids leaving class after a brutal test. In the space someone makes for you to sit next to them. In the teachers who printed you extra copies, the friends who waited outside classrooms just to walk you to lunch, the people who searched for you in school crowds.

It showed up in rides offered. Seats saved. Notes shared.

Maybe we weren't all close. Maybe you and I never spoke. But we shared the same over-salted sidewalks in January. The same humid spring air before APs. The same color of dusk through these classroom windows. We agonized over lost snow days and cheered together at games. We knew those seasons together. And in that knowing, we grew familiar with each other—even if our lives never touched.

What we've built here is a kind of *jeong*—quiet, invisible, but deeply rooted.

And *jeong* isn't limited to this school. The closeness we formed

doesn't disappear when we walk out. It's not something we're leaving behind. We're stepping into a world far bigger than these halls—a world that might feel unfamiliar. Strange. Intimidating.

But the thing about *jeong* is that it travels. It adapts. It follows us, stretching into new spaces.

We've already learned to recognize connection in its quietest forms—eye contact, held doors, familiar smiles across the hall. The *jeong* we've grown has taught us how to carry others gently, and we'll bring that instinct with us—into new cities, on new campuses, across countries.

On subway platforms, in dining halls, crowded apartments, and late-night walks—with people who are strangers now but will one day feel like home.

Even as we step into new lives, we'll still carry these years with us. We'll carry the weight of having grown up together—not always side by side, but still together. Years of shared air, shared noise, shared growing pains. That can't be undone.

Jeong is everywhere, waiting to be seen—like a formless, limitless gas. It grows where we make space for it. That's what we're taking forward: not credits or GPAs, but this—this quiet, persistent sense of belonging. Of having been here, together.

We may not all see each other again. But we will always have *jeong* between us. It's already settled into our bones.

After all, that's what we Koreans say:

Jeong deun da. Jeong always seeps in.

Crossword Answers

Across	Down
7. Blue and Gold	1. All-nighters
8. Superlatives	2. Gap Year
11. Clap Out Ceremony	3. Triumph
13. Internship	4. Diploma
15. Volunteer	5. Yearbook
18. Prom	6. Freedom
19. Tutition	9. Seniors
20. Graduation	10. Senior Skip Day
21. Lawn Signs	12. Cap
	16. Vacation
	14. Senior Pranks
	22. Alumni
	17. Roommates



Senior Speaker: Mia Kim

Op-Ed

Future of the Papacy of Leo XIV

By ANDREW MOON '27
Spectrum Staff

“La pace sia con tutti voi!” (peace be with all of you!), declared the newly elected pontiff, Leo XIV, as he greeted a watching world for the first time on May 8, 2025. For the first time in the two-thousand-year history of the Catholic Church, a pope from the United States has been elected. He chose the name Leo, a decision reflecting his desire to honor the legacy of Pope Leo XIII, who, amid the Industrial Revolution, set the Church’s course on social justice through his landmark encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (“Of New Things”). Today, both the Church and the world face a multitude of challenges. In the midst of these trials, all eyes are now on Leo XIV and the direction he will lead the Church.

As the spiritual leader of 1.4 billion Catholics, the pope’s influence is both profound and far-reaching. Rooted in the promise of Christ to Peter—“You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church” (Matthew 16:18)—the pope serves as the Vicar of Christ on earth and the visible foundation of Catholic unity. Beyond this sacred mandate, his impact on global affairs is undeniable. The

decisive contribution of Pope Saint John Paul II, born in communist Poland, in the fall of the Soviet Union and the conclusion of the Cold War remains a powerful testament to the pope’s extraordinary and divinely guided influence on history.

Until now, no pope was ever from the United States—a reflection of the Vatican’s longstanding reluctance to elect a pontiff from a global superpower, in order to preserve its stance of political neutrality. Yet, the election of a pope from the U.S. carries profound significance.

One of the major factors that played a decisive role in his election was that at a time when the Church faces growing secularism in the West, particularly in the very nation he now represents, the election of a pope from the United States reflects a renewed evangelical urgency—a call to reawaken faith in lands where it is fading.

Some of the greatest challenges facing the Church today are widespread religious indifference, the rise of secularism, and the spread of moral relativism. Amid these challenges, Pope Francis brought a fresh wind into the Church. He envisioned the Church as the face of God’s mercy, as a field hospital embracing

the poor and the marginalized, and as a missionary Church overflowing with the joy of the Gospel. Under his leadership, the Church began to awaken to new hope.

However, Pope Francis’s reform-minded vision was not without opposition. His emphasis on pastoral flexibility and inclusive dialogue was welcomed by many, yet it also stirred unease among those who saw in it a departure from doctrinal clarity and liturgical discipline. For centuries, the Church has drawn strength from continuity, fidelity to established teaching, and reverence for sacred liturgy. These enduring pillars have not only preserved the integrity of the faith but also provided the faithful with certainty in an age marked by confusion. In times of moral upheaval, the strength of the Church has always rested not in adapting to the world but in faithfully proclaiming the truth, even when unpopular. As a well-known quote reminds us, “the church that is married to the spirit of this age, becomes a widow in the next.”

The Church is more than a human institution; it is believed to be the Body of Christ. While the Church must respond to the needs of the present, it must do so without compromising the truths that have been

faithfully preserved by saints and scholars alike.

The election of the new Holy Father, Leo XIV, comes at this critical moment. His choice of name signals a desire to uphold the legacy of strong and clear leadership, grounded in social justice and moral clarity. The new pope faces the delicate task of guiding the Church through turbulent times by balancing necessary reform with unwavering commitment to the faith’s core teachings and sacred worship. Only by holding fast to these pillars can the Church remain a steadfast beacon of faith and hope in a rapidly changing world.

Pope Gregory I famously called the papacy the “servant of the servants of God.” The true nature of the papal office and all ordained ministers is not to seek power or prestige but to serve humbly and selflessly. The pope, as the visible head of the Church, carries the weight of this responsibility, embodying a ministry of service to the faithful and to all humanity.

The pope is the living image of Christ crucified. Just as Christ willingly endured suffering and death on the cross, Christ did not step down from His mission, so too must the pope remain steadfast in his calling. This profound identification with Christ’s passion calls the pope

to lead with humility, courage, and unwavering faith.

At the heart of Christianity lies this sacrificial love revealed on Calvary—the willingness to give oneself completely for the salvation of others. It is this love that the pope must embody as he shepherds the Church, guiding the faithful not by worldly power but by the example of Christ’s own humility and mercy. This mission, grounded in service and sacrifice, is both a sacred duty and a continual challenge, reminding the pope that his role is not one of dominion, but of devoted care for the spiritual well-being of over a billion souls.

In an age marked by division and moral confusion, it is a hope that Pope Leo XIV’s service stands as a beacon of hope and unity. His solemn charge is to lead the Church faithfully, carrying the cross with grace and wisdom, always mindful that true leadership is found in service and true strength in faithfulness to the Gospel. As he reminded the world, the Church must be “a Church that builds bridges and encourages dialogue.”

FITNESS • TENNIS • SWIM • SPA • CAMP



Every young athlete possesses unique talents and aspirations, which is why we provide individualized coaching tailored to the specific goals of each junior player in middle and high school. Our high-performance

training environment is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, enabling these aspiring athletes to hone their skills and develop the competitive edge necessary for success fostering resilience, teamwork, and confidence.

Op-Ed



AB’s volleyball team!
MATTHEW LIU

Fulfilling Gym Requirements at AB

By HENRY WANG ’27
Publicity & Finance Manager

As students, many of us spend a lot of time participating in sports outside of school, whether it’s soccer, basketball, swimming, or other activities, and some might wonder: should doing sports outside of school fulfill our gym requirements? Currently, at ABRHS, students are required to take four years of physical education, regardless of whether they participate in sports or not. But is this policy still the best way to promote health and fitness for all students?

School gym classes are designed to teach students a variety of physical activities and fitness skills. They expose us to different sports. Relying on outside sports to fulfill gym requirements might limit students’ exposure to these diverse activities and important health lessons. By keeping the requirement, schools can ensure that all students, regardless of their extracurricular involvement, receive a comprehensive physical education.

Not every student has the same access to organized sports outside of school. Factors like cost, transportation, or other personal issues

can prevent some students from participating in after-school sports. Requiring gym classes ensures that everyone benefits from physical activity and health education, creating an equitable system where no student is left behind. Some students may not enjoy sports, or they might have physical limitations or personal reasons for not participating. Gym classes provide a safe, structured environment for these students to stay active and develop healthy habits. Removing or reducing the gym requirement could leave these students without the necessary physical activity needed for their health. These classes also introduce students to activities they might not try on their own, encouraging a lifelong habit of fitness. Gym classes aren’t just about physical fitness—they also help students develop teamwork, discipline, and social skills. These lessons are valuable beyond sports and can help students succeed in many areas of life.

Participating in organized sports outside of school should be recognized as fulfilling gym requirements because these activities often provide the same, if not more, physical benefits as traditional gym classes. Sports such as soccer, basketball,

swimming, or track involve intense physical exertion, teamwork, and skill development, all of which contribute to a student’s overall fitness and health. When students dedicate time and effort to these activities, recognizing outside sports as equivalent to gym classes would encourage students to pursue activities they enjoy and are passionate about. Additionally, allowing sports outside of school to count toward gym requirements can save students time and reduce scheduling conflicts, giving them more flexibility to balance academics, extracurriculars, and personal interests. Overall, since organized sports outside of school promote physical fitness, teamwork, and discipline, they should be considered a valid and effective way to fulfill gym obligations, providing a comprehensive approach to student health without the need for mandatory indoor gym classes.

Maintaining the four-year gym requirement and participating in school-sports helps promote lifelong healthy habits and ensures every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and stay active both in and out of the classroom.

Neurodivergent Experiences at AB

By TORI BELL ’26
Spectrum Staff

We often see both similarities and differences between those around us — do you ever wonder why that is? Well, you can thank your cranium for the variances in people. The brain is one of the most fascinating organs in the human body, the center of our knowledge and function. One of the many differences in our brains includes neurodivergence, which highlights the different ways in which people think. Some example forms of neurodivergence, which you may already be familiar with, include autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). In some cases, people who are neurodivergent may feel that they don’t conform well with society. It is important that we recognize that this is an issue with society and not the fault of an individual person. There

are plenty of neurodivergent people in our school, including me. Some of us get accommodations to help navigate the difficult experience known as high school, and along with these supports, many of us seek acceptance, not in the form of fitting in, but by being supported for who we are.

Being neurodivergent truly isn’t a perfect experience, though we find our own strengths. For one, many neurodivergent people, especially those on the autism spectrum, may feel ostracized from their peers and as if they are misfits within humans as a whole. These feelings of isolation are not the fault of any individual person, however. Instead, it is deeply rooted in misunderstandings. To elaborate, neurotypical and neurodivergent people tend to have different ways of communicating. Breakdowns in communication can make it difficult for people to get along with each other. In terms of school, being neurodivergent may

impact how we learn and interact with others, especially with our peers, creating a sense of double-consciousness. For some, it may be hard to focus or manage time effectively, which can lead to homework being turned in late. A lack of executive functioning can also impact grades and well-being (as sleep is often being put aside as people rush to get their homework done). Being neurodivergent can also affect how we interact with our peers. As someone on the autism spectrum, it can be difficult to integrate with others when they are socializing, and it can also be difficult to join group activities. However, at the end of the day, the most important feeling is to provide belonging to those who feel isolated for being neurodivergent. Neurodivergence should not be something we fear or feel vulnerable for, but rather something that is supported in society.

Protests & Censorship

By LUKAS KANICS ’26
Chief Copy Editor

For decades, the leading voices in protests in both the United States and other countries have been students, specifically in high schools and especially colleges. The newfound freedoms, proximity of like minded young people, and free thinking and self-exploration that is encouraged in such spaces make schools hot spots for politics and protests. However, under the current federal administration, there has been a push to restrict the voice of outspoken students and punish those who do protest. This is a very dangerous policy to have, as it has historically led to conflict, restricts freedoms in an unconstitutional manner, and paves the pathway for authoritarian control.

First, attempts to quell protests in history have rarely ended well. Nearly seventy years ago, student protests against Soviet influence in Hungary snowballed into a full blown revolution that completely altered the lives of all Hungarians due to the Soviets unwillingness to meet the protestors’ demands. Among such Hungarians was my grandfather, who managed to be one of the few to escape the mass murder of the entire student body of his college town. Almost fifteen years later, several demonstrators at Kent State University were shot by members of the national guard during a protest against the Vietnam war, and less than two weeks later, police fired on protestors at Jackson State university with similar bloodshed occurring. Finally, less than twenty years later, several days of student-led protests in Tiananmen Square ended in bloodbath after the military was sent in to squelch their demonstration. It’s important to remember that all of these protests didn’t begin with death. Turmoil built for years in Hungary before the bloodshed began, protestors had been opposing

the Johnson and Nixon administration’s actions since the beginning of the Vietnam war, and Tiananmen Square only became a massacre after days of protest. History often acts in a cyclic nature and not learning from the mistakes in the past would be foolish. The escalating threats issued by the current administration can and will lead to violence if they do not cease immediately.


Second, the current restrictions placed on student protests are unconstitutional. The right to protest is a constitutional right under the First Amendment, and any attempt to prevent peaceful, legal protests is a violation of fundamental rights. Furthermore, the Fifth Amendment’s due process clause along with the Fourth Amendment’s outlining of probable cause clearly protects politically active students on visas, such as Mahmoud Khalil and Rumeysa Öztürk, from being arrested on the street without a warrant, potentially stripped of their visas, and/or deported. Finally, demanding private universities complying with their demands is an unconstitutional attempt to strip such institutions of their independence.

Last but not least, the policy of the current administration involving this issue presents a risk of authoritarian control under an over extension of power. By crushing the most active voices with the heels of their boots, they wish to stamp out their greatest opposition, and with X posts from The White House such as, “DO NOT RETALIATE AND YOU WILL BE REWARDED”, their mission seems very clear. Whether you feel their actions are justified or not, their actions are undeniably worrisome and echo history in the most chilling of ways. In my opinion, the current administration must completely backtrack all it has done on this issue with haste or else it will lead us down a dark path that goes against the foundational values of America.

FREE

Classic Donut
With Purchase Of
any beverage

excludes Specialty Donut and Fancies




Not valid on mobile app or delivery orders. Limit one coupon per customer per visit. Coupon must be presented at the time of order. Shop must retain coupon. May not be combined with other offers or promotions. No substitutions. Excludes fancies, specialty donuts/bagels, donut kits, avocado spread, and all Toast varieties. Consumer must pay applicable tax. Void if copied, transferred, sold or prohibited by law. Cash Value 1/20 of 1c.

GOOD AT

315 Main Street
212 Main Street
182 Great Road
100 Powdermill Road

EXP: 7/6/2025



Off Topic

Marching Band Clash

By COURTNEY ARNETT '26
Spectrum Staff

At Acton-Boxborough Regional High School, the performing arts are a major source of student engagement. They offer students the opportunity to express themselves, meet new people, and try new things. Our performing arts program consists of Proscenium Circus (Theater), Orchestra, and the Band. However, in order to be a part of the band, students must also fulfill a Marching Band requirement. This prevents many students that may have otherwise taken band from doing so. Is this requirement unfair, or is it simply necessary to maintain the intensity of AB’s music program? To answer this question, I interviewed both the ABRHS Band director George Arsenault and a student leader within the band to hear their opinions on the marching band requirement.

I began by asking Mr. Arsenault to explain the difference between the marching and concert bands at ABRHS, to which he responded, “There is just one band. It’s not a marching band or a concert band, it’s just one band,” which I now believe to be the source of the band’s success as a whole. He explained that, when he arrived at ABRHS in 2018, he too wanted to change the structure of the band in order to allow more students to participate. To do this, he reduced the number of parades from three per year to only one and had the band perform only at home football games. After doing these things, he looked at potentially separating the marching and concert bands, but found that in separating the band, he risked compromising the closeness and cohesiveness of the band as a whole. Mr. Asenault said, “There’s a reason people are even interested in doing [band] and that’s because it’s good. And to be good, there are certain standards that we have to [uphold].” He stressed the importance of maintaining the joint-band structure and that the community aspect of the band was key to its success. He emphasized that in

order to ensure the band continues to function as well as it does now, maintaining the band’s “outstanding community” is crucial. However, the director did agree that he is “Willing to be flexible [towards special cases], so long as they do not damage the community.”

After this interview, I walked over to the band room beside his office and met firsthand the community he spoke about. There were a handful of students practicing after school and helping each other with their music, so I asked a couple of them for their opinion on the marching band’s community. Among these students was the trumpet section leader, Oscar Lewis, who supported much of what his director had to say. Oscar agreed that “community is huge [part of marching band] because marching band is all about teamwork. If one person is stepping wrong or playing the wrong note, it really shows.” Oscar followed his statement up by commenting directly on the band’s community, saying that the community is so great because of “how everyone knows everyone...it’s really hard not to fit in within the band, which is really nice”. Seeing how essential community is to the cohesive whole of the marching band, and the amount of time it takes to create this community, it is no wonder that the marching band requires a large time commitment for its students.

I originally went into my interview with Mr. Arsenault with a rather biased opinion, believing the marching band requirement was unnecessary. However, after hearing how much the band’s community relies on the closeness and cohesiveness created in the marching band, my opinion has changed. Truly, the existence of the marching band and concert bands as an inseparable entity is central to the success and community of the ABRHS performing arts program, and doing away with the marching band requirement would only work to compromise this community, and thus the band as a whole.



Miles Davis
ONLINE SOURCE

A Graduation Playlist

By LUKAS KANICS '26
Chief Copy Editor

Good Riddance (Time of Your Life) by Green Day

Being the de facto graduation song, this playlist would be incomplete without it. Originally written as a sarcastic breakup song, the song has grown far beyond its original meaning to act as an anthem for bittersweet endings.

Doing the Unstuck by The Cure

With its first lyric being “it’s a perfect day for letting go,” “Doing the Unstuck” encourages the listener to try new things and to embrace change and the end of the old. What could be more fitting for graduation?

Unwritten by Natasha Bedingfield

Not only is this song universally (or very nearly universally) adored,

but its message, that your future is undetermined and that you are in control of your own story is important to imbed in such an uncertain and nerve-racking time as graduation.

Everlong by Foo Fighters

Similar to “Good Riddance”, “Everlong” is another breakup song with broadly applicable bittersweet themes, but with more energy and intensity.

Don’t Change by INXS

“Don’t Change” not only asks the listener to stay true to themselves, to not bend to the shape others prefer, but also, in the context of graduation, it acts as a plea for the world to stay in place and an expression of the desire for this moment at the conclusion of one’s high school journey to last forever.

Nightswimming by R.E.M.

“Nightswimming” is a slower

song than the others so far, but it still fits within the theme. In the song, the singer describes his memories of the delights of foolish activities on a teenage summer night in a eulogy for simpler times, proliferating feelings that are now blooming for many seniors.

Alone by The Cure

The first track of The Cure’s most recent record, Songs of a Lost World, an album filled with songs about reminiscing over the past and the end of times, with the final track literally being called “Endsong”, “Alone” is not alone thematically, but it’s interpolation of the poem “Dregs” by Ernest Christopher Dowson and more gloomy tone earn it a spot on this playlist.

Atmosphere by Joy Division

Some may say this song is too dark for this playlist, but graduation can be tough, and the song’s repeated petition of “don’t walk away” and hauntingly beautiful synths act to close out this playlist on a more fitting, somber note.

Congrats to Class of 25! Off to college, Need a Bike?

CELEBRATING



YEARS

PEDAL POWER

BIKE & SKI

176 Great Rd. Acton MA 1-800-479-3197

www.pedpow.com

Miles Davis

By ANDREW MOON '27
Spectrum Staff

A jazz fan dies and is welcomed by St. Peter, who leads him into a smoky, dimly lit jazz club in the afterlife. On stage, a man sings “What a Wonderful World” with that unmistakable gravelly voice. The fan leans over, whispering, “Is that... Louis Armstrong?” St. Peter nods. “It is.” Next, a woman steps up and sings “I’m a Fool to Want You” with aching beauty. “Billie Holiday?” the fan asks. “Yep,” says St. Peter. Then the fan notices a figure in black, sitting alone at the bar, trumpet by his side, back turned to the room. In awe, he asks, “Is that Miles Davis?” St. Peter chuckles. “No... that’s God. He just thinks He’s Miles Davis.” There are musicians, there are legends, and then, there’s Miles Davis.

He was not just a trumpet player. He was a monumental innovator, icon, and maverick. From cool jazz to hard bop, modal jazz, and jazz fusion, he shaped the direction of music for decades. For much of his 50-year career, Davis played the trumpet with a thoughtful, expressive tone, frequently using a stemless Harmon mute to create a more intimate and personal sound. While he remains one of the most referenced figures in jazz, his musical spectrum reaches far beyond jazz, from funk and pop to rock, electronica, hip-hop, and more, making him a true genius.

Born on May 26, 1926, in Alton, Illinois, Miles Davis grew up in a middle-upper-class African American family, which gave him early exposure to a variety of musical influences at an early age, and by the age of 12, he began taking trumpet lessons. His professional musical career took off when he joined saxophonist Charlie Parker’s bebop quintet in the 1940s. While he started with Bebop, characterized by fast tempos, adventurous improvisation, and complex harmonies, Davis soon pushed jazz in a new direction. He pioneered cool jazz—calm, subdued tempos and sounds—releasing his groundbreaking album The Birth of the Cool.

In the 1950s, he organized a quintet featuring saxophonist John Coltrane, pianist Red Garland, bassist Paul Chambers, and drummer Philly Joe Jones. This group recorded legendary albums such as The New Miles Davis Quintet, Cookin’, Workin’, Relaxin’, and Steamin’, defining hard bop, a genre characterized by its strong blues influence.

By the 1960s, Davis continued to break musical boundaries. Collaborating with arrangers like Gil Evans, he released Kind of Blues—wildly recognized as his masterpiece, the greatest jazz album ever recorded, and one of the greatest albums of all time, introducing modal jazz. His musical innovations went even further. As the 1970s arrived, he shocked audiences by releasing electronic albums such as, Bitches Brew, Get Up With It, In A Silent Way.

Even in his final years, Davis refused to stay in the past. His 1992 album Doo-Bop, released posthumously, surprised many with its incorporation of hip-hop influences, proving once again that he was always ahead of his time.

Duke Ellington, widely regarded as the greatest jazz pianist of all time and famously referenced in Stevie Wonder’s “Sir Duke,” once called Miles Davis “the Picasso of jazz—the invisible art.” Miles Davis, just like Picasso, never stopped innovating, giving birth to some of the most original music in the world. His music is known for its remarkable expression of silent emotions and feelings that are difficult to describe in words. Miles Davis not only changed jazz but pop culture as well. Whenever jazz seemed stalled, he always pioneered a new genre and presented revolutionary ideas to push jazz forward with his outstanding trumpet skills. His romantic and somewhat melancholic playing of trumpet and astonishing accomplishments defined the Jazz we know today.

To truly capture the immense life and achievements of Miles Davis would require far more than just a few paragraphs. In fact, it would take every page of The Spectrum to do justice to his groundbreaking contributions to pop culture. As the joke at the beginning tells, he was the god of jazz, transcending the ordinary. When Miles Davis passed away, the world didn’t just lose a man. We lost the legend whose echoes will forever shape the sound of modern music.

Off Topic



The Broadcast Album cover
ONLINE SOURCE

Soundwaves of Synth

By TORI BELL '26
Spectrum Staff

When I first heard of the band, Broadcast, it was because one year ago, Spotify recommended me their song “Tears in the Typing Pool”. The song has emotion while maintaining a limited number of instruments. I didn’t really think much about them until about two or three months ago, when Spotify recommended their compilation album *Work and Non Work*. Intrigued by the fuzzy 60s soundtrack ambience and the antique dream-pop, syncopated sound, I searched up the band to learn more when I found out that the lead singer, Trish Keenan, unfortunately passed away in 2011. This was deeply upsetting and left a feeling that Broadcast’s musical journey ended prematurely, but it also led me to have a deeper appreciation for the band and for the limited time that we all have. And soon, I started to become hooked on Broadcast, making them one of my favorite bands of all time.

But, the reason I have written this article is not purely to gush about Broadcast (even though they’re awesome). The 25th anniversary of Broadcast’s album *The Noise Made By People* happened not too long ago (March 20, 2025), and another album by Broadcast, *Tender Buttons*, will celebrate its 20th birthday on September 18th of this year. Both albums sound starkly different from one another, but they both carry Broadcast’s core principles— cohesive melodies and lyrics that are both stream-of-consciousness and a genuine representation of Trish’s emotions and experiences.

The Noise Made By People was Broadcast’s debut album, released in 2000. This album has an atmospheric sound with gentle, deliberate, antique, almost metallic instrumentation, including the manipulation of synths to get a bell-like sound. My favorite song from that album would be “Echo’s Answer”, which has haunting, wintry instrumentation that would leave the listener in an endless expanse if it weren’t for Trish’s calming and comforting voice gen-

tly guiding the listener through the four-minute song. “Until Then” is also one of my favorite songs because it is gentle, yet also feels as if something needs to be said. The track starts out with a sense of longing, yet there’s also a sense of hope in the lyrics (“And until then none of us have anything”). As the song progresses, the guitars build up, creating a fuller sound. But even then, it still remains gentle and comforting. Moreover, many tracks on this album have complex chord progressions, especially “Papercuts,” which has a base key signature of C minor, although it doesn’t seem to have a set key signature throughout the song; the chorus leans towards C major with some undertones of other key signatures. All in all, the album has a consistent sound to it. When I listen to it, it feels like I’m walking through a charming abandoned town that is waiting to be rebuilt (a “City in Progress” reference!).

Tender Buttons, which bears the same name as Gertrude Stein’s experimental prose book from 1914, was released in 2005, almost 20 years ago. A striking thing about this album is how it diverges from their previous albums. Although Broadcast was not immune to change, as their sound did shift from *The Noise Made By People* and *Haha Sound*, *Tender Buttons* was a huge step away. This probably had a lot to do with the fact that Broadcast was reduced to Trish and her husband and long-time bandmate, James Cargill. *Tender Buttons* heavily utilized the now-outdated VST (a type of plugin that can be added to digital audio workstations to add extra instruments or functions) *QuadraSID*, a Commodore 64 sound emulator. This sound chip can be heard particularly well in “Corporeal”. The synth at the beginning of this song almost sounds 8-bit in some ways, but it also drones on melodically, providing a contrast between sharpness and melody. Most of all, Broadcast was able to show their ability to capture different moods and use their instruments to their fullest capability by adding songs that are very different from one another, yet when placed against one

another, create a cohesive album. For example, the song “America’s Boy” has harsher synths and a more forceful drum beat while “Tears in the Typing Pool” and “You and Me in Time” possess more pensive lyrics and atmospheric yet sparse instrumentation that makes the listener feel like they are in an artist’s rendering of nature. However, one of the things that stood out most to me were the lyrics. The lyrics in this album diverged from traditional sentence structure, particularly in “Corporeal”; I especially like the lyrics “We are mankind/We are manikin/With and without mind/With or without Darwin,” and I feel that these lyrics in particular represent the loose writing style on this album. With mellotron (an antique electronic instrument that emulated acoustic instruments) flutes that gently guide the listener, “Tears in the Typing Pool” shares the same loose lyricism, but this song reflects on more personal experiences. The song is open-ended and up to interpretation, with one interpretation being that it is a song about accepting loss/grief despite the difficulty of doing so. Online sources also say that Trish wrote this song while her father was dying of terminal illness.

As a band of contradictions, Broadcast’s change of sound and direction from album to album shows their experimentation. *The Noise Made By People*’s metallic yet gentle sound is a stark contrast to the juxtaposition which is *Tender Buttons*, which combines abrasive synths with reflective lyrics that float in the air, waiting for the listener to interpret them as they wish. This band has taught me that contradictions can be beautiful in many ways; thought processes change over time as one’s experiences mold who they are. Broadcast’s story is difficult and upsetting, but their music has also spread joy and served as an inspiration for many. Broadcast has changed my life in several ways— I feel more motivated to make music and pay attention to how my lyrics connect with the surroundings and world around me, not purely based on personal experiences. I am thankful for Broadcast, who will leave a permanent legacy, both as musicians and as people.

Love Doc

By DR. LOO & DR. HUGS
Spectrum Staff

Hey lovebirds!

Today we are going to talk about how to savor this last summer for those in relationships with significant other(s) leaving high school after the summer. Since many people graduating high school are not rich, local trips will probably be best!

First, let’s take a trip down memory lane. Visiting your elementary school alma mater could be fun, or even Pre-K if you took that route! If you were a local child growing up, there is no better way to make a deeper connection than to talk about the past and reminisce! If you go back to RJ Grey, be sure to take one last walk through those fated woods to Dunkin’. Maybe take a last burrito from Santa Fe or one last stroll through the Acton Arboretum.

Next, it’s beach time! Basic as it is, there is nothing more romantic than going to the beach and posing for a cute Instagram story! Feel the wind blowing through your luscious locks and apply lots of sunscreen. Glowing skin means taking good care of it!

Additionally, take a romantic day out in Boston. Head out for a picnic in the public garden and enjoy the

flowering trees and fluttering birds around. Afterwards, you can even take a swan boat ride or a duck boat tour to get the entire Boston tourist experience (hey it’s popular for a reason)!

Finally, watch a fun movie or TV show together! Whether at O’Neil and getting Menchie’s frozen yogurt after or playing Netflix at home to see your childhood favorite shows one last time, be sure to get close and enjoy it all.

Now, remember, ignoring the issue does not make it any better. At some point, you are going to have to confront the elephant in the room. The best way to make sure your relationship lasts (if you want it to) is to talk about plans for the future. While it will be difficult, it will make you stronger than ever!

Remember, distance is no problem if it’s a person you love, and stay healthy everybody!

Best of luck to you snuggle puppies,
Dr. Loo and Dr. Hugs

P.S. Update on Romeo: He overcame his fears and now has a Juliet to keep him company. Thanks to our prescription of courage, he was able to ask her out and they are now happily dating. He would like to remain anonymous for now, but hey, maybe next time!

THE SILVER
UNICORN
BOOKSTORE

Acton’s independent bookstore is proud
to support our friends at *The Spectrum*!

Shop seven days a week at
12 Spruce St. in West Acton!
Open every day at 10 am!

Shop online anytime at:
SilverUnicornBooks.com

Follow us on:

Off-Topic

Connections

CHECK	RAISE	BLUFF	MOUNTAIN
CREASE	VALLEY	CIVIL	HEATH
FOLD	CALL	STRAND	COLD
GREAT	TARN	GULF	PETAL

Our graduation Connections!
Lukas Kanics / Chief Copy Editor

The Matcha Copycat

By LUCIA SABATEILLI ’26
Mainspread Editor

Blank Street. Originated in Brooklyn, New York in 2020. It’s plastered across your social media platforms, praised for its creativity, efficiency, and rapid domination of an incredibly saturated market - coffee and tea, keeping up New York’s reputation of the city that never sleeps. Due to its high tech espresso machines, Blank Street baristas can concoct a latte with the flick of a finger. From the springtime Daydream Matcha to its inventive Mike’s Hot Honey Latte, the genius behind Blank Street is the marketing itself. Take a treat with a complimentary strawberry shortcake upon first purchase of the incredible Strawberry Shortcake Latte. Further, with brand deals such as that with Kendall Jenner and Emma Chamberlain, who wouldn’t want to go to this amazing cafe? Acquiring more than one million new customers in 2023, Blank Street markets itself as a fresh alternative to corporate machines like Starbucks or Dunkin.

Despite popular opinion, my Blank Street experience fell painfully flat in comparison to expectations. Amidst the rampage of matcha themed drinks, the Daydream Matcha and White Chocolate Matcha were indistinguishable, both lacking the earthy, subtly sweet quality of a good matcha. The expected chocolatey goodness and rich texture fell short by miles. Frankly, it ran parallel to warm, soggy Cocoa-puffs cereal milk. They really put the ‘Blank’ in Blank Street Coffee. And the price bordered upon \$9,

astronomical for the average beverage. So, when I saw the debut of the Strawberry Shortcake Matcha by Blank Street, I refused to try it. To save nine bucks in my piggybank, travel costs, and my tastebuds, I decided to recreate it.

The Strawberry Shortcake Matcha copycat is a silky smooth matcha crafted with ceremonial matcha complemented by a strawberry milk base and topped with french vanilla syrup. Add freshly chopped and crushed strawberries or drink it as it is—either way the flavors will sing and dance on your tongue and leave you wanting to make it again and again!

Ingredients:

1 teaspoon ceremonial grade matcha (for optimal taste)

2 tablespoons hot water (1:2 ratio)

Strawberry milk (or strawberry milk powder)

1 tablespoon French Vanilla Syrup (Monin)

Full Cup of Ice

Fill a cup full of ice

Wet a (preferably) wooden whisk with warm water and add the matcha to a ceramic bowl

Add the hot water to the bowl, whisk the matcha and water together to reach a thick, blended consistency

Add the matcha mixture to the cup of ice

Fill the cup with strawberry milk

Add the French vanilla syrup

All done! A Strawberry Shortcake Matcha for half the cost and time!

The School Uniform Controversy

By TINA LI ’27
Op-Ed Editor

For years, school uniforms have been a controversial topic in many schools. Do school uniforms actually help students? Advocates argue that uniforms decrease distractions and promote discipline, but how true is that? In kindergarten, I attended a private school with a strict uniform policy before moving to the AB district. The only thing I vividly remember from my year there was how much I dreaded wearing the school-provided clothes—the scratchy fabric, the stiff collars, and the tacky dresses. It was torture even thinking about changing from my soft, cotton pajamas into the straitjackets they called uniforms. The pants alternative wasn’t much better. The rigid, jean-like fabric disguised as khakis, paired with the itchy collared shirt, was uncomfortable and restrictive. The clothes that were supposed to reduce distractions did the complete opposite. Instead of focusing on my teacher’s storytime, I spent the day feeling irritated and trapped in the fabric that made me miserable. Despite the widespread belief that uniforms improve academic performance and behavior, research says otherwise.

One of the main arguments for school uniforms is that they help students concentrate on their education rather than their outfit choices. However, studies suggest otherwise. According to the National Institute of Health, students in schools with uniforms show no significant improvement in behavior, performance, or attendance compared to those without uniforms.

In fact, uncomfortable clothing can heighten frustration and discomfort, making it harder to focus. Students may struggle with temperature issues, ill-fitting clothes, or irritating fabrics, leading them to concentrate more on their discomfort than on their lessons. Allowing students to wear clothing of choice helps them feel more at ease, ultimately improving their focus in the classroom. Additionally, many schools don’t provide clothing conscious of people with fabric allergies or irritants, creating another issue altogether. Why limit self-expression and heighten student pain for a non-existent or irrelevant problem?

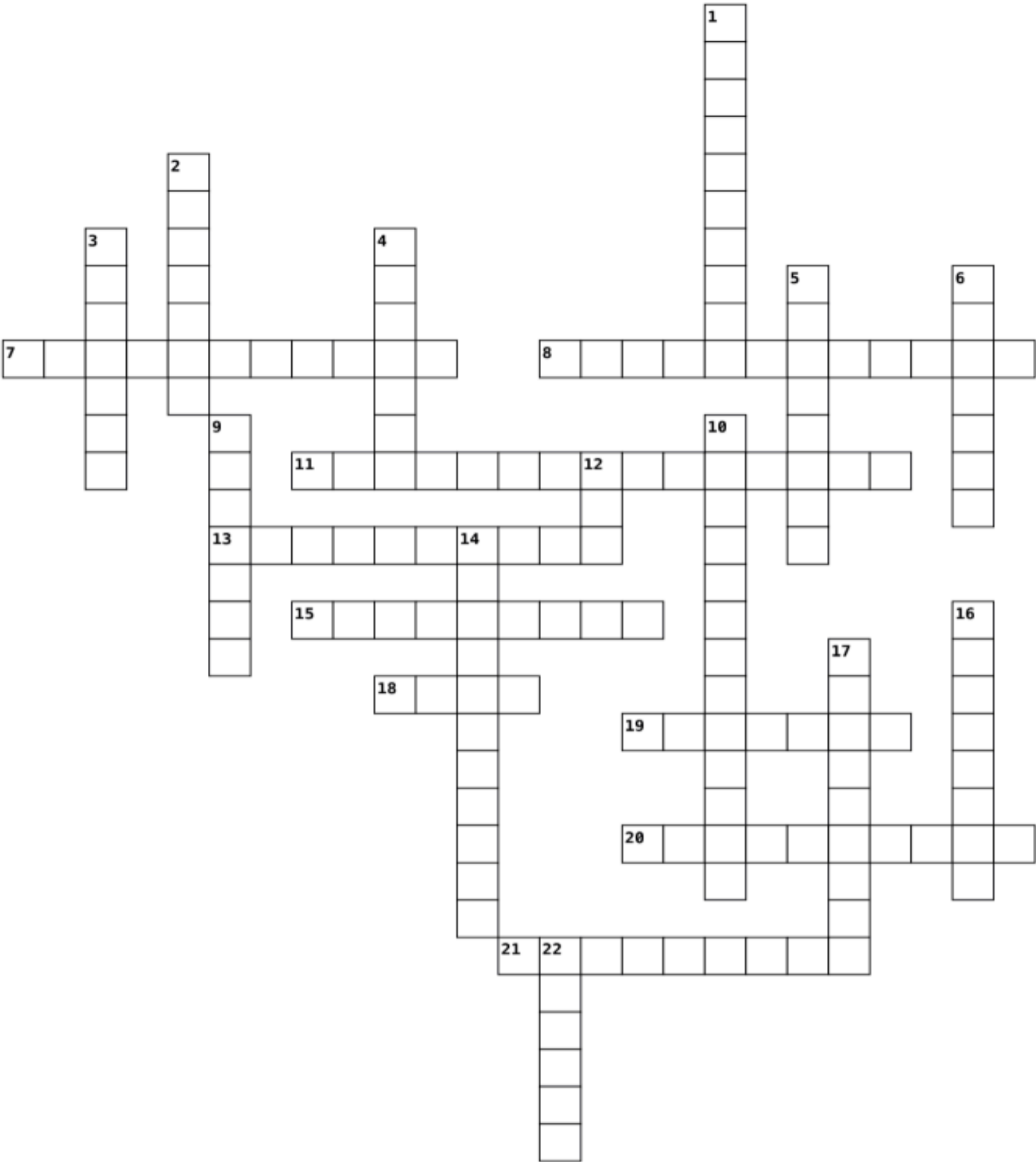
Another major drawback of school uniforms is their impact on student identity. Adolescence is a crucial time for self-expression, and forcing students to wear identical outfits stifles their ability to explore their personal style and develop confidence in their individuality. Furthermore, some uniform policies fail to accommodate religious or cultural dress requirements, forcing students to choose between adhering to school rules and honoring their beliefs. This lack of inclusivity can make students from diverse backgrounds feel alienated and unsupported. Additionally, uniforms take away a fundamental freedom: the ability to make decisions about personal appearance. Teens should be able to express themselves through their clothing, as it fosters independence and self-assurance. Strict dress codes send the message that conformity matters more than individ-

uality, which is not the lesson we should be teaching young minds. In theory, uniforms could help foster a sense of community and belonging with everyone wearing the same clothes, but in reality this just masks the people and is not going to be effective.

The financial burden of uniforms is another issue. While some say that having only one set of clothes is better for saving money over the long term, this just isn’t true. It isn’t sustainable to only have one pair of all of the clothes that the school requires. For lower-income families, purchasing school-approved uniforms and casual clothing for everyday wear can be an unnecessary expense. Many uniform policies require specific brands, colors, or styles, further driving up costs and limiting accessibility for some students. Instead of easing financial strain, uniforms often create another obstacle for families who are already struggling.

The argument for school uniforms largely centers on the idea that they improve student focus and discipline. In reality, however, uniforms limit individuality, self-expression, and autonomy while placing unnecessary financial pressure on families. Rather than enforcing rigid dress codes, schools should encourage students to feel comfortable expressing themselves within reasonable guidelines. Ultimately, allowing students to choose their own clothing fosters confidence, creativity, and a stronger sense of self—qualities that are far more valuable than forced conformity.

Off-Topic



Across

- 7. Colorful in spirit
- 8. Most Likely To...
- 11. Last applause
- 13. Hands-on work experience
- 15. Counting the hours for unpaid work
- 18. The last dance for seniors
- 19. Some people get financial aid or scholarships for this
- 20. Ceremony on June 6th
- 21. Congratulations! "YOUR NAME" Class of 2025

Down

- 1. Redbulls and Celsius are your best friends during these
- 2. Extra time taken between high school and college
- 3. "We did it!" emotion
- 4. Proof that you made it
- 5. Book of memories
- 6. The feeling you get exiting the school doors
- 9. Oldest of the bunch
- 10. "Don't tell anyone, we are off to the beach!"
- 12. Toss this in the air!
- 14. "Let Us Swim!"
- 16. Time off in the summer
- 17. Random or chosen?
- 22. What Wes Schroll and thousands of others are

The Other Side

SPECTRUM’S SIX 6-WORD STORIES

Went to the theater, got played.

Got a big stick, spoke softly.

FAILED DRIVING TEST, WENT ABOVE PAR.

I failed my narrative writing class.

CLUB MEETING TODAY, WHERE IS EVERYONE?

Went stargazing during day, got sunburned.



A Graduation Sonnet

By NATHANIEL KIM '27
News Editor

From crossing the streets to walking the halls,
You have shown me what I can and can't do.
I've learned enough to know what my heart calls,
I've seen enough; I give you my adieu!
Looking back, I wish I could change the past,
O' well, freshman year is just freshman year!

Who would have known that geo was a blast;
Only hope you can save your future tears!
Whatever is next, you've told me enough,
I know you now, but times will sure be rough.
However you change, please change for the great,
Whoever awaits, don't let them make you wait,
Let us be free, let us be departing;
From being told then, we are just starting!

----- WAR
CIVIL, COLD, GREAT, GULF

POKER ACTIONS
CALL, CHECK, FOLD, RAISE

TYPES OF FOLDS
CREASE, MOUNTAIN, PETAL, VALLEY

LAND TERMINOLOGY
BLUFF, HEATH, STRAND, TARN