THE JET GAZETTE

"WE'RE ALL JETS HERE"

Late Spring Edition

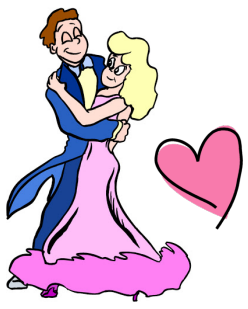
June 2021

EMHS at Adventureland



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Senior Prom



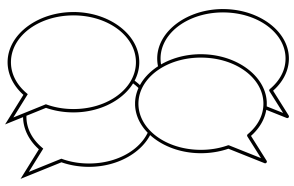
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The Future of East Meadow High School

Jakub Brachowski and Sevi Ozgur, *Contributors*

East Meadow High School has been through a lot this year. We remained strong and fought through it together; now we must prepare for the next year. How will we open? What will clubs and sports look? Will there be a virtual option? The majority of students hope that masks and desk shields will disappear next year because they are a big distraction during class. Students are hoping for less restrictions, more freedom, and for everyone to come back to school full time.

The *Jet Gazette* interviewed Assistant Principal, Mr. Drew Genoino and Superintendent, Dr. Kenneth Card, Jr. to see what their vision is for EMHS 2021-2022.

Classrooms: Right now classes contain dividers on every desk in the room. Students are expected to wear masks at all times (except gym and lunch which allow for mild restrictions). What do you envision classrooms to look like next year?

Mr. Genoino: "As of right now we are preparing and setting up to have classes everyday where students are back in full. There has been no indication that we will be maskless next year. So we would be planning for masks with the hope that possibly there will be no masks depending on how many people are vaccinated and the health department's guidelines. I'm not sure about dividers. It all depends on the Covid-19 guidelines.

"There has been no indication that we will be maskless next year."

Dr. Card: I hope that we will be back to normal. I think from what we are seeing right now in terms of the infection rate and in terms of the availability of vaccines, I'm hopeful that September will be as close to normal as possible as we exit this pandemic. Our planning still includes making sure we have necessary safety protocols for students to come back. But those protocols are based on information we receive from the Department of Healthand Nassau County Health Department.

Technology: In the beginning of the school year, every student received a Chromebook. This boost in technology is just the beginning. What technology trends will East Meadow continue to embrace?

Mr. Genoino: The school had initially set a plan that they wanted to go one to one [for Chromebooks]. Here, every department was given a few Chromebook carts, we were using Google Classroom and everyone had their own Google passwords. You always start small. In a few years everyone, students and teachers, was supposed to have their own Chromebook. With Covid occurring and Covid restrictions having to go into lockdown and then hybrid, that kind of expedited the one to one so it quickly became not a few years away, but now.

Dr. Card: I think that eventually outside of the pandemic, we were moving in the direction of one to one computing, ensuring that students would have a device and that we would be using some type of platform to deliver instruction remotely or here in school. That has always been our plan and the pandemic has sped up that process.

The Future of Schoology?

Mr. Genoino: Schoology is going to stay. We are starting to see Schoology update their product in order for our needs. It was a little tough at the beginning of the year. They are starting to learn a lot. Students are starting to learn it, teachers are starting to learn it, but also Schoology is starting to teach us. For instance, the calendar goes into depth to show you the due dates so you can track your calendar a little bit better.

The Virtual Option: Many students were forced to stay virtual throughout the whole year due to health concerns. What does the future look like for these students?

Mr. Genoino: "One thing we have to keep in mind is that when we are looking at what school is going to look like next year; it's not necessarily going to be what I want or hope. We have to stay within what the CDC guidelines tell us, what the health department guidelines tell us, and then certain things I hear from our central office and from Mr. Howard. When this information is given, it usually follows a chain [of command]."

"Schoology is going to stay."

Dr. Card: At this point, fingers crossed we hope that virtual will not be necessary, however we are still planning for it through Dr. Casamento's office and we have started to put together a committee to talk about virtual options, if necessary, what it might look like. We ask people such as teachers, administrators, parents, and students to sit on this committee so that we can begin to plan now should that become a necessity. A virtual option would probably be imposed on New York State school districts, but as of today we haven't received word of whether that would be required yet.

Outside the Classroom: Many students look forward to after school clubs and sports. What can students expect regarding these timeless activities?

Dr. Card: I see no reason why sports wouldn't start in September. In terms of the data of infection rates and testing and vaccines availability I think we are moving closer and closer to normalcy.

"I see no reason why sports wouldn't start in September."

Shopping Sprees & Moral Fees

Allyson Hollywood, *Editor in Chief*

The mall is filled with countless stores housing racks of clothes, shoes, the newest computers, toys, makeup, and more. Have you ever stopped to think how all these fashion and technology stores are rapidly updated on the latest trends? New, popular items fill the shelves within days or weeks, and just as quickly, the next hot commodity takes their place. So what is the source of all this *stuff*?

Thank "fast fashion." Brands such as Zara, H&M, Topshop, Forever 21, and Shein are guilty of feeding into this consumer culture. Fast fashion, by definition, is, “inexpensive clothing produced rapidly by mass-market retailers in response to the latest trends.” This comes at the cost of the lives of millions of workers; 80% being women and even many children, who slave over repetitive tasks for hours on end, receiving minimal pay that does not cover the basic cost of living. In fact, according to the research conducted by Battered Women’s Support Services, only 2% of those who work in the fast fashion industry receive a "living" wage.

Under-developed countries are the main culprits; the fashion production industry rarely provides basic worker rights or protections to their employees. Garment factory employees work lengthy shifts in unbearable conditions with no breaks, crammed into factory rooms, pressured to meet the day’s quota.

The unregulated world of fashion needs to change, but if the demand stays high and consumers continue to shop, there will be no incentive for change.

"Fast fashion" tends to produce low quality clothing. As trends are rushed to be pushed out to displays and malls across America and the world, quality drops in exchange of quantity and, of course profit. This is where the environmental aspect comes in.

If the social implications were not bad enough, nature suffers just as much as we do when it comes to fast fashion. The low-quality materials and the numerous micro-fashion seasons are reasons people throw away their clothes and shop for new ones as soon as possible. This crowds landfills with garments and unnecessary materials that took millions of gallons of water to create. Flooded landfills and emptied water sources; something just isn’t right with this picture. An article posted on Penn State’s Mathematical and Sustainability page in 2015, states that to create one pair of blue jeans takes 1,800 gallons of water to sustain the amount of cotton crop needed to make them. This is only the indirect usage.

The World Bank Organization points out a terrifying fact. “Every year, the fashion industry uses 93 billion cubic meters of water…” To put it in perspective, they state that this is “enough to meet the consumption needs of five million people.” Water waste isn’t the only issue. Water contamination is also a significant problem. Microplastic, dyes, unused garments, and chemicals all can be found polluting our waters, tracing back to garment factories. Having these toxic impurities in the water can affect marine life and biomagnify through the food chain to have an impact on human health as well.

Is there an advantage to fast fashion? Why do we support this inhuman, environmental-destroying act? Consumer culture. Wealthy business tycoons have taken over almost every aspect of our lives, promoting their products in even the most subliminal way. Social media promotes sales, trends, and one-day delivery services. In the end, the masses fail to benefit, yet are stuck in a loop of buying and tossing and repeating the process every time they see a new product.

There is a way to combat this! Thrifting has come to the forefront of many teens’ lives. An act that would have been laughed at years ago, teens are now embracing hand-me-down clothes and the designs of the past. Mending clothes is also another option. Instead of throwing away a ripped t-shirt sew or patch it. Supporting small and sustainable businesses will also reduce your carbon footprint while knowing you are not supporting companies that run off unpaid and unregulated human labor. The total at the bottom of the receipt does not even begin to explain the true cost behind the clothes.

If Not Now… When?

Danielle Kravitz, *Editor in Chief*

The very first day of my freshman year, I sat in Mrs. Kudla’s journalism class and knew immediately that I wanted to be the Editor in Chief for the *Jet Gazette* by my senior year. I wrote articles, learned how to do the layout, and then applied to be on the staff at the end of the year.

In my sophomore year, I was the Editor of Features and the Business Manager. Again, I contributed articles and ideas, helped with the layout and once again, applied to be on the staff for the following year. This time, I aimed higher, applying for the revered title of Editor in Chief. At the final meeting of the year, a slideshow revealed which staff members were selected for the editor positions. As each slide revealed the name of a person and a position, I grew more and more nervous. Finally, we reached the end and the final slide appeared: Editors in Chief: Allyson Hollywood and Danielle Kravitz! That was my name on the board! All of my hard work and dreams since my first day in journalism were achieved a whole year earlier than I had expected.

I spent my junior year as the Editor in Chief with one of my closest friends which made it even more rewarding. I continued with my position this year; my senior and last year working on the newspaper.

This is my final letter. Talking about how I achieved my ambitions with the newspaper is an amazing example of why you should set goals and work hard to achieve them. There were other people in my freshman journalism class who labored just as hard and loved it. I was so nervous that I would not get the job, and yet, I earned it even earlier than I thought possible.

We each get this one life. If you do not go after what you want now, when are you going to? Yes, we’ve heard this speech a million times from a million people, but it is so relevant. I want each and every one of you to take something away from this. If there is a dream or goal that you want, go after it. Do not listen to anyone who has doubts or does not believe in you, because I promise you, you are bigger than that. Those people who do not believe in you are probably too scared to pursue their own dreams.

My fellow seniors, I am so proud and happy for all of you. We did it! We are graduating! These are our last few weeks all together, so make them worth it. We are all moving on to bigger and more amazing things and I am so excited to see where everyone ends up in the future. I hope you all get your dream life.

To the East Meadow High School teachers, thank you. Honestly, thank you so much. Not one of us would be here without you. Every student has that one teacher that made a huge impact, and I was lucky enough to have several. Thank you for not only teaching us how to solve for "x," but teaching us valuable life lessons we will need once we leave high school. Thank you for always encouraging us to dream.

Finally, to every student, faculty, and staff member, it was a pleasure spending these past four years with you and getting to know so many of you. I wish you all the absolute best and do not forget, it is *never* too late to pursue your dreams.

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EMHS Goes to Adventureland

Brianna Vallone, *Contributor*
Photos courtesy of Charlie-Ann Strycharz

On Wednesday May 26, East Meadow High School students had the opportunity to spend the night at Adventureland! According to Mrs. Christina Egan, almost 600 students and staff attended. "It was awesome!" Egan exclaimed! There was a great turn out and everyone had a lot of fun. Several students came and enjoyed themselves by going on a number of fun rides.



The most popular rides included the exhilarating Frisbee, the rocking Pirate Ship, and the not so scary Haunted House, which by far had the longest line. "The swings were the best part!" exclaimed freshman Charlie-Ann Strycharz. "I enjoy going up and down on the Pirate Ship," shared Aiden Augustyn, also a freshman. Fellow freshman Myrdiva Jean-Pierre, agreed, "I enjoyed the thrill of the Frisbee and the Pirate Ship."

"The water rides were the best part!"

Students were really disappointed to learn that the biggest and most thrilling roller coaster, Turbulence, was closed for the whole night. Instead, some decided to cool down on this humid, hot night by making a splash on the Big Dipper ride. Freshman Amyah Anthony shared, "The water rides were the best part. I got soaked. However, the pizza tasted like cardboard. It was upsetting that Turbulence was closed." The drenching water was only a precursor of what was to come.

East Meadow High School teachers and their own children joined the students on the lines. This younger generation had a wild time on the tea cups and merry go round. Guidance Counselor Mrs. Michelle Merolla brought her children and loved every minute. "I thought it was so much fun. It was so great to see all the students running around, laughing together... and really nice to see so many teachers with their families as well."

Mrs. Jennifer Chaplin, math teacher, agreed, "I thought it was a wonderful night! It was the first time I saw some of my students (vaccinated



of course) without a mask! I really enjoyed watching my students having fun together and my own children liked the short lines."

Many students took advantage of the junk food options there as well. From churros, Dippin' Dots, funnel cake, ice freezes, and ice cream nachos, Adventureland offered interesting treats to say the least. The food court also had things like pizza, chicken tenders, burgers and more.

Fellow math teacher, Mrs. Suzanne Ardilio exclaimed, "Adventureland was such a wonderful night. Even getting caught in the rain added to the laughs and fun we had. Seeing our students enjoy themselves after such a tough year was so nice. My own kids had a blast, they felt like they were the kings of the park not having to wait on any lines. Overall great night and we should do it again!" Things were going so well at EMHS night at Adventureland until around 7:45 pm.

Unfortunately, that was when the sky suddenly burst open and a torrential downpour soaked the attendees. It was complete chaos once the rain started. Things went from fun to fiasco within minutes! People were running around the amusement park getting soaked, seeking shelter from the storm in places such as the gift shop, concession stands, the food court or the arcade. As Guidance Counselor Mrs. Joanna Silberman stated, "I'm just happy we made it back to our car before the rain started! WE RAN!!!!!"



"It was so great to see all the students running around, laughing together."

Sadly, Adventureland had to close down for the night so everyone had to call their parents to come pick them up and leave. Even though everyone did not get to stay until 9:00 pm like planned, EMHS night at Adventureland was still a major success and everyone had a lot of fun!

Mental Health Awareness Month

Samantha Goldstein, *Features Editor*

May is National Mental Health Awareness Month. Mental health is a huge issue that many teens share. This year at East Meadow High sShool students and staff took extra steps to spread awareness and make sure all students were educated.



Along with decorated posters in the hallways, there were daily challenges on the announcements for students and staff. These challenges were given with an explanation of how participating in that challenge could better your mental health.

These challenges included exercise because when a person exercises, endorphins (the body's "happy drug") are released.

At the end of Mental Health Awareness Month, there was a celebration. During each student's English period, staff served ices and a smiley face sticker. It may seem small, but it still made most students happy to replace class with a snack.

Mental Health Awareness Month is a great way for the staff to let students know there are resources and people looking out for them. If you struggle with your mental health or need help, don't be afraid to reach out to a guidance counselor or teacher.



EMPL Update

Spencer Leventhal, *News Editor*

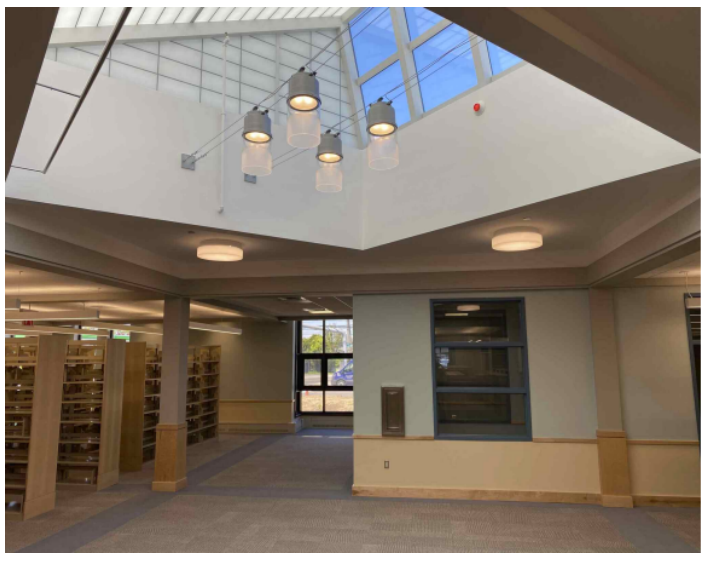
On July 11, 2019 the construction of the East Meadow Public Library (EMPL) began. This construction is an exciting ongoing event in the East Meadow community. This project has faced many challenges because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, library director Ms. Carol Probeyahn, advocated for the construction to remain on a steady course to completion.

Numerous additions are being made to the library's infrastructure. Probeyahn stated, "We have a new community room with fixed seating. A reading garden where patrons will be able to sit on a nice day and where staff can have story time for children." These additions will create new programs that will be available to the public upon reopening. The community room will be used to show films and hold concerts for audiences, as well as much more. The reading garden will provide a beautiful environment for patrons to read and relax, (the reading garden will also come to serve as a Covid-19 safe outside reading atmosphere). Probeyahn is very excited about these new features that will keep with the ongoing modernization of libraries around the country.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic and construction forced the closure of the main building, virtual programs continued and patrons picked up books on hold at the Samanea Mall. The EMPL provided a sense of security and normalcy to its community members throughout this strange time.

Probeyahn is also looking forward to additional programs. "Outdoor programs in the garden, STEM programs in the makerspace in the lower level and concerts in the community room." These are all very exciting activities that will be available to all.

The new and improved library is expected to open in the summer of 2021. Stay updated on the renovation on the library's website.



courtesy of eastmeadow.info

Volunteers 'R' Us

Mahira Ahmad, *Contributor*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. proclaimed, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?" Service activities are a splendid way to fulfill that question, and here on Long Island there are countless opportunities!

Community service was introduced in 1975 throughout England and Wales as a viable alternative to prison. Now, high school students volunteer to spruce up their college resumes, and end up finding the work rewarding. Sophomore Gabriella Reiss expressed, "I definitely think that all people should experience some form of volunteer work because it can increase one's empathy, sense of responsibility, experience, and work ethic."

The aid of the internet has allowed many to do service activities online, in the comfort of one's own home. Freshman Maggie Li shed light on her experience volunteering even in this pandemic. She applied for volunteering organizations online through a website or social media platform. "Most organizations only require your contact information and the answers to a few questions, but others may have a more stringent application system equipped with necessary qualifications and an interview process."

"Volunteering was hard to find at the height of the pandemic, however things have really started to open up now."

Students can start their search for volunteer opportunities with East Meadow High School's guidance counselors. Guidance counselors are a great source of where to get started.

"Volunteering was hard to find at the height of the pandemic, however things have really started to open up now and there are many places that are now taking volunteers again," Ms. Carly Salzman, guidance counselor, observed.

In order to participate in these wonderful activities, forms and applications vary from organization to organization. Some require an application or letters of recommendation. Volunteer work without compensation does not require working papers at all!

"I believe you should join the Key Club because you meet the kindest people."

If volunteering outside of school seems intimidating, EMHS' service clubs include Key Club. Freshman Geneva Bhagroo is this year's Freshman Representative 2020-2021 and next year will be Treasurer of 2021-2022. "I started community service through middle school, I joined Builder's club and was blown away by how active it was," she said. "Volunteering does not have to be an outside of school activity, it can easily be done through school."

Key Club has been around for years supplying people with what they need to learn. "I believe you should join the Key Club because you meet the kindest people, and do the greatest things, and when you do service projects it doesn't just benefit the community but it also benefits yourself," said Bhagroo.

Volunteering can seem intimidating at first, but it is a great way to give back to the community and grow as a person. One small act of volunteering can make a difference. You can do this East Meadow!

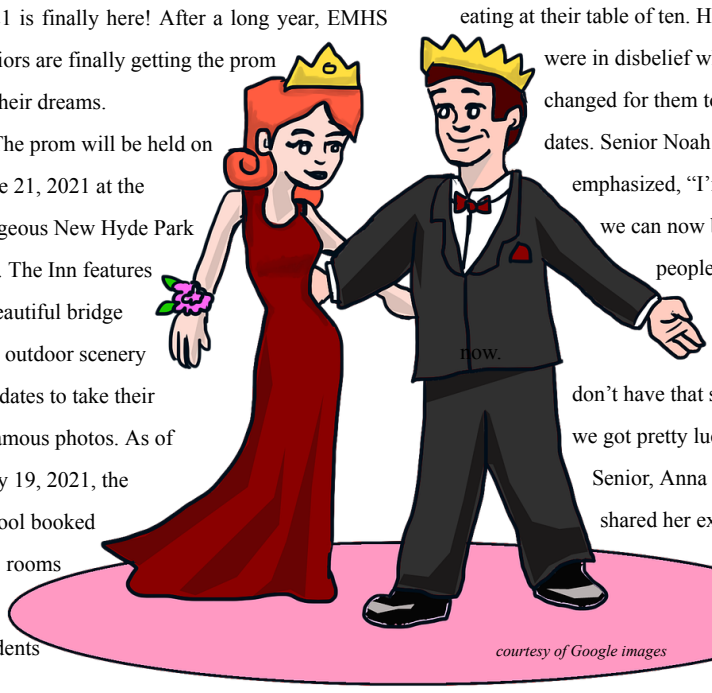
Happily Ever After: Prom

Annabella Gangi, *A&E Editor*

Dress: ✓ Tuxedo: ✓ Limo: ✓

Excitement: ABSOLUTELY! Prom season 2021 is finally here! After a long year, EMHS seniors are finally getting the prom of their dreams.

The prom will be held on June 21, 2021 at the gorgeous New Hyde Park Inn. The Inn features a beautiful bridge and outdoor scenery for dates to take their infamous photos. As of May 19, 2021, the school booked two rooms so students can move back and forth, and adhere to Covid-19 guidelines. Students will enjoy their time with music, taking photos, dancing, and spending time with their friends.



courtesy of Google images

"I am happy to be able to have a prom. It almost feels normal."

Senior Ashley Klein exclaimed, "I am glad we are able to have a prom with everyone, no matter, masks or not, I am happy to be able to have a prom. It almost feels normal." Definitely more normal than last year, when sadly all area high school proms were canceled due to the pandemic.

The national health outbreak has still impacted prom procedures. At press time prior to prom, students and their dates are required to get Covid-19 tested. During the prom, students must wear a mask at all times besides eating at their table of ten. However, students were in disbelief when restrictions changed for them to bring outside dates. Senior Noah Diamond emphasized, "I'm really glad that we can now bring any guests, people are going to be much happier now. Other schools don't have that same option, so we got pretty lucky."

Senior, Anna Hollywood shared her excitement, "It is like the first thing that feels normal in over a year and it gives me a lot of hope that things are getting better. It is nice to have something to look forward to after such a hectic year." Fellow senior, Juliana Bracco declared, "Honestly, I am really excited for prom, after everything this year we have to make the best of it and we are going to have a great time!"



Some places to volunteer at:

Long Island Children's Museum: a non-profit learning laboratory that inspires children and adults through interdisciplinary, hands-on, playful experiences. Their mission is to share their passion and their relationship to the real world. Volunteer opportunities consist of museum store assistant, assistant explainer, office assistant, floater, and birthday parties. Volunteer applications are on their website: https://www.licm.org/.

The Long Island Cares Student Volunteer Corps: students carry the opportunity to work alongside staff and other volunteers to understand and participate in hunger advocacy. Registration is online at https://www.licares.org/.

Ronald McDonald House: volunteers prepare meals, talk to families, and maintain housekeeping for sick children that require living within close vicinity to a hospital. The nearest house here on Long Island is Ronald McDonald House Charities New York Metro.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island: a mentoring program which hopes, "That it will lead to a reduction in poverty and unemployment, to safer schools and neighborhoods, or to a renewed optimism for growth." Students can become a "Big," a volunteer mentor who is matched in a one-to-one relationship with a child, "Little," in the program.

Schoolhouse.world: this Covid-19 response initiative started by Sal Khan, the same man who created Khan Academy. The program allows students from around the world to be tutored by people who are experienced in math fields.

Pens to Friends: an organization with a mission to create friendships between children with unfortunate situations and volunteers. Volunteers can write physical letters or craft them virtually, and then have them sent out to children who need someone to talk to. Their Instagram is @penstofriends and their website sign up is www.penstofriends.carrd.com.

HorseAbility: an organization located in Old Westbury that makes horse riding accessible to people with special needs. Freshman Ann Joseph spoke highly of her guidance counselor's advice, "I was actually looking for available volunteer organizations as many weren't taking volunteers due to the pandemic. So, I met with my guidance counselor and she recommended HorseAbility."

Diverse Literature Sweeping Through EMHS

Mahira Ahmed and Maggie Li, *Contributors*

On April 7, Mr. Jim Mendonis, East Meadow School District's Director of Social Studies and 21st Century Learning, and Mr. Frank Lukasik, Director of Literacy and Funded Programs, stood before the Board of Education and advocated the institution of an inclusive environment for all students by bringing more books with characters of different cultures and identities into the classrooms and libraries of East Meadow.

"We're talking about diverse characters," Lukasik asserted in the *East Meadow Herald*. "Characters that represent different ethnicities, race, gender, sexual orientation, have different family structures. We're also looking at authors that are diverse. We're looking at diverse genres and also diverse formats."

"We're talking about diverse characters."

Diversity has been a delicate subject over the decades, and is unfortunately lacking in many American classrooms. The University of Wisconsin-Madison's Cooperative Children's Book Center compiled statistics surrounding the ethnic backgrounds of childre's literature in 2018: only 1% of books depicted Native characters, 5% Latinx, 7% Asian Pacific Islander, 10% African American, 27% including animals or others, and as the majority, the remaining 50% were centered around white characters.

"I am Asian, and when I was younger I never really thought about representation in literature," freshman Geneva Bhagroo expressed. "But the more I realize it, the more I feel that it needs to be addressed. This lack has only deepened my passion for representation of minority ethnic groups."

Freshman Sasha Klepner acknowledged, "I feel very represented because I'm, well, white. However, it would be nice to see more positive Jewish representation since that's also part of my identity."

An example of a marginalized topic with minimal representation is disability. According to the Cooperative Children's Book Center's 2019 study, as little as 3.4% of children's books have disabled main characters compared to the 26% of Americans who are affected by a disability.

Mrs. Jody Siegel, a 9th grade English teacher, commented, "For students, you can't possibly represent every diverse aspect of every student in your classes, so invariably, someone might feel "left out" if they don't feel represented in literature while others are."

According to the Cooperative Children's Book Center's 2019 study, as little as 3.4% of children's books have disabled main characters compared to the 26% of Americans who are affected by a disability.

School districts like Smithtown have faced backlash against their own diverse literature initiative. Students and residents wrote to the district asking for more racial diversity in the school's curriculum. However, controversy erupted when "unconfirmed allegations spread through social media that children were being indoctrinated in anti-white and anti-police teachings," according to *Newsday*.

Freshman Jiya Kumar, a fellow Asian American student remarked, "As an avid reader I've always seen a certain type of Indian girl being shown. With lack of representation I never felt seen or felt like I could have the same things as the white characters could have since authors portray people of color in a stereotypical and demeaning way."

Lack of representation may engender a false or confused sense of identity. In contrast, authentic literature helps children from minority communities develop more confidence in their individuality. As Krystal Jagoo's article, "The Importance of Representation in Books," states, "Children may see less value in themselves because of such poor representation, which can potentially minimize, erase, and ignore their identities."

The "project" first took root with Lukasik, who had a vision of implementing more diverse reads for the children in classrooms who are from differing backgrounds. Mendonis caught on to the idea, and the two men sought to enact it in the district. The idea of bringing books into non-English classes has also been considered.

"Children may see less value in themselves because of such poor representation, which can potentially minimize, erase, and ignore their identities."

"Has your social studies teacher ever come in with a picture book and say, 'I'm going to read this picture book to you?" asked Mendonis. "Never happens right? Again, as a teacher, I never thought to do that, and then I got turned onto this whole new world of what great conversation starters picture books can be!" Using meaningful, but easy to understand literature, to introduce topics in various courses like social studies could stimulate a greater interest and understanding in students.

For some, an inclination to read may be difficult to uphold, particularly if the books that they are exposed to do not appeal to them. Mendonis encountered this challenge as a child, "Without having the ability to go and find a book on my own and really think about what I wanted to read about, it just didn't inspire me to become an avid reader." Just as constraints in the reading material of school curriculums may limit the horizons of students, choice and the potentiality of seeing oneself represented in the books they love can foster love of reading.

"I am able to learn about new cultures through the selection of new books they have at the library. It also saves me from increasing my Amazon debt."

"My goal is to help my students develop critical thinking skills through reading and writing, enabling them to become informed citizens of our society, as well as to develop a lifelong love of literature and reading," Siegel stated.

Librarians, like EMHS's very own Mrs. Peggy Gallagher, are major contributors to the initiative. Part of their job is to recommend new novels that may spark a student's interest, and they are constantly endeavoring to increase the accessibility of books in the community. This year, the East Meadow School District purchased Sora, an ebook and audiobook platform, which furthers the convenience of reading. Along with assisting students in navigating the site, Gallagher also helps students obtain East Meadow Public Library cards (EMPL), which is linked to the EMHS Library, opening up the opportunity to read thousands of digital books.

"The library has been great for enhancing my taste in literature," Klepner remarks. "I am able to learn about new cultures through the selection of new books they have at the library. It also saves me from increasing my amazon debt."

For book suggestions and reviews, Gallagher consults professional journals such as *School Library Journal* as well as *The New York Times* best sellers list (Young Adult) and *Goodreads*. "I also consult with my colleagues, fellow librarians, and students," she exclaimed. "I love when a student suggests a book to me!"

Many diversity-related events may be on the horizon as Mendonis would like to bring public speakers who are educated in different fields of culture, race, and religion to school audiences. Mendonis says, "The positive aspect of learning about different communities and being more accepting is that you are more equipped to be a global citizen when you graduate high school." Currently, they are also discussing the implementation of this proposal with consultants specializing in the subject matter, as well as endeavoring to develop a social studies unit examining segregation on Long Island with other school districts in the county.

Actively working to remedy a deep-rooted issue that plagues the American education system, this new diverse literature initiative that the East Meadow School District is promoting is a great step forward; a step that will hopefully ripple into many more, guiding our community toward a better, more just, future.

"Summertime and the Livin' is Easy"

Yassin Bahgat, *Contributor*

The summer is the perfect time to go to try things outside your comfort zone. It's filled with many activities that are free! The East Meadow Public Library helps students and families of East Meadow visit places like museums by making them cheaper and easier to access.

"Old Bethpage Village Restoration is a 209 acre village located in Bethpage, NY, which includes a wide variety of homes, farms, and businesses from the 1800s. It's just the perfect place for you if you want to travel back in time and be fully immersed in the nineteenth century Long Island life." It is free of technology and the village demonstrates how people lived in simpler times. It normally costs $15 per person, however the library pass offers free admission for up to four people.

Interested in aviation? Have you always wanted to learn about space and airplanes? Go visit the Cradle of Aviation right next door in Garden City. According to the Cradle of Aviation website, visitors can "explore over 150,000 square feet featuring 75 air and spacecraft from a hot air balloon to an actual Apollo Lunar Module … [there are] eight exhibit galleries and throughout the museum there are volunteer docents to share their aerospace experience. There are over 30 hands-on exhibits, a half dozen cockpits to climb into and many short films throughout the exhibits." The normal price is $21, but with the library's museum pass, it is free for two adults and two children.

Want to get back to nature? According to the Old Westbury Gardens website, "Old Westbury Gardens welcomes visitors of all ages for guided tours of Westbury House, in-depth tours of the formal gardens, school visits, children's programs and events, family programs, museum exhibitions, classic car shows, indoor and outdoor classical and pop concerts, lectures, book signings, horticultural demonstrations and workshops, Scottish Games, botanical arts and gardening classes.". The tickets normally cost $14 per adult but with the library pass, it is free for two adults and two children and there is a 10% discount on the gift shop.

If you thought that's it, then you are wrong! Catch a free outdoor showing of *The Karate Kid* at 8 p.m. June 12 at North Hempstead Beach. If movies are not your thing, then try a concert! Eisenhower Park is coming back with a summer concert series. The Bob Marley tribute band, Roots Foundation, will light up the stage on June 26. Any Way You Want It, the Journey tribute band, will perform on July 3, followed by the Grateful Dead Tribute Half Step on July 10. Finally do not miss the There is Sir Paul which is a Beatles and Paul McCartney cover band, which is on July 24.

Compiled by Abigail Thomas, *Editor*

Congratulations to the Class of 2021

Adelphi University
Andrea, Danielle
Bonilla, Belkis
Bonilla, Miguel
Carpio, Jaina Rashel
Coelho, Austin
Escobar, Valentina
Garcia-Elias, Ashlee
German, Valerie
Gonzalez, Natalie
Hollywood, Anna
Jeremiah, Samson
Kaur, Simranjit
Klepadlo, Matthew
Lam, Samuel
Levenson, Kayla
Manalil, Noel
McGahan, Emma
McQuillan, Cameryn
Mongalo, Matthew Joseph
Munoz, Matthew
Nicolaou, Lucas
Ponce, Lara
Rice, Matthew
Romano, Antonio
Russo, Michael
Schultz, Elizabeth
Shahid, Umair
Simbulan, Marcus
Torres, Justin

Baruch College
Gonzalez, Elvia
Jafri, Dua
Rayson, Zora

Bentley University
Garcia, Kyara

Binghamton University
Labnine, Aya
Mednick, Dylan

BOCES
Brussel, Sean

Coastal Carolina University
Leeb, Nicholas

Citadel Military College of South Carolina
Samida, Kyle

College of Charleston
Rodriguez, Adriana

Colorado State University -Fort Collins
Hollywood, Allyson

Cornell University
Diamond, Noah
Pesa, Mateo

CUNY City College
Felton, Casseus

East Carolina University
Curshen, Jade

The Electrical Training Center
Silva, Matthew

Elizabethtown College
Bernardo, Nataly

Elmira College
Levine, Liana

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Karki, Niskarsha

Farmingdale State College
Antuofermo, Antonio
Caiozzo, Michael
Cangialosi, Michael
Dockery, Danielle
Duhs, Alexa
Geevarghese, Andrew
Giblin, Dylan
Giraci, Sara
Gonzalez, Fabrizzio
Iline, Eric
Maniscalco, Thomas
Moskowski, Luke
Ozgur, Melis
Piccinone, Daniel
Picone, Vincent
Ragalie, Sarah
Razi, Muhammed
Robinson, Tyler
Saffioti, Isabel
Sam, Justin
Saragossi, James
Snow, Daniel
Spinato, Robert
Surlin, Jenya
Wier, Paul

Fashion Institute of Technology
Cardone, Alyssa
Mirza, Mishaal

Florida Atlantic University
Herman, Casey

Fordham University
Jean-Pierre, Maielle
Martinez, Christopher

Gannon University
Tetrault, Jared

Hofstra University
Amjad, Aman
Antenor, David
Bailey, Emely
Barry, Christopher
Haque, Hamna
Johnson, Haley
Kowal, Taras
Schwartz, Ashley
Skoros, Ryan
Tecusan, Kevin

Hofstra cont.
Van Houten, Zachary
Xhindolli, Janet

Hunter Business School
DeLuca, Gabriella

John Carroll University
Tenzer, Austin

Johns Hopkins University
Sugrim, Tyler

LaGuardia Community College
Shafique, Mohammad Zain

Le Moyne College
Espinoza, Kyla
Perez Rodriguez, Jomaily

Long Island University
Hassan, Amir
Javier, John Angelo
Nielsen, John
Rafi, Sammy
Senetto, Meghan
Strifas, John
Zammit, Julia

Loyola University Maryland
Lao, Maxx
Stergis, Shayanne

Marines
Dobrawsky, David

MCPHS University
Chinchilla, Enery

Merrimack College
Gentile, Anthony

Molloy College
Floody, Shannon
Fontana, Isabella
Howell, Carly
Sohl, Megan
Tadres, Beshoy Emad Shaheed Melad

Nassau Community College
Abualya, Laith
Aguilar, Jason
Aguirre-Vergara, Mark
Ambojnon, Diane
Babino, Angela
Biyikli, Seyma
Borone, Daniel



> "Be unafraid to be completely you, and accept all those other individuals that you meet as they are."
>
> ALICIA KEYS

NCC cont.
Brito, Dhiannie
Brown, Giavanna
Carroll, Megan
Castro, Aidan
Clarke, Jalen
Coffey, Jack
Cornell, Thomas
Cuadrado, Christopher
D'Achille, Mia
Danzy, Selena
Desire-Durandisse, Jeff
Desjardins, Jessica
Di Scala, Brian
Fernandez, Tristan
Garcia Rojas, Kayla
Giambald, Joseph
Giraud, Marc
Giuffre, Alexander
Gonzalez, Alejandro
Gudsowski, William
Hand, Michael
Hildenbrand, Christopher
Hirschheimer, Mitch
Huang, Jing
Jackson, Ashton
Kanas, Nicole
Malik, Sahir
Melendez Ochoa, Jimmy
Mincone, Ariyanna
Minsky, Jared
Molnoski, Dennis
Munoz-Ospina, Natalya
Nelson, Jack
Oliveira, Tiago
Palacios, Dylan
Papadadtonakis, Manolis
Patel, Om
Paul , Deneesha Sue-Ann
Pedisich, Brendan
Pereira, Matthew
Polo, Matthew
Rizvi, Ajaz
Romero, Tania Guaman
Sanz, Ayana
Saravia, Jacqueline
Sargent, Tatiana
Sharma, Abhay
Shen, Brandon
Syed, Ramiz
Tejada, Justin
Torres, Annie
Torres, Eleni
Turcios, Kiana
Ventura Bonilla, Hector

Nassau Community College cont.
Weiss, Megan
Williams, Rhoda
Wilson , Kentric
Zaidi, Wajih

New England College
Ballato, Christopher

New York Institute of Technology
Ahmed, Yusra
Chen, Nike
Demir, Saliha
Farquharson, Nicolai
Jablonski, Brian
Kanfer, Jack
Kebreau, Nathaniel
Luna, John
Martin, James
Meah, Tyler
Patel, Hanshal
Pesce, Anthony
Super, Anthony
Vecchione, Christopher
Walli, Mahdiya

New York University
DeJesus, Angelina

Northeastern University
Chinnadurai, Nishanth
Donnelly, Patrick Jerome
Goldberg, Mitchell
Medina, Alexandra
Nogid, Garett
Osher, Lawrence
Patel, Shruti
Patel, Vinit
Rehman, Hafsa
Uppal, Avantika

Nova Southeastern University
Hearty, Jennifer

Ohio State University- Main Campus
Glassman, Sam

Pace University
Ciampi, Anabelle
Laico, Kate

Parsons School of Design
Marsolais, Shannon

Pennsylvania State University
Guarneri, Victoria
Perez, Alexi Ryan

Purdue University-Main Campus
Horwitz, Jonah

Queens College
Daly, Jaden
Seepersaud, Venai

Queensborough Community College
Diaz, Danielle
Turcios Bonilla, Kenya

Riddle Aeronautical University
Karki, Niskarsha

Rochester Institute of Technology
Scheir, Daniel

Roger Williams University
Terino, Emma

Salve Regina University
Kelly, Alexandra

Sacred Heart University
Volpe, Abigail Nicole

Siena College
Columbia, Matthew

Scripps College
Conti, Isabella

Seton Hall University
Stolberg, Sofia Ruth

Stevens Institute of Technology
Philip, Caleb

Suffolk County Community College
Craven, Jacob

SUNY Cortland
Klein, Ashley
Rivera, Bella
Salina, Alvaro

SUNY Delhi
Rosen, Eric

SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry
Foster, Ella

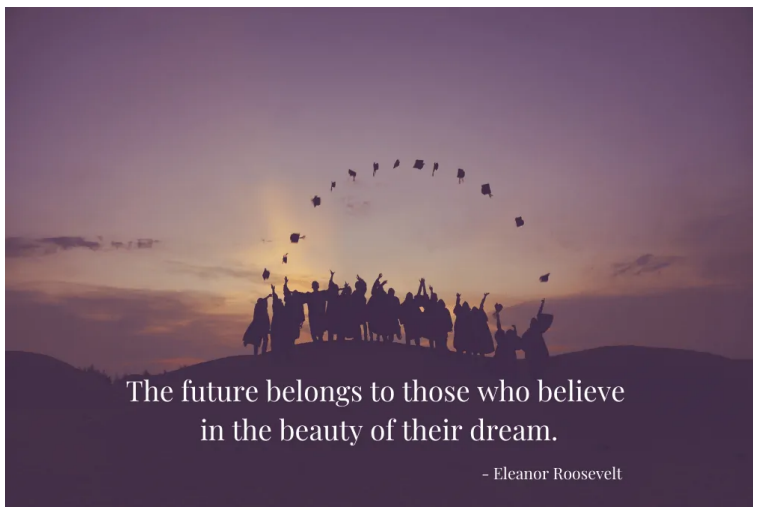
SUNY Fredonia
Klewicki, John

SUNY New Paltz
Bonventre, Matthew
Martin, Alexander

SUNY Old Westbury
Desjardins, Justine
Mirza, Waris
Shahzad, Zainab
Teixeira, Ruben
Vanegas, Christian

SUNY Oneonta
Alagna, Sophia
Hippner, Ashley
Kong, Ryan
Leary, Christopher
Trebendis, Kelly
Vella, Nicholas
Ziegler, Brianna

SUNY Oswego
Tanenblatt, Julie



courtesy of Google images

SUNY Plattsburgh
Paul JR, Mario

SUNY Purchase College
Gramlich, Andrew
Kravitz, Danielle

St. Bonaventure University
Abraham, Jayden

St. Cloud Technical and Community College
Camacho, Madison

St. John's University- New York
Bracco, Juliana
Howery, Brianna
Khanna, Aarti
Khanna, Karan
Lam, Emily Han
Smith, Savannah
Tang, Joel
Thomas, Abigail
Trivolis, Emma

St. Joseph's College- Long Island Campus
Esposito, Ryan
Mann, Dylan

Stony Brook University
David, Niah
Farber, Skylar
Hafke, Sarah
Hossain, Samira
Irshad, Faiz
Jacksi, Ali
Kaur, Harleen
Kumari, Karishma
Levy, Elizabeth
Mei, David
Ng, Rachel
Patel, Dhruvi
Patel, Lisa
Patel, Tashu
Pulle, Michael
Rodriguez, Vanessa
Shin, Julian
Walsh, Catherine
Wetterhahn, Erin
Zubair, Ansa

The New School- Parsons School of Design
Marsolais, Shannon

Temple University
Vilchynskaya, Yana

Trade Union
Christoforatos, Vasilios

Universal Technical Institute - Orlando
Bartlett, Tyler

University at Albany
Botros, Matthew
Kraus, Macrina
Michel, Lauren
Pepanio, Jada Deandra

University at Buffalo
Biju, Roney
Klein, Emily
Squiciarino, Angelina

University of Central Florida
Herman, Carly

University of Connecticut
Insinna, Caroline

University of Delaware
Gangi, Annabella Sophia
Von Ohlen, Abby
Weinstein, Alexander

University of Maryland-College Park
Daddi, Supriya
Shea, Andrew

University of Massachusetts-Amherst
Helming, Payson

University of Mount Olive
Espinosa, Scarlett

University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Abel, Taylor

University of Rhode Island
Ignatow, Marissa

University of Tampa
Orsini, Lyana

Vanderbilt University
Mcleod, Myla

Villanova University
Gins, Andrew

Western Connecticut State University
Velasquez, Eric

Wingate University
Lugo, Darius

York College
Bryce, Caleb
Molina, Jeremy

Workforce/Gap Year
Banwell, Andrew
Brennan, Michael
Cabral, Marcus
Gonzalez-Oliva, Maria
Guevara , Andy
Molina, Herberth Ariel
Mooney, Timothy
Mooney, Tyler
Richardson, Crystal
Scheer, Kyle

Summer 2021 Movie Releases

Maggie Li, *Contributor*

Over the past year, the pandemic has derailed our day-to-day lives, shutting down businesses and entertainment centers all over Long Island. However Covid-19 vaccines have allowed some semblance of normalcy. By late March, virtually all of Long Island's movie theaters reopened. Which films are set to hit the big screen this season?

Kicking June off with a bang, the movie adaptation of Lin-Manuel Miranda's Broadway musical sensation, *In the Heights* will be released on June 11. Directed by *Crazy Rich Asians* director Jon M. Chu, the film explores a Dominican American district of New York City as a bodega owner (Ramos) contemplates his future.

Luca, a Disney and Pixar animation featuring a coming-of-age story about a sea monster-turned-boy on the Italian Riviera, is next, set to be released on June 18. In addition, the ninth installment of the *Fast and Furious* franchise (F9) is also coming out June 25.

July is expected to have plenty of highly-anticipated movie releases as well. For instance, *Summer of Soul*, a documentary following the events of the Harlem Cultural Festival of 1969, is launching in both theaters and on Hulu on July 2. Pushed forward a couple of days, *The Forever Purge*, a science fiction horror movie, is also appearing in theaters on July 2. Marvel fans are rejoicing with the upcoming release of *Black Widow*. Centered around Natasha Romanoff's (Scarlett Johanssen) story, fans will welcome it on July 9. *Space Jam: A New Legacy*, a mashup of basketball players and the Looney Tunes team, and *Escape Room 2*, a psychological thriller, are both being released on July 16. Finally, July 30 sees the introduction of *The Green Knight*, a fantasy film based on the legend of King Arthur, and *Jungle Cruise*, an adventure movie starring Dwayne Johnson and Emily Blunt.

Scheduled movie releases are much more sparse in August but looking ahead, there are several worth noting. The sequel of 2016 film *Suicide Squad* comes out August 6, followed by *Demonic*, a supernatural horror movie being released on August 20. *Candyman*, another horror film, will be available in theaters on August 27.

At the present time, most theaters are not offering discounts directly intended for high school students. Nevertheless, chains such as AMC Theatres and Showcase Cinemas boast bargains and lower rates on certain days of the week, namely Tuesday. Premiere and Insider members of AMC's Stubs A-List receive reduced ticket prices on their "Discount Tuesdays," and similarly, Showcase Cinemas drops their prices from the regular $13.50 to $8.75 for non-members on "Bargain Tuesdays."

It has been a long year, and everyone is itching to go back to their normal lives. This may be a start, so which movie are you most excited to see?

Social Media: A Gateway to the Wayward World

Mahira Ahmed, *Contributor*

The rise of social media has become a major turning point in the world. In the 1970s, the PLATO System, a computer-based education system, offered the earliest form of social media by starting its first successful online communities.

Five decades later, social media has dramatically evolved, offering much more than the human brain had anticipated. Investopedia defines social media as, "computer-based technology that facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information through the building of virtual networks and communities. By design, social media is internet-based and gives users quick electronic communication of content."

Friends and extended family use social media to network, find career opportunities, or simply to look for people across the globe with common interests.

In a year where human interaction was minimal due to the pandemic, keeping tabs in the online world has helped thousands feel heard. East Meadow High School's social workers, Mrs. Lori Ann Petersen and Ms. Margherita Diglio wrote together, "Social media is a wonderful tool for teens to connect with others during this long period of isolation. It's an outlet that provides support and comfort during these times of uncertainty."

Generation Z is the first to live with the smartphone, ready to use. An EMHS survey gathered that 99.2% of people carried a phone while 0.8% did not. Many teens hear phrases like, "You're wasting too much time on that phone," or, "That's going to damage your brain," at least once by adults who (most likely) have not grown up with the internet world.

"Teens spend an average of seven hours and 22 minutes on their phones a day, and tweens -- ages eight to twelve -- are not far behind, at four hours and 44 minutes daily," according to Common Sense Media.

Social media apps like TikTok are like a high school; everyone is searching for a way to become relevant and popular while sticking to their own groups in cliques on certain platforms. TikTok has been a highly downloaded app, with 48.8% of East Meadow High School students spending most of their time on that app, following a tie with YouTube and Snapchat at 46.3%. The second most downloaded app in 2019 was TikTok, the first being WhatsApp.

Social media allows people to obsess over getting the most likes and posts. It is stimulated through our dopamine receptors, the things that make us happier. One must be validated through self esteem rather than at the expense of others. "A lot of people don't realize that saying things like "Can we get this to 500 likes?" is subconsciously seeking validation," Sydney Reilly, a freshman, said. "It's nice to get comments about something you post, but you shouldn't base your confidence completely off of likes."

People begin to lose track of time quickly through the gaze of social media. An EMHS survey found that 36.1% of people could stay away from the phone for three-five hours. 24.6% can stay away for a week, and 6.6% can stay away for only half an hour. Spending hours upon hours on social media is unhealthy, especially for sleep schedules. About 56.1% say they always go on their phone before bed, 10.6% do not, and 33.3% express occasionally. Lack of sleep can lower the immune system. It can also lead to moodiness, drop in grades, and add to existing problems such as depression and anxiety.

Social media can be a wonderful and draining place that can be accessed anywhere all the time. "It is an entertaining waste of time," said Jakub Brachowski, a freshman. "But it's no place to be rude, so be nice to other people because you never know they might be a billionaire."

"It is an entertaining waste of time."

Social media can be a place to gain confidence, but often can be misused. "The people most negatively impacted by social media are those who are very vulnerable, have low self-esteem, or are looking for acceptance," Petersen & Diglio remarked.

"I think it is great that social media spreads the message of important world events, but at the same time, much is fake, which leads me to often feel confused and upset," Allison Sinnot, a freshman, expressed. "With the growth behind social media, it's easier to hide behind an anonymous account and body shame or 'cancel people.'

Free platforms have given people liberties to create crude and harmful remarks that would not be shown in reality. Leya Skaria, a freshman, commented, "When someone new becomes popular fast on the internet, they are so fast to find something wrong with them."

Social media can be a wonderful and draining place that can be accessed anywhere all the time. It certainly is not going to go anywhere and it is important to be aware of the issues surrounding this generation of teens.

ENL Corner

Gabriella Reiss, *Assistant Editor*

Students from across the globe bring an array of cultural backgrounds and a multitude of foreign languages to the halls of East Meadow High School. The ENL (English as a New Language) program focuses on teaching English to those with a foreign primary language, while educating ELLs (English Language Learners) on academics across the board. They meet five times a week to learn how to read, speak, and write in English.

The first step for an ELL is to take the New York State Identification for English Language Learners which determines one's English competency. Then a language proficiency team (LPT) reviews the results of the test and determines whether the student needs further English language instruction. If the LPT agrees that the student needs more instruction, then he/she is placed in East Meadow High School's ENL program. The lead teachers who oversee this program include Ms. Jaclyn Simberlund, Mrs. Jackie Ramirez, and Mrs. Elizabeth Dowling.

Simberlund, a former English tutor, realized her true calling while tutoring a few Italian students while studying overseas. Becoming an ENL teacher taught her that, "There are so many ways to be human, and there is no judge or specific culture that determines what is 'normal' or right and wrong." Furthermore, she particularly enjoys, "Learning about my students' personal experiences and giving my students a voice to express their cultural backgrounds in the classroom."

Inspired by both her grandmother's immigration from Barcelona and integration of Spanish culture into American life, Ramirez decided to become an ENL teacher. She reveals how teaching her ELLs, "Has taught me that though we all come from different places, most of us share the commonalities of what we will sacrifice for success." She continued, "Many of my students came here for a solid education, more job opportunities, and a better future for themselves and family." Ramirez further expressed the deep connections her students build with one another due to their "similar goals" and how she "fill(s) more roles than just teacher in their lives." She ends off with, "Seeing my students grow from when they first enter to when they leave brings me such joy."

Dowling, the assistant principal of East Meadow High and the supervisor of the English, Special-Ed, and ENL departments, expressed her pride in how the ENL program focuses on "the individual student, who they are, and the culture that they come from." Furthermore, she explained how the program has grown significantly over the years and continues to not only focus on students' academic success but also their social and emotional health. Lastly, she revealed the upcoming ENL ambassador program, an initiative that, "designates the school's experienced ELLs to be mentors for others.

The Falcon and the Winter Soldier



courtesy of Disney+

Spencer Leventhal, *News Editor*

Marvel's new Disney+ exclusive series, *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* recently concluded with the sixth and final episode of the series. The mini series took Marvel fans into the lives of Sam Wilson aka Falcon and Bucky Barnes aka Winter Soldier approximately six months after the events of *Avengers: End Game*. This series pursued new and exciting story lines, reintroduced former characters, and instituted an underlying theme of equality.

In the first episode, Bucky is learning to conform to a semi-normal life. The Winter Soldier no longer controls him. For the first time he is truly free. However, Bucky still feels responsible and guilty for the actions of the Winter Soldier and must make peace with that.

Yori is the father of one of the men that the Winter Soldier killed. Throughout the series, Bucky contemplates whether to tell Yori the truth of his son and his killer or to keep it a secret thus further burying Buckie's guilt and PTSD.

Meanwhile, Sam Wilson/Falcon undergoes an identity change throughout the course of the series. Avengers: End Game concluded with Steve Rogers/Captain America giving Sam Wilson his shield. Steve expected Sam to carry on the shield and become the next Captain America. However, Sam does not believe that he can live up to such steep expectations. Throughout the series Sam is forced to find what being the next Captain America truly means to him. Sam knows that he can not be the next Steve Rogers and nor does he want to. Instead he will become the new Captain America.

The Falcon and the Winter Soldier, not only tells a truly fantastic story, but also brings to light issues of equality that are especially applicable to recent events. Along Sam Wilson's journey of becoming the next Captain America, he meets an interesting character named Isiah Bradley. Bradley was a black man who was experimented by scientists using the super soldier serum. This storyline reflects the occurrence of real life events.

According to the Marvel Database "Isaiah's origin story is based on the real-life events of the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment, one of the most unethical known medical experiments in US history, where 600 African-American men from Alabama were lied to under the pro-mise of free healthcare from the government into receiving no treatment of syphilis so the consequences of the disease when untreated for 40 years could be observed." This severe human rights violation that occurred in real life is being brought to light by the Marvel Universe. Throughout the series Isiah Bradley highlights the many injustices that many African-Americans have faced over the course of history. It sheds a new light on racial injustice.

The Falcon and the Winter Soldier is a thrilling Marvel series that does not disappoint. Although not crucial to the overall Marvel storyline, it offers great content that every Marvel fan should enjoy. Therefore, I strongly recommend watching *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* on Disney+.

Country Comfort

Gianna Devita, *Contributor*

Country Comfort follows Bailey, a country music star turned nanny for five kids who are in desperate need of guidance after the passing of their mother. Throughout her time with the Haywoods, Bailey helps each of the children, specifically nine year old Cassidy with difficult challenges such as mourning, religion, and self identity.

The sitcom perfectly addresses these emotional moments in a smooth, comedic way. American Idol pop sensation Katharine McPhee stars as Bailey along with Eddie Cibrian, recently in *Sunset Beach* and *Third Watch*, as the widowed father of five.

The audience is introduced to Bailey, whose life seems to be spiraling out of control after a breakup that caused her to lose her job. In the series premier, her truck breaks down in the middle of a storm, forcing her to knock on the front door of the Haywood family's ranch. She does not know how drastically her life is about to change as the Haywoods hire her to help with the children.

In a style similar to *The Sound of Music,* Bailey discovers that the children have buried their strong love of music which she helps them rediscover through a family band. Ironically, this is just what Bailey needs to make a comeback.

The child actors of *Country Comfort* are truly the stars of the show with their hilarious one liners and impeccable comedic timing stealing the hearts of viewers. It is evident that Cassidy shares a special bond with Bailey but the sitcom focuses on all of the children's personalities. Flirtatious older brother Tuck, self conscious Brody, intelligent middle child Dylan, rebellious Cassidy and the youngest daughter Chloe, who is easily comparable to the iconic Michelle Tanner from *Full House*.

Arguably the most unique and intriguing parts of the show are the catchy tunes the Haywood family sings. With an incredible cast of professional singers led by McPhee and a cameo by LeAnn Rimes, it is no surprise that these performances have viewers singing along. They sing many classic covers including "My Girl" by the Temptations, "Teddy Bear" by Elvis Presley, "Stronger" by Kelly Clarkson and many of Rimes' songs.

Country Comfort sheds light on many topics that might be seen as "taboo" in today's society making it a perfect show to watch with family and friends. While *Country Comfort* does have it's display of cliche moments, just as most family sitcoms do, it is definitely worth the watch! It just might become your newest *comfort* show.

Once again, Netflix has created a show that viewers of all different demographics can enjoy. *Country Comfort* is a sweet, yet predictable show that is a modern day rendition of *The Nanny* and *Full House* with a southern twist. This show covers it all; catchy songs, sensitive topics and quirky characters that just make it more enjoyable!



courtesy of Netflix

The Song of Achilles: The Epitome of a Greek Tragedy

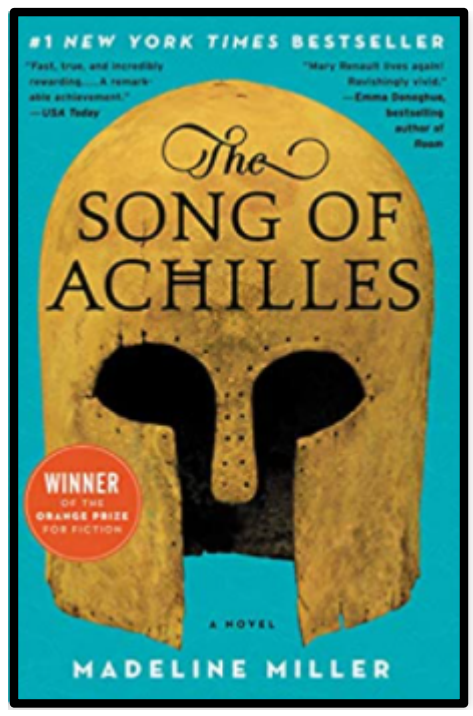
Maggie Li, *Contributor*

Adventure and tragedy, glory and despair, heroes and villains; that's what epic poems are made of... Classical literature is renowned for its focus on mythology, where Greek gods play with fate and their demi-god children and embark on valiant quests for fame and reverence.

Coming highly recommended as utterly heart-breaking, Madeline Miller's *The Song of Achilles* is a modernized adaptation of Homer's *Iliad*, leading up to and following the course of the legendary Trojan War. Most are familiar with the story of the "greatest of all Greeks," Achilles, but this rendition, through the eyes of his most treasured companion, Patroclus, is truly like no other.

A lyrical war story filled with flowery language in a beautifully depicted world, *The Song of Achilles* is a work of art. It is narrated in a sequence of time skips as the protagonists develop from children to lovers into soldiers. The hype that the book receives is largely due to the LGBTQ+ representation via Achilles and Patroclus' tear-inducing relationship, and fair warning: it really is that devastating.

Miller's creative choice to write the novel in the first person point of view of the often-overlooked Patroclus, in lieu of his far more famous boyfriend, is genius. So often people compare themselves to larger than life heroes like Achilles than a mere mortal like Patroclus. He is mediocre and pales in comparison to the many epic Greek heroes. Patroclus' shortcomings hardly make him any less of a role model.



courtesy of Amazon.

Emulating the poetic verses of the *Iliad*, the sheer amount of figurative language found in the novel is astounding; similes and metaphors appear in nearly every line. The imagery of the gods and other mythical creatures is fascinating as well. As opposed to the romanticized renderings of them in other literary works, the inhumanity of the gods and their detachment to mortals is highlighted in a way that makes their supremacy clear and menacing.

My only criticism is the lack of character and plot complexity, although intentionally. After having such high expectations, *The Song of Achilles* ended up being a bit anticlimactic. It takes a few chapters for the plot to make much headway and overall, the story seemed impersonal. However, I *do* recommend this book for its gorgeous writing and tragic love story; just remember to keep a box of tissues on hand.

Senior Advice

Abigail Thomas, *Clubs Editor*

Many people claim that senior year is one of the best years of their life. College applications, decisions, SATs, final games, prom, and graduation; all of these are things associated with senior year. It's up to you to see what you can make out of not just your senior year, but the rest of the years you have left at East Meadow High School. Here is some advice from East Meadow's very own guidance department.

Tip number one: get involved! Mrs. Michelle Merolla advised, "choose courses of interest each year, get involved in a couple of activities in/out of school (doesn't have to be too many but pick a few things that are important to you like finding a job, sports, clubs, summer programs). And, look for ways to challenge yourself each year--and I do not just mean academically!"

Mrs. Joanna Silberman agreed that one should, "find a good balance between academics and social/athletic participation. Join different clubs and activities... talk to students outside of your friend group... live in the moment instead of stressing about the future... and reach out for help if you need it."

Tip number two: prepare for college applications. It is a scary process, but if you spread the work out, everything will come into place. Mr. Steven Pereira suggested, "For Juniors, if you can get those teacher recommendations requested before the summer, great. Try to crank out those essays over the summer and you will be way ahead of the game. Visit colleges during your winter and spring breaks... Have mom and dad start filling in the FAFSA so they just have to update after the first of the year. Take the SAT/ACT. Open the Common Application and fill in all the blanks. Finally, mark your calendar with every fall deadline and all you'll have to do your senior year is hit "send" when the time comes. Now doesn't that feel good."

Tip number three: choose a major. Deciding what to major in college is a difficult decision. Mrs. Tamara Healy mentioned, "I think it's really important that students mix their passions with their strengths. Take notice of the subjects you excel at, and the clubs/activities you find yourself gravitating to outside of the classroom. Utilize the internet and even ask adults questions about their careers and how they got there." She added, "I also love utilizing Naviance for college planning and career assessment tools. Every student has an account and it's a wonderful way to get students thinking about college choices, majors, and careers."

Tip number four: recognize that senioritis is a real thing! One thing that is inevitable is senioritis, a plague that catches us all off guard. Pereira exclaimed, "SENIORITIS IS REAL. It is very normal to begin to be mentally exhausted at this point. You may not want to do work, go to class, etc., but you have to push through."

Students are juggling a lot of things in their life whether it's their job, sports, or assignments. Although senior year is the end of an era, a new beginning is not so far away.

College Applications and Covid-19

Samantha Goldstein, *Features Editor*

Covid-19 has changed so many aspects of life, one of these being college applications. Without some of the opportunities provided in previous years, such as more SAT and ACT test dates, colleges have changed the requirements when it comes to applications. Here are a few things that may be helpful when it comes to applying to colleges.

The first thing to know is which schools require testing. Some schools have become "test optional," others have gone "test blind" and some still require them. So what is the difference? "Test optional" means that if a student submits a test, the school will look at it, but if not, that is completely fine. It will not change how they view you as an applicant and

"Test optional truly means test optional. We, as colleges, will not hold you to a lower standard if you don't submit one"

it does not mean that one has a greater chance of being rejected.

"Test optional truly means test optional. We, as colleges, will not hold you to a lower standard if you don't submit one," said Angel Carter, a Senior Admission Counselor at Tulane. "Test blind," however, means that a school will definitely not look at a test score. Even if a student submits a score, a school will not look at it. It is important to look into what a school requires test wise.

Another thing that is still needed when applying for college is a recommendation. This can be from a teacher, coach, guidance counselor, or anyone who can write something special about you that can be seen on a basic college application. Most colleges require between one and three letters of recommendation.

Applying for colleges can be a hard process, especially when the requirements are constantly changing. By taking the time to go on a school's website or email an admissions counselor, you can find out exactly what you need to do.

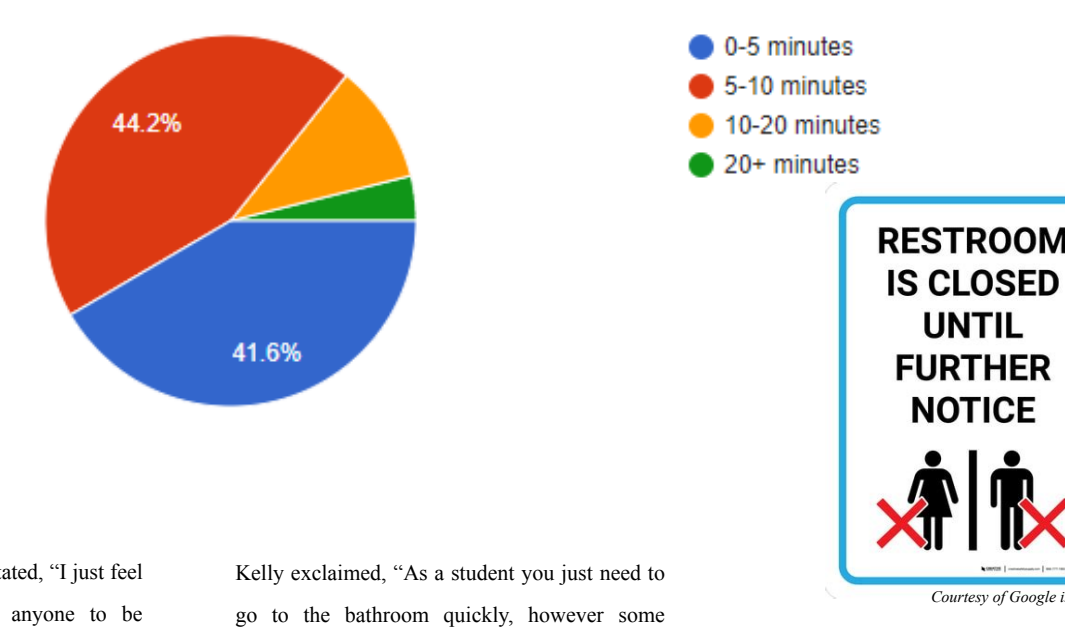
The Bathroom Situation

Humza Malik, *Contributor*

The Covid-19 pandemic has been devastating and as a result, safety for students is a top priority. Students must now social distance and wear masks at all times. This has unintentionally created the "Bathroom Situation," affectionately (or not so affectionately) called by students and staff alike. At press time, only two students are permitted to enter the bathroom at a time.

As a result of the epidemic, East Meadow High School limited the number of people in the bathroom to two at a time. The CDC recommends to, "Limit occupancy of enclosed spaces such as bathrooms...Don't allow staff (or others) to gather while waiting for access." As a result, long lines have encompassed the hallways, disrupting classes, and frustrating both students and teachers. Students end up missing valuable class time waiting in line to use the bathroom.

"I don't want anyone to be suspicious about me being out of class for a long period of time."



Courtesy of Google images

Ninth grader Mahira Ahmed stated, "I just feel nervous because I don't want anyone to be suspicious about me being out of class for a long period of time. Also sometimes I REALLY just need to go to the bathroom and it doesn't help that people may hog the line." Another student Justine Desjardins stated, "The bathrooms are big enough for more than two people to enter at a time and keep social distance."

Teachers are dismayed by these long lines as their students are missing their classes. One anonymous teacher complained, "Students complain about these long lines at the bathroom and when they get in and [then] become part of the problem." Another ninth grade student Cara Kelly exclaimed, "As a student you just need to go to the bathroom quickly, however some students like to hang out in the bathrooms which causes innocent students to miss class time which impacts work you could've missed."

As this situation has affected all students, many students proposed potential solutions. Freshman Ryan Monahan suggested, "Either relax the two person rule or regulate how much time you can spend in the bathroom." Another anonymous student suggested that, "We could get rid of the limit of those allowed in the bathroom at once. It is a low risk for Covid-19 especially with masks. After school for sports the bathroom number is not limited so why should it be during school when you have class and need to use the bathroom fast."

The *Jet Gazette* also recently surveyed the student population and found that 59% of students have on average wait time on the bathroom line that was longer than five minutes.

While the bathroom situation has obviously been very harmful for students and staff alike, there appears to be no immediate solutions planned. However as the pandemic comes under control and restrictions are relaxed, then eventually restrictions will be lifted on the bathrooms.

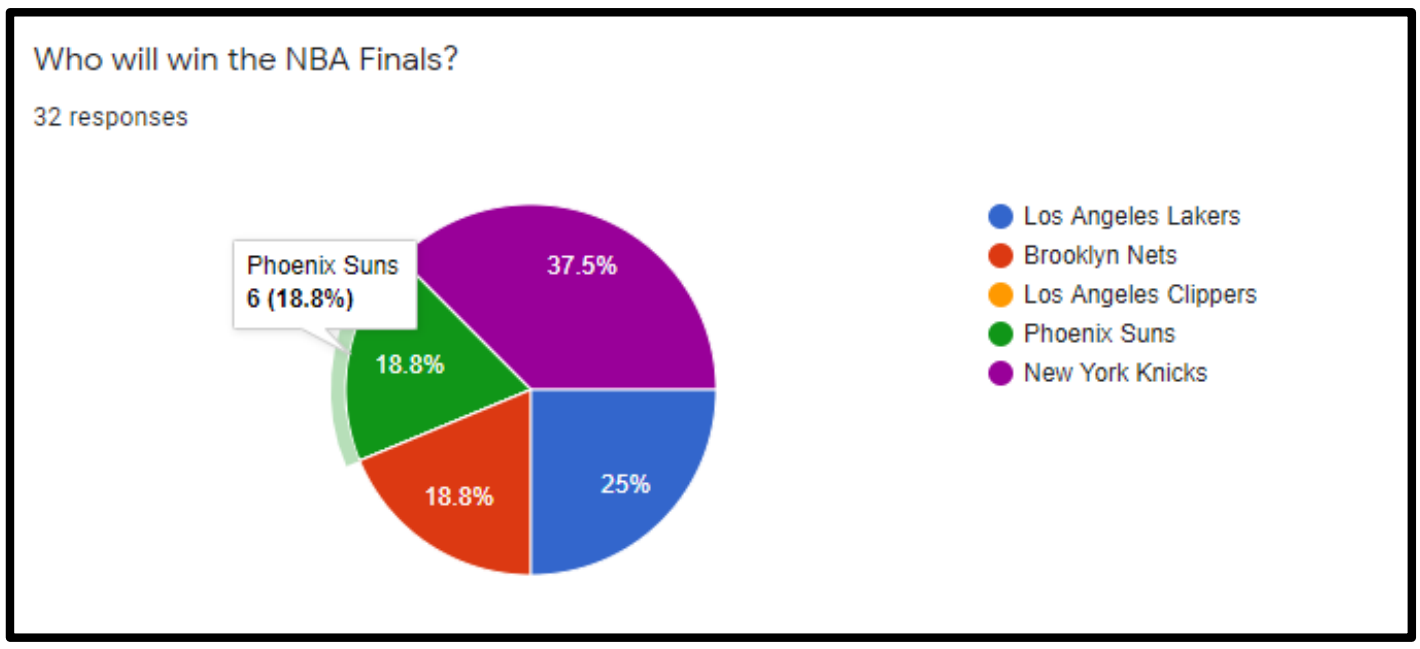
Miracle at the Garden

Spencer Leventhal, *News Editor*

For the first time since 2013, the New York Knicks qualified for the NBA playoffs. When the Knicks began their season, playoff expectations were low as usual. However, the addition of Tom Thibodeau as the new head coach and the breakout season from Julius Randle made this incredible underdog story a reality.

Thibodeau, according to Bleacher Report, "Has turned the Knicks around in just one year at the helm, guiding the 41-31 New York Knicks to a No. 4 seed in the NBA playoffs. New York had missed the postseason in each of its six previous seasons, including a 21-45 record last year. This year's Knicks team has drastically improved on defense under Thibodeau, allowing the fewest points per game and finishing third in defensive rating." He previously won Coach of the Year when he was with the Chicago Bulls in 2011. Thibodeau is an established coach who transforms teams and is just what the Knicks' organization needed in order to make a playoff run and become a competitive team.

On July 9, 2019, Randle signed a three-year, $63 million contract with the New York Knicks. Randle assumed a starting role his first season with the Knicks in the 2019-2020 season. Randle was a large contributor to much of the team's scoring output, but he was simply meeting expectations not exceeding them. This year, Randle had a career best season. He was able to produce career high numbers in multiple stat categories such as points per game and rebounds per game. Randle averaged 24 points per game, which made Randle the lead scorer on the team. Due to his amazing performance, Randle earned a spot on the NBA All-Star team, which marked the first time in his seven year professional basketball career that he had earned this honor. Randle's career high not only made the Knicks playoff chance a reality, but it also led to him being named the NBA's Most Improved Player. This award is given to players that have shown exemplary improvement in their on the court performance. He received 98% of the first place votes. Randle is a very exciting franchise player for the Knicks organization and their fans.



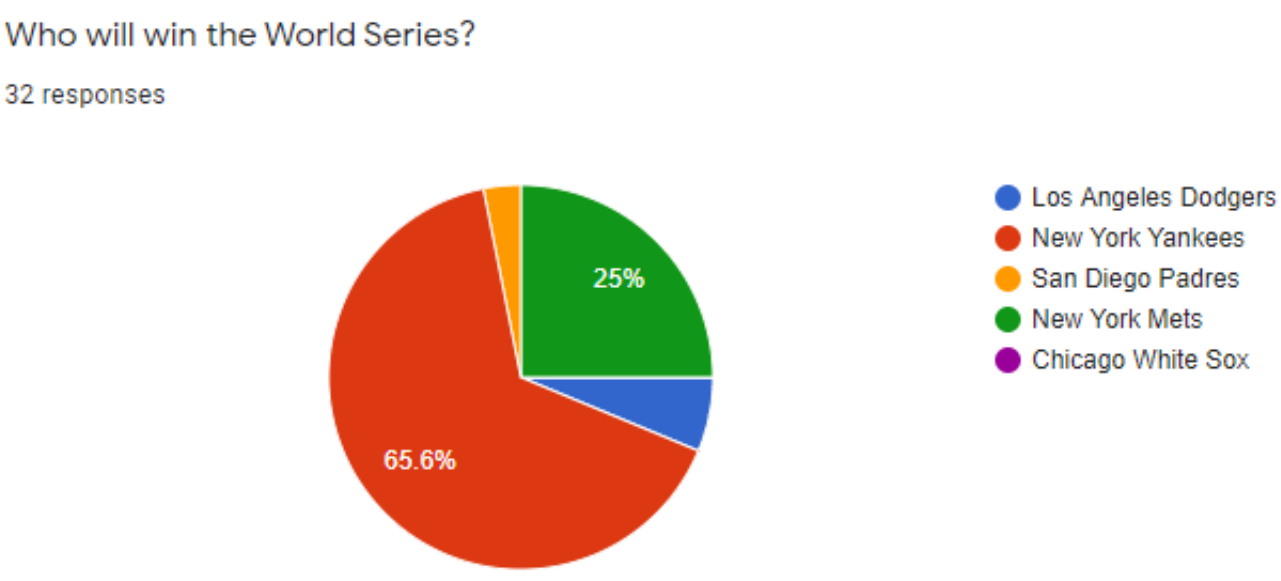
Julius Randle was not the only player that served as a major contributor in the Knicks' impressive winning season. Both Derrick Rose and RJ Barrett were pertinent to the Knicks' success. Derrick Rose was acquired by the Knicks in a mid-season trade with the Detroit Pistons. Rose served as a valuable player not only because of his statistical contributions, but also because of the veteran status and leadership that he carries with him. This was a crucial acquisition for the Knicks because prior to the trade, the team consisted of primarily young players. Rose served as a leader and a guide to help develop the younger players on the team. Shortly after this midseason trade the Knicks began to see great strides of improvement due to the addition of Derrick Rose.

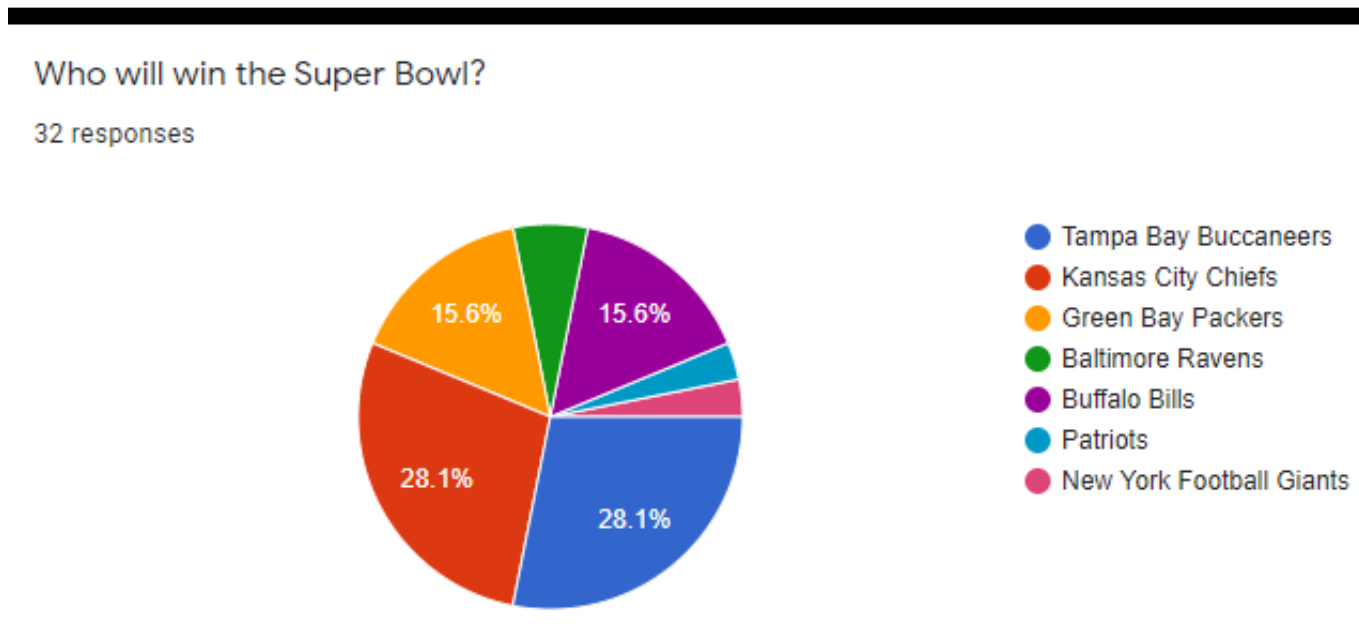
According to the *New York Post*, "When the Knicks traded for Rose on Feb. 7, their record stood at 11-14. When the 32-year-old has played and that hasn't been all the time, because of a COVID-19 absence, the Knicks are 17-7."

Barret, who entered the season as a second year player, needed to have a career season to satisfy the expectation that Knicks fans had for him as the third overall pick in the 2019 NBA draft. Barrett was able to have a great season, improving on nearly all of his rookie year stats. Barrett is a promising young star for the Knicks organization and fans are very excited to see the kind of player that he evolves into.

All of these factors led to the Knicks incredible run for a playoff seed. In April the Knicks went on an 11 game winning streak solidifying their playoff berth.

The Knicks were the fourth seed in the Eastern Conference and faced the Atlanta Hawks in the first round. Although the New York Knicks lost the series in five games, fans should be extremely proud and happy with the incredible season their favorite team had.





The *Jet Gazette* surveyed students about their New York sports predictions.... here are the results.

Fabrizzio Gonzalez, *Contributor*

Spring Sports Wrap Up

Noah Diamond, *Sports Editor*

Photos courtesy of Noah Diamond, Spencer Leventhal, and Jasmine Mathew

In the spring of 2020, it would have been crazy to think that just a year later East Meadow High School would have a sports season up and running. Fast forward to the present day, and most people would say that EMHS had one of its most successful sports seasons in years!



As always, both the boys and girls track and field teams powered through the conference. With division champions that include Dhiannie Brito (Discus), Jada Pepanio (Long Jump), Mariah Perkins (High Jump), Lindsay Segal (100 Hurdles), Megan Sohl (800), Leslie Villafuerte-Castro (1500, 3000), Mariah Perkins (4x400), Emily Lam (4x400), Eleni Torres (4x400), Megan Sohl (4x400), Silvia Ronemus (4x800), Leslie Villafuerte-Castro (4x800), Dakota Eira (4x800), and Megan Sohl (4x800), the EMHS girls track and field team finished their season undefeated with a 13-0 record. No better way to end the season than by being crowned as the Division and Conference Champions!

The boys track and field team also had a stellar season, finishing 12-1 and with division champions Brian Jablonksi (Pole Vault), Ashton Jackson (Long Jump), and Zach Van Houten (3200). The team placed second in both the Division and Conferences Championships. About both the girls and boys teams, Coach Michael Ringhauser said that, “In a season unlike any other, we had a team unlike any other. The resiliency, adaptability, and determination of each member of our program was inspiring and drove us to achieve great things throughout the season. Our seniors established themselves as tremendous motivators and role models, while our underclassmen contributed in numerous facets bringing depth to the team.”



Due to moving up to a more competitive conference, the girls lacrosse team had its struggles. Even through this, the athletes had a great time playing the sport they love. All of the senior captains will be playing lacrosse in college and have been “leading forces” on the team over the past four years, Coach Kara Fiorillo told the *Jet Gazette*.

With football being played immediately prior to the spring season this year, the boys lacrosse team faced critical injuries due to growing fatigue throughout the season. Brendan Pedisich, Chris Barry, and Patrick Spinola all had outstanding seasons, but the second half struggles to maintain the team’s energy were too great for the team to have a record that properly reflects its talents.



Coach Justin Szwejkowski is “very proud” of his boys’ varsity tennis team and their 6-4 record. Every match was competitive and each athlete came to practice ready to improve and hone their skills. First doubles player, Maxx Lao, said that he, “Really enjoyed playing with the guys” and it cultivated in his favorite sports season ever.





The girls badminton team may have not finished with as strong of a record as they may have hoped for, but being in one of the top conferences and and making the playoffs proves that their season was still a great success. Supriya Daddi and Samantha Goldstein were the team’s captains and made sure everyone had a fun time.

East Meadow High School’s softball program has dominated Long Island for years. In 2019 the girls’ varsity softball team won the Long Island Championship game. Most of the team has since graduated, leading to this year’s roster being almost entirely new! Senior Alexandra Kelly, who was the winning pitcher for the 2019 Championship game, led the 2021 team as its captain. They finished with a 7-7 record and made the playoffs. The JV Team found similar success, ending the season with an 11-3 record!

Sports are a very important part of many students' high school experience. In a year filled with twists and turns that no one expected, it is great to know that there was some amount of normalcy that students can look back on with fond memories.



