



SPRING PREVIEW



by THE WARD
MELVILLE
KALEIDOSCOPE

Too often, while reading the news, I find out about an exciting event after it has already happened and is being reported on. At the same time, many students who are participating in cool events with clubs and other organizations seem to struggle to get the word out beyond their friend group.

It is with these two ideas in mind that *Kaleidoscope* approached our “Spring Preview” April edition. In it, we seek to highlight new developments that will impact students throughout the end of the school year, from a new digital format for AP exams to a new vending machine, and

upcoming events students are involved in, from academics to the arts and athletics.

It is my hope that, by continuing to highlight the varied accomplishments of students at Ward Melville, they’ll receive the broader recognition and support that they deserve. Further, I hope that readers will be inspired to be more engaged in our district, whether by making a plan to vote on the school budget or attending a student show.

I would like to thank the students, teachers and administrators who spoke to *Kaleidoscope* members to make our coverage possible. We can’t wait to share our final print edition of the school year in June!

— Oliver Wu

Preview With the Prom Committee

by SARAH CHERLIN and
ALEXANDRA COTLET,
ARTS AND
ENTERTAINMENT
EDITOR and NEWS
EDITOR

Senior prom is one of the most highly anticipated occasions for Ward Melville’s graduating class. The Prom Committee dedicates countless hours to perfecting the event annually; this year, they plan to go above and beyond prior expectations. Committee President Madison Calvanese and active committee member Remus Liff provided us with a glimpse into the planning process behind this year’s prom, as well as a preview of what seniors can look forward to on June 26.

favorite animated scenes will be recreated with realistic adaptations to make it feel like you are in Wonderland.

Q: What has the planning process involved, and who is involved in it?

MC: From the beginning, we have come up with ideas for each section of prom that follows the traditional *Alice in Wonderland* story. During each meeting, students are able to voice opinions and discuss ideas about what the invitation, keepsake and prom itself should look like. We get together with the school administration, club advisors, a catering company, a DJ and a construction company in order to plan all of the components of the prom. Additionally, parents are very involved in doing most of the building and decorating.

Q: What are your roles in the prom committee? How does the prom committee delegate roles for planning the prom?

RL: While I’m not on the board, I originated the concept of an *Alice in Wonderland* theme based on the cartoon. I then worked with Madison and a few others on combining our ideas to create the final product. The board and the teachers have a lot of opinions on what is done, while people who are just on the committee voice their thoughts and ideas as well.

MC: I am the current president of prom committee. I run the meetings with the vice president, Isabella Caracci. We focus on giving students with specific skill sets different jobs to complete, such as sketching a design idea that we can then present to the rest of the club, tweak and implement. All club members are encouraged and

welcome to come to after-school parent meetings where they can help explain their vision to parents. Usually, board goes to parent meetings and delegates the other club members’ ideas to parents.

Q: Is there anything you can share about what the prom committee already has planned?

RL: We’re working with the parents and committee to create a cohesive story for the walkthrough, starting with the invitation and weaving it into the design of each section. We want it to feel like you’ve just stepped into the movie without a Disney-cartoony feel.

MC: We are trying to recreate the whimsical and magical adventure that Alice went through during her journey in Wonderland. We are currently focusing on the transitional areas between each section of prom and creating an invitation and keepsake that connects to the theme and color scheme of prom.

Question: What was the inspiration behind this year’s prom theme?

Remus Liff: The inspiration for this year’s prom theme, “Down the Rabbit Hole,” is the original animated *Alice in Wonderland* with elements of modern adaptations.

Madison Calvanese: The inspiration for this year’s prom comes from a mix of the traditional animated *Alice in Wonderland* movie with realistic elements from the live action. Some of everyone’s

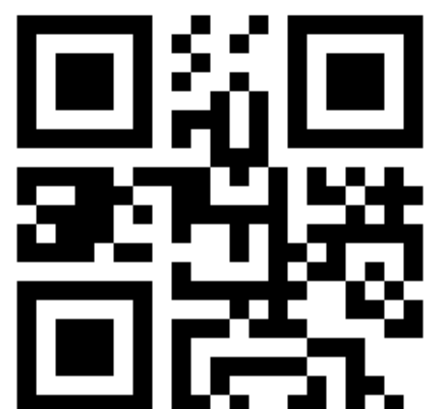


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Teachers' Viewpoints Vary on Digitization of AP Exams

by **LILY HUANG and ALEXANDRA POTEKHIN, STAFF WRITER and NEWS EDITOR**

For decades, high school students in Advanced Placement courses have demonstrated their proficiency and knowledge in a variety of subjects through rigorous standardized AP exams. While such exams remain a critical benchmark for students across the globe, an increase in unauthorized early access to physical copies of testing booklets, along with increased incorporation of technology into education, have spurred College Board, the testing nonprofit that administers AP exams and the SAT, to rework the test administration process. In 2025, AP exams will transition from the traditional paper format to a digital or hybridized medium. This decision has garnered varied responses and opinions from teachers preparing their students for these exams.

Teachers of AP humanities courses at Ward Melville, which typically have exams that require students to read lengthy excerpts and answer essay-style questions, generally expressed discontent at the complete digitization of their examinations. “Just because you can doesn’t necessarily mean that you should,” said AP English

Language and Composition teacher Ms. DiIorio. In AP English courses, students must provide long-answer responses to prompts that require complex analysis of a variety of speeches, essays, letters or documents. “I don’t believe all tests are created equal, and different subjects require different skill sets that are not always transferable digitally,” added Ms. DiIorio.

AP United States History teacher Ms. Bilek voiced similar concerns. “The test requires so much writing and analysis that a digital test may be challenging for students who aren’t as comfortable typing their essays. Personally, I don’t like the fact that it’s not a paper test because students lose the ability to physically annotate documents, which is a big part of tackling sections like the DBQ [Document-Based Question].”

On the other hand, College Board’s decision to computerize AP exams is less disputed by teachers of STEM subjects. With some exceptions, these subjects will employ a hybrid test model with online multiple choice and free response questions and a paper free response answer booklet. “Students will need at least a few opportunities to have the online questions and get used to going back and forth from a piece of paper to a computer screen, but I don’t think it’s going to have a huge impact,” said AP Physics 1 teacher Mr. McGunnigle.

AP Statistics and AP Calculus AB teacher Ms. Re agrees. “The shift is not really that different for math. The fact that they’re still going to let you do all your free responses on paper is good,

able to access YouTube, and they can allow students to view specific videos by embedding them through platforms including EdPuzzle, Google Slides and Google Classroom.

The vast majority of school districts in New York, including Three Village, have a subscription to Google Workspace for Education to facilitate the usage of online classroom materials. In a November message to education administrators, Google wrote that, “Educational institutions are now required to annually review and re-confirm access to Google Additional Services for users under 18. ... As a reminder, the Google Workspace for Education Terms require that institutions obtain parental consent before users under 18 can access any Additional Google Service.”

Following the email from Google, Louise DeCandia, the NYS Education Department’s Chief Privacy Officer, wrote, “Although consent may provide compliance with the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act



but I’m interested to see how the hybrid format will affect the presentation of questions they’ve asked in the past. In general, as long as teachers are having students practice online questions, whether it’s through homework or in class or through assessments, you will all be fine,” she stated.

Meanwhile, for courses such as AP Computer Science and AP Psychology, the complete migration to an online setup has simplified the process of preparing students for their tests. “We won’t practice handwriting code anymore, which is something that we literally only had to do for the AP exams,” said AP Computer Science A teacher Mr. Smit. “I think the shift will make it easier for computer science students to organize their code, especially when it comes to reorganizing things after they’ve already started writing. It’s about time they’re making this change.”

Similarly, AP Psychology teacher Mr. Wilson suggested that this development is “a natural evolution.” “It’s going to be second nature,” said Mr. Wilson, who believes that distractions and fatigue that come from the digital test will “mirror that of your cell phone use.” He and many other teachers have already relocated course materials like assignments and tests to online applications.

(FERPA), [additional Google services] still cannot be used in New York schools unless they are the subject of a data protection agreement consistent with Education Law Section 2-d.”

EdLaw 2-d prohibits schools from using services that collect “personally identifiable information (PII)” for non-educational purposes. For example, YouTube collects student data for advertising, a non-educational purpose. Under the law, educational services that collect PII cannot be used in schools unless they are covered by a Master Service Agreement/Data Protection Agreement (MSA/DPA) with New York State. Google’s Core Services, such as Google Drive, Google Classroom and Gmail, are already covered under a MSA/DPA, but its additional services are not.

The change in Three Village was announced in an email to students on February 28, less than two days before the policy went into effect. Throughout Ward Melville, many students expressed

A major motivating factor in pushing the exams online was the security issues College Board encountered in recent years. In summer 2024, College Board Senior Vice President Trevor Packer released a statement saying, “Unfortunately, this year, we saw a rise in bad actors compromising AP Exam content for financial gain.” However, this change does not guarantee that the issue will be resolved. Concerns remain about the vulnerability of digital platforms to potential breaches, and teachers worry that new methods of cheating may emerge as technology continues to evolve. “They have to be two steps ahead of the students, because students are always going to try stuff. As long as you’re two steps ahead, you’re going to block their attempts before they go down the road and academic integrity gets compromised,” Mr. Wilson said.

Despite the uncertain alterations to the AP examination process, Ms. Bilek acknowledges that “because it’s the first year, these changes seem like a big hurdle or challenge. However, students always rise to the occasion and they always handle new challenges really well. They’ll be successful, regardless of the potential struggles.”

disappointment that they would no longer be able to easily access YouTube channels such as Heimler’s History to supplement what they learn in class. However, students are still able to access videos if they are embedded through a website. For example, Khan Academy videos, another popular educational YouTube channel, remain accessible through the Khan Academy website. Dr. Kevin Scanlon, the Three Village Superintendent, said the district is in the process of “working around some of those things” to help students easily access educational videos that will help them in their classes.

Dr. Scanlon noted that the policy is meant to “protect students from potential harms” rather than inhibit student education. He added that there are no plans to ban any more commonly used services like YouTube in the foreseeable future, but Governor Kathy Hochul has pushed to introduce a statewide school cellphone ban in the state budget this year.

Three Village Students Lose Access to YouTube

by **REBECCA MALZ and OLIVER WU, STAFF WRITER and EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

On March 1, access to YouTube was turned off for Three Village students. The action followed a letter sent by Google to school administrators in November requiring renewed parental consent for student access to “Additional Google Services,” which include YouTube, Google Translate and Google Maps, by March 1. Subsequently, the New York State Education Department sent a follow-up letter informing districts that access to the services was technically already prohibited under New York State’s Education Law Section 2-d, passed in 2020. Teachers remain

Ward Melville Fishing Expo Has Another Successful Year

by OLIVER WU,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Ward Melville Patriots Fishing Club held its 12th annual Salt-water Fishing Expo on March 1. The show started in 2013 and has been growing every year since, except for one year off due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is now the largest fishing show on Long Island — this year, there were 212 vendors across 335 tables, with dozens more on the waitlist. The show helps vendors gain exposure across the local fishing community. Funds raised from raffles sold at the show allow the Fishing Club to go on trips in the fall and spring at no charge to students, including seven trips planned across May and June.

The Fishing Club was founded by advisor Bob Wilson 16 years ago. Mr. Wilson explained his motivation by saying, “Fishing is the most expensive, yet cheapest, form of therapy out there.” He started off by reaching out to local businesses in the early years of the show — the first show had 10 vendors — but quickly, vendors began reaching out to him instead. Now, there are businesses from states all along the East Coast, from North Carolina to Maine; even a fishing camp from Alaska attends. The show has reached its maximum

floor space and is unable to expand any further within Ward Melville.

This year, vendors came from a variety of backgrounds, with specializations in rods, lures, plugs, charter services, art, apparel and more. In addition, there were tables for organizations and agencies such as the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Program. Many of the vendors contributed to one of the 80 raffles at the show, often worth hundreds or thousands of dollars. Because there is no entrance fee to the show, the raffles helped to support the club. Additionally, there were 10 speakers who gave presentations throughout the day, sharing their expertise on different areas of fishing.

Before the show, Fishing Club members, numbering over 40, spent hours setting up over 300 tables across the cafeteria, gymnasium, auditorium entrance and the surrounding hallways. On the day of the show, they helped vendors bring in their supplies and find their spots, and they assisted vendors throughout the day. Jeremiah Moody, the club’s president, said, “My first two years at the club were largely informational, learning techniques of fishing and the different types of local fish. Mr. Wilson and those who were in the club before me have really prepared me to take on the presidential role this year. This year at the show, I had more of a logistical role. I’ve been able to form relationships with many vendors.” Moody was also interviewed for



Photo courtesy of Riverhead High School Fishing Club.

the Bay Rats and Buoys Podcast while at the show.

Many vendors who participated in the show were inspired by the youth participation in the Fishing Club. Brenden Rutigliano of Captree Fuel Bait and Tackle explained, “This expo is the reason I decided to start the Long Island High School Fishing League to encourage more schools to start fishing clubs.” Rutigliano donated eight rod & reel combos as a raffle this year, his 11th year at the show.

Captain Doug Tobak, the owner of Corazon Fishing Charters, has been at the show for four years. At the show this year, he donated a full day charter for a group of six as a raffle and gave a talk which highlighted his insights into fishing on the South Shore. Tobak said, “Bob Wilson and the Ward Melville community have supersized the youth fishing movement. ... For me to see that, I want to be all in on helping.” Additionally, Tobak shared, “[The show] has helped us keep in contact with our existing customer base, and it’s allowed us to create new relationships with the fishing community.”

The proceeds from the show go towards funding the club’s trips, which are open to all students at Ward Melville for free. The club also contributes over \$9,000 to senior scholarships every year. This year, there are trips out of Port Jefferson Harbor, Shinnecock Inlet, West Meadow and more. Carmine Menna, a member, said, “The Fishing Club has taught me a lot of leadership skills. I really like the trips, not only because I get to go out and catch fish, but because I can help people learn as well.”

Mr. Wilson emphasized that all are welcome on the trips, highlighting the range of students who were in the club, from “lacrosse kids to the football quarterback to kids who are in all kinds of academic pursuits.” Most of the trips are beginner level and don’t require any previous experience, although a couple are more advanced. Mr. Wilson mused, “There’s something about being one with nature. You get to see sunrises or sunsets that no one else gets to view. We live on an island. This is one of the natural resources that you should learn to appreciate and to keep around.”

Farmer’s Fridge Vending Machine Opens in Ward Melville

by CAROLINE QIAN and
VICTORIA LACHKO,
STAFF WRITERS

In March, Ward Melville saw a new addition to its culinary options: the Farmer’s Fridge vending machine. Farmer’s Fridge vending machines offer nutritious, farm-fresh meals, such as chicken wraps, Greek salads, Thai noodles, pesto pasta, chia seed pudding and more. Farmer’s Fridge employees come to locations and restock their Farmer’s Fridges with food sourced from local farms.

Depending on the respective location’s chosen plan or “status” of bronze, silver or gold, the frequency of restocks will vary to meet demands. According to Ms. Howard, a member of Ward Melville’s Wellness Committee, the

immense popularity of the vending machine has led the committee to switch Ward Melville’s fridge from silver status to gold status. In its first few weeks, the vending machine’s popularity meant it was often out of stock, but the gold status will mean a greater quantity of food items available. Additionally, customers are able to indicate on the machine if they want an item that is out of stock, allowing the company’s algorithm to adjust the quantity and types of options being restocked.

The idea for Ward Melville’s own Farmer’s Fridge was sparked over five years ago when Kevin Finnerty, the Three Village Athletic Director, spotted a machine on an errand. Impressed by the healthy options and “convenience factor,” he sent a photo of the machine to the Wellness Committee, which consists of teachers, administrators, students and community members. From there, the committee taste-tested samples of Farmer’s Fridge meals; assessed the need in Ward Melville for fresh, convenient after-school

food and even negotiated technical details with the Farmer’s Fridge company. For example, Ward Melville worked with Farmer’s Fridge to ensure that fresh food shipments could be delivered on the same route as those for Stony Brook University’s Farmer’s Fridge machines.

After years of deliberation, the Wellness Committee’s efforts paid off. While the convenience of Farmer’s Fridge machines makes them popular in airports, colleges and hospitals all around the country, Ms. Howard said, “Ward Melville is one of the first high schools in the country to get one of these machines. ... It’s really cool.”

The new addition was primarily intended to fill a gap in nutritious food options after school for those involved in clubs, athletes, and teachers who stay after school. Ward Melville’s other vending machines feature items like chips, cookies and ice cream. Ms. Howard highlighted some of these benefits, stating, “The machine is helpful to us teachers since some of us have to stay late

for conferences and workshops. Coaches and other athletic leaders also often stay late, so the machine is really beneficial for everyone.”

Students Gracie Stuart, a junior, and Olivia Monticciolo, a sophomore, also spoke about their own perspectives on the Farmer’s Fridge. Stuart, a student member of the Wellness Committee, believes that the fridge “greatly enhances not only the variety of options after school for students, but permits a healthier lifestyle as we can have fulfilling meals in between school and activities or sports.” Monticciolo offered her experiences as well. “As a vegetarian,” she explains, “it can be hard to find many vegetarian options in school. ... Now, with the new Farmer’s Fridge, it’s easier for me to get something filling and nutritious.”

Moving forward, the faculty lounge is also receiving its own Farmer’s Fridge vending machine so staff won’t have to compete with students for items. The machine was installed at the end of April and will be operational by early May.

Spring Into Music with NYSSMA and the Pops Concert

by SAMANTHA
DELMAGE, STAFF
WRITER

Spring is a time filled with excitement for the music community in the Three Village Central School District. As the school year nears an end, musicians are devoting their energy to preparing their pieces for upcoming performances. There are several major musical events happening in Three Village this spring, including NYSSMA and the Pops Concert.

NYSSMA, the New York State School Music Association, hosts a festival at schools across the state every year to give students a chance to perform the pieces they've been working on and get feedback from a judge. The auditions consist of playing scales, a solo piece and sightreading a short passage. NYSSMA is New York's chapter of NAFME, the National Association for Music Education. It is the largest state unit in the country, with over 100,000 students participating annually.

This year, Three Village is hosting both its usual satellite festival for the district as well as the regional All State festival, which allows the most accomplished musicians from across the state to audition for a spot in performances in Rochester in the fall. Ward

Melville's Tri-M Music Honor Society helps to run the event. Members are located outside each of the rooms during the festival to allow the auditions to run smoothly, and Tri-M has also been giving free music lessons to elementary and junior high school students to prepare for NYSSMA with its Music Without Borders program.

Another exciting event for musicians to showcase their talents is the Pops Concert, which will be held outdoors at Ward Melville on Monday, June 9, at 6:00 p.m. The concert is a celebratory event that features all of Ward Melville's music groups, including a combined orchestra, combined band and jazz band.

This year, all three of Ward Melville's choirs, Camerata, concert choir and women's choral ensemble, will be performing. In the past, only Camerata participated in this event. Additionally, the music department is planning a grand combined performance with chorus, band and orchestra playing simultaneously. A group performance of that scale has never been done before at Ward Melville, but the music teachers and students are determined to pull it off. While the setlist remains a surprise, the songs are sure to be crowd-pleasers.

Ethan Tam, who plays the saxophone, has participated in NYSSMA since first grade. He has done piano, jazz, classical and ensemble NYSSMA over the years, sharing, "I believe NYSSMA is a great way for younger musicians to gain motivation to practice and

as they join forces to think, write, rehearse and perform on the clock.

Cinnabar meets before the event to brainstorm prompts. Then, at the beginning of 1st period on the day of the event, Cinnabar members and the Players gather in the LGI to form groups; prompts are then randomly assigned. The writers and actors work together in creative spaces like the LGI and Z-Space to develop original scripts for the 5-10 minute plays. Group members work throughout the day to write and rehearse their creations. Students in Cinnabar are also encouraged to step into acting roles, while Players are encouraged to participate in the writing as well.

After school, students have the opportunity to leave and buy



Photo courtesy of Pondview Media.

work towards a very attainable goal. Without it, at a young age, it was hard to find motivation to work on techniques and harder pieces." He also noted that "attending NYSSMA as a member of Tri-M is extremely fun because you get to see all the kids who worked so hard play their pieces in front of judges. Motivating them, giving them words of encouragement and giving them tips on how to do well as they perform is extremely rewarding for a musician like myself."

The Pops Concert is a nice way to celebrate the end of the school year on positive terms. Madison DeLuise, a member of the concert choir, shared, "I'm so excited to perform songs that have had such an immense impact on our lives. Even though I don't mind learning more obscure pieces, performing songs that both you and the audience know and love makes

for a much more lively and engaging performance."

Despite their differences, both events provide invaluable experiences for musicians who have poured countless hours into their work. DeLuise reflected, "NYSSMA has helped me stay focused and motivated to get the best score possible. It's pushed me to work harder and become more determined to excel at my performance. It's made me take singing more seriously, learning everything from the pronunciation of the lyrics to the various dynamics of the piece."

Both NYSSMA and the Pops Concert are events taking place this spring that highlight the dedication and passion of musicians, offering a mix of challenges and excitement that elevate the music program at Ward Melville High School.

Plays in a Day: Creativity on the Clock

by ARIEL BASSIS, STAFF
WRITER

Picture this: you are given the task of crafting an entire production series — all in just 24 hours. That is the challenge awaiting students involved in Plays in a Day, an annual collaborative event between Cinnabar, Ward Melville's art and literary magazine, and the Ward Melville Players, a student acting group. This fast-paced event will put the imagination and creativity of both writers and performers to the test

as they join forces to think, write, rehearse and perform on the clock. Cinnabar meets before the event to brainstorm prompts. Then, at the beginning of 1st period on the day of the event, Cinnabar members and the Players gather in the LGI to form groups; prompts are then randomly assigned. The writers and actors work together in creative spaces like the LGI and Z-Space to develop original scripts for the 5-10 minute plays. Group members work throughout the day to write and rehearse their creations. Students in Cinnabar are also encouraged to step into acting roles, while Players are encouraged to participate in the writing as well.

After school, students have the opportunity to leave and buy props and costumes or continue rehearsing for the rest of the afternoon. Then, there is a full run of the show at 5 p.m., and, after 12 hours of preparation, the official show begins at 7 p.m. Participants are challenged to rely heavily on their expressive instincts and imagination to successfully bring their stories to life. The audience also receives an exciting glimpse into the spontaneity of live theater.

At last year's successful event, one group received the prompt "Greek Mythology" and developed a sorority ghost story based on the theme. Another group took inspiration from a sitcom to write their play "Jumping the Shark," which included intro music and cue cards with audience reactions.

the final productions," said Grubbs-Aubrecht.

Hope Hahn, Cinnabar's other co-president, spoke out about the upcoming show as well, saying, "I am really excited to bridge the gap between Players and Cinnabar, since I am in both clubs. I have always thought of it as an opportunity for like-minded individuals to collaborate in ways they haven't been able to before."

Plays in a Day, however, is not just about the performance and final delivery of all that was created. It is about the process, collaboration, perseverance and imagination that goes into the production of this event.

Ms. Marra, the Cinnabar advisor, said, "I love Plays in a Day because it gives you the opportunity to see writing from beginning to end. You start with the idea, you plant the seed and you all contribute."

Mark your calendars for May 30 if you want to be witness to the theatrical magic of Plays in a Day.

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Ward Melville Science Bowl Going to Nationals

by ISABELLA DEVITO,
STAFF WRITER

Ward Melville's Science Bowl team has had a successful year so far. In January, they won the regional competition at Brookhaven National Laboratory, marking their third consecutive regional win. The team will advance to compete at the national competition in Washington D.C. from April 24-28.

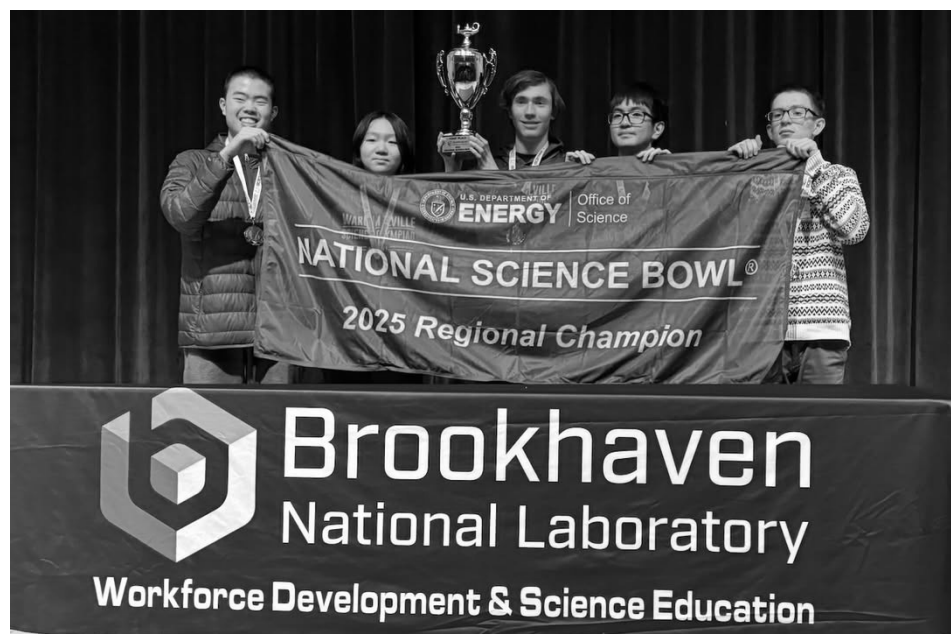
The team was pleased by their win at Regionals, with member Anna Xing saying that their success "ultimately came down to a mix of both luck and collective effort." When discussing preparation, all of the team members preached that practice is essential. Since they specialize in different fields such as physics, earth science and biology, captain Sean Skinner said that they have read through complete college textbooks to learn that field's content to prepare.

However, they've gone above and beyond for the next

level. Skinner said that to prepare for Nationals, they "practice the fast-paced buzzer questions with each other at club meetings" and do online competitions.

Another member, Gunes Sunar, described the importance of practicing in this manner. He said, "Since the questions can come from a variety of sources, I practice many types of science applications like notes, classes or science trivia." Additionally, he mentioned that speed is "crucial" in competing at Nationals. Sunar claimed that he plans to "practice for this competition, exceeding as much as one could possibly imagine," and that the heart of his preparation is "persistence, not motivation."

Skinner spoke about the challenges that come with competing in such a fast-paced nature and the mindset of the members during competition, noting, "The questions are very much about speed and intuition, and you have to be willing to take risks. Competing with a microphone and a buzzer in a full auditorium looks stressful, but the only thing going through your head is finding the answer as quickly as possible and being the first to buzz. Sometimes that means making predictions and buzzing in



an answer before they even finish reading the question."

Although the competition seems nerve wracking, the team is thrilled. Skinner remarked, "We all feel really great about going to Nationals. This will be our third year in a row qualifying, and, based on our Regionals performance, it's looking like it could go quite well. Last year, we made the top 24, which was a first for our team, so it's really great to see our increased efforts paying off."

Although Sunar is also looking forward to the competition, he said he wants to "save the excitement and joy for the eve of

the day I get to Washington D.C. and focus on studying till the very end." He also commented, "Whether my team wins or not, I'd still feel like a true winner if I have a focused mindset."

The other members shared enthusiasm for Nationals, with Skinner saying he's looking forward to meeting "like-minded people and visiting Washington D.C.," and Xing stating that they are especially excited for "the opportunity to compete against teams from across the country and visit the National Mall in D.C."

Ward Melville DECA Heads to Orlando

by ZAINA KHAN, STAFF
WRITER

Twelve members of Ward Melville High School's DECA team have qualified for the prestigious International Career Development Conference (ICDC), set to take place in Orlando, Florida in late April. After excelling at the state-level competition, these students are now preparing to represent Ward Melville on the international stage.

DECA is an international organization that prepares high school students for careers in business-related fields such as marketing, finance, hospitality and management through competitions and real-world experiences. Ward Melville's team has grown rapidly in recent years. Two years ago, Ward Melville DECA had around 60 members and eight ICDC qualifiers. This year, the club has almost doubled in size to over 120 members and 12 ICDC qualifiers.

Katie Duong, co-president of the club along with Madeena Jalili, added that this growth has been matched by a rise in initiative, saying, "Seeing everyone set up their own practice sessions, give feedback and take charge has been super rewarding." Jalili and Duong

achieved a significant personal milestone this year by winning first place in their event, Business Law and Ethics Team Decision Making, at states.

Beyond the competition, ICDC is an opportunity to connect with students from around the world. Jalili, who has been to ICDC two times prior, said that enriching conversations with other competitors were some of her most memorable experiences.

ICDC preparation involves months of practice, with an emphasis on improving confidence, critical thinking and presentation skills. "For DECA competitions, it's really important to develop confidence in front of judges," Jalili explained. To help competitors improve, she organized team practice sessions where qualifiers can practice with one another and give constructive feedback.

One of the biggest challenges faced by the individuals heading to ICDC is the pressure of high-level competition. Success in DECA doesn't come easily — it requires dedication, resilience and a willingness to improve. Jalili credits her success to constant practice in problem-solving, speaking and presenting. "I once struggled significantly with confident public speaking, but through consistent effort alongside my partner Katie, I developed confidence in these areas," she said. Duong added, "What I love about DECA is how it forces



you to get comfortable with speaking and thinking on your feet."

This year, the team faced the challenge of making the trip financially accessible. "Two years ago, it cost around \$2,000 per person to attend ICDC," Duong explained. "This year, we brought that down to \$500." She hopes this effort "sets a precedent" and shows how impactful district funding can be in making opportunities accessible for more students.

Duong shared that, through DECA, she learned leadership means more than just giving directions; it's about creating space for others to thrive. "I've been competing in DECA since 10th grade, and I attribute a lot of my growth to the community here."

One of Jalili's most fulfilling experiences has been seeing others

succeed. "Throughout the year, we organized numerous roleplay practices to help members improve their presentation skills, and it's been incredible to see how far many of them have come."

While DECA is focused on business, Jalili emphasized that the skills it teaches are applicable to many different career paths, including her own interest in medicine. She said, "DECA isn't just a business-oriented club. It's an organization that teaches a wide range of valuable skills for professional settings."

Ward Melville's DECA team is excited to go to ICDC from April 26-29, where they hope their hard work throughout the school year will pay off.

Three Village Needs A Clear AI Policy

by **CLAIRE SLONIEWSKY and ANDREW CHUANG,**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF and STAFF WRITER

What would you do if we told you that this article was written by AI? Would you take it less seriously? What would you think of the *Kaleidoscope*? How would it reflect on Ward Melville, or on us personally?

This article wasn't written by AI, but the rise of artificial intelligence in the classroom has been remarkably swift. According to Statista, a staggering 86% of students used AI to complete their schoolwork in 2024. Similarly, *Forbes* reported in 2024 that 60% of teachers had incorporated AI into the classroom. Along with this, 98% of the survey respondents identified a need for education on ethical AI usage.

It's clear that AI will be an enduring component of education in the future. However, today, students are punished if caught using AI technology in Three Village, and the school district does not currently have any AI-specific academic honesty policies. Considering all of this, where should we draw the line when it comes to AI usage? To us, the answer is simple: the district should adopt a concise and standardized process for determining whether or not usage of such tools is ethical.

Today, AI offenses committed by students are categorized under plagiarism. Plagiarism is listed under the Academic Dishonesty bracket of our Student Handbook, defined as "the work(s) or idea(s) of another, not necessarily those of a student, including the work of artificial intelligence applications when not *specifically* directed to use by teachers, as one's own through the deliberate omission of acknowledgement or reference."

The Three Village Assistant Director of Technology Gary Young, clarified that "if you're using AI to do your work for you, that's basically plagiarism. You're using somebody else's information and work and trying to pass it off as your own." Consequences of this offense might include parental notification, oral reprimand, written reprimand, no public recognition of academic honors, ineligibility for/or removal from honor societies and withdrawal of District-sponsored scholarship.

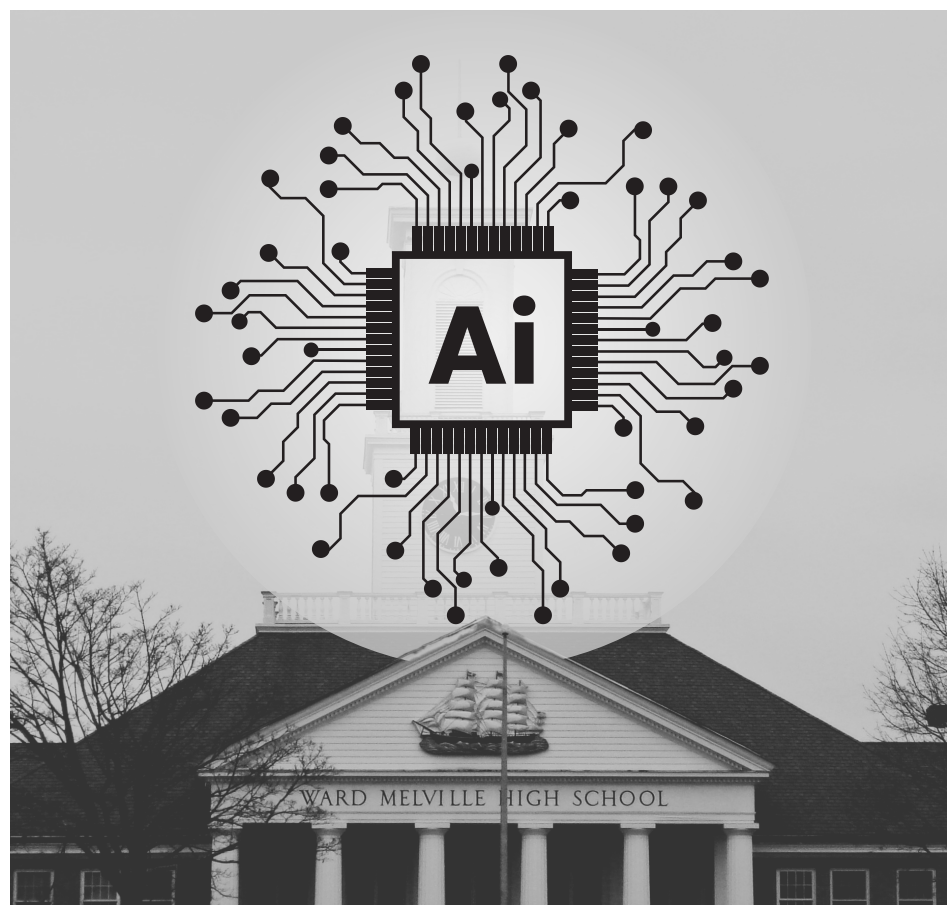
We do not necessarily disagree with this policy. Maintain-

ing an academic environment that prioritizes original work is the bare minimum for any proper education. However, it's important that district policy reflects that, meaning we need an AI-specific honor policy, or at least recognition of AI issues in the Code of Conduct. The consequences of our lack of this policy are apparent in disparities between the treatment of students and teachers when using such resources, in questions surrounding AI-detection software and the vagueness between proper and improper usage.

Through conversations and interviews with both Ward Melville students and educators, it is clear that teachers are encouraged to take advantage of modern technology like AI, while students are

good and bad. AP Literature and Composition teacher Ms. Jacqueline Shaw said she used AI to her benefit in certain scenarios, explaining, "I'll plug work in and say, what are the general strength of my students? Where do you see areas for improvement for my students? Sometimes when you're grading and are so in the thick of it, it's hard to look at the big picture."

Ms. Shaw did reject the abuse of this resource by educators, noting how there is a time and place where they shouldn't be using it. "If they're using it to do all the grading and they're not reading anything, how could you possibly help a student in that way, if you don't know the writing that they have done for you?"



reprimanded and forced to face inconsistent and unclear punishments. In an interview, Young said, "Knowing teachers and their mindset, I don't think they would be using [AI] for essays and things like that," casting doubt on whether or not teachers would use the resource in grading essays or writing feedback. On the contrary, our own investigation discovered at least a dozen teachers who may have used AI in lessons across this academic year, witnessed by multiple students.

One Ward Melville senior, who asked to remain anonymous, wrote that a teacher "told [students] directly that she was going to use AI to leave comments when we were writing an essay about short stories in her class." They added: "I don't think it is okay for a teacher to be leaving comments like this, especially when we are AP students preparing to go to college."

Still, not all AI use in the classroom is negative. The core issue is that the district has yet to highlight a difference between

While one teacher's opinion on the topic isn't always universal, it is distressing for a student to be unsure how their school district treats AI-related offenses, especially when their own teachers are encouraged to use the same platforms. Students can be punished under the plagiarism category, but this punishment depends solely on the teacher in their classroom. Regarding policies or punishments put in place for students, Young said, "When it comes to a punishment for using AI, it depends on how it was used, what rules were put in place by the teacher on how it could be used ... there should be a punishment if you're breaking the rules that were set by the teacher in the classroom."

Not only is the punishment different case by case, but the district has demonstrated a clear double standard for who is allowed to access AI resources by installing the Brisk AI Chrome extension for all teachers. Brisk specializes in automating various tasks for teachers. It is capable of planning lessons, creating teaching

resources, differentiating materials and providing personalized feedback. Brisk can also scan students' documents to see if their text was copy and pasted, helping teachers identify work that may be AI-copied or plagiarized. Having teachers use Brisk AI to discourage students from using AI is contradictory and fuels a problem it is trying to prevent.

Our district knows of AI's availability and convenience and have recently shut several websites down on student-issued chromebooks and email accounts. Young touched on this topic during our interview, "At first, we were allowing access to ChatGPT and Gemini. We have shut those down since. That was something that the Board of Ed specifically wanted us to do." The district's AI detector should be viewed as its own AI source, just like ChatGPT and Gemini are. Prohibiting high schoolers from searching these websites is a physical statement made by Three Village that they are against AI use. It's ironic that the same district provides their teachers an AI resource to use in the classroom.

Regarding the Board of Education, we were able to converse with Dr. Stanley Bak, one of the Three Village Board of Education's newest trustees. Although his stated views do not reflect any official stance of the Three Village Board of Education, we wanted to understand the perspective of a Board member. "I believe AI has unfortunately had a generally negative impact on education so far," Bak said, "The goal generally is not to provide specific punishments, but rather make clear what is and is not acceptable. Is brainstorming ideas using AI tools allowed? Outlining an argument? Creating a draft document? Polishing a few sentences? At what point do you need to acknowledge your use of AI? A clear policy prevents misunderstanding." He also provided an example of a sample district AI policy — one that Three Village has yet to implement.

The rise of artificial intelligence in education has been quick and widespread, causing a lot of ambiguity between what AI is deemed good and what AI is deemed bad. We aren't sure what the answer is, but there needs to be a definite answer. As Ward Melville students, recognizing when to not use AI resources in the Code of Conduct would limit the misunderstandings we have about where Three Village stands on modern technology.

Spring Sports Begin at Ward Melville

by ZAHRA VESAMIA
and SARAH WU, STAFF
WRITERS

The Ward Melville spring sports season has officially begun. Student-athletes are now competing in lacrosse, badminton, flag football, softball, baseball, track and field, tennis and golf. With all teams already deep into practices and games, this season is shaping to be promising in action and competition.

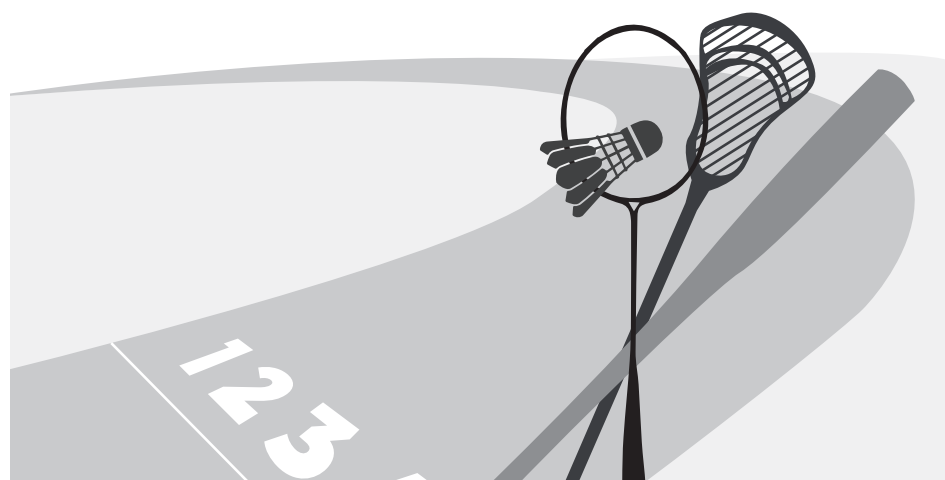
Boys lacrosse is expecting a strong season. With practices year-round and a minicamp leading into the spring, the team is going into the season with high intensity. “Every year, the goal is to win counties then move on to states. I think this group is special and we definitely have a chance to make those goals a reality,” captain Callan McLaughlin shared, optimistic about going far this year. The team is particularly looking forward to facing long-time rival Northport, a

matchup that always brings competitive energy.

The boys baseball team is entering the season with renewed energy and a drive to bounce back after a challenging season last year. With a strong bond between players, many of whom have known each other for years, there’s excitement about returning to the field. “There’s nothing better than playing the sport I love with people I’ve grown up with,” said captain Jason Stiles, reflecting the tight-knit bond within the team. Practicing six days a week, the team is focusing on game-like situations and live pitching to prepare.

Rather than relying on power alone, the team’s strength lies in baseball intelligence, small ball tactics and smart decision-making. They are determined to compete with the leading teams in their division and bring their best effort to every game. The team is confident that this season will be one of success and that they will emerge with a strong sense of unity and determination.

As a three-peat county champion, the girls badminton team is going into the season with confidence. Their goals include



winning a fourth consecutive county title and finally clinching a Long Island championship. This year’s tryouts drew a record number of students. According to senior Katie Specht, what sets the team apart is their balance between work and play. She said, “At badminton, we can make funny videos for Instagram and eat snacks, but also dedicate ourselves to improving all in the same practice.”

Practices are deliberate and intentional, focusing on consistency, awareness of opponents’ strengths and weaknesses and refining skills through playing different people on the team. The team is also placing more value on doubles play, aiming to build depth and strength across the roster. With

experienced leadership and an influx of new players, the badminton team is set for another memorable season.

With the spring sports season in full swing, each team is bringing its best to the field. From the lacrosse team’s county title aspirations to the baseball team’s focus on redemption, there is no shortage of passion and determination across the board. As the athletes continue to train and compete with strong leadership and clear goals, it’s safe to say this spring is looking up for Ward Melville.

Three Village Budget Vote Set For May 20

by LILY HUANG, STAFF
WRITER

The 2025-26 budget has placed significant financial pressure on the Three Village Central School District, as major increases in costs and expenditures have stretched funds to a breaking point. Contractual salaries rose \$6.1 million, which was expected, but an additional \$5.3 million was added to expenses through an escalation in health insurance prices. Combined, these heightened expenses have left little room for nearly all other budget items.

To maintain all current staff and programs in Three Village, the district would need to install a budget with a tax increase of 7.1%, well above the 2025-2026 tax cap of 2.78%. A plan with this overreach would need a historically unlikely 60% supermajority vote in favor to pass. Faced with this reality, the Board of Education (BOE) — composed of President Susan Rosenzweig, Vice President Karen Roughley, and trustees Dr. Stanley Bak, Dr. Jeffrey Kerman, Dr. Shaorui Li, Dr. David McKinnon and Vincent Vizzo — has planned significant reductions to areas throughout the district to create a budget compliant with the cap. During the BOE

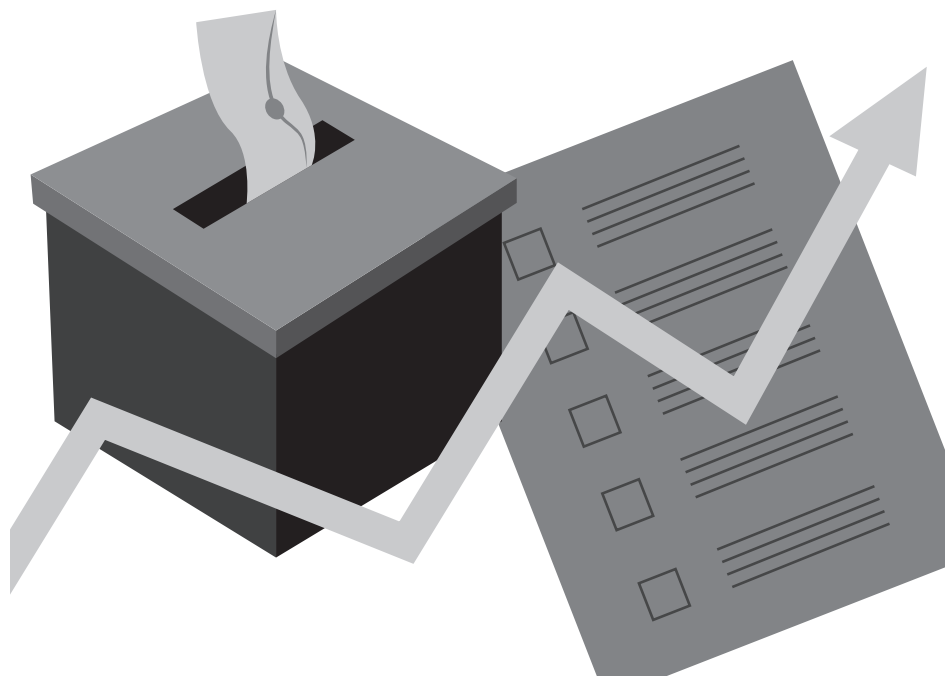
meeting on April 9, the Board presented a budget within the tax cap for the upcoming school year, which will be decided upon through a vote on Tuesday, May 20.

The Board plans to reduce expenditures by phasing out several clubs and programs within the district. These cost-saving procedures include a \$123,000 cut in the Summer Math and Reading program and the elimination of clubs with fewer than 15 members.

A particularly controversial measure taken to downsize spending is the elimination of the Intellectually Gifted (IG) program at the 4th grade level. Factoring in salary costs and transportation, this cut would save the district roughly \$200,000. This decision, which was announced abruptly via email after families had already received the program’s entrance exam scores, received strong opposition from parents and students at the Board meeting on April 9.

Throughout the year, the decade-long campaign to push back school start times seemed to be drawing to a close as the Board discussed the implementation of a 35 minute delay in start times at the high school, an adjustment welcomed by many in the community. At first, the \$1.1 million cost of this change was factored into the budget. However, the Board voted to scrap this figure at the meeting on April 9 in order to give more room to fund existing programs.

Superintendent Dr. Kevin



Scanlon said that a priority with the removal of start time expenses would be to restore elementary class sizes, which were expected to increase to around 27 students per class as a result of the planned staff reductions at both the elementary and secondary levels. Restoring the full IG program or the Summer Math and Reading program are other possibilities.

Voters will decide whether to approve or reject the proposed budget amount, although the specific programs that will be cut or included continue to be in flux. If the budget is struck down, the Board can either put the same budget up for a revote, put a revised budget up for a second vote, or head straight to a contingency plan, where total spending levels would be the same as the 2024-25 year. If the budget is put up for a second

vote and fails, then the Board must form a contingency budget, necessitating millions more in program and staffing cuts.

Eligible voters can participate in the budget vote on Tuesday, May 20 from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. at Ward Melville High School. A public information meeting and budget hearing will be held on Wednesday, May 13 at 7 p.m. at the North Country Administration Building. Early voting is also available. Absentee ballot and early mail ballot applications can be obtained from the Three Village website or the North Country Administration Building at 100 Suffolk Avenue in Stony Brook between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., with application deadlines beginning May 14. Residents should contact district clerk Inger Germano with questions.

Crossword

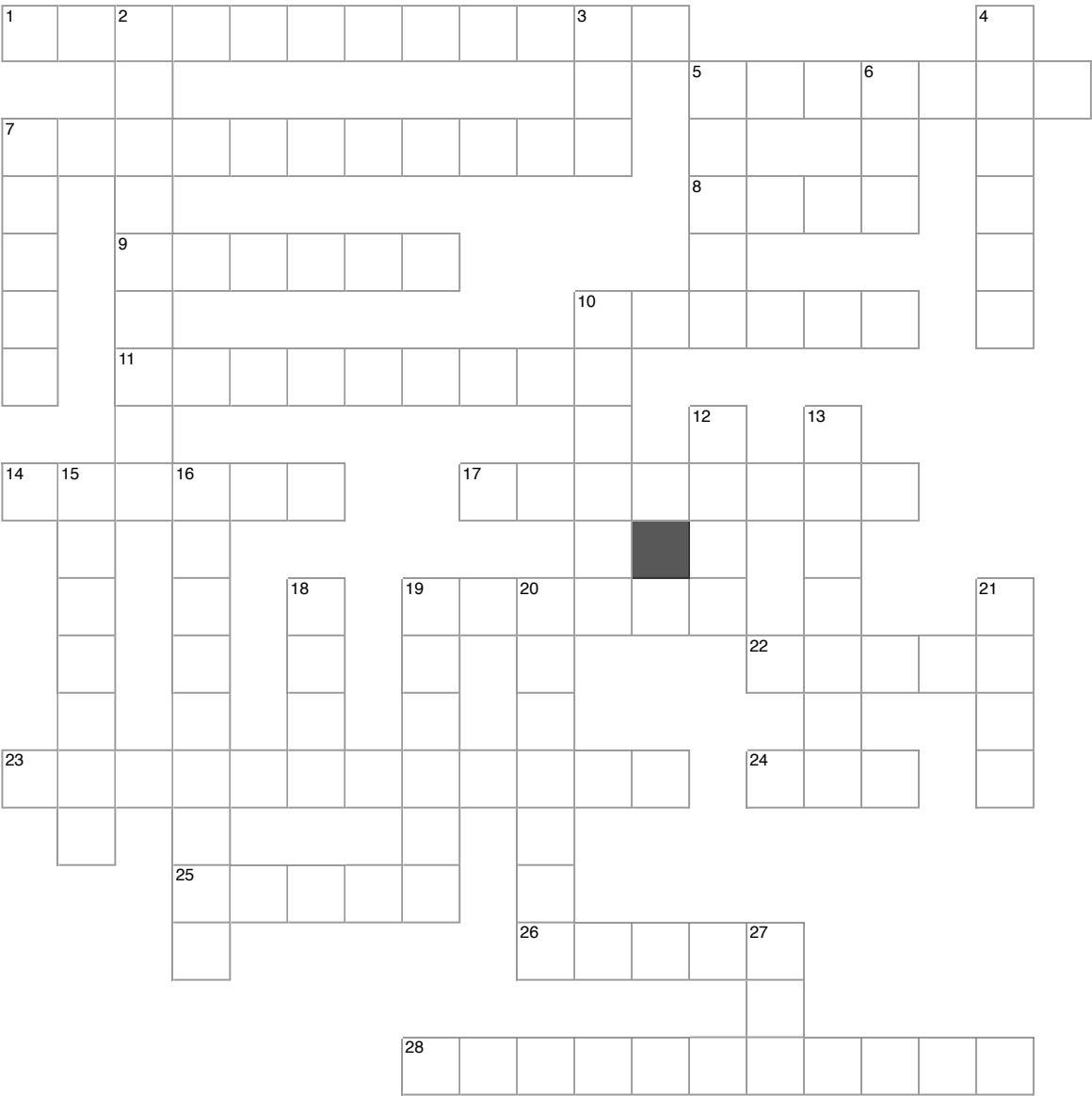
by MICHAEL RETAKH,
OP-ED EDITOR

ACROSS

- 1. Sleepwalking
- 5. Perfect desert
- 7. Sentimental flower
- 8. German ‘art song’
- 9. Mel Brooks’ Springtime for _____
- 10. New Canadian PM
- 11. Southern Spain
- 14. Musical clef
- 17. Not Catholic or Protestant
- 19. Team Jeremiah or Team _____
- 22. Passover feast
- 23. With clue 28 and a comma, connector of independent clauses (and beginning of clues 1, 7, 11, 16, 17, 18, and 20)
- 24. Show with recent jubilee
- 25. Common French king
- 26. Italian love
- 28. See clue 23

DOWN

- 2. Mad Hatter companion
- 3. College Board exam
- 4. ‘I’m working late’ occupation
- 5. Bears or coordinates for _____
- 6. Interest rate setter
- 7. Number of Lenten days
- 10. Centenarian president
- 12. What was in the beginning, according to John
- 13. True or false
- 15. Caesar’s river
- 16. Monarch or painted lady
- 18. Major cooler company
- 19. Dover to _____
- 20. Panamanian dictator
- 21. Grand _____
- 27 And so on



Upcoming
School Events

MAY

- 20 - Three Village Budget Vote, 6 a.m. - 9 p.m.
- 29 - Senior Music Awards, 6 p.m.
- 30 - Plays in a Day with Cinnabar and Ward Melville Players
- Late May - Poetry Day
- 12th - Senior BBQ
- 12th - Senior Athletic Awards, 7 p.m.
- 12th - Last Day of Classes
- 16th - PVSA Award Ceremony, 6:30 p.m.
- 26th - Senior Prom, 9 p.m.
- 29th - Ward Melville Graduation, 10 a.m.

JUNE

- 4th - Art and Tech Exhibition, 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- 9th - Pops Concert, 6 p.m.
- 10th - Senior Walk Through at Elementary Schools
- 10th - Senior Scholarship Awards Night, 6:30 p.m.

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