COLT CHRONICLE

GRADUATION ISSUE 2024

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Illustration by Aarushi Kumar

Project Graduation: Information and Expectations

Graduation is approaching, which means one last field trip for seniors.

By Olivia Bsales, Features Editor

Project Graduation will be held on graduation day, June 14, following the graduation ceremony. From 9:30 PM to 2 AM, the seniors will travel to a surprise location for a fun night with their peers. Everyone is encouraged to participate because this will be the last high school activity for the Class of 2024.

"I think project graduation will be at the American Dream Mall because that is where it was last year," said senior Jake Piccola.

Many other seniors agree with Piccola. "If the surprise location is somewhere else, I hope it will be fun because I don't know what place could be better than the American Dream Mall," said senior Kate Donaldson. In the past, Project Graduation has been held at the American Dream Mall for many years.



Photo courtesy of Vue Magazine
American Dream Mall ferris wheel

"I had so much fun last year, and it was really cool being at the American Dream Mall late at night," said KHS alumna Laura Conetta. Most of them had a great time and thought it was a great way to end the year and their time in high school.

However, some seniors said that they were overly tired, "I think it would be better to have this trip on a different day because graduation day is already a long and stressful day," said KHS alumna Alexa Leitao. Although many people might agree with Leitao and feel very overwhelmed, graduation day should be a very exciting day anyway.

"I am really excited for project graduation mostly because we will be there after midnight, which I think is pretty cool," said Piccola.

However, some seniors are anticipating the sadness that will come afterward. "I know I'm going to be upset when the trip is over because that will be our last time together unless we have a reunion in a few years," said Donaldson. Although project graduation will be a very cool experience, it may be upsetting to some seniors because it will be their last moments together. The Class of 2024 grew up together, and they have all known each other since elementary school.

If the surprise location is at the American Dream Mall, the seniors will have a lot of fun because there will be a lot of different activities they can do. Last year, the entire mall was rented out, so the seniors did not have to worry about other people being there. They will be able to ride on the roller coasters, go ice skating, go shopping, eat food, and walk around wherever they want. Although they would be at the mall very late, there would still be employees everywhere and chaperones to supervise all of the students.



Illustration by Siyana Ahmed
Graduation caps thrown into the sky

CRACKING THE ADMISSIONS CODE IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE

Learn what factors go into the college admissions process with an expert college consultant from Quad Education Consulting

By Kristina Haviland, Editor-in-Chief



Photo by Unsplash.com | Student walking on college campus.

According to Quad Education Group, current Ivy League acceptance rates have dropped to extremely low numbers, ranging from 3.3 percent to 7.3 percent. With over 100,000 applicants, top universities are becoming harder to get into each year, despite students achieving more.

Mary Banks, formerly in admissions at Columbia University and New York University, is the Director of Admissions Consulting at Quad Education Group. Quad Education provides resources for students and connects them with counselors who work closely with them throughout the application process. Banks has worked in higher education for over 40 years; here, she shares her knowledge on the intense reality of the college admissions process.

What goes into the admissions selection?

It's a complex and chaotic thing that is really quite simple. There are millions of students applying, some will get in, and some will not. We need to remember there is a plethora of programs that will provide a student with an exceptional experience. Once you apply, it may seem like a matter of chance. Two people may have the exact same credentials, they may look alike, are from great high schools, and write wonderful essays, but one gets in and one doesn't. There are many factors that go into an admissions decision that are not necessarily obvious. Be authentic and seek advice when you build your application/program list after your research is complete. You need to find that place where you "fit."

How can students get the most out of letters of recommendation?

Whether you have a low GPA, a perfect academic record, or exceptional athletic credentials, it is important that your counselor, or teacher, shares examples of your potential with specific references that tell your story, adding color to your application. It's also important to have a resume or a list of attributes that you would like your faculty member to stress in the letter of recommendation.

What should students think about when choosing where to apply?

Students should consider cost, location, their specific program, diversity, student groups, and other factors. It is advisable to consider your local university or community college when compiling your list.

How can students use personal and supplemental essays to stand out?

You must figure out what it is that makes you unique and incorporate those different attributes to create a persona that will shine through on your applications. The supplemental essays are important and will differentiate your application from others.

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What separates one student from another?

Someone I worked with in admissions went to Harvard for her undergraduate education. She started her own business making bakery goods out of jellyfish, and she had every required box checked: excellent grades, perfect SATs, and more. The things that separated her from other applicants were that her humility and her authenticity were apparent in her essays.

How can a student showcase his/her abilities beyond the numbers?

Most schools are concerned with putting together a class that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. It's great to have the best grades, the best test scores, and the best everything, but unless you have incorporated a pay-it-forward, volunteer experience, and sincere and authentic participation in your community, it is not enough to just be smart. Everybody is smart in one way or another.

Why should comparison be avoided?

I think the most damaging thing that we can do as applicants is to compare ourselves to our peers. Not just our global peers, but our friends; people who were our friends until admissions decisions were compared. Just be careful.

Why is authenticity important?

The pressure that is on high school students, even middle school students, is unconscionable. I don't think that it does anything except create an anxious and depressed population, and that is not what colleges are seeking. Some parents and their students have put so much emphasis on achievement that it has created an inauthentic applicant. Someone who has focused on real interests, even a possible career path, throughout his/her four years of high school is a much more exciting applicant than someone who is trying to be great at everything with no discernible passion.

For more information:

Quad Education is a leading college admissions consulting company in America with over 15 years of experience. With a 98% acceptance rate and a team of counselors that has reviewed over 211,000 applications, Quad Education is committed to maximizing students' chances of getting accepted into the world's most competitive programs.



Photo courtesy of Curry College
Students walking down steps

A Sour Start to a Sweet Success

A deep dive into Olivia Rodrigo's music career and her popular ongoing GUTS tour.

By Lea Albik, Staff Reporter



Photo by Christopher Polk | Olivia Rodrigo performs onstage for the kick-off of GUTS World Tour at Acrisure Arena on Feb. 23 in Palm Springs, Calif.

For the first time, Olivia Rodrigo is going on a worldwide tour to promote her newest album "GUTS" topping her last tour with a whopping 77 total performances across the globe.

Rodrigo's GUTS world tour is currently trending and many are looking to buy tickets. So far, she has had amazing success in her tour and is still selling out stadiums. In her previous tour, she performed 33 times in North America and 16 times in Europe. Not only is this tour traveling to multiple different countries, but there are also many more shows than her last tour, which gives many fans the opportunity to attend one of her concerts.

Rodrigo performs 22 songs on this tour with a mix of songs from her previous album "Sour" and her new songs from "GUTS (Spilled)." The set list is "Bad Idea, Right?", "Ballad of a Homeschooled Girl," "Vampire," "Traitor," "Drivers License," "Teenage Dream," "Pretty isn't Pretty," "Love is Embarrassing," "Making the Bed," "Logical," "Enough for you," "Lacy," "Jealousy, Jealousy," "Happier," "Favorite Crime," "Deja Vu," "The Grudge," "Brutal," "Obsessed," "All-American B*tch," "Good 4 U," and "Get Him Back!" Many fans who went to the tour thought that her adding in the new songs from GUTS was very exciting and made the concert experience better.

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“I really enjoyed the concert! The whole experience was amazing, not only was her set very entertaining but the crowd was also very engaged and it was fun to sing along!”

- Senior Liora Shuster

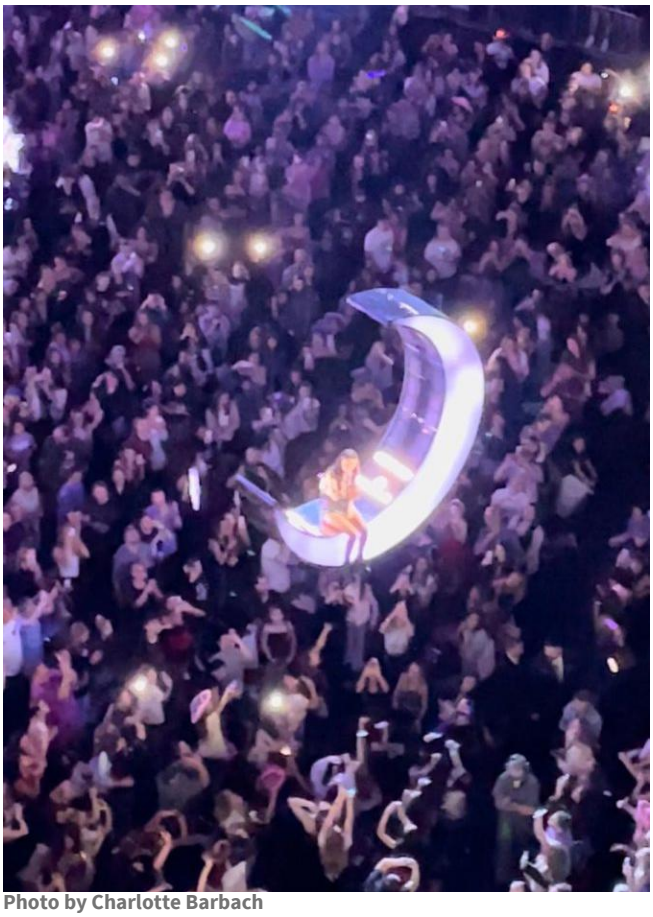


Photo by Charlotte Barbach

Olivia Rodrigo singing “Enough For You” while soaring on a moon.

The cost for the GUTS world tickets typically start at $278, however the average price is around $1081. These tickets are very pricey and as the dates get closer the price starts to get higher. You can buy these tickets on TicketMaster, StubHub, SeatGeek, and many other sites.

The new release of the album combined with its widespread popularity has made this tour extremely demanding and pricey. The GUTS album had six nominations at the iHeartRadio Music Awards, and Rodrigo ended up winning Pop Album of the Year.

The concert was very enjoyable; not only did Rodrigo do a great job performing, but the audience was very lively and energetic. Everyone that attended the show was singing, dancing, and recording. It was exciting to sing along with everyone.

During the performance Rodrigo brings out one star guest to perform to open up her show; she has so far brought out The Breeders, Chappell Roan, PinkPantheress, Remi Wolf, and many others.



Photo by Kevin Mazur

Olivia Rodrigo performs during her GUTS World Tour opening in Palm Springs on Feb. 23, 2024.

Rodrigo had many different outfits, props, and more. A fan favorite of the concert was when Rodrigo was soaring in the air on a moon.

The tour first started off with “Bad Idea, Right?”, and as soon as the audience heard the music, the floor of the stadium started shaking. The vibe of the 90-minute concert was electric.

Although the concert tickets may be pricey, it was worth it and many said that this concert was an amazing experience that they will never forget.

SPICE UP YOUR SIPS

Taking on the new Starbucks Spicy Refreshers

By Sofia Solensky, Staff Reporter

Just like the weather, Starbucks is heating up its drinks. They recently came out with a new Spicy Refresher line, which includes three flavors: Spicy Strawberry, Spicy Pineapple, and Spicy Dragon Fruit.

On April 16, Starbucks came out with their new limited-time Spicy Refreshers. Starbucks has confirmed when these drinks will stop selling. Starbucks also came out with a Spicy Cream Cold Foam to go along with the drinks.

To make this drink, Starbucks takes one of their original Refreshers and adds hot chili powder. Customers have also said that you can adjust the amount of hot chili pepper, which indicates how spicy the drink will be. This can affect many people's opinions on the drink, depending on if they like spice or not.



Photo by Starbucks Story and News
A photo of the three new Spicy Refresher flavors.

The Spicy Strawberry refresher smells like the original Strawberry Acai Refresher -- it looked like it as well -- but just a few shades darker. During the first sip, there is a sensation of burning chili pepper. The Refresher was not expected to be that strong. It looks like a normal, sweet drink, but you get a mouthful of chili pepper instead. It is interesting to see Starbucks experimenting with new flavors, but the spiciness was a little too much. The chili pepper took over the whole drink, and it outbalanced the other flavors one is supposed to taste.

Overall, the drink was okay. If you enjoy spice, you might find it delicious. But if you don't and prefer your drinks more on the sweet side, these new refreshers might not be your cup of tea. Either way, everyone should try this drink, just to see what it is like.

Many celebrities and influencers on many social media platforms have tried these new Spicy Refreshers as well. Janelle Rohner, a TikTok influencer with 5.2 million followers, reviewed this drink and posted it on her TikTok account, Rohner ordered the tall Spicy Pineapple Refresher, and she thinks the drink is very good.

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR JANELLE ROHNER'S REVIEW!

Seen from many other people's views, and videos posted on social media, these drinks have mixed opinions. Many people enjoy it and would get it again. Other people, including me, would not get it again. Anyone could end up finding themselves a new go-to at their local Starbucks, for the time that the drink is released.

The Sounds of Coachella 2024

A review of this year's performances at one of the most popular music festivals in America

By Lexi Haines, Staff Reporter



Illustration by Siyana Ahmed | Concertgoers at Coachella in 2023.



Photo by Frazer Harrison | *Tyler, the Creator headlines Coachella 2024 on April 20.*

Coachella: one of the largest, most exclusive, and most famous music festivals in America and even the world. Every year in Indio, California, otherwise known as Coachella Valley, the festival draws in many different socialites, influencers, and other celebrities, all eager to see the stunning performances of over one hundred artists. Coachella has had a wide array of musicians that have been featured at the festival, including stars such as Beyoncé, Harry Styles, Billie Eilish, The Weeknd, and Lady Gaga.

Given Coachella's record of giving attendees performances from incredible talent, people were very excited to see all the artists that would perform at Coachella this year. The headliners of Coachella 2024 consist of some of the most popular names in the music industry: Lana Del Rey, Tyler, The Creator, and Doja Cat. And fans were not disappointed by their amazing performances.

Del Rey fans experienced an incredible set from the pop icon. Del Rey gave her fans an enthralling performance, doing everything from riding in on the back of a motorcycle to being joined by a hologram on stage.

She sang some of her most popular songs such as "Ride" and even surprised her fans with snippets of her unreleased songs, such as "Jealous Girl." Overall, fans were more than pleased with her performance.

As for the other headliners Doja Cat and Tyler, The Creator, they also did not disappoint. Pop artist Doja Car dazzled her fans with an intricate and entertaining performance, including dinosaur skeletons, yetis, mud choreography, and so much more in her set, giving fans a concert experience that they will most likely never see anywhere else. Tyler, The Creator also gave fans an incredible show, performing songs such as hits "Call Me If You Get Lost," "See You Again," and "Earfquake," bringing on famous guests such as Childish Gambino and A$AP Rocky to perform alongside him.

Aside from the headliners, there were also amazing performances seen by other artists invited to the festival, such as Sabrina Carpenter, Tyla, John Summit, Kid Cudi, Deftones, and Diplo. The performances at this year's Coachella were astounding, and fans everywhere are excited to see what the lineup for 2025 will be.

The Biggest Fair in New Jersey Returns

The State Fair Meadowlands Returns this June to New Jersey including delicious food and fun and family-friendly activities

By Peyton Triano, Editor-in-Chief

The bright flashing neon lights shine onto the huge crowd of people, as the sound of carnival games echoes the warm summer air. Fair season is soon approaching, along with the smell of buttery popcorn and sights of horse shows. The New Jersey State Fair roots back to 1821 and the summer fair season is soon approaching.

The New Jersey State Fair will start Aug. 2, and end Aug. 10 making it the perfect activity for mid-summer. To visit, the address is 37 Plains Road, Augusta, NJ. To attend the fair and go on rides or play games, pricing will vary, but the automatic system for tickets is $3 for two tickets, $15 sheet for 11 tickets, $25 sheet for 22 tickets, and $55 sheet for 55 tickets.

Once paying for admission, and for ride tickets, there's no need to worry about parking because parking is always free. Sophomore Paige Drazenovic states, "My family and I go to this fair every year, and my mom always says the free parking is the best part."



"A few summers ago, my family and I visited the fair without paying for ride tickets. There were many activities to do included with admission that were still just as fun."

- Junior Waiz Shaikh

If you're looking for a good time but also a good budget, the fair includes free entertainment included with admission. These include a performing arts tent, "Cowtown," edutainment (education entertainment), sports shows including biking, and much more.

For all the foodies out there, the fair has you covered. With over 60 food vendors featured on their website, there's a variety of food for all. One of these vendors includes a special guest only on Aug. 5: "Cousins Maine Lobster."

Not only are there food vendors, but there are also commercial vendors. There are over 140 commercial vendors featured on their website that will make an appearance at the 2024 fair. Although this fair has many out-of-the-ordinary features, there are still the classic carnival rides and fun games. Sophomore Allison Jones states, “I love boardwalk rides, so I want to go to the fair this summer.”

Just like the boardwalk, there’s the classic carnival, swings, and many more.

The loud sounds and the big rides many do enjoy, but if anyone experiences sensory issues, the carnival is offering a period of quietness on Aug 8. from 12 PM to 2 PM. Sophomore Zoe Leitao states, “I think it’s cool that they offer a more inclusive option for people with sensory impairments.”



Illustration by Sabrina Lopez

The Sussex County Carnival is a sight worth seeing from the vendors, to the rides to the food. Pre-sale tickets will start May 1 and can be bought on their website:

sussexcountyfairgrounds.org/html/tickets.cfm.

This super unique experience is a sure way to enjoy a nice summer day!

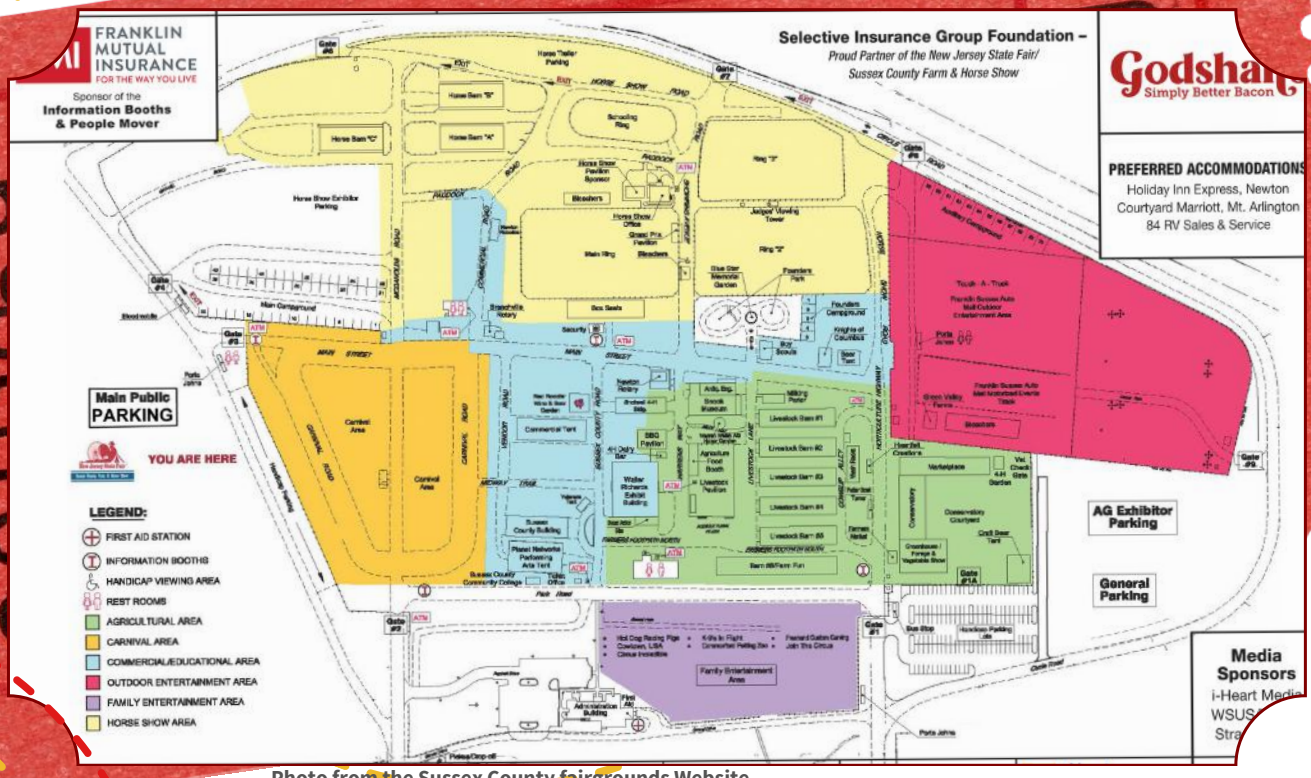


Photo from the Sussex County fairgrounds Website

Map of the Sussex County fairgrounds and its many activities

Class of 2024 Valedictorian: Cole Pryor

Pryor shares his journey to accomplishing this achievement

By Kristina Haviland, Editor-in-Chief

It was just four years ago that current senior Cole Pryor stepped foot into KHS, unaware that he would be graduating as the Class of 2024 valedictorian. Such an accomplishment takes hours of dedication and maintenance of a high GPA (grade-point average). Pryor will be attending the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania in the fall.

Like many valedictorians, this was not a set goal that he had as a freshman. “I didn’t plan for it, I just wanted to achieve my potential and see how far I could go working as hard as I can,” says Pryor. He shares that since junior year, he had a feeling it was going to be him as he was working extremely hard.

By taking the hardest classes available to him, he has been able to acquire certain skills that have pushed him to do his best. Pryor says, “I always had to take classes that maybe I wasn't accustomed to. I’m not much of a physics person, but I had to take AP physics, which was pretty tough for me, but I learned to get through it and achieve what I thought I could.”

Teachers can see his dedication to his academics, even through courses that he does not want to pursue as a career. Chemistry teacher Adam Smith had Pryor as his student for two years. Smith says, “He had a quiet confidence in the classroom and I could count on him to understand concepts quickly. It seemed like everything was easy for him, but he put in some hard work when necessary, never getting frustrated and always with a smile on his face.”

Another attribute that led to his success was his ability to look beyond a grade, gaining knowledge that other students may miss. Smith says, “He's really curious about learning things, and not just looking for an A+, and I imagine other teachers would say the same, no matter the subject area. That intellectual curiosity might be one of his biggest keys to success.”

Many top students have developed an interest in one area; for Pryor, his focus is on business. Along with taking finance and accounting honors, several of his activities include DECA and ColtsVest, two business-oriented clubs at KHS led by advisor and teacher Cathy Gilligan.



Photo by Kristin Nieto

Cole Pryor, Kinnelon High School Valedictorian, Class of 2024

As president of both clubs, he has excelled in DECA, competing in both the District and NJ State Conferences since his freshman year. Gilligan says, “I think Cole has all the skills needed. He is bright, disciplined, ambitious, humble, kind, and calm.”

Pryor shares that Gilligan has helped influence his passion for business as he has grown over the years. Gilligan says, “Cole is kind, humble, bright, disciplined, and ambitious. I have seen him grow in confidence, and I am certain that Cole is going to continue to do great things in the future.”

For those who wish to become valedictorian, Pryor shares a piece of advice:

> **“Time management is a big skill. Also, learning that there are some things that you can’t control and you just have to overcome those obstacles rather than dwelling on the fact that you can't control those things.”**

Pryor plans to learn business and political science and see where that leads him, most likely doing investment banking.

Gilligan shares a quote by Winston Churchill that she believes is important for students to acknowledge, “Success is not final. Failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts.”

Class of 2024 Salutatorian: Claire Wang

Wang reflects on her time at KHS

By Liyana Aslani, Staff Reporter

Each year, the KHS graduating class anxiously awaits the reveal of their valedictorian and salutatorian. With a competitive group of students at the top of the class this year, it was definitely a well-deserved title for the 2024 salutatorian, Claire Wang. The diligence and dedication she displayed toward her academics will be recognized when Wang furthers her studies in college for pharmacy. Wang plans to venture into that field in the future.

Wang prefaces discussing her achievement by saying that she did not expect to be named salutatorian. In fact, she expressed how it only became a goal of hers during the first half of her senior year.

Although she was not expecting this achievement, Wang certainly put forth the hard work. Interestingly, she said becoming salutatorian, “wasn’t really a goal of mine - I just knew that I wanted to get the best grades I could, so I could get into a good college” which her efforts have rewarded her.

In terms of how she accomplished this, Wang said, “I think something that helped with my grades was studying a lot but also my friends because I was able to learn from them as well.”

However, staying at the top of the class does present some challenges. For Wang specifically, she noted how time management and procrastination were struggles at times because she would push off some of her assignments until the last minute - going to bed very late. To combat this, Wang said, “One of the most helpful strategies that I started doing this year was completing my homework as soon as I got home or trying to finish as much of it as I could during school. This helped me a lot because I started sleeping earlier, and I had way more free time.”

Classmate and tennis co-captian Jianna Sartorio spoke on Wang’s academic dedication, mentioning how “Claire is very proactive when it comes to her schoolwork and assignments. She is also helpful with her classmates and just lending a helping hand.”

Wang also mentioned how KHS specifically helped her achieve this accomplishment. She explained how having helpful and supportive individuals around her contributed to staying towards the top of her class. “Along with my teachers, my guidance counselor Mrs. [Marlene] Goudreau has helped me achieve this accomplishment. She has always been there, supporting my extracurriculars and classes - I don't think I would be where I am today without her.”

A few teachers who Wang truly felt helped her throughout her years at KHS and shaped who she is today are her tennis coach Mark Landzert, her science teacher John Manning, as well as Spanish teacher Maria Fiuza. Wang is grateful to have had such positive experiences with these educators and appreciates all they have done.



Photo from the KHS yearbook

Manning, who taught Wang in both AP Biology and AP Physics, commented on her driven nature.

> **“Claire has always been a brilliant student, but I think more recently she has come to exemplify reliability more than most.”**

“Whether implicitly or explicitly, I think she now understands that successful people are not only capable themselves, but they know how to collaborate and make others around them better as well. Her enthusiasm and reputation reflect that.”

Her work to achieve these high standards has not gone unnoticed, as she looks forward to studying pharmacy at Rutgers University through the Honors College and will share further information during her graduation speech on June 14.

“The efforts she has made here at KHS all but guarantees it,” said Manning.

Buonasera Restaurant & Pizza: Offering So Much More Than Food

Buonasera, where authentic Italian dishes and a story come together to delight the senses.

By Jacki Lally, Staff Reporter

Located in Butler, NJ, Buonasera Restaurant & Pizza stands as a symbol of culinary excellence and perseverance. From its humble beginning in 2020, Buonasera started as a small restaurant, although the challenges of a global pandemic got in the way Buonasera has continued in its commitment to serving up delicious Italian food and amazing dining experiences. Each customer who walks through the door is welcomed as if they are part of a family. Offering great food, and even kinder hearts Buonasera is an amazing place to eat.

Buonasera offers a wide selection of Italian dishes that could be enjoyable to all. Focussing on lunch and dinner the restaurant offers foods from pastas and pizzas to seafood, soups, and salads. From traditional pasta dishes like spaghetti carbonara to hot pizzas topped with any ingredients, the menu is a list of Italian delights. Appetizers like crispy fried calamari and garlic knots make a perfect start to a meal, while soups and fresh salads offer lighter options as well. Buonasera includes a separate menu for any kids that come along as well, offering more for picky eaters like chicken fingers and spaghetti with butter.



Photo by Jacki Lally
Grilled Swordfish with Mediterranean Veggies dish offered at Buonasera.

“As a raised Italian, the Frutta de Mare made me feel connected to the food and my life.”

-Patrick DeNaples, Kinnelon resident and long-time restaurant supporter

Buonasera has a selection of meat and seafood entrées that are sure to satisfy each customer. From chicken parmigiana to veal piccata, each dish is prepared with care and attention to detail, ensuring that every bite is a delight.

The Frutta de Mare is a highly talked about dish that is highlighted on the menu at Buonasera Restaurant. Including the tasty blend of Pasta and Seafood, the Frutta de Mare is perfectly cooked and delicious.

The prices at Buonasera are accommodating to all, ranging from $2.50-28.50. Prices range for catering and delivery options, depending on food options and delivery fees.

In addition to its regular menu offerings, Buonasera also offers a BYOB policy, allowing diners to bring their favorite bottle of wine to enjoy with their meal. And for those looking to treat Mom to something special this Mother's Day, Buonasera has it covered with a special menu.

Buonasera is open seven days a week for delivery, takeout, and in-restaurant dining under a reservation. Due to the success of the restaurant, Buonasera was recently able to expand and almost double in size. Since this recent expansion, they now accept larger party sizes for regular reservations of up to 13 people and even have opportunities to rent out the space for larger events. Buonasera also offers outdoor seating in the warmer months. Beautifully decorated with Italian flair, it creates a comfortable atmosphere when eating and enjoying the great food.



Photo from HOB website
Wild Mushroom Lovers Pizza

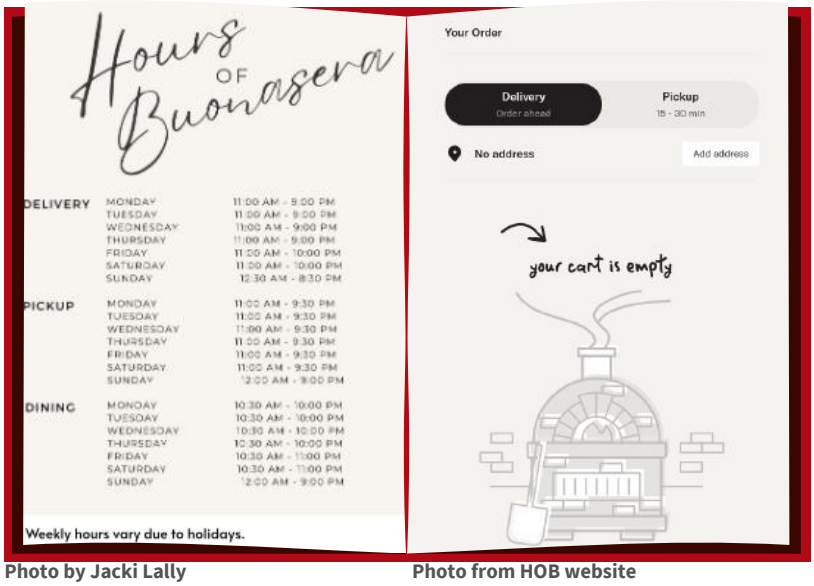


Photo by Jacki Lally
The House of Buonasera's time schedule during the week

Photo from HOB website
Online ordering tab for HOB website

As well as being able to rent out the space Buonasera also offers catering services. With as low as 24 hours' notice the amazing food can be delivered to a customer's house or anywhere there is an event.

Not only does Buonasera create amazing dishes, but makes each customer feel connected and comfortable while dining. Offering comfortable prices and many options that can please almost anyone who walks through the door, Buonasera is a great place to eat.



Photo from HOB website
BROCCOLI RABE & SAUSAGE



Photo from HOB website
EGGPLANT ROLLATINI

Coach, Mentor, and Leader

Thomas Mott Inspires the New Era of Boys Lacrosse

By Madison Gigante, Staff Reporter



Photo by Frank Corrado
Junior Benjamin Klinger clearing the ball in their game against Parsippany Hills

Music sounded from the distance, inching its way toward the field. The sound of cleats hitting the concrete gets louder by the second. Screams of excitement build up from afar. Making their way through the gates. The Kinnelon Colts Boys Lacrosse team heads to center stage.

Coach Thomas Mott has been the head coach for the boy's lacrosse team for the past two years. Not only does he put the boys to work on the field, but he also puts them to work in the classroom as a teacher at Kinnelon High School. According to Kean University Athletics, Mott also spent his time in the classroom and playing lacrosse for Kean University.

Recently, Mott reached his 250th career coaching win. Not only is he having success with winning in Kinnelon, but Mott also made history at Immaculata High School. Leading the team to win their first state championship in 2007, then four more state titles a couple of years later. After leaving Immaculata, Mott coached at Pingry High School, leading the team to win two state championships.

In 2023, Mott took over the Kinnelon program. They went 15-3 in that first year. Mott has not been in Kinnelon long but has for sure made his mark in Kinnelon.

Senior lacrosse captain Jake Piccola says, “Coach Mott is a great leader and has the skills to make the best out of the team that plays each year. He always teaches leadership roles within the team and has taught me the correct ways to teach others.” With only a few games left in the regular season, the team holds a record of 11-3.

Dedication and culture are tremendously important in building the foundation of a strong team. Coach Mott emphasized the saying “Culture beats talent” to his team and pushed the team to build closer bonds or as they say “Brotherhood”. Having a close-knit team helps to improve the team's win and work as one whole unit. Mott strives to build an individual relationship with all of his players.

Senior lacrosse captain Benjamin Papendick explains, “Coach Mott came to the High School my junior year, he has encouraged and pushed me to do things out of my comfort zone and helped me grow as a person. He represents so many qualities that I admire and are necessary to succeed as a head coach, and he will give advice and help anyone who asks.”

In the short time, Mott has been here, he has already positively impacted his players and the younger players who will eventually be a part of his team.

Sophomore attackman Peter Correia says, “Coach Mott has made a positive impact on the rest of the team because I feel like he is even getting the younger kids involved with the drills and helping them to improve as players for their future seasons on our team.”



Photo by KHSBoysLax Instagram
Mott and the team after reaching his 250th win

UNITY AT THE PLATE: KHS SOFTBALL MERGES WITH LAKELAND

Kinnelon and Lakeland's softball merger has brought a sense of team spirit after KHS struggled with low numbers.

By Cara Rosenfeld, Staff Reporter



Photo by Cara Rosenfeld | The softball field at Lakeland Regional High School

In March, the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association allowed the KHS softball team to merge with Lakeland Regional High School after it had difficulty gathering enough players.

The merge was necessary for Kinnelon to ensure they could play softball this season. Senior Jenna Dermksian says, “I brought this situation up to Mr. [David] Mango and Mr. [Andrew] Rosado as all I wanted was a senior season.”

A standard softball team requires at least nine players to cover all positions on a field. However, history teacher and softball coach Elena DeStories says, “In the end, we only had six girls signed up to play softball, so in order to have a successful season, we had to find a school that was willing to work with us and let us join their team.”

Before the finalization of the co-op, some players had mixed feelings about the merger. Sophomore Lauren Dumaresq says, “At first, I think we were all dreading it. But now that we are in the season, I think it made us a better team.”

Although there were differing opinions initially, the merger has proved to be a catalyst for growth. DeStories says, “I think the co-op has helped the girls improve their softball skills with other girls who love the sport just as much as them and has given them the opportunity to play the sport they love.”

Moreover, Dermksian emphasized the importance of continuing softball at KHS, “I did not want the sport to [phase out] in the High School for the younger girls and the future of the program,” she says.

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	AB	R	H	RBI	1B	2B	3B	HR	BB	HBP	SB	AVG	SLG
Samantha Buynie Junior	13	2	3	5	2	1	—	—	5	—	—	.231	.308
Lexi Callahan Senior	33	17	15	14	8	2	2	3	9	—	2	.455	.909
Victoria Cervino Senior	5	2	3	—	3	—	—	—	2	—	1	.600	.600
Ella DeBonis Junior	29	8	11	8	7	1	1	2	4	—	1	.379	.690
Jenna Dermksian Senior	36	17	13	23	4	2	3	4	5	1	—	.361	.917
Katie Eivner Sophomore	23	13	8	7	7	1	—	—	12	—	2	.348	.391
Meredith Healy Senior	36	8	12	15	6	5	1	—	1	—	—	.333	.556
Haley Knox Sophomore	5	1	3	1	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	.600	.800
Julia McCormick Junior	35	16	13	5	10	2	—	1	7	—	3	.371	.514
Olivia McCormick Junior	31	12	9	7	9	—	—	—	6	1	1	.290	.290
Sophia Parisi Junior	20	3	5	7	3	1	—	1	2	—	—	.250	.450
Victoria Sabatelli Senior	22	7	6	7	2	2	1	1	7	—	—	.273	.591
Peyton Triano Sophomore	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Total:	**288**	**107**	**101**	**99**	**63**	**18**	**8**	**12**	**60**	**3**	**10**	**.351**	**.597**

Photo from nj.com
The Lakeland softball team's roster and stats

As the season progresses, the Lakeland co-op softball team has been working well together. The team has a current record of 11-7 and a promising chance of making it to states. Dumaresq says, "The girls at Lakeland have been nothing but friendly and welcoming, and the coaches have really pushed us to be the best. "

The merger affected not only the players but also the games and practices. Since the merge, the KHS softball team has been bussed to Lakeland Regional High School for practice. For away games, they either go directly to the away school or sometimes to Lakeland and travel with the rest of the team. Despite this new difference, Dumaresq says, "In all honesty, the change was not bad at all, and if anything, I have really enjoyed my time at Lakeland."

The actual practices have maintained a familiar rhythm. They consist of going to the gym to practice batting, splitting up the infield and outfield to work on specific skills, and sometimes scrimmaging against each other.

It is still being determined whether the softball team will merge in upcoming seasons. Regardless of the outcome, Dermksian has expressed gratitude for the season's efforts. "This new change has allowed us Kinnelon girls the opportunity to play, as we did not think a season would be possible this year. With the help and support of both Kinnelon and Lakeland, we are all very thankful for this opportunity."



Photo from NJ.com
The 2023 Kinnelon softball team

"I did not want the sport to [phase out] in the High School for the younger girls and the future of the program."

- Senior Jenna Dermksian

TIKTOK ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK

One of the Biggest Social Media Giants Faces a Ban in the US

By Nathan Shurts, Opinion Editor

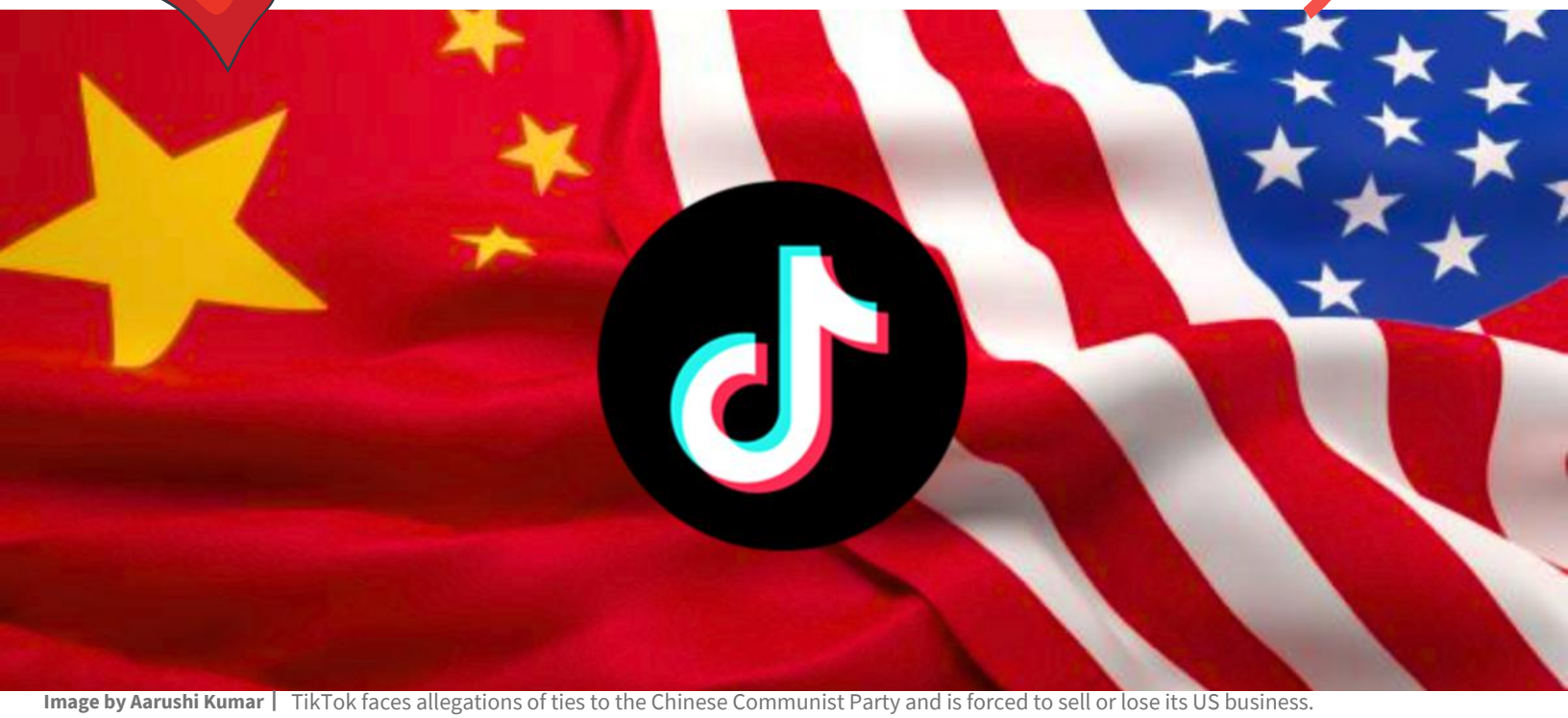


Image by Aarushi Kumar | TikTok faces allegations of ties to the Chinese Communist Party and is forced to sell or lose its US business.

Adviser's Note: The views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in this opinion article belong solely to the author and do not reflect the view of The Colt Chronicle Staff, Kinnelon High School, or its students and staff members.

On April 21, Congress passed a bill threatening to ban TikTok. If the Chinese parent company ByteDance of TikTok doesn't sell its share of the company within just about a year of the bill's passing, the app will be banned nationwide. Where did this come from, and how can we just up and ban social platforms?

Interestingly enough, TikTok had already been banned from all government information technologies back in December 2022. Now the plan to stop the app has escalated, as the app faces a ban on a far wider scale. The main difference this time is that TikTok plans to put up a fight.

Why the Ban?

Arguments in favor of the ban point to TikTok's Chinese origins, relying heavily on accusations that TikTok is collecting data from Americans and delivering it to the Chinese Communist Party. The CCP and TikTok deny having any such relationship, and TikTok vehemently claims that there is no legal way China can access US user data. Despite this, under Chinese Cybersecurity law, TikTok is required to share all data with the CCP should they request it. In addition to this, ByteDance openly admitted to AFP (a news source) that they used TikTok data to track journalists they suspected of leaking company data.

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Picture courtesy of Office of Congressman Robert Garcia from Wikimedia Commons | The United States Capitol Building

Looking at these very clear infractions of TikTok's stated policy of user information privacy as well as the fact that TikTok is beholden to the CCP, banning the app in the US seems to be in the best interest of national security, especially since the act is not an outright ban. The terms of the act dictate that TikTok can remain active in the US if ByteDance sells the company to a new parent company that is not beholden to the Chinese government. In other words, the decision lies squarely in the hands of ByteDance. ByteDance is currently not backing down. In the meantime, they are fighting the decision in the courts, under the argument that banning TikTok endangers freedom of expression, which is protected under the First Amendment.

Free Speech vs National Security

The free speech defense of TikTok is by far the most widely-argued point in this case, and it is the lynchpin of the defense the company is offering to the courts while fighting the eventual ban. Essentially, suppose TikTok is truly an open forum for discussion and the posting of content and ideas. In that case, it should be protected by the First Amendment, as it would fall under freedom of speech and expression.

However, suppose it is considered a source of information that the Chinese government or any foreign adversary can manipulate. In that case, it can be forced to close unless it falls into American hands. This is the way the government is currently perceiving TikTok, for better or for worse. The challenge with banning TikTok comes with deciding whether the government has the authority to enact this type of censorship.

Can This Ban Happen?

Realistically, the ban will take almost a year to come into effect, even if it is enacted immediately. The company was given nine months to sell, plus an additional three months once the sale is in progress. On top of that, any delays caused by the current court challenges of the act can further extend the deadline, potentially by years. In other words, TikTok probably isn't going anywhere for a very long time.

As for the court challenges, the legal experts don't all agree. "The First Amendment means that the government can't restrict Americans' access to ideas, information, or media from abroad without a very good reason for it — and no such reason exists here," said Jameel Jaffer, executive director of the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University.

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However, as AP Government and Politics teacher Caitlin Ward points out, “It’s more about what we are concerned with, rather than if it violates the First Amendment. China is our number one adversary when it comes to misinformation… if the Chinese government is controlling the American version of TikTok, I think that it should be banned because we don’t want another country putting their stamp on our information, or elections, or national security.”

What are we Concerned About?

As a country, we need to focus on national security and protect the data of our citizens from falling into the hands of foreign adversaries. One way of going about this is to try and take control of TikTok directly, like we are doing now. This makes sense since it will hurt a Chinese company and help whichever American company buys it, and no First Amendment rights will be endangered since the app will not be banned. However, it also ignores the much larger issue at play and uses TikTok as a scapegoat for the entire social media industry.

TikTok collects data from users, but so does everyone else, from Google to Instagram to Apple. Yes, it is owned by our top international competitor, but almost no evidence exists that China has used this against us. If we are banning TikTok intending to protect user privacy, perhaps we are taking too narrow an approach. Regulation across the industry is a far better solution because trying to ban one company is not going to fix the systemic issues posed by Big Data companies. If we are really worried about user data being stolen or weaponized, why is TikTok the only target?

When asked why they opposed the ban, freshman Millie Cho brought up an important point. “If you take a moment to read the terms of service of both Instagram and Twitter, there have been many loopholes and controversies which are equally concerning as TikTok's. Safety concerns are not limited to TikTok and should not be limited to TikTok. Other companies are just as susceptible to gathering and selling their user's data.”

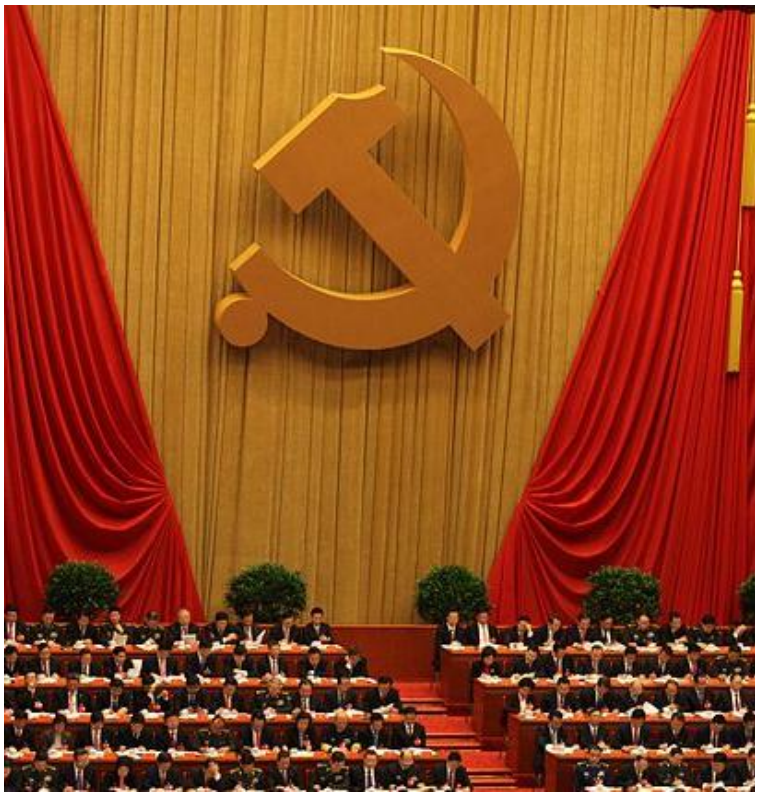


Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons
The 18th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

Another freshman who expressed a similar sentiment but chose to remain anonymous said, “Many of the concerns that people desire to ban TikTok over are similar to actual actions and decisions conducted by domestic companies like Google. They, too, take and use user data for a variety of actions. One of those actions is providing the U.S. government information to essentially spy on its citizens. Such information can be used to find and track potential criminals and terrorists, but it can also be used to potentially put down political opposition. At the end of the day, the conversation should be more about how we should be more mindful about how companies collect and use data, rather than painting an image of a sole outlier.”

Perhaps a ban is in the best interest of our national security, but we should consider the actions of American companies before we glorify forcing TikTok to be one of them.

There's No Such Thing As 'The Song of the Summer'

Before summer goes into full swing, let's unpack one of the biggest music nicknames of the 2020s

By Owen Fernstrom, Opinion Editor

Adviser's Note: The views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in this opinion article belong solely to the author and do not reflect the view of The Colt Chronicle Staff, Kinnelon High School, or its students and staff members.

One of the most popular terms in pop for the past few years has been "The Song of the Summer." It's a designation made for whatever song had the most airplay and influence during that year's summer. Generally, the music is very poppy and high energy but it doesn't always have to be which brings me to my point. There has never been and will never be a Song of the Summer.



Photo from Spotify
The supposed song of the summer of 2023, Morgan Wallen's "Last Night"

Right before, during, and after the summer there is a constant barrage of people saying that they either found, decided on, or even made the Song of the Summer. This is confusing to me because these people often speak about completely different songs and even different genres of music. There can't be a Song of the Summer if people cannot come close to a consensus on what it would be.

Looking at last year's Billboard Charts, the Song of the Summer for 2023 would be "Last Night" by Morgan Wallen because it led the weekly charts all 14 weeks of summer. For some people, this might have truly been the soundtrack to their summer but for many others, it just wasn't. Especially now that it is so easy to listen to a variety of music, the most important Song of the Summer is different for different generations, different types of music listeners, and even more generally for different people. There is no one song that everyone can agree on as being important and worth listening to for 14 weeks straight, and even if there was, that would make music listening less interesting.



Illustration by Sabrina Lopez
Illustration of music note pool floats.

The most exciting and fun parts of the enjoyment of music come from hearing something new and out of your comfort zone. If everyone listened to the same music, there would be no more of those moments of listening to something new and different. This whole Song of the Summer badge that people try to label music as only takes away from music in general.

In a poll conducted with 20 KHS students, the majority of 12 students said that they thought the Song of The Summer was an actual label for certain songs that reached certain criteria. This statement was unsurprisingly muddled when there was an almost perfect split over whether the Song of the Summer had to be pop music specifically. If there is such indecision over something so important to defining the Song of the Summer, then it only makes sense that there's no such thing.

There have been no major hits that have gained the term yet in 2024, so hopefully, the term is starting to fade, but I would not be surprised if tens, if not hundreds, of songs, are given the title willy-nilly for no other reason than a strong chorus and a happy tone to the song. Instead of finding a Song of the Summer for everyone, music listeners should just find that song for them. The song that will make the summer for them. Confining music to specific labels and titles will only lead to less interesting and less powerful music in the future, so as America goes into summer let's fight against that need to categorize and instead just listen to what you like.

Fashion2Fast

With the rise of inflation comes a turning to cheaper alternatives, but at what cost?

By Millie Cho & Sabrina Lopez, Staff Reporters

Adviser's Note: The views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in this opinion article belong solely to the author and do not reflect the view of The Colt Chronicle Staff, Kinnelon High School, or its students and staff members.

Consumers of fast fashion may indirectly support modern-day slavery and the pollution of our earth.

With living expenses skyrocketing since 2020, millions of people are looking to cut costs. Although thrifting used to be the No. 1 alternative, millions of people have turned to the easier, less sustainable option: fast fashion. This industry's labor laws produce unbelievable amounts of carbon dioxide, and makes extensive use of cheap, synthetic materials. There are always alternatives to combat pricey times, but fast fashion should not be one of them.

There are two very affordable options: thrifting and fast fashion. However, most people continue to support the worst option for our planet. "I do not want to directly support the suffering of other people knowing that brands like this are very unethical, especially Shein," says senior Saul Mena. Many fast fashion companies use child labor and pay very little for day-long shifts.

News company Channel 4 conducted a report and found that Shein–one of the most influential fast fashion brands–had workers on the clock for 70+ hour shifts with very little time off. They also found unsafe factories set up in residential buildings. They lacked emergency exits and windows. The conditions that Shein, an app with millions of users, has provided for their workers are filthy and unethical. No worker should be forced to endure such conditions, however, buyers continue to support Shein.

According to CarbonLiteracy.com, the fashion industry produces roughly 10% of global pollution. Some may think this information is enough to shut down this industry, but companies like H&M, ZARA, and Abercrombie "greenwash", or make their products look beneficial for the environment, although they produce the same amount of waste. Though there are many versions of greenwashing, a prominent methodis having the label "recyclable" on the tag of an article of clothing when they are solely referencing the tag being recyclable, not the article of clothing.



Photo by Andrew Biraj of Reuters

The Rana Plaza building in Dhaka, Bangladesh collapsed on Apr 24, 2013, killing 1,134 people. The Rana Plaza -- among hundreds of other commercial buildings -- used exploitative labor practices in dangerous working conditions to create garments for some of the largest businesses in the world including Zara, Primark, and Walmart.

Another example is H&M, who claim that their product is made with 50% more recycled material compared to their other pieces, when in reality, the amount of recyclable material in the clothing went from 2% to 3%.

Although they are not inherently lying, consumers of these brands deserve to know the truth, and deceptive marketing can be one of the most successful ways for fast fashion brands to upkeep their sales.

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> **“I do not want to directly support the suffering of other people knowing that brands like this are very unethical, especially Shein.”**
>
> ***- Senior Saul Mena***

The fashion industry accounts for 10% of the world's pollution and creates 92 million metric tons of waste annually. With the overconsumption of natural resources as well as the carbon emissions created, the low costs of these items are only made possible at the expense of our environment.

Fast fashion is also affordable because of the materials used to make the styles. High-quality brands often use 100% cotton, denim, silk, and linen, which can last hundreds of wears if taken care of. However, brands like H&M or ZARA often use blends of polyester and nylon, which are fragile and do not last well over many wears. These materials also tend to dry rot, "...which means if you pull at it, it rips instead of tugging. I've noticed there's been a decline in quality," says junior Owen Fernstrom.

"It's better to buy something for forty dollars and wear a hundred times than 20 that you'll wear 10," Fernstrom says. It's more sustainable to purchase an expensive piece that will last for years rather than settling for fast fashion which will only last weeks.

And yes, with inflation rising and the poverty rate climbing, not having enough money to support sustainable brands is an issue. But even so, options such as Depop or thrifting exist to get what you need. Depop is a great alternative, as "it's a lot easier to find the items you're looking for," says Mena. Thrifting sustainably can also be one of the most cost-efficient and accessible alternatives to buying new clothes. With the introduction of fast fashion into the fashion industry, there are millions of pieces to give a second life. There should never be a reason to support the crimes of the fast fashion industry.



Photo by Cezaro De Luca of Europa Press/Getty Images
The retailer Shein is another company associated with fast fashion and has been accused of profiting from child labor and exploitative business practices

Instead of staying in denial about this issue, do your own research. Find options that you like and can afford. Inform others about the fast fashion industry, whether it's just one person or millions. There is no excuse to at least change where you buy from. You're just a five-minute search away from taking action and being part of the solution to resolving fast fashion’s effect on the world.



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*Policies were crafted with the help of Columbia Scholastic Press Association and FHN Today.

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