

# The Cougar Chronicle

January 2021

JACK M. BARRACK HEBREW ACADEMY

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## Reflections on the Events of January 6, 2021

While this edition of the Chronicle was mostly written before the political events of the new year, the staff feels compelled to acknowledge the unprecedented attack by Americans on Americans that took place in our nation's capital on January 6th. In every form and from any source, acts of terrorism are wrong and must be prevented from ever recurring. There is no excuse for turning to violence to try and stop the due process of democracy. The events of January 6th, 2021, should never be forgotten, for if they are then they can happen again. All constituencies of our country must unite to work towards a better America and a better society, where love and understanding can reign supreme over hate and discord. We encourage readers to move forward from something indescribably sad to something positive.

## Social Distance vs. Social Security at Barrack

*Lila Elkins, Staff Writer*

Over the past few weeks, the students in the Upper School were asked if they feel accepted at Barrack. The responses varied, but there was overall agreement that our goal as a Kehilla should be to ensure that no student feels insecure or left out. Interestingly, six out of the eight students interviewed by the Chronicle said the social situation at Barrack has not changed since last year, meaning, most friend groups are the same since before the coronavirus.

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The issue with this is that even though the friendships haven't changed, the environment has. We can no longer be with each other the way we once were. According to one student, this new change causes students and their peers to feel "divided and crave social interaction" despite still having friends. For the students that want to branch out, this year in particular is much harder because of the physical and emotional barriers that come with a hybrid learning environment. There is also a lack of receptiveness toward those students that attempt to branch out because other students are hesitant

to reach out to new students or outsiders in this year of uncertainty.



It

seems that Barrack is made up of closed-off friend groups and students who are knocking at the locked doors trying to be accepted into something that was determined years ago. Now is the only time we have, so how as a community do we ensure that students can be themselves and feel secure at this school?

All of the students interviewed were asked: "What can we do to make Barrack a more accepting place?" A 10th grader stated, "[We should] work on doing things [together] as grades ... and not in little groups." It seems that students at Barrack are very susceptible to splitting off into cliques and not getting a proper opportunity to mingle with every stu-

dent in their grade. An 11th grader said to "mix up people so they get to know each other." A group of 12th graders said "to have the '9th grade bonding activity' every year." Barrack's past efforts to bond its grades have evidently not been successful enough as students still crave openness and acceptance. However, it seems as if the students at this school seem very willing to branch out, which in their own opinions, leads to acceptance.

An obvious solution can be derived from all of the students interviewed - have the school intentionally mix up students so they get to know each other. While this may seem both easy and simple, what happens if

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**"It seems that Barrack is made up of closed-off friend groups and students who are knocking at the locked doors trying to be accepted into something that was determined years ago."**

## Democrats Defeat Trump in Presidential and Senate Elections

*Blake Fox, Israel Editor*

After four long days of waiting, the news media was finally able to project Joe Biden, the President-elect of the United States, and Kamala Harris, the Vice-President-elect, on the afternoon of Saturday, November 7th. This projection came following the state of Pennsylvania being called for Joe Biden, which put him over the 270 electors needed to win the Electoral College vote.

Election night, which occurred on Tuesday, November 3rd, ended without any clear winner, with the significant battleground states of Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Georgia, Arizona, and Nevada all too early to call. However, other contested states, including Ohio, Texas, and Florida, were all won by President Donald Trump. In contrast, the states of Minnesota and New Hampshire, and Nebraska's 2nd Congressional District, were called for Joe Biden. Nebraska's 2nd Congressional District, an area that encompasses Omaha, Nebraska, went to Trump in 2016, but when it was called for Biden on election night, it was the first significant signal that momentum was going in the former Vice-President's direction.

Early on the morning of November 4th, Donald Trump falsely claimed

that he had won the 2020 Presidential election, as he had leads in the major swing states of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. However, millions of mail-in ballots that heavily-leaned Democratic, remained uncounted. By the afternoon of November 4th, Biden received a considerable boost when the states of Michigan and Wisconsin, which were both won by Trump in 2016, were declared to have been won by Joe Biden. On November 7th, a batch of votes from Philadelphia put Biden ahead by greater than 0.5% in the Keystone State, and he was declared the President-elect.

PBS



Biden's win was seen as a landmark victory for many people. His running mate, Kamala Harris, will be the first Black person and first woman to serve as the Vice-President of the United States. Biden will be the first President since *Continued on Page 15*

## Thank You, Barrack!

*Raphael Englander, School News Editor*

The Cougar Chronicle, and the entire Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy community, would like to acknowledge the faculty and staff who have worked tirelessly so that we can participate in on-campus and remote learning as much as possible. We are grateful to each and every person -- teachers, administrators, support staff, maintenance staff, etc., for making Barrack a school where students are both safe and happy to learn.

## No to Amy Coney Barrett and No to Court Packing

*Blake Fox, Israel Editor*

On October 27th, 2020, Amy Coney Barrett was confirmed by the Senate to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Barrett, a university professor and a former federal Appellate Judge, is undoubtedly qualified to replace Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the Supreme Court. Barrett has long served as a law professor at Notre Dame University, clerked for the late Supreme Court Justice, Antonin Scalia and was rated as "well qualified" by the American Bar Association. Still, the process by which she was appointed is ludicrous, particularly when one looks back at how previous nominations have been challenged.

Following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia in February 2016, then-President Barack Obama sought to nominate Merrick Garland, the Chief Justice of the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, to the Supreme Court, with 237 days until the 2016 election. Garland was a satisfactory candidate, however, the Republican-controlled Senate, led by Mitch McConnell, refused to hold hearings for Garland's nomination and instead insisted that the vacant seat should be chosen by the next President, who would be elected later in the year. Similarly, in 2016, Senator Lindsey Graham, who presided over Barrett's confirmation hearings, stated, "I want you to use my words against me. If there's a Republican president in 2016 and a vacancy occurs in the last year of the first term, you can say Lindsey Graham said let's let the next president, whoever it might be, make that nomination."

Even then-professor Barrett spoke against Garland's nomination, arguing that replacing "the staunchest conservative justice on the court" with an Obama-appointed Justice could "dramatically flip the balance of power..." Republicans left

Scalia's seat unoccupied for more than 400 days before it was finally filled by Neil Gorsuch, Trump's nominee, in April 2017.

**"By the time the Senate confirmed Barrett, more than 65 million Americans had already voted."**

Despite these events, when Ruth Bader Ginsburg passed away just five weeks before the 2020 election, McConnell and his Republican cohorts made no effort to stick to their precedent of allowing the president elected in November to pick the next justice. By the time the Senate confirmed Barrett, more than 65 million Americans had already voted.

Now confirmed as a Justice, Barrett will be one of the most conservative Justices on the court and could serve as a crucial 5th vote on issues ranging from healthcare to abortion rights. Importantly, Barrett potentially could have given conservatives a majority if Donald Trump tried to take legal action regarding mail-in ballots during the 2020 Presidential election.

Furthermore, Barrett's nomination came during the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in an unemployment rate of 7% and killed more than 220,000 Americans. McConnell and the Republican Senate refused to vote on the stimulus bill known as the HEROES Act, which passed the House of Representatives months ago. Instead of working through the parts of the HEROES Act they did not agree with, and getting help to the American people, the Senate spent time trying to rush through a Supreme Court nomination. With Barrett's rushed nomination, the integrity of all Senators who voted in favor of the Justice's confirmation is now called into question.

In response to Barrett's

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## Despite Hypocrisy, Confirming a New Justice Is Fair

*Niva Cohen, Opinion Editor*

In September, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg of the Supreme Court died, leaving a vacant seat just six weeks before the election. While the country mourned, so did the Democrats, but not only from the sorrow of her death. They sourly anticipated President Donald Trump's nomination of a new Justice, and were outraged - but not surprised - when Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell rushed to confirm his pick despite refusing to hold a hearing for President Barack Obama's choice in 2016 because it was an election year. Other Republican leaders followed suit, arguing that this year's situation was different because the same party controlled both the Senate and

election is Constitutional and legally fair. If, as a country, we decide that we want to *change* the law and forbid nominations in the last year of presidency, we must go through the proper channels. Yes, McConnell is inconsistent and partisan, but as long as no laws are in place to hold leaders accountable, new Republican and Democratic Mitch McConnell's will arise in every generation, unfairly implementing arbitrary rules based on their best interests. A Constitutional amendment could provide clarity and prevent future unfair applications.

From a more idealistic standpoint, confirming Justices at the end of a presidential term reduces politicization of the Court and



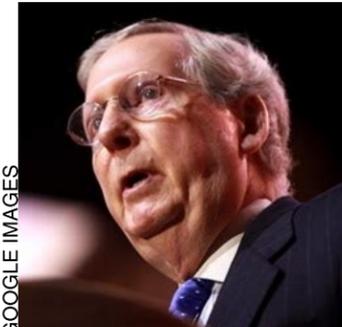
GOOGLE IMAGES

Justice Amy Coney Barrett

White House. Although their hypocrisy is blatant and their rationale flawed, their 2020 position is the correct one; there is no reason why Justices can't be nominated and confirmed in an election year.

The United States functions on the precedent that the Constitution, its founding document, sets. With regard to new Justices, it says that the president "shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint... Judges of the Supreme Court." The Constitution also gives the Commander in Chief a four-year term, not a three-year term or even a three-year and 364-day term. Therefore, the President of the United States has the right to exercise his or her presidential powers, such as nominating Justices, at any point during the four years in office. The end might draw nearer and nearer, but until the next Inauguration, there are no checks on what a president can do as long as he is working within the bounds of his job description.

As outlined above, filling a Supreme Court seat close to an



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Senator Mitch McConnell

provides closure. Vacant seats become *more* politicized if left open during an election. In these cases, the American people invariably select the next president based not only on their own positions and plans for the Executive branch but on how they want the Court to tilt for the foreseeable future. This split, having some officers of government be elected and others appointed, is decisively why the Constitution gives presidents, and not the people, the responsibility of choosing Justices, in the first place; it isn't supposed to be directly democratic. Presidents should attempt to resolve as many issues as possible before a new administration comes onto the scene.

**"The bottom line is, whether or not something is fair is irrelevant; those in charge, regardless of their party affiliation, will always take advantage of their power, especially when the law is on their side."**

## Connections and Opinions: The Pros of Social Media Awareness

*Margot Englander, Staff Writer*

There are so many different sources from which to receive your news. There are websites, print newspapers, radio channels, TV channels, and, most recently, social media. This may seem surprising, as social media is often regarded only as a platform for sharing photos and videos with friends, its original use. However, people have taken to social media

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**“Social media has often been portrayed as just a way to share dances and images with others, however, Social Media can also be used to spread information, raise awareness and connect with others struggling with the same thing.”**

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(notably, Tiktok, Instagram, and Twitter) to share their political ideas and stories with others. This helps show people that they are not alone.

One of the first movements to blow up on social media was #MeToo. The #MeToo movement empowers survivors of rape and sexual assault to share their stories and connect with others who have gone through the same trauma. This movement brought to light how common sexual harassment and assault are. Social media allowed everyone to contribute their own stories and formed a bond among survivors around the world. The traditional media has little bandwidth and can't possibly share every single story, but social media allows every individual to be a part of a larger community.

Recently, social media has been used to spread awareness about the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and the protests that rang out across the country following the murder of George Floyd. Protesters used social media to share videos and photos from the protests to spin their own stories that the media would not or could not have used.

They offered a personal perspective on what was really happening, and not just the media's broad strokes outline. Traditional media sources are ordinarily impacted by the same sweeping slant throughout their paper or site, often showing only one side of the story, while on social media platforms, you can find every viewpoint as it is the most personal form of information available. Undoubtedly, you will find many different opinions, but social media presents a more nuanced look at the world around us by personalizing causes.

Social media is not just used to spread awareness and information about giant movements like BLM and #MeToo. It is also used on smaller levels and caters to younger audiences. Recently, 16-year-old TikTok star, Charli D'amelio, took to her Instagram story to share her experience with an eating disorder, showing others that they are not isolated, and that even the most successful people struggle. She also encouraged others battling with eating disorders to seek help, saying, “I need you to know you



Various popular and commonly used social media apps

are not alone. Remember it's OK to reach out and get help. We all need help sometimes.” When influencers share their struggles, young viewers can see beyond their favorite content and into the lives of people they relate to.

Before social media, celebrities were never encouraged to show their flaws.

Social media has often been portrayed as strictly a fun, social tool, but it has transformed into a means of spreading information, raising awareness and connecting victims of

## Should We Trust What We See? The Cons of Social Media Awareness

*Lila Elkins, Staff Writer*

In theory, spreading awareness on social media is extremely helpful to inform the public about various topics, but in reality, it can create unnecessary tension in our lives and perpetuate misinformation. Have you ever looked at someone's Instagram story and seen them post about one cause, but not the one you stand for? For example, they might post about racism and cultural ap-



An anti-social media banner

propriation but grow silent when an attack against Jews happens, and because of this you decide to cut them out of your life. These are the curses of social media awareness: assumptions, and baseless hatred against our own neighbors. That person didn't post about the Jewish attack, but maybe they were volunteering at Jewish Relief Agency or praying at their synagogue for the better treatment of Jews. There's no knowing with social media as it selectively shows one's beliefs.

Social media can cloud our judgment and create more issues than it solves. In 2020, people were making more assumptions than ever based on social media apps, as “Cancel Culture” rang through communities and feeds. Individuals have become too prone to acting on their impulses and have driven a rift between “sides” of

political and social movements. Additionally, there is a bias against someone who chooses to shy away from the activism of social media. Twitter and Snapchat seem to be the new courthouses, and public embarrassment is their one-size-fits-all sentence. Social media awareness is more divisive than it is uniting.

Furthermore, assumptions tear the world apart, and social media is a breeding ground for one's worst assumptions about others. In French philosopher Rene Descartes' book on logic, his first rule is to never assume, so we must take a step back from our “awareness” on social media and focus on our own views rather than other people's. Legally, anyone has the right to post their words on social media if they follow app guidelines, but it is the morality aspect that people these days rarely seem to consider. “Cancel Culture” spawns from this “morality”, along with who is just and

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**“Assumptions tear the world apart, and social media is a breeding ground for one's worst assumptions about others.”**

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who is wrong. Spreading news on social media contributes nothing but impulsive hatred to the world in the form of public embarrassment that leaves America as a whole more divided than ever. We need more action and fewer reposts. It's time to see the true face of social media awareness.

## Socialized Medicine -- Why Not Now?

*Rachel Loeb, Staff Writer*

It is a tragedy that so many Americans lack access to affordable healthcare, but the United States can meet all of its citizens' needs without resorting to socialized medicine. Universal healthcare means that anyone who gets sick would be able to get treatment. President Obama tried to accomplish this through the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), which requires all Americans to get health insurance. In order to make that possible, insurance companies are required to offer affordable insurance even to people with pre-existing conditions, and the government subsidizes the cost of insurance for people who would otherwise not be able to afford it. Other countries, such as the United Kingdom, took a different approach: socialized medicine. In England, most doctors and nurses work for the government in clinics and hospitals built and operated by the government. Through analyzing socialized healthcare in other countries, many Americans can see that this is not the system they actually want, but many have been misinformed thus far on the facts surrounding healthcare in America.

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**"Americans need to be better informed about the different kinds of healthcare systems used around the world and appreciate the differences between Obamacare and the widely discredited socialized medicine."**

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Throughout the 2020 election, the theme of healthcare was very controversial, as Republicans mischaracterized Obamacare as socialized medicine and called the people who supported it a name with historically challenging connotations: socialists. On the contrary, Obamacare is a hybrid system that gives all Americans access to healthcare on the free market, as healthcare is provided by individual doctors and private companies, rather than directly through the government and its annual budget.

Every fiscal year, American politicians try their best to allocate funds among all the different needs in the country. However under socialized



medicine, if they would wrongly assess and not spend enough money on something, there would be consequences; for example, serious wait times for medical treatment. Even if everyone could see doctors for free, the doctors might not be available for months. Further proof of the consequences associated with socialized healthcare are evident in other countries around the world. In England, when a particular medicine is in short supply, doctors may have to get special permission from the government to prescribe it to more than a certain number of patients.

Additionally, when healthcare is directly tied to the bureaucracy of government, all healthcare workers work for the government, and it effectively sets the price for all medical procedures. As a result, to keep prices under control, the government sets doctors' salaries, with the result that doctors in countries with socialized medicine are paid less. Accordingly, the best doctors either leave the country or go into private practice where they can charge higher fees, but these private doctors are not covered by their country's public healthcare system. Therefore, only the richest people can afford to be treated by the best doctors. Moreover, since most people don't have a choice about where to go, there is no incentive for one hospital or doctor to compete against other hospitals or doctors in the quality or cost of their care. In our current healthcare system, there is inherent competition built into every aspect of America's society that bleeds into the way insurance companies set rates and cover individuals.

Even in America, without socialized medicine, many people have concerns about the government's access to their private information and are fearful that it might be misused. In actuality, these fears are not justified. With America's current

healthcare setup, there are laws that limit the government's ability to spy on its own citizens that particularly extend to medical conditions and treatment. However, if the government is someone's healthcare provider, as it is with socialized healthcare, every time a citizen seeks medical care, they are directly sharing their private information with the government. Many people would avoid being tested for sexually transmitted diseases or enrolling in a drug rehab program if they knew this could be part of their public record.

In the current American healthcare system, when doctors tell patients that they need to take a certain medicine and the patients are responsible for paying a portion of the medicine's cost, the patients will naturally check if they already have that medicine at home in order to avoid the expense. However, if the government covers the entire cost of that medicine, then patients might not even bother to check and end up picking up medicine that they already have. In fact, since countries with socialized medicine often face shortages, most patients will take advantage of an extra prescription by creating a stockpile of medication at home. This fear of shortages leads to an unnecessary accumulation of medicine, which can create the very shortage that prompted the original frenzy. No household should feel the need to hold on to medications in fear of a national supply running out.

Given all the problems with socialized medicine, Americans are better off having developed a solution of their own. However, Americans need to be better informed about the different kinds of healthcare systems used around the world and appreciate the differences between Obamacare and the widely discredited socialized medicine.

## The Sad Reality of Socialized Healthcare

*Edan Held, Staff Writer*

The arguments for and against socialized medicine, a system in which the government pays for all healthcare-related expenses, are clear and have become quite apparent in public discourse. While there are numerous arguments in favor of socialized medicine, it has failed to become widespread since it is heavily politicized. Different groups on the political spectrum have taken different sides -- some in full support, some altogether rejecting it, and some trying not to get involved as they are happy with the current system. But if average Americans were to look at socialized medicine with an open mind, they would find more pros than cons.

Socialized medicine will save lives -- it's as simple as that! For people who struggle to put food on the table, seeking medical attention is at the bottom of their priority list. Moreover, due to skyrocketing prices, so many of them delay treatments that could help them and their loved ones, especially when their finances force individuals to choose between getting the healthcare they deserve and basic living costs like food and rent. A 2019 Gallup poll found that 25% of Americans were delaying treatment or had a relative that was delaying treatment due to high costs that affect more people as each year passes. Another study done by the American Cancer Society found 56% of adults in America have undergone some medical financial hardship. This recurring theme of financial burdens due

to extremely high medical prices will only become more common unless something is done about it. By its very definition, socialized medicine ensures that every person will have access to healthcare without having to worry about paying for it.

A common argument against socialized medicine is that doctors would receive less pay. This may be true, but 66% of physicians that responded to a Med-Scape survey said they would prefer a socialized healthcare plan, disproving any notion that the professionals would feel underappreciated. These doctors say that socialized medicine would relieve much of their stress since they wouldn't have to scramble to fill out paperwork and get administrative business done as much as they do now. In addition, they wouldn't have to fight with insurance companies on behalf of their patients to get reimbursed. Ultimately, in the eyes of many of the professionals in the field, doctors are willing to sacrifice some of their salaries if it means relieving stress and improving their work experience.

Another hesitation some have is that socialized medicine is too expensive. It may not be a cheaper upfront investment, but it would save both the government and individual citizens money in the long term. Twenty-two studies published in the

PLOS Medicine Journal agree that switching to a single-payer plan would generate net savings over several years. Similarly, the Mercatus Center, a right-wing think tank, estimated that we could save a total of \$2 trillion in just ten years by implementing a socialized medicine plan. Statistics show that socialized medicine would have a positive impact on the economy, in addition to saving lives. Particularly now, as

**"Socialized medicine will save lives -- it's as simple as that!"**

we experience the devastation of a pandemic together as a country, healthcare remains at the forefront of everyone's lives and minds. If now is not the time to reassess the system currently in place and demand better, when is?



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## No to Amy Coney Barrett and No to Court Packing

confirmation, many on the left have now called for the expansion of the Supreme Court. In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt tried to add more Justices to the Court but was rebuffed in his attempt by the Democratic-controlled Senate. The Senate was correct to reject court-packing in 1937 and would be wise to do the same regarding any future attempts to pack the court. The biggest problem with court-packing is that the Supreme Court would become a tit-for-tat system, expanded everytime the President and the Senate belong to the same political party. For example, if the Democrats add two Justices to the court, the Republicans can respond by adding three Justices to the court next time they're in control. This would create a never-ending cycle in which the Supreme Court is continuously expanded and made more and more partisan.

Gone would be the days where the Supreme Court was independent of the Executive Branch; instead, it would be submissive to Washington's political parties. As Democratic Senator Burton Wheeler stated during Roosevelt's administration, court-packing would "create now a political

court to echo the ideas of the Executive and... a weapon that can cut down those guaranties of liberty written into your great document by the blood of your forefathers and that can extinguish your right of liberty, of speech, of thought, of action, and of religion. A weapon whose use is only dictated by the conscience of the wielder." Court-packing would eliminate the entire judicial review process as established in the case of *Marbury v. Madison* in 1803. Before Coney Barrett's confirmation to the Supreme Court, the Court had a 5-4 conservative majority, but through judicial review, many actions of the Trump Administration were struck down, such as Trump's attacks on the United States Census and DACA. Packing the Supreme Court would potentially allow a President of the United States to dismantle fundamental American ideals such as separation of powers and civil liberties. The highest court cannot remain a credible body, much less the head of a separate government branch, if it is transformed into an easily manipulated toy of the Executive Branch.

In addition to the confirmation of Amy Coney Barrett, Mitch McConnell has

politicized America's judiciary system. With the confirmation of many justices that this



NBC News

Justice Barrett speaks at the White House after her confirmation

writer considers unqualified, including Justin Walker, Sarah Pitlyk, and Lawrence VanDyke, the courts have begun to shift into a tool weaponized by politicians, instead of individually important representatives of America's democracy (although, it should be noted that other Judicial nominees, such as Josh Wolson and David Stras, were qualified). If Democrats want to combat the politicization of the courts, they should propose term-limits of 18 years upon Supreme Court Justices, or consider the creation of new federal circuits to handle the sizable federal caseload.

## Strange Beginnings: a Sixth Grade Perspective

*Maurice Kanter, Staff Writer*

Moving to middle school means taking a step up in your life. It is an opportunity to make new friends, and when that middle school is Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy, it means becoming a part of a community. However, these are strange times. The Barrack community is changing, but our community has learned to adapt and prosper through these times. Barrack has done an outstanding job reorganizing the way we go to school. On the other hand, because of new and necessary precautions, the magic and freedom of joining Barrack has been largely reduced. So were sixth graders robbed of their first year at Barrack? Find out from these journal entries of a new sixth grade student at Barrack during this year of COVID-19.

*September 8th 8:22-* Children piled out of cars, buses, and vans. With six feet distance between them, they made their way towards the big white tents. Every sixth grader was going into Barrack with a different mindset -- some were excited, some were nervous -- but among the masses there was disappointment. Disappointment that we could not go in the building, disappointment that not all our friends could be here, disappointment that the campus we toured a year ago would be restricted. A large number of students embraced the new way of learning and were happy to see their friends, but others had trouble trying to make new friends from a distance.

*September 15th 8:24-* After a challenging



MRS. MARCIA HARWITZ

Jacob Susser-Stein and his peers in a Barrack tent.

week of online classes and some time learning how to use canvas, the sixth grade was finally back on campus. Once again the sixth graders piled out from their vehicles with cards around their necks, ready for a new day of learning. Many attended classes on campus, though some were online and that number was only to grow in the following weeks.

*September 22nd 8:22-* Sixth graders had become accustomed to the idea of going in to school one day a week. The desire to see the entire campus and truly experience middle school was all but gone. A lot of students also became more comfortable with the idea of social distancing, and wearing masks just became a usual thing. With the addition of after-school sports, the sixth grade finally got

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a better chance to bond, become better integrated into the Barrack community, and have fun.

*September 29th 8:26-* The routine had been set in place for every student attending class in person. Going on campus, something students took for granted in the past, became a treat. Being able to talk to their friends, to better understand their teachers, to become the best student they could be, that is the true magic of going on campus at Barrack! So did sixth graders lose their start at Barrack? Well, kind of. The magic and freedom of moving to middle school are limited, but our teachers and our friends are all still there. A great effort was made to ensure that there would still be a sense of community, and it is always magical to be a member of the Barrack community.

## Online or On Campus

*Adele Haselkorn and Mollie Lachter, Staff Writers*

Due to COVID-19, Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy has switched to a hybrid in-person schedule that alternates between middle school and high school. This system has its pros and cons and each Barrack student likes different parts of it.

Abby Joshowitz '26, says, "My favorite part about being in person is that I can see all my friends and it makes this crazy time a little more normal.... My favorite part about being online is that class starts later, because before COVID-19 I didn't like getting up early all the time."

"Being in person improves my concentration because there are less distractions to deal with, compared to learning at home," Ari Powers '23 told us. "My favorite part of being online is the alternative schedule. The classes being shorter gives me some extra time to transition between classes, which can be very helpful," he continued.

There are also downsides to being at home and on campus. Abby says, "I don't like being online because it's a lot of screen time.... My least favorite part about in-person school is that we're outside and it's cold."

Students also described which environment they work better in. "I do not tend to get distracted, partly because there is nothing to distract me on or close to my desk. This may also be because I like most of my classes, and I am interested in what they are teaching," states Zemer Freidenreich, a fully virtual sixth grader.

Ari says that the place he works better in is at school, "due to the at-

mosphere that is created in an in-person learning environment due to the lack of distractions. When in school, I feel ready to learn."

Many students believe that they are getting more distracted while being at home. "I find there are harder distractions to avoid in online learning than in in-person school. I work better at school if the teacher is in school because it's easier to learn that way even though there are many distractions. There are many distractions at home, too, and I think the distractions at home are a little harder to concentrate with," says Abby.

Students have also noticed sports are different from last year. This year, there are not any competitions or games because the school does not want too many people in one space.

Before Barack started the one week on and one week off schedule, Ari Powers tells us that "I [felt] nervous because I [knew] that COVID-19 is a big deal and I would



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## Barrack's Evolution to Keep Pace with a Changing World

Raphael Englander, School News Editor

When it became apparent that COVID-19 was going to change our way of life, the administration at Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy recognized that Barrack needed to make sure it could meet the needs of its community in this new world. Upon realizing this, the SSEL initiative was launched. SSEL, or Spiritual, Social, and Emotional Learning, is a large committee comprised of Barrack community members who are determined to make sure that all of us are spiritually, socially, and emotionally

nourished. SSEL's goal is for everyone at Barrack to connect with one another, ourselves, G-d, and our environment.

Within SSEL are committees with narrower missions. One of these committees is DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion). DEI was established following the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and others, and the ensuing

<b>HONOR</b> כבוד <b>KAVOD</b> BEING TRUTHFUL AND SHOWING RESPECT TO STUDENTS AND ADULTS TO THE SCHOOL'S BUILDING AND GROUNDS TO OUR TRADITION	<b>COURAGE</b> אומץ לב <b>OMETZ LEV</b> SHOWING STRENGTH OF HEART AND COURAGE TO ACT ON PRINCIPLE TO BE AN UPSTANDER TO SEEK UNDERSTANDING TO DEVELOP AND PURSUE HIS OWN ACADEMIC AND EXTRACURRICULAR INTERESTS TO RESIST PEER PRESSURE
<b>KINDNESS</b> יתרון <b>HESED</b> SHOWING GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT TO GIVE TO OTHERS TO SHARE WHAT I HAVE READILY AND GENEROUSLY TO BE THOUGHTFUL, CARING AND INCLUSIVE TO LOOK OUT FOR THOSE IN NEED OF A KIND WORD OR DEED	<b>COMMUNITY</b> קהילה <b>KEHILLAH</b> EXTENDING FRIENDSHIP IN A SPIRIT OF INCLUSION TO CELEBRATE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF OTHERS TO RESPECT AND CELEBRATE OUR INDIVIDUALITY AND OUR DIVERSITY TO REPRESENT MY SCHOOL IN POSITIVE WAYS WITHIN THE LARGER COMMUNITY

JBHA.ORG

### JBHA's four Derech Eretz values

protests that erupted in response to their deaths and systemic racism in general. Many JBHA parents and students were adamant in their insistence that JBHA become an explicitly anti-racist, pro-Black Lives Matter school. In response, DEI will focus on bringing more diverse voices into the Barrack community, expanding the curriculum, being aware of the fact that JBHA is not totally homogenous, and being conscious of Barrack's students of color who often feel marginalized.

Headed by Frank Tow, a former Barrack math teacher who left his job to pursue a degree in social work, DEI encompasses four subcom-

mittees. These smaller task forces will focus on the curriculum, advisory periods, professional development for teachers, and overall student culture. DEI will work with the Derech Eretz Council, Gender Sexuality Alliance club, Students Combating Racism club, Culture Change club, and Women's Empowerment club to truly make Barrack the most welcoming place it can be.

SSEL and DEI's missions are not new concepts to Barrack, as the Derech Eretz Council has worked towards these goals for many years. However, DEI will be exclusively about diversity, equity, and inclusion (its namesake). DEI and Derech Eretz are interconnected because both initiatives will try to establish our school as a place that lives up to its values. We must honor every member of our community, making sure everyone feels valued, whether they are the minority or the majority. Students need a place to feel courageous, to raise concerns, say what they feel, and to put themselves out there to make a positive change. By nurturing this moral courage within its student body, Barrack can become a brave space. We need to be kind because JBHA students come from many different backgrounds and everyone should be included. By nurturing this kindness within its student body, Barrack can become a safe space. If people do not feel like they belong, JBHA does not live up to DEI's mission or its Derech Eretz values.

For students interested in learning more about DEI and SSEL in general, the staff members involved include Rabbi Judd Levingston, Rabbi Will Keller, Mrs. Christine Farrell, Mr. Thomas McLaughlin, Mr. Justin Cooper, Ms. Jennifer Groen, Ms. Hallie Anderson, Rabbi Daniel Rosenberg, Mrs. Joyce Ferber, Mrs. Wendie Sittenfield, Mrs. Mari Kalman, Mrs. Amy Grolnick, and Mrs. Lisa Nolan.

**“By nurturing this moral courage within its student body, Barrack can become a brave space”**

## Sports

### Barrack Sports Update

Danny Cohen, Sports/Layout Editor

Due to COVID-19, Barrack has been very precautionary with its sports. In a normal world, there would be various Barrack winter sports, including basketball, swimming, and indoor track; however, only basketball is being played this season. Currently, there are only practices, with players required to wear masks and maintain six-foot distancing at all times. Obviously, playing in a mask is much more tiring, so coaches have been giving players more water breaks, where they step outside and still maintain social distancing. Since off-campus sites such as Harcum and Haverford are off limits, Barrack has utilized its own outdoor tennis courts, equipping them with baskets so teams can practice, if weather permits. While we would all like to be playing a real season right now, with normal practices and games, it can simply not be done, and Barrack is trying its best to provide somewhat of a basketball season for its students.



JEWISH EXPONENT

**Barrack's Boys Varsity Basketball Team after winning the championship in February of 2020.**

Continued from Page 6

## Online or On Campus

not want to catch it, however, I [knew] that the school has put strict procedures in place to make everything safe, so mostly, I [felt] safe. I am excited because I like going to school in person better than learning online and I am excited to see my friends and teachers.”

Some students have chosen to take classes totally online. Zemer explains that “as far as I know, I am not planning to go in person until there is a working vaccine out, which might mean that I am virtual all year.”

Our final question to everyone was whether Barrack could find a way to improve their system this year. “In-person and online school are not perfect but I just don't know what could be done to improve it,” says Abby. Ari says that Barrack is “doing the best they can.”

COVID-19 has affected everyone, but Barrack is doing a great job making sure this year is the best it can be, while keeping everyone safe!

## Israel's Handling of the Pandemic

Margot Englander, Staff Writer

In March, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, many eyes were on Israel and the way it was handling COVID-19. On March 11th, Israel began enforcing social distancing measures and other restrictions to limit the spread of the disease. On March 19th, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared a national state of emergency, and Israel went under strict lockdown. Israelis were not allowed to leave their houses, unless it was essential. In May, Netanyahu began easing restrictions, but reintroduced them in July after a rise in cases.

On September 10th, Israel had the highest number of cases per million people in the world. On September 13th, the government approved another lockdown; this one was

**“Israel and its government took a different approach to handling the pandemic than President Trump and other world leaders.”**

meant to last three weeks. Citizens were not allowed past 0.3 miles from their homes, and most public areas were closed. This lockdown took place during the High Holidays. Many students at Barrack Hebrew Academy were upset that High Holidays had to take place over

Zoom, but it is worth remembering that, in Israel, the laws and regulations were even more strict than in the United States. However, this lockdown didn't seem to work, as Netanyahu had to introduce even stricter rules on September 23rd. The lockdown ended at midnight on October 18th, over a month after it was called.

The government also provided financial assistance during this time, extending unemployment payments and handing out grants to businesses and people who were suffering. Similar to the Black Lives Matter protests in the United States, protests took place in Israel. However, the protests in Israel were happening for a different reason. During July and August, protests were held to express concern and anger over the response of Netanyahu and his government to the pandemic. In response to the protests, the Knesset (Israeli parliament) passed a law restricting citizens from having gatherings more than 0.6 miles from their homes. This was intended to curb the protests against Netanyahu and the government.

On a more positive note, Israel is known for its technological advances and scientific intelligence, so it came as no surprise when an Israeli scientist came forward with a new way of testing for COVID-19. This new

method used a “breathalyzer” that could give results in 30 seconds, with an accuracy rate of 85%. This device is now being tested and could be ready to use within months.



**Citizens in Israel protesting the handling of the pandemic**

Overall, Israel took a different approach to handle the pandemic than American President Donald Trump and some other world leaders. Israel opted to go under an incredibly strict lockdown, while other countries did not take this route. However, both Israel and America ended with high numbers of cases, though Israel's death count is lower. This shows just how dangerous COVID-19 is and how all nations should be watching the world to see what other countries are doing to prevent its spread.

## Who Is Heshy Tischler and Why Is He So Controversial?

Blake Fox, Israel Editor

What does “Never Again” mean? For many people, it is seen as a phrase in opposition to genocide. Yet for many Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) Jews, it has become a rallying cry to oppose what they see as antisemitic COVID-19 rules that have been directed towards predominantly Jewish neighborhoods, mainly in New York. These regulations, directed at areas designated as “Red Zones,” closed yeshivas and limited synagogue capacities to just 10 people. Governor Andrew Cuomo established the “Red Zone” following a summer where many ultra-Orthodox Jews in New York continued to attend synagogue and gather at large weddings.

In response to these restrictions, Harold “Heshy” Tischler, a 57-year-old landlord and radio show host, became a leading advocate for many in the Haredi community, although many others in that community are appalled by his actions and rhetoric. Tischler, who is also running in the 2021 City Council elections in New York, first gained prominence this summer for his vocal support of Jewish weddings and reopening playgrounds during the COVID-19 pandemic. In September, he heckled medical professionals and accused them of being “Nazis” at a New York City COVID-19 press conference.

Tischler's rise to fame came in October when New York labeled primarily Jewish neighborhoods in Brooklyn as “Red Zones.” Tischler, who rarely wears a mask, led protests



**Tischler during an anti-mask lockdown**

against New York officials, such as Governor Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill DeBlasio, where he made statements to his supporters such as, “You are my soldiers...we are at war!” Flags bearing the words, “Trump 2020,” were a common sight at the protests, as well.

However, the protests did not remain peaceful. On October 7th, Jacob Kornbluh, a Hasidic journalist for the *Jewish Insider*, was surrounded by protestors, pinned to a brick wall, and then kicked and punched. Those at-

tacking Kornbluh called him a “Nazi” and “Hitler.” A day earlier, Tischler had labeled Kornbluh a “moser,” a Hebrew term for snitch, and a “rat.” Similarly, another journalist was chased down and attacked by members of the Hasidic community. Protestors also blocked city buses from coming into their neighborhoods and burned masks.

Tischler was arrested on October 11th and charged with unlawful imprisonment and inciting a riot following the violence. Tischler's lawyer, Sara Shulevitz, called the arrest “politically-motivated.” In response to Tischler's arrest, Hasidic Jews took to the streets chanting, “No Heshy, No Peace.” Tischler was eventually released from police custody, but the charges remain.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted the ultra-Orthodox community in New York. In addition, many people inside and outside of the ultra-Orthodox community feel that both the governor and mayor have made COVID-related statements that border on antisemitic. With much of the Jewish community's eyes on New York, Tischler has emerged as a loud, controversial and influential figure in the Haredi community.

## “Peaces” of the Middle East: The Abraham Accords

Shirin Kaye, Editor-in-Chief

Since its establishment, Israel has faced hostility from its Arab neighbors and its Palestinian residents in the West Bank and Gaza. After multiple wars, Israel used its newly-captured territory to strike unexpected peace treaties with Egypt and then with Jordan. As the Middle East continues to change, Israel has been using its advancing technology -- like military expertise and scientific breakthroughs -- to combat surrounding enemies and to trade with allies. In September, Israel signed additional unexpected and historic treaties: the Abraham Accords.

These agreements were signed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for Israel, Foreign Minister Abdullah Al Zayani for Bahrain, and Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan for the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Later, in October, Sudan's Prime Minister Abdulla Hamdok also entered into a normalization agreement with Israel. These agreements were facilitated by the United States and President Donald Trump. The Accords officially signaled cooperation in diplomacy, tourism, trade, arms, economy, technology, agriculture, and healthcare. The peace also represents a normalization of relations, in which these Arab Gulf States finally recognize Israel's statehood.

The signing of the Abraham Accords is a significant accomplishment for the parties involved. The leaders of the countries gain positive recognition for the deal they managed to strike. The Arab Gulf States can now benefit

from their partnerships with Israel, and Israelis win new business and travel destinations in the Arabian Peninsula, as well as new allies. On the other hand, the Abraham Accords are bad news for some. Israel promised the UAE that it

enemy, is worth putting aside their differences. Turkey and Russia also have strong influences in the region's political action and side with the Palestinians; they obviously do not benefit from the ties created by the Accords.

Looking ahead, the US is expected to continue to be involved in furthering peace efforts in the Middle East. Benjamin Beal '21, who portrayed Joe Biden in Barrack Hebrew Academy's mock presidential debate, agreed that the president-elect "is likely to seek more potential countries in the Middle East to normalize with Israel." Although President-elect Biden will not support the Israeli right as much as President Trump does, he has known Prime Minister Netanyahu for over 30 years and, Beal added, "is a strong supporter of a two-state solution, [though he] sees Israeli settlement in the West Bank as a major obstacle in the path towards peace."

The Accords' implications, however, do not stop here. The Arabs' recognition of Israel and further isolation of the Palestinians are key in reshaping the dynamics in the Middle East. A case in point is that President Trump oversaw the normalization of relations between Sudan and Israel only weeks after the signing of the original Abraham Accords. Although the full implications of what this means for diplomatic relations is uncertain, the US removed Sudan from its list of state-sponsored terrorists and Sudan's peace process with Israel will probably continue to grow. In addition, more Arab countries are likely to sign on to unite against Iran and make their relations with Israel official.



Leaders of the four countries met at the White House to sign the Accords.

would suspend its West Bank annexation plans, but it is unclear how long this pause will last and under what circumstances the US would resume its support of annexation. The Palestinians still get the short end of the stick; the UAE, Bahrain, and Sudan are practically isolating them because these Arab countries believe their future lies in unity with Israel. Previous US presidents have tried to coordinate peace between Israel and the Palestinians, however, President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu realized that dealmaking with *other* Arabs would be easier and equally impressive. Moreover, the UAE, Bahrain, and Israel made the decision that fighting Iran, their common

## World News Japan's Got a Plan: Carbon Neutral by 2050

Niva Cohen, Opinion Editor, and Becca Miller, A&E Editor

Scientists say that to evade the most disastrous effects of climate change, we must eliminate global net greenhouse emissions by 2050. Japan has decided to step up to the challenge. Yoshihide Suga, Japan's Prime Minister, has pledged to go carbon neutral by 2050. Despite widespread fears that progressive change would disrupt the economy, the International Energy Agency has voiced the contrary. Ever since 2015, it says, fiscal advancement hasn't been tethered to carbon emissions. Suga echoed this sentiment in his first address to Parliament, saying that "responding to climate change is no longer a constraint on economic growth."

Some doubt the plausibility of this plan, as Japan emits the fifth most carbon dioxide in the world. The country uses 210,559,949 tons of coal per year, as well as other fossil fuels, and the public is generally against increasing their use of nuclear energy, so Suga's timeline might be unrealistic. But the prime minister and his leadership team have plans to fulfill their ambitious agenda. They will use solar cells, carbon recycling, and more renewable energy

on their path to net-zero carbon. At first, they aimed for 80% reduced emissions by 2050, but upon facing pushback, they have opted for a more aggressive timetable, aiming to do away with carbon emissions altogether. Suga's team has gracefully straddled the balance between the naysayers and those complaining that they aren't going far enough.

Although nuclear energy could expedite Suga's plan, the Japanese are particularly averse to increasing it. In Japan, there is much residual trauma from the Fukushima nuclear plant meltdown almost a decade ago. "Nearly 10 years on from Fukushima we are still facing the disastrous consequences of nuclear power, and this radioactive legacy has made clear that nuclear energy has no place in a green, sustainable future," says Sam Annesley, executive director of Greenpeace Japan. Suga has not promised to completely avoid nuclear energy but insists that safety will be a top priority.

Over 60 other countries have made the same pledge as Japan, along with the

EU. China, the world's biggest carbon emitter, has a similar agenda but allows itself ten more years to get its act together. Trailing behind China in its carbon emissions is the U.S., which has no such plan, and, as of November 4th, has even taken steps back by withdrawing from the Paris Climate Agreement, the only country to do so. Many believe this has monumental implications for the global effort to reduce carbon emissions. According to Mauro Petriccone, director-general of the European Commission's Climate Change group, "This kind of operation of this magnitude and the resources required? Well, without the U.S. it has seriously damaged the international process."

With its pledge to go carbon neutral by 2050, Japan sets an example for the rest of the world. It won't be an easy goal to meet, but Suga and his government are willing to put the work in to build a brighter - and greener - future. With the third-biggest economy in the world, Japan has proven it's possible even for success-oriented countries to commit to making bold environmental reforms.

# New Year, New Barrack

## Barrack Student Leaders Persevere Through Uncertainty

Maya Shavit, Editor-in-Chief

The year 2020 and its pandemic have brought more challenges to all aspects of life than anyone could have predicted. Particularly within the school environment, students have struggled to find a sense of normalcy as they are physically divided from each other. With some students attending school in-person and others online, it is difficult to stay updated and motivated. However, throughout the struggles of the pandemic the student leaders have been there, working hard for their peers on how to make school as manageable and fun as possible. From grade officers, to Jewish Leadership Initiative (JLI) members, and the Student Association (SA) officers, the student movement to take control of their 2020 school experience is in full force.

Particularly for the 12th grade officers, finding enough time for the class to plan and enjoy senior events has been difficult. It was already difficult for the officers only having a single period a cycle to host Grade Meeting, where the whole grade meets to discuss ideas, but now there have been new assemblies and lessons encroaching on their designated time. As senior treasurer, Robby Ufberg '21 feels this struggle. "We've been working hard to try and figure out ways to raise money and morale for the grade mid-pandemic, but it's been hard to find time to plan because of the Israel meetings we've had that replace Grade Meeting," he says. In addition to the stresses of the pandemic, time is valuable for seniors as they must focus on more than just their difficult Barrack classes. "We've all been swamped with college applications, but now that we are finished with the November applications, we're organizing a cookie dough sale and a possible sticker sale or face mask sale." Ufberg and his fellow grade officers are focused on trying to keep their grade united through new sale ideas, amidst the chaos of a senior year during coronavirus. While they persevere to plan sales, the officers also brainstorm innovative ideas that can have the class come together

for much needed comfort during the school year. With senior activities like prom still up in the air, class funding and bonding is more important than ever before.

Like the grade officers, the JLIers have transformed the way that they meet with the Barrack community. Since, due to safety restrictions, there are no traditional Shabbatons where grades would stay overnight at school, the JLI has created "Shishi Together" programming. JLI member Shira Amar '21 explained, "During our Shishis, we provide bonding activities incorporating our Derech Eretz values, humorous plays based on the Parsha of the week, tie-dying, and a great lunch. So far they have been extremely successful and we cannot wait to plan more of them!" During these Shishis, there are also alternative praying options to keep the community safe. JLIer Matthew Garber '21 elaborated, "For the davening and prayer group which I was assigned to for the Shishi, we could not do any prayer because we were unable to sing together. Instead, we gave the students journals to either write or draw in. For people that did not want to do that, we offered the option to meditate and say the silent Amidah in order to give a variety of options." In addition to the new "Shishi Together" program, there are weekly Zoom Kabbalat Shabbat services for the whole community. As weeks progress and holidays happen, there are still special activities for specific holidays as in past years, but they look a bit different. An example is a video for Sukkot that came to the student body with an interactive virtual Sukkah building activity. Amar expanded on a recent holiday event, "For Sukkot, we presented a fun

virtual Sukkot activity where students personalized their own Sukkah on a slide and could comment on others. We also put together a fascinating video about the importance of Sukkot."

While the grade officers and JLI members work diligently in the interests of their individual grades and the Jewish aspect of Barrack, the SA Officers have had the task of keeping lines of communication open among the staff and the students. SA Secretary Anita Hoffman '21 is among the team of student leaders. "After going

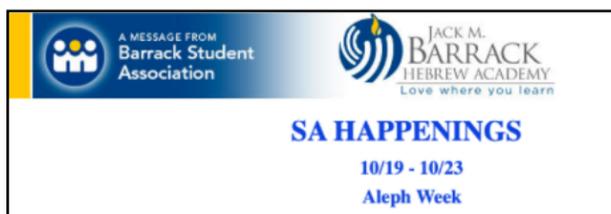
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**"Even during this period of doubt, the student leaders have made it their mission to help the student body however they can."**

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virtual in March, SA immediately began to work to ensure that students could get the most out of online learning. Over the course of the past eight months, SA has planned various activities to keep Barrack's community strong, including a Thanksgiving event. We also have worked to help students adjust to the hybrid learning model." SA officers continue to bring student concerns to the attention of the administration as they always have done, but their jobs have expanded exponentially now that a substantial portion of students learn full-time at home. Hoffman and her peer officers continue to update the students with weekly "SA Happening" emails and post on social media about school activities, like clubs.

Even during this period of doubt, the student leaders have made it their mission to help the student body however they can. Their efforts to keep the student body informed and excited during the insanity of a pandemic cannot afford to go unnoticed.



Barrack's "SA Happenings" sent out to the school every week.

Continued From Page 1

## Social Distance vs. Social Security at Barrack

the students do not talk to someone new? How can an organized activity work if students aren't willing to meet new classmates? Friendship cannot be forced. Some schools have tried to mix up their students as an approach to diversify friendships, but simply mixing up students is not a solution to feeling accepted at Barrack, even though that seems like a common and easy response. The truth about how anyone and everyone can feel accepted does not lie in the hands of others.

Ultimately, the Barrack community is filled with students who want to be accepted, but the culture lends itself to be a place filled with groups. All students must be willing to open themselves up to

change for the community to become a welcoming environment. There is a famous Jewish saying from a sage called the Chofetz Chaim that says, "When I was young I tried to change the world, but found it was hard to do that, so I tried to change my town. I couldn't change my town, so I tried to change my family. I wasn't able to change my family and finally I realized that I could only change myself." Every student must try to become the change they want to see. Do you want nice people to come up to you and ask you about your day? Be that person for someone else. Social acceptance at Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy is achieved when students accept who they are and actively try to change the culture around them.

# ack, New Chronicle!

## Teaching Hybrid -- Teacher Perspective

*Eliana Weinstein and Mordechai Singer, Staff Writers*

Teachers at Barrack have always taught in a traditional classroom setting, but when COVID-19 first hit in March of last year, school was shut down and forced to go fully remote. With the new 2020-2021 school year, and the school moving to a hybrid/in-person plan, Barrack teachers were given the choice of how and where they wished to teach. Some teachers chose to teach remotely, while others chose to teach their students outside in tents, or inside the building.

There are many differences between teaching in person and teaching from home. John Bistline (aka "Johnny"), Barrack's Athletic Trainer and Science department teacher, decided to teach in person, although not all his students are at school with him. He says, "I haven't had any issues with students being engaged -- participation has been great." Although masks and difficult circumstances regarding COVID are a part of the equation, it seems that being in person can be manageable, and of course it is easy to reach students in the classroom.

Along with different teaching modes, the teachers also have different opinions on how

Barrack handled COVID-19 and schooling. Johnny further shares, "I believe Barrack did a great job, given the circumstances of being a 6-12 school. While it's not perfect, Barrack is making the best of a bad situation." With situations changing almost weekly, the fact that Barrack has been able to stay open and stay safe is almost shocking, and highlights



Barrack's talents. Johnny explains, "The current setup allows for maximum safety while still providing students with as normal of a school day as possible."

Although teachers in school have their struggles and strengths, so do the teachers who teach virtually. Dr. Aaron Freidenreich (aka Dr. Frei), a member of the Jewish Studies department who is currently teaching only remotely, was asked how well he could keep his class focused while online. He explains, "I am very pleased with how my classes have

gone so far. I have been able to teach my lessons effectively in our remote format. I have gotten accustomed to remote teaching and developed my skills in conducting my lessons virtually, using my screen and documents to their fullest to achieve my goals, and I think students are learning effectively as a result." However, he does have his difficulties: "Although it is a little more difficult to gauge student focus over Google Hangouts than in person, it does seem to me that my students are engaged in the class even though it is all remote."

Similarly, Mrs. Lilach Taichman, an upper school History teacher, reflects that "successful remote learning demands that [students] take greater ownership over the process of their own educational progress." Dr. Frei adds that he is "happy with how many students have been participating in class." As to how Barrack handled the COVID pandemic, he explains, "Since I am not at the school each day, I really can't comment about its handling of the situation, I can only speak to my own handling of it. For my part, I have worked

*Continued on Page 13*

## Tent vs. Staying Home -- Student Perspective

*Sophia Mittman, Staff Writer*

Students have different opinions on the hybrid plan at Barrack during the COVID-19 pandemic. After interviewing multiple students about their opinions on tent school or online school, the Chronicle learned that

**"I find it very difficult to learn from home while my whole class is together outside in the tent, because the background noises make it hard to hear."**

more students enjoyed learning in the tents than staying home while the majority of their class was learning in person.

The hybrid plan, one week in person and one week at home, can be confusing and stressful. During in-person weeks, some kids are online full time while the rest of the class are in person in the tents. Many students think it is better to be in person because it feels emotionally essential to be social despite the COVID-19 circumstances. One student in the class of 2024 who is learning in person said, "Even though it is a difficult time right now, I enjoy coming to school every day to see my teachers and friends."

While interacting with classmates seems to be the most positive aspect of physically coming to school during COVID-19, some students choose to come to school in person due to the difficulties learning online presents. A ninth grader who learns remotely said, "I find it very difficult to learn from home while my whole class is together outside in the tent because the background noises make it very hard to hear and focus." When students virtually attend classes during days where the majority of their grade is in person, they must face distractions like wind, side conversations, and general noises that interfere with their learning experience. However, noise is an issue whether it be at home or in person. A student in ninth grade who learns both remotely and in person said, "It's much easier to learn when I'm in person with everyone than when I am home, but when I'm in the tent, sometimes I cannot hear my teacher because of the wind." The technical difficulties associated with learning virtually are inescapable, as virtual students might not be able to see the board and then not be able to take their notes properly. Another freshman said, "I don't mind when my whole class is not in the tent because students are at home, but it can be annoying

if I was in the tent and I had a partner assignment, and my partner is at home." Capturing the essence of Barrack's community is difficult when people are physically split apart.

SOPHIA MITTMAN



**Ninth graders in a tent.**

There are many perspectives on student learning during COVID-19. In the tent, students struggle to hear their teachers and follow all safety precautions, and at home, technology tends to act finicky from the teacher's side and the students'. Still, Barrack is trying its best to work out these problems and ensure that everyone has a great learning experience through these difficult times.

## Barrack Drama Department Presents *The Laramie Project*

Becca Miller, Arts and Entertainment Editor

This year, the Barrack upper school play is *The Laramie Project*. This play was created by Moises Kaufman and the members of the Tectonic Theater Project, based on interviews they conducted with residents of Laramie, Wyoming, following the murder of Matthew Shepard.

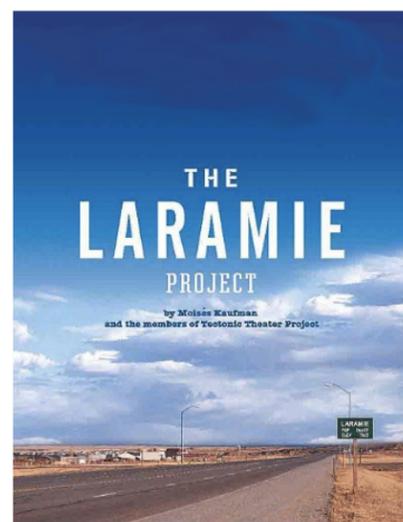
The JBHA Drama Department performed *The Laramie Project* 10 years ago, according to department head, Dewey Oriente. He added that, "I thought the current political climate, coupled with the format of the show [would make] it easy to go virtual; I believe Laramie [was] a good choice." This time, Dewey was directing *The Laramie Project* along with Ash Chelder '21 and Ben Fisher '21, both veterans of the JBHA Drama Department.

**"I thought the current political climate coupled with the format of the show makes it easy to go virtual; I believe Laramie is a good choice." - Dewey Oriente**

The Drama Department remained undeterred by the difficulties presented by COVID-19. Some of their rehearsals were in person, after school in the auditorium, and everyone there wore masks. According to Rosie Ackerman '23, a cast member, "The whole show is basically socially distanced, so it worked fine." During in-person rehearsals, they blocked out the show. Rosie also described online rehearsals, saying that, "In the beginning, it was just going through the script and reading our lines, but [later we talked] about how we [were] blocking the show." One challenge was that a couple of students participating in the show were fully virtual. But the members of the department were resourceful and flexible in their preparations.

As of November, there was still a lot of uncertainty about how exactly performances would work. Rosie said at the time, "I know the performance is virtual and it's on December 12th; I don't really know how we're showing it though." Similarly, Dewey Oriente said, "We are still figuring out the best way to present the show. There are many options: filming the show live in the auditorium, students filming sections on their own, and maybe using Zoom too." Like everyone else, the Drama Department had to figure out how to adapt and resume normal activities in a rapidly changing world. Dewey commented that, "We are learning as we go along; it is a new world and a new interpretation of theater. This is an art form that I know like the back of my hand, but I feel like a first-time director."

*The Laramie Project* is a vastly important show, and I, for one, looked forward to watching the highly talented JBHA Drama Department perform it. After watching the show, I can emphatically say that the cast and crew really did an excellent job. *The Laramie Project* is by nature powerful and moving, and the talented cast delivered it quite well. They also did a really good job adapting to the virtual format necessitated by COVID-19. Anyone who didn't see the show really missed out.



## Theaters during COVID-19

Shira Dorff and Avital Eisenstadt Uram, Staff Writers

During COVID-19, many of our beloved hangout spaces have been closed, including theaters. Both Broadway and movie theaters all across America are struggling to stay in business during the pandemic. New shows like MJ, a musical about Michael Jackson, and the Music Man starring Hugh Jackson and Sutton Foster probably won't make the stage until the fall of 2021.

All Broadway theaters shut down on March 12, 2020. Broadway didn't shut down for the 1918 flu, nor did it shut down for 9/11, but it has closed for COVID-19. Broadway brings in a lot of New York's tourism revenue, and not just because of the shows. It also helps the shops around Times Square make money. Without Broadway, the stores' sales are nowhere near where they would be if Broadway was open.

Broadway is hoping to reopen in the summer of 2021, but will most likely not open until the fall of 2021, depending on the status of the pandemic. Charlotte St. Martin, President of The Broadway League, which represents producers and theater owners, said about the reopening of Broadway, "That's the question of the hour and the day and the month and the year, because we truly don't know. Certainly, a lot of shows are making their plans, and some think we will open in the summer, and I hope they are right. But I think people's bets are the fall of next year."

She also said, "There has to be a medical or scientific change. We're hoping for complete reliability of rapid testing, combined with other medical or scientific enhancements for the audience and the cast and crew. Many productions are being tested which are

promising, and a combination of those would bring us back. And yes, we'd love a vaccine." Some Broadway actors are already being tested daily. However, the nature of Broadway theaters makes it hard for them to reopen; the closeness of the seats and the tightness of backstage makes it hard to observe social distancing.

Although Broadway is all the way in New York City, students still miss going to the theater. "If I don't get to see a Broadway show again, I will literally cry," says Ariella '26. There is something special about going to see a live show; you can't get the connection that is made between the actors and audiences anywhere else.

Not only is Broadway struggling but movie theaters are having a hard time opening during the pandemic. On October 8, Regal, the second-largest film exhibitor in the U.S., closed 536 theaters, with no opening date in sight. Other big theaters, such as AMC and Cinemark, are also having issues, though they are not closing. AMC Theatres said that it may go bankrupt by 2021, unless more customers buy tickets or it finds new ways to borrow money. Most of the movie theaters are closing temporarily, but if people don't want to go back to movie theaters after the pandemic then that might become permanent. We talked to a few Barrack Hebrew Academy students to see if people still wanted to go back.

### Do you miss going to theaters?

A sixth grader said that she missed watching movies with her friends. A seventh grader said that he was excited to go to the movies, and watching a movie at home is different than

being in a theater. A Barrack mom said, "There is something special about being at a movie theater: Eating the popcorn and candy, laughing along with the audience, and not feeling like you should fold laundry while watching a movie." Five out of the five people we interviewed said that they missed eating snacks and watching movies with their friends at theaters.

### Did you go to a drive-in movie theater or do anything creative over the summer to watch movies?

A sixth grader went to her cousin's birthday party and watched a movie on a screen outside in the backyard. One person went to a drive-in concert. Ariella '26 went to a Harry Potter drive-in movie, which she said was really fun, but kind of uncomfortable.

### At what stage of COVID-19 would you go back to movie theaters or Broadway?

A sixth grader said that she'd be more comfortable if there was a limit of people and marked-off seats. Most people said they would go back when COVID cases are low, under 20 or so cases a day, or when a vaccine gets out.

Movie theaters are not just good for watching movies, but are also important in our economy. There are so many different jobs that go into making the movie theaters function. For example, managing theaters is a career for some people, and teenagers and others work at concession stands. There is something for everyone at the movies: great entertainment for all ages, jobs for different people, and that magic in the air when you walk into the theater.

However, just because theaters are *Continued on Page 18*

*Continued from Page 11*

## Teaching Hybrid

hard to make sure to continue to (a) offer a high quality education to my students that challenges them and deepens their skills in working with Tanakh texts and appreciating their value, (b) create an environment where all students feel included and able to participate fully in their learning, and (c) maintain an atmosphere where all students 'love where they learn.' I am hopeful and confident that the school as a whole is doing the same."

2020 has been a crazy, different, and strange school year for everyone. Although teaching situations have been different online and in person, they also have their similarities. Reaching students in different settings is challenging, however, all of the teachers at Barrack, regardless of where they are teaching, are doing their best to give their students the best education they can. Thank you Barrack teachers for working your hardest to engage your students this year, no matter where you are working!

## What Are Poll Watchers?

*Margot Englander, Staff Writer*

If you watched the first presidential debate, I'm sure you heard Donald Trump's comments about poll watchers, specifically in Philadelphia. Many Americans viewing have since been wondering: What are poll watchers? Below is a basic rundown of the "who, what, and why" of poll watchers and their significance.

**The name seems pretty straightforward: people at the polls, watching. But watching out for what?**

Poll watchers are there to look out for suspicious activity and logistical issues.

**Who are poll watchers, and do you need any specific qualifications?**

Poll watchers are mostly sent by political parties to ensure a fair shot at winning. They are chosen from a pool of applicants. In order to apply to become one, you must be a registered voter of that county.

**What are the rules poll watchers must follow?**

Poll watchers cannot wear any clothing that shows allegiance to a particular party or candidate. They cannot interfere with the poll workers or get into a voter's space. They have to wear a badge that identifies them and they cannot challenge any voter's belief.

**What are poll watchers not allowed to do?**

Poll watchers cannot photograph or video voters. They also cannot spread false information in an effort to change a person's mind. They cannot block the entrance to a polling place, or confront a voter. They also may not ask a voter for documentation to

vote. Their job is to stand and watch silently, and if asked a question, to direct the person to a poll worker.

**What are poll watchers supposed to do if they suspect voting irregularities?**

They are not allowed to do anything on their own. They report suspected irregularities to their political parties, who bring the reports before judges. The poll watchers might be asked to testify in court about what they saw.

**What is the difference between a poll watcher and a poll worker?**

Poll workers are paid to do jobs on Election day or in Election season, some of which may require training. There are multiple kinds of poll watchers, including researchers and representatives from political parties, but most watch to make sure there is fair play.

Poll watchers are the unsung heroes of American democracy. Their dedication ensures liberty, validity, and honesty during the most important day on the calendar.



Newberry Country

## Armenia vs. Azerbaijan - What's Going On?

*Aron Shklar, World News Editor*

Recently, in a remote but important part of Asia, tensions between two countries spiked unexpectedly. Those countries are Armenia and Azerbaijan, both former Soviet states and members of the former USSR. Long-simmering tensions over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh escalated on September 27th when artillery and air attacks were launched, and both sides accused each other of being responsible.

Described as "an ethnic tinderbox" by the New York Times, Nagorno-Karabakh is a hotly contested region with importance to both Armenia and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan views the region as part of its country, and it is internationally recognized as such. However, many ethnic Armenians live in the region, and claim that they are allied with Armenia. Armenia's government backs this claim, using the Armenian Genocide of World War I as a way to justify their military defense. Another source of tension is that in 1992, the ethnic Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh in fact declared themselves independent from Azerbaijan, which resulted in a two-year ethnic war. The tensions from that conflict are still active today, and fed into this current conflict.

This stage of fighting started when Armenia claimed that Azerbaijan launched air and artillery attacks on Nagorno-Karabakh, according to Politico.com. Azerbaijan claims that it was "conducting a 'counter-offensive in response to military provocation.'" The death toll on both sides is disputed. As of October 2nd, Armenia reported that it had 158 fatalities and killed 200 Azerbaijanis. The next day, Azerbaijan claimed that it had killed 550 Armenians already. Both

sides, sadly, have been accused of killing civilians, with 13 killed by Armenia and 19 by Azerbaijan. An unknown number of properties have been destroyed by both sides, including at least one restaurant. These tragic losses will continue to rise, as it is no longer just Armenia and Azerbaijan in this conflict.

Azerbaijan and Armenia are not the only countries involved in this conflict. Each has a powerful country prepared to back it, and to enter into the conflict themselves. Those countries are Turkey, who is supporting Azerbaijan, and Russia who is supporting Armenia. On October 1st, CNN learned that Syrians in the rebel Syrian National Army (which is backed by Turkey) were being hired by someone to go fight for Azerbaijan.



An unexploded rocket shell in the Nagorno-Karabakh region on October 1st, 2020

**"Nagorno-Karabakh is a hotly contested region with importance to both Armenia and Azerbaijan."**

This mysterious benefactor turned out to be Turkey, who has claimed that these are "baseless allegations" according to CNN. CNN also interviewed an anonymous hired Syrian fighter, who said that "they told us that they will give us \$1,500 a month. Our contracts are for three months, and every month we will be getting

paid by the unit commander." But the fighter added that he isn't sure who is actually providing this money. At least 1,000 men have signed up to fight, but there could be more. Many people are pointing towards Turkey as paying these soldiers, but again, Turkey denies these allegations, blaming Armenia instead. This serves only to raise tensions further, and darken the prospect of an easy end to the conflict. In spite of the fighting, several attempts have been made to ease tensions between the two countries and their allies. On October 10th, Russia brokered a cease-fire, in which the sides would trade prisoners and collect their dead. However, this deal soon fell apart, and the two countries once again began to attack. Despite this lackluster deal, on Tuesday, November 10th, the war ended, with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announcing that he signed an "unspeakably painful agreement" with Russia and Azerbaijan. This announcement came hours after Azerbaijan announced that it had captured the key city of Shusha, sometimes described as the "Jerusalem of Nagorno-Karabakh," due to its religious significance. Shortly after Prime Minister Pashinyan's announcement, Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev stated that the deal would "return our territories without any further bloodshed." President Vladimir Putin of Russia has since said that Russian peacekeeping forces will be deployed along the border, to prevent further warfare. And so, the war ends, with a tragic loss of life on both sides, and no guarantee of this being the last conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.

## Standout Winners in Medicine, Chemistry, and Peace: The 2020 Nobel Prizes

*Niva Cohen, Opinion Editor*

This past October, the Nobel Committee distributed prizes in all fields. Unlike in ordinary years, when the winners would fly to Stockholm for an in-person ceremony, they attended an online one. Despite the unorthodox manner in which they received their awards, 2020's recipients are just as deserving as any.

Three doctors -- New Yorker Harvey J. Alter, Briton Michael Houghton, and Californian Charles M. Rice -- shared the Physiology or Medicine award. Working in different decades toward the same cause, each helped discover the Hepatitis C virus and, according to the Committee, "made possible blood tests and new medicines that have saved millions of lives." Hepatitis C can cause the liver to swell and affects 71 million people, yet it was a medical mystery until these three doctors made scientific and medicinal leaps.

In the 1970s, Dr. Alter, who works at the Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center in Maryland, made the first stride by discovering that neither the type A nor the type B form of Hepatitis was responsible for most hepatitis cases caused by blood transfusions, one of the most common means of transmission. Because of his research, it was clear that some other similar virus must exist. In the 1980s, Dr. Houghton, a professor at the University of Alberta, identified the Hepatitis C virus, allowing doctors to screen for it in their patients and prevent cases from worsening by catching them early. Finally, Dr. Rice of Rockefeller University in New York conducted further studies and found that chimpanzees got sick when exposed only to Hepatitis C and nothing else, solidifying Alter's and Houghton's conclusions.

Hepatitis C can spread asymptotically, so many people don't know when they have it. In these cases, the virus can act as a silent killer, gradually destroying the liver from the inside. Drs. Alter, Houghton, and Rice did the research that allows physicians to accurately test for the virus with a blood sample. Through their research, they have saved lives and, as Dr. Houghton works on a vaccine, might continue to do so.

Scientists Emmanuelle Charpentier from France and Jennifer A. Doudna from the U.S. won the Chemistry Prize for their work on

CRISPR, a gene-editing tool that has exploded (figuratively speaking) in the scientific community. They discovered CRISPR genetic scissors in 2012, which can alter animal and plant DNA with extreme precision. CRISPR tools can change a genetic code in a matter of weeks, speeding through millennia of evolution. Therefore, by using Charpentier's and Doudna's techniques on humans, we might be able to find a cure for cancer and other devastating diseases. Although there are some ethical questions about applying CRISPR to people, from a scientific standpoint, these two women have done a service to generations to come.

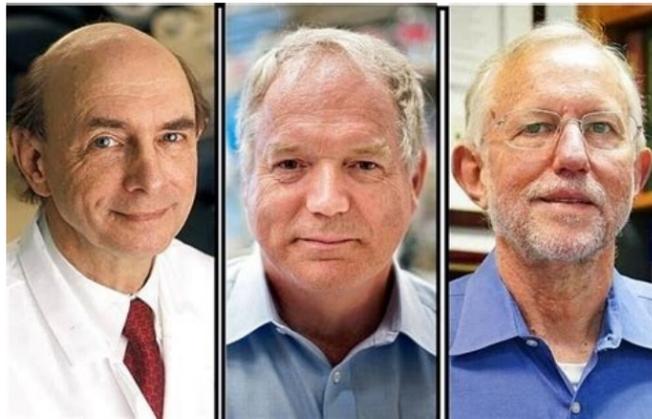
The World Food Program, a UN organization founded in 1961, won the esteemed Nobel Peace Prize. The biggest humanitarian group focused on food, the WFP strives to eliminate world hunger, especially in the face of the coronavirus. When countries are at war, conflict decreases the food available to citizens, and the coronavirus only exacerbates this effect. The WFP relieves this struggle with starvation, providing food and helping war-torn countries make the first step toward peace.

The WFP has been serving from the background for decades. It has helped in hundreds of crises, including the Ethiopian famine of the 1980s, the Yugoslavian wars of the 1990s, and natural disasters such as the

Asian tsunami of 2004 and the Haitian earthquake of 2010. Employees sometimes even put themselves in danger for their cause, entering perilous regions like Yemen to help victims of their governments' negligence. Last year, the

WFP helped almost 100 million hungry people in 88 countries. Its impact has only grown, and it shows no signs of slowing down.

In times of strife and struggle, it is easy to overlook silver-linings. The Nobel Prizes are an opportunity to praise those doing good work and draw attention to their selfless efforts. For years of research, volunteering, and trial-and-error, the Cougar Chronicle congratulates this year's Nobelists.



**Drs. Harvey J. Alter, Michael Houghton, and Charles M. Rice, winners of the Physiology or Medicine Prize.**

**"By using Charpentier's and Doudna's techniques on humans, we might be able to find a cure for cancer and other devastating diseases."**

## Arts

## Quarantine Binges

*Talia Frisch, Staff Writer*

Quarantine has been tough for many families around the globe. One thing that can calm people down during a stressful time is amazing Netflix shows. But which ones are the most popular? In a survey sent to the entire Barrack Hebrew Academy community, 55 students and faculty members agreed that the most-watched Netflix show is *Outer Banks*. This is an adventure mystery set in the Outer Banks of North Carolina about a social clash between the "Pogues" and the "Kooks," who work together to find gold and figure out why John B, the protagonist's father, died.

Fifty-three Barrack students and faculty members watched *All American*, and it is also this author's favorite Netflix show. It is an exciting story about a boy named Spencer James, who lives in a poor, primarily Black neighborhood, called South Crenshaw. He is a football star and is given the amazing opportunity to play football at Beverly Hills high school. Because Spencer is so good at football and he does not have a home in Beverly Hills, he goes to live with a rich family named the Bakers where he feels as if he is not welcomed at first. However, he starts to feel more comfortable in Beverly Hills towards the end of the show. The

series is filled with tons of crazy drama that you would not expect!

Thirty-five Barrack students and faculty members watched *Tiger King*. This show is insane. It is a documentary about the feud over who is the better tiger owner between Joe Exotic and Carole Baskin, two crazy tiger owners. Joe accuses Carole of killing her husband by feeding him to her tigers.

The least-watched show, which only 18 Barrack students and faculty members watched, is *You*. This show is about a psychopath named Joe who is obsessed with a girl named Beck. After going to great lengths to date Beck, Joe does something terrible to her and to many other people who try to get in his way.

Included in the survey was a place to list other shows people have binged during the quarantine. Some popular shows people have watched and recommend are *Gilmore Girls*, *Gossip Girl*, *Glee*, *New Girl*, *Riverdale*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Cobra Kai*, *The Office*, *Arrow*, *Flash*, *Vampire Diary*, and *The Good Place*. If you haven't watched any of these shows yet, go watch and enjoy them! Barrack folks know what they are talking about when it comes to Netflix shows!

Continued from Page 1

## Democrats Win White House and Senate

James Buchanan, who was inaugurated 163 years ago, to be born in Pennsylvania, and the first President in United States history to be a resident of Delaware. Harris' husband, Doug Emhoff, a well-respected entertainment lawyer, will also be the first Jewish person to be the spouse of either the President or Vice-President.

Although the Presidential win was a major victory for the Democrats, many Congressional positions were filled by new or incumbent Republicans in the House of Representatives. Republicans won key seats, largely due to votes from the Latino community in Florida. In South Florida, Republicans defeated incumbent Representatives Debbie Mucarsel-Powell and Donna Shalala. Other Democratic incumbents, such as Max Rose of New York, Kendra Horn of Oklahoma, and Joe Cunningham of South Carolina, were all defeated. Many of these wins came as shocks to the Democratic party's supporters, but some Representatives like Jim Clyburn and Cedric Thorton blame the widely misinterpreted "Defund the Police" movement on the party's struggles to retain House seats.

The race for the United States Senate was too close to call when this paper went to press, with the Republicans leading the Democrats by 50 seats to 48 seats, and two Georgia seats still in contention. Democrats Mark Kelly, an astronaut, and John Hickenlooper, the former Governor of Colorado, were able to unseat incumbent Republicans in Arizona and Colorado. However, Democratic Senator Doug Jones of Alabama was defeated by Tommy Tuberville, a former college football coach. The races in Alaska, between Dr. Al Gross, an Independent supported by the Alaska Democratic party, and incumbent Dan Sullivan, a Republican, and in North Carolina, between Cal Cunningham, a Democrat, and incumbent Thom Tillis, a Republican, took more than a week to be called, but both went to the incumbent. However, the race for the Senate would come down to the two runoff elections in Georgia between incumbent Republi-

can David Perdue, a business executive, and Democrat Jon Ossoff, a documentary film-maker, and incumbent Republican Kelly Loeffler, a business executive and WNBA team co-owner, and Democrat Raphael Warnock, the Reverend and Pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta.

In the early morning of January 6th, it was announced that Reverend Warnock had won in his bid for the Senate, becoming the first Black senator in the state's history. Later that day, it was announced that Mr. Ossoff had won his bid as well. Senate control is now split 50-50, with Vice President Kamala Harris as the tie-breaking vote when needed.

## Word Search Answers From Page 20

S Z N C B H T ( L I B E R T A R I A N ) B X S I E P Q R B N K  
M N M C T L E Z P G O G R Y O X L O B C K Q M F T I U R D A  
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C I K I I T Y O P J D B R C I X M P C I P D W I O S H G R I  
V J E F N L E A C I H U D N O Y K T O A O Y J H A R G I Y H  
F R G C E F B F H R U L O R E H D M A I I N B A I I O T A  
U X Z C T R T P B N A E H O B S E F O D I T G T M B P M A B  
J M B A H O O O O A H T G K I W B N R C T U S A R K V G D Y  
C C L H V A R L H B L C P L D N J W D J I S T B E E K P J A  
B O Z A C J K A A R O L W D E N O Q G B C O A U P X C K O D  
O N L A R L B R I V X S O T W K D R L O S M T X U I J U K E P  
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M R S L L C W Z H Y Q B Q M L Q D K P C S S G C L P R L I U  
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P S C I Q Q U T O N A D T R I M P R I Q H L C L C L E I  
R G F W X I J I G D Z J A E Y X R Z R F Z Z Q W A L U P P U  
L D L Y O S O O K R F N V V G P F N N Q K H Y L N V E O E J  
X L Q F W C H W O K Y B O S V E B L L P G X K S F Z X T N A  
Q R V D I F J V M C F D T U U W N F W X P B M Z U H J P C D  
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## The Life of Notorious RBG

L.L., Staff Writer



WIKIPEDIA

The late Ruth Bader Ginsberg passed away on September 18th, at eighty-seven years old. One of the most prominent

Supreme Court Justices, she served from 1993 until the day she died. Ginsberg was popularly known as "RBG", and the details of her life are fascinating.

Joan Ruth Bader was born on March 15, 1933, in Brooklyn, New York, to a Jewish family. Her father Nathan was a merchant and her mother Celia worked in a clothing factory. Her mother died of cancer the day before Ruth finished high school.

Bader studied at Cornell University on a full scholarship. She met her future husband Martin Ginsberg in college, and they married in 1954, the same year she graduated. After their eldest daughter was born, Martin enlisted in the Army. Two years later, the couple returned to Harvard Law School where Ruth was one of eight women in a class of 500 men. She eventually became the first female student to work on the *Harvard Law Review*. When Martin was diagnosed with cancer in 1956, she was his caretaker, as well as their young daughter's, and also worked hard to finish her studies. Martin recovered, graduated, and got a job as a lawyer in New York. Ginsberg finished her studies at Columbia University, in order to be close to her family.

After she graduated, she had a very hard time finding a job because she was a woman. She was hired as a law professor at the Rutgers Law School in 1963, but received a lower salary because her husband had a well-paying job. In the 1970s she was the head of the American Civil Liberties Union's Women's Rights project. She argued six landmark cases on gender equality before the Supreme Court. Interestingly, many of her plaintiffs in these cases were men; Ginsberg wanted to prove that discrimination on the basis of sex does not just impact women. For example, she argued on behalf of a man whose wife was in the Air Force, that he had been denied the housing benefits that were given to wives of men in the Air Force. Another case she argued was on behalf of a widower who had been denied the social security benefits that widows get, and that he needed to help raise his son. And in yet another important case, *Reed v Reed* in 1971, she persuaded the Supreme Court to apply the 14th Amendment's "equal protection under the law" to include discrimination on the basis of sex, however, this case had a female plaintiff.

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter appointed Ginsberg to the United States Court of Appeals, and in 1993, she was nominated to the Supreme Court by President Bill Clinton. She was approved by a Senate vote that was ninety-six to three. This made her the second woman to serve on the Supreme Court. She is well known for writing the majority opinion in the case *United States vs. Virginia* in 1996. She said that the state-sponsored Virginia Military Academy's male-only policy violated the 14th

Amendment's Equal Protection Clause. In general, Ginsberg tended to vote with the liberal judges, but she got along very well with the other judges.

In 2013, a law student at New York University gave her the name, "Notorious RBG", based off of the name of the late rapper Notorious BIG. This, along with her dissenting opinions in many cases, made her a pop-culture icon. Until 2018 she never missed an oral argument.

Eight days after her death, on September 26, 2020, President Donald Trump nominated Judge Amy Coney Barrett to fill her spot on the Supreme Court, despite the late Justice Ginsberg's wishes. Judge Barrett had served in the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit since 2017. She underwent four days of questions and hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee before their vote on the twenty-second of October. Democratic Senators boycotted the vote, but the Republican-led Senate voted anyway. Judge Barrett was confirmed on October 26, mostly along partisan lines, giving conservative-leaning judges a five-to-three majority on the Supreme Court, with Chief Justice John Roberts considered a swing vote, sometimes voting with the liberals and sometimes with the conservatives. Judge Barrett's confirmation is a pressing issue for women's rights and racial justice advocates, as she takes her seat on the court just before major cases on abortion and voting rights come before the Supreme Court.

RBG was undeniably a champion of women's rights. It is time for a new generation to step up and continue her legacy and fight for equality for everyone.

## Fly Eagles Fly

Danny Cohen, Sports/Layout Editor and Jacob Erlbaum, Staff Writer

At the midpoint of the 2020 NFL Season, the Philadelphia Eagles were far from superb. After an MVP-caliber season in 2017, franchise quarterback Carson Wentz has continuously regressed, especially in 2020. The 27-year-old quarterback out of North Dakota State has proven to be an Achilles' heel of Philly's team as he leads the NFL in turnovers, following the four he posted against division rival Dallas Cowboys, a team ravaged by injuries and with a bad defense by every statistical measure. For many reasons, Wentz and his teammates have been a disappointment thus far to the Birds.

Although Wentz has been blamed by many, there are other reasons behind the Eagles' poor start to their season. Injuries to the offensive line, in particular to key players like Brandon Brooks, Andre Dillard, Lane Johnson, and Isaac Seumalu, have given Wentz limited time in the pocket. On top of that, an injury to All-Pro tight end Zach Ertz, along with promising tight end Dallas Goedert, further diminished the Birds' offense. The Eagles are now finally be-

ginning to regain their health, so hopefully Wentz can regain chemistry with his offensive weapons.

While Wentz has dealt with a new lineup each week due to injuries, there are no excuses for the level he has been playing at. Currently sitting at 28th in the league with a quarterback rating of 49.9, it will take a drastic turnaround if Wentz wants to lead his team deep into the playoffs. The Eagles' schedule is as hard as it gets with match-ups against NFC favorites Seattle Seahawks and Green Bay Packers, as well as Kyler Murray's Arizona Cardinals. De-



Eagles quarterback Carson Wentz walks off the field after throwing an interception vs the Dallas Cowboys.

Mitchell Leff/Getty Images

**"Currently sitting at 28th in the league with a quarterback rating of 49.9, it will take a drastic turnaround if Wentz wants to lead his team deep into the playoffs."**

spite this, the Eagles may not have to win these games to make the playoffs, as the NFC East is

historically bad this season. The Eagles must look to earn wins within their division to further solidify their position in first place.

While this has been a very unfulfilling season for Eagles fans, there is still optimism as the team gets healthier, with the return of their full palette of offensive weapons.

## Previewing the NBA Season

Will the Lakers repeat? Will LeBron win another MVP award?

Max Hirsch, Staff Writer

Although the previous season just ended in October, it's never *too* early to talk basketball, since the 2020-21 season begins December 22. While it seems like the experts and spectators say this every year, I think it's possible that next season will go down as one of the most competitive to date. The teams across the National Basketball Association haven't been this balanced going into the season since 2010, right before a superteam was formed in Miami. Here are my predictions for the 2020-21 basketball season, which will undoubtedly be one to watch closely.

### NBA Champion:

LeBron James just won his 4th championship—this time with the Los Angeles Lakers—and with his superstar teammate Anthony Davis likely to re-sign with the Lakers, many are picking them to repeat. The now infamous duo are the favorites in Vegas (with +380 betting odds) and have been the consensus early finals pick. You can never go wrong with betting on LeBron, right?

Right behind the Lakers (with +460 odds) are the Clippers, a team that had high hopes entering last season after making huge off-season acquisitions, but ultimately disappointed in the playoffs. After blowing a 3-1 series lead to the Denver Nuggets in the second round of the NBA playoffs, superstars Kawhi Leonard and Paul George vowed they will bring the Clippers franchise their first-ever championship. The team's management surprisingly fired Doc Rivers, a legend in his own right, showing just how far they'll go to fit their superstars' needs.

While the Clippers are another solid pick to win the finals, I'm betting on the NBA's known underdog: the Golden State Warriors (with absurdly high +1200 odds).

Although the Warriors have not fit the description of "underdog" in this era, losing players Steph Curry and Klay Thompson to injury damaged their game beyond repair last year as they recently finished last in the NBA. However, I don't think that last year's atrocities will dictate this year's performance. The Warriors have always been a well-coached team, and now that two of the best shooters of all time are back, the Warriors will likely uphold their glorious legacy as they have been the most dominant team this past decade, with the exception of last season. I expect them to surprise a lot of people next season and return to their elite shape, potentially winning over 60 games.

### Most Valuable Player:

This is a really tough award to pick, however, it is notable that out of the last 35 MVP awards, the MVP's team has finished 3rd or better in their conference. So in my eyes, we can eliminate around 22 teams, leaving us with the Bucks, Raptors, Sixers, Heat, Lakers, Clippers, Nuggets, and Rockets. Out of all of these teams, Jamal Murray has the best opportunity to win MVP because of the numbers he'll put up. His usage rate topped 27% in the playoffs last season, and with the best passing center in the league alongside him, Murray is bound to put up MVP statistics. If I told you before last season's playoffs that Jamal Murray was my pick to win MVP, you'd call me crazy. However, he became a completely different player in the playoffs. He has proven to be a confident and passionate team player with a remarkably high shooting percentage and assist to turnover ratio. He was two games away from bringing his Nuggets to the NBA Finals, and I'm convinced he's going to continue his hot streak into next season and improve even more (espe-

cially on the defensive end).

### Most Improved Player:

This award is notoriously random, but towards the end of last season, Tim Hardaway Jr. *really* found his stroke and I see his transformation this season being even greater than last year's. He shot so efficiently in the second half of last season that he finished the season shooting 40% from three, well above league average and a remarkable percentage for a high volume shooter like him. With Luka Dončić cementing himself as a top player in this league, it's safe to say his teammate Hardaway will only get better as a complementary piece. I think he might develop into that third superstar in Dallas, something they need in order to compete in today's league.

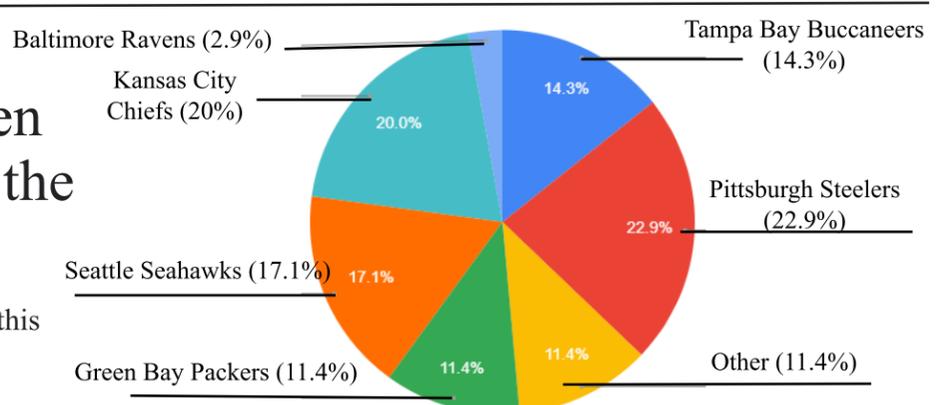
Alternatively, I also think Donovan Mitchell has a fair shot at this award despite his current All-Star status. He surprised a lot of people when he came into the league, becoming the top option for the Jazz and leading them to the playoffs, but hasn't really improved statistically since. I think it's possible that he takes his game to another level, becoming the superstar Utah needs him to be. He had multiple 50 point games in the playoffs and although he lost, he evidently played his heart out.

It's safe to say that next season will be very entertaining. I can't guarantee any of my predictions (although I do feel good about them), but I can promise that the NBA is going to be very competitive and balanced in this upcoming season. All of these awards are up for grabs, and will be thrilling to watch out for.

## Sports Poll

After half the NFL season has been played, who do you think will win the Super Bowl?

The Cougar Chronicle polled 35 Barrack students, asking them this question.



## Doc Rivers: The Right Man For The Job

*Jacob Hare, Staff Writer*

It has been almost 40 years since Doctor J. led the Sixers to an NBA championship. When a team hasn't won in that long, fans become impatient and unhappy, especially in the city of Philadelphia where winning does not happen that often. Now that there's a new Doc in town, Sixers fans are more hopeful than ever before.

The 2019-20 Sixers were a colossal disappointment and were swept out of the playoffs in the first round by the Boston Celtics. The Sixers management and ownership realized that Brett Brown was not the coach who would bring a championship to Philadelphia. They were reluctant to fire their head coach, but ultimately made the decision to let him go due to the team's disappointing playoff results over the last three years. In his seven seasons with the team, Brown showed that he possessed a great basketball mind, but was unable to elevate his team to a championship.

After the Los Angeles Clippers lost in the second round of the playoffs, they shocked basketball fans by firing head coach Doc Rivers. He is a future Hall of Famer, and he is one of the most respected and well-liked people in basketball. Rivers also has one of the most impressive resumes for current NBA head coaches: He has won a championship and a Coach of the Year Award, and has racked up over 900 career wins.

It's not too often that a future Hall of Famer is on the market, and the Sixers knew they needed to seize this opportunity. Within hours of the news of Rivers' departure from the Clippers, the Sixers reached out, and ultimately, the two sides agreed on

a five-year, \$40 million contract, making Rivers the 25th head coach in Sixers franchise history.

The Sixers did consider other coaches, such as Mike D'Antoni, Tyrone Lue, and Billy Donovan. While all three are well respected and highly regarded around the NBA, Rivers separated himself from that pack. It may sound like a cliché, but the goal is to win a championship, and if you ask yourself which of those coaches gives you the best chance to win, the clear and obvious answer would be Doc Rivers; he possesses all of the qualities of a championship coach that Brett Brown lacked. Rarely do coaches command the amount of respect from their players that Rivers does, but if the Sixers want to win, superstars Joel Embiid and Ben Simmons need to be on the same page as their new coach.

With Brett Brown, fans saw how much these superstars got away with. Ben Simmons has gone four seasons without a jumper, and in the modern NBA, that's completely unacceptable, especially for a point guard. Time after time, off-season videos have surfaced of Ben Simmons working on his jumper, but when the season started, we saw that to be fake news. With Doc Rivers as his new head coach, things aren't going to be easy for Simmons if he can't find his jump shot. And for Embiid, if he can't stay in shape and show up in the fourth quarter of games where his team needs him the most, things won't be easy for him either.

Another issue that the Sixers had was accountability. Brown failed to hold his players

accountable but Rivers has stressed the importance of it. Rivers said on behalf of himself and his coaching staff, "Accountability has to be throughout your team." He continued, "If you don't [have accountability], you're not going to win. We have to be accountable to each other every single day. That's the only way we're going to be successful here." Rivers knows that this is the first step in building a winning culture, but everybody has to buy in.

While Rivers has only been in Philadelphia for a short period, he's already building the Sixers culture that the city's fans have been craving. He's brought in some of the best assistant coaches in the NBA and helped recruit Daryl Morey to become the Sixers' President of Basketball Operations. Morey is known to be a great trader and is considered to be one of the brightest minds in the NBA. Fans hope Morey can help add more pieces to the already talented 76ers roster. In addition to Morey making moves, Rivers' likable personality will be vital in bringing in big-name free agents for the Sixers in the future.

Rivers may not have coached a game in Philly yet, but you can already sense a brighter future for the Sixers. An improved coaching staff and front office can only be a good thing for the Sixers. If Doc Rivers can bring his strong leadership qualities to Philadelphia and help Ben Simmons and Joel Embiid become the transcendent superstars that we know they can be, the Larry O'Brien trophy will be coming back to Philadelphia.

## Bubble Business

*Jacob Erlbaum and Max Hirsch, Staff Writers*

On March 11th, 2020, the professional sports world was stunned after learning that the Utah Jazz's center, Rudy Gobert, had tested positive for COVID-19. Four minutes later, the NBA suspended its season until further notice. This set the course of action for sports leagues across the world as they suspended play in the following days. Suddenly, professional sports were gone and questions arose as to when or if the leagues would be able to return and complete their seasons. Talk of a return remained silent at first, but as the summer approached, the different leagues began to devise plans. The MLB and European Soccer decided to test players daily and allow no fans at the games. The NHL, NBA, and MLS took a safer approach, deciding they would create bubbles in order to return to play.

At the time, the idea that these leagues could build bubbles that would successfully block out the COVID-19 disease in the midst of a pandemic was ludicrous. The country was experiencing an all-time high in cases and deaths along with an extreme shortage of tests. Many players expressed their uncertainties and concerns with this idea on social media, with some ultimately deciding to opt-out. However, Adam Silver, Gary Bettman, and Don Garber, commissioners of the NBA, NHL, and MLS, respectively, were adamant that their leagues return. The NBA season would resume, renting out Disney World in Orlando for the teams in playoff contention. The MLS also rented out a portion of Disney's sports complex in Orlando for a return to play tournament. However, following this tournament, the MLS decided to follow a path similar to that of the MLB and the European Soccer Leagues and play a shortened season with daily testing. The NHL ultimately decided to head north and create two bubbles, one in Edmonton and one in Toronto. All of the leagues made partnerships with testing companies and required all players to get tested daily, a vital reason for their success.

A few weeks after the creation of the bubbles, cases among the players and staff were nonexistent, and that continued throughout the rest of the season, largely due to the strict guidelines. Players weren't even allowed to leave the bubbles to pick up food to ensure the virus had no way in. If players had to leave for family matters they were required to

quarantine and test negative for five consecutive days after returning. Player morale inside the bubbles was also a key focus of the organizers. Lounges and access to an array of activities within the bubbles gave players something to do outside of focusing on their respective sports. It is clear, the NBA, NHL, and MLS put safety first as well as the comfort of the players; these were the two main contributors to the success of the bubbles. The extreme measures taken were the reason for the success of these bubbles, as both seasons did in fact finish and crown champions.

On the flip side, the leagues that didn't create bubbles (MLB, NFL, and European Soccer League) faced challenges along the way. Many players tested positive throughout the season, but were responsible and quarantined immediately. In baseball, the Miami Marlins and St. Louis Cardinals were among the few teams that had several players and personnel that tested positive early in the season. This exposure to the disease forced them to miss several games, but they were able to make them up through doubleheaders. In the NFL, the Tennessee Titans had the largest outbreak which resulted in their game against the Pittsburgh Steelers being postponed. In both the MLB and the NFL, there were scattered cases throughout the season, likely due to their choices to not quarantine their teams in a bubble. Fortunately for all of the team members who participated throughout the season, significant outbreaks were avoided for the most part.

Ultimately, the bubbles were extremely successful, while the leagues that opted to play outside of the strict quarantine structures struggled along the way, but were able to play out their seasons. In the NBA, players were able to reunite with family late in the playoffs, and the NHL welcomed the parents of players for the Stanley Cup Final. Similarly, leagues like the MLB and European Soccer Leagues were able to overcome hurdles and complete their respective seasons. The sports world has now turned its attention to the NFL and college sports to see if they will be able to complete their seasons. Everyone involved will look to the success of other major sports leagues as guides moving forward.

## Club Corner: Politics in Perspective with PAC

Luke Finklestein, Political Action Club President & Kayla Bleier, Managing/Centerspread Editor

Welcome to the Club Corner, a new addition to the Cougar Chronicle where you can get to know the clubs at Barrack! This is a way to learn about what clubs do on a daily (or weekly) basis -- not just their "Club-Fair" pitch.

Barrack's Political Action Club (PAC) fosters meaningful debate and conversation about domestic political issues. Through examining these topics in a lively and respectful manner, PAC seeks to increase political participation in ways that matter. In addition to weekly club meetings, PAC leadership organizes special events like Barrack's mock election and has brought in relevant speakers covering topics ranging from gerrymandering to American influence in foreign affairs. The club is a place to listen, agree, challenge, and learn, and it has a leadership that believes our society thrives when more people participate in thoughtful, educated policy discussion.

A Review of Barrack's Mock Election, organized by PAC:

Following a lively, ethical, informative debate and campaign season, the results of the Barrack Mock Election are official! The student body overwhelmingly supported the Democratic nominees Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, giving them a count of 256 votes; President Donald Trump and VP Mike Pence came in far second with 59, and Libertarian candidates Jo Jorgenson and Jeremy Spike Cohen followed with a paltry 15. Many thanks to Ben Beal '21 and his campaign team for an excellent portrayal of President-elect Biden. His debate performance was much commended for its accuracy and phraseology, including such classics as, "Listen, folks," and, "Here's the deal."

Also, a very kind thank you to Maddy Denker '20 for her portrayal of President Donald Trump. She rocked the debate with her fine

line of accurate portrayal and adherence to our Derech Eretz values, and her content was superb. Furthermore, she awarded attentive listeners with impressive rebuttals, and it was a thrill to see a full devotion to a Trump wig to get in character.

Lastly, special recognition of Rabbi Judd Levingston, Director of Jewish Studies, for serving as our Ethics Watchdog and for compiling our ethics guidelines. With his help and expertise, we were able to conduct a completely ethical election! We all have our biases, hopes, fears, and passions surrounding the *actual* election -- not to negate our own -- which makes it all the more impressive how our candidates and cam-



The PAC team in action at the debate

campaign teams showed great leadership through kindness, accuracy, and genuine civil discourse. Thus, no matter how the U.S. election unfolded, the Barrack community can be quite proud of their own.

## Ask Jack

*You Ask and We Try to Answer (edited by Jacob Hare)*

Hi Jack,

If I am struggling in one of my classes, what are some tips for doing better?

Dear JBHA Student,

The fact that you are asking this means you are taking your school work seriously. So try some of these tips and see if they help you improve.

1. Meet with your teacher: Meeting with a teacher is a perfect opportunity to get extra help in a class. All teachers at school want to see students succeed, and teachers go the extra mile to help their students.
2. Take clear notes: Make sure that you have clear and detailed notes in this class. Taking strong notes will help you understand your class's central concepts, which ultimately helps you succeed.
3. Don't start to study the night before a test: You may think that you can get away with studying the night before the test, but that's not always the case. Starting to study a week in advance of the test will help you see what material you need extra help with, rather than relearning material the night before the test.
4. Ask questions: If you are confused by the material, don't be afraid to ask a question. Odds are someone else has the same question that you do. Asking questions can only help you succeed.

Hi Jack,

I want to sign up for a lunchtime club, but I'm worried it's too late to join. What should I do?

Dear JBHA student,

It is never too late to sign up for a club at Barrack. Clubs are always looking for new members who can help them grow and make their club better. Regardless of what club it is, I am sure they would be excited to get a new member.

Hi Jack,

If I am overloaded with work, would it be possible to get an extension? If so, how?

Dear JBHA Student,

It is always possible to be granted an extension on work and the best way to do this is to ask your teacher about it. However, it doesn't look good asking the night before something is due, because it shows that you pushed it off until the last minute. So I would recommend that you ask your teacher in advance if you know you have a lot of work coming up. If you have a problem with talking to your teacher, then talk to your advisor or an administrator and they can help you talk to your teacher about a possible extension.

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## Theaters During COVID-19

closed doesn't mean that people should miss out on seeing their favorite actors perform. Broadway actors such as Lin-Manuel Miranda and Laura Benanti have released videos of themselves singing their favorite songs. Lin-Manuel Miranda released an unheard song

from when he was first writing Hamilton. The Philadelphia Orchestra has performed online concerts. 2020 is a year where almost everything has been taken away from us, but it's also a year of adaptation. We must learn that not everything we do right now will be per-

fect, but that we are all doing our best to deal with what we have. This is a time for learning and coming together. Whether it's watching a movie with friends or seeing an online play, at least we're not stuck in the 1960s where there was no Netflix or Zoom.

## What the People Want!

Addison Smith and Rachel Loeb, Staff Writers

Amidst a global pandemic, many Americans across the country have been left with not much to do to ease their anxiety besides watching and/or listening to entertainment. Now more than ever, the People's Choice Awards (PCA's) represented the bright side of 2020 for many people. This is an American show that awards entertainment based on the votes of the general public. Voting took place between October 1st and October 24th, and the winners were revealed November 15th. Each of the 48 different sub-categories in the People's Choice Awards encapsulates a different aspect of how people coped through the coronavirus, whether it was listening to different songs, watching movies and TV shows or scrolling through Tiktok. This year's forms of entertainment helped to keep everyone sane, and each of the nominees certainly deserved these awards. However, only one nominee could get each award, and we, the authors of this article, predicted many of them. Several are worthy of special mention.

In the category of Movie of 2020, the nominations were: *Bad Boys for Life*,

*Extraction*, *Project Power*, *The Old Guard*, *Birds of Prey (and the Fabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn)*, *Hamilton*, *The Invisible Man*, and *Trolls World Tour*. This category is particularly important because it covers all different genres. The winner was an easy call for us, and *Bad Boys for Life* dominated the rest of the playing field. Ever since it came out, audiences received it with high regard. Viewers saw this movie as a new take on the franchise as it played directly into its strengths. *Bad Boys for Life* is the only nominee to have a 96% audience score on Rotten Tomatoes, the Movie/TV show rating website. All of these factors considered, *Bad Boys for Life* was the obvious choice for Movie of 2020.

Another movie category that deserves to be highlighted is Family Movie of 2020. The nominations included *Doolittle*, *Onward*, *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *The Willoughbys*, *My Spy*, *Scoob!*, *The Call of the Wild* and *Trolls World Tour*. This category is important because these movies are something that people of all ages can enjoy. All of the nominees were excellent

choices as they each have insightful stories, and choosing one was a struggle. However, after a lot of deliberation, we correctly predicted *Onward* as the winner, because of its exciting and heartwarming nature.

Next is the most realistic category of this whole award show! So without further ado, these were the nominations for Reality Show of 2020: *90 Day Fiance: Happily Ever After?*, *Below Deck Mediterranean*, *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, *Love & Hip Hop: New York*, *Love is Blind*, *Queer Eye*, *The Real Housewives of Atlanta*, and *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. These shows were great but one was just that much greater. That's why we predicted *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* (KUWTK) as the winner. With all of the drama, fights, pranks, Birkins and the cutest children, this show was by far the best part of 2020!

The last of these categories is Drama TV show of 2020. The nominations were *Grey's Anatomy*, *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, *Outer Banks*, *Ozark*, *Power*,

*Continued on page 20*

## Mulan's Many Controversies

Eliana Pasternak, Staff Writer

The controversies surrounding Disney Plus' recently released *Mulan* remake are many, ranging from political issues to artistic choices to leave out fan favorite components from the original, such as Mushu the dragon. At release, viewers needed to pay \$30 in addition to Disney Plus' flat \$6.99 a month rate to see the movie, although this fee has now been waived in anticipation of the general December 4th release on the streaming service. Many thought it unjust for Disney to not only charge so much for the film, but also to limit viewership to subscribers of the service.

*Mulan*'s political controversies didn't just begin at premiere. In 2019, star Liu Yifei, who played Mulan, publicly expressed her support for Hong Kong's police force, which has been brutal against pro-democracy protesters. Shortly after posting her message, the hashtag #BoycottMulan began circulating on Twitter.

But perhaps the most disturbing controversy of all came at the end credits of the movie, when Disney thanked eight government bodies from Xinjiang, the western Chinese province best known as the site of China's inhumane treatment of the Uighurs. For years, the Chinese government has forced Uighur Muslims into concentration camps, where they planned to "reeducate" them under Communist doctrine. The chances of Disney not knowing of this gruesome treatment are close to none, especially considering how close *Mulan*'s filming was to the camps, and yet they still chose to thank these government bodies, sparking a resurgence of the hashtag, which had begun to die down with the movie's actual release.

The political controversies don't end there. Many viewers claim that the movie is heavily dipped in Han supremacism, a belief held by many Chinese communist leaders, including the late Mao Zedong, that ethnically Han Chinese people should govern and rule over other minority groups in China.

The movie's villain is clearly coded as Muslim, like the Chinese Uighurs. Considering that the Muslim characters are darker-skinned and wear turbans, as well as clothing considered similar to outfits worn by ISIS members, it's easy to understand why experts such as University of Colorado Boulder anthropologist Darren Byler believe that the movie is heavily Islamophobic. Overall, the many political undertones, that must have been at least partially intentional, led *Mulan* into a heavily controversial premiere.

When Disney originally announced that they were cutting Mushu from the movie, fans were initially outraged, but, unlike its political failures, Disney's reasons for excluding some iconic aspects of the 1998 movie were more valid; Disney allowed itself to explore realism, giving the movie more serious tones, a goal undermined, however, by the presence of a rather fantastical phoenix woman who follows Mulan throughout her journey. With Eddie Murphy voicing Mushu in the 1998 movie, it was clear that the character's sole purpose was for comedic relief and toning down any harsher themes for the younger audience. But as the first Disney remake to earn a PG-13 rating, *Mulan* ceased to need Murphy's role. In addition, many Chinese viewers of the 1998 movie agreed that Mushu trivialized Chinese culture. The small dragon did little to honor the Chinese legends regarding dragons as majestic creatures.

Despite all of its controversies, the 2020 *Mulan* movie did passably with critics, earning a 66% on Metacritic and a 74% on Rotten Tomatoes, but it underperformed greatly with consumers. With a budget of \$200 million, *Mulan* is the most expensive movie directed by a woman filmmaker to date, but its box office revenue barely breached \$65 million. With its December 4th general release, the movie was bound to make headlines again, though one could not be sure whether it would be for the right reasons.



Promotional posters for *Mulan* display their Muslim-coded villains.

## 2020 Election Wordsearch

Benny Scheinmann, Features and Games Editor

Words can be found vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

- |                   |                 |                |               |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Electoral college | Absentee ballot | Mail in ballot | Kamala Harri: |
| Polarization      | Libertarian     | Jo Jorgensen   | Donald Trump  |
| Swing state       | Spike Cohen     | Republican     | Kanye West    |
| Exit poll         | Mike Pence      | Politics       | Congress      |
| Democrat          | Delegate        | Vote           | Joe Biden     |

S Z N C B H T L I B E R T A R I A N J B X S I E P Q R B N K  
M N M C T L E Z P G O G R Y O X L O B C K Q M F T I U R D A  
Y D K V G O K Q O R V G X V D T C K N M J B Q Q P Q E A M K  
K B H A W A A Q I F Y Y K Z A W B P I D A V F K K P H G O X  
M W R O N Q O Y F K J F S C R J T I R A U C Q C R C P C F M  
Y Z Y H J Y R V K A M A L A H A R R I S D E L E G A T E Z A  
I K L B I H E Y R W X S U M F N I T S B G R X H Z S N J R K  
A L C C E F D W S A A P C J O G W U V Q T U D F R W Q S T R  
Q B P J L K Y C E P Z U J Z P A S I V S V A L S Z L V O T E  
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E R J E V E C U L T T K O U Z P R T T A S J I U E S Z M Z E  
E H Z B N A M Y A F W O E F G L S N S I Z E S O C G D P Q G  
C L K I I T Y O P J D B R C J X M P C I P D W I O S H G R I  
V J E F N L E A C L H U D N O Y K T O A O Y I H A R G J Y H  
F R G C F F B E H R U L O R E H D M A I L I N B A L L O T A  
U X Z C T P T P B N A E H O B S E F O D I T G T M B P M A B  
J M B A H O Q O O A H T G K I W B N R C T U S A R K V G D Y  
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P S C I Q Q U T D O N A L D T R U M P R I Q H L C L C L E I  
R S F W X I J I G D Z J A E Y X R Z R F Z Z Q W A L U P P U  
L D L Y O S O O K R F N V V G P F N N Q K H Y L N V E O E J  
X L Q F W C H N Q K Y B Q S V E B L L P G X K S F Z X T N A  
Q R V D I F J V M C F D T U U W N F W X P B M Z U H J P C D  
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Answers are found on page 15

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## People's Choice Awards



Tracee Ellis Ross, in an Alexander McQueen outfit, accepting her Style Icon Award, with the Zoom audience in the background.

*Riverdale*, *The Walking Dead* and *This is Us*. For this category, there was a clear winner just based on the fans' reviews. *Riverdale* won because it kept you on your toes throughout the series. The third season in particular really ramped up the tension and kept viewers in constant suspense. *Riverdale* left a lasting impression about how far friends are willing to go to do the

right thing. Considering all of this, *Riverdale* was the best show to win Drama TV show of 2020.

This next category definitely got us dancing this past year! All of these amazing artists definitely deserved these nominations. The choices for the Album of 2020 were: *After Hours*, by The Weeknd, *Changes*, by Justin Bieber, *Chromatica*, by Lady Gaga, *Folklore*, by Taylor Swift, *Future Nostalgia*, by Dua Lipa, *High Off Life*, by Future, *Map of the Soul: 7*, by BTS and lastly, *YHLQMDLG*, by Bad Bunny. For this category, it was a close call between *After Hours*, by The Weeknd, *Changes*, by Justin Bieber, *Future Nostalgia*, by Dua Lipa and lastly, *Map of the Soul: 7*, by BTS. All of the fans loved these albums which made it that much harder to pick a winner. But after further consideration, we agreed that the winner of the Album of 2020 should be *Map of the Soul: 7*, by BTS. Since this album came out, it has had all of the buzz on TikTok with people dancing and singing to all of her amazing songs.

In song after song, this year's artists tried to get us on our feet dancing to the rhythm, rather than thinking about this hectic

world. The nominations for Song of 2020 were: "Break My Heart," by Dua Lipa, "Dynamite," by BTS, "Intentions," by Justin Bieber, "Rain on Me," by Lady Gaga & Ariana Grande, "Rockstar," by DaBaby, featuring Roddy Rich, "Savage," by Megan Thee Stallion, "Stuck with U," by Ariana Grande & Justin Bieber, and "WAP," by Cardi B, featuring Megan Thee Stallion. These songs were all amazing at making the world feel that much more normal. But for the winner, the BTS army definitely came through and pulled out a win for "Dynamite."

The first category within Pop Culture we chose to highlight was Social Media Star of 2020. The nominees included Addison Rae, Charli D'Amelio, David Dobrik, Emma Chamberlain, Jojo Siwa, Liza Koshy and Loren Gray. We chose this category specifically because we felt it most accurately represents what people like. There was no competition, and it should come as no surprise that Emma Chamberlain was our predicted winner. Emma appears as an icon and trendsetter to many young women across the country. Her calmness throughout the pandemic distracted viewers from the fear they were facing and helped them cope. Emma Chamberlain deserves this award because she exemplifies the spirit of Americans during 2020.

The last category that we focused on was the Animal Star of 2020. This category shows what one animal can do to brighten up someone's day. The nominees were Doug the Pug, Esther the Wonder Pig, Hosico, Jiffpom, Juniper the Fox, Nala Cat, Shinjiro Ono and Suki Cat. The star that we predicted to win this category definitely deserved this award. Even though he's an animal he demonstrated the kindness and humanity needed to help us get through this hectic year. Whether it was visiting children's hospitals, helping patients cheer up, or just being plain cute, he deserved this award hands down, so we predicted Doug the Pug as the winner of Animal Star of 2020.

A big congratulations to all of this year's well-deserved PCA nominees, and a big congrats to this year's People's Choice Awards winners!