

The Tomahawk

Student Newspaper

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“Striving to Be
the Best”

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Student Debt in America

By David Nottis, *alumnus*

It has come to the forefront in the American media that student loan debt is a major problem that has affected many American college students. Debt is a major problem for those who have secured bank loans, governmental loans, and other lending sources for the purpose of higher education.

The government provides federal student loans, while private student loans are available through private entities, like banks, credit unions and online lenders.

The average student loan amount borrowed continues to hover around \$30,000, according to *U.S. News & World Reports*. With the continued increase in college tuition and fees, it is projected that student debt will continue to increase.

According to the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities, 42 % of students at four-year public universities finished their bachelor’s degree without any debt.

Twenty-three percent graduated with less than \$20,000

in debt. About 13% had between \$20,000 and \$29,000, while 15% had between \$30,000 and \$50,000. Only 7% had over \$50K in debt. Those with over \$100,000 represents .5 % and are anomalies

The average student loan amount borrowed continues to hover around \$30,000, according to *U.S. News and World Reports*.

amongst student borrowers.

Federal loans are available through the U.S. Department of Education. Direct subsidized loans are supported by the government, meaning inter-

est doesn’t accrue while you’re in school or during periods of deferment. But, it does begin accruing when you graduate or drop below half-time status.

“It is a great benefit to have interest waived because people are shaken to see how the passage of time increases the cost of borrowing,” according to Heather Jarvis, an attorney specializing in student loans.

“The student populations who need the most help is typically Pell-eligible,” according to Kristen McGuire Executive Director for Young Invincibles, a national advocacy and policy nonprofit organization. She goes on to say that students should not let fear of debt stop them from attending, especially if they are from a low-income home because “a college education is the best way to lift yourself out of generational poverty.”

The White House Council of Economic Advisor

See **Student Debt**, page 6

Selling Nostalgia Here in East Aurora

By Thomas Pazian, *alumnus*

You are walking down Main Street and you pass by a big building with a man perched on top. The storefront looks like it came from the 1930s, with the red and white striped awnings and it bears the name of Vidler’s.

Vidler’s is a five and dime shop situated in the heart of East Aurora, NY. As an icon in EA, Vidler’s features a broad inventory of items, from candy and nostalgic toys, to pots and pans for the kitchen.

Vidler’s started small, and throughout the years, grew not only in size, but with popularity. Vidler’s was opened in 1930, around the start of the Great Depression under the name

Fair 5c to \$1.00 Store, by Robert S. Vidler. The store was opened because his mother-in-law could not get a spool of thread. He was not allowed to use the family name because the store had a high possibility of failure at that time.

The store started as only two aisles and was about 900 square feet. In 1946, Robert bought the building he was renting, and the store doubled in size. By 1949, Bob and Ed Vidler joined Robert and the store was renamed to *Vidler’s*.

In 1954, Toyland was added to the store and located in the basement that was recently acquired. The store had its current storefront designed

See **Vidler’s**, page 5

Creating a Business in a Virtual World

Bailey Drabek, *alumna*

Have you every dreamed of starting your own business? Sometimes it is about finding your niche and pushing forward. The number of teen entrepreneurs is insanely low; however, it is not undoable!

According to, Junior Achievement, "...adult entrepreneurs found that 13% started their first business at 18 or younger, though the average age entrepreneurs tend to start their first business is 28."

The virtual world has many opportunities to create your own business. One platform in particular is called Roblox.

Roblox is a cross compatible app that allows users to play a wide variety of games created by players around the globe.

According to the Statista website, "In the fourth quarter of 2022 Roblox Corporation had over 58.8 million daily active users worldwide."

On Roblox, you can create 3D accessories in an invite-only program to gain a currency called robux. You can exchange the in-game currency (robux) you earned for real-life currency.

For example, according to the Roblox Devex Rates, 100k robux is equal to \$350. The program to upload accessories is called UGC, which stands for User Generated Content, meaning that you can create accessories ranging from hats to 3D layered clothing for the virtual catalog to dress up your avatar (in-game character.)

Personally, I went from playing my favorite game at 11 years-old to making a living at just 15 years-old. I started off learning how to make

See *Entrepreneurship*, page 5

Big News with Netflix!

By Ella Wyzykiewicz, *alumna*

Netflix is an online streaming service that used to be a DVD rental, but has now evolved into the most popular streaming service in the United States—and for good reason. From series to films to renewed seasons, here is all the news on Netflix.

Many well-known shows and movies are released monthly, including Netflix originals. Netflix originals began in 2012 and are simply movies and television shows that were made specifically to be aired on Netflix. Netflix produces many originals that come out yearly.

Due to the pandemic, many people began binge watching new series, and this is shown through the popularity of some well-known Netflix originals. *Stranger Things*, a sci-fi show taking place in the 80's, is the number one most watched show ever on Netflix, drawing viewers through the three seasons.

Another very popular show that gained a lot of attention during the pandemic was *Outer Banks*. The show is about a group of teens that go on a treasure hunt to find gold, which is a classic storyline. With 2.1 billion minutes watched after Season 2, *Outer Banks* emerged as a hit series, and has continued its success with the release of the third season.

Many well-known movies are continually added to Netflix's library, including *The Conjuring*, *Daddy Day Care*, *Rocky*, *Top Gun 2*, and more. On New Year's Day 2024, Netflix added 69 new movie and series releases to their platform, like *Anabelle*, *Dark Shadows*, *Gravity*, *Elvis* and *The Joker*.

Many popular films are Netflix originals as well, like *Matilda*, *Purple Hearts*, and the *Irishman*. Although these movies have many views, the most commotion comes from the Netflix original series.

Many series are continuing in 2024, such as *The Crown*, *Cobra Kai*, and *Squid Games*. Anticipated for early 2024 are *The Brothers Sun*, *Boy Swallows Universe*, and *Fool Me Once*.

A fan-favorite, *Wednesday*, starring Jenna Ortega, is, according to *Forbes*, the third most watched show ever on Netflix with over one billion hours watched. This show is a Netflix Original, and spin-off of the well-known *Addams Family* movies and television series, starring the oldest sibling, Wednesday Addams.

Wednesday is sent to a boarding school called Nevermore, where she encounters many kinds of "people" and solves an important mystery throughout the season.

This show is directed in part by Tim Burton, creator of *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, and *Corpse Bride*, as well as other famous films.

See *Netflix*, page 7

America Is Being Invaded

By Anthony Linski, *alumna*

Believe it or not, America is invaded every day, but not by neighboring nations. It is invaded by its own creatures. These invaders are actually called invasive species. They are animals who are brought to a new environment by means of unnatural causes such as boats or planes. They don't fit into the environment's food chain because they have no natural predators. Invasive species are able to produce at a faster rate and overpopulate an area quicker.

Mr Dubel, chemistry teacher at Iroquois, reported, "Invasive species are an increasingly significant threats to our existing ecosystems and environments because of how much we move food and products from one country to another, and how much we move boats, firewood, and food products around within this country. Both of those factors make the likelihood of invasive species being introduced and spread to an area where they have no natural predators to keep the population in balance."

There are ways to prevent invasive species, which involve people changing behaviors. Regulators and governments should be inspecting food and products that are being moved nationally and internationally.

People need to share information as soon as invasive species are identified. Oftentimes, many of the things that we are looking for, like fish and insect eggs, are too small to be seen easily. Completely preventing invasive species is not practical or possible in the global society we exist in today.

Lake Erie has an overpopulation problem with zebra mussels, a bivalve mollusk that sticks to things, yet they are native to the Caspian and Black Seas. They reproduce at faster rates than any

See *Invasive Species*, page 5

Parks: Our National Treasures!

By Grace Czech, *senior*

U.S. National Parks include a wide variety of landscapes with scenery ranging from mountains, waterfalls, canyons, glaciers, beaches, deserts, and dense forests. It is easy to find beauty in any picture seen of these breathtaking locations.

Congress approved a legislation in early 1872, designating 2.2 million acres of land as "a public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people."

Yellowstone became the first National Park in 1872, and President Woodrow Wilson signed the act creating the National Park Service in 1916. The National Park System now covers more than 84 million acres in all 50 states. However, travelling to these parks and experiencing these views are a different sensation than just hearing about the vast expanse they cover.

A survey stated that 297 million Americans have visited a National Park at least once in their lives. However, not many remember much from their trip, and some do not stay longer than

See *National Parks*, page 7

Managing College Applications

By Rachel Kelly *alumnus*

Applying for college is a confusing, tedious process, and many students tend to delay when having to fill them out. There are many ways that you can make yourself stand out from other applicants and many resources that make applying for colleges an easy process.

Knowing the steps of the application process is critical, so become informed on each step from the application to campus tours.

Applications

The most known application for applying to colleges is the Common Application. You only have to fill it out once and can send it to any of the 800 colleges that accept it. Oftentimes, you will need information from your parent or guardian to complete some sections.

If you are thinking of applying exclusively to a SUNY school, you can fill out the SUNY Application, which includes over 60 colleges across New York State.

The college that you are applying to may have a different deadline, so it is important to mark your calendar for timely submissions.

It is critical to note that if you are applying for Early Decision or Early Action, those due dates are probably early fall.

If you are applying to a college that has a rolling admission, you should still apply as soon as you can to make sure your spot is reserved, pending acceptance. A rolling admission means that you can apply throughout the year. They only stop accepting applications once the class is full.

The FAFSA is used to determine a potential student's eligibility for federal student aid, which can be a vital component for a family when considering college options. Once you file the FAFSA, the process is initiated, and colleges can begin making determinations and sending out financial aid packages.

Once the money is allocated, don't wait too long. You may forfeit some of the aid offered for the same package you would have if you filed early, so it is important to do so.

On the Common App,

See [College Applications](#), page 8

The Fashion Cycle

By Ella Wyzykiewicz, *alumnus*

Fashion trends go in and out of style in very short amounts of time. The fashion cycle continuously repeats itself dating back to the beginning of fashion. It is the process in which certain patterns, styles, or colors come into popularity and then phase out. Most of the time these trends will come back again in about a decade.

Starting in the 1970's, people wore bell-bottomed jeans and flowy clothing. Now it is known as the "hippie" or "retro" style of the fashion industry now. In the 80s and 90s, boyfriend jeans and band tee shirts, were the rage. Now they have come into style again in modern times.

Next is "Y2K" fashion, which was from the early 2000s and featured low-waisted jeans, yoga pants, and tight-fitting tops. This fashion cycle repeated itself again 10 years later, as predicted, so it is currently known as the "2020s style" and features a reboot of these fashion trends.

There are five stages of the fashion cycle. Introduction of a style, rise in popularity, peak of popularity, decline in popularity, and rejection of the style.

Introduction is when this style first enters the public eye. People see something new and are intrigued. Rise in popularity sparks when interest increases, and more stores begin carrying the style, therefore increasing its popularity.

The peak of popularity is when a style is at its highest point. It is very trendy and normally will be worn by a model and then posted on social media. This is a style at the highest level of trending.

Decline in popularity begins when another style begins to take its place, decreasing the trendiness of the original style, as people are getting bored.

Lastly, there is impact from the rejection of the style. Rejection occurs when people are not only disinterested in a fashion trend, but actually begin to dislike the style. In the 2010s, many people hated low-waisted pants from the early 2000s. Yet, looking at current styles, they have become a trend again.

Fashion trends cycle in and out of popularity repeatedly. Patterns, styles, and colors will cycle through popularity, repeating old styles and creating new ones from them. For designers, the key move is to continue generating excitement around the waves of repeating fashion.

Swift Tour Causes Chaos

By Ella Wyzykiewicz, *alumnus*

Last spring, Taylor Swift has announced a new tour where she would perform her new album as well as other hits across the country. As a result, chaos broke out with Ticketmaster, and fans around the world are devastated.

Swift is one of the most famous musical artists in the world. It is no surprise when people mention her newest album, titled *Midnights*, most recognize it instantly.

Midnights is Swift's 10th studio album and it was released in 2022. Many fans were expecting another re-release album, but when Swift revealed this album would be a whole new one, fans went crazy.

This album was described by Swift as "the stories of thirteen sleepless nights scattered throughout my life."

Once this album dropped, it was clearly a return to the "pop" genre for Swift. Only a few hours after shaking the public with the release of her album, came along the release of seven more tracks! Swift called these songs her "3 a.m. Tracks" and they were added onto the original 13 tracks, making her new album consist of 20 new songs!

As if a new album, plenty of music videos, and seven extra tracks being released wasn't enough, on November 1, Taylor Swift announced that she would be going on tour again after a five-year hiatus!

On *Good Morning America*, she announced the "Eras Tour," and said it was going to be "a journey through all of Taylor Swift's eras."

As many people know, Swift has released albums under the genre of pop, country, folk, and alternative. She has had many different types of albums and has been famous since 2006, when she released her first album. For this, she titled her albums, "Eras." Different albums represent different eras in Swift's life.

When pre-sale concert tickets were announced, fans signed up on Ticketmaster for a random lottery system to receive a code, allowing them to purchase tickets before the general sale date. If fans didn't receive a code for pre-sale, they were supposed to still have the opportunity to buy them during the general sale. Unfortunately, that never took place.

More than 3 million fans signed up for the Ticketmaster pre-sale, and on that morning, people who received a code opened the Ticketmaster site and experienced many issues.

Fans waited in a virtual line for hours only to come across technical difficulties when it was finally time to input their codes and purchase tickets. People were waiting hours to get to the front of the queue and were kicked off the site when there were only a few people left in front of them. The website crash made many people very upset with Ticketmaster.

The Ticketmaster disaster was a top story throughout the U.S. among fans and non-fans alike. Nearly everyone has heard about it!

Two days later, Ticketmaster canceled the general sale before it even began. After many fans who did receive a code still got no tickets, every fan who didn't receive a code never even have a chance to try to purchase them.

Many bots purchased tickets to try to resell and price them at a resale value of thousands of dollars, taking away from real fans and profiting from it. Going even deeper, according to the *New*

See [Swift](#) page 6

Youth Ambassadors Attend ITAC National Youth Training

Parker Cantie, *senior*

On July 16, ITAC and seven Youth Ambassadors visited Dallas to attend CADCA's Mid-Year Training. CADCA is a non-profit international organization that is committed to creating safe, healthy, and drug-free communities. The organization represents more than 5,000 community coalitions globally, aiding in their fight against drugs.

During the four-day conference, ITAC youth ambassadors attended training sessions alongside youth from coalitions from around the nation. The sessions aimed at developing leadership skills and teaching effective methods for running a coalition to help combat substance abuse within schools.

One of the key takeaways from the training and the conference as a whole was the role of coalitions in communities to spread awareness. Tackling the problem of drug abuse can often be daunting. After all, it has become a national epidemic. However, when finding a solution, ITAC is not alone. As noted by ITAC youth ambassador Megan Aichinger, simply looking at the size of the conference goes to show the number of people that care about the nation's problem with substance abuse. There were over 2,400 people at the conference, each looking to do their part in combatting this issue.

The work ITAC does as a local drug and alcohol prevention coalition is part of a much greater movement. ITAC strives to make a difference in the community each and every day, and so do hundreds of coalitions across America. In essence, this is the role of coalitions: making a difference locally as part of a national effort to bring about positive and healthy change, especially among young people. The work ITAC does is both significant and meaningful.

Another key takeaway from the conference, as described by ITAC youth ambassador Cordelia Thomas, is the importance of building an effective and supportive team within a coalition and how that can augment the impact on their community. The youth training sessions at the CADCA conference focused on methods that will enable youth to run an effective coalition. These methods include

See **Dallas Conference**, page 7

Leisure Reading Makes Comeback!

Megan Aichinger, *senior*

Although many people across the country argue that technology and social media have replaced leisure activities like reading, books seem to be making a comeback as the influence of apps like TikTok rise.

Since 1980 it has been noted that there is a significant decline in leisure reading in kids ages 13-17 as they undergo the demanding in school coursework they will experience. The coursework in high school along with extracurriculars uses up extra free time and deters kids away from leisure reading.

However, Seth Wyzykowski, a senior, stated, "Making time to read is difficult, but leisure reading is different and is something I prioritize."

According to the Top Apps of 2022, TikTok was among them having a major influence over their followers. Further influencing teens to begin reading for entertainment rather than simply for school. TikTok has been used as a platform for users to share and suggest books to others.

This part of the app has come to be known as BookTok. User suggestions have been so influential that bookstores such as Barnes and Nobles have designated sections for books that have been suggested on TikTok. While book suggestions from magazines may have aged out, many still gain suggestions from librarians, Amazon, and friends.

Mr. Randall said, "For me, I find an author that I really like and wait for them to come out with a new book."

He feels that is the best way to find new reading material along with suggestions from other book lovers.

Among suggestions from TikTok causing reading interests to peak, librarian Mrs. Freatman noted the increase was furthered by Covid and kids desire to have a break from technology.

Freatman also mentioned the benefits of leisure reading for mental health. She states that reading allows for kids to take a break from stress because they can

See **Reading**, page 7

SPORTS

Sports Can Improve Academics

Grace Pickering, *alumnus*

You are a student at Iroquois High School, and it's your first year playing on the basketball team. As a student athlete, you have begun to use your time wisely, in that, you have noticed that your grades have been increasing during the season. Well, studies show that playing sports helps increase students' academic performances.

According to the Varsity Football Coach of Atlee High School in Virginia, Gray states that participating in sports can help with students' academic performances. Studies show that athletes often have slightly higher averages than those who aren't involved in sports. Gray stated that his students who participated in sports had an average GPA of 2.84%, while other students had an average of 2.62%.

Gray also talks about how sports help build relationships as well. "You talk about relationships? You look at Tom Brady and Rob Gronkowski. That relationship never happens if it's not for football," he indicated.

A study from *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise* shows that student-athletes performed 10% better in subjects like science, social studies, language, and even math.

According to Kyle Nguyen, of *MHHS News* in 2021, said, "Statistics show an increase in test scores from student athletic participation."

Nguyen stated that a recent study from the *Institute of Medicine* indicated that students who perform in athletics also perform better on standardized tests. In addition, statistics show that students who play sports also have better attendance than those who don't play sports.

Although sports can impact students' grades positively, participating in sports while in school sometimes can negatively impact students' academic performance. Many student athletes have a harder time focusing on their academics and they often stress about trying to keep their grades up during the week and even on the weekends due to athletics.

According to Mickey Strauss from Brigham Young University, "While student athletes are stressed about keeping their grades up and performing in academics, they also lack the amount of energy needed

See **Sports**, page 6

Entrepreneurship,

Continued from page 2

2D clothing for Roblox avatars in 2018, which helped develop my future knowledge of 3D modeling. A limited opportunity arose for making avatar accessories for the catalog appeared in 2019. I posted concept work of the virtual accessories on Twitter to hopefully increase my chances of getting into this extremely exclusive program.

Showing my determination, I created a new item every day from March to May 2020, while balancing school and sports. The creation of one item takes around 6 hours to fully design.

At the time the UGC program had about 10 people in it of 32.6 million active users in 2020. I finally got into the UGC program specifically picked by Roblox without applying. In May 2020, I started my own brand of items under a username of SimplyALemon.

I made nearly 6 million item sales within my first year in the program at 15 years-old, and continue to average around 5 million sales yearly. Currently, I have nearly 20 million total sales and sell my products to people worldwide! What began simply as a hobby has become my featured career path.

If you are highly motivated and willing to learn something new, Roblox is the way to go. Here are a few ways to increase your knowledge to help you succeed. First, I would recommend looking into Roblox and seeing how the market works and how you can produce on the platform. Whether it's 2D clothing, programming, creating games, or the UGC program, which is application only, the opportunities are endless.

Next, I recommend watching various tutorials on what you plan on learning to help develop your basic knowledge in your area of interest. Then, create a social profile to help the market and get your work out there to people around the world! Here are a few free programs to help get you started: Blender (for 3D modeling), Krita, Gimp, and paint.net are also free alternatives for texturing. However, Blender does have texturing available in the program, but I do not recommend that to beginners for creating. You will also need to have a laptop or pc.

Starting a business in the virtual industry isn't challenging; you just need to be patient, motivated, and willing to try something new. Good luck to every future entrepreneur and make sure you do your research!

Invasive Species,

Continued from page 2

other animal because they have no natural predators and consume phytoplanktons that are needed by the native species at faster rates.

Zebra mussels are also infamous for biofouling. Biofouling is the accumulation of small animals where it is not wanted on surfaces such as ships, docks, and pipes. Biofouling can clog pipes, damage equipment, and harm the native animals because they are throwing off the natural food chain with their rate of reproduction and consumption of native flora.

It is difficult to try and reduce the population because each female can release up to a million eggs per year. Physically removing them is one of the only safe options for the native species, which is proven to be a challenge because methods of eradication also compose a threat to native wildlife.

The Common Carp or Asian Carp is also an invasive fish species that has been in America's waterways as early as the 1890s. According to Clean Lakes Alliance, "Carp are notorious for altering natural ecosystems. They uproot and disturb submerged vegetation while searching for insect larvae to eat. Carp reduce water clarity and stir up bottom phosphorus-containing sediments, which contributes to algae blooms."

These carp can grow up to 31 pounds, are extremely resilient, and are high jumping fish that can cause harm to fishermen and boats. However, their population can be counteracted by harvesting the carp for things such as organic fertilizer. Private companies located throughout the Mississippi River basin have started aiding carp removal efforts by using them to make organic liquid fish fertilizer.

Another major invasive species is the Emerald Ash Borer. These small insects with a deep green shine to their shells have been the cause of the destruction of tens of millions of ash trees across the U.S. They are about a dime in size and are native to Asia. They likely arrived hidden within wood packing materials that were being transported to America.

The first identification of the Emerald Ash Borer was in Southeastern Michigan in 2002. There are a variety of preventative measures that are recommended, such as not transporting firewood from campgrounds or forests back and forth between states, as that could spread more invasion if they were to stow away in the logs or their leave their larvae inside of the wood.

There is no stopping the Emerald Ash Borer. With losing a majority of ash trees in forest habitats, it can effect the tree species composition, nutrient cycling, and natural forest succession.

The ash trees also become more vulnerable to invasion by exotic plants. With the death of these trees, many species such as butterflies, beetles, moths, flies, and tree bugs are at risk of extinction. At least forty-four species of arthropods that feed exclusively on ash trees are severely impacted.

A question one may have about these invasive species is can they be prevented?

Mr. Dubel reported, "There are some natural solutions to the decrease of this invasive insect, such as woodpeckers and some native wasps. Woodpeckers are enticed by the holes in the trees and eat the larvae and pupae with their long beaks. The wasps have been shown to parasitize and kill ash borer larvae, which has helped some in the decrease."

Invasive species are a tough environmental problem and almost unavoidable. Fortunately, efforts are being made to preserve ecosystems being destroyed by these species and they can even become of use to us.

Vidler's,

Continued from page 1

by Rix Jennings in 1969. Later that year, Robert S. Vidler passed away leaving the store to Bob and Ed Vidler.

Since its founding, Vidler's has become the largest five and dime store in the world. The last expansion for the store happened in 1999, in the neighboring storefront. The store now consisted of four buildings, with almost 20,000 square feet in total.

In 1980, Vidler's got more recognition after being featured in a Liberty Bank TV ad. In 1987, the corny and humorous "Bob and Ed" TV ads for Vidler's started to air.

During the 90s, Vidler's finally got national recognition through stories and magazine articles. Between the years of 2015-2019, Vidler's became a filming location for multiple TV Christmas movies, most notably, *Prince for Christmas*, which aired on the STARZ television channel.

In 2009, the iconic *Vidler on Roof* gets placed onto the store's roof, drawing attention from all who pass by.

In 2013, Bob Vidler passed away at the age of 88. According to TripAdvisor, the store is keeping with traditions and is being run by the third generation of the Vidler family.

Today, the store specializes in selling nostalgic toys and candy, and offers an even greater variety of unique items, which includes Slinkies, candy, satellite wafers, gnomes, candles, picture frames, and fabric.

Popular items for high school students include, cap guns, Pokémon cards, and other nostalgic items, according to Alexa, a manager at Vidler's.

Alexa also mentioned that, allegedly, the store is haunted by an electrician who died sometime between the world wars

Ed Vidler passed away at the age of 90 in 2019. Then, 2020 marked the 90th anniversary for the Vidler's store and its history.

Vidler's continues to be popular today. According to TripAdvisor, it has a four and a half star rating. It is a great place to go and walk down memory lane as you search for those fun items from yesteryear. Vidler's has something for everyone!

Student Debt,

Continued from page 1

stated, “By age the of 26, households with student debt are more likely to buy a house than those that did not attend college.” The White House report found that by the age of 34, college attendees with and without student debt are equally likely to buy a home, and both much more likely than those without a college education.”

What are Americans sentiments regarding student national loan forgiveness program that President Biden has been proposing? According to a poll by CNBC, Americans worry that debt forgiveness could have unintended consequences. Inflation is high right now, and people fear that loan forgiveness can drive inflation higher.

If loan forgiveness were to happen, 53 % of borrowers say they would pay off other loans and save money for retirement according to the same poll. Thirty percent feel no student loan forgiveness should occur, and only 19 % of those adults between the ages of 18-34 feel that no loans should be forgiven.

Mrs. Ford, a guidance counselor at Iroquois, welcomed the opportunity to discuss student loans.

“I went to a 4-year college and then also got my master’s degree, so 6 years total. I ended up with substantial student debt. I paid it off by being very good with my money and paying off large sums at a time whenever I was able to, like when I got my tax returns, etc. I paid it off in full when I was about 38 years-old, about 14 years after graduating with my master’s degree.

Ford continued, “If a student can avoid student loan debt from college, then that is a win. While it’s not bad debt to have (like massive credit card debt would be), it’s tough to get out of college and have a mountain of debt when your first job will likely not be that high paying your first year out of college.”

When asked about Congress passing a loan forgiveness bill, Ford replied, “I had to pay off my own loans and the government didn’t help me, so I think they could offer a lot more money to helping students with college debt in the future. But, I don’t think it should be paid off by the government in full if you have accrued the debt.”

Statistics show that debt has grown significantly over the years, and Ford feels that it’s daunting to see how the debt has increased.

“Many private colleges cost upwards of \$50-60k per year and over 4 years that is massive,” Ford noted.

When asked people with disabilities should have to pay college student debt, Ford said, “I think a student with a disability should still have to pay for college. If they can accomplish being accepted into and finishing college successfully, and they would have the ability to obtain employment. They should be able to pay for it as well. There are a variety of scholarships available for students with disabilities as well.”

Allison Nottis, junior at University at Buffalo, was asked about student debt.

“I haven’t started paying my loans because I haven’t graduated, but I know that I am going to be thousands of dollars in debt. Nottis went on to say, “I wish there wasn’t student debt. In order for people to get jobs where they make livable wages, you need a college education, which is extremely expensive. I wish nobody had to pay college debt; it sucks.”

She believes that college debt isn’t fair because people shouldn’t have to pay off classes, textbooks, or other goods that they need.

Currently, another loan forgiveness program is being proposed by President Biden, which promises to lead to another Congressional dispute. According to Cato at Liberty, a new poll 76 % of Americans oppose Student Loan Debt Relief if it drives up the price of college, and 64 % oppose if it raises taxes. Many are also wary “credential inflation” as it may cause more employers to require college degrees even if not needed to do the job.

Whatever the solution to student loan debt, hopefully the lenders, borrowers, or the taxpayers will come to a shared agreement to help students.



LEAD's MIDNIGHT BOWLING

Friday, Feb. 2

10:00 pm ~ midnight

\$15.00 per person

3 games of bowling, shoes, snacks, & prizes!

5 students per team/prize for Best Team Costume

Sports,

Continued from page 4

for the school day.” They don’t often sleep as much as they should, which can result in students getting injured or becoming ill.

However, female athletes tend to have a healthier view of themselves and life. They gain higher self-esteem, self-confidence, and lower rates of suicide and depression. Life skills are also gained through sports.

In addition, according to Luis Gallardo, a researcher for the World Happiness Foundation, “Sports help women emotionally and psychologically in their lifetime.”

Athletics can impact academic performances for all students. Many kids think sports are helping their academic performance while others are struggling to even pass their classes.

All in all, many student athletes show that playing sports in school helps academic performance because it teaches time management skills, responsibility, and many other life skills.

Swift,

Continued from page 3

York Times, Ticketmaster was now being investigated by the Justice Department, who is “focused on whether Live Nation Entertainment has abused its power over the multi-billion-dollar live music industry.”

In January, 2023, lawmakers grilled CEO Joe Berchtold of Live Nation, Ticketmaster’s parent company, in a 3-hour hearing. Much of the blame went to ticket sales abuse from bots, as well as the concert venues for setting ticketing fees.

However, Kathleen Bradish, Vice President at the American Antitrust Institute, called Ticketmaster “a very traditional monopoly.” She told lawmakers the lack of competition in the live entertainment industry results in consumers having to pay higher prices, according to CNN.

“Customers pay the price for these monopolistic acts with higher ticket prices and fees, lower quality, less choice and less innovation,” Bradish noted.

After the Ticketmaster outrage among fans, Swift took matters into her own hands by filming her Eras performance at SoFi Stadium and releasing it to theaters. The Eras Tour concert film was supposed to end the divide between the Taylor Swift “haves and have nots” once and for all at a reasonable price! The film brought in \$250 million in ticket sales worldwide and is in the Top 20 biggest films of 2023.

Swift remains a powerhouse of artistry and business savvy.

National Parks,

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one day. It is hard to savor the full experiences that these parks have to offer in less than one day.

Iroquois' former Athletic Assistant, Ms. Pacer, has visited many national parks including Rocky Mountain National Park and Acadia National Park. She visited Rocky Mountain National Park promptly after she graduated college and stated that the trip had helped her open her eyes to the world. She has always loved preserving nature and enjoyed the recreation of being outside, especially within the vast expanse of land that national parks have to offer.

Pacer advised one thing, "Explore! Do not always do the touristy hikes; explore deep into the park. By doing this, trails will be less crowded. Also, try to travel during the offseason. It will not only be less busy, but the scenery changes along with the seasons."

Matthew Fredricks, a senior at Iroquois High School, visited many National Parks in the summer of 2022.

National Park, Yellowstone National Park, and Rocky Fredricks' favorite National of its gigantic size and his while driving through a huge

Fredricks also visited Bryce Canyon National Park, Park in April of 2023.

yon and Bryce Canyon cov-offseason so there were not endangered bird, the California (there are only around 200 left

Fredricks advises to order to preserve their natural beauty, and when visiting, the best way to fully experience the parks is by getting up early and visiting during the offseason in order to avoid crowds.

The Czech family visited Yosemite National Park, Kings Canyon National Park, and Sequoia National Park. Visiting these sites, seeing the large expanse of nature and beauty at our feet, was very humbling. The views were breathtaking, and as strenuous as the hikes were, the scenery and natural beauty made the day-long hikes worth it!

Whether the views were enormous Sequoia trees towering over head, waterfalls pouring over the side of cliffs from beautifully clear pools, rainbows produced by the mist of these falls, the sweet scent of the Sierra Nevada, or driving through the deepest canyon in the U.S. (surprise! Kings Canyon is the deepest canyon in the U.S., not the Grand Canyon!), each park offered beautiful and unforgettable landscapes.

In contrast to the West's massive national parks, senior Parker Cantie has explored most of the parks along the East Coast. To date, Cantie has visited 9 parks ranging from Maine down to the Florida Keys. He indicated that each park had a unique feature, like biking through Cuyahoga National Park through Cleveland or watching the manatees in Everglades National Park.

Cantie's favorite visit was also his most unique at Dry Tortugas National Park. It is an island centered in the Gulf of Mexico and can only be reached by plane or boat. The island is home to Fort Jefferson, a former Civil War fort constructed in an octagonal shape right in the middle of the ocean.

"The scale of the fort was unbelievable! It was a grand display of the U.S. military's might, yet it never underwent attack. The massive fort was a weapon left unused—but it was a symbol of the U.S. supremacy in the Gulf, a warning to others," Cantie reflected.

Take some time to visit a national park and experience all it has to offer. The memories made will not be forgotten, and your eyes will be opened to the beauty of our natural world.

Pacer reminded, "There's more out there than we see here in Western New York."

"Whether it be the brackish estuaries of the Everglades or the expanse of the caverns at Mammoth Cave National Park, the U.S. national parks are home to environmental and geological features that demonstrate the marvels of nature," Cantie explained.

Dallas Conference,

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drafting problem statements, identifying local risk factors, and utilizing the seven intervention methods to ameliorate the issue.

Megan Aichinger, a senior who attended the conference, stated, "It was a great experience to learn new leadership styles and acquire skills to inspire others. I enjoyed meeting new people from all over the country who shared similar perspectives on drug prevention."

Equipped with the skills and information garnered from CADCA's Mid-Year Training, ITAC plans to make a greater impact in our community, with hopes of a healthy and drug-free future.

Netflix,

Continued from page 2

With good names behind the making of this show, it was expected to be a success.

Wednesday is a mysterious, spooky, coming of age story that many viewers can follow along with easily and even somewhat relate to. If you haven't seen this series yet, add it to your television bucket list!

Another newer release on Netflix is *Kaleidoscope*. It is a different type of show that is loosely inspired by the real-life story where seventy billion dollars in bonds went missing in downtown Manhattan during Hurricane Sandy, according to *Glamour Magazine*,

The timeline of the show spans from 24 years prior to this billion-dollar heist to 6 months after. *Kaleidoscope* can be watched in any order—you pick the color of episode that you want to start with! Every combination makes the story seem a little different. According to *Yahoo*, it can be watched in 40,320 different combinations.

Kaleidoscope and a huge opening and its popularity is increasing. It also stars Giancarlo Esposito, an actor in well-known shows like *Breaking Bad* and *Better Call Saul*.

Kaleidoscope gives the viewers a different, fun way to watch television. With a new and unique style, this show is a must watch!

With many new movies and shows coming out on Netflix, these are just a few of the most popular that fans are buzzing about right now. With many more films being released every month, make sure to keep up with the entertainment that Netflix has to offer!

Reading,

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be taken to another world that is created by books. It's a great escape. Freatman also mentions that Iroquois Reads is a club that meets every Thursday morning to discuss the book that they are reading, which is a perfect way to find new books to read.

Many titles have been made popular via TikTok like *It Ends With Us*, by Colleen Hoover; *We Were Liars*, by E. Lockhart; and *Dance of Thieves*, by Mary E. Pearson. Additionally, some of the most popular authors of TikTok include Sarah J. Maas, Colleen Hoover, and Leigh Bardugo.

Erin Bracken, a senior, recommends the series *Red Queen*, by Victoria Aveyard. She said, "I haven't put the books down."

From social media influences to peer influences, reading for fun has certainly regained its popularity amongst kids.

there are 7 different sections that need to be filled out. It can take hours to get the application finished, so most students start the application and finish it over a series of days or weeks.

The first section of the Common App is your profile. Profile is your phone number, mailing information, and demographics (which is your religion, military service, and race/ethnicity). The demographics portion of your profile is optional. The last portion asks for your geography, which includes your birthplace, countries lived in, language proficiency, and the status of your citizenship.

The second section is all about your family: your parents' marital status, who you live with, your siblings, and all the education that they have had in the past.

Education is the third section, which includes your current school, the educational history, and academic information.

Next, they ask about testing, which requires your ACT and SAT scores and what academic subjects you took in high school. This next section is a good place to show off some of the academic experience you have had. Be sure to review the Student Portal for all transcript information.

The activities section can include anything from work or community service experience. The entry format is laid out on the common application.

Your personal essay is in the next section and this is your time to really express yourself. You can choose 1 of 7 prompts and can use up to 650 words. In the same section, referred to as writing, you must include disciplinary history and any additional information you may want to add. Then, you must answer the college specific questions, which are questions about what you plan to major in or any scholarships that you could be using.

Lastly, many institutions and honors programs may require additional short answer essay responses.

College Selection

Finding the right college can be a stressful experience, and there are many resources that Iroquois Student Support and online guides to help. Your counselors are always available to assist you through the entire process of applying to college. Also, they can direct you to websites where you can put your major, your specifications for the type of college, and even location to help you figure things out more strategically.

Bigfuture.org is a website where you can fill in all the different things you are looking for in your college and it narrows down the search among 3,800 schools across the country. Keep in mind that applying to a range of colleges increases your likelihood of getting accepted and having plausible options. You will have opened countless doors of opportunities. It is recommended that you apply to 3-5 colleges so that you have a variety of choices when making your final decision. Consider in-state and out-of-state colleges, private and public institutions, trade schools, honor programs, campus enrollment size, and accessibility when designing your list.

College Visits

Knowing that a college is right for you can be a difficult thing. Often you hear of students going on college visits to make sure that they like the campus. It is important to visit the college before May 1, so that you know it is a good fit and you will not be wasting your money. There are many features to consider when visiting a college: making sure it is in a good location, that you enjoy the layout of the campus, and that you like the dorm rooms.

If you are going to a college that is far away, you may not be able to visit that college. There are alternative ways to look at the campus. There are multiple websites where you can take a virtual tour, often presented by a tour guide who can give you insight on the campus. While this is beneficial, nothing beats going to the college itself. Colleges take note of any time you put forward to contacting their school or campus. This is one of many ways you can help yourself stick out over other applicants.

College Essay

The most important thing to remember while writing your essay is that the person reading it does not know anything about you. This is the time to make your best impression in 650 words or less. The essay is often stressful because it is hard to talk about yourself. The 7 Common App prompts give a range of topics that should appeal to most people, like an obstacle that you had to overcome; a place that you traveled to and what you learned from that experience; how you obtained your service hours and what you gained from helping the community; your viewpoint on an important topic that you feel strongly about; or an accomplishment that you are proud of.

Even if writing is something that comes easily to you and you have no problem talking about yourself, there are still major pitfalls that you need to watch out for. Proofreading is key when writing an essay! You must have zero mistakes and make sure everything is grammatically correct. It is ideal to have someone else proofread the essay, like an English teacher or a person whose judgment you trust. It is important that you are clear and to the point in your essay. Colleges can get to know the real you and your aspirations so that they can determine whether or not you would be a good fit.

ACTs or SATs

ACTs or SATs have always been strongly suggested to apply to most four-year schools. However, since Covid, many colleges have gone "test optional," at least for the time being. There are more than 1000 schools that do not require an ACT or SAT and there is a link on the Iroquois High School website that lists out all these colleges. Most four-year schools, however, suggest taking either an ACT or SAT, not both. Even if a school is test optional, high achievement scores on these standardized test can give you an advantage for college acceptance and possibly merit scholarships, particularly for honors programs. Be sure to do your research in advance to determine which test you should be taking and the average ACT/SAT scores that college admissions looks for at your selected institution.

Once accepted into a college, you must make a decision if you are going to go to that school by May 1, which is the National Deposit Deadline. This means you must pay the college tuition fee by then. Early applications acceptances may have a much earlier deadline.

There are more resources to help the application process become easier as you go along. Applying to college can be difficult and time consuming, so it is important to do it at your own pace and give yourself the needed time.

Attitude is everything! It helps to think about college applications as a positive step instead of focusing on the negative. After all, it is the beginning of the rest of your life!

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