



Dinosauria: A Discussion of Prehistory

Sebastian Kopp, Grade 9, Staff Writer

Dinosaurs. Potentially the most famous and adored group of animals to ever exist. Two hundred years ago, on February 20, 1824, a dinosaur was written up in the scientific literature for the first time. It is known as *Megalosaurus bucklandii*. *Megalosaurus* was a 20-foot long, 1,500 pound carnivore. The original specimen was a piece of the right lower jaw found in Stonesfield, Oxfordshire. British paleontologist Darren Naish once wrote, "Why... are dinosaurs popular? Because they look neat, because they're awesome in every sense of the word, because they ruled a vast, chaotic, complex wilderness, and because they're the source of a myriad of big, really interesting questions." Dinosaurs** were majestic and powerful animals that dominated a world so far back in the past that it's almost impossible to comprehend.

To put it in perspective, two dinosaurs often seen fighting in popular media are *Stegosaurus* and *Tyrannosaurus*. *Tyrannosaurus* lived closer to us than it did to *Stegosaurus*, and *Stegosaurus* showed up halfway through the Mesozoic (the time of the



Photo Credits: Dr. Mark Witton

dinosaurs). They persisted through two mass extinction events and rose to the top of the food chain. They occupied every continent and came in all shapes and sizes. We now know of over 1000 distinct species, with a new one being discovered on average once a week. According to recent estimates, we haven't even discovered 30% of the fossilized dinosaurs on our planet. And judging by the fact that we know of around 10000 distinct species of birds, there must be a lot out there. On top of this, since 85 to 97% of organisms don't fossilize, we will never know anywhere near the amount of dinosaurs that lived during the

Mesozoic era.

As much as I would love to go into detail about the families of the dinosaur phylogenetic tree, that would take up too much space. Instead, I'll simplify it. The dinosaurs are split into two main groups: Saurischia (lizard-hipped) and Ornithischia (bird-hipped). The Ornithischian dinosaurs include most groups of herbivores. Thyreophoran (*Ankylosaurus* and *Stegosaurus*), ceratopsian (*Triceratops* and *Styracosaurus*), and ornithomimid (*Iguanodon* and *Parasaurolophus*) dinosaurs are members of Ornithischia. Saurischia contains groups such as the theropods (*Tyrannosaurus* and *Velociraptor*) and the sauropodomorphs

(Continued on page 2)

Eric Adams Is Not Governing Our City Well (An Op-Ed)

Veronica Mollod, Grade 9, Staff Writer

The current mayor of New York City, Eric Adams, has faced repeated backlash over many of his recent decisions, garnering him the lowest approval rating for any mayor since 1996: a dismal 28%.

Many New Yorkers are frustrated with Adams' cuts to school and public library budgets, his handling of the city's migrant crisis, and various other governing choices and scandals.

All this begs the question: Is Mayor Adams really such a good mayor? Are the decisions he is making the best possible actions to help our city? Clearly not.

Mayor Adams has cut budgets for schools and libraries, two of the most important places that young New Yorkers are able to grow up into informed, capable residents. Specifically, Mayor Adams cut \$100 million from the Department of Education's (DOE) budget this year after cutting \$600 million in November. This isn't just detrimental to the whole city, but also HSAS, which will likely be affected by these cuts. Therefore, all students should care about how the DOE's budget is being changed, because it will affect learning experiences, and that, in turn, will affect your future.

(Continued on page 2)

UMG Partnership Terminated with TikTok

Ari Schaer, Grade 11, Staff Writer

Universal Music Group (UMG) is recognized as the most prominent music group globally, representing hundreds of artists, including Taylor Swift, Bad Bunny, The Beatles, Eminem, and many other stars. On January 31st, 2024, the licensing agreement between UMG and TikTok expired. UMG decided to pull all of their artists' official music from TikTok, meaning none of these artists' official sounds could be used to create any videos. This leave was prompted after UMG felt that TikTok was not compensating their artists and songwriters enough compared to other social media platforms. At the time of the pulling of UMG music from TikTok, almost half the songs that occupied the TikTok Billboard Top 50 were by UMG artists, a consistent trend that appeared since the establishment of the chart in September of 2023.

Even though UMG stated that they don't believe that removing their artists' music from TikTok will impact its success, it's essential to evaluate the significant impact TikTok has had in the music industry. TikTok has been a massive launchpad to put artists in the

(Continued on page 2)

Current Events Summary

Mirabelle Medved, Grade 9, Staff Writer

US News:

In the Iowa caucuses, the first event of the 2024 Republican Presidential Primary, former President Donald Trump defeated his competitors. The support for Trump in the Iowa caucuses helped to catapult him into the lead in the race to be Republican nominee.

Trump also made news for challenging the prosecutors in his legal trial in Fulton County Georgia. Trump's lawyers and co-defendants called for the disqualification of district attorney, Fani T. Willis, and special prosecutor Nathan J. Wade, due to a romantic and financial relationship between the two. Though the prosecutors have fended off the accusations by stating that they are no longer involved romantically, if the two were disqualified, the case would be delayed and severely thrown off balance.

Since the pandemic, border restrictions were lifted and the number of migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border has dramatically increased. Due to an overwhelmed immigration system,

migrants requesting asylum have to wait years for a court date to determine whether they can stay in the U.S. Despite President Biden and his administration's goals of handling the situation through legislation, they have struggled to respond effectively as a result of a torn congress. .

Global News:

The Houthi, an Iranian-supported militia that has attacked commercial ships in the Red Sea to protest Israel's war on Palestine, faced resistance from the U.S. and allies. As of mid-January, the U.S. and allies have struck more than 60

targets at 16 Iranian-backed locations, and they have continued to strike into late February.

In a remote American outpost in Jordan, three U.S. service members were killed and at least 34 injured in a drone attack by an Iranian-backed militia protesting American and Israeli action. With the increasing tension in the Middle East, pressure has been placed on President Biden to resist Iran more forcefully, but both America and Iran have stated they don't want to go to war. The Iran-supported militia claimed responsibility for the incident, but

(Continued on page 2)

This article is a conglomeration of a number of HSAS's current events releases, which come out every other week. Find them at hsascommonsense.org/currentevents.

Current Events...

Continued from page 1

claimed it would not target American bases going forward.

Located in southern Gaza, Rafah is a densely populated city home to more than half of Gaza's total population. Due to the large population, many worry about Israel's plan for a land invasion of Rafah. Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel has called for the military to plan an evacuation of civilians in the Rafah region. An invasion of Rafah would be devastating, leading many world powers, including allies of Israel, to oppose the proposed invasion.

Miscellaneous News:

The U.S. conservative Supreme Court is aiming to overturn *Chevron v. Natural Resources*, which would make it difficult for the Federal Government to regulate interaction between the economy and environment.

In a Senate Judiciary Hearing on child safety, CEO of Meta, Mark Zuckerberg, apologized to the families of victims who have suffered from underage sexual exploitation online.

The American Museum of Natural History has shut down the Eastern Woodlands and Great Plains halls due to new federal regulations ordering for the sacred objects of Native American tribes to be returned.

Dinosauria ...

Continued from page 1

(Brachiosaurus and Diplodocus). Theropoda, on its own, contains many different groups, the most famous of which being Ceratosauria (Ceratosaurus and Carnotaurus), Megalosauroida (Megalosaurus and Spinosaurus), and Coelurosauria (Tyrannosaurus and Corvus). If you know ornithology, you will understand that Corvus is the genus name for the crow. A common misconception is that birds are related to dinosaurs when, in actuality, they are dinosaurs. That's right. If you look out your window and see a pigeon pecking crumbs from the ground, you are looking at a living, breathing dinosaur.

On the topic of misconceptions, I can't think of any group more riddled with them than dinosaurs. While they may be the most famous group of animals, they are also probably the most misunderstood. I will do my best to correct some of the more common misconceptions. Contrary to popular belief, there were no flying dinosaurs. Now, I know you're thinking, 'But what about Pterodactyl?' Pterodactyl is not a real thing. The word 'Pterodactyl' is usually used to refer

to Pterosauria, an extinct order of reptiles that lived simultaneously as the dinosaurs. It's an understandable misconception, as they are both reptiles and both lived at the same time. Another misconception is that dinosaurs are lizards. Dinosaurs are part of a family called Archosauria (ruling reptiles). Lizards come from a different, though similar, family called Lepidosauria (scaled lizards). Another fun fact is that, unlike most living reptiles, dinosaurs were

According to recent estimates, we haven't even discovered 30% of the fossilized dinosaurs on our planet.

endothermic (warm-blooded). While popular media likes to display massive and intimidating animals, most dinosaurs were on the smaller side. If any of this information is helpful, I'm glad. I hope that you enjoyed learning as much about these majestic creatures as I do.

UMG... *Continued from page 1*

spotlight. One of the earliest examples of this TikTok phenomenon is rapper Lil Nas X. Before Lil Nas X "blew up" on TikTok, he was a new artist, unknown in the music industry. Lil Nas X's first song, "Old Town Road," went viral on TikTok after someone created a short dance to the song. This led to the song gaining significant traction, eventually leading country music star Billy Ray Cyrus to feature on a version of it. The song spent a record-breaking 19 consecutive weeks at number 1 on the Billboard Hot 100. Similar roads of success were seen by Doja Cat and Megan the Stallion when

their songs Say So and Savage, respectively, became viral hits on the app, helping propel them into the mainstream.

TikTok has been a powerful instrument that has helped popularize artists' songs and careers, whether it be an effort from the artists themselves or a Tiktok user making a video to the song or creating a dance. TikTok has helped popularize artists, like 3-time Grammy winner Olivia Rodrigo, and pushed established artists even further into relevancy, like Lana Del Rey, who had multiple songs become TikTok popular, and Mitski with her song *My Love is Mine All Mine*. Its impact on the music industry should be further discussed, as it has helped shape and propel music and careers in the 2020s.

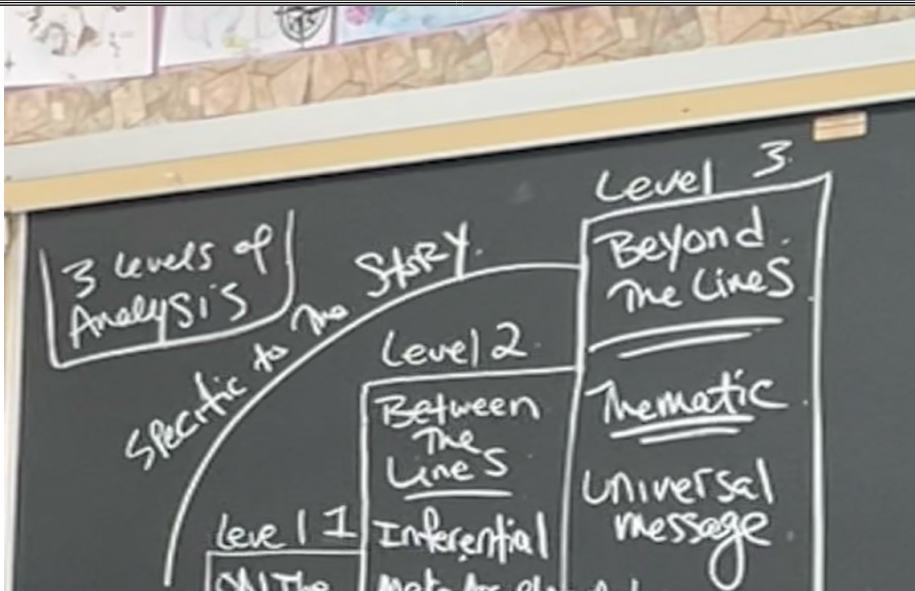
expands a program which helps people live more independent, stable lives by saving the high expenses of housing people in homeless shelters. This law was passed by the City Council, and an attempted veto by Mayor Adams was overruled. Still, Mayor Adams states that he will not comply with the law, citing expense concerns. Similarly to all citizens, Mayor Adams should comply with city laws, regardless of his opinion of them.

However, it is also essential to mention the impact that UMG music has had on the growth of TikTok. The exponential growth of the app in the late 2010s and early 2020s was primarily due to short-form dances created to accompany songs, many by UMG artists. More recently, creating dances has become more out of style, but popular TikTok videos and trends usually revolve around a song.

The question lingers: what does this mean for the music industry? And how will this change impact TikTok? High School of American Studies junior Joey Huang said, "TikTok's impact on what songs will become popular in today's world will not change," but that "UMG artists are now losing the opportunity for great promotion for their songs." The impact for TikTok has been seen as many sounds from videos have been removed, leaving many people with old videos without audio. Junior Mira Goodman-Singh '25 said, "She finds this annoying, as many videos have been silenced, so it's a bit odd." but she believes that "it will be no big detriment to the success of TikTok." But at this time, there is no true correct answer; only time will tell to see what is in store for the future of the music industry, UMG, and TikTok.

It is important for elected officials to act in the best interest of their constituents. Our mayor should act to most help the people of New York City. Nevertheless, Mayor Adams has made decisions that have not benefited his constituents. Mayor Adams has gone against the law, and prevented many New Yorkers, possibly including some students at HSAS, from living better, happier lives.

We must make it abundantly clear to Mayor Adams that his decisions are not in our best interests. We must ensure that he will not continue to act against the will of the people. We have to fight to make sure that our city is governed as skillfully and thoughtfully as possible, so that all New York City residents can be happy to call this city our home.



This is a classroom at HSAS. The whole school of HSAS is being affected by Mayor Eric Adams' dissatisfactory governing.

Eric Adams ... *(Continued from page 1)*

Some may excuse this 0.6% cut given that Mayor Adams originally planned to put 5% of the budget. Still, this is an incredibly large sum of money to take from such an important department and will likely have a very large, noticeable impact.

Adams has also expressed strong support for continuing mayoral control of the city's school system, which many have said needs to be altered or switched to a system of school boards.

Additionally, Mayor Adams has instituted the 60-day rule, which limits migrants to 60 day stays in city homeless shelters before forcing them to reapply for shelter placement or move. New York City Comptroller Brad Lander has loudly opposed this decision and launched an investigation into Mayor Adams' 60-day rule given its potential to wreak havoc on the lives of many families. As Lander argues, there is no

guarantee families will be placed in a new shelter that is close to the school their children are attending.

Forcing families to move from shelter to shelter as they look for a home of their own and parents search for jobs will make it even harder for children in this new environment and it may lead to frequent school switches. It is imperative for the mayor to keep in mind the well-being of migrant students. The policy also fails to properly address the issue of shelters being overcrowded by the approximately 66,000 asylum seekers in city shelters. The 60-day rule simply shifts people from one shelter to another and will not fix the overcrowding situation as Mayor Adams has said.

Moreover, Mayor Adams has not complied with a new law that expanded the city's housing voucher program. The law seeks to help low-income New Yorkers pay their rent. It

The Recent Failure of the Immigration Bill (an Op-Ed)

Jack McCurry, Grade 11, Staff Writer

On February 5, 2024, the Senate released the text of a much-anticipated bipartisan immigration deal. This deal was reached after four months of negotiations led by Republican Senator James Lankford of Oklahoma, Independent Senator Kristan Sinema of Arizona, and Democratic Senator Chris Murphy of Connecticut.

Both political parties have argued for decades that our immigration system is broken, but they vary greatly in their proposals to fix it. Republicans have generally argued for strong border security and deportations of immigrants who enter the country illegally, while Democrats place greater emphasis on paths to legal status for those who enter the country without proper documentation.

In recent years, Republicans have repeatedly attacked the Biden administration's immigration policies, blaming it for the recent surge in illegal entries at the border. An estimated 10 million immigrants have entered the country illegally since 2020 according to *The Hill*. Even among Democrats, pressure has been building on Biden to do more to crack down on illegal immigration, citing the strain immigration has placed on local and state governments. New York City, in particular, has borne the brunt of the immigration crisis, taking in nearly 95,000 new arrivals in 2023 alone.

In the leadup to the release of the compromise, Republicans in the House and Senate pledged that they would not vote for sending more foreign aid to Ukraine to assist with their war against Russia, another Democratic priority, unless Democrats agreed to tough legislation on illegal immigration at the Southern border. The Trump administration's hardline border policies, most infamously the

family separation policy, led Democrats to shift their priorities towards protecting people fleeing from war and persecution rather than focusing on bolstering border security. However, the surge of illegal entries at the border during the Biden administration led many Democrats, including President Biden himself, to rethink their positions and possibly give into Republican demands to fortify the border. The result was an extremely conservative border deal that was almost entirely about border security.

Most notably, the compromise would have required the Department of Homeland Security to shut down the border if crossings reached an average of 5,000 per day over a 7-day period. It also would have raised the standards for asylum claims from migrants, with new considerations of factors such as criminal histories. Under the bill, immigrants who did not meet the asylum requirements would be automatically barred from entering the United States and deported. Additionally, the deal would have ended the policy of "catch and release," allowing migrants caught crossing the border illegally to simply return to their home country, and replaced it with mandating the detainment of those migrants. It would have also provided billions of dollars in funding for customs and border control and cracking down on the Fentanyl Trade.

The bill failed to address several key Democratic priorities; such as pathways to citizenship for DREAMERS, children of undocumented immigrants. In exchange for these Democratic concessions, the bill would have given \$60 billion dollars towards supporting Ukraine in its fight against Russia and \$14 billion in security assistance for Israel. It would have also

allocated \$10 billion dollars towards humanitarian assistance for civilians in Gaza and the West Bank.

As soon as the contents of the bill came out, the overwhelmingly majority of Democrats, including Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and President Joe Biden came out in support of the bill. . Though a good number of Republicans, most remarkably Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, initially came out in support of the bill, many backed off from that position after likely Republican Presidential Nominee Donald Trump publicly critiqued the compromise through X, or twitter. Republican Speaker of the House Mike Johnson called the bill "worse than we expected" and said that it would be "dead on arrival" in the House. However, the Bill never made it that far, dying by a vote of 49-51 in the Senate. Only 4 out of the 49 Republican senators voted for it.

The failure of the immigration compromise is another marker of how the Republican Party is now dominated by close allies of former President Trump. This new

generation of Republican leaders stands out from previous generations because of their unwillingness to reach bipartisan compromises. Closely divided power in the Democratic-controlled Senate and Republican-controlled House has given hardliners, particularly on the right, unprecedented power to subvert legislation they do not feel fully meets their demands. The 118th congress has been called the least productive congress since 1951, with almost no signature policy achievements.

Political division is undermining confidence in the ability of our government and the two party system to solve pressing issues and commit to our allies. It is up to all citizens, particularly young people who are entering the world of politics, to not allow political nihilism to weaken our faith in democracy. Regardless of personal political views or party, we should all demand that our politicians, rather than trying to stay in power, negotiate in good faith with members of their opposing party and fulfill their duty to help solve the most pressing societal issues.

Sleep at the High School of American Studies

Ava Karaganis, Grade 10, Staff Writer

Sleep is fundamental to our ability to process information in our day-to-day lives. It's important in order to build memory and maintain good physical and mental health.

Teenagers need more sleep than adults because their brains and bodies are developing. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that teenagers get 8 to 10 hours of sleep per night. Compared to adults and children, teenagers have shifted circadian rhythms, which means they start to fall asleep only around 11 p.m. or later. Not getting enough sleep can cause a variety of health problems, including obesity, diabetes, injuries, poor mental health, and behavior problems.

The CDC reports that 70% of high schoolers nationwide do not get enough sleep. The majority of students at the High School of American Studies (HSAS) are sleep-deprived. On average, students get about 6.5 hours of sleep. The most sleep people reported was 8 hours, and the least 5 hours.

Why do HSAS students not get enough sleep?

Let's account for a typical student schedule. Many students have

"Not getting enough sleep can cause a variety of health problems, including obesity, diabetes, injuries, poor mental health, and behavior problems."

long commutes and get up around 6 a.m. to start the school day at 8. With extracurricular activities, homework, and dinner, students will likely have to work on homework until 10 p.m. or later. If the student is in bed at 10:30, they might not fall asleep until 11 p.m. or later because of delayed circadian rhythms. This leaves students with, at best, 7 hours of sleep. Though schedules vary based on the day and person, most students struggle with their sleep due to a similar lack of time.

So, how can HSAS students improve their sleep?

Students can limit their exposure to electronics a couple of hours before going to sleep. The blue light from screens tricks the brain into thinking it is daytime, interfering with circadian rhythms. Another key factor is to maintain a consistent schedule. Irregular sleep, such as getting 5 hours of sleep one night and catching up on the weekends, disrupts the circadian rhythm, making it harder to fall asleep. Taking short, 15 to 20 minute, naps early in the afternoon, on the other hand, can be very helpful. However, if the naps are too long or too late in the evening, they can do more harm than good. Exercising regularly can also make it easier to fall asleep and improve the quality of sleep.



Mean Girls (2024)

Revisiting a High School Classic, 20 Years Later

Lior Austrian-Jacobs, Grade 9, Staff Writer

Just over a month after its release, *Mean Girls (2024)* has joined its predecessor from 2004 in the club of movies that have grossed over \$100 million in the box office internationally. The wildly popular remake was based on the Broadway musical, which was inspired by Tina Fey's classic from 2004. The original *Mean Girls* was inspired by the non-fiction guide for parents with teenage daughters called *'Queen Bees and Wannabes'* by Rosalind Wiseman. However, the new movie musical, in its attempt to capture the spirit and success of the original 2004 movie, failed to honor what it was actually supposed to be adapting – a Broadway musical.

As did both the original and the musical, *Mean Girls (2024)* begins with Cady Heron (Angourie Rice) moving from the wild food chains of Kenya, where her parents were researchers, to the wild food chains of high school. Balancing her grades, a crush on Aaron Samuels (Chris Briney), and her social status, Cady works with Janis Ian (Auli'i Cravalho) and Damian Hubbard (Jaquel Spivey) to take down the queen bee Regina George (Reneé Rapp), all the while getting swept up into Regina's world. Scattered throughout the movie are songs from the

Broadway show, but these are often done in a way that loses the Broadway feel of many of the original songs. Angourie Rice's performances in "Revenge Party" and "Stupid With Love" have been the subject of much scrutiny online because of the lack of energy and musical theater technique present, and unfortunately, this theme continues throughout the movie.

For those who followed *Mean Girls* promotion, trailers, and ads, the lack of emphasis on the songs won't come as a surprise, seeing as most of their teasers or posters downplayed the musical theater aspect of the production, choosing to promote it only as a modern remake of the original 2004 movie instead of the Broadway musical. In an interview with *Variety*, Paramount's president of worldwide marketing and distribution Marc Weinstock said they "didn't want to run out and say it's a musical because people tend to treat musicals differently. This movie is a broad comedy with music." A small music note in the title provides the only indication of the Broadway showstopper that supposedly inspired the movie. The production team's choice to shove the musical theater elements to the side is evident in the movie because, with the exception of Reneé Rapp's "World Burn" and Auli'i Cravalho as Janis's powerful "I'd Rather Be Me", most songs are forgettable and blur together

The lack of focus on the musical elements doesn't take away from the humor present in every rendition of this story. Whether it was slapstick comedy, witty one-liners, or over-the-top dance numbers, this movie did what it was supposed to do: make every theater burst out laughing. This lighthearted and comical spirit was preserved, despite the fact that some jokes from the original were not due to their dated punchlines. In "Sexy", the Halloween number sung by lovable airhead Karen Smith (Avantika), a sexy Rosa Parks costume becomes a sexy Joan of Arc costume. Numerous elements of the plotline surrounding Regina's weight were cut, likely due to how attitudes surrounding diet culture have changed in the past 20 years. Also, smartphones proliferated among the students at North Shore High School, indicating the new, time period in this movie. Despite the changes, the heart of the movie remains the same.

As a revisiting of a classic that got millions through the ups and downs of teenage life, the 2024 *Mean Girls* movie works well as an excellent nostalgic and hilarious update to the story. However, it leaves its musical theater roots behind and the songs fall flat. But despite its faults, *Mean Girls* creates a new perspective in a modern world that provides a worthwhile watch for those who grew up with the original.

Super Bowl 2024: Lackluster or Nail-biter?

Nana Sam, Grade 11, Staff Writer

Once the New Year starts, and the final weeks of January approach, there's one main event on everyone's mind. It's not some flashy award show. It's the place where music and football meet to make the most unexpectedly entertaining duo America's ever seen: the Super Bowl. From the creative commercials to the overproduced halftime shows, there's something for everyone to enjoy at the Superbowl.

However, one of the Super Bowl's main excitements, prime-time commercials, fell short of the high expectations watchers have for them this year. From Arnold Schwarzenegger to Robert Kennedy Jr's quirky commercials, they simply were not as entertaining as the Super Bowl commercials we've come to know and love.

Former HSAS student Arshia Intiaz states, "The commercials this year were so lackluster. They were

not hitting. They weren't going for the wow factor. They were just there for the sake of being there." She added, "A lot of people are starting to realize that Super Bowl Commercials aren't as efficient as they once were, so funding for them fell off. As a person who watches the Superbowl just for the commercials, I was very disappointed."

Even though the commercials were a miss, there were mixed feelings on the half-time show. Usher was the main event and he performed his biggest hit, "Yeah", while showing off his vocals alongside his other celebrity guests, Alicia Keys, H.E.R, Ludacris and more. During his thirteen minute run-time, he had a myriad of song and outfit changes, but were these changes grand enough to win over the praise of millions of people who had their eyes glued to their devices and their butts on the edge of their seats?

Chesley Chen ('25) claims, "I feel as if the half-time show was very underwhelming this year. The last

good one was JLO and Shakira in my honest opinion. Also, no matter how many times Usher changed his outfits, none of them did anything for me."

On the other hand, there's people who actually enjoyed Usher's halftime performance. Bridget Sam (StonyBrook '24) claims, "It could've been better, it was just too short. By the time it ended, I felt that I wanted to see more."

The halftime show wasn't the only part of the Super Bowl causing a divide amongst fans, as the game separated 49ers fans and Chiefs fans/Swifties. Many Taylor Swift fans came to support her boyfriend Travis Kelce. This relationship has led to an uptick in female viewership of the NFL since the two started dating.

Once the game started, the 49ers were in the lead and it seemed the victors were already decided for this game. This turned around after Chiefs Mecole Hardman Jr. scored

the touchdown that ended a nail-biting overtime game. It became an underdog story for the books. Formerly confident 49ers' fans were devastated by this loss. Chiefs fans were more than ecstatic with the results. Kelce and Swift celebrated with a televised kiss after the win. Even after she's done greater things than dating the boy on the football team, the win felt like a fairytale happy ending.

By the time it ended, I felt that I wanted to see more."

Overall, Super Bowl 2024 had its highs and lows. Even though there was a severance between viewers of the famous Bowl, we can all agree that this Super Bowl was filled with excitement.

Percy Jackson and the Olympians Review

Luis Laboy, Grade 12, Staff Writer

Adapted from Rick Riordan's bestselling book series, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* is an action-packed series about a boy pushed into the adventurous, modern world of Greek mythology.

Starring Walker Sobell, mainly known for his role as Adam in *The Adam Project (2022)*, as Percy Jackson, the show follows the 12-year-old demigod who has come of age to enter the dangerous world his Greek God father left for him. Him and his friends go on a quest around the United States to save the world.

The three lead actors, Walker Scobell (Percy), Aryan Simhadri (Grover), and Leah Jefferies (Annabeth) displayed good progressive chemistry throughout the series. The chemistry built on the screen transcended into reality as well. The three actors have become the best of friends with each other in real life, demonstrating chemistry that translates just as well off screen.

"The cast was perfect" exclaimed Lior Austrian-Jacobs ('27). The whole crew tried their best to get the most authentic adaptation of Riordan's books. They recruited Riordan to be one of the head writers for the series. The series includes much of the action and villains in the books.

The series had to shrink the first book into eight episodes. Aiden Tom

('24) spoke on how "the action and fighting was great, but it was too short. Each conflict was sorted out in five minutes." In trying to adapt the book, the series condensed and "took a lot of the humor and whimsical spirit out of it" expressed Lior Austrian-Jacobs ('27). Some storylines were cut and merged into different episodes to fit in the limited time given to the series

The series started with a 92% on Rotten Tomatoes for its first season. The series also gained a large following from previous fans and new fans interested in Greek Mythology and the coming-of-age genre. Disney greenlit the series for a second season, based on the second book of the series, planned to release around Late 2025/Early 2026.

"The action and fighting was great, but it was too short. Each conflict was sorted out in five minutes."

Overall, the series is a good adaptation of the book series, with a charming cast and supportive crew. Although condensed into a smaller version of the original book, it can go far and win over many new audience members.

Year of the Dragon at HSAS!

Tahsan Latif, Grade 10, Staff Writer

Happy Year of the Dragon! Beginning February 10 and ending February 24, families across the world will be celebrating the Lunar New Year, a time of great joy and gathering. As the name suggests, the Lunar New Year is based on the lunar calendar, which follows the phases of the moon. In the roughly two week period, followers meet family and friends, exchange gifts, and eat special foods.

The Lunar New Year is often known as a Chinese tradition, however, it is celebrated throughout East and Southeast Asia in the countries of Vietnam, Korea, Malaysia, and Singapore. During the celebration, many traditions and short rituals are performed which are symbolic of certain cultural beliefs. For example, many Chinese households before the New Year clean the house in order to symbolize the expulsion of bad luck and the invitation of good luck. The color red is also used excessively as it symbolizes joy and good fortune. The New Year is a celebration that focuses on family, with large gatherings, gift exchanges, and remembrance of loved ones who have passed. Some of the most well known parts of the Lunar

New Year include the parades and fireworks to celebrate the first full moon. Some of the biggest celebrations outside of China include the Lunar New Year parades in San Francisco and New York. New York's parade happened in Chinatown on February 25.

Another famous tradition associated with the Lunar New Year is the zodiacs. Every year is associated with a different animal on the zodiac. This year is the Year of the Dragon. Many Western cultures view dragons as malevolent creatures, however, Eastern cultures view dragons as beings of power who grant the gift of rain. As such, dragons during the Lunar New Year are revered. Those born during the Year of the Dragon are characterized as individuals with high levels of confidence, courage, power, and intelligence.

Many students in HSAS follow similar customs to the ones mentioned above. However, some put their own spin on it. For example, Logan Kwan's (Grade 10) family makes a special soup during the holiday, though he isn't much of a fan of it. However, he does see the holiday as a great chance to meet relatives. Other students take a more lenient approach to the holiday. Jeffrey Zheng (Grade 10) says that his family doesn't celebrate the holiday, and instead they spend the night eating out at a restaurant.

Title: The Grammys: Masterful or Distasteful?

Dahlia Kaufman, Grade 10, Staff Writer

The 66th Annual Grammy Awards show was filled with drama, featuring a whirlwind of emotional wins and devastating losses. Jon Bon Jovi was named Person of the Year, SZA won Best R&B Song, Taylor Swift broke the record for most wins for Album of the Year, and Killer Mike won Best Rap Song, Best Rap Album, and Rap Performance. However, Killer Mike and Taylor Swift's wins have sparked anger among young adult music listeners. But why?

In my opinion, Killer Mike has created masterpiece songs over 20 years throughout his career. His recent album titled "MICHAEL," dedicated to his mother who recently passed away, held emotional and well-written lyrics with statements on race, police brutality, growing up Black in the deep south, and religious trauma. *MICHEAL* also had amazing features, bringing back artists from the 90s and 2000's, such as Andre 3000 and CeeLo Green, and included newer rappers for instance Ty Dolla Sign and Future. Although "MICHAEL" was a great album which deserves the Best Rap Album award, "Scientists and Engineers" should not have won Best Rap Song.

With that said, opinions differ throughout the ages. According to 59-year-old Laurence Kretchmer, "Killer Mike speaks his truth unlike the trashy autotune tik tok mumble rappers." 15-year-old Michael Grauer takes a different stance, explaining that "Travis was completely robbed and deserved the best rap album

Grammy, who even is Killer Mike."

Now for the Taylor-Lana debate. As a Taylor Swift hater, I believe that Lana Del Rey deserved Best Album and Taylor Swift did not need another award for her collection. Lana's "Did You Know That There's a Tunnel Under Ocean Blvd" connected with many listeners as a gorgeous americana gospel, showcasing thoughts on immortality. On the other hand, Taylor Swift created generic pop music easily found playing in a supermarket or in an abandoned trampoline park. While some of Taylor Swift's albums weren't so bad, like Reputation or her earliest semi-country albums, her new entrance into borderline folk-pop-rock-indie-slop is quite the disastrous flop.

With the controversial ideas aside, let's dive into the first time winners and up and coming artists to keep on our radar. Tyla, most known for her song featuring the lyrics "make me sway, make me water," won best African music performance. Though this seems like a niche category, it means a lot considering it could foreshadow more African music entering the global music scene. Gracie Abrams, the love child of Phoebe Bridgers and Lana Del Rey (and a nepobaby, the actual child of two famous Hollywood directors)-knows the Hollywood scene and will most likely become a big name in the future. Ice Spice was listed by the Grammys as one of the best new in the industry nominees, an indisputable position. This Bronx bombshell created continuously viral songs this year without any sign of her stopping. Starting off as a redhead meme, Ice Spice took advantage of what could have been a one hit wonder and made herself a platform.

As per usual, the Grammy's robbed a couple artists and didn't listen to what the majority of listeners actually supported. But, congratulations to the winners, condolences to the losers, and let's hope that next year's Grammys are slightly better!

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