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## 11th Grade Biology: What Happened, What Are The Next Steps, and What Should Juniors Expect?

BY: ARYA CHAWHAN

The beginning of the IB program is not the only challenge juniors have had to face this year. Since September, 11th-graders at Clinton have had a total of four biology teachers, with some classes having more. But how did this happen? I interviewed Mr. Levin and Ms. Goett to understand what led to these changes.

Ms. Bermejo, a Clinton science teacher who has been at the school for many years, was programmed and ready to teach 11th grade. However, she quit unexpectedly a few weeks before school started. Finding a replacement biology teacher was a difficult task, especially because science is a challenging subject to obtain a teaching license in. Furthermore, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)-focused individuals tend to seek other careers,

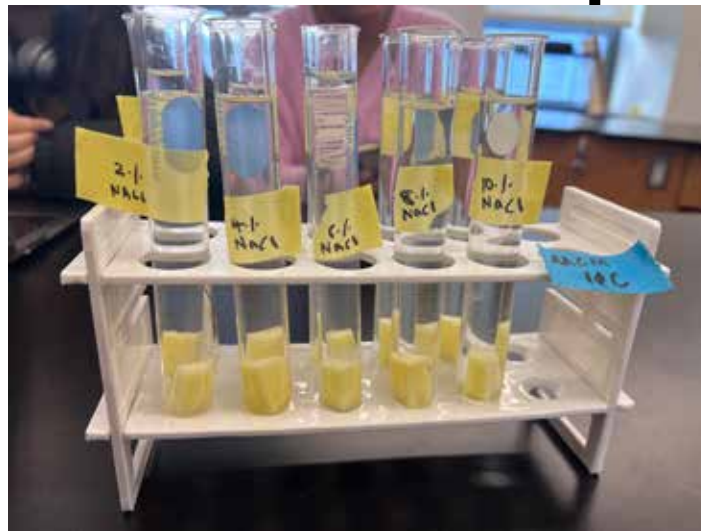


Photo Credit: Clinton Post Staff

An image from the osmosis lab juniors completed during Regents Week.

usually not teachers.

Soon after, the Clinton administration was left searching for a teacher a mere few weeks before students started instruction. The Department of Education (DOE) has an Open Market system where teachers can transfer between schools during the academic year. However, this system closes during

the summer, meaning that any teacher Clinton hired would not have directly come from a DOE system, posing some challenges. As an alternative, the administration posted a job request to the “outside”, using the job-hiring platform Indeed. The consequence of using these non-DOE programs is that applicants are unfamiliar with the IB and Clin-

ton. Although people are overall interested in the IB program, Clinton did not receive a lot of applicants for the replacement. From the handful that responded to the interview request, only a few replied to email follow-ups. It eventually came down to Dr. Sobel (the biology teacher from the beginning of the semester until November 28th) and one other applicant. Dr. Sobel was hired for a few reasons: she had an extensive background in the actual content, research experience, her responses to the interview questions were detailed, and she had the license to teach science. Part of her hiring was also a result of the process of elimination; a number of applicants did not show up for the interview.

Going into the hiring, Mr. Levin and Ms. Goett were aware that someone coming into the job would not know a lot

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# 11th Grade Biology: What Happened, What Are The Next Steps, and What Should Juniors Expect?

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about the IB, nor would they have experience with Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classrooms. The administration was quickly flooded with student complaints. An anonymous 11th grader said, “Dr. Sobel seemed to be extremely confused in understanding the IB program, which made it even more challenging for the students to learn the concepts. As a Higher Level Biology student, we fell behind very quickly in the curriculum and now have to pace through each unit extremely quick to catch up.” As a response, they provided support and decided the next steps, trying to work through complaints by finding similarities between them. One of these patterns was Dr. Sobel’s lack of organization.

On November 28th, Dr. Sobel applied for a leave that would extend until January 3rd. This leave has been extended twice since then; she is now expected to return on April 17th. The reason for the extension is unknown. Dr. Sobel specifically requested a Family and Medical Leave Act, meaning that she has to have a legitimate family or medical reason to stop teaching. In Mr. Levin’s words, a leave is like a “time-out”, meaning it is not possible for the

administration to take any additional action while a teacher is on leave. Just in case, the job application is currently posted; but as of early January, no one has applied. Mr. Levin and Ms. Goett do not know why Dr. Sobel requested a leave, as the application process is outside the principal’s control. Regarding if her leave was expected, Mr. Levin states that he “didn’t know anything for certain.” At the time Dr. Sobel requested her leave, Mr. Levin and Ms. Goett had concerns about her methods but were ready to support her as a teaching member of the community. They were also aware that there were minimal other replacement options, so they were stuck in a difficult struggle to break out of. There is no teacher-administration communication during leave, so Dr. Sobel has not been in contact with Mr. Levin or Ms. Goett over these past few months. Once Dr. Sobel left, there was no pre-set plan in place as there was not enough time to create one. Ms. Goett worked with other IB Science teachers, including Ms. Carballo and Ms. John, to plan something for the duration of the leave. Another challenge in this planning process is that the two teachers with the most IB Science experience, Ms. Jungers and Ms. Bermejo, are no longer at

Clinton. This meant the team qualified to plan the juniors’ curriculum was limited.

When juniors returned from Thanksgiving break, they had a new biology teacher: Mr. Deveraux. Mr. Levin and Ms. Goett viewed him as qualified for a few reasons: he had the license to teach science, a background in chemistry, and was available for the job. He had also previously covered 6th-grade science as a substitute for Clinton. Mr. Deveraux filled the position for about two weeks. After that, juniors were taught by a mix of substitute teachers, until falling into a more routine schedule that they currently follow.

11A and B are taught by Ms. John, 11C (the Higher Level biology section) is taught by Ms. Carballo a few times a week, and 11D is taught by Ms. Goett. This will likely be the situation for the rest of the year. One of the biggest priorities for the administration is ensuring that the Higher Level section is gaining support.

Juniors have completed two labs this school year (magnification and osmosis) and have only made it through one full unit. Before next year, juniors will have finished a total of 6 or 7 labs. The molecular biology unit will begin in February, which will include a few

more labs. Practicals will be spread out over the two-year course, including additional labs and sampling. According to Ms. Goett, juniors are not completely behind. 11th graders will complete a total of three or four units, which is “good shape.” The science department is still planning Quarter 4 and deciding whether to review previous units or begin a new topic. Mr. Levin and Ms. Goett do not think there is cause for concern. According to Mr. Levin, “there are so many things a student can control”, but the administration is concerned and trying to control the situation.

For the rest of the year, juniors can expect to wrap up on Unit 1, then move through the curriculum quickly for the next 2 weeks. Juniors will prepare for Practical 2 and stick to a schedule to make sure that the grade is staying on pace. Next year, Ms. Carballo will teach all cohorts for 6 biology periods a week per section to make up for lost time.

Although juniors have yet to make much learning progress in biology so far, the administration is working diligently to make sure that students are prepared for their IB exams in May of 2024.

# Kanye West Controversy

BY: EMMA  
SWEGER

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Kanye West has recently been dropped by major brands, due to the continuous backlash against his antisemitic actions. The rapper has also lost support for his music, “declining by about 6 percent to 88 million on-demand clicks in the United States” (Sisario). This controversy began on October 8th, after a shocking tweet was made by West, where he made a violent statement targeted directly toward Jewish people. There was a quick reaction to this absurd tweet; multiple celebrities condemned West and he was temporarily blocked on Twitter. But it doesn’t stop there. Days after the tweet was posted, West appeared on “Piers Morgan Uncensored”, where he apologized for his actions, but stated that he did not regret them. His decisions have also raised the debate surrounding



**Photo Credit: CNBC // Clinton Post Staff**  
Kanye West Standing With Balenciaga

separating the art from the artist.

On October 11th, the rapper was interviewed by Fox News anchor Tucker Carlson. During the interview, West continued to make several anti-semitic claims. Viewers of the video stated that people can not blame the rapper’s Bipolar Disorder for his actions any longer. According to BBC, “people who share his condition told the BBC that mental health problems do not go hand-in-hand with antisemitism.”

The absurd and groundless hate speech that West perpetuated did not fare well with brands that he has contracts and partnerships

with. Balenciaga, Creative Artists Agency, JP Morgan, and Gap all cut ties with the artist in October after his extreme antisemitic comments. During this time, the pressure was on Adidas. Adidas is West’s biggest and most well known contract; the “Yeezy” sneakers that West proudly distributed through Adidas are some of the most well-known sneakers in the world. However, as of the 25th of October, Adidas disassociated from the rapper completely, cutting their partnership, which disqualified West from his prior billionaire status.

But West’s rampage doesn’t end here, on November 25th the

rapper announced that he will be running for president in 2024. This is no surprise to those who have been following him for a while. In 2018 West was photographed shaking hands with Donald Trump and earlier in October of 2022, West was photographed in a “white lives matter” shirt.

The recent turn of events for West were a shock to many. The rapper lost support from fans, supporters, and friends who had been with him for years. All of his major contracts fell through and there will never be any way to come back from this. Many fans are wondering what brought this on and when his rampage will end.

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# Kicking Off 2023 with a Horrifying Injury in the N.F.L.

BY: LUCIA SANTIAGO

The 2023 football season began with a terrifying kickoff earlier this month, as N.F.L. player Damar Hamlin suffered a cardiac arrest during a game, which was broadcasted on national television.

On the night of January 2, the Buffalo Bills played the Cincinnati Bengals at the Paycor Stadium in Cincinnati, Ohio. It seemed to be a regular play - the Bills' safety Damar Hamlin tackled Bengals' wideout Tee Higgins. The tackle looked normal until Hamlin stood up and promptly collapsed. He had suffered a sudden cardiac arrest. A cardiac arrest is an abrupt loss of heart function, which results in a loss of consciousness, halted breathing, and the stopping of pumping blood throughout the body.

The Bengals' medical team rushed onto the field and delivered one round of CPR as well as one defibrillation. Defibrillators are devices that send an electric pulse or shock to the heart to restore a normal heartbeat. They were able to resurrect him, and he was taken to the University of Cincinnati Medical Center. The game was canceled and ruled no



**Photo Credit: Twitter // The Clinton Post Staff**  
Damar Hamlin thanks well-wishers after collapse.

contest.

The 24-year-old safety went to college at the University of Pittsburgh, and was drafted to the Bills in Round Six of the 2021 N.F.L. Draft. Hamlin became a starter on the team in September 2022.

Hamlin spent six days at the University of Cincinnati (UC) Medical Center. There he began his journey to recovery. According to doctors from UC Medical Center, the first thing he asked when he woke up was, "Did we win?" To that, they responded that he indeed won - he won the game of life.

He underwent many communication and responsiveness tests and was on a good track. "Normal recovery from some-

thing like this is going to be measured in weeks to months and he's been a little bit ahead of that at each stage," explains Dr. Timothy Pritts, who works at UC Medical Center.

On January 9, Hamlin was transferred to Buffalo General Medical Center/Gates Vascular, which is closer to his hometown and family. Still doing well, he is on a normal diet and can walk around unassisted. He went through many comprehensive medical evaluations and a multitude of vascular, neurological, and cardiac testing on the 10th.

The next day, Hamlin was discharged from the Buffalo Hospital and able to return to his parents and brother.

This tragic and frightening incident had

many people questioning the N.F.L. - what exactly are they doing to help prevent players from dying in their games? The N.F.L. has made many changes in recent years to minimize contact-related injuries. In 2020, according to the NFL, they emphasized the illegality of using a player's helmet to lead a line play, and "any block by an offensive lineman that involves initiating contact with the helmet".

Although, these steps cannot fully eliminate the occurrence of injuries and protect players. Zac Taylor, the head coach of the Cincinnati Bengals, discusses his team and how they are moving forward after the game. He says he supports any player that needs time off, and that his team understands how injuries are a part of the sport. "Players that play football know that; they know what they're getting into. It's a less than ideal part of the game, but it's a known part of the game."

# Is Football Worth It?

BY: TABITHA BREEN

Damar Hamlin's recent collapse on the field shook the nation and provoked continued concerns about the dangers of tackle football, especially for children.

Tackle football culture is plentiful in the US; you can find people watching a game or keeping up with the stats almost anywhere you go. Within this deep-rooted culture, children start playing football as early as 5 years old. Moving into middle school, kids are encouraged to play more and become extra serious, then prepare to possibly be scouted by football academies and even college football teams as early as 13. Within this so-called hardcore football culture, kids have to be at their best and playing their toughest, which also means taking a couple of hits along the way. Well, maybe more than just a couple.

Is it really worth risking the health of our youth just to be able to play football for a few years? Children who play tackle football don't get much more out of it than flag football players



**Photo Credit: Boston University//The Clinton Post Staff**

Hamlin getting tackled.

get out of flag football, besides some long-term injuries. Considering only 7% of high school football players go on to play football in college, let alone 2% that end up playing in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division 1, most youth football players aren't missing out on much by not playing football. Both flag football and tackle football are team games, meaning that a kid playing either will learn team-building skills in both games. So, is it really worth it to put your kid at risk of a life-threatening head injury when they get nothing more out of tackle football than they would from flag football?

Because football is such an important part of American culture, and

it takes a while for players to reach a professional level, tackle football for youth should not be ruled out altogether. Instead, the age minimum requirement for children playing organized tackle football should be raised to at least 14 to avoid head injuries in young children. Unfortunately, as a result of the brain being most vulnerable in adolescence, this age is still very young and could possibly be the most dangerous time to play any sport, including tackle football. To combat possible injuries, coaches should educate their players on the safest ways to play and make their players aware of the symptoms of brain injuries. To best minimize injuries, children should play flag football when they are

young, and then transition to tackle football as they get older and start high school. This way, players are physically, mentally, and emotionally prepared for the consequences that can arise from playing tackle football.

There is still a risk to playing football at any age; more and more ex-football players are showing signs of the long-term effects of football and their brains. Additionally, children are more prone to injury than adults. Not only are brains susceptible to long-term damage at a young age, but their bodies are also prone to damage.

Unfortunately, there are few studies about the long-term effects of head injuries in football, both when sustained as children and as adults, so it is hard to determine how severe the consequences of playing tackle football could be. Nevertheless, parents, coaches, and even children should still be vigilant and consider all the factors before going out onto the field.

# The State of the Bigoted Union, Two Years after the Jan. 6th Insurrection

BY: SPENCER KLUGER

Today is January 6th, 2023, and it marks the two year anniversary of the attack on the Capitol. This article also marks two years of my documenting white supremacy in America and its relation to the January 6th Insurrection. Two years ago, I was hopeful for the radical change imperative to fixing the polarization, hate, and violence in we face, but with little change having occurred, our nation is not much better off than it was. Since January 6th, 2021, much has happened. Donald Trump has been referred to the Justice Department on four criminal charges, Elon Musk reopened Twitter to false information, Kanye West has incited antisemitism, the number of mass shootings maintained its trend, and white supremacy as a whole remained apparent and widespread in the United States.

On January 6th, 2021, Donald Trump incited what was arguably the biggest anti-government uprising America has seen since the Civil War. On this fateful day, Trump addressed crowds of white supremacists and election deniers saying, "We will never give up. We will never concede" in reference to his loss in the 2020 Presidential Election. Following this and other catalytic remarks, 2,000 people stormed the Capitol with flags, weapons, and hate. This led to five deaths, including the death of an officer. According to ABC, over \$2.7 million in physical damages was also inflicted. This event was a defining moment in the polarization epidemic America faces.

In an effort to punish former-president Trump for his actions, the January 6th committee was formed. They worked over the last 18 months for a solution, right up until they



**Photo Credit: The Clinton Post Staff // Bloomberg**  
Kanye West shaking hands with Donald Trump.

would have been disbanded by an incoming Republican House (a sign of the polarization we face). They produced an 845 page report, declaring that Trump purposely incited the riot, and outlined what they believed should be done as punishment. An NPR analysis gave a synopsis of the major takeaways: Donald Trump will be referred to the Justice Department on four criminal charges and should be barred from office, Capitol police should have more training and supervision, and measures should be put in place to limit the chance of similar insurrections in the future. Although it is unclear whether the Justice Department will act on these charges, it at least ensured that Donald Trump's illegitimate and atrocious actions have not gone unnoticed.

White supremacy has also expressed itself in new and diverse ways this year. Following Elon Musk's takeover of Twitter and relaxed censorship measures, neo-Nazis flooded back. According to a Vice analysis, the accounts of many known neo-Nazis were reinstated, and Musk only helped to encourage them by making antisemitic and

alt-right posts. The Anti-Defamation League found that there was a "61.3% increase in the volume of tweets...with an anti semitic sentiment" following Musk's acquisition of the platform.

The removal of most censorship measures on the platform not only opened the floodgates to anyone in the general public with hateful messages, but also influencers with immense followings. One notable example is Ye, formally known as Kanye West, who took to Twitter to spread his hateful and dangerous agenda. In a Twitter post which has since been removed, he tweeted, "When I wake up I'm going death con 3 On JEWISH PEOPLE," a reference to a militaristic heightened state of preparedness. Ye has since been suspended from Twitter by Elon Musk, but has continued to promote antisemitism elsewhere. In interviews with Chris Cuomo and the podcast Drink Champs, Ye spread further conspiracies about the Jewish people, and received praise from many alt-right supporters. T-shirts with swastikas, American flags and Ye's name on them are now for

sale online, and posts containing white supremacist comments have risen. Additionally, A Jewish synagogue was vandalized outside of Chicago with swastikas and the words "Kanye Was Rite," a reference to Ye's support of Hitler.

Other types of bigotry have also been prevalent this year, as shown through the Club Q shooting. In late November 2022, a gunman opened fire at a gay club in Colorado, which left five dead and twenty five injured. This is a prime example of the rise of hate in America, specifically the idea of, white, heterosexual supremacy. The shooter, Lee Aldrich entered the club with two weapons, and a vendetta to kill those who he felt were not like him.

Bigotry in the United States left a stain on January 6th, 2021, and has since continued to grow. It has manifested itself strongly through political rioting, on social media, mass killing events, and has even become casual, such as in Ye's antisemitic remarks. Supremacy can not continue like this. America was once considered a progressive melting pot, but the ideological crevice is widening, and leaves more and more violence in its wake. The U.S. senate justifiably declares, "White supremacists and other far-right-wing extremists [to be] the most significant domestic terrorism threat facing the United States," and action must be taken. Citizens must act up and call out white supremacy where they see it, and social media platforms and the government must take more effort in noticing, addressing, and punishing any instances. I hope that by my 2024 update, more change and progress will have been made.

# The Taylor Swift Ticket Debacle

BY: SOFIA FIGUEROA

Mid-November, under the fluorescent lights of the Clinton School hallways, I received an email from Ticketmaster. “You’ve been selected!” it said, and immediately I was ecstatic. In the email, I received a pre-sale code for Taylor Swift’s upcoming Eras Tour, where I would have the opportunity to purchase my tickets before the chaos of the general public sale. Naively, I was not expecting the disaster that followed.

According to Ticketmaster, 1.5 million users received a presale code for the 52 stadium shows. The sale had begun the morning of November 15th, and users were shuffled into online queues of well over 2000 each. Some were bumped to the front of the line in a matter of minutes, but for most, the wait lasted hours and bled into the afternoon with little to no movement.

Unfortunately, I was one of the unlucky fans who patiently waited with my Ticketmaster tab open, but to no avail. By the time I was able to purchase any tickets, they were nearly sold out. Complaints flooded the internet as fans reported the same issues across the board. It was clear that something was amiss.

That morning, Ticketmaster’s website experienced an unprecedented overhaul of online traffic, ranging from bots to resellers to fans who were in queues without a code. According to Ticketmaster, they had

received a staggering 3.5 billion system requests, which their site simply could not handle. The demand for these tickets broke the website. Fans were kicked off queues, presale codes were deemed invalid, and most fans who received a pre-sale code didn’t even get tickets. It was a disaster.

To everyone’s surprise, Ticketmaster canceled the general public sale just two days later and claimed there were no tickets left over from the presale. According to the company, the demand for The Eras Tour was far too high and their software could not compensate, resulting in 52 sold-out stadium shows.

This outraged fans like myself, who had a horrific ticket-buying experience because this is simply not supposed to happen. From the start, Ticketmaster should have sent out far fewer presale codes to make sure presale tickets did not sell out before the general sale, but they did not. Instead, Ticketmaster claims this was just some catastrophe, and maybe it was. According to Ticketmaster, Swift would have to perform 900 stadium shows to make up for the high

demand she received through their website. But maybe this situation isn’t as surprising as the company made it out to be.

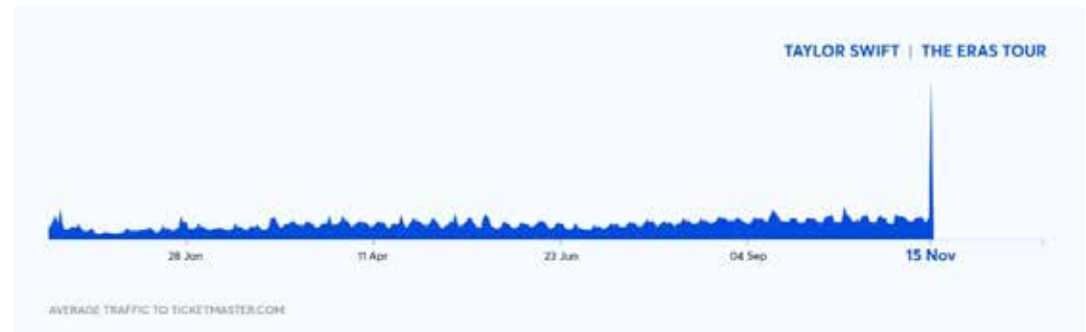
Back in 2010, Ticketmaster merged with Live Nation Entertainment and has since been signed under them. Together, they singlehandedly dominate the live-ticket entertainment business. They’re a monopoly with no competition, meaning they have no reason to fix the issues we’ve seen with The Eras Tour, and maybe they never will. As far as we all know, Ticketmaster will remain a primary ticket seller despite its many flaws. People will inevitably log onto Ticketmaster to buy tickets because it’s marketed as easy and accessible to fans, re-sellers, and ticket brokers alike. I don’t believe that even a disaster like the sale of the Eras Tour would encourage Ticketmaster to mend their issues because, at the end of the day, they are a business.

On the upside, the Department of Justice (DOJ) has an ongoing investigation into Live Nation Entertainment. The antitrust division of the DOJ questions if Live

Nation has abused its power in the live music industry. Of course, Live Nation claims they’d never violate antitrust laws, but only an investigation will tell.

Ticketmaster has truly failed millions of fans with their inability to plan accordingly. Most fans have turned to resellers for purchasing tickets, and even today, nosebleeds are being resold for far more than they’re worth. Because of Ticketmaster, the fans have to suffer and act as pawns in an unjust game.

The sale of The Eras Tour brought to light the extent to which Ticketmaster prioritizes profit over fans. It’s easy to forget that fans buy tickets to see someone perform live, not to stare at their Ticketmaster tab all day hoping the queue moves. Seeing Taylor Swift in concert is extremely important to her millions of fans, and it’s disappointing to see Ticketmaster simply apologizing and doing little to rectify the situation. The best I and other fans can hope for is that Ticketmaster will improve in the future for the sake of fans everywhere and concert life as we know it.



**Photo Credit: The Clinton Post // Ticketmaster**  
Average traffic to Ticketmaster.com.

# *Avatar: The Way of Water*, the Movie of the Generation

BY: LOLA HOROWITZ

When *Avatar* was released in 2009, a wave of post-*Avatar* depression consumed fans. The syndrome came from dissatisfaction with humanity's bleakness after being exposed to the paradisiacal world of Pandora. The wave has returned with James Cameron's release of *Avatar: The Way of Water* in 2022. This science-fiction motion picture of the generation has become the seventh highest-grossing film and is currently topping the box office.

When the Sky People return to the planet of Pandora, *Avatar: The Way of Water* follows the journey of Jake Sully and his family as they flee their home to seek refuge in the reefs of the Metkayina clan. As they learn to adapt and blend in with the community, an ancient threat and vengeful enemies resurface. Jake and the Metkayinas must unite to fight another war against the humans.

*Avatar: The Way of Water* was a thirteen-year-long production resulting from Cameron's commitment to special effects and reality imitation. He used advanced technology to capture underwater stunts and performance capture suits to translate the actors' movements and expressions into their lifelike CGI characters. Water-filled tanks were



Photo Credit: Avatar // Clinton Post Staff

used to simulate waves and currents to assist with digitizing aquatic environments, making the realism more convincing. *Avatar: The Way of Water* is a breathtaking cinematic experience in cinematography, visual effects, advanced CGI, and photorealism. The audience is immersed in a surreal semiaquatic fictional world showcasing the beauty of water. Its vibrant portrayal of Pandora's oceans is meant to reflect our own aquatic ecosystems on earth.

The *Avatar* franchise pays homage to a diversity of indigenous cultures to recognize the hardships faced during the colonial period. Commitment to embodying this identity is apparent in costumes, caricatures, language, music, and religious ceremonies. With the Metkayina people of Pandora's reefs, Cameron took inspiration from the Eastern Polynesian Māori, who are spiritually connected to the oceans and aquatic species. Like the first film, its sequel also touches upon man vs. nature with under-

lying themes of protecting biodiversity and ecosystems.

Centering a film around the indigenous with a white producer was bound to receive mixed reactions. *Avatar: The Way of Water* has received relentless backlash from indigenous communities who are urging the world to not support Cameron's performance of cultural appropriation and reinforcement of the white savior and messiah complex. Critics argue that the *Avatar* franchise is guilty of Blueface—the casting of white actors for indigenous roles. Cameron addressed the accusation by claiming that his film aimed to exploit colonization and imperialism.

Now that Jake Sully and his wife, Neytiri, are parents, *Avatar: The Way of Water* explores familial bonds, parenthood, and the alienation felt by teens. The film focuses closely on Jake's children—Neteyam, Lo'ak, Kiri, and Tuktirey—and how they have dealt with abandoning their old home. Cameron provides a

diversity of archetypes and succeeds at building emotional connections between the audience and the characters.

While *Avatar: The Way of Water* did exceed in characterization, it lacked in the quality of its plotline. It may be action-packed with climatic battles, but it is repetitive and imitates the 2009 prequel. Having the Sky People return for a second time unnecessarily reawakens the conflict that had previously been resolved. However, the film contains many plot twists and an unexpected ending that will leave viewers stunned in their seats.

*Avatar: The Way of Water* is an imaginative masterpiece. Once again, Cameron triumphs at bringing a fictional universe to life in the most inspiring ways. This motion picture provides escapism to those feeling disconnected from restrictive reality. The inexplicable sense of serenity induced upon audiences is hypnotic and addicting. Before *Avatar: The Way of Water* leaves theaters in February, go experience the visual sensation James Cameron created and prepare to fall in love with the planet of Pandora.



## Club Spotlight: Mock Trial

BY: CHIARA MOINE

Clinton offers a variety of different clubs to satisfy everyone's interests and hobbies. This month, I am focusing on a newly formed club: Mock Trial Club! A club where all questions about the field of law and government can be answered and even tested out. I interviewed the founder and leader of the club, 10th grader Sammy Shnayder. I also spoke to a member from the club to tell us about her experience, Sadie Slocum.

**CM:** Why did you start your club?

**Sammy Shnayder:** I felt that Clinton needed more career-oriented clubs that were not just simply about the field you want to go in or possibly are interested in, but also something that you can act on when in high school. For instance, Mock Trial is targeted for the field of law and/or government

and kids who are interested in that. In Mock Trial, you are able to pursue that interest while not just learning about it in class. It also allows you to experience examples of the field of law because of the trials we do.

**Q:** How is it going so far for you?

**A:** It's been really good, we have a solid foundation of 12 - 15 members who consistently come to meetings and participate. We also had our first trial that had a really good turnout. A lot of people showed up and we did some great work for the club, especially since it was only the first trial. The club received feedback that is fun while also educational.

**Q:** What is your goal with this club?

**A:** I hope for the club, maybe this year or further in the future when the club is further developed, that we could potentially compete in the city-wide mock trial debates. From there, even

possibly achieve getting to the state mock trial meeting.

**Q:** Did you have anything that inspired you to start the Mock Trial club?

**A:** This past summer, I took a 4-week program at a university that included a wide range of classes regarding law, which I am very interested in as a possible career path for myself. I felt that we did not really have anything similar to that at Clinton and I wanted the kids here to have the choice to possibly have the same experience that I did: an opportunity to see what the legal field is all about and what it entails for students who are interested in it in an experiential way. Thus, I decided to start the Mock Trial club.

**Q:** When is the next opportunity to sign up for Mock Trial!?

**A:** We are always taking new members throughout the semester since there are many different trials that

we study and hold. But, it would be best to sign up next during the Spring Club Fair which I believe is within the next month because then we can start over with the new members.

**Q:** As a member of the club, what has your experience been so far? How are you feeling about it? Would you recommend this club to others?

**S.Slocum:** So far, I have participated in one trial and I felt as if it was both really fun to be around peers while studying cases and also educational. I think it has been a positive experience and it is a great extracurricular to take part in. It has also strengthened my public speaking which is very important in the IB program. To anyone thinking of joining Mock Trial, I would definitely join in the upcoming club fair and I would recommend you and a friend to join!

## Club Spotlight: Asian Student Union

BY: SIERRA SEETIN

Sarina Shah and Lauren Byun are seniors at Clinton, with 2023 being their seventh year at the school. After recognizing the lack of clubs at Clinton, they founded Asian Student Union (ASU) in 2020, which fit right in with other affinity groups such as Jewish Student Union and Black Student Union (now Black Latin Power Union). The first meetings of ASU were held over Zoom in 2020, originally starting off with six members. When

Clinton transitioned to in-person learning in the 2021-2022 school year, it was an exciting time because it was the first time that the club met face-to-face and was able to share snacks. This is an important tradition for ASU, and they continue to share snacks every Thursday after school in 502.

As Clinton has a predominantly white student body, many students of color feel isolated from their white counterparts. Sarina recalls being the only student in her middle school

class with a dark skin tone, and feeling "just a little" different from her classmates. These feelings promote a sense of alienation, and feeling out of place can be harmful to a student. When founding ASU, Sarina was able to address an issue that many minority students silently suffer from and give them a place where they can be themselves.

ASU acts as a "safe space" and community where Asian and non-Asian students can come together to celebrate culture. Gathering Asian students in one place

enables a stable community to be built and creates a system of support. "Having a group of ten people who come every week is important," Lauren says, "it feels good to know we can rely on them." ASU has also led many Asian cultural celebrations, such as holding an art and crafts-making session to celebrate Diwali. To ring in the new year, the club held a Lunar New Year potluck. ASU is always looking for new members and will hold more celebrations in the future.

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