

# THE PULSE

December 2023

THE HEARTBEAT OF SYOSSET

## Multicultural Festival: A Syosset Tradition

With over 20 countries represented, Syosset's cultural diversity is on display at the Multicultural Festival.

By: Sarah Chen

Multiculturalism doesn't just provide insight on different types of food, language, literature and entertainment, but it also creates a more accepting and open-minded environment. By doing so, it challenges cultural stereotypes and dispels stigma. On November 3, the Syosset High School PTSA hosted a multicultural festival that not only recognized the diversity of the student population, but also celebrated it with the school community.

With parents volunteering, there were over 20 countries represented which served food or showcased their cultures to over 2,000 students. This year's event included cultural performances that represented the rich diversity in Syosset. The festival was held from periods four to eight and students could come during their lunch periods. Ms. Rachel Sze, a parent volunteer from the China stand, said, "It was so much fun to see so many kids appreciate food from my culture!"

With such a wide range of traditional foods from each country, attendees were able to get a meal from all around the world. This included sushi from Japan, Pelmeni from Russia, fried rice from China, and many more options. Students were able to leisurely explore the gym to try different foods and learn about the background of their peers. The foods served also had an ingredient list correlating with the recipe to ensure allergy safety among the students and faculty. With these allergy friendly tables, it ensured that everyone could have a good time. Junior Lily Ke said, "The festival brought an opportunity for



Performing Garba, a group of lively women dance while the tabla is being played in the center. This form of Gujarati dance gave a live visual insight into Indian culture.

Photo by Charley Smouha

a warming experience to enjoy and appreciate culture that would've never been possible."

The highly anticipated event was organized by the hardworking PTSA who collaborated with school administration as well as local vendors and donors to make it all happen. The multicultural festival started in 2016, and it initially represented eight countries. Since then, it has grown so much and into one of the annual traditions that reflects how Syosset continues to diversify and grow.

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The Pulse is published by the newspaper staff of Syosset High School, located at 70 Southwoods Road, Syosset, NY 11791. The Pulse has been established as an open forum for student expression. The opinions expressed in editorials and columns represent the views of the individual writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Pulse editorial board.

**Distribution**

Each issue of the newspaper is posted online on the school website for the Syosset community.

## Syosset Participates in Walkathon

The annual Walkathon event raises money for the American Cancer Society.

By: Alice Huang

On October 16, Syosset High School kicked off the 2023 Fall Spirit Week with its annual Walkathon. Between the first and second periods of the day, the entire student body and school staff walked in unison on the high school field to raise money and awareness for the Syosset Relay for Life team, which supports the American Cancer Society. Despite the initial weather concerns, the Relay for Life Walkathon at turned out to be a success. This year, the school raised a total of \$1,000 in fundraising for the American Cancer Society's support service and lifesaving research.

More than simply a fundraising walk, the American Cancer Society Relay For Life is an organization that is dedicated to raising money for cancer research, patient support, and aiding communities in attacking cancer. This volunteer-led experience unites communities to celebrate cancer survivors, raise funds to improve the



lives of patients with cancer and their families and to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to prevent, treat, and survive cancer. Sophomore Oma Ranga said, "This is really an incredibly meaningful cause for our school community to support. [The walkathon] raises awareness on the issue as well as actual donation funds to provide aid for cancer patients and their families."

The annual schoolwide event encouraged students to think beyond themselves about causes that make a difference in the lives of others. Sophomore Elaine Liu said, "I think it's so important that our school shows Syosset students really how much of a difference we can make together. Maybe to one student, participating in a ten minute walkathon at school or donating a few dollars may not seem like much, but it could mean the world to someone else out there. And that's such a powerful thing."



1. Syosset cheerleaders and marching band lead the Walkathon. The students began the Walkathon with music and spirit as the student body followed around the field.
2. Syosset students walk a lap around the high school field during the Walkathon. This year's event raised awareness and donation money for the Syosset Relay for Life organization dedicated to battling cancer and aiding cancer patients and survivors.

Photos by Matthew Finkel

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# Carnival Treats and Thrills



Photo By: Larissa Mallen

“Fried Oreos are one of my favorite desserts and I loved them at the carnival.”

Food and rides bring the Syosset community together.

By: Nikhil Shah

Despite bad weather, the Syosset Carnival turned out to be a major success. People from all over the community were welcomed with thrilling rides and delicious food.

Many of Syosset High School's clubs sold food and other items to raise money. Brandon Mun, Senate President, said that his favorite food was "the mochi donuts from The Asian American Experience club." Tri-M Music Honor Society sold candy and the Korean club sold ramen. "On a cold night, the ramen was delicious and warming," said junior Sanam Mehta. Warm and fresh zeppoles, funnel cakes and fried Oreos with powdered sugar were among the favorite desserts sold. Sophomore Ayden Diep said, "Fried Oreos are one of my favorite desserts and I loved them at the carnival this year."

Rides such as The Zipper and the Polar Express brought an additional level of excitement for thrill seekers. The classic Ferris Wheel proved to be an extremely popular ride as well. Sophomore Eesha Bhutani said the Ferris Wheel was her favorite ride because, "you could watch the soccer game from it on Friday, and the football game from it on Saturday." The most courageous attempted the Gravitron. Sophomore Anik Paul said, "The Gravitron was my favorite ride because it went really fast...with my friends on it."

The Carnival was the conclusion to Spirit Week at the high school. It was a way to boost Syosset Spirit and bring together students, families, teachers and staff from all over the Syosset community with its delectable food and exhilarating rides.



1. Students visit the dessert stand at the annual Carnival for zeppoles, funnel cake, and fried oreos. Despite the bad weather, the Carnival turned out to be a major success.

2. One of the stands present at the carnival served a variety of savory foods for attendees to enjoy. Carnival attendees were welcomed with thrilling rides and delicious food.

Photos by Katerina Paxinos

# Forensics Freshman Take on Interleagues

Newcomers get a taste of the Syosset experience in the world of speech and debate.

By: Malk El-Abtah



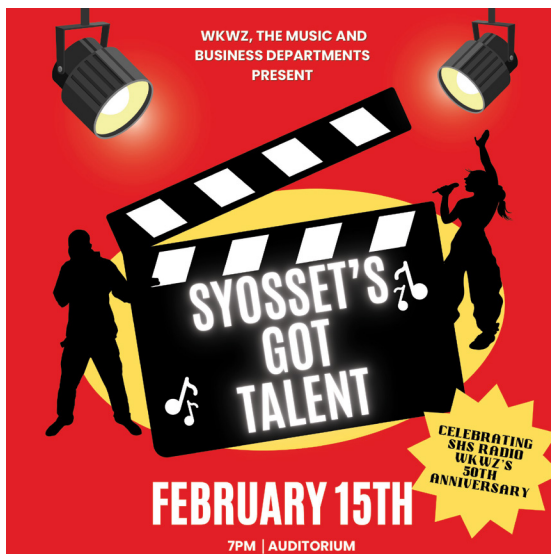
Photo By: Tina O'Bailey

On September 8, 2023, Syosset Forensics rolled out the red carpet for its annual freshman welcome event. The club introduced its captains, explained the different speech and debate events and showcased what students could get involved in. The auditorium was packed with around 100 freshmen, most of whom eagerly signed up for Forensics. And just like that, the freshmen kicked off their journey into the world of speech and debate.

Interleagues, which is commonly known as Mini-States, introduced freshmen to the rest of the schools in New York. Freshman Nia Andraw-is said, "When my captains told me that more schools would be in attendance, I realized two things. First, this would be my biggest challenge yet and second, this competition could be a way for me to gauge my competition and to prove myself."

As the days went by, each one carrying a sense of anticipation and preparation, all roads led to the pivotal date of November 11 – the day of Interleagues. For freshman Shreeya Shah, the journey was marked by a blend of excitement and nerves. Reflecting on the lead-up to the event, Shreeya said, "It was so nerve-wracking. I was signing up for practice speeches and constantly working on my piece. I listened to all the comments I got and I worked to improve myself."

When the day arrived, the freshmen dressed up in their suits, got on the bus and arrived at Xaverian High School in Brooklyn. "As nervous as we all were, it all paid off. With 23 kids placing at Interleagues and Syosset taking home best performance, it felt amazing. I finally understood why people placed such an emphasis on Forensics," said Shreeya.





# S-A-T-saster?: The Digital PSAT & SAT

Students face a new era of standardized testing with online college entrance exams.

By: Katerina Paxinos

The College Board announced in January 2022 that the PSAT would go digital in the fall of 2023, and the SAT would follow suit in the spring of 2024. While the switch was intended to make the exam process easier for students, it raises the question of whether the adaptable format is as fair and valuable as its paper counterpart.

To begin, why are the PSAT and SAT moving to online formats? This can be broken down into three key areas: accessibility, time efficiency, and relevance. To make the exam more accessible, students will be able to take digital exams using their own or school issued device, rather than receiving materials at the testing site. "It was nice to have the calculator on the computer for both math sections, but I found it kind of inconvenient to use scrap paper for calculations," said Samara Epstein, a sophomore taking the exam for the first time.

In terms of time, the digital SAT is 46 minutes shorter than the paper version and contains 56 fewer questions, meaning that digital exams last two hours, whereas paper exams last three hours. When it comes to results, digital scores are distributed faster, taking a few days instead of weeks. The most noticeable difference, however, is in the relevance of the questions, as the exam is now adaptable. The questions you encounter as you progress in adaptive testing are determined

by how you answered the previous questions. This means that all students taking the digital SAT and PSAT will take the same first module for both the English and Math sections, and their performance on the section will determine whether they are routed to a module of higher or lower difficulty.

The College Board claims that the model actually produces more accurate results because while the difficulty of the digital SAT varies between test takers, more difficult questions are worth more points. In essence, this means that even if a student takes an "easier" exam and answers more questions correctly, their score cannot be weighted the same as a student who takes a "harder" exam. Justin Greenberg, a junior who has taken both versions said, "The digital and paper PSAT seemed equally fair to me. The exam's online format and multiple modules make it very difficult to cheat,

which improves its fairness."

Overall, students who take these digital exams agree that the test is easier and less stressful. With all of these changes, many colleges are still making tests optional. While the exam is becoming obsolete for some schools, other more competitive schools still value these scores during the admissions process. Whether you are for or against this new style of testing, it looks like it's here to stay for the foreseeable future.

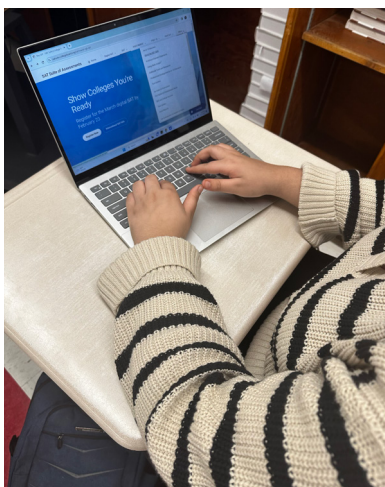


Photo By: Ranika Shah

“The exam’s online format and multiple modules make it very difficult to cheat, which improves its fairness.”

# Syosset High School Through the Decades

English teacher Lydia Esslinger takes a nostalgic trip down memory lane through her years working in Syosset.

By: Xihan Zhang

Syosset High School, since its opening in 1956, has been a school that is home to many accomplishments, notable alumni, and changes. Ms. Lydia Esslinger, an English teacher who has been here since 1969, has seen many of these changes.

Throughout the period of time Ms. Esslinger has taught here, the school demographics have changed significantly. Ms. Esslinger said, "There were more men teaching than women. In my own department, English, there were many sharp, young men. This was the time of Vietnam and the draft." Besides teachers, student demographics were different as well. Cabinet Secretary Elaine Chao, a notable alumna, was Ms. Esslinger's student. "There were 2 Asian students in Elaine Chao's graduating class, her and a girl from Vietnam. Obviously the Asian population is larger now," said Ms. Esslinger. The school has seen a great shift in demographics, with more of the Asian population joining the community. Even though Ms. Esslinger has seen many of her students grow into adulthood, she still sees many of them as "students" even after countless years apart. "Secretary Chao was somebody I got to see evolve through life. When someone was your student, in some ways that person remains frozen in time as your student," said Ms. Esslinger.

The structure of the high school and room distribution by subject have also changed. Ms. Esslinger said, "Where classrooms like C11 or C12 are now used to be open. The middle of B-hall was open. Where Guidance is now was an interior courtyard with tables and chairs where students could meet with teachers. The E100-hall did not exist at all." Different from how classes are mostly arranged by subject today, classes were arranged very differently decades ago. "When I first started teaching here, English was in the A area...each area - A, B, C, D - was like a mini-college," said Ms. Esslinger. Other changes were made, especially the organization of grade levels. "For a time, the ninth grade wasn't in this school. It was only 10, 11, and 12. Not everybody was in school for periods 1-9. Because the school was so big, there were overlapping sessions. A group of students would come in a certain period, and the next group would come," said Ms. Esslinger.



Teaching methods were widely different in past decades before the advent of certain technology. "There are many more visual aids and equipment now, and a little less relying on spoken word. Everybody back then had a notebook, something to write with, paper, and that was it," said Ms. Esslinger. Instead of projectors and screens in every classroom, TVs had to be brought into classrooms when necessary. Ms. Esslinger said, "You could get televisions mounted on rolling stands and if you wanted to show the class anything, you would roll it in. We jokingly called it the rolling curriculum." Prior to having set substitutes in the school, there was a Sub Program. Ms. Esslinger said, "In the Sub Program, people from all different occupations outside of school would come in. Every day was different- a professor of philosophy at Adelphi came, a belly dancer came, a member of the Black Panther party was here, and there would



be a place where a film was set up to watch a movie. We had a choice to have a substitute teacher or have kids take advantage of the substitute program. The school had a reputation for this program; it was even written in the newspaper."

Before ACT was established, the spring musical was put on by the senior class. The musicals were open to not only students with interest in theater. "Most students who were in it had no theater background. I directed 20 years of Spring Musicals, it was a great experience. Bernardo in West Side Story was an athlete I saw walking in the hall. He had an interesting swagger, and I found he could dance. We also had student-faculty plays where the cast was a combination of kids and teachers. It was a wonderful way to work with colleagues and people we taught in class," said Ms. Esslinger.

Through her experience teaching and being able to see how this school has developed since 1969, Ms. Esslinger reflected on her time at Syosset. "I think when you're working every day...it's hard to notice changes because you are in the middle of them. I've always liked being here. I enjoy coming in the morning and spending time in classes and with students in extracurricular activities after the last class ends. I'm a big believer in commitment and work, so I just put my head down and get to work doing what I love to do," said Ms. Esslinger.





Monday: Pajama Day



Wednesday: Country vs. Country Club



Friday: Syosset Spirit

# SPIRIT

By: Zoey Chiu, Hailey Hwang & Victoria Lee

Spirit Week took place during the week of October 16. On Monday, students rolled out of bed ready for Pajama Day, followed by a decades theme. Wednesday, students had the option to choose a country or country club theme, and Thursday was Tropical. Friday, students were decked out in Syosset Spirit to show support during Pep Rally when the team captains spoke, along with performances as well as a relay race.



Tuesday: Decades



Thursday: Tropical

# WEEK

# A Cornucopia of Thanksgiving Traditions

By: Malk El-Abtah

Every fourth Thursday in November, Thanksgiving kicks off. The enticing smells of traditional dishes like turkey, cornbread, cranberry sauce, bread rolls, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, mac and cheese, and the ever-beloved pumpkin pie envelop households across the nation. In this moment, people throughout America express gratitude not just for this food but for the cherished presence of family, friends, and the blessings in their lives.

However, as Thanksgiving traditions evolve, an increasing number of Americans are weaving their own cultural heritage into Thanksgiving, introducing delightful cherished favorites alongside traditional dishes, creating a unique and personal touch to this beloved holiday celebration. Despite the fact that Thanksgiving is all about being thankful for every-

thing you have, food is just as big as the celebration, bringing together families from across the country. Rather than people following tradition, the food on the table has begun to change in some homes. A common addition is Chinese takeout. Not only is it one of the only places that is usually open on Thanksgiving, but everyone loves it. From chicken lo-mein to General Tso's chicken, the options are endless.

Thankfully, some things never change, like America's collective obsession with pecan and pumpkin pie. Despite all the changes in food, one thing that will never change is how Thanksgiving allows everyone to show their love and appreciation for everyone and everything around them, making it one of the most heartwarming holidays.

## Favorite Holiday Shopping Spree

By: Lily Portnoy

Thanksgiving is a popular holiday tradition for a variety of reasons including quality time spent with family, all day football watching or simply being able to have time off from school. And for many people around the world, Thanksgiving is their favorite time of the year as it kicks off the unofficial start of the holiday season with shopping, shopping, and more shopping! The shopping frenzy commences on Black Friday and runs until Cyber Monday.

The origins of Black Friday as the unofficial beginning of holiday shopping season goes back to the 1950s although it didn't really get much national attention until the New York Times referred to it as the "busiest shopping day of the year" in 1975. Black Friday was a day where stores, many of them large retail chains, would open up their doors at designated times offering motivated shoppers opportunities for great deals on products in many categories including kitchen, tech, home goods, luggage and more. Around 2005, online shopping exploded as many more people got access to the Internet. Retailers swiftly used this new online trend to offer similar savings deals on products purchased only online on the Monday after Thanksgiving. This day of deals came to be known as "Cyber Monday". Notably, after the impact of COVID-19's effect on society, more buyers trended towards online transactions and soon many of

the deals were extended out from Friday all the way through Monday.

Over time, and especially in the post Covid era, the differences between Black Friday and Cyber Monday have become more blurred although there are still some differences. Black Friday deals have traditionally focused on a wider range of products than Cyber Monday. Some of the most popular types of products sold in Black Friday specials are electronics and smaller items such as small home appliances and headphones. Cyber Monday often attracts the rabid online shopper who tends to make purchases more in the fashion, homewares, and accessories space. In the past few years retailers have started Black Friday savings deals as early as October while Cyber Monday deals are limited more to the Monday after Thanksgiving.

Even in 2023, Black Friday is still considered to be an in-store shopping event while Cyber Monday is historically seen as an e-commerce event. Based on a survey conducted with a number of Syosset students, 100 percent of those students responded that they would be doing all their shopping online. Some of the products they were most excited to purchase included jewelry, sneakers, winter jackets, and makeup. Whether they shop on Black Friday or Cyber Monday, they are all excited to shop and even more excited to get fantastic deals.



Photo By: Emerson Schaefer



# Club Spotlight

## Mathletes

By: Cody Cheng & Winston Zhou



1. The Syosset Mathletes pose for a yearbook photo. The club met every Tuesday after school in E14/E15.

2. Syosset Mathletes having fun on a trip to Penn State University. Overnight trips take place in spring, where the club goes to competitions in Ithaca and Penn State.

Photo 1 by Kimberly Dwyer, photo 2 by Ashley Huang

If you're looking for a place where you can hone your creative problem-solving skills while collaborating with others, then Mathletes is definitely worth a visit. "We are a kind and supportive community where you can improve your math skills and work on problems collaboratively, immersing yourself in the ocean that is mathematics," said Co-President Aberam Sriganesh. Mathletes meet every Tuesday after school in E14, and meetings consist of interactive lessons on competition math taught by the officer team. Between practices, Mathletes members also take tests for a shot at the prestigious Nassau

County All-Star Team, which is made up of the highest scorers from around Long Island. In April and May, all members of the All-Star Team go on overnight trips to competitions in Ithaca and Penn State, a memorable and rewarding experience that can also create long-lasting friendships.

Overall, Mathletes is a place where one can freely discuss ideas and collaborate on challenging problems. Co-President Ashley Huang said, "We aim to cultivate critical thinking skills, teamwork, and a deep appreciation for the elegance of mathematical concepts."

## Dungeons and Dragons

By: Larissa Mallen

The "D&D" in Syosset's D&D club stands for the game they play: Dungeons and Dragons. "Dungeons and Dragons is tabletop roleplay game that usually takes place in a fantasy setting that emphasizes teamwork and statistics, and just an overall fun game to enjoy with friends," said junior Ethan Chen, the treasurer of the club.

D&D club meets every other Tuesday in E94. When asked who he thought would enjoy D&D club, Ethan said, "people with high imaginations, artists in particular. If you enjoy thinking outside the box with stuff like puzzles and creative writing, I think you'll really enjoy Dungeons and Dragons." With this being his third year involved in the club, Ethan said, "I just really enjoy spending time

with my friends in D&D, we all really enjoy having our imaginations run wild. It's fun to see what kinds of stories you can create when there are really no rules to it."



Photo By: Ethan Chen

Ethan Chen, Carolyn Wang, Jason Riccardi, and Penelope Smith play Dungeons and Dragons at the Panera restaurant.

# Jiang Nan Opens New Horizons

Jiang Nan, a new Chinese restaurant for the community to enjoy, opens in Syosset Plaza.

By: Cody Cheng & Winston Zhou

Jiang Nan recently opened in Syosset Plaza. Jiang Nan is an authentic Chinese restaurant, serving traditional Chinese dishes like Peking Duck and Char Siu Pork.

As you walk in you will notice the cozy, pleasant atmosphere, which is created through a variety of traditional yet modern decorations that makes this a restaurant worthy of your taste buds. Sophomore Michael Ren said, "I really liked a lot of the decorations in the restaurant. The aesthetic goes well with the atmosphere of a traditional Chinese restaurant." The restaurant has a unique feature where all customers receive free unlimited servings of kimchi—a spicy yet savory Korean pickled cabbage. Customers can order popular Chinese classics off of the menu, like vegetable spring rolls, lamb skewers, okra in garlic sauce, and spicy sauteed pork belly, but also more exotic dishes, like tiger shrimp in a sweet chili sauce or stir-fried loofah.

The chefs and staff at Jiang Nan are sure to make your experience a memorable one. When

ordered, the behemoth duck is rolled out on a large serving platter and seared (by being set on fire!) in front of the whole restaurant. Then, the server skillfully makes delicate incisions into the duck, carving out golden, glistening slabs of meat for you and your party to enjoy. The duck is served with traditional toppings, like Hoisin sauce, scallions, and sliced cucumbers. This unique experience makes Jiang Nan different from your average Chinese restaurant.

The restaurant has received a number of positive reviews from the Syosset community. Customers particularly hold the dishes in high regard. "The Peking Duck and the whole grilled fish were extremely well made, and tasted just as good as they looked," said Syosset resident Zhaoding Zhou. Although Jiang Nan has only been open for a few weeks, it's already growing a reputation in Syosset.

1. Peking Duck at Jiang Nan is served with crepes, plum sauce, sliced cucumbers, and scallions. The Peking Duck was wheeled out on a large tray which is then carefully sliced and prepared in front of the table to eat.

2. Jiang Nan encompasses a mix of traditional decorations such as paintings, sculptures, and ceiling lamps to generate a pleasant atmosphere for customers. The new decor felt inviting and bridged Chinese tradition with a more modern feel.

3. A Jiang Nan chef prepares Peking Duck to serve to hungry customers. This dish is traditionally made by hanging the ducks above fire after cooking in an oven for a crispier and more satisfying mouthfeel on the skin.

Photo 1 by Winston Zhou, photos 2,3 by Lorinda Zhou





# Syosset Gets Spooky

Students and faculty channel individual inspirations to dress up for Halloween.

By: Sarah Chen



Photo By: Helen Seo

Junior Lydia Hong rocking a shark onesie alongside her friend, Emma Shafeei, wearing an alien onesie from the animated film *Toy Story*.

It's the spookiest time of the year everywhere, and Syosset High School is no exception. On October 31, students and teachers roamed the halls with a whole range of costumes from animal onesies to human calculators and Elvis impersonators.

One costume trend this Halloween was Onesies of all sorts. Junior Lydia Hong said, "Well it's comfortable to wear to school." Other popular inspirations could be found scrolling through social media platforms- the outfits of the major media phenomenon of 2023 such as Barbie and Ken. Media trends were on the rise throughout the year, with Halloween costumes being no exception. Back in 2021, when the TV show series "Squid Game" was released, fans were quick to buy the iconic green jacket for their Halloween costumes, and that costume was also quick to

fade the following year as the show lost its hype. Another example would be the TV show series *Wednesday Addams*, which came out towards the end of 2022. The Halloween costume was the sixth most popular in the US.

With the ERAS tour also being one of the talks of the summer, a rise in Taylor Swift Halloween costumes was seen, making it to #25 in popularity, and also being the only celebrity ranked that high. Other Halloween costumes that were commonly seen were Disney princesses, Spider-Man, and fairies. Despite not having any media trends centered around these costumes, they were still widely popular. With or without the media effect, Halloween remained a celebrated holiday for Syosset students.

**Click the Play Button to access additional video coverage:**



1. Ms. Sam Sears and Ms. Brittany Palmerini dress up as graphing calculators for Halloween. For her inspiration, Ms. Sears regularly used graphing calculators to plot functions in her math class.
  2. The SHS Business Department dressed up as Amazon workers, ready to deliver products. Known for its convenience and efficiency, Amazon has been a great benefit to everyone, especially during the holiday season.
  3. Radiating old-school megastar energy, Mr. Tom Rooney dresses up as Elvis Presley, the King of Rock n' Roll. Since the biographical drama film *Elvis* was released in June of 2022, the costume certainly garnered the attention of many Elvis fans.
- Photos provided by Trish Sergi



1. Kiki Powell and her castmates in the opening scene of *Peter and the Starcatcher*. Kiki played one of the lead roles, Molly Aster.
2. Lusanga Carter (Prentiss) and Riley Shafritz (Alf) shout as lights fade to green. Alf scolded the orphan boys while giving them worms for food.
3. Kiki Powell, Lusanga Carter, and Shanleigh Meehan's characters are featured arguing about who is their leader. Shanleigh's character, Ted, held a bucket of worms while begging for good food during the scene.

Photos by Ben Harris

## Off to Never Land

Student actors take to the stage to tell the backstory of Peter Pan and Neverland.

By: Rachel Liu

Peter Pan, Wendy, Captain Hook. For many, these characters have been ingrained into our hearts since childhood. The classic story told about Peter Pan and Neverland encapsulates the beauty of imagination and childlike freedom, which is why the story is so beloved by many. As a prequel, *Peter and the Starcatcher* tells the story of how an orphan boy becomes the boy who never grew up.

In an "evocative and fast-paced adventure" on the high seas and a faraway island, an orphan boy named Peter and his mysterious new friend, Molly, overcome bands of pirates and thieves in their quest to keep their fantastic secret safe and save the world from evil. Peter and Molly are taken from home and boarded onto the *Never Land*, a ship that contains a trunk filled to the brim with

magic dust that heals and gives the ability to fly.

Act by act, the charisma of the lead actors Kiki Powell, Amanda Schwartz, and Jaime Guo as well as the rest of the cast, drew viewers into a mesmerizing world filled with hidden messages and action filled adventures along with the twists and turns of navigating a child's life. "This is a great play and I was happy I got to see it," said Evan Collins, a junior who attended the performance. For most, the play's crowning theatrics with colored fog and a melodic symphony of instruments dramatizing the scenes gave viewers a Broadway like experience. As a Syosset ACT production, *Peter and the Starcatcher* is



Photo By: Ben Harris

something you wouldn't want to miss whether in a high school auditorium or on the big stage. For people of all ages looking for a backstory on all the characters, this is the play for you.





1. Fans gather around the stage as the Eras Tour concert begins. The run time was over 3 hours and 15 minutes.
  2. As the concert comes to an end, lights flash and the crowd goes wild. Taylor Swift closed the concert with her hit, *It's Time to Go*.
  3. Fans watch in awe as Taylor Swift enters the "Lover" era of her concert. She sang *Miss Americana* and *the Heartbreak Prince*, *Cruel Summer*, *The Man*, *You Need to Calm Down*, *Lover*, and *The Archer*.
  4. Fans wear wristbands during the concert that are given out as they check in. These wristbands lit up during the show, giving the audience a colorful glow.
- Photos 1,4 by Sophia Deligiannidis, photo 2 by Gianna Affattato, photo 3 by Julianna Macaskill

## Eras Tour Puts Fans in a Frenzy

Syosset "Swifties" attend the Eras Tour to watch pop culture icon Taylor Swift perform.

By: Elaine Liu

Starting in March of 2023 when Taylor Swift first commenced her Eras Tour, her first concert in over 5 years, nonstop news and posts about the concert have spread throughout social media platforms. Spanning across five continents and 151 nights of singing, dancing, and music, the Eras Tour is predicted to earn over \$4 billion, set to become the highest grossing tour of all-time. Since its first night in Glendale Arizona, the Eras Tour has reached record numbers of attendance, with an average of 76,000 concertgoers ranging from babies to the elderly. Whether it be the thousand dollar tickets on Ticketmaster or the friendship bracelets fans create, this so-called "phenomenon" has left Syosset fans craving for more.

After attending the Eras Tour in East Rutherford, New Jersey, sophomore Julianna Macaskill said, "Hands down, the best concert I've attended. The concert was truly remarkable. The dancers, the visuals, the props, the people....everything felt like an out of world experience. Everyone was so enthusiastic and the overall vibes were over the roof." When asked if she would go again, Julianna said, "Even though the ticket purchasing process was very tedious and stressful, I would 100% go again if I had the chance." One aspect that has caused many young fans, including Julianna, to feel this way is because of the numerous songs that Taylor Swift sings dedicated to a certain era. Even those who had not listened to Taylor Swift a lot before the tour have been influenced by those around them. Sophomore Madison Shum said, "Although I personally have not gone, the Eras Tour has become a topic of conversation in all of my class-

es. I've heard of so many people who have attended the Eras Tour, including some of my teachers. I am astounded by how many people have gone, and also spent so much time buying tickets and planned out their outfits."

In addition to the songs, the concert showcased special effects and technology that elevated the experience. Senior Sophia Deligiannidis, who attended the concert with her best friend said, "The concert was amazing and truly captivating. I've never been to a concert with such liveliness and energy. There were also wristbands that were handed out before the concert that lit up with colors relating to each song. It was such cool technology that I've never seen before." Sophomore Gianna Affattato said, "My experience at the Eras tour was very surreal. Going from being a little girl singing along to 'Shake it Off' and 'You Belong With Me' in my bedroom, to hearing Taylor sing in front of me was truly magical and healing. All of the details in the performance itself were incredible and..I really hope I can see her in the future again."

Many people have gone to great extremes to attend the tour, including flying out to different states just to see Taylor Swift in person. Whether you think the tour is too expensive or worth it, no doubt, the Eras Tour has not failed to touch the hearts of Syosset Swifties. "The concert felt surreal and I cried at least 3 times throughout the show. Taylor had been one of me and my mom's top artists on Spotify for a few years to this point, so it was really touching to see her in person," said Gianna.

# Tennis Triumphs: Varsity Girls Garner Glory

Coach Fisher and the captains lead the rest of the team to an undefeated regular season and a shot at the State Title.

By: Nikhil Shah



Photo Provided By: Sanam Mehta

Back: Sophia Cheng, Saisha Puri, Julia Isham, Elaine Liu, Anya Bhatia, Taylor Brecher  
2nd Row: Selena Wang, Kayla Lo, Stephanie Liang, Ava Weinstock, Taylor Weinstock, Jasmine Liu  
Front: Stephanie Marcheret, Sanam Mehta, Zia Mukherjee, Manasi Pradhan, Diya Varma, Manami Wakazono

This fall, the girls varsity tennis team finished yet another successful season, furthering their dominance in New York State tennis. The girls have accomplished impressive feats, securing two out of the past three New York State Finalist titles, earning multiple Nassau County and Long Island Championships and consistently sending many of their top players to the Nassau County and New York State Individual Tournaments each year. Coach Shai Fisher said, "We had a great opportunity to do something special."

The girls went undefeated their entire regular season and throughout the Nassau County and Long Island playoffs. They triumphed over Garden City in the Nassau County Championship and went on to do the same in the Long Island Championship, defeating Half Hollow Hills East 7-0. These hard-earned victories secured the team a spot in the New York State Large School semi-finals at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center. There, Syosset defeated Bethlehem in the semi-finals to face Scarsdale in the finals. Scarsdale and Syosset met in the New York State Finals in 2021 as well, where Syosset fought hard but suffered a 4-3 loss in an extremely close match. For the long awaited rematch, Syosset fell to Scarsdale and brought home their second State Finalist title.

In addition to the great talent on the team, Syosset's success this year is a testament to the leadership of coach Fisher. Fisher, who has been recognized as coach of the year by Newsday and USTA Eastern, has a distinct approach to the development of his players. He uses his expertise in doubles strategies to help each of his doubles teams grow their own game styles. Describing his approach to player development coach Fisher said, "It starts with assessing what they're comfortable with, what they're not, and then working on getting them more confident in the shots that they might not normally hit. It's the constant improvement in those little things." To prepare his players for increased competition as the season progresses, coach Fisher said, "I decided to challenge everyone and move them up one or two positions anytime we had someone absent, and

all the girls, whether they were starting and moving up or if they were from the bench, did an amazing job filling in."

Co-captains Sanam Mehta and Zia Mukherjee also played an important role in the team's success. They were critical in keeping team morale high and advising younger team members. Sanam said, "We like to plan team events to help keep the team close." This year was a particularly young team, with many middle schoolers and underclassmen. Coach Fisher said, "I commend the captains and the senior leaders because they do such a good job guiding our younger players." The girls have a number of traditions, including throwing a pie in their coach's face after big wins and hosting pasta party celebrations. "These celebrations are an encouragement for the girls to work hard in practice and perform well in our matches. Our traditions are also a really fun bonding experience for the team," said Sanam.

Coaches and captains are a vital aspect of any team and its performance, but coach Fisher still modestly attributes the team's success to all of the players and how hard they work. Coach Fisher said, "One of the most important things is that many of the girls play year round, going to tournaments, and playing five to six days a week. No one ever stagnates." He explained how this allows everyone to come to practice prepared for the season and ready to work hard.

The team is vying for a similar outcome next year. They continue to work together during the off-season, forming new strategies and plans for the coming season. Coach Fisher said, "I already have an idea of what I want to focus on next year. I am ready to implement I-formation (a more advanced doubles strategy) and begin to expose the girls to playing double up at the net." In addition, he is also working on partnering with a local university tennis team to work with the girls to expose them to a higher level of tennis and prepare them for the competition to come. "I want us to all collectively work on our doubles play and get to States again to compete at that high level - even better this time," said Sanam.



# Serving Snapshots: Girls Tennis Team

“I want us to all collectively work on our doubles play and get to States again to compete at that high level - even better this time.”

- Co-Captain *Sanam Mehta*



Girls tennis team captains Sanam Mehta and Zia Mukherjee with their New York State titles. This is the team's fourth consecutive county title.  
Photo by:

“One of the most important things is that many of the girls play year round, going to tournaments, and playing five to six days a week... No one ever stagnates.”

- Girls Varsity Tennis Coach *Shai Fisher*



Girls tennis team captains Sanam Mehta and Zia Mukherjee with their New York State titles. This is the team's fourth consecutive county title.  
Photo by:

## Boys Badminton Team Shines to Semifinals

A group of determined athletes and a first year coach lead the badminton team to county semifinals.

By: *Nathan Pranaprom*

In an impressive display of skill and teamwork, the boys badminton team catapulted themselves into the semifinals of the county championships. With grit, determination, and relentless dedication, this underdog team captured the hearts of their supporters.

The journey to the semifinals was not without its challenges. The team faced stiff competition throughout the season, but their unwavering spirit and resilience helped them secure victories when it mattered most. Their performance in the quarterfinals against Manhasset was nothing short of spectacular, and the crowd erupted in cheers as they advanced to the next

round. Coach Tom Rooney, in his first year leading the team, couldn't be more proud. He said, "These boys have worked incredibly hard all season, and their commitment to improving their game is paying off in a big way. They're a talented and cohesive group, and it's a pleasure to see them succeed."

Team captain Tom Lu exemplifies the determination that propelled Syosset's badminton team to this stage. He said, "We knew we had the potential to make it far this year, and we've been putting in extra hours on the court. Our goal is to win the championship, and we'll give it our all in the semifinals and beyond."

# Varsity Football Semifinal Showdown

Drama unfolds as an unlikely hero kicks the game winning field goal during the semifinal game.

By: Peter Napoli



1. Syosset's varsity football team warms up for a game. This season, Syosset ended up making it to the Nassau County Championship game against great competition.

2. Syosset players huddle up for a pre-game discussion with coach Paul Rorke. Coach Rorke has been a coach and mentor for the varsity football team for the past 19 years.

3. Syosset quarterback Mustafa Mozawalla takes a snap from center David Gerson. Mozawalla led his team to the county championship with 21 total touchdowns and a QB rating of 104.3 this season.

Photos by Ben Harris

In a showdown that kept fans on the edge of their seats, Syosset's varsity football team clinched a spot in the Nassau County championship game with a thrilling 30-27 victory over Farmingdale on November 9. In the middle of the third quarter, Syosset quarterback Mustafa Mozawalla stepped up. He showcased his versatility and dual threat ability of a run-pass quarterback by scoring a pivotal 30 yard touchdown run, increasing the momentum in favor of Syosset. With the score at 14-13 in the third quarter, Mustafa's touchdown lit a spark in the players' hearts as they continued to persevere throughout the game. However, the real surprise came in the fourth quarter when the team faced a 27-27 tie.

Offensive lineman Sean Dillon, not well-known for his kicking ability, emerged as the unlikely

hero for Syosset. In a crucial moment, Dillon lined up his shot with the game on the line and nailed the game-winning field goal, securing the team's place in the championship. When asked about his thoughts while kicking the game winning field goal, Sean said, "I set myself and knew I had to hit it for the team." Dillon's unexpected role as the hero highlighted the resilience and next-man-up mentality of Syosset. The victory over Farmingdale not only proved the team's offensive strength, but also highlighted the depth of talent that extends beyond traditional positions and the trust within the players of the squad. The team carried that momentum from the win and the support from all Syosset students and fans as they headed into the Nassau County championship game.





1. Calling a huddle mid-game, the girls soccer team talks plays and tactics with their coaches. The team finished second against Massapequa in the County Finals game on October 31.

2. The varsity coaches watch the game from the sidelines with their motto "For the Team." Head Coach Tyler Arnone began his first year at Syosset this year after playing soccer at the University of Michigan as well as professionally on Real Monarchs. Photos provided by Tyler Arnone



## Girls Varsity Soccer Sets its Eyes on Victory

With their motto "For the Team," the girls soccer players build a culture of teamwork and community.

By: Lily Portnoy

There is no better example of a school team that has fully embraced their motto of "For the Team" than the girls varsity soccer team. Under the leadership of first-year coach Tyler Arnone, the team had another successful season as it continued its run with a play-off appearance in the Nassau County finals against Massapequa. More importantly than just one game or one season, this year's team has built a winning culture inspired by the brand symbol "For the Team."

As described by Coach Arnone, this philosophy encourages the players to see themselves as "a part of something bigger than themselves." This mindset was evidenced by all the time and work they put in, which resulted in sustained success on and off the field this season. The players clearly embraced their coach's teachings in every way possible.

On the field, the team continued the school's legacy of excellence in competitive girls' soccer, finishing in second place in the top power conference with a regular season record of 6-3-3. Building upon that, the girls' journey through the playoffs has been nothing short of dominant. Their first game against Baldwin was a statement 6-0 victory and featured a hat trick performance from junior Alexa Baek and solid goaltending by senior keeper Carly Greenbaum. The confidence coming off that win, along with sharp focus and determination fueled by what Coach Arnone describes as "believing in each other" led them

to another shutout performance against Port Washington in the county semifinals. In that match, the team recorded two goals from senior Brooke Barrie as well as important goals from Alexa Baek and senior Sofia Cummo. Once again, keeper Carly delivered another commanding performance as she pulled off the difficult feat of keeping the opponent to zero goals for the second game in a row.

Off the field, the team has proven that not only do they embrace a culture of "for the team," but they also embrace a culture of "for the school" and "for the community" through their group activities and fundraisers. Coach Arnone was especially proud of the players' efforts around the social cause of breast cancer awareness. Throughout the month of October, the team wore pink jerseys for each game and even designed T-shirts for sale, with the money going to the charity Pink Aid. In addition, the team has organized booster fundraisers where they washed local community members' cars

and offered local discounts at popular establishments such as Sugar Crazy and SoBoL.

As much as any goal, win or shutout, Coach Arnone believed that the team's work around social causes mattered most. He said, "[it was the] most notable highlight of their season." This season proved that the girls varsity soccer players are an all-around winning group of girls because they all universally believe in their motto: "We work hard for the team; we compete for the team; we win for the team."

### Fun Facts about

*Coach Arnone*

### Favorite Songs:

**#1** Joy of My Life by Chris Stapleton

**#2** Hail to the Victors

# 'Tis the Season of Gilmore Girls

By: Katerina Paxinos

There are many things we associate with the arrival of autumn. This can include elements like falling crunchy leaves, chilly crisp air, apple picking, Starbucks' seasonal menu, scented candles, and everything pumpkin spice. Many others, however, believe that the American comedy-drama television series "Gilmore Girls" offers the answer. Despite the fact that the show first aired in October of 2000, its availability on Netflix has exposed the mother-daughter duo of Lorelai and Rory Gilmore to a brand new audience.

This begs the question, what exactly about this show creates such a strong association with the fall season? When you enter the small fictional town of Stars Hollow, Connecticut, the explanation becomes abundantly clear. Fans remark that it somehow always feels like fall in Stars Hollow, with the continual presence of orange trees, comfortable sweaters, and flannels always being in fashion. Some of Stars Hollow's most memorable events, such as the Picnic Basket Auction and the Teen Hayride take place in the fall. Episodes frequently contain familiar autumn activities such as college football games and outdoor walks, engaging viewers in the season's atmosphere. It's also

worth noting that the show normally revolves around Rory's school year, which begins in the fall.

The music is an additional significant factor in the show's connection to autumn and general coziness all around. The laid-back atmosphere of the series is unmistakably communicated by the show's opening track, "There She Goes" by The La's. The infamous "Fade Into You" by Mazzy Star, the title track "Where You Lead I Will Follow" by Carole King, and the other main melodies of the season one soundtrack make you feel warm and cozy, which is especially crucial as the weather starts to turn cool in the fall.

"Gilmore Girls" appears as a timeless October friend in the embrace of falling leaves and pumpkin spice. The show's continuous fall mood, accented by orange-hued landscapes and homey customs, continues to enchant a new generation of viewers as they rediscover the charm of Stars Hollow through Netflix streaming. "Gilmore Girls" masterfully captures the essence of fall, from its familiar seasonal pastimes to the soothing soundtrack, making it an enduring classic for this snug and sentimental time of year.

# Syosset's Take on Drake's "For all the Dogs"

By: Jason Feldman

Drake released a new album on October 6 called "For all the Dogs".

This rap album has received mixed reviews from both fans and critics. Syosset students share their ratings below.

\*50 students were polled.

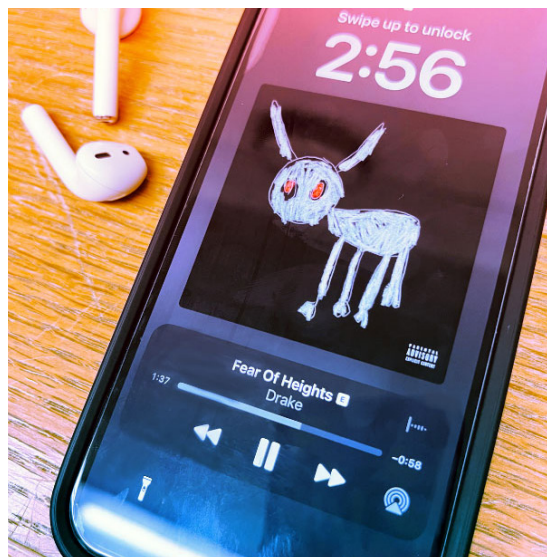


Photo By: Sarah Niam



# Beneath the Bright Lights: Fans' Discontent with the NBA Cup

By: Bhoomi Jobanputra

On July 6, ESPN reporter Adrian Wojnarowski unveiled to the world that the National Basketball Association (NBA) would be holding its first in-season tournament from November 3 to December 9. Two days later, on July 8, the NBA announced the details of the tournament, including the group draws. It was also declared that the semi-final and final rounds would be held in Las Vegas at the T-Mobile Arena. For decades, the NBA has been struggling to compete with the NFL during these early winter months, where seasons overlap for both organizations. Creating this in-season tournament seemed like the perfect way to boost viewership for the NBA. Teams would compete for the "NBA Cup," but winning would not have a direct impact on regular season statistics.

However, many true NBA fans frowned at the announcement of this NBA in-season tournament for a multitude of reasons. One of their biggest dislikes is the timing of the tournament. With the regular season starting on October 24, starting the in-season tournament less than two weeks after the start of the season just seemed pointless. Teams have not had a chance yet to build that chemistry needed on the court. Therefore, this final championship for the "NBA Cup" really

means nothing as it does not reflect on how well the teams perform during the regular season. Perhaps putting this tournament in mid-February, after the trade deadline, could be a more exciting and viable solution next year.

Another big problem with this tournament is the utter disgust of the court design from nationwide fans. From the glaringly bright colors, to the huge stripe down the middle, this design is not sitting right with most viewers. Trying to change up the designs a little is one thing, but the contradictory colors and weird designs are making the game look like it's straight from the NBA 2K videogame. Not being able to differentiate the players from the highly distractible background does not seem the best way of getting the crowd on board with this new tournament.

From the timing to the gaudy courts, this in-season tournament seems more like a gimmick rather than a serious sporting event. It's just not sitting right with the viewers all over the nation, including Syosset. said, "They should've just kept the season how it was last year." This reflects the frustration of viewers about the rule changes and additions from the start of this year's 2023-2024 NBA season.

**The Pulse Staff Wishes Everyone**

*Happy*

*Holidays!*