

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." - Eleanor Roosevelt

Breaking Beacon



Volume 18 / Beacon High School / April 2025

Words of Thought: Beauty

The Impacts of Today's Beauty Standards

By Madison Abrahamson

Do you feel beautiful? Are you happy with who you are? These two questions often result in an array of answers: yes, no, of course, and why? What would make anyone consider these inquiries? Why does it matter?

It matters a lot. Within your subconscious, the perception you have of yourself influences how you treat yourself, make decisions and interact with others. In today's society, people often measure their self-worth by how attractive they are or how others perceive them—but why?

In high school, this subconscious scale of "attractiveness" seems to linger in everyone's minds. You're either "fine," "decent" or "chopped." Within our adolescent minds, our placement in these so-

Continued on page 4



Scholastics Awards Ceremony

By Zenia Haris

The Scholastic Art Awards celebrate teens both nationally and

regionally, encouraging them by recognizing their efforts. This year, thanks to our talented artists, Beacon High School has received 26 Gold and 23 Silver Key awards, as well as an American Vision Award.



Guys and Dolls Preview

By Piper Bruno

The Beacon Players are performing *Guys and Dolls*, a timeless musical about gambler Nathan Detroit (played by junior Jonah Espinosa) and his search for a place to hold his illegal craps game while being questioned by Lt. Brannigan (played by junior Griffin Kitzrow).

Continued on page 2

The Danger of Fake News

The Rise of Deepfakes and AI-Generated Misinformation

By Marisah George

In this day and age, we are surrounded by news that can lead us astray. With the rise of AI and deepfakes, it's hard to tell what is real and what is not. The danger of fake news is prevalent, so here is what to look out for and how to avoid it.

Deepfakes have been taking the internet by storm. The official definition of a deepfake is "a video of a person in which their face or body has been digitally altered [by AI] so that they appear to be someone else." Across the internet, there have been deepfakes of a plethora of celebrities and even ordinary people.

The purpose of using them could be harmless, simply to make entertaining content. However, most depict celebrities or individuals in a harmful manner, such as making them say or advocate for harmful things or inappropriately displaying them. They can be used to convince the public that certain people said or did something, spreading disinformation.

To ensure you don't fall victim to believing deepfakes, it's important to pay close attention. Make sure whoever posted the video is a reputable and official source and not a small or private channel. Also, analyze the video closely. With deepfakes, there are slight discrepancies, such as unusually smooth skin, speech not lining up with the mouth or overall movements appearing unnatural.

Continued on page 6

Chet Baker Sings by Chet Baker

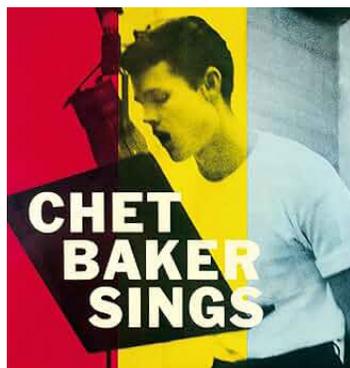
By Liliana Rybak

I received this vinyl for my birthday and haven't stopped listening to it since. People often stereotype jazz music as uneasy or not "real" music, but this album proves them wrong. I appreciate this album because it's not overcomplicated—it makes you tap your feet and sway to the beat.

What makes this album so captivating is Baker's incredibly smooth voice and his signature trumpet, which has a delicate beauty to it. Without getting too deep into music theory, his phrasing is subtle but significant, allowing each note to breathe and flow effortlessly.

It's difficult to choose only a few songs to highlight, but I'll start with the first track. The album opens with one of my personal favorites, *That Old Feeling*, originally

written by Sammy Fain. The lyrics, "Once again I seemed to feel that old yearning, and I knew the spark of love was still burning. There'll be no new romance for me, it's foolish to start, for that old feeling is still in my heart," are touching and perfectly describe what having a crush feels like. I interpret it as seeing someone again and realizing those feelings never really went away.



Another song I love just as much is *Like Someone in Love*. As someone still new to piano—especially jazz—I enjoy playing and singing this song in particular. The album carries a common theme of love and romantic fantasies. The lyr-

ics, "Lately, I seem to walk as though I have wings, bump into things, like someone in love. Each time I look at you, I'm limp as a glove and feeling like someone in love," capture the vulnerability of falling in love and how it can make you feel like a different person. Love has the power to change you, making you do things you never thought you were capable of.

Guys and Dolls (from page 1)

The show also follows high-roller Sky Masterson (played by senior Charlie Klein), who makes a bet with Nathan to pursue mission worker Sarah Brown (played by sophomore Molly Lyons)—only to fall in love with her. Meanwhile, Nathan has been engaged for 14 years to Miss Adelaide (played by freshman Giana Rodriguez), a headliner at the Hot Box Club. This talented cast, crew, and orchestra have worked hard to bring the musical to life. See it April 25-27!

Dr. BHS

Dear Dr.BHS,
I'm having such a difficult time at home right now. No matter what accomplishments I achieve both academically and with my clubs, it never seems to be enough for my parents. They're pretty strict and are soon expecting me to get into a big name school, receive a perfect SAT score and attain an "important" degree to be a doctor or engineer. I honestly have no desire to go into either field or do any of those things, but I don't want to disappoint them because they've done so much for me. I know it's a touchy subject but any advice?

From,
DragonFruit25

Hey DragonFruit25,
First off, I want you to know that you're doing a great job with balancing not only your academics but extracurriculars as well! The pressures that some parents put on their kids often come from their desire for their kids to have a better education and life than them. However, that's no excuse for making you feel less than or incompetent. When it comes to your own life choices, do what makes YOU happy. Regardless of what anyone thinks that you should do, you should aim for your own goals and desires. Any profession that's done with a passion will stand out and I'm sure your parents will be proud of you. Good luck and value your passions first!

From,
Dr.BHS

Writer of the Month: Tabitha Smith-White

By Kiera D'Ippolito

Welcome back! The Beacon High School Newspaper Club and the teachers at Beacon High School will nominate one of your classmates for Writer of the Month each month. After careful consideration, Tabitha Smith-White has been named this month's writer!

Tabitha Smith-White, a sophomore at Beacon High School, is a factual, emotional and observational writer. She spends most of her time on schoolwork or playing games, but when assigned an essay, she pushes beyond expectations—especially on topics she feels strongly about. She enjoys writing about corruption in America and inspiring others to spread awareness and advocate for change. For now, writing is just a school assignment, but in the near future, Tabitha may

be standing in front of a crowd, giving a speech and helping others see the truth.

Q&A with Tabitha

What do you enjoy most about writing?

The subject I enjoy writing about the most is the corruption in America, specifically in American politics and the American education system.

What is your writing process? Do you have any rituals or routines?

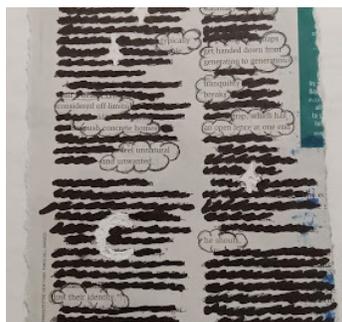
I do not have any specific writing system or rituals, I mostly just have an idea or strong resent and research a topic so I can provide truthful information, and write about how the topic affects people as a whole; letting my ideas and articulation flow like a river from my thoughts into my words.

What inspires you to keep writing?

I have no real inspiration to write; it is mostly for schoolwork. Though, even if it is just for a grade, I tend to go above and beyond in what I write, making sure to get my message out especially about a topic I feel strongly about.

FOUND POEM

The Earth, sea, and land, typically considered off-limits, push concrete homes, feel unnatural and unwanted, lost their identity, stationary trap, traps get handed down generation from generation, tranquility breaks, trap which has an open fence at one end, he shouts.



April Birthdays

By Nadeen Ahmed

- Dawn Clemens - April 7
- Erin Haddeland - April 13
- Kimberly Ritacco - April 16
- Laura Thomas - April 20
- Michelle Query - April 23
- Nesha Prahaladsingh - April 24
- Karen Hoben - April 28

The Heart of Beacon High School's Security

A Dedicated Guardian Who Brings Safety, Support, and Positivity to the School Community

By Prince Yahsir Langford-Jones

Humberto is one of Beacon High School's most well-liked security guards, known for his ability to bring hope and positivity to any situation. He ensures students feel comfortable in the school environment by acting as a neutral third party—a trustworthy individual students can turn to for support.

In an interview, Humberto recounted his own high school years. "I lived in New York City. I came when I was 15. I did high school in New York City, at William Cullen Bryant High School. I loved it," he said. He also mentioned, "I'm still in touch with some people after so many years. I graduated in 1995. And yeah, it was wonderful."

Humberto also shared how he began working at Beacon High School and the decisions he made to connect with the school community early on. "I used to work

security before. When they offered me this position and I got interviewed by Mr. O'Neil, I told him I'd never worked with kids before, but I was willing to learn," he explained.

He started on the second shift, from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. "It was okay in the beginning, but after a while, I realized that when people were leaving, I was coming in, so they didn't know my name," Humberto said. Recognizing the need to build rapport with students and staff, he requested a morning shift. "I think it was a good move because I feel I can help students; I can help people," he said.

Humberto prides himself on being a neutral resource for students who may not feel comfortable confiding in friends or family. "They need somebody to talk to other than somebody at home or a friend. They just need somebody neutral," he explained. "I think I am the type of person you can come to and talk about anything. I'm not going to judge you. I'll just tell you things the way they are. I think that's why people like to talk to me, and I appreciate that."

One challenge Humberto faces in his role is dealing with conflicts among students. "When there's a fight or something, and I see two students going at it, I wish I was there to prevent it," he said. "I don't like students fighting or arguing. I know everybody has different opinions and ideas—nobody has to like each other—but I don't like to be there after the fact. I wish I could prevent things from the start. At least you try to stop it so nobody gets hurt. Other than that, I love what I do."

Kelly Hamburger, a teacher at Beacon High, described Humberto's impact on the school. "Humberto is a security guard who always goes out of his way to greet students and care for them. He truly loves his job and wants the best for all students—not just on a surface level, but deeper," she said.

Humberto's dedication to Beacon High School is evident. For over a decade, he has been a steady presence, ensuring safety, breaking up conflicts, and offering a kind ear to students in need. Beacon High's very own protector, Humberto, has made a lasting impression on the school community, and his efforts are deeply appreciated.

Did You KNOW?

By Nadeen Ahmed

- While most people bring a book to read at the beach, Mrs Vakirtzis brings the June and/ or August Math Regents.



- Ms. Holder competed in Esports in college. At their first national competition, she and her team made it to 5th place (out of 150 teams!).



- Mrs. Gady has been skydiving.

Hamilton Live on Broadway

APUSH Students Watch History Come to life on Broadway Stage

By Kayla Selander

This year, Mrs. Clemens had the incredible opportunity to take 27 AP U.S. History students to see the acclaimed Broadway musical Hamilton, thanks to the Hamilton Education Program.

"The Hamilton trip was absolutely amazing. The show was truly spectacular, and it was really cool hearing the cast answer questions during the Q&A."- Anonymous



While this unforgettable experience may have been the last



opportunity for students to attend, it was met with immense excitement

and left a lasting impression on everyone involved.

Retire Spotlight: Mrs. Hamilton

By Kayla Selander

Growing up in Jackson Heights, Queens, Mary Ann Hamilton experienced the magic of Broadway shows and the rich diversity of New York City. The vibrant environment fostered her deep appreciation for culture. Inspired by this love and diversity, Hamilton felt compelled from an early age to share the world's culture and create a safe space for others.

This passion initially led her to pursue a career in teaching history. However, her journey as an educator took an unexpected and difficult turn. In her third year of teaching, a tragic event changed her perspective: One of her students was killed just outside the school building and she was there that day. This experience left her questioning her path. "I considered giving up because it was the hardest job I ever had," she recalled. "Just when I was ready to throw in the towel, I realized I couldn't. I had to continue and

fulfill my mission for myself and the teenagers." This moment strengthened her commitment to providing students with not only knowledge but also a sense of safety and belonging.

Today, Hamilton continues to foster that supportive environment in her role as the school librarian. When you walk into the library, you are greeted by a woman with fair blonde hair and warm smiles creating a welcoming atmosphere. Behind the desk, sits Hamilton ready to offer guidance, encouragement, and a comforting face to all who enter.

After 22 years in education, Hamilton is now preparing to retire. While she looks forward to exploring the world, she is especially eager to visit her family in Ireland and spend cherished time at their farm. Her dedication to creating spaces of comfort and connection has left a lasting impact on the many students she has supported throughout her career.



A note to Mrs. Hamilton from Sharod Tuggle

Dear Mrs. Hamilton,

I wanted to take a moment to thank you for these past four years. You have been nothing but kind to me, and our bond has grown stronger each year. Not only did you become close to me, but you also became best friends with my mom. She even joked at one point that you were my godmother.

You have been there for me so many times, and I truly appreciate that. Thank you for letting me use the microwave in the teacher's lounge and for allowing me to

listen to music on your computer. This past year, we've had so many fun times in the library. My favorite memory is when you let my friends and me play music on your computer, and we all just had fun dancing.

I find it ironic that the year I graduate is also the year you retire. You will be missed by me and so many other students. With your personality, you've truly felt like one of us at times. You have been nothing short of a wonderful friend, and I hope you enjoy your retirement—you deserve it.

God bless,
Sharod Tuggle

Beauty (from page 1)

cial categories influences the way we carry ourselves. If you're "fine," you raise your head high. If you're "decent," you walk with some confidence. But if you're "chopped," societal criticisms never seem to stop. None of these labels—often shaped by unrealistic social media standards—truly matter, yet our generation constantly emphasizes their "importance." This unspoken scale illustrates how vain we can be, whether toward ourselves or others.

To separate yourself from this way of thinking, take a moment and ask: Why does others' perception of you matter? Is it for the validation you lack? Does hearing, "You look good," make you feel accepted? Or is it an egotistical part of you that desires to be fawned over?

Perceptions of beauty and character are purely subjective. You

might meet someone with a unique personality and grow to like them, while another person finds them annoying. The Jordan 7s you hate and find ugly might be someone's all-time favorite shoes. Would that person's preference change your own? No. Just as you can acknowledge others' opinions while maintaining your own, you should treat others' opinions of you the same way—acknowledge them but don't fixate on them.

The fact is, people will view you however they choose, but that doesn't define you. You define yourself. It's easy to let others' judgment dim your light, to feel like you have to be a certain way to be accepted. These lies, cast upon so many, often defeat the confidence and happiness everyone deserves. But you can combat this by choosing to recognize your own greatness—regardless of what others think.

What's Happening in Beacon?

April 5
NHS Fundraiser at Chipotle
5-9pm Fishkill Chipotle



April 7-11
Multicultural Club Spirit Week

April 10
Spring Fling Cabaret
6:30pm BHS Cafeteria

April 25-27
Guys and Dolls (Beacon Players)
BHS Theatre

March 24-28
Women's Spirit Week

Womens Spirit Week
(All genders are encouraged to participate)

MON 03-24	Dress to Not Impress Forget beauty standards—today is all about comfort, no effort required.
TUE 03-25	Dress Like Your Mom Honor the women who shaped you by stepping into their style and strength.
WED 03-26	Dress Like Your Type Dress in a way that embodies the energy you're drawn to—your type, your rules.
THUR 03-27	Mean Girls vs. Bratz vs. Barbie Confidence, power, individuality—pick your persona and own it.
FRI 03-28	Pink Out Pink is power—bold, soft, and a symbol of strength (plus breast cancer awareness).

Breaking Beacon

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The Newspaper is always looking for members. Join today!

Local Places: Håkan

Eliza Verdichizzi

What makes chocolate so delicious? If it's creamy? The type of ingredients? If it has a taste that distinguishes it from other types? If so, Håkan checks off all of these boxes.

So how did this dream come true? Håkan Mårtensson is a chocolatier known for his creativity. He skillfully is able to add unique ingredients to his chocolates. His passion for chocolate began when he enrolled at the Culinary Institute in Kristianstad, Sweden at the age of 15. He graduated three years later as a pastry chef and worked at a department store called Nordiska Kompaniet, which was known for its high quality baked goods. After that, he participated in the Culinary Olympics in 2005, participated in the World Cup in Luxembourg, and participated in the Culinary Olympics in Erfurt. He has even brought home gold before. In 2008, Håkan moved to New York City to become the Master Chocolatier at FIKA NYC,



where he developed his skills even further, building his reputation as a top chocolatier. Today, he is recognized worldwide for his accomplishments. Håkan is very happy to have a chocolate store in Beacon, New York.

Both in the store and online, Håkan sells miniature chocolates, which they call 'bonbons'. These bonbons have unique flavors such as matcha, milk-n-cookies, and passionfruit explosion. Online, you can order boxes of chocolate. You can get a box with 9, 16, or 25 pieces

of chocolate. You can even tell them what kind of flavors you prefer, and they will include them in your batch. These boxes do happen to cost a bit of money, but are totally worth it for the skillfully made chocolate, and the uniqueness of it.

Håkan also sells chocolate bombs, and chocolate tablets with quite interesting flavors, such as mango and chili. They also have their own protein bars if you're not a fan of sweets. They also have hot chocolate. What I thought made this hot chocolate so much better than store-bought chocolate, was that it tasted much more natural. They even sell their own hot chocolate powder on their website. The hot chocolate comes in a regular and spicy flavor. Regarding the drinks they sell, they have espresso, macchiato, cappuccino, latte, americano, mocha, cold brew, hot chocolate, hot or iced tea, water, beer, and sandwiches!

Overall, Håkan is a wonderful place to visit! Although their prices are a bit higher, it's completely worth it for the quality of the product you get!

Faculty Spotlight: Mark Lyon

By Zenia Haris

Mr. Lyon is one of Beacon High School's finest art teachers, with over 20 years in the district. Personally, I'm extremely thankful to have him for all of high school. He's a very kind and understanding individual, and an overall great person to be around. For a long time though, I stopped myself from asking any questions, unsure of what the answers would entail. However, the suspense of not knowing would begin to eat away at me as the years progressed. Finally, in the first week of March, I decided to finally sit down with Mr. Lyon and really begin to ask hard-hitting questions that would reveal more about the inner workings of his mind.



(Taken by Trevi Romanelli, Silver Key Award)

Serious Interview with Mr. Lyon:

What did you have for dinner last night?

My wife made like a tasty... I don't know exactly what it was, but it was like ground beef and rice bowl with peppers in it.

Describe your ideal order of coffee.

A large coffee, cream, and sugar.

What was your worst subject in high school?

That was a while ago... I was okay in like the humanities.. Science was okay... I dunno. It's so lame with an art teacher saying math but it might've been math. Probably not my strength.

What made you decide to always wear jeans?

Cause they're amazing? They're comfy... It's a very American thing to do.

Three things you'd bring with you to a remote island?

A solar-powered generator, with some sort of a cooktop, and then I guess a hunting knife. 'Cause you gotta eat.

What's your favorite shape, and why?

I was gonna say a Möbius loop, but I dunno if we're counting that as a shape... Let's go with a circle.

What's your favorite color?

Big fan of green— Like a good medical green.

What's your favorite ice cream flavor?

Mint chocolate chip. It's fantastic.

Apple or orange juice, and why?

If I had to choose, it would probably be orange juice but... it's a little too acidic. Like a little bit of it goes a long way.

In your opinion, what is the worst flavor (in general)?

Is there such a thing as a lima bean flavor? That's not great. Fishy flavors, no good. I know I'm about to be on an island but not a big fan of coconut. But I wouldn't call it the worst flavor. I'm comfortable with lima bean.

Crumbl and its Secrets

By Madison Flagler

Every teen with a smartphone or other device has likely heard of the irresistible, out-of-this-world treat known as a Crumbl cookie. Crumbl cookies are beloved for their unique, indulgent flavors, but have you ever stopped to ask yourself: why do they taste so different from other cookies?

According to Crumbl's website, the company was founded by Jason McGowan and his cousin, Sawyer Hemsley, who had a dream of creating the "perfect" chocolate chip cookie. While their cookies have gained massive popularity, it's worth looking beyond the taste. Did you know that some Crumbl cookies contain Red #3, an artificial food dye?

Red food dyes are common in many processed foods, but Red #3, in particular, is linked to serious health concerns. Research has shown that Red #3 can damage DNA and is considered a carcinogen. In fact, the U.S. banned Red #3 from cosmetics in 1990 due to these health risks. So why is it still allowed in food?

The purpose of a food company like Crumbl is to create products that keep customers coming back. However, this often involves using additives and artificial

ingredients that may be harmful. According to FoodBabe.com, "Preservatives, emulsifiers, solvents, and other additives can make up 80% of the formulation (such as sodium



benzoate, glycerin, potassium sorbate, and propylene glycol)—none of which are labeled." These chemicals can mimic flavors like "strawberry shortcake" or "lemon," even when the actual ingredients are absent.

So the next time you consider buying a Crumbl cookie, think about what you're really consuming. Baking your own cookies at home might be a healthier—and equally delicious—alternative.

Club Highlight: Esports

Esports offers gamers in Dutchess County the opportunity to showcase their skills and compete against fellow students. The current lineup includes Super Smash Bros., Rocket League, and Madden, with an exciting addition for the upcoming spring season—either NBA 2K or Chess! Stay tuned for tryout announcements in February.

The program runs during both the fall and spring seasons,



with practices held on Wednesdays under the guidance of Mrs. Alvarez-Moore. Matches take place on either Wednesdays or Saturdays, so get ready to level up your game and join the competition!

Fake News

(from page 1)

Videos and photos using AI have also been a popular way to spread fake news. In the beginning, it was fairly easy to detect AI-generated content, but with its progression, some look just as real as any other media. An example of this was during the L.A. wildfires, when photos circulated of the Hollywood sign engulfed in flames. The images were widely shared and believed, but they were proven false, as the fires were about 10 miles away from the sign. Avoiding AI-generated media is similar to avoiding deep fakes. Don't trust just one source—cross-reference multiple reputable sources if

you're questioning any pictures or videos, and look out for discrepancies.



With fake news circulating everywhere, it's important to stay cautious and sensible. If you see anything that looks unbelievable, it probably isn't true.

The HIGHLANDS
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