

EDITORIAL

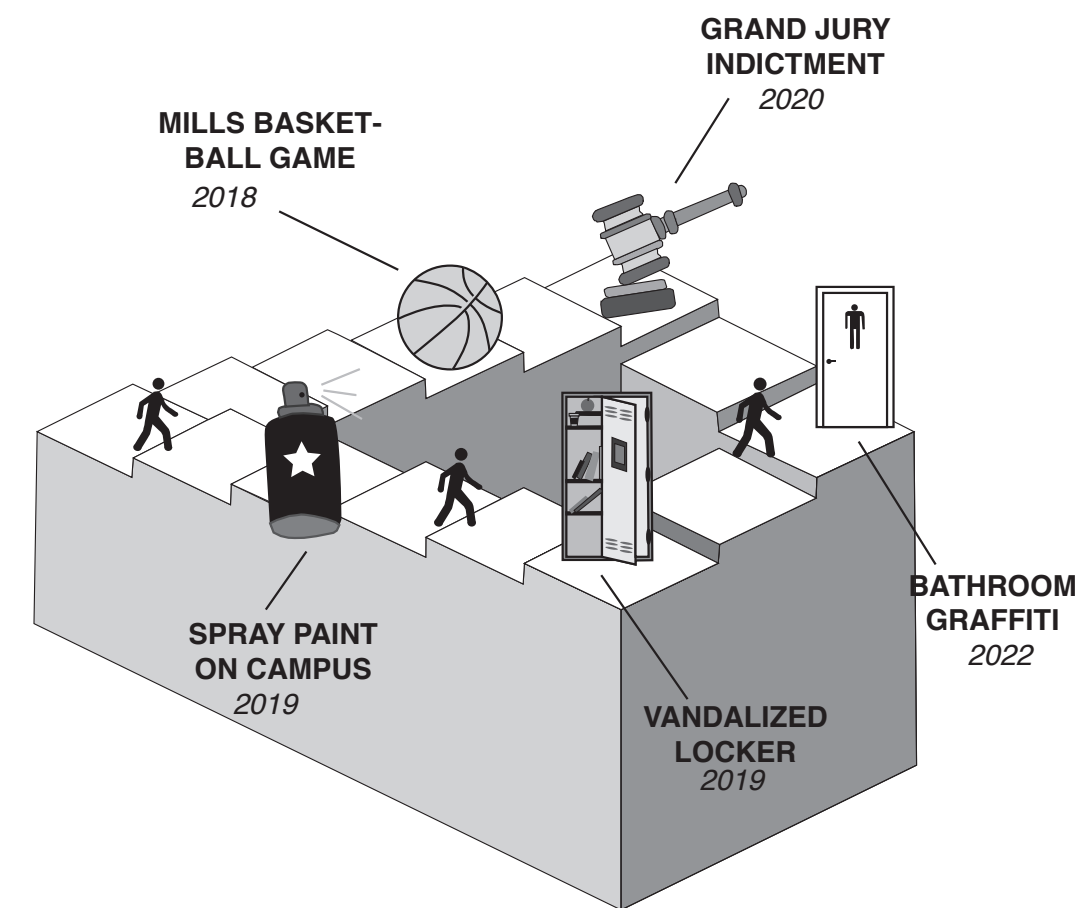
IT'S TIME TO STOP WRITING ABOUT HATE

BY THE BURLINGAME B
EDITORIAL BOARD

On Feb. 8, 2018, the Burlingame B Editorial Board published an opinion piece following a boys basketball game in which Burlingame fans shouted racist chants and slurs at their Mills High School opponents. At the time, our staff wrote that “Passivity exacerbates the problem; we’ve become adept at turning a blind eye to the sort of behavior that turns into a racially-inclined chant at a basketball game.”

On May 23, 2019, a staff member of the Burlingame B wrote an article titled “Anti-Semitism alive and well at Burlingame” in response to swastikas and antisemitic messages found on the vandalized locker of a Jewish sophomore. In the incident’s aftermath, the Burlingame administration was “virtually silent,” the author wrote.

On Sept. 6, 2019, the Burlingame B authored a story called “Burlingame High School target of hate-motivated vandalism” after a facilities engineer discovered racist and homophobic messages spray-painted across the walls of school buildings in the early morning. At the time, this year’s seniors were in their first month of freshman year — still anxiously trying to memorize their locker code, desperately studying for their first biology



test, and forgetting to wash their physical education clothes.

On Sept. 19, 2019, the Burlingame B Editorial Board published a piece much like the one you are reading now. That editorial said the quiet part out loud: no one is surprised when another hate incident takes place at Burlingame, because it’s never an isolated occurrence. Explicit displays of hate — graffiti, van-

dalism and racist chants — were just “public example[s] of what [students] faced every day.”

“We’ve been here before,” the editorial openly declared.

Almost three years later, our new managing team wrote their first breaking news story of the year: “Racist, Anti-Semitic graffiti discovered on campus.” We heard from a student whose parents wanted her to transfer be-

cause of Burlingame’s reputation for hate. We talked to a teacher who said Burlingame’s culture is less welcoming than other schools. And that students don’t want to be here because of that culture.

We’re writing the same story repeatedly: Burlingame breeds racism, homophobia and antisemitism, and denying that reality only perpetuates it. But

our words, however strident and pleading, no longer have the desired impact on our readers. Our community is desensitized to the reality that hate plagues our school; as a result, rather than look at ourselves in the mirror, we prefer to plug our ears and flip the page.

Simultaneously, our teachers have worked tirelessly to incorporate anti-racist and anti-bias professional development into the new curriculum, and our district has updated their policies to reflect the same goals. But our school is fighting an uphill battle if our community continues to lag.

After the 2018 basketball game, former principal Paul Belzer made an announcement over the loudspeaker. “Although we are not defined by the acts of some of our community, we need to stand together and make it clear this kind of behavior is unacceptable and will not be tolerated,” he said.

Almost five years later, this statement is laughable. Make no mistake: Burlingame is defined by how some members of our community act. These incidents darken the reputation of the entire school. While only a small subset of students commit acts of hate, we all wear ‘Burlingame High School’ on our sweatshirts, jerseys and helmets. That means each and every student needs to bear the responsibility equally for changing the way our students at our school behave.

Unfair advantage: It’s time to forget about college legacy

BY LIZZY WAN
Diversity Coordinator

My dad went to a private school that considers legacy. Automatically, that makes me a better candidate for the school. When I apply, my chance of admission should be far higher than a student whose parent didn’t attend the college, right?

This statement is absolutely ridiculous. But most colleges don’t think so.

A 2018 survey by Inside Higher Ed found that 42% of private schools and 6% of public schools consider legacy when looking at applicants. Generally, at least one of a student’s parents must attend the school to qualify for legacy, although it can be used more broadly to include grandparents and siblings.

This includes every school in the Ivy League, where Spark Admissions estimated that between 25% and 35% of admitted students are legacies.

Does sharing the blood of an alumnus inherently make me a better applicant to the school? No. Do they think I bleed the school’s colors because of my lineage? No. So why do so many schools care about legacy?

The answer is pretty simple: money. Universities in the United States, especially private

schools, rely heavily on a steady stream of hefty donations. Families with a long line of alumni from a specific school tend to donate more. To keep the cash flowing, schools are more likely to accept students from these families.

An article by Joe Pinsker of The Atlantic titled “The Real Reasons Legacy Preferences Exist” revealed that a 2017 committee at Harvard University found that if it accepted fewer legacy students, the school would put itself at risk of getting fewer donations, which they be-

“
15.5% OF HAR-
VARD’S CLASS OF
2025 ARE LEGACY.”

SURVEY BY THE HARVARD CRIMSON

lieve is necessary to maintaining Harvard’s academic prestige.

But at the end of 2021, Harvard had the largest endowment in the country, worth an estimated \$53 billion, and received an estimated \$1.4 billion worth of donations in 2018 alone. Clearly, the donations are helpful — but they seem awfully unnecessary, especially for a university that costs \$303,564 to attend for four

years. Harvard’s president, Lawrence Bacow, makes a little over a million dollars a year. Clearly the school will not be running out of money anytime soon.

The benefits of legacy don’t stop at the admissions process. If they don’t make it into their parent’s school, legacy students are often offered pathways to still attend. For example, the University of Southern California (USC) selects students for a transfer plan, allowing them to study abroad for their first year, maintain a certain GPA and transfer as a sophomore. The program is notorious for mainly selecting rejected legacy students, although the exact numbers are unknown.

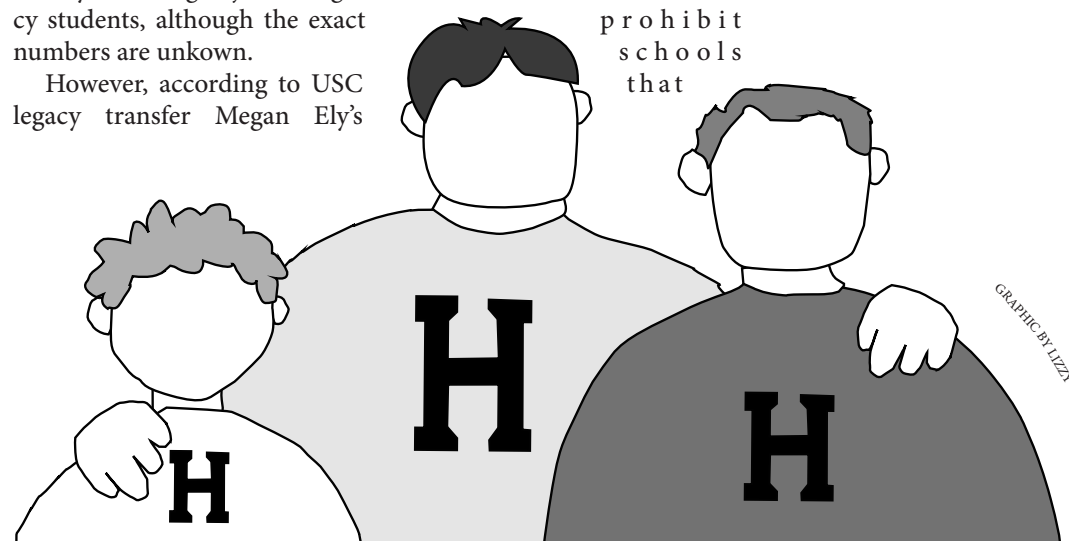
However, according to USC legacy transfer Megan Ely’s

testimony in an Anneberg Media article, the rumors are true. In the article, Ely recalled that all of the classmates Ely knew were also legacy students.

Despite being prevalent across the United States, legacy admissions are not popular among students. College Pulse conducted a survey in 2019 that found seven in 10 students believe that taking legacy into consideration is unfair when looking at college applications.

There is a path to solving this problem: just this year, the Fair College Admissions for Students Act bill was introduced to the Sen-

ate, which would prohibit schools that



An article by The Guardian found that around 70% of Harvard’s legacy applicants were white, revealing how using legacy promotes a less diverse group of students.