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Congratulations tenth-grader Max Banach for being last issue's crossword winner! Use the free app Snapchat (available for iPhone and Android) to scan the QR code below to complete the PV Torch crossword. The first person to do so (that has not won previously) will win a complimentary gift card.



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Delving into Pine View's: Bubble Culture

GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON AND ZOE MERRITT

by Ella Hechlik
Web Editor-in-Chief

The Pine View mission statement asserts that the school's objective is to provide a "qualitatively different learning environment." However, there are varied opinions campuswide as to what "qualitatively different" actually refers to. While administration points to academic differences, students point to the lack of social-issue education that ultimately affects them.

This can be described as part of a bubble culture, which is defined by the Psychology Today web page as, "the socio-cultural context in which we typically immerse ourselves." Pine View is already unique compared to its Sarasota County school counterparts in terms of structure. It is the only school in the district to serve grades 2 to 12 on

the same campus, and it caters specifically to the needs of gifted children. However, many feel this cultural bubble extends beyond the school's obvious differences with other institutions in the area.

"I think the students are naturally sheltered here. The atmosphere is that people are less exposed to certain things. I think [sheltering] could have positive and negative effects. We are less likely to be exposed to say, alcohol and drugs at school than your archetypal high school, but also, college isn't going to be anything like our school now," tenth-grader Zola Disz said.

Disz's bubble culture example regarding student exposure to illegal substances highlights dissimilarities in how Pine View hosts wellness and awareness programs. For example, Drug Free Youth, an

organization that has worked with other high schools in the county but not Pine View, helps promote the dangers of drug use by offering discounts at local businesses in return for a clean drug test.

When asked about programs that Pine View specifically takes part in, Guidance Counselor Lynn Halcomb explained the process of reviewing guest speakers and pointed out the programs Pine View offers that other schools do not offer. "Teachers, counselors and administrators can come in and look at the needs of our students, and there is a group consensus. We react [by bringing in programs] based on the needs of our community and of our students," Halcomb said. An example she included was Dr. Cortman, who meets with all freshman students, and addresses strat-

egies for handling stress.

Some share the feeling of being sheltered at Pine View, but recognize it as just a part of going to school here, while others feel that it may hinder their growth as students. "Pine View is like its own little bubble. When certain topics are even slightly suggested, controversies arise," twelfth-grader Izabella Smith said.

Fellow students denote that there may be harmful implications to this sheltering. "I believe that the bullying at Pine View is better hidden, and therefore most people think that it is less of a problem. The bullying is not well known about, and that relates to the theme that Pine View is sheltered," ninth-grader Ruby Copsey said.

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Pine View breaks ground on new Legacy Garden

by Haleigh Brown
Asst. Editor-in-Chief

Serving as a lasting memorial to the lives of Pine View's many 'giants,' the plans for the Legacy Garden have been set in motion. Pine View staff and supporting families gathered at the quad Nov. 19 for the groundbreaking ceremony of this new project, in hopes to officially begin construction the summer of 2019 and to finish in the summer of 2020.

The idea of attributing an area of campus to past Pine View teachers is thanks to social studies teacher, Pine View parent and alumna Jenna Molinaro, as well as Pine View's longest standing instructor, Spanish teacher Patti Gerlek. Having graduated from the old campus, many of those to be recognized in the garden were some of Molinaro's teachers back in high school. Gerlek, who has been teaching for a total of 32 years at Pine View, calls many of these teachers her best friends. "I feel a responsibility to continue the Pine View legacy to what it was and hopefully what it will be," Gerlek said. "Before I leave, it is my legacy to leave this garden."

With Pine View's consistent construction upgrades over the last couple of years, a few of



Pine View staff members and alumni gather to break the ground of the set location for the Legacy Garden. The garden is planned to be placed in front of Building 3, the blue building, and Building 4, the orange building, where it will recognize and celebrate all of the Pine View teachers that have passed away during the years. PHOTO BY MELISSA SANTOYO

the memorials for specific former teachers were temporarily removed and are to be brought back within this garden. The purpose of the Legacy Garden is to recognize and to celebrate all of the Pine View teachers that have passed away over the years and is planned to be placed in front of Building 3, the blue building, and Building 4, the or-

ange building. "The heartbeat of Pine View is felt in the quad. It is the center that breathes life into the students and inspires creativity before they head into class each day," Molinaro said.

The focal point of the garden is to be an extensive serpentine wall for students to sit on and to reflect. This will wind through a butterfly garden fea-

ture indigenous plants and possibly art sculptures, such as metal roses with the names of teachers who have passed on. The conceptual drawing for the garden was created by Michael Gilkey and is to be carried out by contractor Nick Ferguson, both Pine View alumni.

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Twelfth-grader airs on ABC7 for singing

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Romanticizing rare illnesses
How mainstream media exploits disease

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Inside Pine View's bubble

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by Ella Hechlik
Web Editor-in-Chief

But has this culture always existed at Pine View? According to the opinions of past students, the bubble has been around since they were enrolled. "I always thought that the school was a bubble, but it was safe. I would hazard to say that yes, Pine View is still a bubble. We cultivate a higher quality learning environment here, we are more accepting of different types of students," Chinese teacher and alumna Maggie Higgins said.

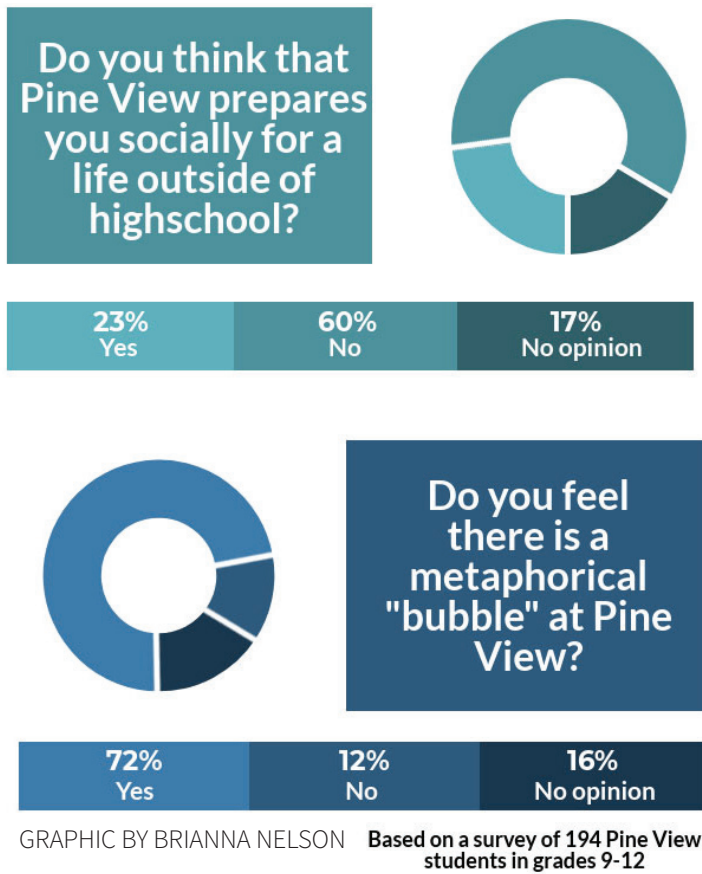
However, while certain issues continue to beset the school and its students, the real differences between Pine View and other schools lie within the distinctive kindness that Pine View offers to all of its students. "My parents were a little concerned about what the stress of the Pine View environment does to students... there is a unity at Pine View that contributes to that reputation [as a bubble] but that was one of my favorite things about it," English teacher John Shea said.

Many graduates, including class of 2018 alumnus Michael Shi, have commented on the differences of college life after leaving Pine View. "When

I tell people I am going back to my school to play soccer or visit, they ask, 'Why would you ever go back?' and I laugh and think to myself, 'They will never understand,'" Shi said.

Whether the bubble culture exists or not, that depends on one's own experiences on campus. While many regard it in a negative light, there are certainly positive factors to the Pine View experience. "The di-

versity here is different, the kids' academic level is different, they are more unique and we have a wider spectrum of weirdness but in a good way. The experiences here are neat, and you can't get them at other schools. The kindness at this school is unique, especially with the high school kids to the elementary kids," school resource officer Deputy Chris Hudson said.



Memorial garden set to be built

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by Haleigh Brown
Asst. Editor-in-Chief

"Many people don't remember that everything on this campus has a story. The gazebo was dedicated after Jim Flint, a beloved teacher on this campus, died of cancer. Cobalt has its name because the first prom took place in a chemistry classroom. It's what I love about this school, everything has so much meaning," Gerlek said.

To mark the official start of this project, Principal Dr. Stephen Covert, PVA President Ben Tuoff, Molinaro and Gerlek spoke to alumni, staff and Superintendent Todd Bowden representing the Sarasota County School Board at the groundbreaking ceremony. Taking place in the area where the garden is to be built, Covert gave thanks to the many people involved with the creation of the project. He gave a special shoutout to many Pine View families, Superintendent Todd Bowden and former Principal Steven Largo for their support and advocacy. Tuoff specifically recognized the efforts of Mo-



Current Principal Dr. Stephen Covert poses alongside other Pine View alumni and staff members prior to the ground breaking for the Legacy Garden. Construction is set to begin during the summer of 2019 and finish during the summer of 2020. PHOTO BY MELISSA SANTOYO

linaro and Gerlek, which they later spoke of why they chose the quad as well as the specific teachers that will be recognized in the garden.

After the speeches, Covert called up a central group of supporters for the final ground-breaking. Each with a hard hat on and a shovel in hand, they broke the ground for the new project. "The mantra that we

use about 'standing on the shoulders of giants' — this Legacy Garden commemorates and honors the legacy that those giants of Pine View have helped set for us in our next 50 years," Covert said.

If interested in supporting the growth of this project, please refer to www.pv50.org for information. All donations are welcome.

UNICEF club raises awareness for global need for clean water



Tenth-graders Naina Chauhan, Ben Gordon and Kasumi Wade along with twelfth-graders Eva Bayer, Erin Chen and Alyssa Steinbaum held an activity for World Children's Day Nov. 20, raising awareness for the need for clean water. PV UNICEF has raised about \$900 for UNICEF, which was used to purchase 3,000 polio vaccines, 100 measles vaccines and 2 HIV kits to help developing countries. PHOTO PROVIDED BY ROMA JAGDISH

IN BRIEF

Sarasota County Sheriff's Office debuts new mobile app

by Clyde Morgan
Asst. News Editor

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office released a new app, rolled out over the fourth week of October, that allows users to send in tips (with the option of being anonymous), review 911 call logs, work with detectives to help with unsolved crimes and more. Available for Apple devices on the App Store and Android devices on Google Play, users can download SarasotaCoSheriff for free, thereby facilitating communication with the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office.

"We are very excited to officially release this new application to the citizens we serve," Community Affairs Director Kaitlyn Perez said in a press release to the Herald-Tribune. In-app uses also include news and events, such as teaching sessions hosted by the Sheriff's Office. The app

provides users with lists of individuals currently in jail, a detailed 911 Call Log, the most wanted persons by Sarasota County Sheriff's Office and a list of unsolved crimes on file.

A map or list of known sex offenders is also available in relation to current location. Two links available on the home page of the app are for job applications and civilian volunteer opportunities. A contact list is also easy to reach which includes phone numbers for non-emergency calls, youth services and public records. The app is intended to be user-friendly and easy to maneuver.

Pine View School Resource Officer Deputy Hudson was very complimenting of the new app. "It's great," Hudson said. "I absolutely recommend [it], it has tons of useful information."

Giving Tuesday replaces local Giving Challenge for 2018-2019

by Odelia Tiutyama
News Editor

In replacement of "The Giving Challenge," a local 24-hour fundraiser in which all donations were matched by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, the Pine View Association (PVA) held "Giving Tuesday" Nov. 27. Giving Tuesday is an annual, worldwide event held on the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving to bring back the spirit of giving after Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

Led by fourth-grade teacher Stacy Burkett and Pine View parents Stephanie Hofmann and Terra Layton, the goal for Pine View's first Giving Tuesday was 50 hours for 50 years. Each student volunteered 50 hours to celebrate the 50th anniversary. To volunteer, students worked on activities such as crafting cards for the homebound and coloring ornaments for those unable to afford them. Weekly themes beginning at the start of November consisted of providing assistance

to the elderly, kindness to animals, helping kids in need and community pride. These weekly activities built up to the final schoolwide event Nov. 27.

Michelle Penn, Goodwill's Ambassador of the Year, joined students at the final schoolwide event to teach how to create mats out of plarn, or plastic yarn. According to Penn, the plarn is woven and then used to crochet mats for the homeless; one mat takes 500 plastic shopping bags and 10 hours to make.

All were welcome to donate to Pine View as 25 percent of the donations went towards the construction of the Legacy Garden. The other 75 percent of donations were given to PVA to use campuswide for funding of extra aides and the music and art programs.

"We just want the students to realize that even giving 15 minutes of your time, you can make something that's going to brighten someone's day and possibly even make their day," Burkett said.

Assistant Principal shares parenting experiences with new club

by Nathalie Bencie
Focus Editor

The new Pine View Parent Book Club was held Nov. 8 by Assistant Principal Tara Spielman in order to get to know the parents of high school students better. The book club, which is made up of approximately 10 Pine View parents, is currently reading "Mindset: The New Psychology of Success," by Carol Dweck.

The novel touches upon how success in school, work, athletics or nearly every other area of human endeavor can be influenced by how people — particularly students — view their talents and abilities. A chapter per week is discussed between parents and Spielman about how the research mentioned in the nov-

el can be applied to students here at Pine View.

"I started [the book club] to get to know the parents at Pine View. A lot of times, the only interaction parents get with administration is about grades and classes, and I wanted to get to know them personally," Spielman said.

During the meeting, parents and Spielman share their experiences in parenting and what it's like to raise gifted students. "It's nice to know that it's not only your kid who is struggling with something, and I think I realized that after joining the book club," member and Pine View parent Traci Couden said. "I've had such a fun time getting to know Mrs. Spielman and the other parents in the club."

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One student's story: Living with Cystic Fibrosis

by Peyton Harris
Asst. Entertainment Editor

The average student's day might start out by getting out of bed, preparing for school, eating breakfast and heading to class. For ninth-grader Maxon LaForge, his typical morning revolves around lengthy procedures vital to his health. At the age of two, LaForge was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis (CF), an inherited, progressive disease that causes lung complications, chronic coughs and more.

Awaking earlier than most, LaForge must follow a strict morning schedule in order to properly treat his condition. This includes doing his vest, a machine that vibrates at high speeds to loosen the mucus in his lungs, taking his inhaler with different types of medicines and consuming various pills to ensure his health. Additionally, LaForge has been prescribed three pills that he must take at every meal. At night, he must repeat the procedure.

CF targets either the respiratory system or the digestive system, however, the disease is attacking both in LaForge's case. Due to the severe effects of CF, LaForge has been hospitalized over 10 times, and he is the first documented CF patient to have cysts on his pancreas. When he was three years old, LaForge had a button gastrostomy tube installed through his stomach to provide him with necessary nutrients, as individuals with CF have difficulty gaining weight and developing. Although the tube has significantly helped him to grow, it forces LaForge to take extreme caution in his day-to-day life. "Since

I was little, I have always had a passion for football, but I haven't been able to play because it was too dangerous for my G-tube. It has also stopped me from going on field trips or sleepovers because I have too much medicine and treatments to do," LaForge said.

To treat CF, LaForge must take 28 pills and complete several physical treatments, each of which must be taken during specific time frames. His schedule has limited his activities as well as those of his family. "We still travel, but maybe not as much as most families are able to. Max has quite a bit of medical equipment that must accompany him," LaForge's mother, Cara Crowley-Covert, said. "I have to take a number of days off throughout the year to take Max up to his doctor appointments at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital. So that takes time away from my students and my professional duties as an educator."

While the physical challenges of the illness are incredibly difficult to deal

with, the accompanying emotional toll is equally strenuous. According to Cystic Fibrosis News Today, people with CF commonly have anxiety and depression, partially due to the knowledge of their short life expectancy. "As a kid [my lifespan] didn't cross my mind, but once I realized, I tried not to think about it. But as I get older, the more I do," LaForge said. "I get really sad sometimes because I feel like I'm not in control of my life. I know I can do my medicine and treatments, but at the end of the day I can't control what happens with my health," he said.

Most of LaForge's peers are aware of his condition, but unfortunately, not all of the feedback is supportive. "I get made fun of a lot because of CF. I'm not the kind of person to let it get to me, so I try to ignore it, but sometimes I feel like the disease is my label and there is no other way for people to describe me," LaForge said.

Still, many of his friends describe him as positive, caring and kind. "Max is a great person that always has a smile on his face, can make anyone laugh and is always willing to cheer you up when you're down," ninth-grader Jonah Schildkraut said.

Although there is currently no cure, medical advancements have greatly lengthened the lifespan of those with CF. The life expectancy of carriers was less than 20 years old in the 1980s, but, according to National Jewish Health, the current life expectancy age is roughly 37.

According to the Executive Director of Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (CFF), Ryan Reid, as said in an email response,

"A one-time cure for 100 percent of the population with CF is still likely decades away, but effective treatment for more than 90 percent of the patient population is only a couple of years from becoming a reality. Cutting-edge technologies, like gene editing, are being pursued in the lab as we speak, and hold the key to helping the foundation make CF stand for 'Cure Found.'"

The CFF promotes advocacy on behalf of people living with this often overlooked illness and hosts numerous fundraisers, which fund both medical advancements as well as raising awareness for CF. "Great Strides" is their largest fundraiser, where annual walks are hosted in over 400 cities, including Sarasota. The walks fund different teams of people living with CF. LaForge's page can be found at fightcf.cff.org under the "Great Strides" and "Donate to a Walker" tabs. While LaForge was not present at the most recent walk hosted Oct. 6 due to health complications, over 30 of his



Ninth-grader Maxon LaForge was hospitalized June 24, 2017 at Children's First due to an infection in his lungs. He spent a week at the hospital and then had to complete IVs at home. LaForge has been hospitalized over 10 times and he is the first documented CF patient to have cysts on his pancreas.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY MAXON LAFORGE

[an infographic]

Cystic Fibrosis Statistics

- About 30,000 Americans have CF
- 1,000+ cases are diagnosed each year
- 1 in 31 Americans carry the CF gene
- Florida has over 1,500 people with CF, making it the fourth most CF-populated state
- Sarasota alone has 100 CF patients

Distribution of CF Patients throughout the U.S

Population

- <142
- 142-324
- 324-586
- 586-812
- >812

Information provided by cff.org, cysticfibrosisnewstoday.com, 2016 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Patient Registry Highlights, and an interview with Ryan Reid

Side Effects of CF

The damage CF does is not limited to the lungs and pancreas — CF can cause many major long-term side effects

- CF patients are unable to grow and develop at their full potential due to the correlation between their body mass index (BMI) and lung function
- CF patients have an 80% chance of developing Cystic-Fibrosis Related Diabetes (CFRD)
- 100 of 200 CF patients will have to undergo a lung transplant
- Men have a 97%-98% chance of being infertile
- CF patients are not allowed to come within six feet of each other, or they will risk cross-contaminating each other

To learn more about Maxon and Cystic Fibrosis as a whole, follow his new Instagram account @thelifeofmaxlaforge that aims to spread awareness about the life of a CF patient!

GRAPHIC BY PEYTON HARRIS



The metal beams seen here, behind the temporary walls used during construction, were installed in order to support the weight of the bulletproof glass. Construction is set to be finished during or shortly after winter break.

PHOTO BY BEN GORDON

Bullet resistant glass in the front office implemented

by Kasumi Wade
Sports Editor

With construction hoping to be completed during or shortly after winter break, Pine View is installing bulletproof glass in the front office.

Sarasota County is enforcing this new installation in front offices throughout all schools in the area. According to Middle School Assistant Principal Sue Fair, as the single point of entry for visitors, the front office is an appropriate place for this addition. The purpose of the bulletproof glass is meant to serve as an added layer of protection for workers in the front office, in case of an emergency.

"The office front doors will be locked and visitors will

have to buzz in and speak over an intercom. It is another added precaution that will help keep

...it should help the members of the office to feel more secure in the case of an emergency,"

Sue Fair,
Middle School Assistant Principal

Pine View safe," office secretary Marianne Leto said.

The glass is custom cut

and measured to fit the steel framing constructed. Currently, the steel framing is finished with development and the bullet resistant glass is underway. Once the glass is installed, the counter area, which has been cut down, will be worked on as well. The counter will have two tray openings, similar to a bank, for the purpose of sliding driver's licenses and visitor passes.

"This should not affect students as they enter and exit the school through the gates unless they are tardy and need to be buzzed in through the front office. Although, it should help the members of the office to feel more secure in the case of an emergency," Fair said.

friends and family members attended the event in support.

In order to advance the research accumulated by the CFF, LaForge's family has started fundraising efforts of their own, including programs implemented locally at Pine View. When LaForge was in fifth grade, his mother created "Quacks for a Cure," a fundraiser in which the Pine View community bought rubber ducks to donate profits to finding a cure for CF. The duck sales raised around a few thousand dollars, along with bringing awareness of the disease on Pine View's campus. When Crowley-Covert

began teaching at Tatum Ridge Elementary two years ago, she brought "Quacks for a Cure" with her.

LaForge's journey with CF is far from over; as every day is a step toward the discovery of a cure. "Having CF has taught me to enjoy every moment in life and to let minor inconveniences go," LaForge said. "I try to stay positive so it doesn't get to me. When I get sad about CF, I never really tell anyone because I don't want them to worry more than they already do. I just surround myself with the people I love, watch football and soon enough I forget about being upset."

Pine View students attend PINC conference

by Melissa Santoyo
Editor-in-Chief

Proudly boasting the catchphrase, “a bubble bath for your brain,” People, Ideas, Nature and Creativity (PINC) is an international conference-style, one-day event that hosts a plethora of guest speakers and invitees to inspire others. This year, students in attendance were able to enjoy a wide range of speakers from all over the globe, each with singular life stories and unparalleled pursuits.

PINC originated in the Netherlands and was founded by the van Lindok family in 1999. The conference expanded to Sarasota in 2014 where Anand Pallegar, founder of the local benefit corporation DreamLarge, acquired the event. From its inaugural showcase at Florida Studio Theatre, PINC moved to the Sarasota Opera House because of the high demand for tickets. It has since remained a highly-anticipated venue for creative thinkers from all over the U.S. The event recently celebrated its 5th anniversary since moving to Sarasota.

“[The founders] tried to bring PINC a couple of times to the U.S. and — just for whatever reason — the stars didn’t align. So, we hatched a plan, literally on the back of a cocktail napkin, that night to bring this [event] to Sarasota,” Pallegar said. He visited PINC in the Netherlands the following year, and from his experience there, Pallegar was confident he could bring the conference to life in Sarasota.

This year the venue boasted 12 guest speakers, ranging from a human trafficking survivor advocating for awareness to a self-described farmer

revolutionizing health care in rural North Carolina. Each presenter discussed a topic unique to their own life experiences, as guests were able to indulge in the stories of others. “I think [PINC] is to make you younger. The audience here is twice my age, but I think they come here and they learn so much that they probably add more and more years to their life, just from hearing stories like this,” guest speaker and sunlight artist, Michael Papadakis said. “This is my first time being here and knowing about this event, so I think [teens] are looking for obviously something to look forward to and someone to look up to, but not to idealize. Someone that they can see a part of themselves in, so they’re not alone.”

The day was divided into blocks and ran on a tight schedule. Speakers presented in sets of three, with roughly 20 minutes allotted for each person. Besides these 12 speakers introduced by Pallegar, attendees were also treated to live fine arts performances, ranging from traditional Ethiopian group dancing to a real-time virtual reality art display.

This entertainment, much of which was provided by local volunteers and students from Ringling College of Art and Design, was bolstered by an impressive menu which guests were able to enjoy during regularly scheduled breaks. Local eateries catered to the event, cultivating an atmosphere of buzzing discussion and a day rife with meeting new people.

Eleventh-grader Farrah Cavus and twelfth-grader Viktoria Mochnacky were able to attend the event for free thanks to

“Each speaker had something very unique, and it just really inspires me that I can do something that they’re doing,”
Viktoria Mochnacky,
grade 12



Award-winning journalist and conflict researcher Christiaan Triebert gives a presentation on the breadcrumbs Internet users leave behind with their social media posts. People, Ideas, Nature and Creativity (PINC) was hosted Dec. 6 and included a wide variety of guest speakers, ranging from a puppet designer and performer to an award-winning TV and film producer. PHOTO BY MELISSA SANTOYO

their affiliation with the local non-profit, Leaven. For regular attendees, the tickets were around \$400, and while PINC was able to partly subsidize the costs for students attending, Leaven covered the rest for Cavus and Mochnacky. “I’m just so grateful to be able to learn from so many different perspectives all at once. Each speaker had something very unique, and it just really inspires me that I can do something that they’re doing,” Mochnacky said.

Cavus’ favorite speaker was Papadakis, who she found to be immensely moving. “I was mostly inspired by Michael Papadakis because of his personal story and how he explained how long it took him to find who he was. He eventually made it in the end, and now he’s trying to spread that light to everyone else he meets,” Cavus said.

Around halfway through the event, Pallegar had all students in attendance join him on stage as a way to display how beneficial it would be to continue teen

involvement with more outreach and financial aid extended. “What motivates me is people like you. Tomorrow’s generation. PINC’s going to be 20 years old next year, so it is a long-standing event, and for me, the ability to carry it for the next 20 years and turn it into something more meaningful... that’s what motivates me,” Pallegar said.

Besides expanding opportunities for students to attend despite the high cost of admission, Pallegar and his team at DreamLarge are also planning to expand PINC to a third city in 2019: Detroit, Mich. “Detroit happened really because we started looking into: ‘How do we grow?’ It’s such an amazing day, there’s so much work that goes into pulling this day off; what other places could benefit from it? And Detroit just seemed like the perfect city; it’s going through a revival, it’s a magical place, [it] used to be the Paris of America. There’s so many great things happening there. So, we thought, ‘Why not?’” Pallegar said.

Science teacher vies for new planetarium

by Leo Gordon
Asst. Match Editor

In an effort to maintain Pine View’s longstanding reputation as a leader in science and mathematics, science teacher Dylan Bell is vying for support by writing a grant to prospectively fund a contemporary blow-up planetarium on campus.

Currently, Pine View maintains possession of an old-model Classic StarLab portal planetarium. This type requires film canisters produced in the ‘70s to project images onto the interior of its dome, and is no longer eligible for physical repair. The planetarium was frequently utilized by former teacher Chap Percival in his Earth and Space Science classes.

To perpetuate the longevity of Pine View’s well-established record in scientific excellence, Bell believes that steps must be taken to improve scientific equipment on campus. High schools in proximity to campus have already taken significant steps toward the improvement of their Earth and Space Science facilities. “Pine View is a unique school and to remain academically competitive with neighboring school programs, such as Riverview High School which has constructed a full-scale planetarium geared towards International Baccalaureate courses, Pine View must obtain similar instructional capacity,” Bell said.

The newer system, with a price tag around \$37,000, would offer visual resources relevant not only to science but also to history and math. The updated planetarium additionally features built-in lesson plans which correlate to state and national standards for curriculum. “The reason why I’m trying to get a following for this sys-

tem is because there is a lot of applicability that goes along with it. It covers material from the center of the earth to the layers and surface of the Earth, meteorology, the atmosphere and the cosmos,” Bell said.

The proposed planetarium is portable, permitting an opportunity for rentals and loans to local schools. Ultimately, if all runs smoothly, the planetarium could prospectively generate monetary profit within the next five to 10 years.

“I think [the planetarium] is a great idea. What’s great about it is that it can be used for so many different subjects for so many different grade levels. I think that it’s one of those things that you have to experience to understand what it is and how significant it would be. The full immersion nature of it is something a teacher can’t do, no matter how good they are or how much technology they have. [The planetarium] is an experience; it will generate a lot of interest in astronomy,” science teacher Neal Gleitz

said. Bell describes the planetarium as a resource that would benefit all grade levels on campus, regardless of curriculum level. “Educators in elementary science classes have even noted the need for high-interest experiences for their students, to motivate further interest in scientific inquiry,” Bell said.

To effectively convey the needs of the project in a detailed proposal, Bell is looking for support from Pine View staff in regard to the needs of their students and curriculum as a whole. Bell hopes to see support for the project across the academic aisle, as it is beneficial to almost every subject taught on campus.



PHOTO BY GWYN PETERSEN

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Girl Scout 'Creates a Community of Smiles'

by Elizabeth Hopkins
Match Editor-in-Chief

Displaying her persistent commitment to community service, twelfth-grader Cate Alvaro completed her Girl Scout Gold Award, the ultimate achievement in Girl Scouts, Dec. 7 at the Salvation Army. The event was the culmination of her project, dubbed "Creating a Community of Smiles," that resulted in the donation of 1,500 dental kits to the homeless population at the Salvation Army in Sarasota.

Involved with Girl Scouts for 13 years now, Alvaro was inspired to join scouts by her mother, a former Girl Scout and current troop leader. "Participating in Girl Scouts has taught me a lot about the importance of sticking with things until the very end," Alvaro said. She has also earned the Bronze and Silver Awards alongside her troop in middle school, as well as completed other service projects. According to Alvaro, however, Creating a Community of Smiles was her most significant un-

dertaking, as it was an individual task she created, planned and carried out herself.

Alvaro decided on the focus point for her Gold Award project while interning for Janoff & Khatri Pediatric Dentistry during eleventh grade. "While interning at the office,

"I began to think how nice it would be if everyone could have the level of oral care many of us take for granted."
Cate Alvaro, grade 12

I began to think how nice it would be if everyone could have the level of oral care many of us take for granted. I wanted to contribute to the health care system and I saw my Gold Award as the perfect way to do so," Alvaro said

In the past, her troop has donated needed items to the homeless shelter in Port Charlotte. After witnessing the great impact these contributions had on her community, Alvaro decided to collaborate with the Salvation Army in Sarasota, as there is not a local homeless shelter in Port Charlotte.

After the planning process of her project, she reached out to different businesses and

received generous donations from them. Stumbling upon the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM), Alvaro noticed that their mission statement emphasized community engagement, Alvaro and came in to contact with their Director of Outreach and Director of Health, Safety and Procurement, Shirley Parrado. The two collaborated to make the plan a reality, Parrado becoming a mentor for Alvaro and a facilitator throughout the whole project

Ajax Paving Industries, Erlich and Sallapudi Orthodontics, Janoff & Khatri Pediatric Dentistry and LECOM all contributed to gather the supplies for the dental kits. Once the items were acquired, members of Alvaro's Girl Scout troop helped to assemble the kits, making the process more efficient and more enjoyable.

The entire project was completed over the course of a year, consisting of many meetings between Alvaro, Parrado and representatives from the Salvation Army. "This was a long-range project. It took a lot of planning, a lot of time and meetings, and she did all of it on her own," her mother, Christie Alvaro said

Throughout the time working on her Gold Award, Alvaro found it easy to keep



Twelfth-grader Cate Alvaro gets ready to pass out dental supplies to the homeless population. She handed out 1,500 dental kits to residents at the Salvation Army while they waited in line for food. Alvaro dubbed her Girl Scout Gold Award project "Creating a Community of Smiles." PHOTO BY KASUMI WADE

motivated, as contributing to helping others is something she is passionate about.

On Dec. 7, Alvaro and doctors from LECOM School of Dental Medicine hand-distributed the dental kits to the homeless population at the Salvation Army. While most of the dental kits were handed out at the Creating a Community of Smiles event, the remaining were distributed at the additional component of Alvaro's project. This element consisted of a screening event at LECOM, where the dental students volunteered their time to administer free diagnostic exams to homeless

people affiliated with the Salvation Army. "Many people don't think the community needs dental supplies. It is amazing to see Cate come up with this concept," doctor and dental student at LECOM, Aubrey Folds said.

Alvaro was recently nominated for the Prudential Spirit of Committee Award by Girl Scouts of Gulf Coast, Fla. for her project and will be advancing to the state level for consideration. She will be pitching her initiative at an upcoming Troop Leader Meeting to pass on Creating a Community of Smiles to a younger troop, sustaining it for years to come.

Pine View safety and security patrol goes mobile

by Olivia Hansen
Humor Editor

As of Dec. 2018, Pine View has implemented a new mounted bike safety and security patrol in order to improve mobility of personnel between students and staff members. This has been implemented by campus security aide David Bachert.

Bachert first proposed the idea to Assistant Principal Alison Rini, who later brought it up at a faculty meeting and cleared it with Human Resources. With his background as a former police officer for the Allentown Police Department in Pennsylvania, Bachert proposed the innovative idea to strengthen safety patrols around campus. He decided to take it upon

himself to advance the mobility of staff to accommodate to the added security measures, such as the fences. "I can get to places you couldn't fit with a golf cart," Bachert said. "For instance, by the third grade playground that now has a gate so you can't bring a golf cart through that way. I can go right through the gate without having to go around. The response time is faster, I can make more rounds per hour or per shift."

As a retired police sergeant and a trained bike officer, as well as a certified trainer, Bachert has experience in the bike control field.

He worked in patrol for several years before establishing a community policing program and eventually became involved in bike patrol, as one of the first officers to go through training for the department. "Back when I started it

was innovative. It was something just starting out, and it was a new method of policing," Bachert said. "It was fun to get involved with. I enjoyed it, and you get exercise. There aren't a lot of places where you can ride a bike for eight hours a day."

The Pine View program allows personnel to get around campus much easier to navigate through crowds easier than a golf cart, and to help the environment. "People don't expect to see a bike coming. You aren't very approachable in a vehicle, people don't come up and talk to you in your police car. It just makes you more relatable to the people around you," Bachert said.

He took it upon himself to reach out to Real Bikes in Venice, who supplied the bike after he explained the initiative, and Coonhound Customs,

who donated the detailing on it. Though he has a shoestring budget, Bachert has managed to achieve his goal of providing an efficient way of transportation for security purposes in only a few months.

It officially began the last week of November, and though the bike is Bachert's main form of transportation around campus, he still utilizes golf carts occasionally.

Bachert has been nominated for the 212 Faculty Award by Principal Dr. Stephen Covert because of his hard work and dedication to Pine View's safety. "I was surprised; it is nice to be noticed. Since I have been here, I have been trying to make smart security choices and I have been involved in law enforcement 23 years, so, yeah, it was nice to be recognized for some efforts," Bachert said.



PHOTO BY CLYDE MORGAN

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The Torch analyzes vaping and its growing popularity

by Ben Gordon
Sci & Tech Editor

While vaping has grown in popularity in recent years, one question still remains unanswered in the eyes of many young adults: is it really more healthy than smoking, or is it simply a sugar-coated version of traditional smoking that has been marketed as a better alternative?

Vaping has become so mainstream among teenagers and young adults in the United States that it was labeled an epidemic as of September 2018. According to the Food and Drug Administration, roughly 2 million teenagers have said they have vaped or juuled at some point in their life.

What differentiates e-cigarettes from normal cigarettes is that while e-cigarettes heat liquid, they do not burn anything like cigarettes or cigars. This means users are not exposed to the carbon monoxide and other toxins found in conventional cigarettes.

Tanya Elliot, M.D., an allergist and internist, highlighted the negative effects of vaping. "Most e-cigarettes do contain a number of potentially toxic

chemical substances, such as propylene glycol or glycerol," Elliot said. She added that at high temperatures, these substances, when mixed, can produce something called propylene oxide, which is suspected to cause cancer in humans.

Additionally, a 2018 study by the American Journal of Preventive Medicine found that daily use of e-cigarettes may double a person's

e-cigarette market share, announced that they would end social media promotion and stop selling most of its flavored e-cigarette pods in stores. The FDA has also announced that it will ban the sale of flavored e-cigarettes.

So what are the benefits of e-cigarettes? Some users explain that they can help you curb cigarette addiction. But, with e-cigarettes being somewhat new technology, it would be incorrect to assume that the benefits outweigh the risks without proper research supporting that claim.

Although e-cigarettes may help current smokers quit using tobacco, they also cause younger people to begin smoking and spark a nicotine addiction. Viewing the new technology as a way to sustain their business, big tobacco is investing in advertisement towards young people. This effectively causes a new epidemic of addictions to nicotine, and should be avoided at whatever costs necessary.

Unit sales for JUUL have increased more than 600 percent in 2017.

Source: Wells Fargo
GRAPHIC BY SARAH CATALANO

[an infographic]



2018
TECH
Year in review

BABEL FISH EARBUDS

Named for the iconic translating fish in "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy," this new product by Waverly Labs combines software from several different databases to translate languages directly into the user's ear.

IPHONE XS AND XR

Most known for its lack of a home button, the XS has wireless charging. Its counterpart, the XR, does not. Color choices for the XS are limited to silver, space gray and gold; however, the XR comes in black, white, red, yellow, blue and coral.

3D METAL PRINTING

With the creation of 3D metal printing, metal became available for mass production. It uses less energy and creates less waste than other manufacturing processes.

ZERO CARBON NATURAL GAS

While using natural gas as a source of energy is not currently renewable and creates the byproduct CO2, a gas with no carbon would solve this problem. Additionally, scientists have created a method that uses natural gas to generate power without burning it.

ARTIFICIAL EMBRYOS

Built from stem cells, these are the first lab-grown human embryos capable of undergoing gastrulation. Although this technology has caused ethical discussion, scientists can use artificial embryos to study early human development.

GRAPHIC BY SARAH CATALANO

Schadenfreude: exploring the science behind why we want our friends to fail

by Anna Labiner
Features Editor

With the increasingly competitive nature of today's youth, feelings of jealousy and envy are at an all-time high. In our current society, people will do whatever it takes to reach the top, causing individuals to take pleasure in the failures and misfortunes of others.

We don't feel this way on purpose. The pleasure we get from the personal afflictions of others is visceral, such as when a pompous, wealthy person goes bankrupt or an egotistical athlete loses a game.

In our heart of hearts, we know these occurrences are unfortunate, yet some part of our brain still finds pleasure in others' shortcomings. So why do we at times feel happiness at someone else's expense?

The answer is simple

and the feeling is so common that it has its own name: schadenfreude. This is defined as "a German word for the joy derived from others' misfortunes" according to the Smithsonian website. Taking pleasure in others' misery is not a fun thing to admit, but if this applies to you, you are not alone.

One reason we experience schadenfreude is because seeing someone else fail provides us with a psychological benefit, causing a boost in our self-esteem. For instance, when you do better on a test than one

of your friends, you generally feel more

your friend.

According to Professor Wilco van Dijk, a Social and Organizational Psychologist at Leiden University, "Their pain can be our gain and therefore it can be pleasing."

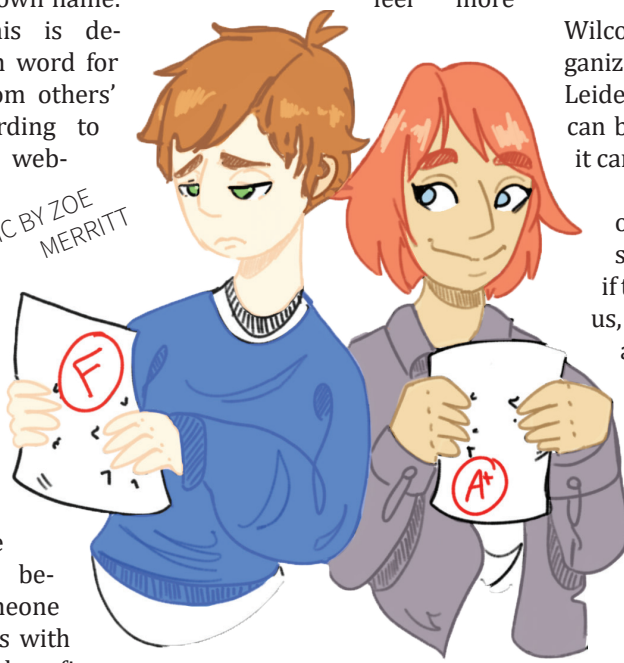
In other words, we only find pleasure in someone else's afflictions if there is something in it for us, like a confidence boost or a sense of vindication. As the Japanese say, "the misfortune of others tastes like honey."

Envy is another major concept in schadenfreude, mostly because envy induces pleasure.

The whole psychological concept of schadenfreude revolves around one becoming envious of someone else, and then feel-

ing a sense of pleasure when something goes awry in their life. In a way, when something bad happens to someone that is of higher status than you, it feels as though equality is restored because you no longer aspire to be like them. If one constantly feels unworthy, they are more likely to be envious towards those who they perceive to be better than them.

In an ideal world, we would all be content with our personal goals and achievements, regardless of the achievements of our acquaintances. Unfortunately, though, schadenfreude is not something that can be cured. If the feeling of wanting a friend to fail creeps up on you, take a step back and evaluate the situation, because someone else's success does not equal your failure.



GRAPHIC BY ZOE MERRITT

Go Green goes the extra degree with environmental outreach efforts on campus

by Tricia Saputera
News Editor

Pine View's environmental club, Go Green, has recently taken strides to expand their club and to educate fellow students on the simple ways they can help the environment. Within the past two months, they have conducted a cleanup, taught elementary students and invited guest speakers to further education efforts.

On Oct. 1, 15 and 22, Go Green held a cleanup on campus, recording the types of litter found to determine which items are most common at Pine View. Most of the litter collected was also improperly placed, as people recycled and threw away trash in the wrong bins. Posters encouraging students to save the environment are currently in the works, and are planned to be hung in the student union, on trash cans and

on recycling bins.

Celebrating America Recycles Day Nov. 19, Go Green discussed the importance of recycling with students in grades 4 and 5. Fourth-grade teacher Wendy Hazlett and fifth-grade teachers Peggy Barber, James Ross and Stephanie White took part in this event.

Through a PowerPoint presentation, the high school members of Go Green taught the elementary students about non-recyclable versus recyclable materials, littering and more. The younger students also chose a certain material often littered and signed a pledge to recycle that item more; the pledge is planned to be hung in the front office.

The club additionally invited three members of the Florida Conservation Corps as guest speakers Dec. 10 to speak to the club. With a mission "to develop natural and cultural resource leaders by connecting them to areas

of critical need in conservation, preservation, interpretation and resource based recreation," as stated on their website, the Florida Conservation Corps discussed the harmful effects of invasive species.

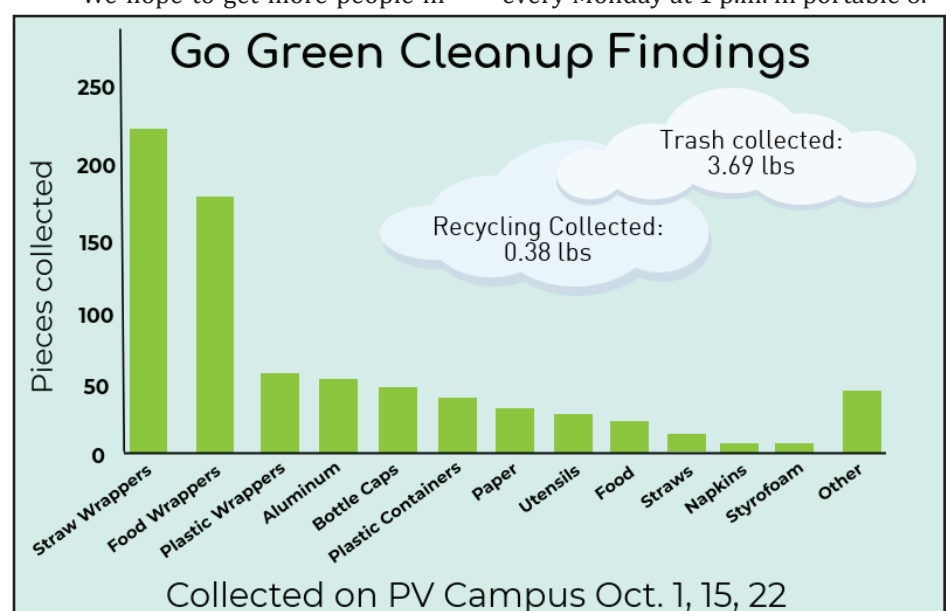
"We hope to get more people in-

involved in environmental activities such as this and raise awareness for environmental issues so we can help make a difference in our community," eleventh-grader and Go Green president Christiana Guan said. The club meets every Monday at 1 p.m. in portable 6.

We hope to get more people involved in environmental activities..."

Christiana Guan,

grade 11



GRAPHIC BY ISABELLA GASKILL

Rock the mic: Twelfth-grade performer pursues her passion for music

by Manny Rea
Managing Editor

Leaving audiences in awe with her alternative performances, twelfth-grader Arya Nalluri has actively been a part of the band program at Let's Rock Sarasota for seven years.

Before joining Let's Rock Sarasota, Nalluri started seriously pursuing singing at the early age of eight. She was initially inspired by her grandmother, who introduced Nalluri to Indian songs during her childhood. Receiving a guitar for her eighth birthday, Nalluri was able to expand her musical talents by learning to play the guitar while singing.

In sixth grade, Nalluri began taking vocal and guitar lessons, along with enrolling in the band program at Let's Rock Sarasota, an organization that gathers students from various schools who play different instruments, bringing them together into a band. Nalluri took on the enviable position of one of the vocalists. She attends one hour rehearsals every Monday, additional times when the

band has upcoming performances, including extended Saturday rehearsals.

The band first began performing for the members' families, and gradually, as their skills developed, they delved into larger-scale venues in the community. Additionally, one of the venues that Nalluri and her band perform at a few times a year is Mandeville Beer Garden.

"When she came to us, she was kind of shy, but she loves music. Her singing took another level," the founder of Let's Rock Sarasota, Julio Madrid, said.

During the spring of this year, Nalluri sang as a duo with the band's main guitarist, Quinton Puleo, an eleventh-grader at Booker High School. The two performed chill-out and alternative music covers with the combined forces of Puleo's acoustic guitar and Nalluri's perfect-pitch voice.

One of their most prominent covers was the song, "My Body" by Young the Giant; this song holds meaning to Nalluri, as she said she fell in love with how its lyrics connect with broader social issues while maintaining an upbeat tune. In fact, she even performed this song with Quinton for Miss Pine View.

To their surprise, they received the opportunity to perform on ABC 7 March 2 of this year, thanks to Madrid setting up the whole operation.

[Music] has definitely given me a lot of confidence and definitely the ability to assert myself. I found that by sharing something I love to do, it opened myself up more as a person."

**Arya Nalluri,
grade 12**



Twelfth-grader Arya Nalluri performs an acoustic rendition of "My Body" by Young the Giant with her band at the 2018 Miss Pine View show. Nalluri had previously performed a cover of this song March 2 with her guitarist, Quinton Puleo, on ABC 7. PHOTO BY MANNY REA

"I think when we went to ABC 7, it really was the best moment for me. It was me and Quinton performing 'Home Sweet Home' by Mötley Crüe. "I realized that moment that this song was something that I picked. And it just represented my own journey, traveling from this meek backup vocalist that I was, to where I was now, standing on TV performing with my best friend," Nalluri said.

Not only has the talented pair performed at various venues together, but they also recorded their repertoire May 1 this year. The two prepped and perfected 10 songs for months, then came to Bay Sounds Studios to spend the whole day recording.

"Arya is very talented. [Per-

forming with her] was fun, and it really was easy, just because we've been playing for a long time. We kind of have this chemistry musically, and we just flow well," Puleo said.

Music not only opened Nalluri's eyes to new genres, but it influenced her as a person as well. "[Music] has definitely given me a lot of confidence and definitely the ability to assert myself. I found that by performing in front of crowds, by sharing something I love to do, it opened myself up more as a person," she said.

Although Nalluri does not have plans to pursue music as a career, she hopes to continue singing as a hobby, performing at local coffee shops and restaurants.

Check out PVTorch.com

Scan this QR code to read about twelfth-graders Tommy Gilfert and LJ Valery and their podcast, Two %.



DECEMBER HOROSCOPES

AQUARIUS
(January 20- February 18)

You've been closed off lately but don't fear emotional vulnerability. It's okay to be a little scared. Remember that your friends do care about you and are always there to lend an ear.

PISCES
(February 19- March 20)

A friend has taken on a project where your skills could be instrumental for success. Don't be afraid to speak up and ask if they need a hand. They likely do and simply don't want to bother you.

ARIES
(March 21-April 19)

Always ready for the next big thing, and with exam season out of the way, you're ready to party! Don't get ahead of yourself, though. Take it one step at a time with smaller goals and head into the new year with a clear head.

TAURUS
(April 20-May 20)

Hey, you! Take a deep breath. Your temper is on the rise for the moment, so please be conscious of it. Go for a walk, draw up a bubble bath and maybe eat some cookies. Whatever you do, just don't lash out at those who care about you.

GEMINI
(May 21-June 20)

Kick it into high gear, Gemini! Like it or not, you can't deny you've been slacking lately. It's time to step up and see what you can do for the people in your life to ease their burdens just a bit.

CANCER
(June 21-July 22)

As we move through the holiday season, abandon your typical materialism in favor of simpler things like practicing traditions with your family. You'll be surprised at how good it makes you feel.

LEO
(July 23-August 22)

You're warm-hearted, and tis' the season of appreciation! Take a minute today to express how much you care about the people in your life. It's sure to put a smile on their faces and strengthen their friendships with you.

VIRGO
(August 23-September 22)

You're someone who likes to get things done, but your study schedule and midterms have left you totally drained. It's time to relax, smile and leave the holiday shopping to other people in the family. You definitely deserve a break!

LIBRA
(September 23-October 22)

Unresolved relationship issues have been getting you down lately. The best remedy is a healthy and a mature conversation, but sometimes the only solution is to simply move on and start fresh.

SCORPIO
(October 23-November 21)

With the new year approaching quickly, take some time to make a list of what you hoped to accomplish this year but didn't. A new year is a new beginning, and a brand new chance to reach your goals.

SAGITTARIUS
(November 22-December 21)

Recently, you've been itching for a change. Luckily, there's a lot out there to explore! Take a risk and try something new. Who knows what you could discover about yourself and the world around you?

CAPRICORN
(December 22-January 19)

You recently accomplished something amazing. Your modesty is admirable, but please remember you deserve all the praise you receive for your accomplishments! Bask in your greatness for a minute or two.

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Best friends take on the big top

Student performers soar to new heights with Sailor Circus

by Anna Labiner
Features Editor

When tenth-grader Jenna Wynne and eleventh-grader Ellie Winer joined the Sailor Circus seven years ago, they never anticipated how much the program would bring them together as friends. Although the two had casually known each other before joining the after-school activity, they both agree that participating in the circus together greatly strengthened their relationship. “I’m so glad we both decided to join the program,” Wynne said, “doing circus with Ellie has been so much fun, and it’s definitely made us become better friends.”

“I love being in circus, but getting to participate in the program with one of my best friends just makes it that much better.”
Ellie Winer, grade 11

The Sailor Circus is known throughout the Sarasota community as being the oldest running youth circus in America and is recognized worldwide as “The Greatest ‘Little’ Show on Earth.” For more than six decades, the program has of-

fered a fun and engaging way for students ages 8-18 to participate in the circus arts and learn valuable lessons, such as time management, self-discipline and teamwork.

Along with its yearly program, Sailor Circus also offers a Circus Summer camp — a fun, immersive way for kids ages 6-15 to get involved in the Circus Arts Community, and try out their acrobatic skills.

Like many young kids who attend the summer program, both Winer, who attended the camp for four summers, and Wynne, who attended the camp for two summers, found themselves totally enthralled with the circus arts. They decided to enroll in the yearly Sailor Circus Academy.

During their first year in the circus, both Winer and Wynne were cast as main character roles in the winter performance “The Polar Express.” Since

then, the girls have greatly expanded their repertoire, and both participate in many aerial acts such as the aerial silks, the Spanish web and the swinging trapeze.

The two share a love for these



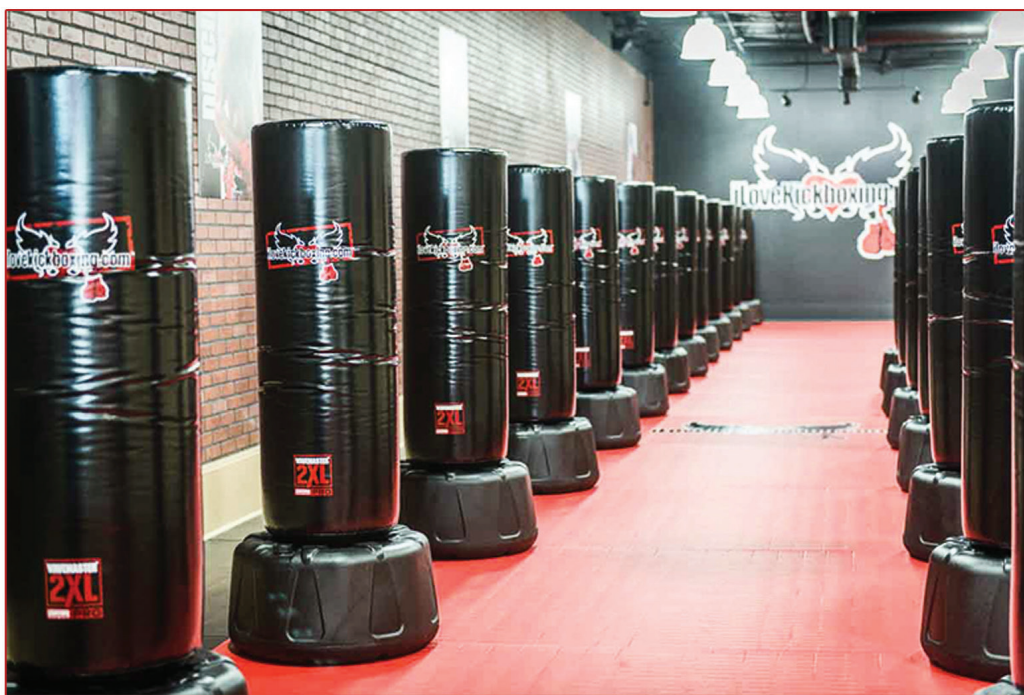
From left to right, eleventh-grader Ellie Winer, tenth-grader Tommy Johnson, tenth-grader Jenna Wynne and twelfth-grader Channing Gross wave to the crowd after a daring stunt, the swinging cradle. Wynne and Winer have been with the program for seven years, and perform this act along with several others of varying degrees of difficulty in a single performance. PHOTO PROVIDED BY ELLIE WINER

lofty acts and are well-known around the program for being in the swinging cradle — a challenging and high-risk act that involves a catcher who hangs from their knees on a suspended platform whilst throwing, catching and swinging the flyers. “Both of them [Wynne and Winer] are amazing teammates and excel in aerial acts. Working with them in swinging cradle is so much fun, and we always push ourselves to do better and accomplish more impressive tricks,” tenth-grader Tommy Johnson said. Johnson also participates in the program and acts as the catcher in the swinging cradle

act. Wynne and Winer both have bright futures in the program, and their friendship only strengthens their love and commitment to the circus arts. “I love being at circus, but getting to participate in the program with one of my best friends just makes it that much better,” Winer said.

The Sailor Circus will be having its winter shows Thursday, Dec. 27 through Sunday, Dec. 30 under the Ulla Searing Big Top at Nathan Benderson Park. Check their website, <https://circusarts.org>, for times.

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TAKE THE STAGE

From classic plays to flashy musicals, Sarasota offers many theaters with a vast array of inspiring productions. With great historical significance and shows for all ages, these theaters create a welcoming atmosphere that leave everyone entertained.

Ladies and gentleman, welcome to the show!

GRAPHIC BY ANNA LABINER AND CLYDE MORGAN

Players Theatre

by Isabella Gaskill
Asst. Web Editor

Founded when Sarasota was a small town of only 8,000 residents, Players Theatre has grown from a small group of drama-enthusiasts to a thriving community theater that has united people from all over Sarasota through their love of productions.

Players Theatre first started when the Out-of-Door Academy School (ODA) owners, Fanneal Harrison and Catherina Galvin, became inspired to implement an activity that captivated and united the staff of their school. The two decided on theater and gathered a group of performers to create their own productions.

Their dreams became a reality when the team moved into its first real theater in 1936. This was replaced in the '70s to add more seating, as well as upgrades, to accommodate the growing population in Sarasota. Currently, Players Theatre is located on North Tamiami Trail but is planning to relocate to the Waterside Place development in Lakewood Ranch. However, they will maintain a presence in down-

town Sarasota as a theater will continue operation in Rosemary Square.

The theater boasts beautiful accommodations as well as concessions, including a high-quality sound system and an impressive lobby. What really makes Players Theatre stand out from other theaters is its dedicated and welcoming staff. The employees make it a point to treat audience members as if they are more than just customers, and they are constantly working to help the performing arts community of Sarasota. "Players is truly my second family. As Sarasota's first performing arts organization, we work to create, educate and inspire future students, performers, artistic teams and audience members in our community," Director of Operations Jolie Schroeder said.

The shows have a mixture of long-time professionals and students, providing a chance for beginning actors in the community to learn valuable acting skills first-hand. This makes the theater a great resource for becoming more involved in the performing arts. Additionally, they offer classes, work-



Players Theatre possesses a charming exterior that reflects its historic value. The theater offers classes, workshops and summer camps for students to begin their acting careers. PHOTO BY ISABELLA GASKILL

shops and summer camps for kids and teens to get started with acting and working in theater. The two programs — The Players Kids and The Players Teens — require small annual fees for the students to work with the theater.

One of the exciting, upcoming events is the Wilde Broadway Series 2018-2019. Players Theatre is offering ticket packages to make the most of this event, allowing buyers to attend six different Broadway shows, including "Hairspray" and "Follies."

Everyone is eligible to support

Players Theatre, either by becoming a sponsor, making a donation or becoming more deeply involved by joining the theater's staff. Further details are available on their website, which encourages donations in order to support the talented actors as well as helping to bring the Players Theatre family to Sarasota.

Rating:
5/5 Torches



Venice Theatre lies in the heart of Venice. The theater has begun hanging up lights in honor of their annual production, "A Christmas Carol." PHOTO BY ALEX ROUMI

by Alex Roumi
Asst. Sports Editor

Tucked into a small corner on Venice Island, Venice Theatre is surrounded by ice cream stores, parks and fabulous restaurants. The annual holiday lights brighten up the front of the building, and patrons are welcomed in with a warm atmosphere and professional productions that will entertain everyone, from teenagers and senior citizens to families of all ages.

Venice Theatre, formerly known as Little Venice Theatre, opened in 1950 when 41 volunteers joined together to form what is now the largest arts organization in south Sarasota County, as well as the one of the largest community theaters in the United States. A non-profit organization, the theater has a board of directors of around 10 people, as well as

28 staff members and about 1,500 volunteers that help the theater run smoothly.

Laurie Colton, the marketing director at Venice Theatre, has been working with Venice Theatre for 10 years. "I started off as a volunteer and worked as a staff person. I performed in shows and came and helped out the theater before I came onto the staff panel and I have loved it ever since," Colton said.

The Venice Theatre is composed of two different theaters inside the building: the main theater, seating around 400 people, and a smaller theater that seats 90. The latter's setting is more personal, and the audience has the chance to interact with the actors in a unique way. In the bigger theater, larger family shows are performed in contrast to the more intimate atmosphere of the smaller theater. There are also four rehearsal

Venice Theatre

rooms, a media room, music room, and a painting room where the theater's scenic designer, Tim Wisgerhof, paints the sets. Outside the main theater is a small bar that sells beer, wine, other liquor, soft drinks and snacks that can be brought into the theater.

In upcoming years, Venice Theatre hopes to add to the building as they continue to grow. The staff have talked about expanding their campus, adding an extra building for classes and to hold camp programs. "We are bursting at the seams here at Venice Theatre!" Colton said.

Due to recent growth, they also hope to expand to North Port, where they would like to form a new branch of the theatre. "We want to make sure that new people moving into the area know who we are," Colton said.

The Venice Theatre performs musicals, plays, concerts, and comedy skits throughout the year. The average age of their patrons is 67 years old, so the theater's productions skew toward older audiences. However, many productions are put on for the younger persons in the area. While the theater does have shows that are ages 17 and older, many of the productions cater to younger audiences and families looking for something to do. They have one annual production, "A Christmas Carol," which they will be showing from Dec. 14 to Dec. 17 this year.

Plays or skits at the Venice Theatre take around six weeks, whereas musicals

take around eight weeks to rehearse for.

Throughout the summer, early fall, and late spring, Venice Theatre is very busy and sells out 80 percent of the time. During the winter and spring when the snowbirds come down, they sell out almost every production.

The theatre is family oriented and a second home to some of the staff there. "I love it here. You can do whatever you do at home here. The dedication that people have to supporting Venice Theatre blows my mind, I love it," Nikki Pietryka, a volunteer and an actress at Venice Theatre said.

Pietryka's children, Annabelle, Kylie, and Tyler, all volunteer and participate in many productions at the theater. Pietryka's family got involved with the theater when they moved from Maryland to Venice, after visiting the theater and watching Peter Pan. "Peter Pan was so amazing. That show was part of the reason we moved down here; we wanted to experience more of Venice Theatre," Pietryka said. Her oldest daughter, Annabelle, is a ninth-grader at Pine View.

Venice Theatre is an outstanding community organization that is perfect for adults and children alike.

It is located at 140 Tampa Ave W, Venice, FL 34285 and is open Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Rating:
4/5 Torches



Check out PVTorch.com

Scan this QR code to read our review of Florida Studio Theatre on our website.



PHOTO BY BEN GORDON

Where to get your one-two punch



GRAPHIC BY ZOE MERRITT

Boxing is not a workout that the typical student participates in. However, with new boxing and kickboxing fitness gyms popping up in Sarasota, more and more fitness-enthusiasts can participate in the combat sport. iLoveKickboxing Sarasota, Jaco's Boxing and Fitness, and Uppercut Boxing and Fitness are all facilities that offer a variety of teaching techniques for hard workouts.

Jaco Boxing and Fitness

by Frankie Grasso-Clay
Asst. Humor Editor

With extreme workouts that instill a higher level of fitness in its members, Jaco Boxing is a hardworking gym that is sure to leave you sweaty and euphoric. From the most inexperienced newcomer to the most dedicated athlete, Jaco's expert instructors ensure to treat every athlete equally.

Upon entering the facility and checking in at the front desk, participants' names appear on a TV screen displaying group assignments, exercise stations and workout sequences for the athletes. In each section, there are different types of activities, with the sounding of a small bell signaling the transition of workouts. After everyone in each section switches between activities, the trainer or instructor yells out over the thundering music to switch stations, teaching the different, intense exercises that will be completed next. Activities include punching, kicking, running, and exercising with dumbbell, seated row machines, biking machines, a SkiErg and more.

Jaco Boxing is run by Adam Jaco and his wife Kelli Jaco. According to the gym's website, Adam was inspired by his father, David Jaco, a heavyweight professional fighter who fought in the ring against Mike Tyson, Tommy Morrison, Mike Weaver and other well-known fighters. Adam became a boxer

himself, and quickly grew among the ranks to become a super middleweight fighter and three-time state champion. According to his biography on the website, Adam "had a passion that couldn't be stifled or calmed. It became a fire that couldn't be contained in himself, rather had to be shared with the world."



PHOTO PROVIDED BY KELLI JACO

"Overall, the goal at Jaco Boxing is to provide a positive experience for people looking for a well-rounded fitness experience," Kelli said. "We use authentic boxing training combined with strength and conditioning to provide a high intensity workout that is fit for anyone. We have programs for kids, fighters, moms, people suffering from Parkinson's — everyone."

If you're looking for something exciting to get back in shape, stay in shape, or feel better about yourself, then Jaco's boxing prides itself on being the gym for you.

Open Mondays through Saturdays, prices and times depend on the day of service, which can be found on the website, <https://www.jacoboxing.com>. The Sarasota gym is located at 5708 Lawton Dr. and the Lakewood Ranch gym is located 4715 Lena Rd, Building 1, Unit 107.

Rating:
5/5 Torches



Uppercut Boxing and Fitness

by Gwyn Petersen
Entertainment Editor

Through high intensity classes and rigorous instruction, Uppercut Boxing and Fitness is sure to improve one's physical health and strength levels. With classes that test every area of fitness, Uppercut, as it is often referred to by its members, guarantees noticeable results in little time.

The gym was developed with the mission of helping people achieve and maintain a certain level of fitness with a focus on mental health. Thirteen years ago, owner Aaron Jaco was working in construction with a side job as a personal trainer. When the industry began to slow in the mid 2000s, he made the decision to walk away and to open up a gym as a full time trainer.

"I really wanted people to see that level of improvement. When you finish a workout, you feel a level of achievement, and after it's done, you walk away and think, 'I just did that. That was awesome,'" Jaco said.

Uppercut offers drop-in and regular classes, ranging from \$10 to \$15, depending on the time and the demand of the class. The classes operate on intervals of different exercises, balancing the practices of proper punches with squats, lunges, push-ups and running. Jaco makes an effort to pull aside individuals who struggle with keeping form to help correct their technique



PHOTO BY GWYN PETERSEN

with one-on-one work.

How a class runs depends on the skill level of the attendees. For instance, if Jaco observes that the class consists of less experienced members, he will concentrate more on basic exercises to build a strong foundation for advanced skills. Higher level classes run at a faster pace, fitting as much improvement into an hour as possible. The advanced students of the studio even compete in fights, which take place at the gym itself.

For those new to or struggling with boxing, there are specialized personal training sessions offered, dedicated to improving in areas one may struggle with. These sessions are priced at \$70 an hour. Groups that would prefer a private lesson can call for pricing, which depends on the number of members.

"I have a short attention span, and I really couldn't stick with a sport until I started boxing here," twelfth-grader Elizabeth Moser said. "It keeps you engaged and moving. I love it a lot."

Uppercut is open Monday to Thursday from 6 a.m. to 6:45 p.m., Friday from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Saturday from 6 to 10 a.m. It is located at 1919 Southwood Street.

Rating:
5/5 Torches



iLoveKickboxing Sarasota

by Zoe Merritt
Asst. Opinion Editor

Walking through the door of iLoveKickboxing (iLKB), one instantly feels the extreme positivity and optimism radiating from the facility. Whether it's the athlete's first class or 50th class, the staff at iLKB focus on making all feel welcome.

An international franchise with locations in Canada, Peru, and throughout the U.S., iLKB opened in Sarasota last December and has since gained a dedicated following of members. Located in the downtown area, the gym is fairly small with two locker rooms and a front area connected to the main gym. The black and red aesthetic is vibrant



PHOTO BY ZOE MERRITT

and encouraging, along with the heavy duty speakers that pump upbeat, diverse, energetic tracks.

One of the many perks this gym offers is the ability for members to walk in to any class during the day, and merely check in with a barcode tag before heading to class. The instructors take the time to learn everyone's names; therefore, a shouted greeting is a common occurrence here.

While the bag combinations and warm-ups change every day, the classes still follow a structured routine. This entails starting with a rigorous warm up, followed by six bag rounds, a speed round and finally partner drills before a short cool down to

complete the class.

Beginning with running, the warm-up also includes lunges, sit-ups, push-ups, planks, burpees, along with a myriad of other exercises to work core, arm and leg muscles. The first bag round is always straight, normal punching in a left-right combination. The third round incorporates front kicks and round-houses; the combinations become more complex from there as additional uppercuts and hooks are punctuated with side kicks and advanced punches. The final round is kicked-off with call and response of "Last round! Best round!" between the instructor and the members. Using your partners gloves as a bag, partner drills test speed and accuracy. The end of the hour brings high fives and chatter as the class wraps up.

iLKB does more than just instruct. The gym has recently announced their development as a drop off for the Toys

for Tots charity, and for the holidays, iLKB created a hashtag on social media to donate Thanksgiving dinners to those unable to afford it. Always keeping an eye out for more ways to give back, iLoveKickboxing cares deeply about Sarasota and the family they have created at their gym.

Appearing as an unassuming gym on the outside, iLKB packs a punch with their dedication to hard work, confidence and the camaraderie formed on the mat.

iLoveKickboxing Sarasota is open Monday to Saturday. The gym is located at 1454 Blvd of the Arts Sarasota, Florida 34236. Their hours and prices vary.

Rating:
5/5 Torches



Student achieves Florida cross-country title for the second consecutive year



TOP: Twelfth-grader Ben Hartvigsen runs in the 2018 FHSAA Cross Country Championships. Hartvigsen has been running for seven years and this was his second time acquiring the state title. RIGHT: Ben Hartvigsen celebrates crossing the finish line at the 2018 Great American Cross-Country Festival in Cary, N.C. He placed eight out of nearly 200 runners. In Cary, he ran a personal record for the season of 15:08.81 minutes. PHOTO PROVIDED BY BEN HARTVIGSEN

by Odelia Tiutyama
News Editor

Twelfth-grader Ben Hartvigsen blew past the competition at the 2018 Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) Cross Country State Finals. Hartvigsen defended his title as the state champion for the second year in a row, finishing with a time of 15:27.05 in the 5K 4A division for Sarasota High School Nov. 10 at Apalachee Regional Park in Tallahassee, Fla.

Inspired by his father, Hartvigsen has been running local races since elementary school. He began his cross country and track career in sixth grade as a part of Pine View's middle school track team. From the Pine View middle school track team, he moved on to run for the

Sarasota High School Cross Country and Track teams in ninth grade. "It was a lot of seeing my dad doing those marathons and being able to run with him that set an example for me to then go to practice freshman year," Hartvigsen said.

Hartvigsen's success in the sport does not come without a sweat. He practices every day, and although there aren't any practices on Sundays, Hartvigsen completes

long runs of around ten miles on his own.

Each week consists of recovery days, which include five-to-six-mile runs, along with workout days, which take place in areas such as Celery Fields or Payne Park. On workout days, the runners work more on fitness, speed and tempo. During racing seasons, Saturdays include either vigorous workouts or actual races.

"Ben is the definition of progression. He was a hard-working JV [junior varsity] runner that kept im-

proving. He exploded his sophomore year with a big drop in time based on his summer training. Again, all season, he kept getting better and ran with more confidence," Cross Country Coach John Stevenson said. "He really didn't start making heads turn till his junior year where he placed second overall at the FSU/Pre-State meet and from that moment he was the runner to beat. Even with a state title his junior year, he stayed humble and continued his work towards a school record and another state title as a senior."

At the FHSAA Cross Country State Finals, their team not only left with Hartvigsen as the individual champion, but also with the team winning the state title. "It was really cool to have won an individual title, but for the team to win, it just felt like everything had come together and we'd finally done what we had set out to do at the beginning of the season," Hartvigsen said.

Concluding his high school cross country season, Hartvigsen attended the 2018 Foot Locker Nationals qualifiers at McAlpine Park in Charlotte, N.C. Nov. 24. He completed the race in 14th place with a time of 15:31 minutes wrapping up the season with his supportive teammates.

From team traditions, such as pasta parties the

night before a race to load on carbohydrates to week-long summer trips to North Carolina where teammates bond while running in the mountains, the team's state title was very important for Hartvigsen. "Team bonding and being with the team is really important. It may not seem like it, but cross country is a team sport. Everybody needs to go out there and be motivating each other. And that's what led to our success in the state," Hartvigsen said.

He publicly announced that he had committed to Harvard Nov. 15. "Running-wise, I just really like the culture there. The team seems very focused on working hard and trying to balance their academics and athletics, but they seem to still really truly care about running and running well," Hartvigsen said.

"I've been to some other high academic schools and I've seen all the passion for academics, but I didn't see a drive for running near the same level."

With this being Hartvigsen's last cross country season of high school, he has begun to set future goals for his college cross country and track career. Hartvigsen hopes to be coached to a level where he can compete at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Cross Country Championships.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY BEN HARTVIGSEN

Ben is the definition of progression. He was a hard-working JV runner that kept improving."
John Stevenson,
Cross Country Coach

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A short drive from Pine View School

Outraged student goes to extreme lengths to assert dominance on Pine View sidewalks

by Madi Holmes
Asst. Web Editor

As more and more gates surround Pine View's swampy campus, students internal commutes are becoming increasingly more cluttered and sporadic. The once rare interaction of a second-grader colliding with a twelfth-grader is now a daily occurrence — and it's tearing the student body apart.

After years of freely being able to assert his dominance, eleventh-grader Shinhit Byzuca, is fed up with the pesky youngsters. The stressed junior shared that he has not only been tardy multiple times due to single file lines, but has also been rudely cut-off by herds of fourth-graders. Byzuca has recently vocalized his opinion on these disrespectful, beta ten-year-olds and has instigated multiple on-campus riots.

"It is impossible for me to get from my Classroom of Tomorrow to my Mobile Learning Cottage without the light-up wheel of a Jansport rolly-backpack charging up my already bruised calf," Byzuca said. "It is a total outrage."

One morning, after his second rolly-backpack shin slash of the day, Byzuca recalls that he took his bottled-up outrage to administration. There, he proposed a new campus layout that suggested all elementary students be immediately relocated to an agricultural hub in central Florida, where their aggressive wheel grinding will help aid the fertilization of Florida's sandy topsoil.

Principal Dr. Stephen Covert, actually considering the proposal for a hot minute due to the increased amount of on-campus rolly-backpack caused injuries, but decided there would be no change to the elementary students' on foot campus routes. This marked the beginning of Byzuca's raging, hateful "High School Liberation" campaign.

The number of elementary-student-caused injuries on Pine View's campus was recently declared the highest in the state, and administration has been looking for a solution for months. The campaign, comprised of posters and speeches in support of Byzuca's relocation proposal, was sincerely supported by the communi-



The animosity toward elementary and middle schoolers is increasing as quickly as their population is rising. To cope with this epidemic, students have attempted to ship the younger populace away to central Florida. PHOTO BY OLIVIA HANSEN

ty for about a day before being forcefully shut down by staff due to inhumanity.

The campaign wasn't necessarily a total bust. Byzuca and his newly accumulated hundreds of supporters started a Go Fund Me shortly after the

silence of their campus protest. The Go Fund Me is open to anyone who supports their cause, and all proceeds will go to the purchase of helicopters for the removal of Pine View elementary and middle school students lacking spatial awareness.

Torch debunks the various group chat members

by Naina Chauhan
Asst. Match Editor

All of us have been in a group chat at some point in our lives, whether you chose to or not. Maybe it was your middle school gang group chat, one for a club, or a class group chat where your presence and participation is crucial to its existence. Regardless of your past experience, this collaborative communication outlet reveals the true nature of the people within it. In this issue of The Torch, the humor section provides an in-depth analysis to address the roles each member may play, revealing their true role in society itself. If you've ever wondered where you lie in the miscellaneous message system, keep reading.

Do Not Disturb: This person put the group chat on do not disturb mere moments after its creation because they can't deal with the incessant dinging that occurs during the first few hours that of its creation. They are always lurking and know

exactly what's going on in everyone's life, but never text themselves unless they need something.

The Planner: This person initially started the group chat to get the gang together, which never happened. They're currently trying to get everyone to go on a trip in the far future that no one can afford.

The Other Person: They were kind of your friend in seventh grade and now you haven't spoken to them in three years. You can't un-add them because it would be awkward and they sometimes send homework answers, so...

guys what the FREAK my chemistry grade is LITERALLY about to go in the TOILET after the Stoichiometry test.....I literally guessed on 90% of the questions and my mom is ACTUALLY going to end my pathetic, useless life....WHY AM I SUCH A HORRIBLE STUDENT?

omg guys I got a 100 😊! Lol Haha!

GRAPHIC BY NAINA CHAUHAN

The Memer: Seems to spend their life on the internet in search of the finest memes to ever exist. While memes 24/7 are overwhelming, they are the reason you understand pop culture references.

The Woke One: Every time a celebrity does anything slightly political they send an article link with the clapping emoji. Informing you about what's going on outside of the United States because they are #Cultured, constantly holding their wokeness above everyone.

The Plug: Always have your back. Left your textbook at home and they text pictures. Always there to share vocab quizlets, send you color-coded notes after you were absent

and always find those great random teacher websites with 'practice tests.' Most common text? "I've got you."

The Gossip Girl: They always have tea. As soon as they hear anything they text it to the group chat and at least 20 other people. Usually about an upperclassman, you don't know. Referrals, breakups, teacher scandals, they know it all.

The Mom: Always checking in with everyone. Kind, innocent, but tries to be cool. Always shocked by anything remotely bad. Makes you feel guilty when you weren't academically honest. Keeps the group chat civil and is like the glue that holds it all together.

The Novelist: Thinks that everyone wants to know what's going on in their life. Writes entire books about stress, school and failing at life in general. No one likes them and they are always 'in love' with a different person.

Politically inactive student mourns loss of Beto O'Rourke

by Melissa Santoyo
Editor-in-Chief

Yes, the midterms may have taken place over a month ago, but will I ever recover from the unshakable loss of Beto O'Rourke in the senatorial race? Obviously not — the Beto sticker on my laptop (which I proudly purchased two weeks following the election) is evidence enough that my deeply-rooted disillusion with the entire state of Texas won't be fading anytime soon.

Unless you are not on Twitter, in which case you definitely live under a rock, young teens internationally were in upheaval immediately following O'Rourke's loss Nov. 6. My entire feed — for days, weeks on end — was filled with jaded college and high school students from all around the nation, mourning Ted Cruz's victory. However, social media convinced the young users that the candidate was... questionable. One fellow O'Rourke fanatic from Missouri, under the tag @Betodeserved-Betta, decried the infallible injustice of the American voting system, despite admitting to not showing up at the polls at all two tweets prior. I mean, it do be like that, I guess.

Despite loosely keeping up with midterms in the thrall of college application season,



High school student, Memelissa Satan, proudly presents her shrine of Beto O'Rourke who lost in the senatorial race against Ted Cruz. Satan has yet to shut up about the election, much to the annoyance of her Twitter followers.

GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON

I avidly followed O'Rourke's campaign — through his Twitter that is. If I was to include the phrase — "woke" in my Twitter bio, I needed to keep up with the race for the Texan Senate seat — lest I lose clout points for my incompetence when confronted about my political stances IRL.

Not surprisingly, our disappointment was soul-crushing. To think, good ole' Texas could have been blue. Even though I have never and will never actually live in the Lone Star State, rest assured that the outcome of this senatorial race

impacts me personally and on a daily basis as a resident of Florida.

In protest, I have continued to amass Beto campaign merch, now sold at a discounted price due to its irrelevance to, generally, most of America. My feed, relatively free of midterm discourse, is never free from the stray disillusioned straggler who relishes in the fact that voter turnout won't matter when the Earth is uninhabitable in 12 years. Nihilism aside, the hype for #Beto2020 is real — that hashtag has yet to fade. Kanye who?

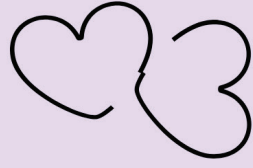
[an infographic]



GRAPHIC BY MADI HOLMES AND ANNA LABINER

[meme of the month]

thank u, next



ORIGIN:

After a long year of break-ups and tragedies, the theatrical and musical icon, Ariana Grande, released a new song summing up her love life, released on Nov. 3, 2018. The well-known, "thank u, next" number has transformed itself not only into an award-winning piece, but has become the backbone of recursive Twitter trends, all of which incorporate segments of the song in lyrical or visual form.

ABOUT:

The song represents Grande's past relationships, but instead of having negative undertones about those who have wronged her, the artist perceives them as learning experiences and ways to understand self-love. The music video incorporates numerous references to classic female-empowering motion pictures, such as *Legally Blonde*, *Mean Girls*, *13 Going on 30* and *Bring It On*. The video also includes characters from Grande's first career in the music/ television industry: *Victorious*.



Legally Blonde (2001)



thank u, next (2018)

POPULAR

DERIVATIVES:

The hit song was immediately turned into memes on Twitter, per usual:



Photos provided by Twitter

GRAPHIC BY OLIVIA HANSEN

[a column]

Let's talk about restaurant etiquette

If you know me at all, you know I work in the customer service industry, where I meet all kinds of special individuals and spend my life exchanging friendly badinage with them. I am a host at a restaurant (the name of which will remain anonymous for the sake of my job) and from this experience I have learned a lot about how I should behave in other restaurants, and thought I should share my insight to, ultimately, make the lives of people in the customer service industry everywhere easier.



Olivia Hansen, Humor Editor

If it's "in season" and the restaurant takes reservations and you come in with a party of four at 7:00 p.m. on a Saturday and we don't have a table for you, take it personally. We probably don't like something you're wearing and are just pretending we are completely booked. Take full offense when I put you on a waiting list. Maybe if you were just a better human being, I would fabricate a table out of nothing for you, but I guess we aren't there yet.

Hold yourself in higher esteem than others. You deserve the better service than everyone there, so if you witness questionable acts (i.e. the table next to you got their salads first when you sat down before

them... I know) demand to talk to the manager. This communication is crucial to your dining experience and without it, you may even have to wait a couple extra minutes. Can you imagine? Was the hostess off-putting? Was your food cold? Was the

I am a host at a restaurant the name of which will remain anonymous for the sake of my job, and from this... I have learned a lot about how I should behave in other restaurants.

bus boy doing an inadequate job of cleaning tables? Well, then storm out. Make a scene. This way, the staff

learns their lesson. Forget eating. Your integrity is much more important.

With these tips, relish every aspect of dining out. Hopefully, my first-hand experience will encourage you to stand up for yourself in the public setting. Remember, the customer is always right and that customer is you.

Torch tea: exposing the ghoulish, ghastly truth of Pine View's English department

After extensive investigation, The Torch has uncovered the truth behind the incredible, the intellectual, John Shea

by Brianna Nelson
Opinion Editor

As many of you know from my exposé last issue, I am a diligent purveyor of tea and tidbits around campus. However, since my last romp in the secret world of teachers that lies right under our school's collective nose (by Nikolai Gogol), I've found

something more shocking than anyone could ever have imagined.

One of our very own faculty, a member of the English department and the face of much discussion around campus

JOHN SHEA is a vampire.

One of our very own faculty, a member of the English department and the face of much discussion around campus JOHN SHEA is a vampire.

Exhibit A — knowledge of literature: If you've never been in Shea's class before, let me paint a picture for you. A silent room of students simply stumped by the raw obscurity of the questions our fearless leader asks. While the class sits in silence, the alleged vampire discusses his affinity for, and flexes his

knowledge of, old books. When he asks questions (I hope rhetorical) about the class's knowledge of unrecognizable Russian short story authors from the 1700s and receives no response, he is positively flustered. Now that you understand the aura of the class, let me present to you my theory: the only way a man could have this expan-

sive knowledge of strange literature is if he himself was alive at the time of their publication. And based on a corroboration of evidence and student opinion, we see how this man is undisputedly a vampire who has been alive since at least the 18th century.

Exhibit B — Vampire-esque aesthetics: Shea is a pale man. Now you may just say 'Oh he just stays inside reading all day and doesn't have time to go into the sun. But did you ever ask WHY he stays inside reading all day? Perhaps it is because he is simply not allowed to make contact with the sun? Stay woke people. Another thing regarding this man's aesthetic is his mode of dress. I have never seen a teacher dress so formally on a regular basis. I'm of the belief this is a part of his ancient vampiric culture. His casual Friday attire also just a blatant attempt to skirt suspicion. "Eat More Kale." Interesting.

This should be more than enough evidence but now we have to examine the



English teacher John Shea revives his youth by shaving his beard in the English planning room. When Shea does not shave his beard, he slowly fades away. It is also a known fact that vampires cannot see themselves in a mirror. Coincidence? PHOTO BY BRIANNA NELSON

intricacies of his vampiric survival. There is only one valid theory on how he keeps himself looking youthful, despite his seemingly never ending existence on this planet. The key to his juvenescence is his beard. You may have noticed how once every few weeks, he shaves his

beard. He is forced to shave his beard and allow the newly cut bits of hair to seep into his skin to remain looking young.

Do what you will with this information, but as I always say: Stay woke. If I suddenly vanish, you will know first to look in building room 207.

[staff editorial]

Shifting the responsibility of protecting our environment

Earlier this year, a deeply dysfunctional Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) dominated the headlines. With the agency's administrator, Scott Pruitt, plagued by a mounting list of various accusations of ethical misconduct, it had become clear that the situation was untenable.

Even amidst scandal, throughout his brief tenure as administrator of the EPA, Pruitt actively sought to undermine the very agency he lead. This is unsurprising, considering that as Attorney General of Oklahoma he staunchly opposed environmental regulation, suing the EPA under Obama no less than 14 times.

Unlike Pruitt, his successor Andrew Wheeler is not so flashy, a former big coal lobbyist, he generally dodges media attention. His practices, however, have proved to be deadlier, his rollbacks carefully considered, more interested in embedding long term strategy within his administrative agenda.

Here in the Sunshine State, prized for its natural heritage, inaction on global warming is personal; unfortunately we have grown accustomed to this brand of fundamental apathy. For years, former Governor Rick Scott corroded environmental protection in the state

of Florida, failing even to address the existence of climate change. And among other offenses, Scott has shown blatant disregard toward the sewage, manure and fertilizer runoff that has spurred on the toxic algae blooms known as red tide.

Through the means of his own Department of Environmental Protection, the EPA was forced to concede the regulation of pollution limits to the state — futile, of course, considering that the existing

is not only ravaging coastal ecosystems, but proving to be a direct threat to Floridian fishing and tourism industry. These myriad impacts hit home for Florida voters. Even at Pine View, where students are fairly evenly split politically, 84 percent of students view environmental protection as a high priority.

Today, however, Florida's governor-elect Ron DeSantis casts doubt on Florida's ability to fight the effects of climate change, chalking it up to a purely federal concern. But with an EPA succumbing to self-destruction, who will carry this load?

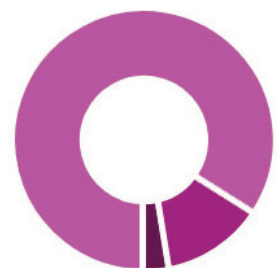
These Florida-specific issues, in tandem with gross mismanagement from the federal government, are forcing local representatives and voters to prioritize the environment. As the future of the natural world faces abandonment from both the federal and state governments, it is up to Floridians to demand stronger oversight from their elected officials, especially amidst the growing dangers of climate change, water quality and other concerns. Now more than ever, it is critical that voters, of all ideologies united in a common fate, weigh the environment more highly on their ballots.

These Florida-specific issues in tandem with gross mismanagement from the federal government are forcing local representatives and us as voters to prioritize environmental concerns.

mechanisms of curbing such environmental destruction had been slashed in the first place. In his first year of office, Scott cut \$700 million from Florida's five water management districts, along with additional rollbacks.

Flash-forward a couple of years and an unusually aggressive red tide, exacerbated by runoff, is accompanied by the rising temperatures and changing rain patterns caused by climate change. The phenomenon

Within the federal government, how much of a priority should protecting the environment be?



Based on a survey of 191 Pine View students in grades 7-12



Do you believe that the federal government is paying enough attention to environmental issues?

GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON Based on a survey of 184 Pine View students in grades 7-12

The Verdict

Bubble Culture: We are disappointed to see that the Pine View experience is confining, often leaving students feeling sheltered.



Legacy Garden: We are happy to see administration making headway on commeration of faculty who have passed on.

[student voices]

Students discuss the state of sex education



Connor Lafo, Grade 9

“Sex education at Pine View is nonexistent. They don't talk about it. They should have seminars or at least something... The prevention of sexual harassment/abuse should be taught, and how report it, as well as how to see signs of it. These classes should happen before high school.”



Cooper Whisnant, Grade 12

“I think Pine View is lacking in sex education. They don't talk about the fundamental parts of how to do it safely... I don't think sex education needs to be a partisan issue because every single person deserves respect in terms of consent, and that isn't really a question, it's just a fact.”

“I think sex education at Pine View is basically nonexistent... Sex education is something some kids are getting in ninth grade, while we're getting [educated in] twelfth grade... [sex education] should be more about making smart choices within that context. It should also go more into the interpersonal aspect, rather than just keeping it super scientific.”



Kaki France, Grade 10



Arya Nalluri, Grade 12

“I think there isn't really any sex education at Pine View, even with everything going on in the current political climate. Every current event now is about the #MeToo movement or sexual allegations against prominent male figures in our society. I think that the lack of sex education at Pine View needs to change, since sexual misconduct is surfacing as an issue now.”

the Torch

PVTorch.com

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Finding your voice in partisan times proves challenging

by Madi Holmes
Asst. Web Editor

Developing an individual political identity while growing up can be confusing when opinions are constantly being thrown from all sides of the political spectrum. Our political opinions today are usually classified under either the liberal or the conservative umbrellas, with little regard for nuance, though maybe it's time for a change.

As hot-button issues, such as gun control and abortion, consume national headlines, contrasting opinions are formed and associated with each different political party. Many factors contribute to opinions formed on a specific issue or topic — like age and religious affiliation. When looking broadly at a political party and its stances, most think all Republicans have to be second amendment advocates and all Democrats must be pro-choice, with no room for the subtle intricacies that shape people's personal beliefs. This has negative ramifications for young people, who often times struggle to find their own individual identity in such a polarized political climate.

For me, I experience this phenomenon a lot. With a mainly conservative household, and a majority liberal school atmosphere, I am constantly caught between both Republican and Democratic points of view. From my mom's Fox news radio preset

to my close friends' avid and eccentric political discussions, I'm always overhearing opinions from opposite ends.

This isn't a bad thing at all. Exposure to different viewpoints has actually allowed me to form my own opinions as an individual, rather than strictly conforming to a political party's majority opinion. Through experience, I've come to the conclusion that I lean left when it comes to social issues but lean right when it comes to economic issues. This divide in my opinions leaves me

tire agenda of a single party.

From my eyes, I feel that some issues, such as the environment and LGBTQIA rights, can be widely overlooked by the older population, but are imperative topics for teens and millennials. I'm not blaming the older population for this occurrence — these issues are either not their first priorities or they do not agree with the beliefs, which is all due to natural social development.

Some changes that younger people can all start taking together include becoming more tolerant towards differences in political opinions and identities. With all of the political polarization occurring today, it seems younger individuals end up conforming to every opinion that surrounds them or completely ignoring politics as a whole. This can be prevented by keeping an open mind to individual ideas, rather than judging based on preset labels and ideals. Listening to those around us, no matter what side of the political divide they are on, is critical to creating well-informed beliefs.

As we continue to move forward, consider viewing political identity as something flexible rather than black and white. Maybe the discarding of our country's "this or that" viewpoint is the solution that will jump start a movement of forward progress in politics that we've been waiting for.

... Most think all Republicans have to be second amendment advocates and all Democrats must be pro-choice, with no room for the subtle intricacies that shape people's personal beliefs.

as a sort of middle-grounder, and sometimes this can discourage me from actively engaging in political conversations.

Surely I can't be the only young person feeling this way. As we all can see, through countless political advertisements, a number of our current politicians and candidates aren't necessarily on the younger side. Due to the forward development of society, pertinent issues among age groups become increasingly different, making it difficult for younger generations to fully support an en-

[a column]

Queer communities must acknowledge and address biphobia

Bisexuality is valid, and that's not debatable. But within both straight and gay communities, it isn't always perceived that way.

About a week before the writing of this column, I had a discussion with a friend of mine regarding bisexuality. Within that conversation we discussed how he tends to frame himself as fully gay or fully straight, while knowing that he is neither. After some thought on the matter, we realized that his complicated self-identity had been affected by internalized biphobia.

He, and many other bisexuals, commonly contend with comments from both straight and queer people alike that leaves the bisexual community stuck in a strange middle ground. They are claimed as too gay for straight communities, where they are forced to suppress their attraction to those of the same sex, while at the same time being told they are not queer enough to interact with gay culture. Though many queer people are used to homophobic comments from straight people, the interesting thing about biphobia is the amount that comes from the LGBTQIA community.

Biphobes within the LGBTQIA community often write off bi people, saying that they don't experience as much oppression because of their ability to pass as straight, but this kind of commentary ignores the level of marginalization bisexuals have experienced. Specifically from queer people,



Brianna Nelson, Opinion Editor

bisexuals are often painted as either on a stepping stone to being gay or simply straight and looking for attention. They are painted as confused for not being able to "pick one" when there should be no pressure put on bisexuals to decide if they are gay or straight. They are neither; they are bisexual. And this erasure leads to worse mental health outcomes. According to a study in the American Journal of Public Health, 60 percent of bisexuals deal with some sort of mood disorder, compared to 45 percent of gay people and 30 percent of straight people.

It is clear that these fault lines exist within the LGBTQIA community, but they don't have to. The LGBTQIA community should be looking out for each other, not tearing each other down based on ideas that are meant to keep them powerless. And for those of us who are often out of the spotlight in regards to queer issues, you are heard, and valid in your identity.

Mainstream media wrongly exploits and romanticizes illness at the expense of patients

by Peyton Harris
Asst. Entertainment Editor

Since the beginning of time, society has been obsessed with the unknown and for a long time that's been diseases. Even now, we are still fascinated by medical conditions, and mass media has taken note of that. In recent years, we have seen film after film with the same concept — two star-crossed lovers with medical conditions, either physical or mental, spit in the faces of their illnesses despite the consequences and live happily ever after — or die. Though the harm caused by romanticizing mental illnesses in media has been condemned as exploitative, Hollywood still hasn't come to see the same for physical illnesses.

While the concept of these teenage films featuring lifelong physical conditions seems harmless, these movies create numerous problems under the false hood of raising awareness for the illnesses.

In reality, many of these movies do little to explain the actual conditions and inaccurately represent them in order to serve the plot line. This rings true with media's trademark: taking advantage of underrepresented groups for a profit.

In the upcoming CBS film "Five Feet Apart," a pair of teenagers living with Cystic Fibrosis (CF), a genetic lung disease, disregard the rules pertinent for their safety in order to pursue a forbidden romance. CF patients are not allowed to come within six feet of each other in order to prevent cross-contamination. The truth of the situation is that the condition is not romantic and portraying this fact of life for CF patients in such a tasteless way ends up misinforming both young CF patients as well as the general public. The underrepresented condition is exploited and romanticized in order to recreate an overdone forbidden romance plot that we have seen time and time again, the director even explicitly saying in an Instagram comment that he drew inspiration from "Romeo and Juliet."

This trend continues with the 2018 movie "Midnight Sun," which manipulated an extremely rare genetic disease, xeroderma pigmentosum (XP), to essentially create an anti-social, quirky, nobody-understands-me protagonist in a love story that hardly touches on the true effects of XP and the lifestyle it entails. XP is a disorder that causes extreme sensitivity to light.

The film comes off

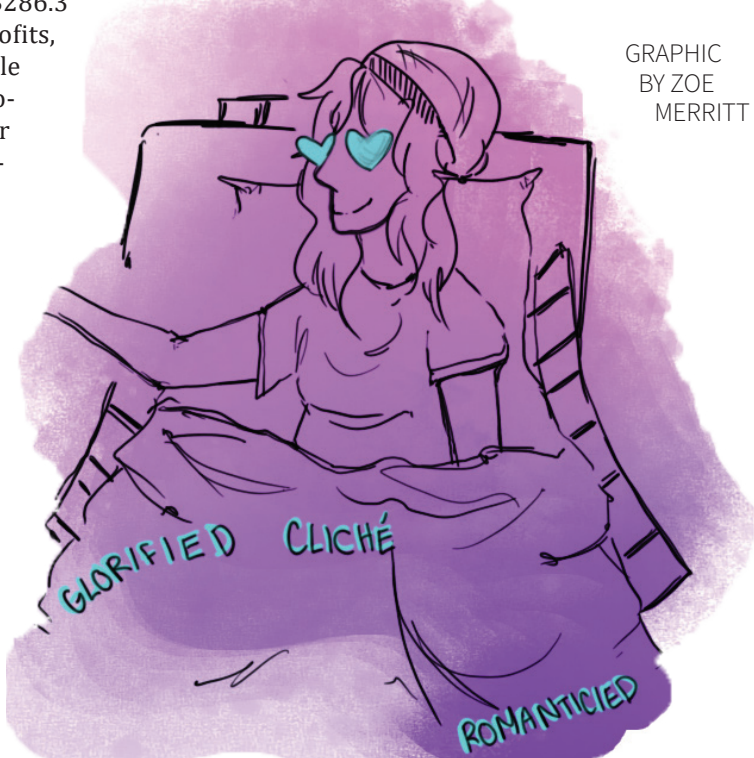
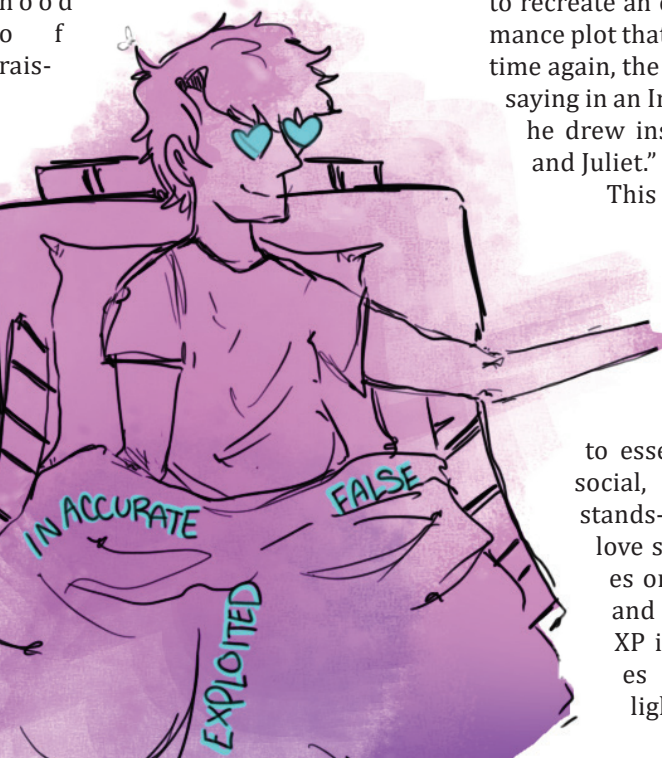
as tacky and simply an addition to the subgenre of terminal-teen romance at the expense of reality. The filmmakers, once again, exploited a lesser known and underrepresented illness for the sole purpose of making cash without considering the wider implications for misrepresenting the disease it is trying to portray.

The 2014 film "The Fault in Our Stars" focused on a teenage couple battling thyroid cancer, which ultimately led to the death of one of the partners. While the representation was adequate, the diagnosis was dramatized and the treatment options were minimized according to physicians in the oncologist magazine Heli.

Not only are these diseases unethically covered, a majority of these movies do not even donate a portion of the profits to the disease the film is centered around. For example, the "Fault in Our Stars" grossed over \$286.3 million in profits, and not a single dollar went towards cancer research. "Midnight Sun" did the same and "Five Feet Apart" has given no sign they will be donating any of the earnings towards CF patients and research. This highlights the irresponsible and

exploitative nature of these films — simply using real illnesses that affect people to gain sympathy points and make a quick buck.

As society's fascination with incurable, lifelong diseases increases, we see more movies about them churned out by mainstream media in sloppy, inaccurate and profit-seeking ways. These movies harm the communities of people afflicted by rare diseases, as well as the general public's knowledge of these conditions. The representation of these illnesses are very important, but it is pertinent that they are portrayed in an accurate, respectful light to show what it's truly like to experience the illness. It should not be a watered down version with no purpose other than to propel the tired "Romeo and Juliet" story we've seen more than enough.



GRAPHIC BY ZOE MERRITT

A spotlight on Mr. and Miss Pine View 2018

By Lucy Collins

Web Section Editor

Every year, groups of seniors compete for the titles of Mr. and Miss Pine View. This year, twelfth-graders William Khabbaz (Mr.) and Adrianna Troche (Miss) were crowned after winning their respective events.

How does it feel to be Mr./Miss Pine View?

Miss: Kind of surreal, honestly. I have been wanting to be Miss Pine view since I was in fourth grade, since I started here, so being Miss Pine View is a really cool experience.

Mr: For me, it makes me really excited to be here and to be part of this school. I've been here for such a long time. For me personally, a minority at this school, being gay and being part of such a small chunk of Pine View's culture, and then being the face of the senior class is just really important for me. It is just exciting for me to show the school a whole different view.

What made you want to be Mr./Miss Pine View?

Miss: I just wanted to go in and do something fun before I leave, [like] bond with some of the girls.

Mr: I was tech booth for a couple years during Mr. Pine View. For me, just watching the boys always bond made me want to do it more. Being [involved] in the show for more than one year

really helped.

If you could change anything about the experience what would you change?

Miss: I would not change one single second of that experience, I loved it. There were a couple of us that complained about having to go to dance rehearsals two months before the show, but looking back on it, we definitely needed the extra time to figure all that out.

Mr: I don't know if I would change anything. It was always little things like the songs that I chose or the walks, but I wouldn't change that. I think everything went the way it was supposed to go. I'm a big believer that everything was meant to be and everything happens for a reason, so everything that did happen, I'm glad it all did.

What is your best memory from the show?

Miss: My act I did with my best friends. And, I literally set up a group chat saying "you guys are in it, you don't have an option." I think when it all came together



Mr. and Miss Pine View, twelfth-graders William Khabbaz (left) and Adrianna Troche (right) share a laugh regarding the experiences of their respective shows. Competing with more than a dozen of their fellow seniors each, Khabbaz and Troche stood on top to represent the epitome of the Pine View student. PHOTO BY FRANKIE GRASSO-CLAY

er on stage it was my favorite part. When we were all goofing around, everyone messed up but nobody cared because we were having such a good time. I honestly want to go back and replay the whole entire night because I miss it already.

Mr: I have really close friends that are juniors and I won't be here when they are seniors, so being able to dance with them and being able to be so confident and so effortlessly happy on stage is just so comforting. This was a moment I will never forget.

What advice do you have for future contestants?

Miss: Just have fun with it. I think some people, not really this year but in previous years, girls take it too seriously and you can see the tension between people. This year every girl — I think the guys did too — everybody was just super supportive of each other and everybody just wanted to have a good time.

I love those girls and I have no tension with any of them.

Mr: I personally think you should be yourself. I think that it is a big thing — showing your personality. It's a really humbling thing and for you to be so effortlessly you is really important. Don't let other people take that away from you.

What was your favorite part of the experience?

Miss: Honestly, the best part was at the end of the show when we were going down the line saying what our favorite part of the whole experience was. And that's kind of the sad part because all the girls were realizing "wow this was already over." It was the coolest part for the girls to realize this was something we would hold onto forever.

Mr: It was after the show ended and I was still in that awe moment of "I actually won this." I had a couple of children come

up to me and hug me saying "you did so amazing, you're such an inspiration." Having that moment of all these kids look up to you and they've seen what you've put out there.

What does it mean in your own words to be Mr./Miss Pine View?

Miss: It's really an honor. I've looked up to the past Mr. and Miss Pine View and each of them were so different — there's no common person who wins. This year's it's just us two bringing something different to the table. It's still surreal to me but I'm glad I did it.

Mr: It's a feeling of being raw in all essence, of being in a position where you are so open, and everyone knows who you are. It's also a symbol of strength and that you can create a better future in the sense of showing a more positive energy for the school. It is ultimately being a role model and a person everyone should look up to.

Student volunteers with ALSO Youth

by Sarah Hassan

Match Layout Artist

As a non-binary student, eleventh-grader Saxon Stanley has actively been involved in raising awareness for the LGBTQIA community by volunteering with ALSO Youth. This non-profit charity provides services, advocacy and support for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex people and questioning youth ages 13 to 21. As an ALSO Youth volunteer since 2016 and currently the president of the Gay Straight Alliance club (GSA), Stanley continues to promote LGBTQIA equality and awareness within the Pine View community.

Identifying as non-binary means that Stanley does not identify as either male or female and thus uses "them"/"they" pronouns rather than "he"/"him" or "she"/"her" pronouns.

Nearly every Friday, Stanley volunteers and participates in bonding activities at the ALSO Youth center in order to get to know others who are a part of the community. Last month, Stanley led an activity creating necklaces, and also participated in the annual ALSO Turkey Trot, a 5k held during the fall that raises funds for support and awareness for the LGBTQIA community.

Stanley first discovered ALSO Youth from a fellow Pine View student in 2016, and, in the following week, revealed to their mother that they were nonbinary and pansexual. Stanley initially started volunteering to have support for their identity, but later became more serious about changing and promoting equality for the community. "[ALSO Youth] made my coming out process so much easier. They supported me when I changed labels and I discovered that I am non-binary," Stanley said.



Eleventh-grader Saxon Stanley poses with a sign outside the ALSO Youth center. Stanley, who identifies as nonbinary, has been volunteering at ALSO Youth since 2016 and is the current president of the Gay Straight Alliance Club.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY SAXON STANLEY

"I think that Florida has only five [LGBTQIA centers]... and having this resource is so important to me, so I wanted other people to know about this and to experience it as well because they are like my family," Stanley said.

One of the most memorable experiences Stanley has recalled while taking part of ALSO Youth was when they were giving a speech about the LGBTQIA community during a School Board meeting. "I thought that I had done a horrible job [during the speech], but then the youth coordinator at the time had told me that I had done a great job and that boosted my confidence," Stanley said.

"I know that [Stanley is] super involved in ALSO Youth. I also help out, and whenever I have any questions, then I can always ask them because they are always there," fellow ALSO Youth volunteer Charlie Sutcuoglu said.

Along with volunteering for ALSO, Stanley is the president of the GSA club in which they do crafts, talk about what is happening in the LGBTQIA community and organize events at Pine View. With an increase

in violence against transgender people, GSA celebrated Trans Day Remembrance Nov. 19. The club held a chalk initiative in which they wrote positive messages about respecting differences and promoting LGBTQIA equality.

"If you run and hide, it just encourages [the anti-LGBTQIA community]... It creates the fear that they want, and so, if we stop showing who we are, then we won't exist, but we do exist," Stanley said.

In the future, Stanley plans to continue volunteering with ALSO Youth as well as continue advocating for equality in the LGBTQIA community. In college, they are considering helping the youth of the LGBTQIA community through psychology or human resources, but for now, they are heading towards a profession in business.

"[Being non-binary] gives me a sense of direction in how I can alleviate and combat the feelings that went along with being put in the girls category," Stanley said. "I feel a lot lighter and happier knowing that what I feel is valid and wasn't me feeling like a tomboy or rejecting gender roles."

[a column] Makeup, confidence and staying true to yourself

My morning routine takes approximately an hour, in which half the time is spent struggling to get out of bed while the other half hour is dedicated solely to "beating my face." I usually wake up every day at 5:20 a.m. and until around 6:00 a.m. my minutes are consumed by primer, foundation, eyeliner and a seemingly endless barrage of other products. It's been this way since I was a freshman, and I've never skipped this meticulous routine. Not until Nov. 26.

Confidence is a flimsy concept. We think that it can be built up over time, and that when the construction is finalized, it will be a permanent structure. But confidence is a thin veneer we pour on ourselves daily, hoping it won't fade by noon.

Some may derive their confidence from sporting certain clothing brands or the way they style their hair. But for me, that facade was built into my makeup foundation. I use makeup as a form of self-expression, like many others, and this creative outlet undoubtedly came with its benefits. When I painted my face, I didn't have to worry about dark circles from all-nighters or scars that had yet to fade.

Humans are creatures of habit, and we derive confidence from regularity. Eventually my makeup started to take a new meaning: it became less about fun, and more about covering up. It was somewhat hypocritical because that's not who I am; I'm a person who prides herself in not caring about the opinions



Melissa Santoyo, Editor-in-Chief

of others toward my appearance. It took a lot of support from my friends — a stupid amount of convincing really — but Nov. 26

marks the day I finally forewent foundation. Surprisingly, I haven't looked back since.

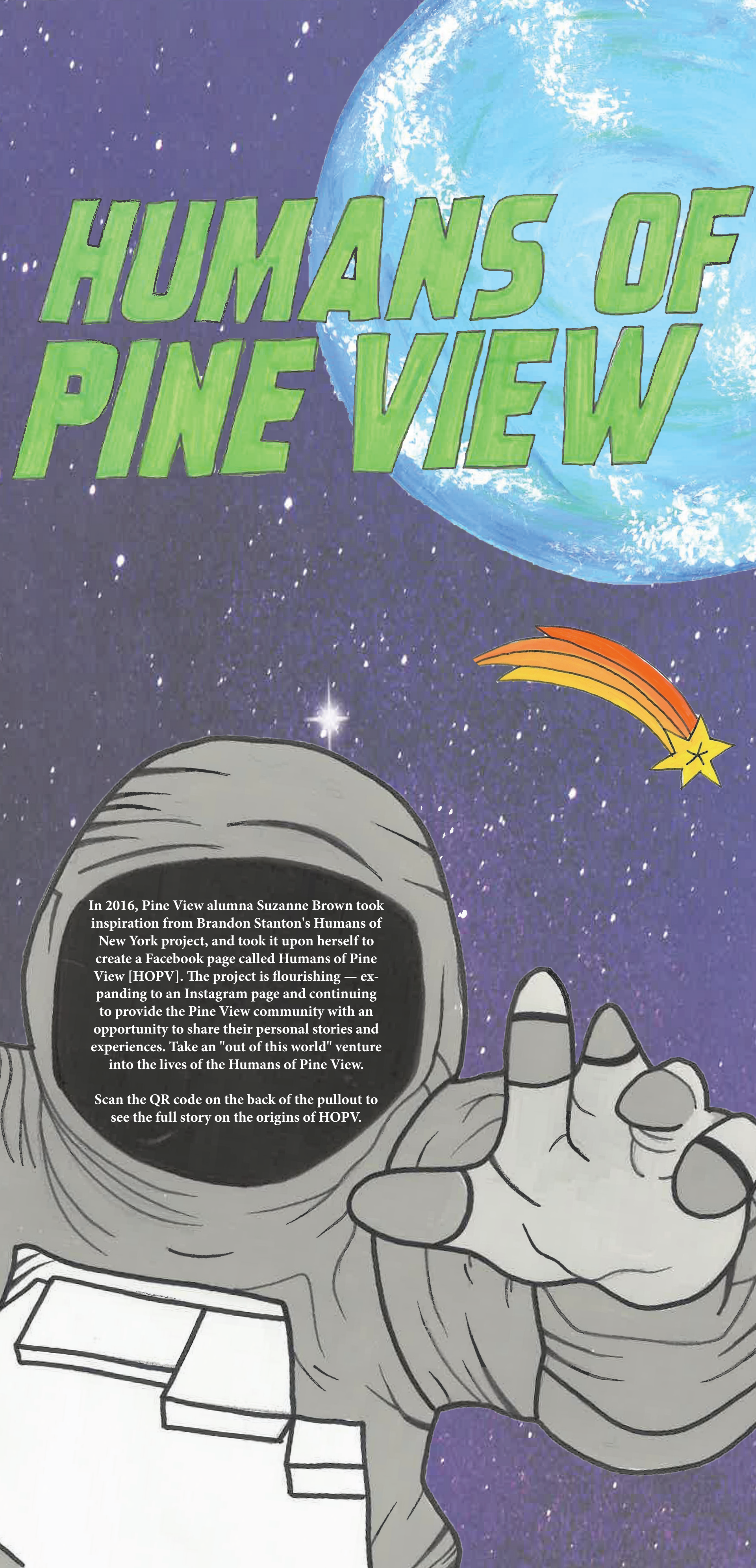
We may think physical items carry all our confidence.

But we are more than our possessions, and we are more than what we do to ourselves in search of self-assurance. To quote the title of Mark Mason's self-help book, the key to confidence lies in "The Subtle Art of Not Giving a [redacted]."

I gave up foundation and not only did I have more time to sleep, but I found an unprecedented empowerment, similar to the kind I had found when I originally began playing around with makeup. If I were to wear it again in the future, it'd be because I want to, not because I feel pressured to cover up. I'm not saying makeup, brands or the hunt for confidence is bad. Just that, oftentimes, we really do care too much about things that, in the long run, are all too trivial.

... often times, we care too much about things that, in the long run, are all too trivial.

HUMANS OF PINE VIEW



In 2016, Pine View alumna Suzanne Brown took inspiration from Brandon Stanton's Humans of New York project, and took it upon herself to create a Facebook page called Humans of Pine View [HOPV]. The project is flourishing — expanding to an Instagram page and continuing to provide the Pine View community with an opportunity to share their personal stories and experiences. Take an "out of this world" venture into the lives of the Humans of Pine View.

Scan the QR code on the back of the pullout to see the full story on the origins of HOPV.

Posted on October 26, 2018

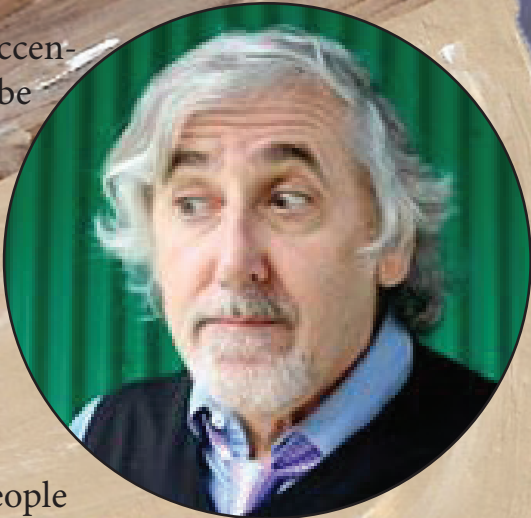
“I have trouble with panic attacks that stem from spending time with people or being incapable of starting/finishing projects, even if they are stuff I am interested in. Just being generally over-tired and sad, it means I have trouble getting homework completed on time and I spend a lot of time just sitting and reading because I have trouble making myself do anything else. Pretty much all I do with my day is go to school, do homework and sleep, so there is not a whole lot in my daily life that it can really affect. I think I’m just used to it now, I’m neutral to it.”



Interview conducted by Sarah Hassan

Posted on January 19, 2018

“I don’t know, some say eccentric. I’d say normal... maybe artsy? I love music, I love all forms of art and I love poetry. That’s kind of artsy. Eccentric works for some people, but to me, I’d describe myself as normal; people who aren’t into the arts seem weird to me. But when people say I’m eccentric, I thank them.”



Interview conducted by Melissa Santoyo



Posted on September 4, 2018

“The happiest moment, I think, was when I watched my son being born. The feeling of you helping give life to another human being— it’s an amazing feeling. It’s like the circle of life, witnessing the circle of life. I’m trying to raise my son the way my father raised me — he was an immigrant, he came to this country in in his thirties and he worked 16 hours a day. I hardly ever saw him, but you know, when I was younger I didn’t understand why he was working. But now that I’m older and I have a child, he was working 16 hours a day because he had seven kids — working hard to put food on the table, and he was just doing what he had to do to survive and to make the world go round. He was a working man, so I hardly ever saw him much. But, now, I have the opportunity to be there for my child.”



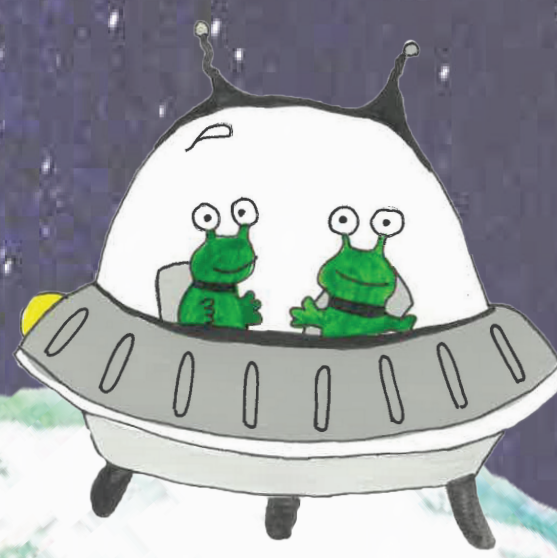
Interview conducted by Joanna Malvas

Posted on November 28, 2018



“I stay motivated because I recently found out what I want to do with the rest of my life which is ophthalmology. So right now, my motivation is ‘If I don’t pass this biology test, then I’m going to fail college biology, and then I’m not going to be able to go into ophthalmology.’ Is it healthy? Probably not. But it mostly works for me as motivation. It does tend to cause me a lot of stress and anxiety, though. If I am being completely honest, I don’t handle [the anxiety] very well. That may sound weird but I guess I have to suppress to impress. The negative effects are mostly just more stress and anxiety packed on. It’s a vicious cycle that hopefully ends in a good college and future.”

Interview conducted by Grace Johnson



Posted on January 25, 2017



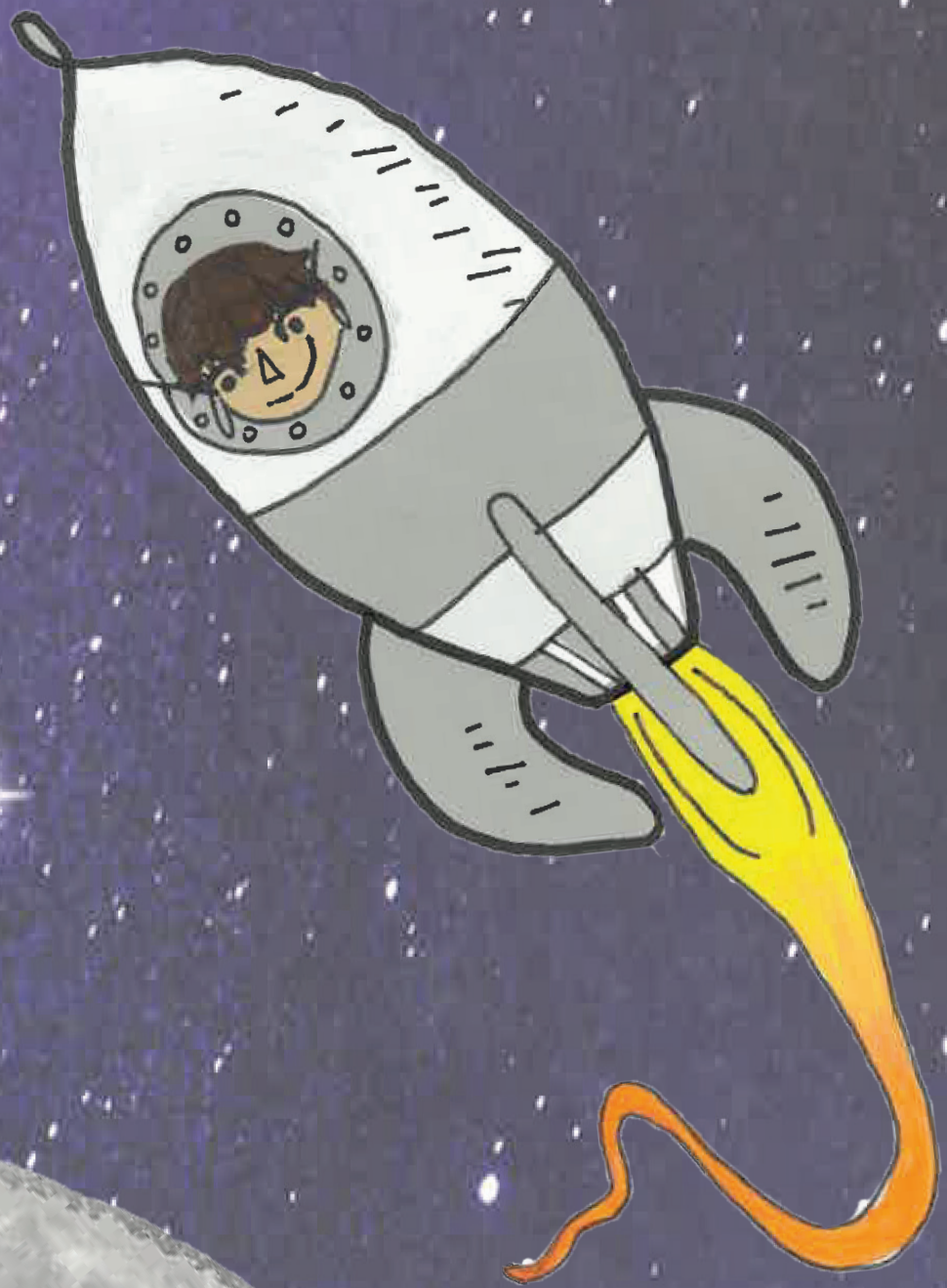
“My wife and I weren’t able to have kids. They’re called ectopic or tubal pregnancies. It’s happened to us not once, but twice. That’s why I love this job so much. I get to be around kids and, you know, be a figure for such awesome students 7.5 hours a day. It’s all I could ever ask for.”

Interview conducted by Nathalie Bencie



“I had to arrest a father who was abusing his child. His son was there when I made the arrest. He looked at me very disturbed and sad. He looked at me like I was the bad guy, even though I was the good guy, there to protect him from child abuse. That’s why I wanted to be a School Resource Officer — to teach them that we’re the good guys.”

Interview conducted by Park Dietz



Check out the web story about HOPV's founder