

the Torch

Portables
and
Pythons



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PHOTO BY ANNA LABINER

by Leo Gordon
Match Editor-in-Chief

According to the National Association of School Psychologists, 4.1 million students took part in some form of a school lockdown or drill during the 2017-2018 school year, including 220,000 preschoolers and kindergarteners.

In light of the increasing regularity of violence — or most notably, shootings — in schools and other public places nation-wide, Pine View, under Sarasota County's direction, has implemented a new set of rules for students and faculty to follow in the event that an active shooter should

appear on campus.

The new rules, while only slightly different from years prior, require that in addition to taking part in at least ten drills per year, students rally in the corners of their classrooms under signs labeled "safe corners." Classroom door windows have also been tinted for safety.

During a phone interview about the county's implementation of the new drill policy, Sarasota County Schools Chief of Police Tim Enos said that, despite parent and student concerns, the drills are not only necessary but mandated by Florida state law.

"It really comes down to the fact that this is set by statute," Enos said. "Our goal is to provide the best and most effective way to keep students and staff safe in the event of an active shooting."

The regularity of such drills — and ultimately, their psychological effects — is largely a new phenomenon. Schools have always conducted drills for fires and weather, but the exponential rise of lockdown drills, in response to more frequent shootings, has been carried out over the course of two decades.

According to the BBC, school lockdown drills saw their first jump in popularity

following the 1999 shooting at Columbine High School and have since become a regular aspect of the educational system for the most recent generation of Americans.

"I remember the first time I heard the word 'weapon of mass destruction.' I assumed they were talking about some sort of military weapon, but they were talking about something that could end student lives in tragedies like school shootings," Sarasota County Schools School Psychologist Tim Gissal said.

Comparing lockdown drills to fire drills, Sheriff Enos believes shooting drills ultimately serve to prevent di-

saster in the event of an emergency.

"Students have been practicing fire drills since kindergarten, and no student has died in a fire in the past 100 years," Enos said. "Part of the reason for that is the fact that every student takes part in fire drills every month."

The prospect of student psychology, as it relates to shooting drills, has become an issue of concern following the trend of similar rules being implemented nation-wide over the past quarter century.

"The drills are necessary for our safety, but they really perpetuate anxiety in students, regardless of their age," eleventh-grader Rosenna Chan said.

When asked about the county's consideration of student anxiety and other psychological concerns in drafting the new rules, Gissal said that the county had consulted with psychologists and referenced research by the National Association of School Psychologists, an organization he is associated with, which emphasizes student anxiety and trauma in its studies.

"We understand that some students and staff may have had trauma in their life, and we realize that the drills may bring out memories of these events. We really try to be mindful of that," Gissal said. "It's a balance. There are disadvantages, but for the good of the general population, it's good to have a plan and be prepared in the event that something does happen."

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Sarasota County moves toward virtual textbooks

by Grace Johnson
Asst. Match Editor-in-Chief

This academic year, Sarasota County Schools made an effort to adopt more online textbooks throughout the school district. This has resulted in online textbooks

book access being provided to each student, along with a class set of physical textbooks for all teachers and the equivalent of two class sets of each physical textbook in the Media Center. At Pine View, this change was especially apparent in the social studies department, as most history classes got new online editions of textbooks this year.

manarily economic.

"[Sarasota County] would really love to be able to purchase unlimited textbooks to give every kid a textbook and have a class set in every room, but we're faced with a few limitations," Manoogian said.

He explained that the main difference in cost is because physical textbooks get lost, stolen and damaged, which results in a financial loss for the district. Last academic year, Pine View alone lost close to \$4,000 due to physical textbook damages and losses — online textbooks will ameliorate this issue.

In addition to the financial benefits, the district believes that it is more convenient for the majority of students because of its accessibility.

"[Online textbooks] are good for students who have busy extracurricular lives because they can get homework done in situations where they might not have a physical textbook with them," twelfth-grader Stefani Wald said.

There is a concern that students who are unable to afford an electronic device are put at an unfair disadvantage; however, the district believes that they have provided enough resources so that each student will be able to thrive.

"We know that most students have devices where they can access that textbook online, whether it be a cell phone, whether they go into the media center at school, or whether they go to a local library, they do have access anywhere," Manoogian said.

Along with internet access to textbooks, students are able to check out a physical textbook from their teacher's class set overnight or from the media center for a couple of days.

A downside to this change is that many students have said they prefer physical textbooks and find online textbooks harder to follow and hard to learn from in general.

"Online textbooks make it harder to focus because I can't necessarily see the full layout of the chapter and

switching between pages is more difficult. It takes longer to complete an assignment with online textbooks and when the textbook website fails, which happens often, I can't complete the assignment," eleventh-grader Kaley Wisner said.

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Rob Manoogian, manager of instructional materials and library services for Sarasota County Schools, explained that the reason for this switch was primarily economic.

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A Loud Mess: band on the rise
Mika Sibinkic returns to his roots



Arik Katz makes a splash in Hungary
Student attends international swim meet



Exploring toxic productivity
Effect of expectations on mental health

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Mental impact of safety measures

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by Leo Gordon
Match Editor-in-Chief

In response to the sudden implementation of the shooter-specific drills, as explained by Gissal, staff members are encouraged to use language that is age-appropriate for their students. Such variants in language between age levels refer to using language like, "get out," and "move quickly," instead of "run" or "escape."

As expected, students young and old offer different perspectives regarding the system's effectiveness.

"Even though it's scary, we need to be prepared in case somebody comes to our school to hurt us," fourth-grader Pari Patel said. "Our safety is important."

Some students, mostly those in higher grades, question the new system given its psychological consequences.

"In our country's en-

It gives us a really good procedure to make us feel comfortable at school.
Victoria Kishoiyian, Grade 10

I understand the point of drills, however I think they need to be more spread out
Sahil Agarwal, Grade 10

I think that the increased lock down drills are unnecessary. It is a waste of class time and doing something over and over again isn't going to ensure safety for the students
Kareena Legare, Grade 11

It feels a lot like the contemporary equivalent of Cold War atomic bomb drills. It makes me question how much these tactics would actually protect us, and it shocks me that we need them in the first place.
Ben Nicholson, Grade 12

How do you feel about the changes in lock down drill procedures?

GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON

vironment, nobody is completely safe anymore," eleventh-grader Keleigh Koeniger said. "Not even with the new drill system. I think the psychological impact it can have on students brings down its overall effectiveness."

Ultimately, as explained by both Gissal and Enos, the County's new lockdown system serves as the most practical and effective way to balance student, faculty and parent input with Florida

state statute requirements. In spite of its potentially negative psychological effects, the system is, according to Gissal and Enos, completely necessary.

For more information on Sarasota County Schools' safety regulations, access the Safety and Security Areas of Responsibility page, categorized under Sarasota County Schools Police Department, on the Sarasota County Schools website.

The effect of virtual textbooks

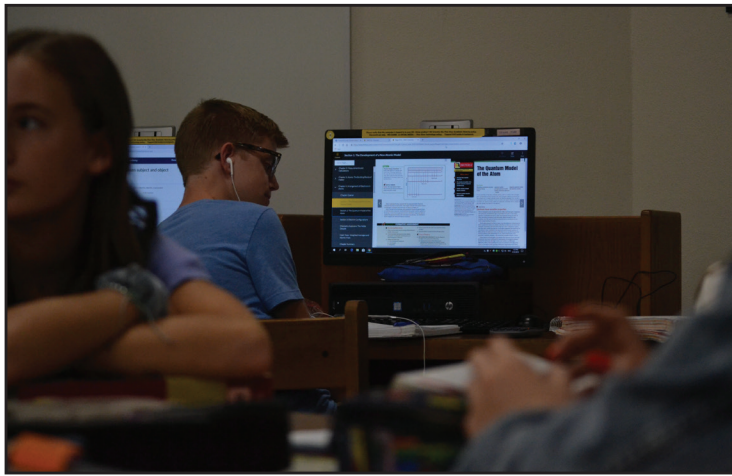
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by Grace Johnson
Asst. Match Editor-in-Chief

According to Public Radio International, when reading something on paper instead of online, it is easier for the human brain to conduct what is called linear reading. Linear reading is described as the process of being immersed in a large body of text, and consequently gaining a developed understanding of the content. While it is possible to carry out linear reading through online texts, it is much more difficult for the brain to become accustomed to.

When the district was discussing the then-possible idea of adopting online textbooks instead of providing a one-to-one ratio of physical textbooks, U.S. History teacher Scott Wolfinger decided to conduct some research on the matter. His research found that close to 80 percent of his students from the 2018-2019 school year preferred physical textbooks, and that while there is not extensive research that demonstrates that online textbooks are worse for students, there is research that shows that when students believe they can't learn from something, they won't.

Wolfinger presented his research and thoughts to As-



A highschool student studies in the Media Center for an upcoming chemistry test. Online textbook access is provided to each student, along with a class set of physical textbooks for all teachers and the equivalent of two class sets of each physical textbook in the Media Center. PHOTO BY ANNA LABINER

sistant Principal of Curriculum, Tricia Allen, and she relayed his information to the district.

"What I am in favor of is meeting the needs of the teachers and students, and if they say they prefer hard copies, I advocate for that. However, I also understand that textbooks are quite expensive and the district went to this model for budgetary reasons," Allen said.

While the world seems to be rapidly converting the physical into online products, Manoogian believes that in the foreseeable future, physical textbooks will not be phased

out altogether — at least not in the K-12 market.

While there are many pros and cons to the adoption of online textbooks rather than keeping physical textbooks, for now, the district has made its decision.

The state and federal governments have reduced education funding in recent years, which has resulted in many cuts of preferred teaching or learning methods along the way. According to the Orlando Sentinel, Florida has the sixth lowest education funding per pupil out of the 50 states.

IN BRIEF

Pine View to implement new peer mediation program

by Madi Holmes
Web Editor-in-Chief

New plans are on the horizon as Pine View works to implement a novel program focused on resolving student-on-student conflicts. The latest county-mandated "Peer Mediation Program" is currently being developed to train students in emotional support and counseling.

The program is designed to help a pair of students in conflict reach a healthy, agreeable solution under the guidance of an older student leader, the peer mediator. The guidance department is currently training 14 teacher-nominated high school student leaders to become qualified peer mediators by the beginning of next year. Once training is over, mediators will begin to help resolve conflicts referred by teachers, administration and campus aides.

By recruiting peer me-

diators, it not only allows increased leadership opportunities for students, but creates an open environment where younger students can feel more comfortable sharing.

"It can be so rewarding for the students that come in conflict because the peer mediators help the students come up with solutions on their own, and that's the power of the program," eleventh- and twelfth-grade guidance counselor Lynn Halcomb said.

The guidance department hopes that the new program will eliminate the "right and wrong" notion among students in conflict and promote judgment-free resolution among all grade levels.

"I love the idea of a fresh ear on some of these conflicts and that these younger kids will see some of the older students as really positive leaders," elementary guidance counselor Kate McManus said.

Web Features

To read more by these journalists, as well as pieces not featured in our print edition, see PVTorch.com

Isabella Gaskill

Everything from movies to television to podcasts, Gaskill's entertainment blog covers all the bases.

Leo Gordon

In his blog, Gordon covers the realm of politics: how to get involved, how to be knowledgeable and how to be responsible.

Grace Johnson

Johnson brings sustainability to her readers by exploring new trends, their practicality and the impact they have.

Gwyn Petersen

As a frequent baker, Petersen combines mental health and recipes by bringing allergen-friendly foods to her readers.

PeaceJam leads Hurricane Dorian Donation Initiative



Tenth-grader Zander Moricz loaded items such as clothing and food into packaged boxes that were transported to Dorian victims in the Bahamas by Agape Flight. The Hurricane Dorian Relief Effort was led by twelfth-grader Luis Flores, along with PeaceJam, creating the donation initiative to run throughout the whole school and focused on donating items like paper goods, bug spray, canned food, tools and clothing. PHOTO BY ANNA LABINER

This Year's New Clubs!
GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

UNIDOS NOW
Working with the non-governmental organization UNIDOS, the club aims to create an organized identity for Latinos at Pine View.
FOUNDER: Luis Flores
SPONSOR: Roberto Lamela
WHERE: Roberto Lamela's portable 22
WHEN: First Tuesday/ Month at 1pm

Bee Club
Pine View's first club dedicated to the saving, promoting and sustainable farming of bees!
FOUNDER: Luis Flores
SPONSOR: Elizabeth Loyer
WHERE: Elizabeth Loyer's Portable 31
WHEN: First Thursday/Month at 2pm

Cultural Appreciation
Each month the club focuses on a new culture, participating in special activities and bringing in food in the style of a potluck party.
FOUNDER: Zander Moricz
SPONSOR: Charles Carney
WHERE: Charles Carney's Portable 22
WHEN: 2nd Friday/month at 1pm

JSA (Junior States of America)
A non-partisan, nonprofit, political awareness club that holds mini debates and mock trials.
FOUNDER: Ray Min
SPONSOR: James Froelich
WHERE: James Froelich's room 101
WHEN: Fridays 2pm

BME (Biomedical Engineering)
A club focused on promoting the Biomedical Engineering profession, creating their own projects and traveling to universities around the country.
FOUNDER: Ray Min
SPONSOR: Rebecca Kehler
WHERE: Rebecca Kehler's room 121
WHEN: Tuesdays 2pm

Twelfth-grader 'starts up' investment company

by Felicity Chang
Web Section Editor

Over the summer, twelfth-grader Joshua Widjaja participated in the Perlman Price Young Entrepreneurs (PYE) Program at the Boys & Girls Club of Sarasota County. Widjaja's company, Numus, won second place and \$1,500 for start-up funds.

Numus is a financial education company that makes use of online curriculum to educate teens about the stock market and investing. Utilizing the whiteboard animation software VideoScribe, Widjaja created short animated videos that can be found on his YouTube Channel and a website that will be launched in December. Viewers can browse through the videos and access the main curriculum at no cost. With a \$5 payment, students can have full access to forums, a group chat, weekly blogs, newsletters and online seminars. As part of his marketing plan, Widjaja used Instagram — @numus.co — and Facebook to build a community.

The PYE program launched in 2017 and takes place at the Boys & Girls Club of Sarasota County every fall, spring and summer.

"It is designed to encourage the entrepreneur mindset in high school stu-

dents. So, to teach them how to become their own boss and find their passion and to reach their own future," Teen Program Director, Caroline Windom, said.

Throughout the seven-week program, high school students learned about identifying business opportunities, marketing, sales, customer service, finance and pitching their ideas to investors.

"I thought the atmosphere would be competitive. But it wasn't at all," Widjaja said. "We really helped support each other's ideas until the competition, and I liked that."

At the end of the program, the participants presented their business ideas through PowerPoint presentations and prototypes to a panel of local judges. Depending on the size of the group, the three to seven participants who pass the preliminary round of competition go on to the final round. The first place winner can use any portion of the \$3,300 available as start-up funds for their company, and the second-place winner receives the amount of money unused. Placing second, Widjaja's company received \$1,500.

Widjaja's inspiration for Numus stems from the lack of financial education for young people, leading to obsta-

cles later on in life.

"I saw that a lot of retirees nowadays, they don't have a retirement fund, and that's a big problem because you can't retire without a retirement fund," he said.

He added that public education does not focus much on educating students on the topic. "There are no finance courses. There are no investing courses. There are no money courses offered here at Pine View and at other schools. I took the initiative to start a program that helped," Widjaja said.

Prior to participating in PYE, Widjaja took action by beginning the Pine View Investors Club his freshman year.

According to twelfth-grader Jeffrey Zhou, one of two vice presidents of the club, "We started off [with] just me and Josh and our friends in our friend group, and we kind of just spread the word by social media, word of mouth and advertisement on the announcements."

Looking to expand his audience, the idea for Numus was curated.

"Ever since I started Pine View Investors Club, I knew that I needed to try

to get a larger group of people, other than locally. And the only way to do that is online," Widjaja said.

As for the future, Widjaja plans to continue pursuing finance in college and as a career.

"I have this three-step process in my mind, but obviously long-term benchmarks don't really work in real life," he said. "But here it is: I go to college for finance; then I join the Coast Guard; then I go into investment banking. After I make my money there, I hope to become a financial adviser and help people retire on time."

As his company continues to advance after the program, Widjaja hopes to promote financial awareness among young people.

"Numus's tagline is 'Tempus est Pecunia', which is Latin for time is money, and it makes sense. Especially when it comes to investing, the sooner you start investing, the faster it will start compounding," Widjaja said.

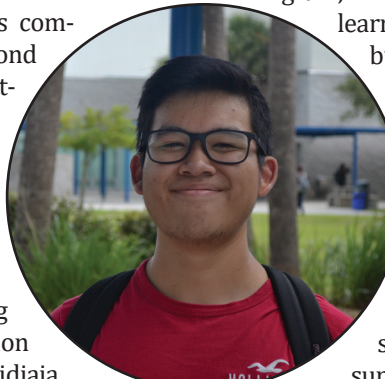


PHOTO BY SARAH HASSAN

“There are no money courses offered here at Pine View and at other schools. I took the initiative to start a program that helped,”
Joshua Widjaja,
Twelfth-grader

Sarasota County implements new vape initiative

by Ella Hechlik
Editor-in-Chief

A new initiative from the Sarasota County School Board has been put in place at Pine View due to a recent increase in teen vaping and e-cigarette usage across the county. The program will require anyone caught vaping or in possession of a vaping device to receive a Saturday detention where they will complete two modules on the dangers of vaping through online curriculum on Blackboard Learn.

The new policy, which was created late last year by the school board, is designed to educate students that are caught vaping on the dangers that come with usage.

New information about the dangers of vaping are surfacing as many teens are facing

life-threatening diseases. The long-term side effects are not truly known yet, as it has only become widespread these past few years. However, short-term signs are beginning to come to light.

These symptoms include lung disease, cardiovascular disease and acute lung injury. According to The New York Times, 12 young adults have already died in 2019 due to vaping-related illnesses.

The JUUL Labs scandals that took off in late 2018 are another impact on teenagers, right when JUUL and similar devices started to flood into high schools across the country. According to USA Today, JUUL had marketing campaigns that targeted children when they first launched the product. Much like candy at grocery stores being placed on lower stands where kids can see them for advertising, JUUL

created pods that have the same amount of nicotine as an entire pack of cigarettes, but in flavors appealing to a younger audience. According to the FDA (Food and Drug Association), JUUL is accused of allegedly marketing their products as less harmful than cigarettes.

"I am glad the district is taking such a positive approach... Instead of shaming kids, we need to educate them on the dangers of vaping," high school Assistant Principal Tara Spielman said.

According to the Pine View school rules, students caught vaping or with a vaping device will receive a Saturday detention where they will complete the two informative modules on the dangers of vaping, and then write an essay on their actions and its impact, which Spielman reads through. If that student is caught a second time, they will

receive out-of-school suspension.

According to school Nurse Beth Banko, vaping is treated the same as smoking in terms of disciplinary action and looking for signs in users.

Officer John Bobianski furthers, if a student is caught vaping, it is considered a tobacco citation from the Sarasota County School Police Department. If that student can meet all the criteria (finishing the modules, writing the essay and going to Saturday school), it will be removed from their record moving forward. However, if they fail to respond to the civil citation, their record would not be cleared.

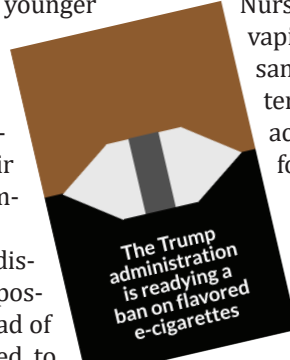
The first module in the vaping program discusses school board policy 2.90 which prohibits tobacco use by anyone on school property. In this case, tobacco can also refer to any

type of e-cigarette or vaping device according to the policy. The second module discusses the illnesses that can come from vaping and provides statistics on smoking in America.

"We have little kids looking up to the older kids here at Pine View. Seeing an older student vaping in the bathrooms is not a position that any of our students deserve to be in. It is violating the respect of your community, your body and the rights of others in your space," Spielman said.

"I would like to see more students participating in S.W.A.T [Students Working Against Tobacco]. My hope is that vaping will be frowned upon by peers and it will leave the campus altogether for social reasons," Spielman said.

GRAPHICS BY BRIANNA NELSON



Student goes global with World Debate



Eleventh-grader Grace Kim poses with her USA Debate Development Team members John May and Katy Lin in Dallas, Texas for their first tournament. In Dallas, Kim debated topics like tax exemption for religious institutions.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY GRACE KIM

by Naina Chauhan
News Editor

After five months of arduous work and anticipation, eleventh-grader Grace Kim was inducted onto the 14 nationally-picked students to the USA Development Debate Team Aug. 27. This team is one of the many that encompasses World Schools Debate, a form of debate where each individual acts as a global representative making decisions on behalf of all nations, presenting either a proposition or an opposition to the motion.

Kim's competitive spirit motivated her to join Extemporaneous Speaking in Pine View Speech and Debate her freshman year, the same event that her old-

er brother and Pine View Class of 2019 alumnus James Kim excelled in. Today, Grace is captain of Extemporaneous Speaking, Declamation Speaking and Impromptu Speaking, as well as secretary of the club.

The USA Development Debate team is the training team, of the more excelled USA Debate team, which competes both nationally and internationally. The development team focuses more on learning World Schools Debate than international recognition like the more competitive USA Debate Team.

The application for the development team was a four-stage process in which she had to prepare a World Schools style speech for stages one

through three. The stage one application, which had the topic of exceptionalism, was due at the end of May, but Kim began working a month early.

By stage two of the application, Kim became consumed by the subject of armageddon as the topic was discussing the state of humanity in the future.

The topic for stage three was about if United States should disengage from Syria and stage four consisted solely of a form to fill out. "Grace really wanted to get in...it showed in the time she spent on writing cases, the way she waited for and reacted to every announcement she received, and the quality of the auditions she was preparing... any morning I checked the prep document and I'd see 'last edit: 2:00 a.m.," twelfth-grader Vice President of Debate in Pine View Speech and Debate Vinny Scuteri said.

According to Kim, twelfth-grader and President of Pine View Speech and Debate Benjamin Nicholson was a great help in the application process.

"Grace is someone who will work tirelessly for things she's passionate about," Nicholson said. "She spent days researching her audition debate topics and finding statistics before even writing her speeches. When she finally did start writing, she poured over her cases to make sure the logic and rhetoric were perfect. USA Debate is lucky to have her."

After all the sweat and tears Kim put into the application, making it onto the team felt unreal to her.

"The results came out later than

they were supposed to making me so incredibly nervous that I could not sit still or sleep leading up to it," Kim said. "On the 26th I got a call from one of the USA Debate team coaches and I was so scared — I thought that it was definitely a call telling me that I didn't make it. When she asked me if I would like to join the team I screamed and just started jumping up and down in my room. Then I ran to my mom — we just jumped up and down together for a couple of minutes."

Kim will be going to tournaments under the USA development team, debating international teams across the country. She will compete in eight tournaments this year across the country in states like California and Massachusetts. Kim's first tournament was Sept. 14 in Dallas, Texas where the team, unfortunately, did not break, as only the first eight teams broke and they were ninth. Kim found this to be a learning experience as she learned more about World Schools Debate, met coaches from Singapore and Slovenia, and was able to get closer to her teammates. She said she is looking forward to competing again in New Orleans Sept. 28.

Now on the team, Kim is determined to make sure that this is not a rare occurrence for Pine View.

"All the schools on the list have money poured into coaching — we already have such smart kids so with proper support we could make this something that happens every year," Kim said.

Substitute transitions into full-time teacher

by **Kasumi Wade**
Sports Editor

Taking the leap from substitute to teacher, English III, English IV and sixth-grade English teacher Wendy Hazlett has already made her mark on campus. With 10 years of teaching already under her belt at schools around the nation, Hazlett took a break from year-round teaching from 2012 to 2019 and instead, began working as a substitute to focus on her children. This year, she has returned to teaching full-time for the 2019-2020 school year at Pine View.

According to Hazlett, she has had a passion for teaching since the fourth grade. Hazlett's fourth- and fifth-grade teacher, Ms. Higbee, inspired her at a young age.

"I can't really put it into words. I was just meant to be around kids. I love it, and I love making a bond with

them," Hazlett said.

Hazlett attended Michigan State University while majoring in Elementary Education and minoring in Language Arts and Social Studies. She then went on to get her masters degree in Reading at Eastern Michigan University. After going to school, Hazlett got right into teaching and continued for 10 years until she had children of her own.

With newborn twins, Hazlett believed she would never go back to teaching. She became a substitute for several years, but after her husband's encouragement, Hazlett decided it was time to come back full time. Hazlett originally chose to substitute and work at Pine View because her daughters attend school here, but they have since left.

"I love the campus and atmosphere here. The whole community is so nice and I love how the focus of the

school is based on giving back to the community," Hazlett said.

Specifically, sixth-grade math teacher Stephanie White has acted as Hazlett's mentor and has been a major help in her transition.

"I was able to get to know her better and see what an engaging teacher she is first-hand last year when she stepped into a fourth-grade, long-term substitute position. Wendy was recognized for her hard work by being awarded the Literacy Teacher of the Year," White said. "She is a valuable addition to our sixth-grade team, as well as at the high school English Department, and Pine View was so lucky

to have her sign on as a full-time teacher."

Hazlett endeavors to connect with her students, as she tries to bond with each and every one of them, encouraging them to feel at home in her classroom. She has added tea lights in the bathroom, warm lighting, a

zen corner and other comforting decorations around the room to ensure the students feel comfortable and at ease. According to Hazlett, she wants to feel at home in her classroom and wants her students to feel the same way.

"Being in the classroom with the same kids every day, you get to make a much

deeper connection with them. It's like we are a family and there's a sense of ownership and community, which is much different from subbing, because you got to know so many different kids but not know much about them," Hazlett said.

She constantly asks for her students' feedback on her teaching, the books they read and more. According to Hazlett, she believes the class should be a democracy, not a dictatorship.

"Walking into Mrs. Hazlett's classroom everyday, it is easy to see how passionate she is about her job and how much time and effort she puts into her lesson plans... Her pure happiness and personable personality is something particularly special, as she brings smiles to all of our faces no matter how hard of a day we are having," twelfth-grader and English IV student Lindsay Farb said.



PHOTO BY ELLA WILLIAMS

Changes at Pine View

- USF DE classes have replaced SCF DE classes
- Six portables have been removed from campus
- There is a new broadcasting publication called The Blue and Gold
- Key Club sponsors are now Roberto Lamela and Jennifer Reyka
- Elizabeth Ballard is now a world history teacher
- Construction for Legacy Garden will continue to be stalled until more funds are collected
- PVA has moved into a portable

GRAPHIC BY MAHITHA RAMACHANDRAN

New SRO on campus

Officer Bobianski joins the school community, continuing his 35th year in law enforcement

by **Peyton Harris**
Focus Editor

In the past two years, a widespread effort to ensure security within American public schools has emerged, and Sarasota County is no exception, implementing several security measures including a plan to create its own police force. Security Resource Officer (SRO) John Bobianski, referred to as Officer John by students, is a member of this new force, replacing Deputy Hudson for Pine View.

Bobianski was born in Springfield, Massachusetts, where both his brother and father served as firemen.

"I just didn't want to [be a fireman] when I got out of high school," Bobianski said.

Instead, he went to Western New England University and got a degree in criminal justice, soon becoming a police cadet. From there, he fell

in love with police work, working for the Springfield Police Department for 35 years. Bobianski also served as an SRO, a lieutenant in charge of the juvenile division and as a Colt Commander on the S.W.A.T (Special Weapons and Tactics) team for 20 years. Further, Bobianski's masters degree in Police Administration allowed him to be a firearm instructor and active shooter instructor at the Massachusetts Police Academy.

"Since Columbine I've been on the SWAT team. We've trained officers to engage the active shooter, because the opposite happened at Columbine. The kid was inside killing kids, and the cops were waiting for a SWAT team... You deal with the threat because if you don't, people will die," Bobianski said.

At Pine View, Officer Bobianski's main job is to ensure the safety and well being of students. During drills, he ushers everyone out of public spots and into the nearest classroom.

"Pine View seems like a great place to being, and I'm looking forward to be a part of this family," he said.

In preparation to work as an SRO, Bobianski attended a 40-hour-long course to be certified for the Florida department of law enforcement, in addition to "Crisis Intervention Training," which teaches officers how to

work with students that have mental health issues.

Throughout his 35 years within the law enforcement field, Bobianski has gathered valuable lessons from his training and various experiences.

"My most valuable lesson would be something more along the lines of, 'Don't jump to conclusions,' and make sure you investigate everything fully before you determined what's happened. So, probably, being extra careful and being detail-oriented and making sure you look into anything fully before you make any decisions," Bobianski said.

Recently, school security has become a major concern as the number of deaths due to school shootings has increased, causing many new procedures to be implemented. Bobianski, however, believes that the job of an SRO has essentially remained the same.

"School safety has always been the same — know who's supposed to be in the school and who's not. You need to build a relationship with the kids so they feel free to come talk to you."

Despite the fundamentals of school safety remaining the same, a crucial difference between Bobianski's former SRO days and now is a technological one — social media, which contributes to an immense amount of cyberbullying in today's schools.

"Back when I was an SRO, we didn't have all these apps. We didn't have the social media stuff, that's the big change," he said.

"Officer John is amazing, because he has so much experience, not only with kids but adults... I think we've got the best of both worlds with him," Assistant Principal Tara Spielman said.

"I think the kids need to know that I'm here to keep them safe, number one, and I'm available if they need someone to talk to about anything. You know, as a parent, obviously, I've raised three kids, and I've worked with juveniles my whole career. I'm willing to help them any way I can, and that's what I want to be seen as; I'm here to help them. If I can mentor kids, great, and if I can help them with something, great. If I can make life easier for them, great," Bobianski said.



PHOTO BY FELICITY CHANG

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Students journey to China in youth program

by Tricia Saputera
Asst. Editor-in-Chief

Under the National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) program, twelfth-graders Alana Schreiber (AS) and Jaden Wiesinger (JW) embarked on a free educational and eye-opening journey to China June 25 to Aug. 12. The trip was entirely paid for and even included a stipend to cover the costs of meals, transportation and more. The rigorous application included multiple essays, language tests and an interview all in Chinese, and when they were notified of their status as finalists, they attended a predeparture orientation in Washington, D.C. and completed an online eight-week course to aid in their preparation. Schreiber stayed in Xi'an while Wiesinger lived in Suzhou. Here's their interview with the Torch (T):

T: Describe a typical day.

AS: We had class every day during the week, so we would go out to breakfast with my host family, and then go to class. From eight to noon we would have language classes. We had two teachers that would switch on and off, one of them was for reading and writing, and the other was conversational, and then we would have lunch at the cafeteria in the school with the Chinese students, which was cool, and then in the afternoon we would have more classes.

On campus we would have a lecture or do art but a lot of times we would also go off campus, so we got to try on traditional Han dynasty clothing, we did a tea ceremony, we spent a week at a music school, and we each got to choose a different traditional Chinese instrument and learn that and then perform it at the end of the week.

Sometimes I would go out after school a little bit with my friends, but we had a lot of homework. Then dinner with my host family.

JW: So I woke up around 6, my host family would make me

breakfast. After that, I would get ready for school, then I would take the subway to school for about 40 minutes.

I would have 4 hours of school a day, one hour of speaking practice, then we would also do grammar, writing, all different aspects of the Chinese language.

After that, we would have a break for lunch. There was no school-provided lunch, so each day we'd go to different restaurants and choose whatever we want to eat.

Then every day we'd have a culture class for an hour. For example, we had Chinese calligraphy, Kung fu, drawing, and then also once in a while we'd do community service. And then after that, we got dismissed, and so I'd go with my friends and we'd explore the city and do a bunch of different things. Then I'd go home, hangout with my host family and do my homework, and repeat.

On weekends, it was mostly spent with my host family.

T: What was the best thing you ate?

AS: For me, I think it's just so

important to try everything... I don't know about the best thing, but the most unique things I would say, I had aorta, that was interesting.

My city actually has one of the largest concentrations of the Muslim ethnic minority there, so we had a street called Hui Ming Jia, which is called the Muslim street, where you just had food vendors that went down miles on each side, so they had a lot of really interesting Muslim-influenced Chinese food there. The food was amazing.

JW: The best thing I ate was something called squirrelfish. It's like sweet and sour fish, so it had the perfect taste. I don't know how to describe it, but it just tasted so good.

T: How did it change your perspective?

AS: It's hard to sum up, but it completely changed my perspective. I've traveled a lot, so I think, definitely in terms of culture shock, it was an easier transition for me than a lot of people, but it definitely made me realize the world is a much smaller place than we think it is.



Top: Twelfth-grader Alana Schreiber stands with the other students who participated in the National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) program in Xi'an. The educational program lasted from June 25 to Aug. 12 and was entirely paid for. PHOTO PROVIDED BY ALANA SCHREIBER

Bottom: Twelfth-grader Jaden Wiesinger sits at Tiger Hill during a day of exploring Suzhou. Prior to the trip, Wiesinger had to complete an online eight-week course to aid in his preparation. PHOTO PROVIDED BY JADEN WIESINGER



I've never been away from home for more than two weeks at a time at most and by myself. It was very different from anything I've done.

JW: It made me realize how lucky I am to live in a country where there is freedom of speech and I have the liberty to

talk about and express myself. It made me realize my place as an American, and also it changed my life because it truly confirmed my desire to study international business in China, and I have this set path that I am really looking forward to following. I'm really excited to continue to pursue my goal.

Pine View welcomes first service animal

by Naina Chauhan
News Editor

Pine View will open its doors to its first service animal later this month as twelfth-grader Reed Spahn will be accompanied by his service dog, Athena, starting Oct. 15 to help manage his Type 1 diabetes. Although Spahn, who was diagnosed with diabetes in 2014, has learned to manage his disease, the 18-month-old black Labrador Retriever will further assist him in his journey through senior year and later in college.

Type 1 diabetes is a chronic condition in which the pancreas creates little to no insulin, which controls glucose levels in the body.

"In the past Type 1 diabetes affected every aspect of my life — anger, confusion, balancing life and school — it was especially hard in the transition period as becoming a young adult," Spahn said. "Type 1 is a constant thing... I used to be afraid of doing things in public like taking my medicine but it has gradually become easier with time and acceptance."

Athena was bred and trained in Utah at Tattle Tail Scent Dogs, a company created by a Type 1 diabetic who breeds and trains dogs for owners who suffer from the disease. As both her parents were service animals for

diabetic individuals, Athena has been scent imprinted since birth. This means Athena can sense rapid changes in glucose levels or dangerous levels using indicators from within Spahn's blood or skin secretions. While Spahn has an electronic glucose monitor, Athena can alert Spahn regarding changes in his blood sugar 15 to 30 minutes faster than his monitor at times.

Spahn respectfully notified Pine View administration about the arrival of Athena before this school year began, allowing accommodations to be made by staff and students in Spahn's classes. According to Assistant Principal Tara Spielman, the process of validating the need for a service animal under the Section 504 county guidelines is not an easy process.

"It's tedious, but it is necessary... I understand the precautions and their

concerns. There are people with phobias and this is a campus with young kids... The most important thing is that there is enough information provided so everyone at Pine View is aware, not upset or concerned," Spahn said.

While Athena will be a new and exciting addition to the campus, both Spielman and Spahn anticipate no difficulties or drawbacks to the situation, as Spahn is a student with a need and Pine View has merely provided accommodations for that need.

"I think that with appropriate and proactive communication and education ahead of time there should be no drawbacks," Spielman said.

To make sure that all students are aware, Spahn will be creating a short video explaining the situation so that all students on campus are aware and

can act responsibly around Athena. Reed plans on explaining his need for Athena and why students must respect his need.

"I want to make people aware that she is just a part of the classroom and school — she is there to do a job, and she cannot do that with distractions from other people," Spahn said. "Being in a school environment I need to be focused, so I can get the most out of my school experience. I cannot be completely consumed by her because other people are distracting and exciting her."

Spahn is an ambassador and advocate for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF), where he spreads awareness and raises money for the organization. He plans to hold an event Jan. 4 at the Cock and Bull Brewery where Spahn's band, Steel Relic, and other musicians will be performing to support the JDRF.

Spahn hopes that students will take this as an opportunity to educate themselves more about diabetes.

"Chances are you know someone who is diabetic — do some research and find out some information so that you can make someone's day a little easier... It's important to always be mindful and aware of those who may be struggling," Spahn said.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY REED SPAHN

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AMAZON FOREST FIRES

Everything You Need to Know

HOW IT STARTED

- Fires are mostly caused by humans to clear land, often to make space for cattle farms and other agriculture
- The fires have been burning in small areas and occasional flare-ups for decades, but the recent outbreak was not widely covered until August 2019



WHAT WE KNOW

- Brazil's National Institute for Space Research discovered that the country has lost more than 1,330 square miles of forest land to man-made development since January (39% increase from 2018)
- Atmosphere already holds 415 parts per million of carbon — Amazon destruction would add 38 parts per million



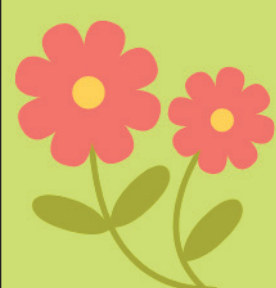
WHAT HAS BEEN DONE

- Canada and UK pledged 11M and additional 12M to aid with the prevention of forest fires
- G7 countries provided 20M+ to help forest fire



WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Sign petitions, participate in environmental activism and protests if possible, and boycott products sourced from Brazil involving soybeans, iron ore, and crude petroleum. These are Brazil's top three exports — forests are stripped away to make space for soybean fields, iron mines, and petroleum rigs



Facts and statistics from: OEC World, Brazil National Institute for Space Research, Al Jazeera, Washington Post, Express Home of the Daily and Sunday Express

GRAPHIC BY OLIVIA HANSEN, REPORTING BY SARAH HASSAN

FSU introduces new teaching style

New teaching technique innovates biology labs

by Ella Williams

Asst. Sports Editor

Researchers from FSU have teamed up with Pine View biology teachers to study how the use of Argument-Driven Inquiry (ADI) in labs, as well as classroom learning, affects students. Argument-Driven Inquiry is an instructional model that enables science teachers to integrate a laboratory activity with classroom lessons, ensuring students' success in academic activities, as well as teaching life skills.

To observe how students use ADI, the FSU team will be visiting Biology Honors teachers Tonya Johnson and Rebecca Kehler's classes to film labs and classroom activities. The students in these classes will participate in experiments that encourage them to talk about any challenging questions or ideas. ADI is about students being challenged and having to think and talk about what the answer or solution is. The FSU team came to Johnson and Kehler's class on August 26, September 3, and 5, and will continue later in the semester.

"Research suggests that science learning should be propelled by the need to 'figure things out' that is, to make sense of and explain a natural phenomenon. Student talk is essential in this work," FSU researcher Jennifer Schellinger said.

The teachers attended a workshop over the summer, where teachers learned

to steer away from note-taking and deliberate directions and start having students conduct experiments without significant guidance. This workshop was in June and was offered by the science supervisor, Sarah Burkett. The workshop is offered as a professional development opportunity in Sarasota County

Research suggests that science learning should be propelled by the need to 'figure things out'."

Jennifer Schellinger
FSU researcher

Schools.

FSU approached Pine View science teachers as well as other schools in Florida with the idea of ADI, which was presented in the workshop; Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Kehler both accepted, integrating their knowledge from the workshop into classroom activities.

According to Johnson, she was excited to implement the new teaching style.

"This is very new to me," Johnson said. "It is way outside of my comfort zone."

Johnson hopes that the new approach to instruction will al-

low students to thrive outside of the classroom and continue to do so even after they graduate. She explains the concept to her students by drawing a parallel between regular labs and cooking — typical lab formats are like recipes giving exact directions, while ADI labs will teach students real-life judgment skills in a hands-on environment.

Ninth-grader Selma Pehlic participated in these labs, designed to test how salinity affects the growth of a toy alligator, if samples are living or non-living, and chemical reactions in ethanol.

"I like this way of learning because it allows kids to be more open-minded when learning about biology and allows them to discover more things on their own, rather than just being taught off of a PowerPoint," Pehlic said. "It's way more challenging to discover things through the labs because the info isn't handed directly to us."

Both Johnson and Kehler hope to continue using innovative teaching styles in their classrooms in the future. These teachers are also going to another workshop, The Buffalo Case Study Project, in Buffalo, New York. This workshop will take place Sep. 26 to 27 and will help the teachers enhance their knowledge of ADI in the classroom.

Moving forward, Schellinger and the other researchers at FSU hope to continue spreading Argument-Driven Inquiry across the globe.

All the Time in the Multiverse

The Science Behind Popular CW Show 'The Flash'

by Sarah Catalano
Sci&Tech Editor

"My name is Barry Allen, and I am the fastest man alive."

Yeah, we've heard it before. The question isn't, "Is he the fastest man alive?" but instead, "How is he the fastest man alive?"

In science fiction, what we imagine is what we invent — the technology of people's dreams tends to emerge as reality. Take "Star Trek's" communicator devices and cell phones, or Jules Verne's "From the Earth to the Moon" and the moon landing. Packed with biochemists and technological engineers, "The Flash" is no exception.

In light of the release of season six of the popular CW show "The Flash," we're delving into the rich science behind the man in the red suit.

Accelerate

The Flash's origin story revolves around a faulty particle accelerator — a machine that uses electromagnetic pulses to cause charged subatomic particles, like protons and electrons, to move in concentrated beams at high speeds.

The Institute of Physics (IOP) in the U.K. published an online paper in 2014, the same year season one of the show was released, discussing the applications of particle accelerators. According to the IOP, simple particles form at the site of a collision and decay shortly after. These particles, and those formed by their decay, can be studied to reveal more about the building blocks of the universe.

Over 30,000 accelerators are currently in operation, the largest owned by the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), in Geneva, Switzerland. CERN's official website sets the size of their accelerator at a "27-kilometer ring of superconducting magnets."

Not all accelerators are so massive, though — some are even smaller than the one depicted in "The Flash." The mechanisms are a key component of radiotherapy machines, commonly used to treat cancer.

Despite the popularity of the concept throughout the genre, accelerators are unlikely to malfunction, especially extreme enough to cause a dark matter explosion like the one that granted Barry Allen his powers. While "The Flash" chooses to focus on other aspects of physics, the real-life particle accelerators' role in modern science is irreplaceable.

Frictionless

When Barry first uses his powers, his speed combined with air resistance causes massive amounts of friction, singeing his clothes and shoes; however, these incidents are shown less and less frequently as the show continues.

Both the comics and CW show explain the phenomenon: as speedsters (meta-humans with speed) grow a closer relationship with the Speedforce (the force that lends speedsters their powers), they develop the ability to generate Speedforce around them. This excuses them from normal laws of physics — like friction. This aura extends as far as the speedster wishes, hence Barry's ability to take people and items with him at high speeds and not cause instant combustion.

In addition to the supernatural explanation, the Flash's frictionless suit contributes to his exemption from friction. A friction-free material is beyond modern physics, but not by far. According to the Argonne Leadership Computing Facility (ALCF), researchers simulating low-friction materials have achieved sustained superlubricity (the state of remaining nearly frictionless) using graphene and diamond-like carbon.

The substances make "nanoscrolls," hollow cylinders that function like ball bearings. But the material loses its lubricity in water, so ALCF researchers continue to search for a solution.

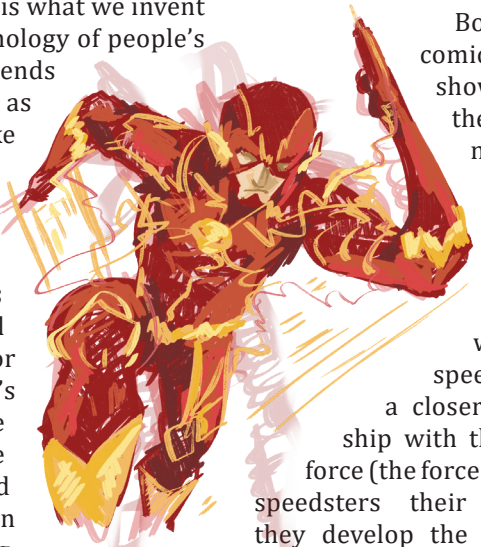
A substance free of friction would have monumental applications. ALCF said that "one-third of every fuel tank is spent overcoming friction in automobiles," and a lubricant as potent as the graphene scrolls could significantly increase the life-time of moving mechanical parts.

Science speeds by

The modern human may not be able to phase through solid walls or create wormholes to travel through time, but science fiction's power is very real. Years ago, Star Wars creator George Lucas imagined a world where sand speeders zoomed across the desert without ever touching the ground, and now sleek trains hovering on magnetic tracks transport thousands of people each day.

Today, the importance of creativity and arts in STEM pursuits grows ever stronger. As science yields more and more questions, shows like "The Flash" are pivotal in understanding and sculpting a universe too big to understand.

Bending the laws of spacetime is as easy as wondering how.



GRAPHICS BY ZOE MERRITT

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GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON

Student's band makes 'A Loud Mess'

Sibinkic shifts his musical talents from VPA to PV

by Anna Labiner
Entertainment Editor

Hammering the strings of his favorite power chords, ninth-grader Mika Sibinkic began learning the guitar at just 8 years old and has furthered his enthusiasm for the instrument by playing as the lead guitarist in his band. A Pine View student since fourth grade, Sibinkic recently decided to return to his beloved campus after just a week of participating in Booker High School's Visual Performing Arts (VPA) program.

"It wasn't Pine View. At Pine View, I have a family... I don't want to be any less in touch with them," Sibinkic said.

By chance, Sibinkic was first introduced to the idea of playing the instrument by taking a recommendation from a volunteer tennis coach who professed that picking up the guitar would help him "get the chicks."

Convinced, Sibinkic urged his mother to arrange guitar lessons, thus launching his obsession with the stringed instrument. He currently has 45-minute guitar lessons along with a two-hour band practice on Wednesdays.

Sibinkic's band "A Loud Mess"

alternates roles to ensure that each band member gets an equal amount of time for singing and doing back-up vocals. The band is composed of singer and rhythm guitarist eighth-grader Maeva Ginsberg-Klemmt, drummer ninth-grader Jake DiTomaso, singer keys and bassist eighth-grader Mojdeh Khoshi and finally the lead guitarist — Sibinkic himself.

Deviating from other bands composed of young artists, "A Loud Mess" covers popular songs from the 60s to the 90s with the occasional pop song for younger audiences.

The band is planning to play at the Pine View Fair for two hours. Footage of their previous performances can be viewed on their Instagram @a_loud_mess.

Band member Ginsberg-Klemmt describes Sibinkic as someone she can confide in when stressed, and explains the impact of his presence in the band: "He adds the essence of humor, but at the same time he also reminds us that we have to work hard."

"I think he's just having fun when



Ninth-grader Mika Sibinkic (right) jams out with fellow band member, Maeva Ginsberg-Klemmt (left) at EveryOneRocks — a popular practice space for musicians in Sarasota. Sibinkic's band, "A Loud Mess," is composed of four students and was created in August of 2018. PHOTO BY ANNA LABINER

he plays... When he is performing, playing or rehearsing, he's focused but he also has a lot of fun with it too," Gene Hudson, Sibinkic's and Ginsberg-Klemmt's guitar teacher and "A Loud Mess" band manager said.

Sibinkic's band is also occasionally booked for gigs, with the guitar-fiend noting a particularly interesting performance at DiTomaso's graduation party.

"We were in front of the pool, and we just got to crank it out in the water. [The house] was around the bay, we turned up the amps. [Jake] played loud, and we just had a great time. Also, I broke a string, which is also a great sign, that means I'm into it," Sibinkic said.

Sibinkic was accepted into the VPA program, more specifically the

jazz band, and later got into Category 5, considered as one of the highest-ranking bands in the program. He said he enjoyed the experience of being able to play different genres at Booker, and although he felt the need to return to Pine View.

To Sibinkic, playing the guitar is like using a stress ball, and he describes strumming the chords as truly blissful.

"Guitar can be effortless at times, it can be tough at times, but I never disliked it even though it was tough. Even if my fingers hurt, I could play for hours, even while standing up at times, and maybe jumping. I could be forced to play the guitar, and I could have a great time... I just have to pick the guitar once per day, I just have to," Sibinkic said.

At Pine View, I have family... I don't want to be any less in touch with them."

Mika Sibinkic,

grade 9

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STUDY SPOTS



A quiet coffee shop, a bustling city hub, or a tranquil library — here in Sarasota, a wealth of study spots dot our community; the hardest part is choosing which one is right for you.

GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

Kahwa Coffee

by Brianna Nelson
Spark Editor-in-Chief

Within the hustle and bustle of downtown Sarasota, Kahwa differentiates itself with a large brown logo and vibrant yellow walls. Despite its unassuming storefront, Kahwa is one of the premier study spots Sarasota has to offer.

Upon entry, Kahwa conjures an interesting dynamic: soft music with a striking industrial environment. Despite the sharp contrast, both play into the benefits of this study spot. The lighting of the building is natural and bright due to a large window, making any notes easy to see.

Sound is critical for discerning an ideal studying environment. Too loud and it's distracting, too soft and one might find themselves falling asleep on their laptop. Kahwa hits a perfect chord in terms of its auditory ambiance, with quiet music that remains energetic. Another differentiator between Kahwa and the competition is the volume of the coffee machine. Many other cafes struggle with the issue of loud and distracting coffee machines, however, Kahwa does not succumb to this. Even when at full capacity, most of the background chatter is kept to a minimum, and most patrons keep to themselves.

"I see a lot of professionals coming through here and it helps me stay productive and focused on my work," Sara-

sota resident and Kahwa regular Allison Samol said.

Amenities is the next big category that Kahwa passes with flying colors. Tables fit the industrial theme nicely and chairs are comfortable. The only drawback is the lack of large tables for study groups. Drinks are also available with amazing discounts for those with reusable cups, where no matter the cup size, if it is reusable you are always charged for a small. The cost is for sure worth it as the drinks are smooth and delicious.

In terms of accessibility, WiFi is easy to link up to and is lightning-fast. Outlets are nearby and are readily available for all patrons.

The comfortable environment, non-distracting auditory landscape, and bustle of fellow students and workers really creates the

perfect study spot for any student. "It's one of the few networking hubs in Sarasota for young people," Barista Dana Laag said.

Kahwa is located at 1487 2nd St, Sarasota, FL 34236, and is open Wednesday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Sunday through Tuesday from 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.



PHOTO BY BRIANNA NELSON

Rating:
5/5 Torches



Project Coffee

by Isabella Gaskill
Web Section Editor

Located in Downtown Sarasota, Project Coffee's minimalistic and modern design make it a prime spot for students to dive into some studying and grab a quick bite to eat.

The coffee shop, which opened in July, focuses on practicing sustainability, and the friendly staff and casual vibe are enough to make every customer feel like a regular.

The enormous windows, lofty ceiling and natural light combined with the very spacious layout make the coffee shop feel comfortable and roomy. There are several seating options to choose from, including spots by the windows and tables that provide ample space to work alone or with some friends.

Even something as simple as the furniture adds to the ambiance, with the wooden tables contributing to the contemporary design of the space. An extra bonus is the number of plants throughout the cafe, which is a little added touch that all of us houseplant-obsessed Zoomers will appreciate.

The simplistic design of the establishment prevents the mind from wandering too much and allows for more efficiency when doing work. The chatter of other customers is generally quiet, and the soft background music adds to the studious vibe.

The coffee shop also provides easy access to the rest of Downtown Sarasota, making it easy to stop by other restaurants or the Selby Library. Free WiFi is also provided.

With an entirely plant-based menu, Project Coffee makes it simple for vegan, vegetarian and lactose-sensitive patrons to order with ease. They have all the typical caffeinated drinks, including lattes and teas. The menu of food items includes popular staples, such as avocado toast, biscuits, and carrot cake. They also have a number of unique homemade jams, ranging from apricot to blueberry, to have with the biscuits, adding a unique twist to a classic.

The establishment also offers bagged coffee and reusable coffee cups, which are available for sale at the front



PHOTO BY ANNA LABINER

Rating:
5/5 Torches



Lelu Coffee Lounge

by Isabella Gaskill
Web Section Editor

Located just minutes away from the famed Siesta Key Beach, LeLu Coffee is a much-loved spot for locals and tourists alike. A hospitable staff, chill atmosphere and amazing menu give the restaurant a welcoming and cozy vibe, making it a perfect place to do some studying or meet up with a group of friends.

Despite being located in the bustling heart of Siesta Key, LeLu is able to maintain a relaxing environment, especially in the mornings to mid-afternoon. Although the noise fluctuates throughout the day, it is generally kept quiet and easily blocked out with headphones if it becomes bothersome.

Perhaps the most optimal window for studying time would be quite early in the morning before the afternoon rush begins and there is still very little noise. But it is a cafe after all, so patrons tend to keep their chatter to a minimum throughout the day.

For those who need a caffeine boost before hitting the books, LeLu offers a wide variety of coffee; everything from lattes and cappuccinos to specialty drinks such as the Island Coconut Mocha. The menu also includes a plethora of food items, including

sandwiches, pancakes, desserts and almost everything inbetween. Service is speedy and the staff is incredibly friendly and helpful — the only hard part is choosing what to order.

"It's a great place to study because the background noise isn't too overwhelming and helps me focus," tenth-grader Ruby Copey said.

In terms of seating availability, LeLu has all their bases covered with sofas situated in the middle of the restaurant; tables, both inside and outside; a bar area and window seating.

The open layout makes it a perfect place to get together with some friends to work on projects (and maybe even swing by the beach when done). They also have free WiFi available upon request and several power outlets for patrons to use — everything needed for the perfect study session.

LeLu Coffee is located at 5251 Ocean Blvd, Siesta Key, FL 34242 and open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. For more information, visit lelucoffee.com.



PHOTO BY ISABELLA GASKILL

Rating:
4.5/5 Torches



Gulf Gate Library

by Lucy Collins
Web Section Editor

Dubbed the most beautiful library in Florida by Business Insider in 2016, the Gulf Gate Public Library certainly lives up to the prestigious title for its contemporary design and spacious interior.

The establishment, which was renovated and reopened in January 2015, is a popular spot for those who need to hunker down with some work or simply relax with a book. The plethora of educational resources and assurance of a quiet workspace give this spot the upper hand over other studying spots around town.

With enormous windows spanning the length of the building, finding ample lighting in this establishment is no problem, and the beautiful view of the foliage just outside these windows creates a welcoming and pleasant environment.

When comparing the benefits of study spots around Sarasota, it is worth noting that although Gulf Gate Library does not have any food options, it does offer noise control, something that many cafes can not provide. Libraries are notorious for their strict policy of keeping volumes to a minimum, and Gulf Gate Library is no exception.

Additionally, unlike many smaller establishments, the Gulf Gate Library's enormous size allows for many different study locations all within one building; in

fact, the library staff prides itself on its abundance of seating capacity, accommodating about 1,000 to 1,200 visitors each day. Such seating options include round wooden tables as well as enormous plush chairs.

Study rooms are also available for reservation or walk-ins for those who prefer complete seclusion when doing work. A reservation for these private rooms must be made 72 hours in advance and can be used for three hours, while a walk-in guest can only use the room for two hours.

In terms of accessibility, Gulf Gate Library is a mere ten-minute drive from Pine View's campus, a trip that is worth taking for the myriad benefits provided. The library offers free WiFi, space to work in a peaceful environment, and an ideal area to sit down and get

through long hours of homework and studying, free from distraction or noise.

The Gulf Gate Library is located on 7112 Curtiss Ave and is open 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, and closed on Sunday.



PHOTO BY LUCY COLLINS

Rating:
4/5 Torches



Portables & Pythons

You gather before me hungry, tired — maybe even scared.
Every day, you consider quitting and never returning.
But that simply isn't your way, traveler.
When I was young and my bones didn't hurt, I did the same trek, and I never quit. From the service road to the dusty shell desert, I've seen it all.
In fact, in my youth, I began to map the world of Pine View. I'll tell you what, give me a satchel of coin, and I'll hand over my coveted map, and maybe throw in a bit of advice...
only for your gold, though.



Your local village cartographer,
eleventh-grader Brianna Nelson



The Torchable

Strange sounds emanate from the decrepit tower, even in the dead of night. Few will ever see the journalistic goblins who create the tomes of events that record our daily life here at Pine View. The goblins silently scuttle throughout campus, slowly collecting information in secret. Search through the bushes, and you might find one simply listening. Though they may seem small and ugly, they are genuinely the barons of the written word. The only time they make themselves known is when they all fan out to deliver this news to all classes. Honor their work, for they are tired and their legs hurt.

-Bonuses: Valuable news and a book to commemorate your time here.

-Dangers: interaction with these creatures and their leader
-2 constitution.



The Office

The castle at the heart of Pine View is where Lord Covert rules over his dominion. Although an imposing figure, Covert is a benevolent ruler - parading through Pine View to meet with all his subjects from the gnomes to the aristocrats of the kingdom. Other than Lord Covert, the castle is filled with many of his lords, ladies, and lieges. The royal wizards provide a shocking amount of information to any who dare to enter. There are few students brave enough to seek court with the lord, primarily due to the frightening energy of the main office. Sitting in those chairs induces a fear like no other.

-Bonuses: Receive the help you seek, +1 knowledge.

-Dangers: Visitors will be hit with intense nerves and unreasonable fear.

The Science Dept.

Their den smells like mugwort and the swampland. Here, in this undrained region of Pine View, magic runs amok, only to be controlled by the masters of the arcane sciences. Each has special powers. One will see Chaillou, potion master crafting her tinctures and burning her herbal candles. Strickland is primarily an alchemist, combining strange roots and liquids in her hut. Johnson, Kehler, and Wilson are the three enchantresses of biology. They catch frogs from the nearby forestland to create their experiments. Some shun them, but they have much to teach apprentice sorcerers.

-Bonuses: Prepared to face the daunting wilderness that is STEM college courses, +4 dexterity in the lab.

-Dangers: Chemical burns, accidental curses and surprise experiments (primarily on travelers).

Building 16

Here in this underdeveloped region of the kingdom, within the mushroom forest, a large lodge sits in the center. The building may seem quiet through the thick wooden walls, but within, young gnomes bustle about the halls on an hourly basis. Careful upon entry as you might step on them; or worse, their handcrafted mushroom art for which they are known for. Give care to the joyful creatures, even if they attempt to chomp on your ankles in their excitement, it is well-meaning (most of the time).

-Bonuses: Small gifts and snacks to add to your backpack, +3 health.

-Dangers: You may step on one by accident, be careful!

Portable 12

When one enters this structurally unsound portable, the last thing you'd expect would be the smiling face of Priestess Braun. Her room is decorated in art and artifacts to the gods of Star Wars and other deities throughout history, releasing a loving and passionate aura. She cares for all kinds in her temple, and entering will almost immediately restore faith in your quest. Go forth, traveler, and learn all you can.

-Bonuses: Enjoy the soothing loving energy, +3 constitution when you leave to take on the world.

-Dangers: None!

The Shell Lot

The sun beats down as white dust fills the air. One can see the shadows of these poor, tired souls, making (possibly) their final trek into the dark gates of Pine View. You look up... a droplet hits your glasses, and you thank the gods for some sort of reprieve from this desert wasteland. But oh, you were so wrong. Quickly the downpour begins creating a swamp, forcing the poor, tired, and now wet villagers to wade through ankle-deep muck. They are slowly sucked into the earth, never to be seen again. Bless them, and bless all who enter this treacherous land.

-Bonuses: Not applicable.

-Dangers: Take a critical hit to your health, -10 health.

The Gym

Within the kingdom resides the army camp and arena led by General Thorpe and Commander Ballard. One may ask, what war are we preparing for in this time of peace? And the truth is none. Thorpe and Ballard spend their days training the middle school dodgeball army for their turn in Pine View's favorite blood sport: the annual dodgeball tournament. The carnage can never be erased from my mind, the boom of dodgeball cannons still rings in my ears.

-Bonuses: Their activities during the day are uncertain, may pass through unharmed.

-Dangers: +6 agility, if you survive a dodgeball pelting.

characters

Knowing the land is just the first step; there is also a myriad of unique characters that mill about the dominion. Many of whom have similarities to you, dear hero.

From the gnomes to the ancient wizards, the land of Portables and Pythons is full of exciting creatures and classes. Consider asking them to join you on your journey, and take a look for yourself!

Second Graders



The gnomes of Pine View may immediately seem like a weak class. I mean, they're tiny, like motile infants. However, that is in some way their power. These impish creatures use their size and energy to their advantage and are some of the most agile and quick units around. In terms of their drawbacks, many fundamentally don't understand fashion. Their armor is a mismatched set of rags, and that way of dress is simply incentivized by ideal gnome builds. Another thing to note is that gnomes love to craft, and were established on a long-held tradition of art and creation. For that reason, they can create items for you and your group with ease. Just know there is more to the gnome than meets the eye.

Freshmen

Ah, bards. A confusing contradiction within itself — how can one be so unskilled yet so charismatic? Within the hierarchy here at Pine View, freshmen are thought of as jesters in most situations, so are bards. Embarrassing, dramatic and yet surprisingly fashionable, the freshmen of Pine View rule as the resident bards of the land and bring life to any dull moment. They will go beyond usual lines to create fun and make jokes within the party.



Seniors

For the ancient (but only in comparison) wizards of Pine View... the best descriptor is tired. Tired of it all, ready to leave and explore further, and the fact that they can't yet escape leaves them grumpy and full of spite. Many have lived in this same kingdom for the past 11 years, growing and cultivating their skills in the arcane arts through the help of masters throughout Pine View. Now, they are ready to fly free and find new spells and arcana. If you encounter a seemingly mean senior, just know that they have been trapped here for another year, and that's why they are so crabby.



Veteran Teachers

While I used the word ancient for seniors, the true seniority on campus comes from the veteran teachers of Pine View. These monks have lived through it all, recalling the entire history of Pine View from its growth to that one terrible student 20 years ago. Most are set in their ways and are known for incredibly strange quirks, but it adds character. It's hard to describe, but they simply exude big monk energy.



What's the deal with separating comedy and truth in media?

by Anna Labiner
Entertainment Editor

At its heart, comedy is a simple thing. From the era of Rodney Dangerfield to Jerry Seinfeld, the standard procedure for a stand-up routine has remained fairly consistent: comedian tells a joke, the audience laughs, comedian moves on with his act. This may be an accurate depiction of the comedic field for some, but for many, these jokes are just the tip of the iceberg. Comedic routines are often workshopped and critiqued with extensive forethought as to how the audience will respond to the joke, and in recent years, comedians have had to add yet another consideration to their content — will this joke offend anyone?

That isn't to say that comedy itself has been altered. Comedians continue to tell offensive, "politically incorrect" jokes; however, these jokes are now being scrutinized to an extent that has never been seen before. Why? Social media.

As seen on many aspects of the in-

ternet (memes, Tumblr posts, TikToks, tweets, etc.), social media prefers brevity when it comes to humor; however, the acts of many stand-ups are simply inappropriate for this medium. For instance, comedians like

Taking a joke out of context in this way can have disastrous effects on a comedian's reputation. Take Jo Brand, for example, who made a quip about throwing battery acid at certain politicians, and later found herself the subject of a police investigation regarding her crude words. Sure the joke was risky, but it was also said at a comedy club, and surely does not warrant a full-scale police investigation.

Brand's run-in with the law demonstrates a central problem with the confluence of the internet and comedy, in that it has caused many to mistake jokes that pertain to more serious topics as an attempt to pursue serious political or social commentary. Comedy is not journalism. Social medias involvement in comedy has painted the profession in a negative light and has opened up the floor to a myriad of misinterpretations. Often, the irony of a bit just doesn't translate.

Jokes are meant to be told to an audience that has paid to see a performer, and who want to hear what they have to say, offensive comments and all. However, when this content is taken out of context and posted on the web, it loses a good part of its comedic value and is forced upon those who didn't particularly want to see it in the first place. Thus triggering the nonstop onslaught of hate comments and "so and so is 'cancelled' tweets.

"There's this new level of, like, selfishness when you go to a comedy club — where they'll watch you for 40 minutes and take everything as a joke, and then all of a sudden you'll hit a topic that's sensitive to them, and then all of a sudden you're making statements," Comedian Bill Burr said in an interview with Jerry Seinfeld in his show, "Comedians in Cars

Getting Coffee."

The point here is not to bash those who call people out on their hypocrisy or excuse those who take jokes too far, nor is it to label internet-users as "snowflakes." On the contrary, people should certainly be aware of those who hold biases and should be able to express their discontent with someone who promotes prejudiced ideologies; but on the same note, internet-users should be able to discern whether someone is cracking a joke or making a factual statement. This basic concept encompasses the modern dilemma that threatens the basis of comedy as we know it and places the reputation of many well-intentioned comics on the line.

The growth of social media platforms and their impact on the comedic field have changed the relationship between the audience and the comedian in that they have essentially taken a performance out of a comedy club and exposed it to a whole new world of unsuspecting viewers. No longer can a comedian crack an offensive joke without having it shared with millions. So what does one do with a profession that pushes moral limits and thrives upon making an audience uncomfortable, especially in an age where this is highly scrutinized? This is tough; as social norms fluctuate as the cultural environment changes.

Although comedians might utilize comedy to hint at an underlying truth or promote a political stance, it is all in good fun. The basis of comedy depends upon comics saying what nobody wants to say out loud or pointing out inconvenient truths, so it is irrational to tell those who embrace this art form that they should censor themselves for the sake of a new composition of audience members.



John Mulaney often go on elaborate tangents just to tell a single joke, so when a small snippet of this routine is posted on the web, of course the full scope of the routine is not captured.

GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

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Pine View's Summer Camp Champs

Some of our very own Pine View Pythons used their summertime to increase their physical capabilities and prepare for their upcoming seasons. Across grade levels, students went far and wide to ensure they reached their full physical potential. With tennis camps in France and training with golf professionals, these students went the extra degree.

Katherine Jordan

by Alyson Mizanin
Asst. News Editor

Playing soccer since before stepping into her first day of preschool, twelfth-grader Katherine Jordan possesses undeniable prowess in the sport. Though she began the recruitment process for Columbia University in eighth grade before officially committing as a sophomore, Jordan attended the Nike World Headquarters' soccer camp over the summer. The camp was held in Portland, Oregon through the University of Portland and lasted from July 21 to 27.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY KATHERINE JORDAN

Jordan's membership in the Tampa Bay United Rowdies (TBUR), an extension of the Elite Clubs National League (ECNL), is the reason she was able to attend the Portland camp; Tampa's league is considered one of the best in the nation, its players were scouted for camp attendance. Jordan and three other girls in TBUR — Natalie Gorgi, Claire Rain, and Alexa Goldberg — were first sent to ECNL's Southeast Regional in Georgia.

From the Southeast Regional, Jordan was selected to attend the national camp. Flying out across America with her father, Jordan then attended

five days of training, scrimmages and memories that will last a lifetime.

Starting her five days at the camp off with a near two-mile walk, Jordan's camp schedule was divided into two training intervals, the first of which followed breakfast, and the second following lunch. These would last roughly two hours each, with the first interval training around drills and the second interval consisting of more challenging routines. The camp attendees would split off into two groups for games, or scrimmages, and then end their nights with dinner.

"We trained twice a day and that came with a lot of fun, but the best times I had were in between lunch and the last training session, or the time we had to ourselves before dinner. We had a few hours to do what we wanted, and everyone would relax and intermingle, with everything from music to Netflix to pingpong," Jordan said.

The camp's final day for Jordan's age range coincided with the first day for younger players. Jordan and her peers took a bus to the Nike World Headquarters to scrimmage on Nike's field in front of the junior

players, which Jordan considered "surreal" because of what it established: the realization that she could end up playing on huge fields in front of inspired crowds in upcoming years.

"The camp taught me a lot of technical and tactical skills, which I can apply in my upcoming season. But I think the hard-working skills and the support of the other girls taught me a lot more than any new techniques could, and I'll carry those feelings with me," Jordan said.

"Trust me when I say that every college in the country wanted to recruit her. She is honestly the best player I've ever had the privilege to play with, both as a technical player and as a positive force on our teams," Venice High twelfth-grader Mason Schilling said of her teammate.

With Jordan being one of the Venice Indians' soccer team captains, both she and Schilling hope to close their senior season with the State Championships.

"[Jordan] has given me so much; she's the reason I got onto the TBUR and got a ton of college exposure. You've got a girl who travels constantly for soccer, plays on two teams and has a history of four judo national championship wins, all while maintaining great grades. She is the all-around deal; I know I'll be seeing her playing for nationals one of these days," Schilling said.

At the tennis academy, the team would have an hour and a half of on court practice twice a day. There were two members of the team with a coach on each court. The members of the team were also given an all-access pass to the academy's fitness facility, which they used for an additional hour and a half every day. On Wednesdays, they were given a recovery day, and only practiced once on the court, did less fitness, and were given time to rest and use the ice baths.

Dennison particularly enjoyed the mindset of everyone on the team.

"Everyone there was very goal-oriented and everyone was focused on improving and everyone there was successful, like no one was really slacking off... People were there to get better and work hard, and I think that was really good to be exposed to," Dennison said.

Looking forward, Dennison dreams of one day becoming a professional tennis player. Nonetheless, her education is important to her. She hopes to go to an Ivy League college while simultaneously pursuing tennis, eventually playing professionally.

Anya Dennison

by Lora Rini
Match Layout Artist

This summer, tenth-grader Anya Dennison attended a tennis camp in Sophia Antipolis in the south of France. She was at the tennis academy for three weeks, where she experienced intense and specialized tennis training alongside players from all over the world.

The academy is owned by Patrick Mouratoglou, who coaches Serena Williams, star American tennis player and former number one in the world. There were students from a variety of levels at the academy, but Dennison was a member of the Pro Team, which is very advanced. Out of the hundreds of students attending the academy, only 15 to 25 were on the team at a time.

Tennis has been part of Dennison's life since she was born.

"I started when I was three years old, but there are pictures of me [on the tennis courts] from right when I got out of the hospital. The first week, one of the first things my parents did was take me to the tennis courts," she said.

Her mother, Pine View teacher Marianna Dennison is professionally certified to teach tennis and played throughout her childhood, so it makes sense that she would take her newborn daughter to the courts. However, just because tennis was a big part of

her parents' lives, this does not mean that they pressured Dennison into taking up the sport. She tried a variety of activities when she was younger, but tennis was always her favorite.

At home, Dennison trains every weekday for one to three hours, and even more on the weekends. Currently, she does not have a permanent coach or is affiliated with a tennis club, so she goes to a public court with a private coach and sometimes another player.

"Her attitude on the court is always good, it's always professional. She's always motivated, she's always putting in her best effort,"

family friend and hitting partner Jaime De Castillo said.

"With a lot of players, you have to tell them to try a little bit longer, to stay out there a little bit more, to put in a little more effort; with Anya, you actually have to tell her to take a break. She's kind of the opposite that way."

Dennison first became interested in the camp when she was looking for somewhere to train over the summer. She reached out to the academy and sent them a video of herself playing, and they placed her on the Pro Team.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ANYA DENNISON

Makena Winch

by Tiffany Yu
Match Layout Artist

As the final bell of the year rang, most students were planning for lazy summers spent on the beach. But twelfth-grader Makena Winch already had his summer of soccer laid out.

Winch has been playing soccer for nine years and consistently shows his dedication to the sport. Winch currently plays for the Lakewood Ranch Chargers as well as Sarasota High School's boys varsity soccer team, usually a center back or outside back, both defensive positions.

"I know that he's a quad varsity athlete and he's very committed to each team that he's on so it's not like he's spreading himself too thin or anything. He's a natural leader," twelfth-grade Chargers teammate Kris Selberg said.

To start his summer, Winch attended a soccer camp at Harvard University from June 23 to 24, where he participated in three sessions with elite soccer players from around the country. On the last day of the camp, Winch was playing in a game and fell on his ankle, spraining it. Although it was a mild injury, Winch found difficulty walking, let alone playing.

Later, from July 14 to 17, Winch attended another soccer camp at Washington Uni-



PHOTO PROVIDED BY MAKENA WINCH

versity in St. Louis, the WashU Boys ID camp. Winch admitted that when he arrived at the camp, he was agitated that he couldn't play his best.

"I also think that helped me learn that if I want to go to a camp where it's the best of the best I can't slack off," Winch said.

Although Winch experienced a couple low points over the summer, his favorite camp of the summer was at Princeton University from August 1 to 4.

Princeton University, in Winch's book, is clearly one step ahead of the rest. Winch met many seasoned soccer players from around the country and made lots of friends. The campers were split

into small groups and competed against each other until one team won the title of grand champion. Winch's team won this title, which he noted was a highlight of his summer.

Winch leaves with a parting piece of advice: "You've got to make sure that if you're going to go and do it, that you're really committed. I'd recommend if you want to go play in college that you do it, but make sure that if you're going, you're in your best shape possible, and you can really compete."

Winch plans to continue his soccer career into college; but for now, Winch wants to lead his high school soccer team to districts.

Kiran Kadiyala

by Mahitha Ramachandran
Asst. Opinion Editor

The middle of Oklahoma is hardly a first thought when thinking of a dream destination, but that is exactly where eleventh-grader Kiran Kadiyala spent three days this past summer. The 16-year-old golfer trained with the number one collegiate golf team in the United States from Aug. 1 to Aug. 4.

Kadiyala's golf journey began at age 12, after her parents signed her up for it.

"It really happened by accident," Kadiyala's mom said. "We were looking for a summer camp to put her in, and our neighbor had told us about how playing golf had made their child more disciplined... We decided to give it a try and eventually she really ended up liking it."

Kadiyala has been golfing competitively for about two years and plays for the River-view Girls Golf Team. Earlier this year, Kadiyala's coach presented her with the opportunity to train with professionals at Oklahoma State University (OSU) over the summer, home of the number one collegiate golf team in the country. This opportunity was possible because Kadiyala's coach has a son that coaches golf at OSU, and Kadiyala had the skill and credentials for this level of intensive training. She eagerly accepted the offer.

"I was expecting to be outshined by everyone. When I arrived, I was told that everyone there was either on the professional tour or a champion of the tour. I was literally playing among champions," Kadiyala said as she recalled the first day.

Over the next three days, she played and trained for ten hours each day, working to im-

prove every part of her game.

Despite all the physical aching and soreness, Kadiyala says that it felt like mental boot camp more than anything: "With golf, you can visually see with each shot what the player was thinking. If it was a really good shot, then the player was comfortable and collected but if they have a good practice swing and a good setup but then hit a bad shot, you know that you just saw them psych themselves out, and you're watching it play out in the shot form. I did that to myself a lot — I psyched myself out so much because I was afraid of failure."

Through Kadiyala's time at OSU, her coach showed her a new perspective. She learned to disregard

the people around her while playing and believe in her preparedness. This attitude that Kadiyala learned from the three-day training has allowed her to keep calm while golfing competitively and love the sport more deeply.

Kadiyala's experiences at OSU this summer and the lessons she learned there are ones that she believes will affect her in the long term.

"When you're surrounded by people who are better than you, live in it. Regardless, you still have to go hit a ball, no matter who's around you. I'm using that in everything that I do now. That was what the camp taught me," she said.

Kadiyala plans to keep playing golf throughout high school, and hopefully in college.

"For me, [golf] went from a chore that I had to do in middle school to dreading failure in eighth grade, and now it's more like an outlet. My mental fortitude has never been stronger," Kadiyala said.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY KIRAN KADIYALA

Twelfth-grader represents United States at World Junior Championships in Budapest

by Joanna Malves
Asst. Spark Editor-In-Chief

During the World Junior Championships in Budapest, Hungary, prior to competing, numerous swimmers from all over the world shared the same anxiety in the holding room. Among these swimmers was twelfth-grader Arik Katz, who has been swimming since the age of six.

Katz attended last year's Junior Pan Pacific Championships in Fiji, placing second in the mile. This was Katz's first international competition, and Fiji only held 30 countries. This year, the World Junior Championships in Budapest held over 100 countries.

"It was really scary; it was just intense. I've never been to such a big meet before, and there were over 100 countries there... It was so professional and it was really nerve-racking, because I've never swam on such a scale before," Katz said.

Nevertheless, Katz was up for the challenge, placing fifth in the mile and eighth in the 800-meter freestyle.

"It was definitely such an honor, and I'm so thankful that I've been given this opportunity. It was just really awesome to meet the 44 other swimmers from all over [the world]... It was nice because they can real-

ly relate to you, because we all do this, and we all understand what it's like to compete," Katz said.

But to compete at an international level, Katz had to surpass the national level competition at Stanford University, California that took place three weeks before the World Junior Championships. This meant placing as one of the top two qualifiers. Thus, Katz intensively trained with his swimming team, the Sarasota Tsunami, in preparation for the national competition. The hard work paid off as Katz placed first in the mile for the "18 and under" category.

Preparations entailed attending swim practice everyday from 6:30 to 9:15 a.m., as well as additional Monday and Wednesday practice from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

"He rarely ever misses a practice. When he's at the practice, he stays very focused on doing things right, trying to do it better each time. He's not afraid to work hard to practice and push himself to his limits," Ira Klein, Katz's swim coach, said.

Katz took home high rankings, but also bonds and memories created with international friends.

Taylor Katz, Arik's sister, shares Arik's zeal for swimming, and she is the assistant coach for Arik's team.

"Honestly, it's been a real-

ly great experience so far. Arik is the youngest of my family, and I am the oldest, so we really got to bond a lot more than we did growing up, since we were doing completely different things... I think through swimming and being around a lot now, we learned that we have a lot of interests outside of school, too, that we didn't even know beforehand," Taylor Katz said.

Katz faced other grueling circumstances in the past that have made him the successful swimmer he is today, like a shoulder injury two summers ago.

"That was really frustrating, because I had to take a step back...I wasn't able to try as hard... I was like, 'oh god, I'm not going to be where I need to be,'" he said.

After the competition, Katz was ecstatic to find out that he was selected to be in the National USA Swimming team Sept. 4. Katz further plans to challenge himself in the Olympic trials next summer.

Yet, beyond his swimming achievements at a national and international level, Katz can be recognized for his determination.

"Arik is extremely dedicated; I've never seen anybody be like that before. Everything he does, he gives 110 percent. In swimming, he goes to all the practices, he does extra [training] after school... And then, not only that, but he also does amazing in all of his hours studying... I'm just blown away by him," Taylor Katz said.



TOP: Arik Katz poses with teammates at the Junior Championships in Budapest, Hungary. With over 100 countries at the competition, the United States won the most cumulative medals, 37. BOTTOM: Katz (left) and members of the USA swim team pose with an American flag on the pool deck. Katz took away fast times and experiences from the meet. PHOTO PROVIDED BY ARIK KATZ

He's not afraid to work hard, to practice and push himself to his limits.

Ira Klein,
Katz's swim coach

[an infographic]

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September 18
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"The YMCA does so much for Sarasota, from the summer camps to the foster kids care and swim lessons. I feel like everyone in Sarasota has experienced the Y at some point benefiting their lives."

-Lauren Andrews

Y Employee,
Twelfth-Grader



HOW TO HAVE A HOT GIRL SCHOOL YEAR

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Make sure that you are consuming at least five whole gallons of water each day to maintain your clean skin and keep your metabolism on its toes!

2 Stable sleep schedule...

Ensure that you allow yourself at least 13 full hours of beauty sleep each night to eliminate under-eye bags and give you that extra boost throughout the day!

3 Be YOUtiful...

In order to reach your full hot girl school year potential, you must disregard everything that is happening around you and focus on YOU. You are the sun and everything revolves around you, and that's that.

4 A balanced breakfast...

The \$12 juice from Crop is the only way you can start your day. Periodt. Also, it's important to incorporate all food groups into your breakfast (besides carbs, dairy, gluten, wheat, sugars, salts, GMO's, etc.) What I have found to be the best supplement is dry kale with raw toful

GRAPHIC BY MADI HOLMES AND ANNA LABINER

Beloved Dr. Dean's retirement leaves clubs homeless

by Madi Holmes
Web Editor-in-Chief

English teacher and Pine View hero Paul Dean's news of retirement has caused a wave of panic among club presidents on campus. While Dean is day dreaming about sipping handheld electric kettles of tea at his artsy, suburban Venice home, stressed and scared club presidents are crying left and right trying to find a sponsor to take over next fall.

"Dr. Dean's aloof energy just can't be replaced," Poetry Club member Stan Zha said.

Dean is the beloved sponsor of pretty much every club, including Poetry Club, and his retirement is leaving the chess-playing, Peace-Jammin' students in the dust. Dean's charmingly cluttered classroom is home to some of Pine View's most talented and poetic literary stu-

dents, as well as the most collegiate-driven, stress-culture promoting kids you can find.

Without the icon himself allowing his classroom to be home to Poetry Club, Chess Club, Peace Jam, Academic Olympics, Roast Battle Club, Leaf-blowing Club, Tea-Lovers' Club, Student Scientology Society and Extreme Baking Club, where will they go?

Multiple teachers, who wish to remain anonymous, have come forward saying they have been physically and verbally abused by students begging for a sponsor for next school year. On the other hand, some students have said they are considering just stopping the club in general with the news of Dean's departure.

"We would have to actually, like, listen to and inform our sponsor... I just don't see that happening," Zha said.

As Dean continues preparing for his new glorious retired future, he says he will miss sponsoring Chess Club the most, but obviously will miss his hard-working, studious and diligent Creative Writing students more.



GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON AND MADI HOLMES

The Best of the Warehouses: Costco vs. Sam's Club

by Anna Labiner
Entertainment Editor

When considering the wide variety of wholesale retail chains that dominate practically every city in America, it becomes quite obvious that only one of these facilities stands out among the rest. After careful consideration and some intensive investigative journalism, I have come to the conclusion that Costco Wholesale is the true bearer of the prestigious title of Best Wholesale Retail Chain. Costco is every warehouse-lover's dream and is the clear choice over its garbage-fire counterpart, Sam's Club.

To begin with, nothing beats that sumptuous feeling of flashing my Costco gold-star membership card at the friendly employee waiting at the entrance of the store. As we lock eyes, it becomes clear that we are both aware of our involvement in something bigger than ourselves — the Costco community. When shopping at this fine institution, I find comfort knowing that I am in the presence of other upper-crust Costco members such as myself.

Truthfully, strolling through Costco is a treat in and of itself. I would only caution potential shoppers to watch out for young children whizzing by on Heelys, an occurrence not uncommon thanks to Costco's incredibly smooth floors and its plethora of wide, open space. Besides the potential run-in with a 10-year-old child in mid-Heely, the Costco experience is quite serene; shopping there almost feels like being at a mini resort, complete with friendly employees and countless food samples.

These free samples, perhaps Costco's most iconic features, are one of the main selling points of my argument. Although they seem insignificant to Costco's overall rating, these small treats really add to the shopping experience and are a good exemplification of Costco's vibe, which is laid-back and comforting; that is,

if you're not a parent shopping with three young children who are all having a collective tantrum in public. That's rough.

What really puts Costco over the edge, however, is its association with the Kirkland brand, which supplies many of Costco's regular products and sponsors a small food court located in front of every Costco. Although this food court may not seem like much, it's really not that bad, and grabbing a "very-berry sundae" before heading into the

store makes me feel expensive. It's always fun to treat yourself, and Costco understands that.

When it comes down to it, Costco truly is the messiah of wholesale retail chains and is undoubtedly a better option than Sam's Club, a wannabe store that will never possess the flair and charm that makes Costco so special. In order to drive my point home, I will be hosting an anti-Sam's Club rally in the quad, complete with free samples and actual Costco employees, date pending.

by Isabella Gaskill
Web Editor

Recently, I have realized that the majority of my Sarasota-raised friends had an incredibly different childhood than I did. Instead of going to Sam's Club at least every other day, they went to Costco. This absolutely shocked me as I did not know that Costco existed until I was about 11 years old. Until then, I lived blissfully ignorant of Sam's Club's ugly step-sister. And although I know that this is an unpopular opinion, I am firm in my belief that Sam's Club is f a r

portant parts of either store are the products. Specifically, I would like to address two things: the rotisserie chickens and the samples. Let's start with the chicken. I have never had a more fulfilling and satisfying meal than the rotisserie chicken at Sam's Club. It warms my heart in a way that Costco's dry and under-seasoned chicken ever could. And the samples. Where do I even begin? At Sam's Club, I have only been offered the best of the best including root beer floats, whole cookies, and Go-Gurts. Truly the store's finest. At Costco, we always get the same boring, and dare I say, disappointing samples, usually badly reheated frozen food and mediocre granola bars. Anyone who says the samples from the two stores are on par with each other is sorely mistaken.

The last thing to address is the store itself. Have you ever been to a Costco that was not severely understaffed, with lines longer than you thought were humanly possible? I didn't think so. Sam's Club always has more than enough people to check you out in a timely fashion and even offers self-checkout. Costco could never.

Additionally, the layout of Sam's is superior in every way. Specifically, the left corner at the back of the store is the most calming and peaceful place I have ever been. It is a space reserved for miscellaneous items, including citronella candles and silverware. Usually, when people meditate, they think of rolling waves at a beach or the cool crisp air of a mountaintop. I think of the left corner at Sam's Club. And if you compare the slickness of the floors in the two stores, it is evident that Sam's once again comes out on top.

If we look at the evidence, it is impossible for anyone who considers themselves a logical thinker to come to the conclusion that Costco is superior to Sam's Club. I do not accept constructive criticism. Thank you for your time.



GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON

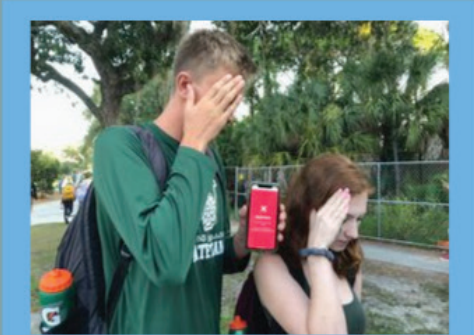
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[meme of the month]

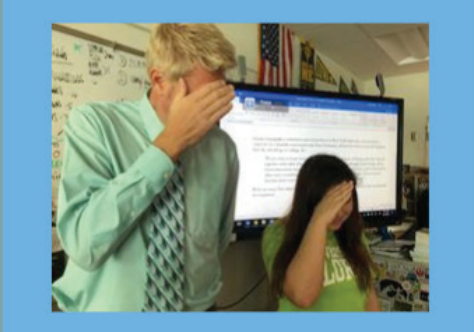
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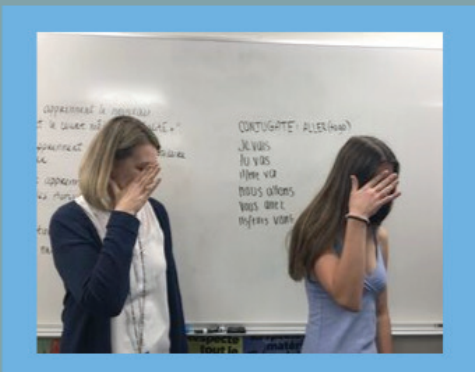
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"WE BALLIN"



"WE CONJUGATIN"

GRAPHIC BY OLIVIA HANSEN AND BRIANNA NELSON

[a column]

Attendance phobia: A student story

With the school year in full swing, I would like to utilize this platform to bring light to a very common issue that tens of students struggle with every year. This is going to be hard to say, but it needs to be out there.

I have a severe case of attendance-phobia. I lie awake at night contemplating whether or not I should put the emphasis on the beginning or end of "here," and whether or not I should have raised my hand as a complement to the phrase. And the worst part is this nerve-racking illness goes unseen in the department of mental health.

A teacher taking attendance: is it a stress-inducing process? Yes. To make matters worse, there is always one kid that decides to go rogue on everyone and switch up the safe vocabulary used: "Present" and "aqui" aren't the only things making our knees quake. What do those kids hope to accomplish anyway? Let's be honest here, nobody likes that. In fact, these new and original synonyms only contribute to my disease, as they make me question my vocabulary choice. The audacity.

My solution to this prob-



Elena D'Amato,
Asst. Humor Editor

lem is simple. Eliminate attendance. The whole process is arbitrary, really. Like, why? Please explain to me the reason behind this morning ritual every teacher partakes in.

Last ly, I would just like to highlight the worst part of all: the teacher's

pronunciations of students' names. Is my name really that hard to say? It is three syllables long and quite simple, to be honest. "L-ain-a," not "Ala-na". Wow the teachers really be out here playing too much, the disrespect. Thank you, that is the end of my rant.

A teacher taking attendance: Is it a stress-inducing process? Yes.

Who's that Pokémon?

As part of a Humor tradition, each issue will include a teacher-based Pokémon. Try to collect them all!



GRAPHIC BY ANNA LABINER

PSAT meme sparks controversy within College Board

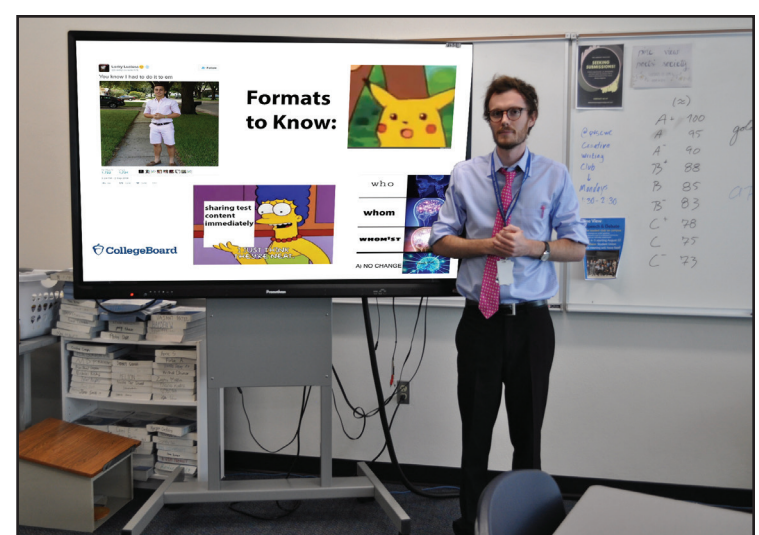
by Zoe Merritt*
Features Editor

After years of warnings, College Board has finally started to crack down on all students who dare to dabble in the art that is post-PSAT memes. Every year a select committee hits Twitter to issue warnings and friendly reminders but to no avail. This year, thanks to a well-meaning College Board employee and a few influential accounts, College Board may have finally lost the battle.

Last week, a leaked photo from the latest meeting went semi-viral as someone tweeted a picture of the head of the Meme Committee, Peter S.A. Thompson, teaching his coworkers classic meme references. In the post, Thompson can be seen explaining "you know I had to do it to 'em" with a matching PowerPoint. It sparked controversy over whether or not the jokes violated testing rules or not, with several accounts across Twitter, Instagram and Tumblr popping up in preparation for this year's exam.

"I can't wait for the Internet to move on. This will soon fizzle out just like that Area 51 mess," BigLenJournalism (not verified) said on Twitter.

But as soon as freshman meme gods were able to find their footing, they found their accounts deleted and test scores invali-



Head of Meme Committee, Peter S.A. Thompson, teaches his colleagues common memes, including "you know I had to do it to 'em," and "Pikachu face."

GRAPHIC BY ZOE MERRITT

dated. #CollegeBoard trended on Twitter for the third time this month in the height of this mystery: underclassmen everywhere were bewildered by the rumors of a mole, turning other accounts into the Meme Committee.

Students realized that the situation was larger than just known PSAT meme accounts when everyday students were being notified that their test scores were also being invalidated due to sharing test information. A particularly successful account (@PSksksAT on Instagram) run by Pine View freshmen Anna I oop and Meena D'Boyes were quick to expose Thompson as the man behind @DefinitelyNot-CollegeBoard, the account he was using to catch students sending in memes with the

illicit content.

"It should have been obvious in retrospect, but in the end we all hope that College Board will see that this is just a nationwide joke that brings people a lot of joy," D'Boyes said. "No one is making these memes hoping it's going to help other people do better."

The Meme Committee and Thompson have since publicly issued a statement across all social media, apologizing for their furtive actions. As of today, the jury is still out over the discourse surrounding just how much test content is given away in memes, if any at all. College Board has yet to release another statement.

*Editor's note: this story was written by time-traveler Zoe Merritt on Oct. 17 2019.

[staff editorial]

Toxic Productivity's Effect on Mental Health

A junior starts her day at 4:15 a.m. She heads to swimming for a couple hours before jumping in the shower and getting ready for school. She's prepared for her test the next day, but still wonders if she studied enough (she only studied for two hours, and her best friend studied for four hours). That evening, a similar sequence repeats — go to practice, and head straight to the desk, where she'll study and finish homework for the next four hours.

Scenes like this unfold daily around campus. Think about it. Filling your schedule to the brim



with extracurriculars and AP classes not just to get into college, but also to one up your peers. Those feelings of guilt set in — maybe you're relaxing instead of working on the homework that might pile up in the future.

Toxic productivity is undeniably hard to define. The amorphous nature of the concept and its newly found impact on young people is just beginning to be researched, especially in regard to students.

To loosely define it, toxic productivity is the constant need to create output, whether that be homework or personal projects.

The cycle doesn't stay at work, it permeates into our home and creates a constant dread and guilt surrounding relaxation. Just sitting down at the

end of a long day to watch TV can feel overwhelming.

The need to constantly be producing, even when it seems like the day's work is done, hits close to home here at Pine View. To constantly see your peers working and to hear about their all nighters creates a culture where this is expected of students. The need to one up your friends' all nighters and caffeine addictions simply fuels the cycle.

This is a new normal, not just at Pine View but for young people everywhere. But jam-packing your schedule in order to feel productive, while wearing down both your body, mind and motivation is not the way to go. Moving is not the same as moving forward, an idea that may be lost on many students who are caught up in their "busy" lifestyles.

"I think toxic productivity comes from a feeling of guilt about self-indulgence. Honestly, it's ridiculous. I think people confuse relaxing and enjoying life with being lazy, and it has created an academic environment where people don't allow themselves to be happy," tenth-grader Zander Moricz said.

"Part of it comes from the competitive aspect at school; you get stuck in a cycle of 'I have to do everything better, or

The Verdict



Officer John: We are excited to meet our new Sarasota County Schools PD officer, Officer John Bobianski.

Online Textbooks: We are sad to see Sarasota County Schools transition to online textbooks and away from traditional textbooks.



E-cigarette Prevention: We are happy to see the school district take action to prevent student use of e-cigarettes.

E-cigarette Use: We are disappointed to see teen vaping-related deaths, as all of the work to prevent teen nicotine use has been undone.



The media's focus on sensationalist stories keeps the public uninformed

by Odelia Tiutyama
News Editor

Did you know?

18 million Yemenis could face starvation by the end of the year. More than 1.3 million Rohingya refugees continue to face oppression in one of the world's most devastating humanitarian disasters. There are 4.3 million displaced people in Sudan seeking refuge. An estimated 36,383 Americans are killed with guns each year.

You probably do know, though, that President Donald Trump tried to buy Greenland.

Every day, Americans are bombarded with headline after headline pertaining to the theme of President Trump's latest tweet or the hottest celebrity gossip — and after a certain point, the articles begin to strongly resemble one another. Rarely do American readers obtain information on the problems developing countries face, and if the reader happens to stumble upon an article, it usually isn't accompanied by a mass influx of related articles like those concerning President Trump.

Rather, the country and news outlets largely focus on ourselves and policies between America and foreign countries, often neglecting the millions that are dying in less developed countries that face political and social instability.

However, despite the immense

emphasis on American politics and social life, the media also fails to report on the more frequent, yet small scale events that take place in the country.

For instance, according to Giffords Law Center, mass shootings comprise only a fraction of the thousands killed due to guns each year, with estimates showing that such violence constitutes less than one percent of all gun deaths. Yet, media outlets tend to focus solely on mass shootings instead of lesser-known but more important facts. 61% of gun violence is due to gun suicides, 35% from gun homicides, 1.4% are law enforcement shootings and 1.3% encompass unintentional shootings.

The lack of media coverage on international issues and small-scale national issues is rooted in two problems: one, American media consumers are not interested in events that do not directly affect them, and two, media companies want to make

a profit, so they deliver the news that consumers want to see, not what they need to see.

This belief that many Americans hold is demonstrated by CNN's Jeff Zucker, who said, "The idea that politics is sport is undeniable, and we understood that and approached it that way."

The American media follows suit in the content that consumers explicitly demand to be shown, as seen in the coverage of the Amazon fire. The Amazon forest in Brazil was on fire for three weeks before any American news sources began covering it. The sudden emergence of articles regarding the forest fire over 20 days later was a result of news consumers bringing attention to the story — the producer of much of the world's oxygen was burning. Without the consumers, most of us still would not have known

about this fire. As the media began to take notice of the consumers' desire for coverage, hundreds of articles began to pop up.

In the summer of 2019, as more consumers became aware of the social and political crisis millions endure in Sudan, the press began to publish more articles concerning the country. Before a large population of the social media masses began to change their profile pictures to blue, in respect of Sudanese activist Mohamed Mattar, few articles were available that summarized the situation of the crumbling country. The almost instantaneous emergence of articles regarding Sudan following the demand of social media influencers demonstrates news outlets' desire to keep their audience's attention rather than educate them.

Without proper education on the brutality faced by counterparts around the world, Americans are hurt by a lack of knowledge that the media reinforces. The issue will persist unless media sources are encouraged to report on international and small-scale national issues, instead of the latest presidential Twitter storm. As informed Americans, it is our duty to demand coverage of humanitarian issues around the world. The media must allocate coverage based on the substance of the stories in question, diversifying and enriching content.

GRAPHICS BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

the Torch

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[student voices]

Students discuss new countywide anti-vaping campaigns

Following a string of recent deaths related to the spread of vaping, there has been a national and local push to curb further complications. As covered in News, Sarasota County Schools has instituted a new policy, requiring two weeks of rehab through Blackboard Learn if students are caught using or in possession of a vaping/e-cigarette device.



Hannah Sticht, grade 12

“I agree that something needs to be done [about vaping] especially with all the new information coming out about the health effects... I think that [the rehab] is too intensive considering there are a lot bigger problems going on that need to be addressed.”

“I don’t think it will do anything. There isn’t much the school can do besides ban them...The black market and underground trade will always exist, so regulating it will just end up doing more harm than good.”



Ryan Hunek, grade 10

“In a lot of cases that we’ve seen in the past, when someone says something is bad and it’s not allowed anymore, people just want it more... they should be looking for something else, but it might work temporarily.”



Spencer Opal-Levine, grade 11

Pine View’s College Culture: Rat Race or Healthy Competition?

by Gwyn Petersen
Managing Editor

College applications — the bane of every senior’s existence. For most of us, the fall of senior year can feel like walking through a minefield. At any moment, you may be bombarded with questions like, “Are you nervous?”, “What do you want to study?”, and, possibly the scariest question of all, “What schools

are you applying to?” Here at Pine View, that question carries significant weight. Why shouldn’t it? After all, these are important decisions that shape our future. However, the way many approach the college application process is toxic.

“We’re a product of our culture,” college resource advisor Lance Bergman said. “We put a lot of really amazingly talented young people in the same place and it then becomes inevitable that they look at each other and go,

‘Where are you applying?’ If you don’t have Ivies or ‘reach schools’ on your list, then it’s a matter of ‘Why.’”

I’m no stranger to the competitiveness of Pine View’s academic environment. I worked myself into exhaustion with a schedule of five AP classes my junior year, and agonized over the decision to cut back on the intensity of my course load

“We put a lot of really amazingly talented young people in the same place and it then becomes inevitable that they look at each other and go,

‘where are you applying?’”
Lance Bergman,
College Resource

senior year in fear of judgment from my peers. The process of applying to college puts us into a very similar position, where we may feel obligated to apply to more highly prestigious schools to fit in with a majority.

“This idea of applying to many, many more schools is a relatively recent phenomena,” Bergman said. “We’re in a funny place, because there are schools like us that limit the number of applications students can make because

they feel like it’s a feeding frenzy. Everybody wants to apply to all of the [Ivy League schools], and cast a wider net because they might at least get into one.”

I have a solid list of eight schools to which I’m applying. My best friend has six on a list of her own.

“I want to have options so I can make sure I go to the school that has the best fit for me,” twelfth-grader Sophia Nealon said. “I think that’s kind of why everyone applies to a bunch of different schools, because they can.”

The factors that contribute to a person’s decision to apply to a specific school may vary. For some, it’s a matter of hard financial realities.

Not every school offers enough financial aid or merit-based scholarships to make it a good choice. This can make in-state schools more attractive to prospective students, due to opportunities like Bright Futures scholarships and cheaper in-state tuition. To a lot of students, affordability is a significant, if not the most important, factor in deciding where to apply, especially at schools outside of Pine View. So, why do they have a such a stigma at Pine View, considering in-state schools are the only option for so many students?

Some students may alternatively choose to attend in-state schools for their undergraduate degree in hopes that they may later attend

[a column]

Congress’ lack of gun legislation is deadly

For generations, the United States of America was a symbol of stability and security. It was regarded as one of the safest places in the world, where kids could go to school without fear of gun violence, of becoming a statistic.

In recent years, mass shootings and homicides related to shootings have increased in frequency. According to the New York Times, 12 people per 100,000 die from guns every year in the United States, an increase from 11 people per 100,000 in 2016, the highest rate since the mid 1990s. The only way to prevent a further increase is to stop guns from getting into the hands of those who shouldn’t have them. We can all agree on that; at least, the American people do.

Despite almost universal support for common-sense gun legislation (94%, according to a 2017 Quinnipiac University poll), no meaningful legislation has passed in almost a decade, because one side of the aisle refuses to listen to their constituents; they only care about funding their campaigns with the National Rifle Association’s (NRA) war chest.

According to the Center for Responsive Politics, 99% of the NRA’s congressional donations in 2016 were to Republican candidates. This is an increase from the 63% during the 1992 election. What changed? Democratic support for increased common-sense gun control grew tremendously to an all-time high, as mass shootings continued to occur and nothing was being done to prevent them.

But, it isn’t just support among Democratic voters that



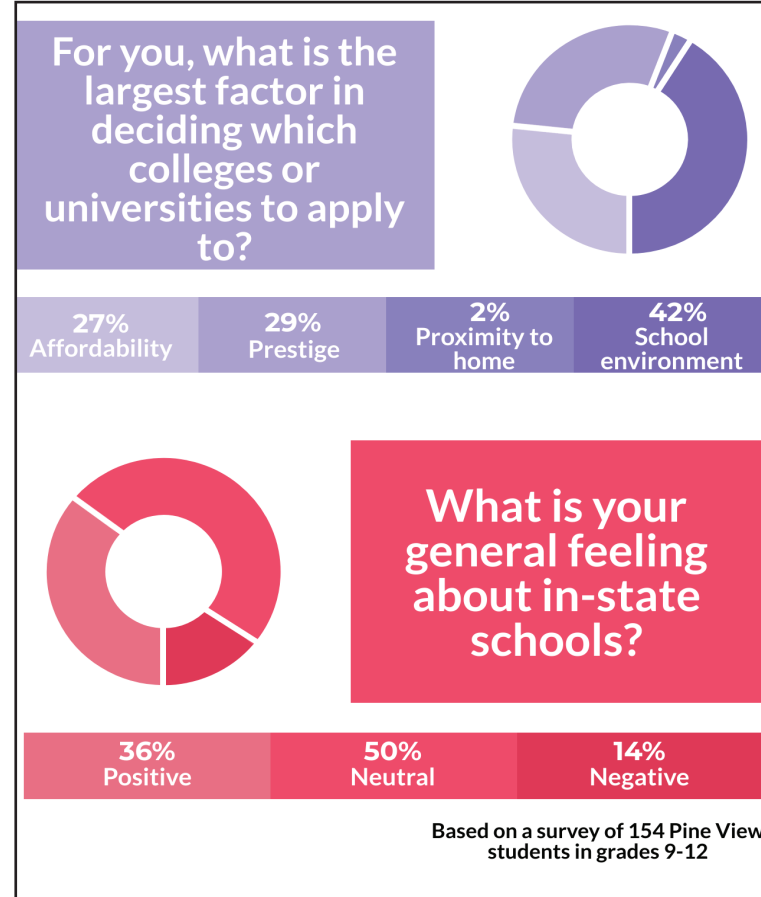
Ben Gordon,
Opinion Editor

has risen. According to a 2019 Quinnipiac University poll, a staggering 94% of Americans support universal background checks, with 98% Democratic support and 92% Republican support. Because Democratic legislators vote with their constituents in mind, the NRA’s contributions to Democrats have decreased as they have risen for Republicans.

Gun control is not a partisan issue, but it has been morphed into one — the issue has been deeply distorted by Republican law makers in a cynical bid for power. It isn’t about the Second Amendment; it’s about sowing division among Americans as gun manufacturers continue to rake in the big bucks, watching as they tear our country apart.

Deep down, both Democrats and Republicans agree that something needs to be changed. Simply, the reason why laws won’t change is because some politicians prioritize their campaigns over their constituents.

[an infographic]



GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON

a more elite and expensive graduate school.

“It’s been stressful,” twelfth-grader Ben Nicholson said. “It’s been a lot of ‘How good is this school going to look?’ and ‘How much is this going to cost?’”

When it really comes down to it, though, the stigma behind schools surrounds Pine View’s own prestigious reputation. Having been here since second grade, it slips my mind sometimes that the combative atmosphere here is all I’ve ever known. Maybe the decision to apply to certain schools, such as Harvard and Yale, is rather an unconscious and underlying desire to seek out environments that remind us of Pine View.

“Why do you want to go to Stanford? A lot of the time it’s because it’s so selective,” Bergman said. “It’s getting an opportunity to have something that somebody doesn’t have, belonging to that club. Sometimes Pine View is that club. Sometimes Pine View isn’t the best academic placement for a student, but they want to be here because it’s the best.”

There are several factors that contribute to deciding to apply to a school, and none of them are dependent on another person’s opinion. In the end, the choice is yours.

So, where do you really want to go to college, and why?

Planned Parenthood pioneers Peer Education

Students engage in community activism through new program

by Elizabeth Hopkins
Asst. Editor-in-Chief

As tenth-grader Eden Glickman walked through the doors of Planned Parenthood for the first time, she wasn't exactly sure of what lay ahead of her.

"I guess I was expecting a doctor's office, like a cold, little medical building," Glickman said.

The center, located downtown, does not just provide sexual and reproductive health care. Glickman was heading to the first meeting of the Peer Education Program, which trains teens to provide medically-accurate information on sexual health to their friends and classmates. All in an effort, according to Peer Educator and twelfth-grader Carlton Leffler, "to create a more knowledgeable and healthy community," as well as to "stop the spread of misinformation about Planned Parenthood and about the services provided."

The Peer Education Program was established by Planned Parenthood of Southwest and Central Florida in January 2019 with funding from the Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation and other donors. Outreach Educator Paola Ferst was the spearhead, who, after an application process, assembled a diverse

group of teens from schools across the county.

After a summer hiatus, the program is now structured to the school year, consisting of two semesters. The emphasis of the first semester is instruction, while the second is application — shifting their focus to the community. Additionally, meetings are no longer bimonthly but weekly.

The typical meeting, Wednesdays from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., revolves around a set topic, ranging from STI prevention to LGBTQ language and inclusion. Leffler compares meetings to Socratic circles, with Ferst leading discussions using interactive games and activities.

According to Ferst, the curriculum is evidence-based, which she characterizes as "inclusive and comprehensive." Lesson plans are often sourced from Advocates for Youth, a nonprofit organization focused on equipping young people with information on sexual health.

"We get values-free information," eleventh-grade Brianna Nelson said. "We get told the facts without biases. We don't let our own personal opinions impact the way we share information."

Outside of the classroom, during the second semester, each Peer Educator must

"co-facilitate" sexual health lessons alongside Planned Parenthood employees. Peer Educators have delivered presentations to local groups such as ALSO Youth and Teen Court.

Throughout the year, Peer Educators are also responsible for staffing community events, such as the Teen Health Fair, held by the Sarasota Health Department.

Additionally, Peer Educators are expected to log their interactions with friends and classmates regarding sexual health issues. Documenting such exchanges quantifies the group's impact.

"People have the right to this information," Glickman said.

Consistently, she notices "the discrepancy between what people think about sex and what sex actually is," a lesson she said the program has revealed to her.

"I know that myself and a lot of my friends learn from places that aren't the best. These websites don't teach anything about safe, consensual sex," Glickman said.

In response to misinformation, Peer Educators must communicate effectively. In this, Ferst said the peer-to-peer relationship is crucial.

"It's better to have someone who you know and who



Three of the Pine View students who are members of the Peer Education Program, Brianna Nelson (11), Eden Glickman (10) and Carlton Leffler (12), converse during their weekly meeting. After a successful pilot program last spring, the program expanded into a two-semester format this school year. PHOTO BY GWYN

is informed telling you what's going on, than someone who isn't trained," Nelson said. "We highlight that it's not just your body, it's the relationships you form with others. It's complex."

Currently, the Sarasota County School District's sex education policy is clearly at odds with the decidedly progressive curriculum offered by the Peer Education Program. For instance, according to Sarasota County Curriculum Chapter 4 XIII Section A, one guiding principal is to "teach abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage as the expected standard for

all school-age children while teaching the benefits of monogamous heterosexual marriage."

Consequently, organizations like Planned Parenthood are restricted from public schools within the district, unable to publicize their services or provide sex education to a broader student community.

Glickman expressed frustration that some people are unable to get past the fact that Planned Parenthood provides abortion care.

"It's a really great organization that provides reproductive health care to a lot of people," Glickman said.

Coloring outside the lines



Wasserman's untitled piece shows her interest in surrealism. Wasserman has been interested in art for most of her life. PHOTO PROVIDED BY JACKIE WASSERMAN

by Ben Gordon
Opinion Editor

Effortlessly creating masterpieces with the stroke of a brush, ninth-grader Jackie Wasserman has steadily expanded her artistic prowess with diligent practice. Now a skilled artist, Wasserman shares her knowledge with students around Sarasota.

Art has played a role in Wasserman's life for as long as she can remember.

"It sounds cliché, but as soon as I was able to pick up a pencil, I was into art," Wasserman said.

Her grandmother enjoyed art as well, but mainly worked in graphite, outside of Wasserman's scope of interest. Wasserman especially enjoys working with acrylics.

Wasserman's creative approach to her work stems from her ability to construct pieces that depart from the average acrylic painting. Her own imagination is behind her paintings.

Wasserman herself is an abstract artist. She creates pieces that are solely her own, which stem from her immense creativity and drive to make the best art that she is capable of.

"Sometimes I get random inspiration just from watching TV or history videos — my most random thoughts just flow out that way," Wasserman said.

Before she moved to Sarasota, art was just a fun activity for Wasserman — something she rarely did outside of her home. Arriving in Sarasota eight years ago, Wasserman's family noticed the Sarasota Art Center, adorned with its

statue garden and beautiful paintings along the exterior walls.

"We were really lucky to come across it," Wasserman said. "I hadn't even considered going to an art camp, but I went anyway. If I hadn't decided to go, who knows where I would be now."

The Art Center takes an out-of-the-box approach when it comes to teaching young artists. According to Wasserman, they skip the basic "summer camp" activities and delve into mixed-media art and spray paints, among other techniques.

Coming back year after year, Wasserman has now been improving her art skills and volunteering at the Sarasota Art Center for eight years, with no plans of stopping. She went almost every day of summer break, helping the campers with various art techniques, whether spray painting, sculpting or other 2D pieces.

This past summer, she was granted the opportunity to help a child at the summer camp learn English using her knowledge of Spanish from school. That opportunity was an extra bonus for Wasserman, who was not expecting to help with anything other than art.

"That was a cool experience, but my favorite part of volunteering at camp is helping them learn how to improve their art skills," Wasserman said.

Wasserman's brother, twelfth-grader Ryan Wasserman, has watched her artistic capabilities grow over the years, from improving her skills to becoming a mentor herself.

"I watched my sister progress over the years, and her artwork is always interesting, with a mild spike of bizarre," Ryan said.

Ultimately, Wasserman's work as a volunteer and art student will improve not only her own skills, but those of the students she works with.

[a column]

Embrace your pace

by Ella Hechlik
Editor-in-Chief

I came to Pine View in eighth grade without any kind of substantial educational foundation to build on. I hadn't had the Pine View curriculum since second grade like many of my fellow classmates and needless to say, I fell behind very quickly. My grades were even brought up in my Torch interview.

When I would get confused in my classes and look around for help, everyone else seemed perfectly fine, eager to move onto the next thing, while I got stuck after each concept. Even classes I had previously excelled at became hard for me, and I felt completely alone in my confusion. In my mind, Pine View was meant for gifted kids, and I had somehow stumbled right into the middle of it accidentally.

Soon enough, I transferred down a year in both math and Spanish class. I was told I could easily catch up over the next summer and that it would all work out. At the time, I did not understand how much that one change would affect the way I see the world, nor did I know how much of an impact it would have on my time at Pine View.

I did not catch up. I stayed behind in classes every year. Being older than everyone else in your classes is hard no matter what, but at Pine View it is even more difficult. Other students in the classes couldn't comprehend me being behind when I explained the situation to them, and even certain teachers had no idea how to handle it. People couldn't grasp the idea of being behind because Pine View has always been about



Ella Hechlik, Editor-in-Chief

being ahead. There is special curriculum for students who excel at certain subjects but that doesn't go both ways.

This made me embarrassed for most of my time at Pine View, and I would avoid talking about my classes or

posting my schedule. I wanted to keep it hidden. I wanted to make it through with my head down and just move on.

But after four years, you get sick of it all. I was put in the classes that worked for me and a lot of good ended up coming out of a situation I initially hated. Each day I got a break from my own classmates, and made friends in other grades that I would otherwise never have met. The way that I view education changed, and I became a lot more cognizant of other people's situations.

I regret spending so much energy on being mad at the system and mad at myself for not "getting it" like everyone else around me. However, I don't regret being behind. It taught me so much more about myself, the people around me who truly wanted me to succeed (shout out to Mr. Robertson for pulling me through Algebra 2) and the power of hard work and believing in yourself, even if you feel alone.

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