

SPARK

newsmagazine



THE SPARK

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Baby Challenge!



Find the babies hidden in this issue! The first person to circle all the babies and bring them to Portable 3 will win a \$10 Starbucks giftcard.

FRONT AND BACK PAGE PHOTO BY JIAYI ZHU

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Role Models and New Leaders

by Lindsay Luberecki

Change is good. You'll hear this sometime through your life when you are upset about something. And for National Junior Honor Society, members would agree that this club's change was most definely good.

To preface, NJHS is an organization dedicated to community service through students, bringing them together to help others. Members must get volunteer hours and maintain a 3.5 GPA to stay a part of this organization.

NJHS has been at Pine View for quite a while, but this year, it underwent a major shift and was handed over to a new leader, Pamela Novak.

Novak, an eighth grade English teacher, was given the opportunity this year to run this organization she is peresonally linked to.

"I chose NJHS because my daughter [Sophia Lopez] is in eighth grade and she's in NJHS, so I thought I would have somewhat of a personal connection this year," Novak said.

Taking on something new and running this organization has been hard but rewarding for Novak.

"I really like it, but it's been quite a lot of work to figure out everything it entails," she said.

Novak has had to start many things over but has many plans for NJHS at Pine View.

But how exactly did Novak change this organization? She is working hard to make it more structured, and to strive toward carefully keeping track of the hours. She is making an accessible website, which she will always keep up-to-date. She also wants to bring members of NJHS together more.

Novak wants to get all the members of the or-

ganization together to do group projects and to connect people more.

"I want to have, especially, students who are having a hard time finding volunteer opportunities be able to do something on campus," Novak said.

Novak also wants new members to aspire to be something bigger, like two high-achieving members did last year.

Eighth-graders Jade Firlie and Kathryn Hamill earned over 100 volunteer hours each last year and were recognized with NJHS medals at a November meeting, Firlie with 151 and Hamill with 140.

How did they do it? The answer is with a lot of perseverance and time.

Firlie volunteered at Teen Court of Sarasota, Oscar Scherer State Park, All Faiths Food Bank, and The Salvation Army and has a passion for helping people in need.

"Not everyone is as fortunate...so you've got to do your best to give out to the people who aren't as fortunate," Firlie said.

Hamill also feels strongly about giving back. She earned her hours at a choir for younger children, at a theater, and in a food drive. Hamill feels that NJHS is a great way for people to get along while doing something selfless.

"It lets you see what's out there," Hamill said.

She also believes that volunteering is a great way to explore different job opportunities.

"Ms. Novak makes the club much better. It's good to have teachers like that," Firlie said.

With role models and a new leader, NJHS is looking forward to a good year.

ADVICE TO NEW INDUCTEES OF NJHS

FIND SOMEONE TO WORK WITH

The time will go by faster and will be more fun if you work with friends.



FIND SOMETHING YOU ENJOY

You will want to volunteer more and have more fun if you find something you enjoy doing.



SPREAD OUT YOUR VOLUNTEERING

If you start by volunteering at a few different places, you can get an understanding of what you really like and want to pursue.



Information from Kathryn Hamill and Jade Firlie,
Graphic by Lindsay Luberecki



Environmental Occurrences

By Courtney Nelson

You throw a plastic bottle into the trash and you keep walking to your next class. It's no big deal, unless everyone starts to think that way; but at this point we have.

Initiatives on saving our planet have occurred all over the world, and it's important that we first start locally to expand and influence our

outlook on the environment.

The Global Green Group, (G3), has been working to once more implement a functional recycling program at our school. The club sponsor, David Yotsuda, is a proponent for environmental activism and a Life and Earth Science teacher at Pine View.

Yotsuda has made strides in reversing our carbon footprint in a

way that appeals to students of all ages. He has encouraged and practiced recycling around the campus.

New goals have been set in place, such as recycling and new water fountains. These being the primary goals of G3, being able to promote a sustainable campus and implement positive habits in younger students while providing for a solution to cli-





mate issues, are positive steps in the right direction.

One of the main changes occurring is a promotion and installment of recycling once more. Recycling as an important part of re-using materials that would otherwise be thrown away.

Being able to recycle is important, but people must first know which items are appropriate for the recycling bin. Certain items that are contaminated or that are heavy use may not be able to be recycled.

"Certain items that we thought could be recycled, can't be recycled. Unfortunately, paper with too many staples or too much glue cannot be recycled, pizza boxes are most certainly not able to be recycled because of all the grease which contaminates the cardboard. Paper towels, and facial tissues can't be either," Yotsuda said.

Beyond that, making students motivated by creating more accessible places to recycle is critical.

Another goal that Yotsuda has is to put in multiple new water bottle filling stations in some of the buildings. To start off, Yotsuda would like to put the stations in the office and Building 16, in addition to the one previously installed into the cafeteria.

According to TreeTribe, "50 billion water bottles are sold yearly in the US and yet only 23% are getting recycled. This means that nearly 38 billion of those water bottles were trashed, leading to increased pollution and landfill waste."

So, being able to give a helping hand

to the 38 billion bottles that are thrown away, is a step in the right direction and an opening to help promote other environmental and clean policies and items on campus. Being a part of a group that recycles benefits everyone and the planet similar to a symbiotic relationship; therefore, we still need to help, we as students need to take action.

"Our custodial team works hard every day, but they most certainly will not be able spend more time sorting and recycling; that's why helping our environment is a team effort," Yotsuda said.

In addition, saving on plastic can help so that we could spend the money on other more important necessities such as, repairs, learning materials, and making the learning environment as good as possible. If you think about it, the cost of the waste that comes solely from water bottles is incredibly large, yet easily avoidable.

A Stanford study stated "This has an economic impact by producing more than \$1 billion in wasted plastic each year. This could all be avoided by simply using a reusable water bottle to reduce waste."

Cultivating an environment where we can help grow a community and share a mutual connection with everyone is important. An issue like the state of our environment is something that matters to all of us because it's happening. Earth is happening right now; if we want it to be there in the future, we need to take care of our planet.

PHOTO BY BEN GORDON

It's Raining Babies: The Craze for Plastic Infants

By Jiayi Zhu

Plastic babies. The newest epidemic going on now at Pine View. It all started with sixth grader Moxie Bonifield. Browsing on Amazon for Halloween makeup, she came across the figurines.

"I've always gone for the joke... and I saw the babies and I thought that was really funny," Bonifield explained.

Sixth grade science teacher Dylan Bell was the first recipient of these small babies. Soon after, news spread of the 'baby trend'.

It took about two weeks for almost the entire sixth grade to have their own plastic baby to take care of. Even sixth

grade
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da Lyons has a collection of her own from her sixth graders. Bonifield is now well-known as the girl who passes out babies.

"I think it's really cool, people come up to me and ask 'Hey, can I have a baby?'" she said.

The baby boom has received massive popularity, especially from sixth grader Danielle Kodra. She was one of the first people to find out about Bonifield's great idea, with much excitement.

"I loved it because they were very popular [among the grade]," Kodra said.

So, how is it possible that almost everyone in the grade has a baby? The distribution process can be described as quick, yet effective.

"We threw aisles and then twenty down the

people caught and kept them," Kodra explained.

The baby craze has grown rapidly and now seventh grade has entered this phenomenon. Seventh grader Noah Marks heard about it and decided that the seventh grade shouldn't be left out. Seeing a myriad of sixth graders with their prized possession in the form of a small plastic baby, he came to the conclusion that he must one-

up the lower grade by buying 300 plastic babies from online.

"I wasn't inspired, I was challenged," Marks said.

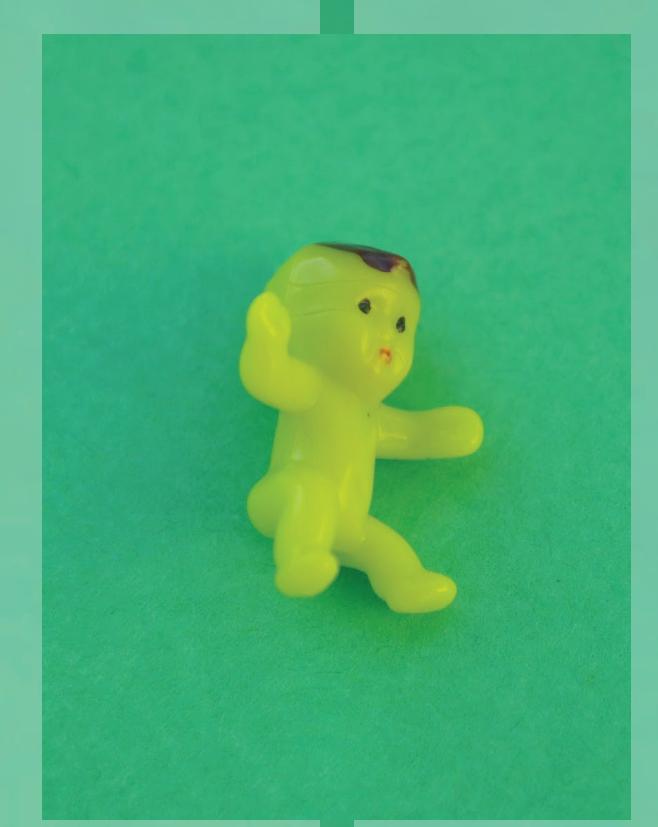
Unlike Bonifield, Marks mainly gives the babies to his friends — unless it's paid for. He offers one baby for 25 cents each — a pretty decent deal.

"Do you like children? Would you like to adopt a child? Take my babies," Marks says when giving a baby.

Although not having a solid plan on what to do in the future with them, Marks does plan to order more. Afterall, the entirety of middle school knows at this point — even the teachers.

"All of my [teachers] know, I offered babies to them [upon being politely rejected]," Marks said.

All in all, the baby craze is in action and doesn't seem like it's stopping anytime soon. Make sure to say "hi" to these baby vendors, Bonifield and Marks — and even ask for a baby — that is, if you don't have one already.



Fun and Fuel in The Sun

By Ryan Purdy

Many years ago Neal Gleitz, middle school science teacher, received a grant, and thanks to the SunSmart E-Shelter Program, the school board office worked to get solar panels installed here at Pine View School.

The SunSmart E-Shelter Program is a \$12 million program founded by the University of Central Florida, the US Department of Energy, and utility companies. The program has deployed solar panels in as many as 100 emergency shelter schools around the state. The program started in 2012 and have introduced as many as 250 teachers and 50,000 students to renewable energy.

Solar panel installation can cost anywhere from \$74,000 to \$90,000. Not only do students and teachers get to participate in the construction of the panels, but it can merge into the curriculum of the school. These solar systems lower energy costs during normal days, and provide critical energy during emergencies.

One example of this was in 2017 during



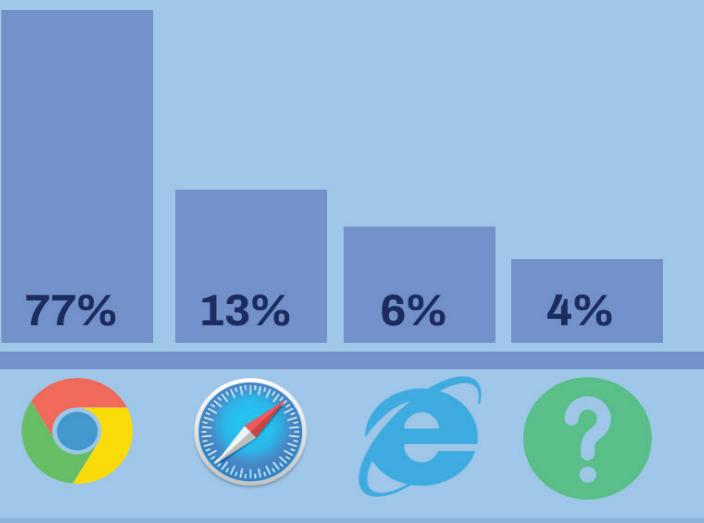
Hurricane Irma where schools were used as shelters, one of the schools' gas generator ran out. Thanks to the solar panels, energy continued to run.

Gleitz's goal was to make solar energy "visible, normal, and practical." He wanted students to think of the solar panels not just as an idea for environmental activists, but a "practical way to generate energy." He even has students do the math for the expenses of these systems and as it turns out, they have become less expensive than the use of fossil fuels over time. As of now, the panels are still functioning.

"All the energy produced by the array goes immediately onto the campus electrical grid and is consumed instantaneously," Gleitz said.

Browser Wars

Which internet browser is your favorite, and why?



Based on a survey of 89 students grades 6-8.

GRAPHIC BY LEO GORDON

Why is it your favorite?

Popular Responses:

Google, because It's my default browser

Google, because It's better quality

Safari, because It's my default browser

SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY THROUGH THE AGES

GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON

PENCILS AND PAPER

At the turn of the century pencil and paper replaced the old slate and chalk, giving students the opportunity to save their work

1900

1925

FILM STRIP PROJECTORS

For presentations, teachers began using film strip projectors that displayed up to 50 images and were often accompanied by an audio cassette

BALLPOINT PENS

Replacing fountain and dip pens, ballpoint pens became the premier permanent writing option for students

1938

1960s

OVERHEAD PROJECTORS

Providing document projection for school and workplaces, teachers quickly adopted this tool for projecting assignments and other objects onto the wall

SCANTRON SHEETS

Despite being originally created in the 1930s scantron sheets took off in testing environments

1970s

Disney's New Renaissance

By Leo Lenerz

For decades, Disney has produced amazing original adaptations in animated form of classic stories. They have been very influential and boosted a whole new generation of creativity. The animated films, such as "Beauty and the Beast" or "The Little Mermaid", are timeless classics beloved by families everywhere. However, things have started to change for the worse. Disney has been continuously producing live action remakes of their classic animated movies over the past decade.

The remakes have even been making more money than the originals worldwide. For example, the live action "Beauty and the Beast" (2017) made \$1.263 billion, while the original "Beauty and the Beast" (1991), adjusted for inflation, still only made \$779 million.

For the most part, however, the original movies are still massively ahead of the remakes in terms of critic's ratings, with the only exception being "The Jungle Book" (2016), which has a 95% on Rotten Tomatoes, while the original "The Jungle Book" (1967) has an 87%. Additionally, the audience ratings tend to lean more towards the originals as well.

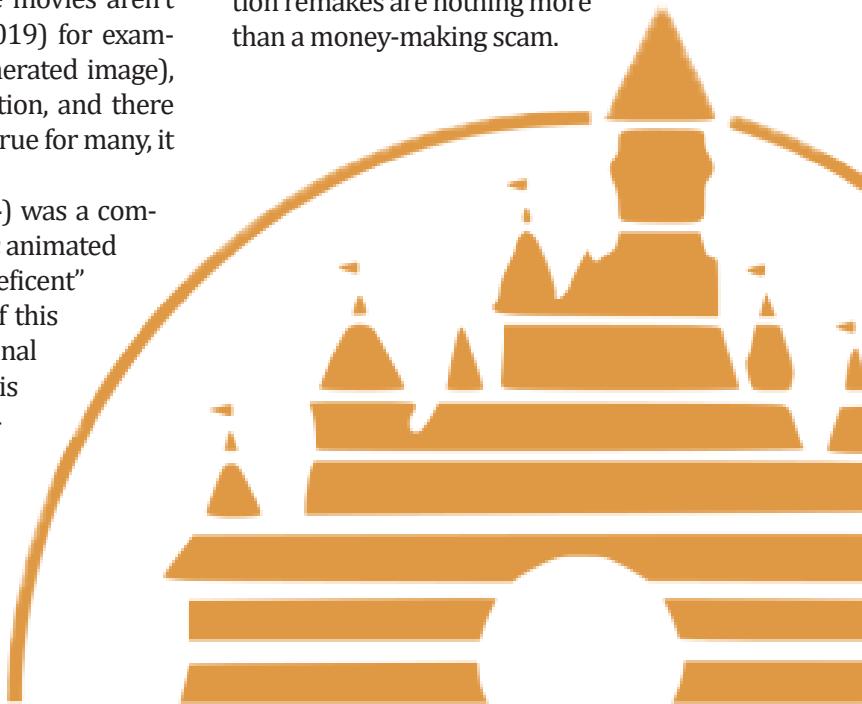
Though the remakes have been produced before, the first being "101 Dalmatians" (1996), recently Disney has been churning out remake after remake. Most people would be happy if Disney changed up aspects of the original movies, but the remakes have no new substance, and are just poorly rehashed versions of the same story. Some of the movies aren't even live action. "The Lion King" (2019) for example, is completely CGI (computer generated image), which is just another form of animation, and there was nothing new in it. Though this is true for many, it is not always the case.

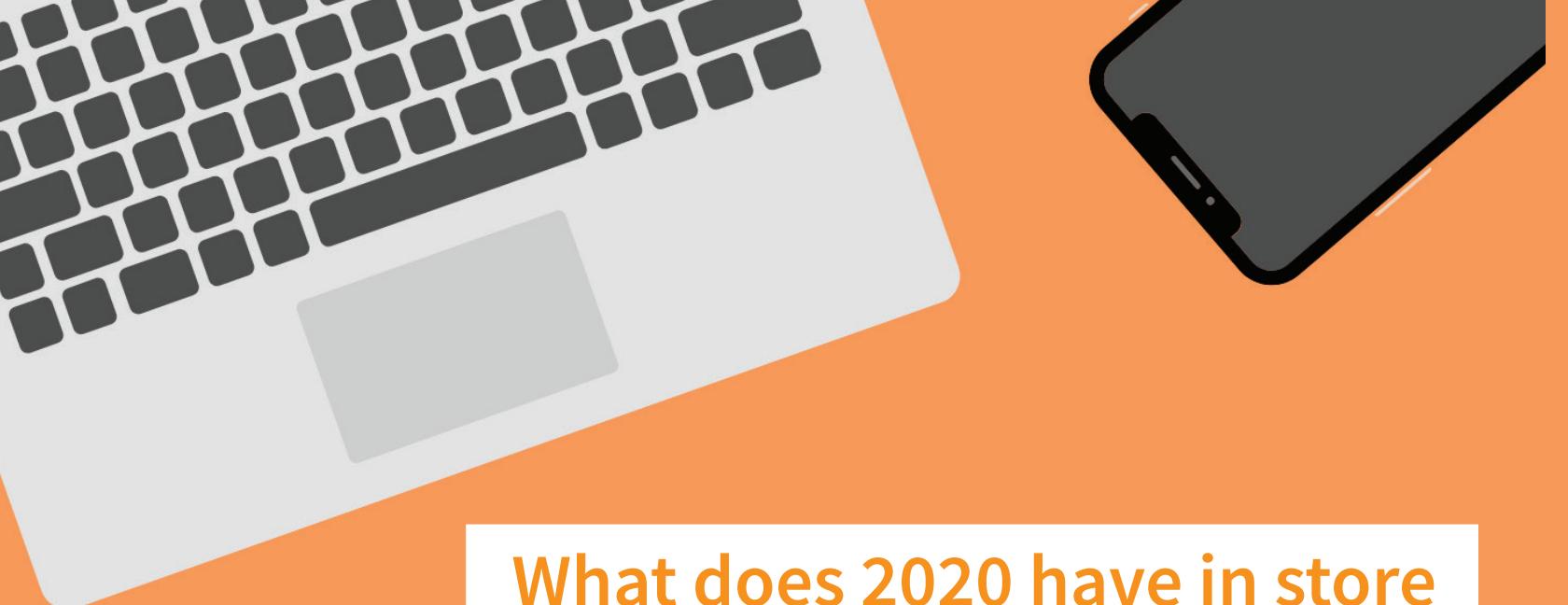
For example, "Maleficent" (2014) was a completely different retelling of the classic animated film "Sleeping Beauty" (1959). "Maleficent" (2014) was from the point of view of this film's titular character and the original film's main antagonist, Maleficent. This was one of the few cases where Disney actually tried to make something new and interesting for fans, and it came close to the audience score of the original film. This is not true of most of the other remakes though. Disney, instead of making original animated films, has resorted to

rehashing the same tired plot lines.

For example, Scar's song "Be Prepared" is in both versions of the movie, though they are presented very differently. In the original, Scar's voice is booming and the audience can see how truly evil and insane he is, prepared to do anything to become king. Though he sings it to the hyenas, it is Scar's song, so it is mainly about him and his evil plan. In the remake, however, it is presented as more of a speech to motivate the hyenas for battle, and Scar is portrayed as more of a dictator leading a nation in the song rather than a truly psychotic, vengeful brother.

The film also doesn't show as much emotion and is not as entertaining. With traditional animation, much more feeling and emotion can be portrayed than in live action movies or with CGI. In "The Jungle Book" (2016), the snake, Kaa, looks relatively normal, with no defining features whatsoever. However, in "The Jungle Book" (1967), Kaa has glowing, multicolored eyes, and a smooth voice, as he tries to hypnotize the main character of the movie, Mogli. The design is so much more appealing in the original. All in all, Disney seems to be running out of original stories to tell and has resorted to retelling stories they already told in earlier films. Some people may disagree, saying that the remakes are more realistic or introduce younger children to the classic stories, but it seems that the bad outweighs the good and the Disney live-action remakes are nothing more than a money-making scam.





What does 2020 have in store for entertainment?

By Sam Wright

By the time you're reading this, it's 2020. Some, but not many things have happened yet. And since this is the Spark's entertainment section, what is going to happen in 2020's entertainment space?

There are some very anticipated console releases for 2020. The PlayStation 5 is planned for a release in the holidays alongside the Xbox's Project Scarlett which will be launching with the exclusive launch title, "Halo Infinite." Atari is re-entering the console space with a new console called the Atari VCS, a powerful, crowdfunded console with both retro Atari games and more modern games alike, although no newer games have been confirmed for it. But more interestingly, there is a more obscure, family-friendly console planned to launch in October called the Intellivision Amico.

According to the Amico's FAQ page, it will be priced around \$200, and will come with "two unique controllers." A smartphone can act as such with a free app (making it worthless to buy more controllers for most people) for up to a total of 8 players at once. The games are promised to be under \$10, rated for up to a maximum age of 10+, and free of any other transactions other than the games themselves (such as DLC and microtransactions, big money-makers for 3rd party developers). Will this have any success? Only

time will tell.

Now onto the games. Starting off, Minecraft has been busy with some side projects. One of them is a Pokémon Go-style game called "Minecraft Earth" which is currently in early access. The other is a dungeon crawler called "Minecraft: Dungeons" releasing in Spring 2020.

Speaking of Spring, "Animal Crossing: New Horizons" will be coming out, as well, March 20. Animal Crossing games are about you, the game's only human, growing a town full of animals as its mayor and growing your home with the help of the loan shark. However, you're going to be doing it on an island now. The loan shark is still there, taking advantage of the island anarcho-capitalist style.

A new installment in the Watch Dogs franchise called "Watch Dogs: Legion" is also coming out in Spring. The Watch Dogs games have always been about hacking the world around you, particularly with large corporations. Now, you're hacking the British government after a Brexit-went-bad scenario that turned the government into a fascist regime based around technology. You will also be able to recruit and play as, literally, anyone in the game for the first time ever. It is set to release March 6, 2020.

More video game releases include "Cyberpunk 2077," a futuristic game surrounding a criminal mercenary named V and his quest to

find an implant that gives immortality (which probably deserves more credit than I'm giving it). It will be releasing April 16 however, one of its PC distribution platforms, Steam, says it will give its users access April 15. Another release is "Doom: Eternal", a game about killing every demon getting in your way, will be releasing on March 20th. Last but not least, *Ori and the Will of the Wisps*, the sequel to *Ori and the Blind Forest*, a game which has kept its plot and concept under tight wraps with somewhat of an exception to the character (an orphan), will be releasing February 11.

Next let's talk about movies. "*The Sonic the Hedgehog Movie*" has finally had a CGI redesign and has also rebranded its trailers. The story will be about Sonic the Hedgehog (who is an alien), working with a small-town sheriff to prevent Dr. Robotnik (whom you may also know as Dr. Eggman in the video games) from gaining the secret to his immense speed, which Sonic claims will allow the doctor to take over the world. Its planned release is February 14. The "*Black Widow*", a darker Marvel movie, will be delivering the popular MCU character's backstory, is currently set to release May 1. Another addition to the MCU are the *Eternals*, an offshoot of human-

ity's evolution created by the aliens known as the Celestials to defend earth from their evil counterpart, the Deviants. Their movie, "*The Eternals*," is set to release on November 6. Do you like horror films? Well you're in luck, because the fifth installment in *The Purge* franchise will release July 10th, and the sequel to "*Escape Room*" will premiere April 17.

A new Scooby-Doo movie, "*Scoob!*" is set to release on May 15. The movie will be about the iconic crime-solving gang's origins, as well as them teaming up to stop a "dog-pocalypse" (Ruh-roh! I smell a bad plot!). A new Ghostbusters movie, titled "*Ghostbusters Afterlife*," is set to release in Summer 2020, specifically July 10, according to CNN. It will be a sequel to the two original Ghostbusters films, and not the more recent 2016 Ghostbusters reboot. Finally, A new James Bond movie, "*No Time to Die*," will be released April 8 in the U.S.. The story will be about Bond trying to rescue a kidnapped scientist, and will feature Daniel Craig in his fifth and final performance as James Bond.

So, that was 2020 in entertainment, or at least what I could find. So far, 2020 seems to be a great year for entertainment space.

GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON



Raising the barre: Breaking down stigma in dance

By Shelby Brann

Dance /dans/; (verb) to move rhythmically to music or a beat. To Kellen Zander, dance is more than a sport, or a set of steps. As Zander says, "It's art."

Zander does this art at Sarasota Ballet, a prominent facility for both professional and young dancers all over Florida. Zander takes classes Tuesday through Saturday, with much preparation for school in his free time. Being a Pine View student, he usually handles many assignments in advance, as well as studying hard over the weekend, sacrificing what many other students view as quality relaxation time.

The recent and popular John Ringling Circus "Nutcracker" in late December featured Zander. Zander has participated in many performances over the years, always taking a backseat to the action but being sure to leave a lasting impression on those around him.

The parents of fifth graders two years ago experienced Zander dancing at his finest for an opening act at the fifth-grade dance—though students, sadly, didn't get to see him, the parents and teachers were thrilled to see a young, talented dancer, especially one who attended classes at Pine View. There, in the gymnasium, Zander did a beautifully conducted salsa alongside fellow student Alexa Daverio and several professional dancers. All of them

spun across the floor, perfect spins and dips highlighting the night.

Pine View wasn't the first to recognize Zander's sterling talent. Christopher Hird, the director of the Sarasota Ballet School, and Dierdre Burger, the assistant director, both have excellent views of Zander's dancing.

Burger said, "Kellen is hard working and very intelligent. He has excellent attendance and attention to detail."

She added to this by telling how Zander's coordination allows him to master any tough technique. Both Hird and Burger agree that Zander has much potential and that they look forward to helping him in his future.

Zander, like all too-few male dancers, has had to overcome odds in order to remain top in his classes.

"You have to work harder to fit that role because it's a lot more effort," Zander said.

Many male dancers have faced stigma and mockery for pursuing their talent and passion. But it'd take a lot more than gender to stop Zander from dancing. Zander describes dance as 3D art created from your body.

"It's my passion.", he said. Dance has created a hidden place for so many to disappear into, away from the judgmental eyes that follow at school. Zander is glad to have that escape, even if it's only for a few hours each day.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY KELLEN ZANDER



Mall Wars: Westfield VS. UTC

University Town Center

GRAPHIC BY SHELBY BRANN

Westfield at Sarasota Square

ATMOSPHERE

- Skylight roof and amazing lighting
- Modern seating and decor
- Clean

- Nostalgic
- Accessible and easy parking
- Convenient and Nearby

Food

- Vegan Friendly
- Higher-end Restaurants
- Lots of options in the mall and surrounding area

- Costco Pizza
- Central Food Court
- Variety of fast food options
- Independent restaurants

ACTIVITIES

- Kiddie area
- Holiday events
- Window Shopping

- Movie Theater
- Ninja Knockers Ball
- Laser Tag
- Arcade

SHOPPING

- High-end shops
- Variety of teenage focused clothing
- Quality dressing rooms
- Trendy overall

- Variety of nonclothing related stores
- Costco
- Affordable options for clothes

The Secret Life of Teachers



By Madilyn Hagney

Until recently, students have known teachers only as "those things who bury us in homework."

Recently, however, questions have been raised as to whether teachers truly are simply sources of work or if they could be hiding evidence to the contrary.

It all started with Ida Whit-Ness, a Pine View seventh-grader.

Whit-Ness had left her homework in Mrs. Flahavan's room and gone to pick it up after school.

"I was the only student left on campus—I guess there weren't any clubs meeting that day—and what I saw in her room absolutely shocked me," said Whit-Ness.

According to Whit-Ness, Flahavan and several of the science teachers were holding the party of the century in the yellow building—breaking several lab safety rules.

And that wasn't all Whit-Ness saw. Allegedly, several of the English teachers were congregated in the green building, having a tea party, and the PE teachers

were having a rather intense dodgeball game in the gym.

Whit-Ness claims she even saw the math teachers re-enacting a scene from "A Beautiful Mind."

The accused teachers could not be reached for comment, but the gossip has spread rapidly throughout the school, and several students have strong opinions.

For example, eighth-grader Skep Techal stated, "This is so obviously libel. Some loser didn't do their homework, so they tried to distract everyone with a groundless parody of 'Toy Story'."

Meanwhile, seventh grader Bea Leaver is more than willing to believe.

"I think it's perfect," said Leaver. "Overbearing homework machines during school hours, party animals when the students leave."

While eyewitness accounts and irony may not be the most concrete evidence, students may never see their teachers the same way again.

"I think we've only scratched the surface of what teachers could be doing when we can't see them," Whit-Ness said.

Good Grades At Any Cost



By Margaret Toth

The end of second quarter has come and gone with the snap of a finger. You have been so busy with extracurriculars and what you call a social life that there has been no time to work on grades, the whole reason you go to school. Especially being a Pine View student, grades play a big role in your life and expectations are high. It is hard to balance the perfect grades and extensive amount of extracurriculars with the unhealthy amount of worrying you do. It is safe to say that this quarter has not been the best.

With swim meets around every corner and at least 15 hours of practice a week, you practically have gills at this point. Over the course of the second quarter, your grades were plummeting with every stroke taken.

Unfortunately, it was too late when you realized your current system wasn't working, final grades for second quarter were out. As you clicked the assignments tab with your parents eyeing you down from every angle, your mouth dropped,

and a single tear rolled down your sunburnt face.

"There is absolutely no way!" you cried out, your parents becoming suspicious.

"What?" your mother cried from the kitchen, and without a response and a slam of the laptop screen, you took to your room taking sanctuary in the warm blankets.

The next day at school was horrific, throughout the day you pondered the ways you could get away with your unacceptable grades. You had heard of the varying grades your friends have gotten and decided to act. It was the middle of your math test when a light bulb exploded in your mind. It was time to hack Crosspointe. After school, you ran to your computer to begin business. A couple videos later and you were practically a pro. It was time.

You were being paid by multiple friends to change their grades as well. You opened the tab and started. It was surprisingly easy, and to think it was just a couple

of YouTube videos that were needed.

The deed was done, and your friends were happy. You were finally ready to show your parents, things were working out perfectly. You quickly logged out and called your parents excitedly.

"Mom! Grades came out, want to see?"

Your parents came walking in, not suspecting a thing. A few clicks later and the black and blue page was ready to be analyzed. You smiled happily, but 10 seconds later your heart dropped. The hack didn't work. You had simply inspected the elements. You had dug your own grave.

"C,D,B,C,C,B! My goodness, these are awful!" your mother exclaimed.

Let's just say that night was not the best and the next day at school was even worse. There was nothing you could do; your grades were going to be the same way for the rest of your Pine View career. It was time to accept this harsh reality.

The Gluttony Games

By Courtney Nelson

"Well, I can already tell that it's been a catastrophe. Maybe next year," sixth-grader Betty Graeds said.

It had only been a few weeks after winter break, yet everything had already been set up for disaster for the middle schoolers. Most didn't know what was in store for them but for those who did, they knew of the battlefield that Pine View would become.

Each year middle schoolers are involuntarily volunteered as tributes

to a set of rigorous courses and challenges. They were no set up by the upper-classmen, who will always have it out for the lower grades. It was their opportunity to see who was the strongest and the most able to survive Pine View's rigorous, and quite frankly, dangerous high school classes.

The upperclassmen frequently refer to these courses and challenges as "The Gluttony Games." A truly merciless "game" that pits tributes against each other until only the

strong survive, a truly fascinating example of survival of the fittest.

Although all current high schoolers must have endured the Gluttony Games at least once to go to Pine View, they still enjoy setting up the games and seeing natural selection in its most primal form: prepubescent children.

The challenges include varying actions such as Studies to the Death, Harnessing all your Brain Capacity, and of all the challenges the one voted most popular among older students is dubbed "The Batman Bench."

The Batman Bench is a challenge in which tributes are dispersed throughout the campus, as well as different supplies such as heavy textbooks, pencils, airplanes of the paper variety, and of course fifty-pound bookbags scattered around campus; in the challenge tributes sprint upwards of a hundred yards while battling others in order to reach the Batman Bench

first. It's a true challenge of athleticism and intellect.

Other challenges, such as Studies to the Death, include studying for that test that you procrastinated for until 1 a.m. the night before, and have to take in all the information before you pass out. As well is the Harnessing of all Brain Capacity, a challenge in which you are challenged to not speak or message anyone for at least a few hours and complete many hours of homework.

Although it seems quite entertaining to see middle schoolers fight with each other and throw down the drama, younger students don't see it that way.

"They really must be playing if they didn't take into account that there's nothing on earth that's really going to make me sprint one hundred yards without getting anything in return," eighth-grader Nadin Shea-P said.

"Your life... and I suppose academic success," ninth-grader Curt Throwt said in response to Shea-P.

I think at this point it would be important to note that although no physical violence is actually involved in the Gluttony Games, the students do take it a bit too far sometimes. But as it's commonly said, "May the odds be in your favor;" there's a long road ahead and countless battles to overcome.

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Finding the time between classes

By Liana Le

Admit it. You've felt the cold stare of your disapproving teacher. The embarrassing talk between your classmates, but the worst part is you were late by one minute! Your hatred for your passing periods is the only thing you can think of for the next fifty-two minutes.

How could you possibly make it from portable city to the yellow building while having a short chat with your teacher and making a much-needed trip to your locker? Add in a bathroom break and you're toast.

Seventh-grader Freya Melbourne actively uses her locker. Melbourne speaks out about feeling pressured not to use her locker to get to her class in time.

"There's not really a need for lockers if we just put things in them all day and we can't come back for our stuff," Melbourne said.

Yes, the lockers are dispersed all over campus to be more convenient, yet many students find it troublesome. For instance, a student whose classes are all close to the gray lockers must walk all the

way to the yellow lockers.

Seventh-grader Nandani Patel insists more time to get to class would be ideal.

"I think we need an extra minute of passing period time," Patel said. "Some people go from one side of the campus all the way to the other, so I think it'd be nice to have an extra minute to pass by."

Since the Pine View campus is so big, most middle-school classes are spread out. For many students, this means their classes can be across campus!

Sixth grader Evelyn Hunt said, "It's really hard to walk halfway across campus in 5 minutes and be on time, and teachers don't really understand."

Students and teachers express different points of view on transition periods, which doesn't come as a shock since they are by no means in the same shoes.

This is a simple problem that could be easily solved. Middle schoolers have it hard enough at school and being late to class won't make it any more bearable. Allowing only one- or two more-minutes will ensure students are ready and on-time.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY FLICKR

Finding Balance in American Education

By Sam Wright

Back in November, U.S. Senator and ex-Presidential candidate Kamala Harris introduced a new bill into the Senate. This bill is called the Family Friendly Schools Act, which, if passed, would provide low-income elementary schools with 5 million dollar grants to extend the school day to allow both parents in families to work 9-5 jobs - the bill went viral. This arguably was the reason that caused her to drop out of the presidential race. This also brought up a serious question, should the school day be increased? I personally believe the duration of the school day should not be extended.

For starters, this would create more isolation between a child and their family, who typically don't spend much time together each day because of the already existing school hours. Assuming that a child is getting 8 hours of sleep every night, and that a child goes to school for 7 hours every day, the same amount of time as Pine View—that leaves 9 hours to spend with family and friends outside of school every day. The measure for which doesn't account for possible bus travel to school, any extracurricular activities, or time spent on homework. Even if sleep and school were the only non-home activities done by a child, that would still be 15 hours of the day.

Another reason is that the school system is currently outdated and strips children of their childhood. Paul Boyce, a contributor to the Foundation for Economic Education (a news platform based upon economics, politics, culture and education), wrote in an article, "Children rarely are allowed to be children. Play is stifled. Students are crammed into a classroom and taught in a standardized way. Creativity is restricted. They aren't allowed to harness their inquisitive minds...Tests infrequently harness the analytical mind."

Teaching also isn't improving in the U.S. compared to the rest of the world. Boyce also writes, "Literacy rates have stagnated since 1971, while there has been no progress in math since 1990..." Keeping children in institutions outdated since late last century for longer wouldn't help them learn anything useful.

Another reason to not increase the school day is that

teachers would likely have to work for longer hours. The teachers at Pine View already work one extra hour compared to someone with a 9 - 5 job, typically coming earlier and leaving later than their students. Note that this would be one hour less than the Florida maximum work-day of 10 hours.

According to Business Insider, "The average salary for a public-school teacher nationwide was \$60,483 during the 2017-2018 academic year, the most recent for which data [was] available," and the average Florida teacher salary was one of the lowest at \$47,721. That would mean that teachers would be working at a wage of \$12.86 per hour if paid the nationwide average, and \$11.71 per hour if the state average. This is less than a house cleaning company in Lakewood Ranch called My Maid, LLC is offering to pay employees on glassdoor.com, a job searching website. They are offering pay of \$13 - \$15 per hour.

Extending the school day could also be seriously detrimental to the school district's budget and teacher's jobs. To avoid costs from having to pay teachers extra, employees could be laid off or have their salaries reduced if the county wasn't going to redirect funding from somewhere else. Even so, this still would solve the problem of the (Writer's note: currently a proposed state voting issue for 2020) minimum wage escalating to \$15 in 2026 and \$13 in 2024, overshadowing the larger national average wage.

Some may argue that there is a serious need for afterschool care for small children in low income areas, but there are solutions that wouldn't require a million-dollar grant in the form of after-school clubs. These would allow for closer interactions with teachers on a personal level, more than a generic after-school program would.

In summary, there are serious detriments to extending the school day. A teacher's wages cut, they would have to deal with a longer work week that bends Florida law, and students would also be stuck in a stagnant education system for longer. A longer school day is a lose-lose scenario for teachers and students, and should not be implemented.

Students



Stress and Stress: Finding a balance

By Courtney Nelson

Stress affects many aspects of students' lives. School, relationships, and other activities all play a part and the requirements from just one class alone can be daunting. With the majority of students having to balance extracurriculars, homework, exams, and family life, it might get to be all too much. Thus, being able to acknowledge the presence of stress and worry is pivotal in creating a safe space for our campus.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), "One in four students have a diagnosable mental illness." As well, 49% of students are under heavy stress, and 73% have felt some sort of stress recently. Although stress itself is not a mental illness, stress can cause mental health problems, and make existing problems worse. For example, stress has the possibility of transforming into anxiety or depression.

In addition, if you're often stressed, you're probably producing high levels of hormones, cortisol and adrenaline. These can make you feel physically unwell and affect your health in the long run, according to the Mayo Clinic Organization. Like most students, eighth grader Gabriele Navitckis feels like she has stress constantly looming over her.

"It's not about procrastinating until the last moment and getting stressed, I just get stressed by how other people see me and trying to make others happy, while having my best interest in mind," said Navitckis.

All things considered, students must find a way to combat stress in a way that is genuinely making an impact and can engage everyone, for a multitude of reasons. Being cognizant of mental illness and just the large amount of stress that many have can help us make steps in the right direction to helping ourselves and helping others. Just being aware and educated on the effects of mental illness and its causes can help us have sympathy and empathy for others.

Sarasota County Schools have decided that it would be best for every student's well-being to introduce classes that discuss wellness and the causes and ways to stop stress. The classes occur every month and are there with the Sandy Hook Promise Organization. The mental health days help bring awareness to the issues that play a large role in our behavior and actions within the classroom and outside.

"Not being able to speak with the class, and talking about personal stories, stigmatizes the situation. It almost in a way shows how we shouldn't talk about our problems, and how it's not alright to have help by talking to our peers," said eighth grader Amy O'Malley.

Although the classes help bring awareness to mental health and safety issues, there is still the question of whether these classes have actual impact on students, and if the classes give a reason for initiative to help other students. Even though their original purpose was to offer helpful solutions to relevant issues to our society, such as bullying or school shootings, the majority of students have given mixed reactions.

Some students don't take the hour seriously, laughing at some of the material instead of paying attention, talking to their friends and doing other classwork. Although not all students behave in that manner, it's unfortunate that some can't respect the time to talk about such serious topics that impact us all, regardless of whether you find the topics interesting or not.

So, giving a period every so often to talk about the issues that we've become so desensitized to and pass off as just "news" has given students a time where we reflect, where we need to actually sit down and think. Whether or not the current program is making as big of a difference as expected, it's still bringing awareness to topics that have been brushed over for too long, and that's a large step in the right direction.

