

the Torch



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ABC 7 News provides awards to educators

by Tiffany Yu
Match Layout Artist

With another month comes another Sarasota and Manatee County teacher awarded the title of Chalkboard Champion. The initiative, begun by ABC 7 in partnership with Gettel Automotive last October, recognizes exceptional elementary through high school teachers in Sarasota and Manatee County once a month. The teachers who are selected receive a check of \$500 as well as new supplies to bolster their classrooms.

To be considered, students, parents and other teachers submit forms referring teachers on ABC 7's website. The form asks for specific details regarding a teacher's merit, how they inspire their students and what specific qualities the teacher exhibits that makes them deserving of the award. After the forms are submitted, they are carefully sorted through until the teacher of the month is revealed.

English teacher Chris Pauling decided to step in by encouraging his students to take part in the submission process. Following the news, Pauling discovered the competition during its earlier stages, when the first few teachers were being awarded the title. To this day, a Pine View teacher has yet to receive the title and award.

"I know that there are some really amazing people that I work with side by side and do planning with and so forth, so when I went in to nominate somebody I thought that maybe my students would also like to nominate somebody, so I shared it on my Blackboard and told them it was up there," Pauling said.

Although Pine View has yet to be recognized, to become involved, search MySuncoast.com/ChalkboardChampions and nominate one of the many well-deserving teachers on Pine View's campus.



by Ella Hechlik and Brianna Nelson
Editor-in-Chief and Spark Editor-in-Chief

Pine View has often placed health education on the back burner. With schedules filled full of AP classes and extracurriculars, human growth and development courses have been historically neglected in both policy and action, until recently.

Health education varies amongst states, districts and schools. On the state level (Florida Statute 1003.42(2)(n)), the Florida Department of Education describes a health education curriculum as requiring the teaching of abstinence as the only means to avoid pregnancy; however, other aspects of sexuality education can be included per each district's school board's discretion. For example, counties across the state have implemented a more comprehensive approach to education — birth control, condoms, etc. — while remaining within state policy.

Sarasota County, however, has adopted an abstinence-only approach, excluding other aspects of sexuality education. According to Sarasota County School Board Curriculum Policy XIII Section A, updated in April 2019, "A school shall: Teach abstinence from sexual

activity outside marriage as the expected standard for all school-age children while teaching the benefits of monogamous heterosexual marriage."

Starting in fourth and fifth grade, students begin to learn about puberty and hygiene. The content begins to mature, requiring seventh and eighth-grade teachers to cover HIV/AIDS and other STIs, disease prevention and teen pregnancy prevention. The high school syllabus is based around information provided in Health Opportunities Through Physical Education (HOPE) classes.

Pine View implemented the plan into elementary school using the district-wide Proctor and Gamble video "Always Changing" to illustrate the required content (a form was sent to parents for approval prior to the lesson). Puberty, the reproductive system, personal hygiene, menstruation (for girls only) and healthy decision-making in interpersonal relationships are all included. Classes, as is district policy, are gender-segregated with girls receiving instruction from school nurse Beth Banko and boys from fifth-grade teacher Andy Vitkus.

Starting in middle school, the information Pine View students receive and the information outlined by the district

diverge. Pine View eighth graders are taught information regarding human growth and development by their life science teachers during lessons that already pertained to human anatomy. HIV and STIs are mentioned in the academic teaching of differences between viruses and bacteria, while aspects like teen pregnancy prevention have been left out entirely — deviating from district guidelines. Moreover, an increasing number of students skip the life science course, taking ninth-grade biology as eighth-graders and, thus, have no means to supplement the health education they skipped.

Upon realizing this gap of knowledge, James Slaton, Supervisor of Health and Health Education for Sarasota County Schools, offered a supplement for students lacking the curriculum.

"We have someone from the department of health who can come in, so that's something that we can request for [Pine View]," he said.

To become realigned with policy and include previously omitted content, Pine View has joined other schools in the county providing a guest speaker to educate middle school students on human growth and development.

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State institutes new mental health policy

by Odelia Tiutyama
News Editor

In today's society where students face increasing adversity, pressures and temptations, mental health in youth has taken a heavy toll. The Sarasota County School District recognizes this trend and has embraced a greater focus on mental health in an effort to provide aid to struggling students.

According to the Florida Policy Institute, Florida is fiftieth in the nation in mental health services and has the third-highest percentage of mentally ill persons who are also uninsured. Locally, one in five residents under 18 years of age, experience a severe mental disorder during their life.

Lacking proper resources to deal with mental health issues and with the recent Parkland shooting, Florida is the third state, following New York and Virginia, to adopt a policy focusing on mental health education.

During the summer, teachers and staff across the state completed two hours of training through an interactive program provided by Kognito, a health simulation company. Along with this training, teachers are expected to complete the six-hour course called Youth Mental Health First Aid, which, accord-

ing to the mission statement, "introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a five-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations."

"It's important for us — guidance, administrators and other staff members — to know how to identify a student that is struggling or having issues in their home life or school life," Assistant Principal Tara

Spielman said. "The training

following the Parkland Shooting, the state has adopted rules requiring five days of one hour-long mental health education, K-12 substance abuse prevention and child trafficking information for grades 6 through 12. This curriculum teaches children to communicate, collaborate and navigate in a compassionate and empathetic way.

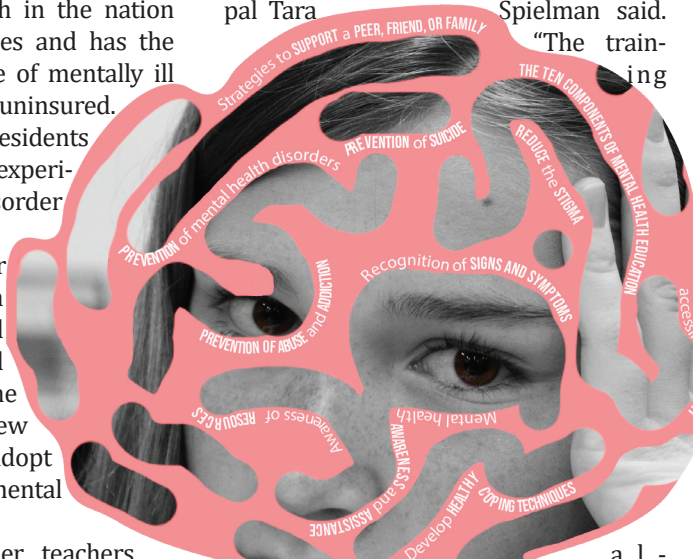
As every district was provided with components that the mental health education must touch on rather than specific lessons, Sarasota County decided to use its own experts instead of purchasing mental health curriculum from private vendors. The student services team consisting of school psychologists, school social workers and school counselors, along with the communications department and curriculum instruction department, work together to provide the videos designed for intimate, small group settings.

Although legislation does not call for any curriculum presented to elementary school students, Sarasota County utilized social emotional learning programs such as Sanford Harmony and restorative practices, a social science that studies how to improve and repair relationships between people and communities, to begin building "circles of safety" at the elementary level.

Responsible for overseeing the curriculum process and ensuring that the content shown to students is relevant, Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Service

Debra Giacalone said in response to the sudden emergence of mental health initiatives, "Mental health has always been really important in our schools, as teachers have always been focused on the social and emotional well-being of our students. After the Parkland incident, the Florida legislation has really gotten involved in what's happening in our schools." GRAPHIC BY FELICITY CHANG

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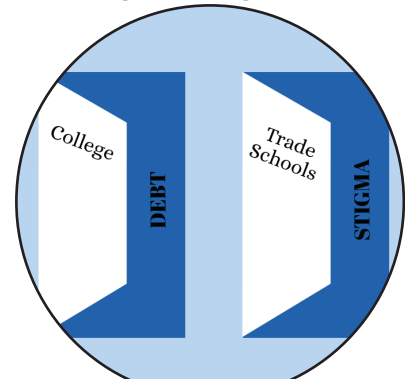
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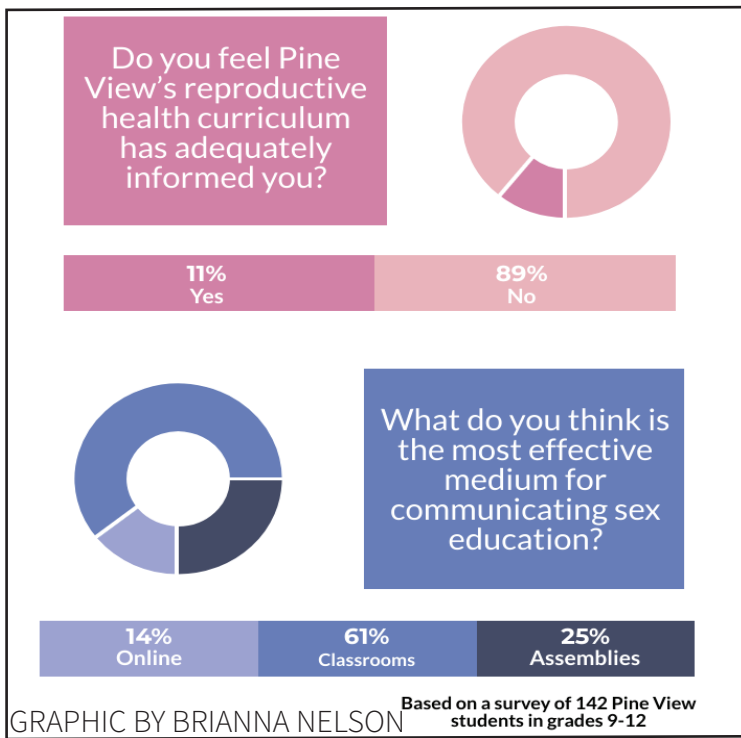
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by Ella Hechlik and Brianna Nelson
 Editor-in-Chief and Spark Editor-in-Chief

Starting Jan. 22, Jasmine Akins and Alexis Thompson, health educator consultants from the Florida Department of Health, will be coming to Pine View to teach seventh-graders the curriculum “Your Life, Your Health, Your Future #Always.” This program was adopted across the district and was approved on a federal level before trickling down to be approved by school districts. The curriculum was designed to be 10 hours long; however, that varies from school to school.

“We truly leave it up to the school to determine how long it runs... sometimes we only hit three subjects, other times we do the whole thing,” Akins said.

Every student participating in sexual health education must have a permission form signed by a parent. Before the addition of Akins’ and Thompson’s program, the middle school health education slips had never been handed out despite the curriculum being required. Instead, the emphasis was placed on the embedded



GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON

curriculum within eighth-grade life science.

High school students are also supposed to receive district-mandated human growth and development education through their Health Opportunities through Physical Education (HOPE) course. In most schools in the district, HOPE is taught in a physical classroom with guest speakers. Pine View, however, lacks the course on campus, so students are funneled into two options: FLVS courses or HOPE

waivers. According to Slaton, there may be differences between the online and classroom settings of HOPE.

“[The full curriculum] is probably a lot different than covering human growth and development in person,” Slaton said.

In the face of prospective changes, human growth and development education at Pine View is expanding to fully meet district standards.

State mental health curriculum aids students

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by Odelia Tiutyama
 News Editor

Videos that have been presented to six through twelfth-grade students include the themes of recognizing signs of mental illness and reducing stigma. Future videos will include student involvement such as those part of the peer counseling group at Sarasota High School, and topics may cover: awareness of resources for those struggling with mental illness, strategies on how to best support those struggling with mental illness and strategies to develop healthy coping techniques.

“Students truly profit from the opportunities to have lessons on health that are planned, provided and struc-

tured for them to engage in conversations,” Spielman said. “People tend to avoid conversations on mental health and paint it negatively, but these videos and the discussions that accompany them are real and authentic.”

In addition to the new health curriculum, Pine

and refer them to the mental health counselor to then set up a meeting.

“There’s a certain connotation around mental health that’s not necessarily stigma, but it’s so ingrained in our society...” twelfth-grader Waseh Khan said. “In reality, mental illness is something you have to talk about, and if you don’t, then it’s just going to keep being a problem. And you need to make sure that you have those treatment options available, even for those that cannot afford it.”

As the state board’s new ruling explicitly calls for teaching students how to recognize signs and symptoms of disorders, mental health awareness and assistance and how to develop coping skills, each district has until Dec. 1 to submit plans to the state education department outlining the structure of the lessons.

“I hope this allows students to understand that mental health is really important, and that every one of us needs to take care of ourselves so that we know there are people out there to help us, and so that there is no shame in getting help,” Giacalone said.

GRAPHIC BY SARAH CATALANO

View has partnered with Safe Children Coalition to provide the service of a licensed mental health counselor. Students interested in receiving the free counseling are welcome to connect with their guidance counselor who will then connect with the student’s family

Pine View GSA club attends annual Venice Pride Festival



Twelfth-grader Kacie Bates sits at Pine View’s Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA) booth at Venice Pride. The club members gave away candy and shrinky-dink keychains with the club’s mascot, a green and pink frog, for small donations. Venice Pride held the second Venice Pride Festival Nov. 2 from 11:00a.m. to 4:00p.m. to celebrate the diversity, visibility and strength of the LGBTQ+ community and allies, with hundreds in attendance. PHOTO BY SARAH CATALANO

IN BRIEF

Luminary hosts fundraiser

by Joanna Malvas

Asst. Spark Editor-in-Chief

The Luminary, Pine View’s literary magazine club, hosted the first Arts Night fundraiser Nov. 15, teaching and promoting the arts to elementary school students. The event was held from 4:10 to 5:30 p.m. in Room 803, art teacher Sharon Salamon’s classroom. Tickets for each family were \$5 in advance and \$7 at the door. The night had interactive sessions, in which each of the Luminary members held sessions covering, watercolor, sketching, origami and poetry.

Each year the Luminary releases its “Luminary Magazine,” a literary publication composed of work from high school students and staff. Thus, the Luminary’s Editor-in-Chief, eleventh-grader Gabby Gentile, explained how the club wanted to hold an Arts Night to encourage creativity among younger students. Gentile expressed how this event could help younger students feel involved in the arts on campus.

“We just want to spread creativity throughout all of the

grades. People might lose the opportunities to utilize their artistic abilities, and we want to be able to bring that out in people,” Gentile said.

Salamon was on board to have Arts Night held in her room, as she wants to encourage students to explore their own artistic skills.

“In the past, I’ve hosted with other elementary students where they’ve had art clubs. I definitely promote arts [with younger students], because younger students have a lot more creativity because they’re more open a lot of times... For younger students, they’re way more interested in exploring and making mistakes, so we want to keep promoting that as long as possible,” Salamon said.

Overall, Gentile expressed how the event influenced elementary school students as well as families.

“When you include parents, they can be supportive of it... They can experience that alongside them... It’s just fun to work together as a family, and it’s a bonding experience,” Gentile said.

Rho Kappa welcomes community speaker to campus

by Alyson Mizanin

Asst. News Editor

National Social Studies Honors Society Rho Kappa’s first ever campus-wide event took place Oct. 29 in the form of a presentation highlighting the artwork of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, courtesy of art historian Baila Miller. President of the club and twelfth-grader Luis Guevara-Flores wishes to introduce more speakers to Pine View throughout the school year.

“Baila Miller is known for her lectures that she gives over the Sarasota and Manatee area. I met her at [the] restaurant I work at — she came in one day, and she had said, ‘Oh, I would love to come to Pine View and do something with the kids there.’ She was very open about it; we met each other, and it just clicked,” Guevara-Flores said.

After some consideration, Kahlo and Rivera were chosen as subjects for the presentation because of their prominence, so as to draw more students to the event.

The presentation focused on Kahlo and Rivera’s individual impacts on the art world and popular culture. Miller be-

gan her lecture by allowing the audience to read a multitude of labels — everything from “dreamer” to “innovator,” “activist” to “radical” — and asked them to later identify which ones best suited surrealism’s “power couple.” After describing the extent to which Rivera influenced the Mexican population to take pride in their heritage, Rivera fit into all the categories. Kahlo’s courage to overcome her physical disabilities and express her gender uniquely placed her in the same subdivisions.

As for Rho Kappa’s future, Guevara-Flores hopes to maintain his wish to further involve Pine View in the humanities.

“Our mission for Rho Kappa is to elevate the humanities; this isn’t something we see a lot here at Pine View, unfortunately. That’s our number one mission going forth with every event we propose,” Guevara-Flores said. “Ultimately, having this Hispanic aspect is also promoting the Latin community, and as a Latino member, this is something that is really important to me. Having both those messages is something that we strive to achieve and we will achieve.”

United Way campaign provides resources for local organizations

by Sarah Hassan

Asst. Match Editor-in-Chief

During the month of October, Pine View along with Sarasota County took part in the United Way campaign by donating money to local organizations. For at least a decade, Pine View teachers have been given pledge sheets with the option of either deducting one to two dollars monthly from their paychecks or paying a one-time donation of their choice.

One teacher who has been donating through United Way is English teacher Paul Dean. Dean has been donating to Planned Parenthood through United Way from the very beginning of the program.

“United Way covers a lot of things. They are a very good organization, but I want my money to go specifically to Sarasota County,” Dean said.

As an international program, United Way’s slogan is, “Small change. Big difference.” The relatively small donations from teachers fund organizations that help people improve their financial stability and education through literacy and tu-

tor programs. These programs provide support for teenagers to graduate high school, and train adults for success in jobs.

Although United Way is an international organization, there are local divisions located around Sarasota. United Way South Sarasota County consists of the cities North Port, Venice, Nokomis, Englewood, Osprey and Laurel. Students who want to help better the community can take part in programs in collaboration with United Way, such as Mission United, Children First, Salvation Army and UnidosNow.

High School Assistant Principal Tara Spielman recalls the collaboration between United Way and the county when working as a teacher at Pine View.

“My hope is that the program will reach beyond the one month of campaigning... I send emails with one more tidbit about the program [each week to the teachers during the month of campaigning].”

For more information on how to help with the program, visit United Way’s website: UnitedWaySuncoast.org

Critics raise concerns over SRO training

by Ben Gordon
Opinion Editor

Six-year-old Kaia Rolle arrived at her Orlando elementary school Sept. 19 expecting a normal day. Rolle, who suffers from sleep apnea, did not get much sleep that night. She was sent to the office after acting up in class, was charged with battery, and left her school in handcuffs — she was “Baker Acted”.

Instances like these, where critics say that students suffering from mental illness are misunderstood and face unfair consequences, are frequent. In the eyes of mental health advocates, the lack of awareness of the scope of the mental health crisis, combined with a lack of knowledge exhibited by the very people tasked with combating it, is part of the reason why the mental health crisis has reached the point where it is today.

The rapid increase in the number of people held under the Baker Act is a prime example of an increasing awareness of the mental health crisis. The Florida Mental Health Act, commonly known as the Baker Act, allows for involuntary examination of those who may have a mental illness, or could be harmful to themselves or others. According to the University of South Florida Baker Act Reporting Center, 36,000 were “Baker Acted” in the 2017-2018 school year, more than ever before, with 13,000 of those under the age of 13.

Since collection began in 2001, those impacted by the act has spiked. But, has the

number of people who struggle with mental health increased? Probably not. This implies that progress has been made in the quest for mental health awareness, but mental health advocacy organizations argue that not enough is being done to address students who struggle with mental health.

After the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, the Florida Legislature

when they are trained properly to handle situations where the safety of students and others is in question. In Sarasota County, SROs receive 40 hours of crisis intervention, six hours of youth mental health and first aid training, two hours of Baker Act training and four hours of de-escalation training.

In the State of Florida as a whole, the requirements cover less ground. The only require-

ment, said.

Mental health advocates say that 40 hours of training is nowhere near enough, and that more attention should be placed on mental health awareness and training. They point to studies that show it could take 40 hours of training just to understand the teenage brain.

“[Current training] creates a strong foundation, but as mental health training con-

“I feel like we need to make sure that everyone knows that they have the support they need if they are struggling with their mental health,” Chan said.

Pine View’s own SRO, Officer John Bobianski, wants students to know that he is there to make them feel safe and understood.

“All students need to realize they can speak to any adult on campus about their mental health,” Bobianski said.

“It’s every adult’s responsibility on campus to help students in regards to all aspects of student life. I can refer students to our counselors and school psychologists if needed,” he said.

Proponents of increased mental health awareness argue that while the Baker Act is helpful in many scenarios and can bring help to those who otherwise would not have received it, it also targets those who exhibit anti-social behavior, not necessarily mental illness. They claim SROs alone should not be able to make the decision to send students to be psychologically evaluated.

Regardless, any reform of Baker Act enforcement would have to be mandated by the Florida Legislature, since under Florida state Statute, only SRO’s can enforce the Baker Act on school campuses.

Until state law changes, the Sarasota County Schools Police Department can not make any adjustments to the rule. Proponents of reform argue that while the law cannot change, the training that officers receive certainly can.

BAKER ACTS IN FLORIDA: FACTS AND STATISTICS

199,944 people were “Baker Acted” in the most recent released data from 2017

less than 2%

are ultimately deemed a danger to themselves or others and admitted to mental hospitals

109% increase since Baker Act data collection began in 2001

BASED ON INFORMATION FROM THE BAKER ACT REPORTING CENTER AND THE ORLANDO SENTINEL

GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON

passed the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act. The act mandates that every public school in Florida must keep a school resource officer (SRO) on campus at all times during the school day.

In the eyes of most officials, SROs have proven to be effective and beneficial to schools

ments are the eight-hour crisis intervention training and six-hour youth mental health and first aid training, as mandated by Florida Senate Bill 7026.

“Prior to this bill, there was no requirement for officer training, but training was provided by the agencies of the deputies working in schools,” Tim Enos, Chief of the Sarasota County Schools Police Depart-

ment, said. “This is a crucial part of being a school resource officer — to identify students that are in crisis and provide them with the assistance they need.”

At Pine View, students like eleventh-grader Rosenna Chan have voiced their concerns that SROs do not have enough training to ensure that every student feels safe and understood.

Student educates on suicide prevention

by Olivia Hansen
Humor Editor

When twelfth-grader Marissa Fontaine lost her dad to suicide in August 2019, she recognized it as a chance to spread awareness about mental health and to vocalize her story so that she could make a change firsthand, instead of resorting to negativity.

Fontaine first began raising awareness through social media posts and initiating conversations with classmates and peers to reverse the stigma around mental health.

“That’s one thing that has affected me coming back to school and back into my normal activities; you don’t realize how much kids [mention suicide ironically] until every time they say it and it stings,” Fontaine said.

In October 2019, Fontaine helped spread awareness for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and raised money by selling bracelets for \$3 apiece. Fontaine also took part in a

5K Out of the Darkness walk sponsored by AFSP Oct. 20 where her friends and family gathered to honor to her father and others that have suffered from suicidal thoughts or actions.

“I love seeing more Pine View students and student organizations at the walk each year but at the same time it saddens me, since this usually indicates that more students have experienced the effects of self-harm and/or suicide,” Assistant Principal Tara Spielman said. “This was my eleventh year attending the walk and I have a feeling the presence of our students will increase in the coming years as the stigma of mental illness begins to be erased.”

“The walk lasted from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., bringing people from all over Sarasota County together to bring attention to the matter at hand and pay respect to those who have died from

suicide.

Wanting to make him proud is what drives our emotions and strengths and our desire to raise awareness,” Fontaine said.

With her two younger siblings in mind, Fontaine shifted her focus from herself to their well-being by dedicating time and care to ensure their attitude remains positive and optimistic during this time.

“I took my brother out for ice cream the other day because he was really upset and having a rough time. It was such a small, really precious moment, and it made me super appreciative of the small things,” Fontaine said.

To ensure that he will be with them forever, Fontaine, her younger sister and her mother got matching tattoos on their wrist of the “I love you” sign. In the last selfie they took together, Fontaine’s father was shown making the “I love you” sign with his hands.

Fontaine’s goal throughout her journey is to ultimately impact the life of someone struggling with suicidal thoughts or mental illness.

“If I could save just one person from going through what my dad went through, it would be an astronomical change for me. Any type of awareness I can bring to that or comfort I can bring to people going through something similar would be a major goal of mine,” Fontaine said. “I know that my dad would not want me to react in a negative way, and if I could alleviate just one person’s pain or help one person feel comfortable talking about something they are struggling with, he would be proud of me.”

Fontaine’s family has received steadfast support and love from friends and loved ones; their father left an impact on everyone around him.

“Anybody who knew my dad knew that he was the happiest person, always cracking jokes. He was everybody’s dad,” Fontaine said.



Students stand together following the 5K Out of the Darkness walk sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Oct. 20. In addition to the two hour walk, Fontaine also helped raise awareness for the foundation by selling bracelets for \$3 apiece.

PHOTO BY OLIVIA HANSEN

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Pine View takes a step back on green initiatives

by Anna Labiner
Entertainment Editor

Though Pine View was once a front runner in the push towards a more active green initiative — earning the esteemed title of a Green-Ribbon School in 2015 — efforts toward promoting sustainability have slowed down, with fewer major projects (like the solar-panel installation) being completed with environmental awareness in mind.

Pine View's sustainability initiative has not exactly fallen flat; however, it is in need of rekindling on behalf of the student body, faculty and administration according to science teacher David Yotsuda, a prominent advocate for environmental awareness on campus. At a time when environmental awareness and education is receiving global attention, many agree that Pine View should be involved in such a relevant movement.

One such student is twelfth-grader Christiana Guan, who is the current president of Go Green, a member of the Sarasota Environmental Alliance and a regular attendee of school board sustainability meetings.

"I think that we have dialed back in our environmental initiative, which is ironic because this is a time when other people are becoming more environmentally friendly," Guan said.

Although the recent decline in Pine View's environmental initiative can be broadly attributed to Sarasota County's recycling issue, in which recycling vendors have become more selective in terms of what they consider recyclable materials, this is not the only factor that has led to a decline. According to Yotsuda, the issue seems to stem from a recent loss of staff members concerned with such issues as well as fragmentation on how sustainability can be promoted.

"We still have many projects going on, it's [the environmental initiative] just not as big as it used to be, primarily because Mrs. Templeton retired, and then two of the parents who helped — their children graduated so they really don't have ties to the school anymore," Yotsuda said.

Essentially, the movement towards environmental sustainability is present at Pine View, though it requires students and staff members to pick up where previous activists left off.

Former Pine View science teacher Beverly Templeton is one such activist, who played a prominent role in starting the discussion of sustainability on campus through her participation as a G3 club sponsor and contribution to the Green-Ribbon initiative among other projects. Templeton's recent retirement is one of the many factors that has weakened Pine View's sustainability outreach.

"If students are passionate about environmental issues, they must become active and step up. Find issues and projects that you can just pour your heart

into to make a difference — the faculty support is there, students just need to get the ball rolling. It's so important for young people to be active, to be local, to really step up and make their voices heard because this is your future," Templeton said.

Issues on how to overcome sustainability concerns such as the recycling dilemma are county-wide; however, Pine View has been noted by some county officials as a particular offender in terms of a lack of recycling.

"Pine View is very bad about everything coming out of the cafeteria... The cafeteria contamination is horrible, it goes straight to the garbage," Superintendent Todd Bowden* said during a meeting for the Sarasota County Sustainability group Oct. 21.

However, Bowden's statement has since been refuted by both cafeteria staff, who claim to have taken initiative regarding sustainability, and Principal Dr. Stephen Covert.

"If we want to do something systematically, maybe we ought to look at why the district is buying Styrofoam trays," Covert said. "...I would certainly hate to think, not having seen him in our student union, or in our dumpster area, that [Bowden] would have any way of making that claim."

Contrary to the superintendent's stance, Covert, as well as teachers like Yotsuda, can attest that Pine View does retain its commendable reputation of sustainability, specifically the fact that Pine View is the only school in the district to receive a Green-Ribbon award.

As for the future of sustainability on campus, involved students and teachers like Guan and Yotsuda maintain a positive outlook, trusting that Pine View will always be active on the environmental front. Many clubs and programs dedicated to environmental preservation and awareness, such as G3, Go Green, E-waste and Tree Huggers, remain relevant in Pine View's social atmosphere. But the missing piece of the environmental movement seems to be more general groups dedicated to tackling environmental sustainability from all sides. Such a group, S@PV (Sustainability at Pine View), was once a major contributor on campus, organizing events and programs to promote environmental awareness. But S@PV is no longer active. This opens up the floor for anyone to step up.

"The district and the community have to come together and say, 'This is something important to us'... all we need to make a difference is energy, and passion, and people... It's (sustainability practices) good for humanity, it's good for future generations, and there could potentially be an immediate impact for us now," Covert said.

*At the time this went to press, Todd Bowden's separation agreement to resign was pending approval from the school board.

Online tool aids teachers in Sarasota County

by Mahitha Ramachandran
Asst. Opinion Editor

Sarasota County is home to a wealth of cultural and educational experiences. Connecting teachers and parents to these opportunities in one accessible and efficient way has been the mission of EdExploreSRQ.com.

EdExploreSRQ.com was launched in 2011 through partnerships between the Patterson Foundation, the Community Foundation of Sarasota, and the Education Foundation of Sarasota. The website provides a practical search tool where teachers can search for "explorations" by subject, grade level and exploration type: off-campus exploration, in-school performance, teaching artist residency, etc.

Angela Hartvigsen, parent of ninth-grader Will Hartvigsen and alumnus Ben Hartvigsen, is the manager of EdExploreSRQ for Sarasota County schools and has been working with EdExplore since the idea for the web-based platform was formed.

"Our first iteration of this site was actually built by someone in the IT department with the Patterson Foundation coming in for support, but now we have a community partnership team that leads because now it's much more than a website," Angela Hartvigsen said.

The partnerships and foundations that EdExplore are built on also provide grant programs which teachers can apply for. This allows teachers to maximize learning opportunities throughout the school year as well as make these opportunities accessible to low-income students.

The ease and accessibility that EdExploreSRQ provides drew the attention of Pine View third-grade teacher Freda Williams. Her first exposure to the program was when she watched an

art teacher conduct a origami storytelling activity during a teachers' workshop.

Teaching artists are individuals around the community who have an expertise in a certain subject. Many of the teaching artist residencies on EdExplore are interdisciplinary, combining science with dance or art with engineering, for instance. These individuals are trained to come into the classroom and lead an activity with the students.

Freda Williams recognizes the benefits that these activities have on her students, especially at Pine View.

"[The students] are such out-of-the-box thinkers and it's something super engaging and fun, but also aligned to the standards," Williams said. "I love this site because there are many teaching artists around town, but these particular ones really want to work with teachers and have taken the time to learn what it's like to be in the classroom."

In fact, through EdExplore, Williams found a teaching performance artist that is going to help the third-graders create a showcase, where students will write their own scripts and create their own sets and costumes under her direction to eventually perform for their parents in February.

"There are Pine View teachers that definitely are utilizing it and connecting to it. You don't tend to write as many grants because there's usually ways to find funding within Pine View, which is a really good thing," Hartvigsen said.

However, this involvement is largely in elementary classrooms, and high school involvement is especially lacking. Hartvigsen hopes this will encourage more teachers to take advantage of the resources on EdExplore, including high school teachers.



Green Ribbon Award

GRAPHIC BY LEO GORDON

50 YEARS OF PINE VIEW FAIR

In the first years of the fair it was themed. One popular theme was the Election of 1912 that even included a stage set-up for debates.

In the past, teachers and students had little to work with, but everyone was very creative and free to think and do whatever they wanted.

Ben Turoff who is a PVA member of 19 years spent his first six years heading the fair and then again this year after a 12 years hiatus.

While music is such a huge part of the fair today, it was not in years past.

GRAPHIC BY LUCY COLLINS

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The landing showed the country's potential to explore beyond Earth.

Under the Artemis program, NASA hopes to send astronauts to the moon by 2024.

www.nasa.gov

A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

Spanish Teacher Patricia Gerlek

"Everyone pretty much stopped what they were doing, huddled around the television, and watched. People in the cities would just stop in front of the TVs in the windows and just stop and stare and go, 'Oh wow,' and then look up at the sky."



"I would love [the younger generation] to be as excited as I was when we watched a man touch down and actually walk on the moon, and to have the same experience when we explore other planets and other galaxies."

GRAPHIC BY SARAH CATALANO, REPORTING BY FELICITY CHANG

Artificial intelligence's influence grows

Pine View alumnus urges participation in new tech

by Kasumi Wade
Sports Editor

While robotic waiters and lifelike automated assistance may still be inventions of science fiction, artificial intelligence (AI) is taking today's society by storm. Whether you realize it or not, AI is part of everyday life and continues to increase its influence on day-to-day activities. AI is the developmental theory of using computer systems and technology to efficiently perform tasks that would otherwise be done by human beings. Today, there are many ways AI is integrated into society. Autonomous cars, autonomous drones, translation devices, smart home devices like Amazon's Alexa and Google Home, virtual assistants like Siri, and other invisible systems like those of which underlie the economy and finance are all examples of actively effective AI.

These devices' sophistication is increasing every day, making the study of them more significant — in an emerging field, it is necessary to ensure safety by preventing malfunctions that could physically harm people, destroy elements of societal infrastructure like power lines, or be utilized in a malicious manner. Josh Achiam, a 2009 Pine View alum, is currently a sixth-year PhD AI student at the University of California, Berkeley, while simultaneously working as a full-time member of the technical staff at OpenAI — a corporation researching and developing friendly AI in a manner to benefit humanity as a whole. Achiam works on developing and testing algorithms for deep reinforcement learning to ensure its safety. Using reinforcement learn-

ing, the concept of utilizing computers to solve problems with trial and error; Achiam tests AI technologies in target games. These games help improve computers by making them repeatedly play to the highest possible score so the computer can learn what works and what does not. Achiam uses various simulated physics environments where a simulated robot attempts to accomplish a task in a simulated world.

As creating and ensuring the safety of AI is a long, in-depth process, the work Achiam does specifically on a day-to-day basis is centered around fundamental research. While other workers and researchers further down the line directly impact an AI device's outcome in society, Achiam focuses on its beginning development. As a whole, OpenAI provides insight and techniques needed to achieve safety in set circumstances.

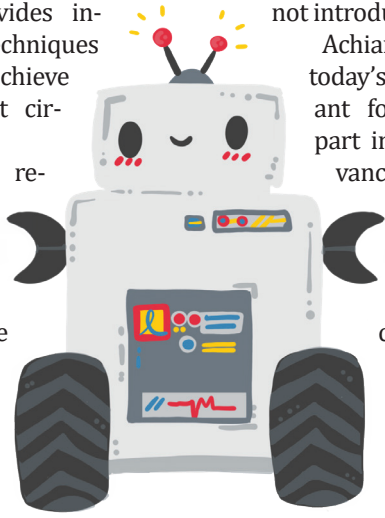
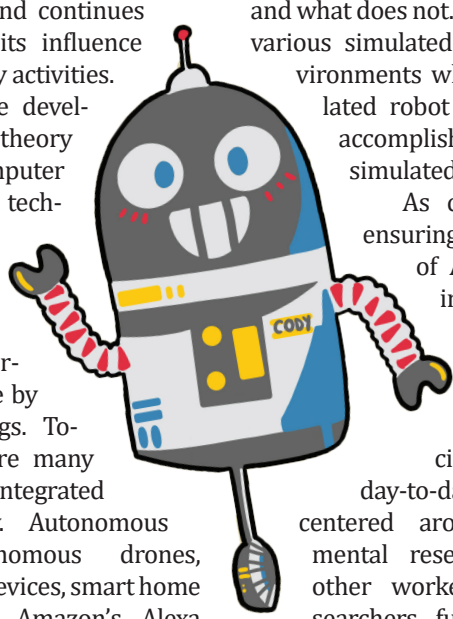
"I think research in AI safety is particularly important because whenever you have a new field of technology, where that technology is going to become very consequential in the way that people live their lives, if you don't plan for safety from the start, then you wind up with a lot of unexpected issues that can directly harm people in one way or another," Achiam said. AI allows activities that once had to be done by humans at a smaller scale to increase

significantly. Making certain services hyper-available allows humans to focus on other tasks and spend less time on ones that can easily be done by machines. For example, where translations would usually take a vast number of highly trained experts, translation devices can do the same work in seconds. Developers in the AI field aim to improve the quality of life by making certain aspects easier.

"While we are not yet at the stage where AI is doing the most important things for improving quality of life, like individual education or complete medical diagnosis, these things are actually potential outcomes down the line of this type of technology," Achiam said. "Frankly, they are not that far into the future, which is the amazing thing. I think we will be able to see a lot of these within our lifetime."

As someone who works in AI safety, Achiam said he sympathizes with some of the stigmas surrounding AI. There is the possibility of new AI technology negatively affecting the economy as it could suddenly render many jobs obsolete if not introduced with caution.

Achiam believes that in today's world it's important for people to take part in technological advancements. As technology will rapidly change the way we live over the next few decades, people, and younger generations mainly, need to embrace it. "Especially at a place like Pine View, where there is access to great resources, students should make an effort to engage with how technology development will impact your lives and careers. And while possible, learn as much about it and get ahead of the trend," Achiam said. "Instead of just watching from the sidelines, you can be a part of it, and go contribute and build."



GRAPHICS BY ZOE MERRITT

Students nurture future space food

NASA partnerships 'produce' data on edible crops for the ISS

by Isabella Gaskill
Web Section Editor

Planting the seeds of the future, Pine View students have taken part in NASA's Growing Beyond Earth Challenge (GBE), a collaboration between the Kennedy Space Center and the Fairchild Botanical Gardens, providing important data that could one day help NASA choose plants to be grown by astronauts on the International Space Station (ISS).

Pine View currently hosts two grow boxes, one located in science teacher Dylan Bell's classroom, managed by three seventh-grade students, and the other in Anatomy and Physiology teacher Flo Ames' classroom, which is managed by the Tree Huggers club. The boxes are specially designed with LED lighting, a watering system, fertilizer, pots, soil, and the seeds themselves, which are grown and observed in one-month cycles.

These measurements are sent to NASA, where they are used to determine the best plants to grow on the ISS — the ideal plant grows quickly, has good flavor, provides large amounts of edible food and is stress-tolerant. Some schools involved in the program are also testing additional factors, such as harvesting strategies.

Bell became involved in the program when he was contacted by a parent volunteer, who was looking for a teacher who would be willing to keep the box in their classroom and su-



Tenth-grader Leila MacKenzie measures the growth of plants that could someday be grown on the International Space Station. Along with other members of Tree Huggers club and students of Dylan Bell, MacKenzie works to provide data for NASA. PHOTO BY LEO GORDON

pervise the experiment. "I agreed because it's NASA," Bell said. "Anything involved with space I like to do." Seventh-grade students Wesley Wehleg, Lee Volpe and Jack Zhou, three of Bell's prior students, volunteer their time and come in daily to work on the project.

The other box, hosted in Ames' classroom, is managed by the Tree Huggers club. After learning about the program, Ames offered the idea of getting involved to the club's co-presidents and twelfth-graders Ellie Winer and Marguerite Andrich, who agreed to work with the program. They set up their grow box in late October and have been measuring the plants and checking their growth frequently.

"Since last year the club has gained a lot more members

and volunteer opportunities. We've been able to expand our projects by partnering with organizations like NASA's Growing Beyond Earth program," Andrich said. "In the future, we are hoping to have a broader impact on the community and even wider. We were initially worried that we wouldn't be able to find any large scale projects to work on, but the NASA program is a really important step in developing our club even further."

One plant at a time, Pine View students are contributing to a database that NASA will one day use for sustainable farming more than 200 miles above the surface of the Earth. For more information on this program or to get involved, students can contact the Tree Huggers club or visit www.fairchildgarden.org.

Believing is seeing

Confirmation bias changes our perceptions

by Peyton Harris
Focus Editor

In any debate lurking in the depths of an Instagram comment section or Twitter thread, one is likely to find users refusing to acknowledge an opposing viewpoint — even dismissing the opposing evidence as misleading or entirely untrue, oftentimes without any real evidence. Or perhaps a friend is obsessing over minor details in a social situation, things that seem insignificant, but just can't be put aside.

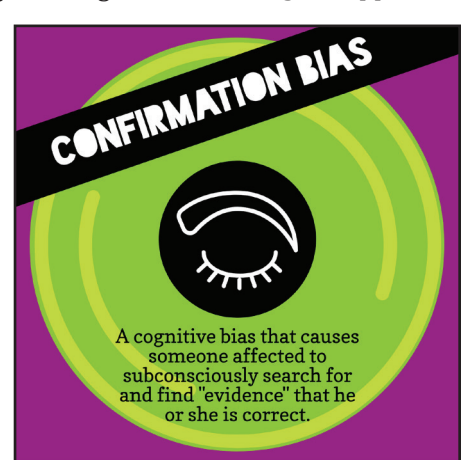
From an outside perspective, it's easy to recognize bias for what it is. We scoff at these arguments and seemingly foolish situations, thinking ourselves to be in a superior state of mind; however, we're all privy to these same biases, even if they are less apparent.

We don't hold prejudices on purpose. The tendency to believe what we want is subconscious, deriving from our instinctual desire to be right. The formal term is confirmation bias, explained by Psychology Today as occurring "from the direct influence of desire on beliefs. When people would like a certain idea or concept to be true, they end up believing it to be true." It's a form of cognitive bias; essentially, it's a shortcut the brain takes to simplify information processing.

It's easier to stick to preconceived notions than to analyze our opinions and understand new perspectives. We tend to cherry-pick information that reaffirms our mindset and reject information that threatens it. The idea that one's fundamental beliefs

might be flawed is difficult for most people to accept. This self-deception is natural to us, unintentionally trapping us in our mindset like a train on tracks.

Confirmation bias plays a pivotal role in today's divisive political climate. The idea of "fake news" has paved the way for facts to be easily dismissed as sensationalist, thus reaffirming one's own point in their mind. Hysterical debates between opposing party members significantly reduce the chances of concession — hating the opposition becomes as



GRAPHIC BY SARAH CATALANO

common as a cold. The cycle of a conviction and "evidence" pushes people farther to the extremes of their opinions and away from a middle ground, which is desperately needed for compromise to be reached. Confirmation bias doesn't just manifest itself into politics, but in our own inner perceptions of self. For people with anxiety or low self-esteem, confirmation bias plays a vital role in how they view the world. For example, one who suspects that a friend doesn't like them will be biased toward all the friend's "negative" behavior, clinging to affirmative information and ultimately conclude that they are disliked. While the nature of confirmation bias may seem inescapable, it only truly holds power over those who are unwilling to reexamine their views. By actively evaluating our own mindsets and stepping outside of ourselves to see things from a different perspective, we can keep our brains (and biases) in check.

Ethnic Markets of Sarasota

When it comes to diverse cultures and unique customs, preservation is key. In this spread, The Torch urges readers to step outside of their foodie comfort zones and expand their cultural repertoire by visiting these cultivating ethnic markets.

Vung Tau Market

by Lucy Collins
Web Section Editor

Creating a cultural hearth for both locals and visitors, Vung Tao Oriental market offers a wide range of products that are unique to Asian culture. Items such as clothing, beverages and cooking ingredients dot the aisles of the store, creating a vivid display of traditional Asian commodities.

The ethnic grocery store is tucked into a small strip mall near downtown Sarasota, a neon sign illuminating its presence. Inside, rows of shelves line the perimeter of the store, each one dedicated to a certain kind of product, such as traditional Asian noodles, and an assortment of accompanying sauces and spices. The tremendous variety of products offers a more immersive experience for customers. In the back of the store, fish kept in refrigerators and fresh vegetables like Thai eggplant and chili give an assortment of options for a taste of Asia, along with exotic candies, coconut flavored cookies, and popular ethnic drinks.

Food is not the market's only specialty. Customers can find figurines and toys scattered across the store with an abundance of bowls, spoons, plates, and cups littering the shelves, skillfully decorated with a soft, floral design coupled with an affordable price. Customers can

additionally find clothing in the back corner of the store, such as dresses, shirts, jackets and hats representative of traditional Asian culture.

In addition to their classic market-products, Vung Tau caters specific dishes that can be ordered for pick up, hot and ready to devour. They offer traditional ethnic food from Thailand, China, Malaysia, Korea, Japan, India, and Vietnam and allow for some sampling prior to placing an order.

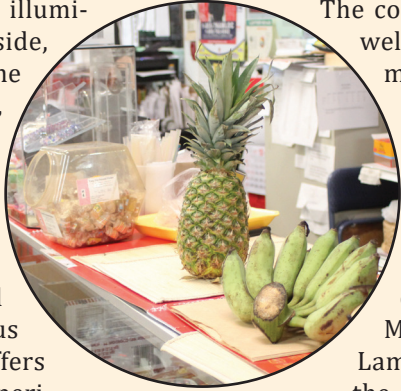


PHOTO BY LUCY COLLINS

The cooks take requests, as well, for any craving one might have.

Vung Tao's employees pride themselves in their diversity in terms of their scattered origins and varied ethnic backgrounds. Manager Amanda Lam's parents arrived in the United States from Hong Kong, where she frequently visits.

"My favorite part about working here is the food, it reminds me of Hong Kong," Lam said.

The store sees both local connoisseurs of cultural dishes and new visitors, providing a wide variety of Asian staples under one roof. With an abundance of tasty traditional treats, intricate clothing, and trinkets, Vung Tao Oriental Market truly does it all, and effectively offers an authentic look at the eastern part of the world.

Vung Tao Oriental Market is located at 1333B N Washington Blvd.

Rating:
5/5 Torches



Scandinavian Gifts

by Lora Rini
Match Layout Artist

Voted best gourmet food store in Sarasota by the Herald Tribune's Readers' Choice in 2019, Scandinavian Gifts is the perfect place to get in touch with Scandinavia's rich culture. The store was also a finalist in the gift shops category, a ranking justified by their cheery merchandise and welcoming staff.

Scandinavian Gifts's colorful facade definitely stands out next to the simple designs of its neighboring stores. The window displays are packed full of everything from ceramic mugs and bowls to potholders; yet, these displays offer only a glimpse of the many novelties inside.

Upon entering, the first thing one might notice is the sheer volume of merchandise. Scandinavian Gifts does not waste any space, leaving every wall and surface completely covered. While this might sound overwhelming, the effect is actually the opposite — it creates a warm environment, almost like someone's home.

The market carries merchandise from a wide range of Nordic countries, including Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, and Greenland. Their products include home decor, clothing, kitchen necessities, food, books and much more.

Scandinavian Gifts also has a devoted local following. One such customer is Therese Bonasera, who moved to the United States from Sweden in 1998 and visits Scandinavian Gifts around holidays or whenever she wants a taste of home.

"It reminds me of going home, and Sweden, and my family there, so I think that's what I like about it. They're al-

ways very nice and helpful and if you ask about something that they don't have, they even buy it so you can buy it from them," Bonasera said.

Though the products displayed at the market are all of high quality, there are some clear standout goods when it comes to sales. One of the more popular products is the kringle, an O-shaped Danish pastry that comes in a multitude of flavors. Another best seller is the Swedish dishcloth, which is a mix between a paper towel and a sponge and can be reused multiple times.



PHOTO BY LORA RINI

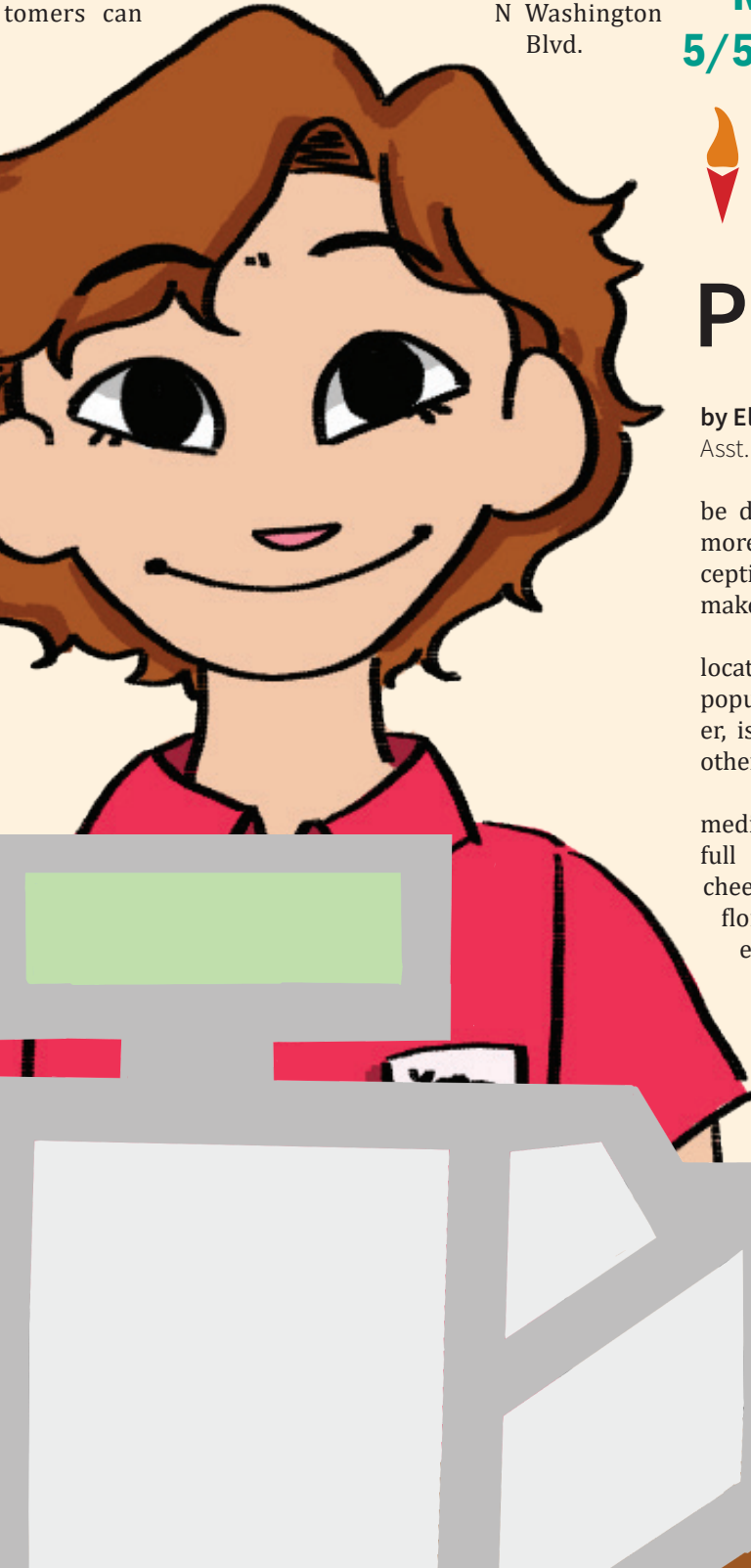
The employees in the market contribute to the store's cheerful ambiance — they are respectful of customers' boundaries, but are always willing to answer any questions or point a first-time visitor in the right direction.

"I particularly enjoy the merchandise — it's colorful, cheerful, happy," Scandinavian Gifts owner Pam Stepsky said.

Stepsky opened Scandinavian Gifts 30 years ago. Her family owned a Scandinavian market in western New York while she was growing up, so it is no surprise that Stepsky decided to open a gift shop of her own. While she was born and raised in the United States, Stepsky has Norwegian heritage, so the business truly runs in the family.

Scandinavian Gifts is located at 2166 Gulf Gate Dr, Sarasota, FL 34231 and is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Saturday.

Rating:
5/5 Torches



Piccolo Italian Market & Deli

by Elizabeth Hopkins
Asst. Editor-In-Chief

While its humble, unassuming storefront may be deceiving, Piccolo Italian Market & Deli offers more than what meets the eye, displaying an exceptional variety of Old World, Italian favorites that make this spot a hidden gem.

Situated in an often crowded plaza, Piccolo is located just North of the Clever Cup, a cafe popular with students. Piccolo, however, is surprisingly roomy, unlike the other businesses found in the area.

An expansive deli counter immediately catches the eye, chock full of authentic Italian meats, cheeses and olives all under a florescent glare. Adjacent, however, is where the real action is — shelves of imported goodies line the walls.

Piccolo offers breadth as well as depth. For instance, the coffee selection is particularly extensive — Espresso? Dark roasts — Piccolo has got you covered for all your fancy, Italian coffee needs.

Piccolo also offers a remarkable array of pastas. In fact, at the far corner, a whole refrigerator is full of nothing but fresh pasta. Dry varieties are even more plentiful, with shelves upon shelves dedicated to spaghetti, pappardelle, penne and much, much more.



PHOTO BY ELIZABETH HOPKINS

Along with its abundance of exclusive packaged foods, Piccolo's stand out commitment to quality is also on display, earning the market a loyal, local following.

What's more, Piccolo boasts its own small kitchen, serving up classic Italian recipes with homestyle flair. Many patrons dine in, feasting on tasty comfort foods such as their variety of subs. The Italian, with the perfect ratio of fresh, crusty bread to meat to cheese and other toppings, is truly a delight. Prices, however for sandwiches and other products can be quite steep.

Piccolo also offers hot options, like the Chicken Parm and Chicken Marsala, all served over pasta with a side of bread. Their famous Meatball Sub, dripping with hot marinara and melted provolone, is also a favorite, served on Mondays.

Among Gulf Gate's diverse array of eateries, Piccolo stands out. Whether you're looking to find a

casual lunch or to whip up your own gourmet meal, Piccolo is the, albeit slightly under-wraps, destination for all things Italian in Sarasota. Just one visit will make you a regular in no time.

Piccolo Italian Market & Deli can be found at 6518 Gateway Ave, Sarasota, FL 34231.

Rating:
4/5 Torches



Student takes his talents from the Broadway stage to the Congress floor

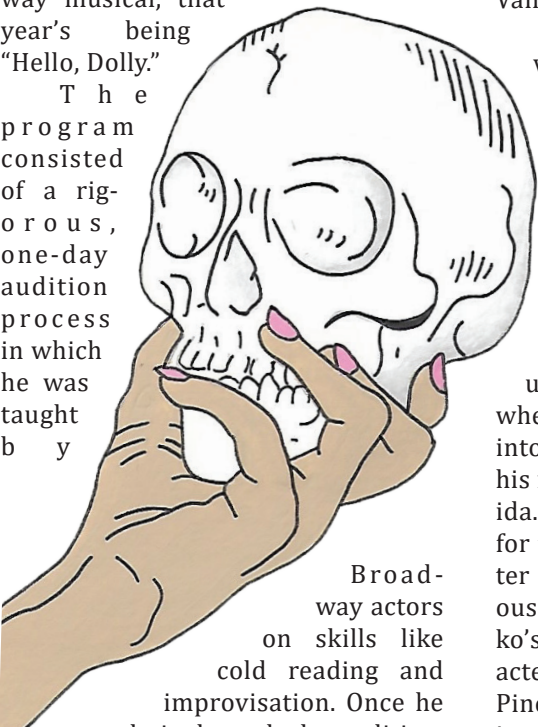
Nesterenko uses his acting skills to facilitate his transition to Speech and Debate

by Lily Quartermaine
Asst. Entertainment Editor

In the summer of 2018, at just 14 years old, tenth-grader Andrei Nesterenko had the opportunity to perform on the most coveted stage in the country: Broadway.

Nesterenko was part of the Broadway Artist's Alliance, a summer program where he got the chance to act alongside his peers in a Broadway musical, that year's being "Hello, Dolly."

The program consisted of a rigorous, one-day audition process in which he was taught by



Broadway actors on skills like cold reading and improvisation. Once he made it through the audition, he participated in just one week of training in preparation for the remarkable night. In the end, he performed in a one-night show of "Hello,

Dolly" in the Shubert Theatre. Nesterenko credits his involvement in this program as his peak.

"It was easily one of the best experiences of my life," he said.

During this experience, Nesterenko was able to meet one of his biggest inspirations, famous actor Victor Garber. To his delight, Nesterenko ended up playing Garber's "Hello Dolly" character, Mr. Horace Vandergelder, live on stage.

"[Garber] played one of my favorite characters on TV ever, in DC's 'Legends of Tomorrow,'" Nesterenko said.

Nesterenko has always loved acting. He was especially interested in film acting until the age of 12, when he transitioned into stage theater due to his move from New York to Florida. He was then selected to audition for the Broadway Artist's Alliance after a recommendation from a previous acting teacher. One of Nesterenko's close friends, Charles Wald, has acted alongside Nesterenko during Pine View's drama club practices, and is eager to support Nesterenko's talents.

"His technique is very natural, he picks up on things well and he is a good listener. He can emulate the

actions of the people who are guiding him to improve his acting technique very well," Wald said.

However, Nesterenko has recently sought a transition as to how he participates in the world of theater. Along with being in the drama club, Nesterenko is currently in his second year of Speech and Debate and is beginning to focus on it more heavily. As he settles into his transition from acting to Speech and Debate, Nesterenko finds that his background in theater carries over.

"It gave me a chance to speak with others on complex issues," Nesterenko said, in reference to why he began participating in the club.

Since joining, he has been to two local tournaments and has been given the opportunity to speak his mind on a wide range of topics. Nesterenko especially enjoys the after-parties involved with the club and the interactions he gets to make with his audience.

Speech and Debate is one of Pine View's largest clubs and has a diverse selection of activities and attracts a myriad of students. The events involved in the club, especially the interpretation-based ones, require a

lot of the same skills and strategies that theater has to offer. A

large group of these students, like Nesterenko, use their coinciding interests in theater and speech and debate to their ad-



vantage, whether it be a Congress student needing to improvise in the middle of a challenging debate or an Interpretation student channeling a heartfelt character through their piece.

Nesterenko's acting repertoire is prominently reflected in his grandiose and theatrical personality.

"He's a trustworthy gentleman who always puts others before himself," tenth-grader Greyden Whitfield said.

Currently, Nesterenko is deciding on where to take his next step in the acting world, but he remains positive nonetheless.

GRAPHICS AND PHOTO BY ANNA LABINER

THE TORCH'S LOCAL FIND

It's time to ditch that shabby, lone backpack-buried ballpoint and upgrade to a more sophisticated school supply set that will match your busy and work-filled school week. Write-On Sarasota is the perfect local pit stop that will cater to everyone's inner avid note taker. From fresh, leather-bound journals, to upscale sharp pens that will make anyone's handwriting look Vsco worthy — Write-On has something for everyone. Their inventory, including quaint, high-quality greeting cards, upscale calligraphy tools, niche desk nick-nacks, and more, also serve as the perfect local gift for generations of family members this holiday season.



WRITE ON SARASOTA



GRAPHIC BY MADI HOLMES

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GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

REPORTING LOCAL

GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON
PHOTO BY ZOE MERRITT

A Day in the Life of SNN Executive Producer Kathy Leon



by Alyson Mizanin
Asst. News Editor

Getting started

The office is silent, save for the police scanner's constant babble, its static breaking through the clicking of keys on a keyboard with news of various 911 calls and banter between officers.

The night outside buzzes with the sound of cicadas as computer monitors, open in various tabs, flash with the newest reports from both across the world to those centralized back home in the Sunshine State.

A cup of coffee rarely finds itself abandoned by an individual who cannot help but wish for another cup as she gazes at the digital clock that boasts its proud message of 3:23 a.m.

As night waits with bated breath, Sarasota News Network (SNN)'s producer and anchor Kathy Leon

finds herself facing a daunting task: create a three hour broadcast full to the brim with information pertaining to local, national and business-related news, so as to best suit the viewing needs of Sarasotans.

Leon's mission grows more consuming under her necessity to keep her reports timely. If any events, monumental as they may be, have occurred more than a day prior to the broadcast without any substantial update, they are quickly dismissed.

As morning makes its way to take over the night's suspense, Leon has filled the once empty shells of SNN's assembly program, NewsKing, with rows of stories containing scripts and associated video content. In order to do so, Leon looks over SNN's 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. broadcasts to see which stories could carry over into the morning news. Modifications are made where necessary in order to guarantee timeliness in the reports, and other story concepts come from a collection of various sources. SNN partners with NBC, CNN, Tampa's WFLA, and

the Sarasota Herald-Tribune, all of which allow for mutual story-sharing among the sources. Leon's position as an executive producer allows her to make adjustments where she deems most suitable, leading to headline and phrasing changes within the stories.

On the grind

To the average person, the endeavor is formidable, given the time constraint and the requirements each story needs to fulfill. And yet, this process is repeated by Leon on a day-to-day basis; each morning starts with punching the clock at 3:00 a.m. before the day is finished and doesn't stop until 11:00 a.m.

When producing a show, Leon does her best to include as much diverse news into the broadcast as possible; with commercials and time allotted to weather forecasting taking out a large portion of the show, only the most integral information pertaining to Sarasotans and their livelihood can be included.

The stories having passed those requirements are then condensed to 30 seconds, so as to best fall within the flow of the broadcast. Packages, or stories consisting of content which simply cannot be reduced and have considerable amounts of accompanying video footage, can last up to a minute and a half; however, the number of packages in any given broadcast must be outweighed by smaller stories for viewer appeal.

"When you think about the way we're going in the past several years, we've seen how Twitter has affected what we do. We try to tweet everything now — a lot of our news tips from the police department or the sheriffs are on Twitter. Then, we'll follow up on it [on air], but we find out what's happening first," Leon said. "It's very important to get every fact straight so you can get the actual information in that small version. I thought 30 seconds was short for a

story at first, but when you go to Twitter and there's only so many words you can use, it definitely makes you focus and has definitely changed journalism."

Blocks and broadcast

The assembly of the newscast is then separated into blocks, or pieces broken up based on commercial timing and the span of the show. Blocks are divided into sub-categories pertaining to various levels of news.

Broadcasts

begin with an opening block, in which Leon has her standard "Hello again, everyone" message to start off her next three hours on air alongside co-anchor Don Brennan. This three-hour-long broadcast lasts from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.; although as much information is included in the original script, major updates or breaking news that occur while the show is live require Leon to give Brennan control as anchor while she makes necessary changes.

Blocks coming past the opener are separated into local, national and business news following that order.

"We're local news, but of course you have to talk about the top stories that are happening in the country. I would love to put every great story I could find, but... it has to affect, in some way, [Sarasotans], or just be an insanely crazy story," Leon explained.

Because Leon holds the executive producer position at SNN, she enjoys following a pattern to her newscasts. When creating morning shows, she chooses to keep her broadcast relatively light to "leave the viewer in a good mood to start their day,

while also being informed."

The shows conclude on a light-hearted note whenever possible; such follows Leon's hope to keep her viewers positive after having finished her show, while also parting with valuable information to carry them throughout their day.

A bit of history

Leon's presence in the business over the past 26 years has allowed her to see how changes have been made in increments. Leon started her career as a reporter for ABC 7, formerly Sarasota's WWSB, before joining the Herald-Tribune in 2003, where she worked as a reporter for 10 years.

"We went through the recession and that really hurt not just broadcast news, but also print news. We had many, many people cut on print size when we worked together and when all this was happening, but I do think that when you have the ability to work with the paper — and we still do, we still bounce ideas off each other, we still call up the paper reporters and see what they're covering, maybe go out on a story together — I think that it's very successful," Leon said.

Making an impact

Broadcast journalism's impact on Leon's life is undeniable, but her influence on Sarasotans' awareness is equally as important. Having started her career because of a desire to stay knowledgeable of what was going on around her, Leon's reporting skills have awarded her six Associated Press awards for her work with hard news and sports stories.

"The reason why I love broadcast journalism is because the video element along with the story... It's the smaller version of the story with the ex-

act details correct, but when you marry it with really good video, I think that is so impactful. With words, you can paint the picture, but actually seeing the picture married with the words is incredibly powerful, and that's what I love about it," Leon said.

Q: What does your typical work day look like?

A: I rise before dawn. I spend a lot of time reading our local stories, but as general manager I also spend a lot of time with managers of our various departments — advertising, circulation, production — and helping with the opinion section of the newspaper/website and talking to folks in the community, either on the phone, in person or through speaking engagements. I attend lots of community functions.



GRAPHICS BY
LILY QUARTER-
MAINE AND
ISABELLA
GASKILL

"I like the excitement that comes with a live newscast — anything can happen." - Kathy Leon

INTERVIEW WITH THE SARASOTA HERALD-TRIBUNE

"Like teaching, journalism is one of the most important things in our society: it's the bulwark of our democracy and a freedom that, even today, too few nation's embrace like ours does, even in these divisive times."

conducted by Gwyn Petersen
managing editor



Interview with **Matt Sauer, Executive Editor and General Manager,**
GateHouse Florida Regional Editor of the Sarasota Herald-Tribune

Q: What do you think is the public's opinion of local news?

A: I think, unfortunately, that some people lump us in with news outlets that come at the news from a point of view. We do not, nor do we focus much on national issues or politics, except in terms of how it affects the communities we cover. We have a newsroom that reflects all manner of political and social views, but we don't bring that bias to our coverage. Journalism to me is like the scientific method. You can assume a hypothesis, but the reporting is what determines what a story says, not what you think the story is.

Q: What would you say is the Herald Tribune's role in the community?

A: To be the primary source of news in both print and digital formats and to serve as a marketplace of ideas and a convener of public opinion. To "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable" as the old journalism axiom goes. To be a watchdog over government and other prominent institutions for the public, the Fourth Estate duty enshrined in the Constitution.

Q: How do you ensure your work is accurate and factual?

A: We always question our reporter's work: Who was your source? Do you trust them? Can they prove what they're saying? Would they be willing to testify in court to its veracity? There is a host of ways to check facts today with technology, but nothing beats documents and first person accounts. All we have is our credibility, so it is critical that what we present is accurate, unlike much of the material you see disseminated on the web. They usually come with a point of view or an interpretation of "facts." People – readers – should always consider the source when interpreting "news." There's no such thing as "fake news" to a real journalist. News equals facts. If it's not factual, it's not news.

Q: What do you think is the biggest struggle that journalists are facing right now?

A: Working in an industry that is still adjusting to a world where the traditional ways that media companies, particularly newspapers, paid for good journalism are shifting under our feet. It's going to take a whole set of different approaches to continue making it work from now into the future.

Q: Why should people read the paper every day?

A: Lord help the United States if newspapers ever disappear. There is no one to fill that vacuum, not the national outlets and certainly not the search engines and social media giants who only present news that they take mostly from newspaper without any compensation. One thing that holds people back who otherwise might harm the public is their fear of the spotlight of journalism.

Q: What made you decide to become a journalist?

A: I wasn't someone who knew at birth I was destined for journalism, but I always enjoyed writing and meeting new people and, above all, continuing to learn and grow. Journalism was appealing, because you do all those things on a daily basis. Southwest Florida is such an amazing place to practice the trade because we have such an incredible population here.

Q: What skills does a journalist need?

A: Inquisitiveness and a good work ethic, not really skills but excellent characteristics. You can't be afraid to ask "dumb questions." It's your job to be clear on stories and concepts. You need to be able to take very complex concepts and explain them like you'd be explaining them to your grandmother or your child or a group of schoolkids. It sounds easy but that is the toughest part of the job, and to do it concisely.

Student takes her skills to the water

Ninth-grader competitively water skis for Sarasota Ski-A-Rees



Kendall Dooley (RIGHT) is being held up by her doubles partner during a Sarasota Ski-A-Rees show. This is one of Dooley's favorite water ski tricks; it requires complete concentration, collaborating with her partner, and a smile. PHOTO PROVIDED BY KENDALL DOOLEY

by Gwyn Petersen
Managing Editor

Ninth-grader Kendall Dooley didn't start out water skiing. In fact, she previously did competitive gymnastics for five years. Ready for a change, Dooley was introduced to the sport two years ago by a friend of hers and instantly fell in love.

Dooley is a part of the Sarasota Ski-A-Rees, a team registered with the National Water Ski Association. The team, with members ranging from age three to over 70, participates in regional competitions on Lake Silver in Winter Haven, Florida. Every June, the winning team advances to the

national competition, usually held in Wisconsin or Illinois.

In 2017, the Ski-A-Rees won the national title. In 2011, the team won regionals, and in 2019, they received second place at regionals. Throughout the year, there are also individual competitions for doubles, where a teammate is skiing and holds Dooley in the air while they perform tricks, like swivel skiing, where a skier pivots 360 degrees on a ski mounted on a ball and jumps. Dooley's favorite memory from water skiing is taking part in the doubles competition in the 2019 regional competition.

"Kendall has come a long way

in the two years she's been on the team," Ski-A-Rees coach Brad Satterlee said. "She's learned a lot, and she's increased her skills each year, so she can perform in more acts in the show."

In a water-skiing competition, time is of the essence — even set-up is limited to 20 minutes. Once the clock starts ticking, every member of the team runs around, organizing thousands of dollars worth of equipment, such as the sound system, boats, skis, ropes, costumes and stage props. Each team is given an hour to present their show, which must consist of at least 13 acts. The acts can be both on land and on the water. Breakdown is timed as well, and if the team hasn't vacated the beach within 10 minutes to allow the next team to set up, points may be docked.

Five certified USA Water Ski & Wake Sports-rated experts judge each performance based on flow, execution, difficulty, showmanship, and spectator appeal.

The dock and equipment personnel, pick-up boat crew, sound crew and towboat driver also receive scores on their performance that factor into the overall show, scored out of 350 points.

"The most important thing I've learned from water skiing is working with a whole team of all ages," Dooley said. "When building a pyramid,

there are about 15 of us all coming off the dock at the same time, so it's important to communicate and work together."

Practices take place on Saturdays, either on land with spotters or on the water, typically from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The team also performs in weekly shows on Sundays at 2 p.m. During practice, the team works on their individual skills first, but eventually comes together to work on formations such as pyramids, doubles and the ballet line.

“She’s learned a lot, and she’s increased her skills each year so she can perform in more acts in the show,”

Brad Satterlee,
Ski-A-Rees Coach

Dooley's favorite parts of training include doubles and the ballet line, where a line of girls practice synchronized skiing tricks behind a boat. Dooley also skis outside of practice in order to be able to complete more tricks.

"The biggest challenge I've faced was learning to turn on my ski," Dooley said. "My ski has a binding on it that spins, so I had to learn to ski while turning backwards, or while holding the rope in my foot."

As for the future, Dooley doesn't plan on giving up water skiing anytime soon.

"I'll ski as long as I'm able to," Dooley said. "It's great exercise, and it's a sport you can do at any age. We have people on our team that are in their sixties."

Should competitive eating be considered a sport?

by Zoe Merritt
Features Editor

Each year, Independence Day sees crowds of over 40,000 people crammed together on the corner of Surf and Stillwell Avenues in Coney Island, New York. Why? To watch 20 competitors push their stomachs to the limit in Nathan's Famous Hot Dog Eating Contest. This past summer, attendees watched with awe and disgust as 2019 winner Joey Chestnut ate 71 hot dogs in ten minutes.

Competitive eating is an activity where people compete against each other to eat massive amounts of food in a short round of about 8 to 10 minutes long, sometimes as long as 15 minutes. It is most popular in the United States, Canada and Japan, according to Topend Sports. The first competitions of this kind were entertainment at county or state fairs, where the food in question was pies.

When debating competitive eatings status as a sport, there are many factors to examine. What has to be considered first is the exact definition of a sport and where its boundaries can be pushed. According to Merriam-Webster, a sport is "physical activity engaged in for pleasure" or "a particular activity (such as an athletic game) so engaged in."

In layman's terms, a sport is a competition performed by athletes — professional and recreational. Competitive eating and other similar forms of entertainment call into question what makes a sport a sport. Competitive eaters train for events and have discipline and dedication, but what they do is not dependent on being traditionally athletic. The physicality of competitive eating is the reverse of sports such as soccer and running, where endurance is also key. Still, a player's effectiveness is partially dependent on a stricter diet and bodies fine-tuned to run.

A gray area is found once events such as competitive eating, televised on ESPN, push at what an athlete is. Traditional athletes work to push their bodies

to be faster and stronger. Critics of competitive eating bring up how it is in such opposition to the healthy lifestyle that athletes depend on and is not the most appealing to watch.

Those who compete do so intensively. Competitive eating has its own league, the Major League Eating (MLE), and annual events such as Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest on the 4th of July and the Day-Lee Foods World Gyoza Eating Championship in August turn out large crowds every year in New York and California. Sport or not, competitive eating is a high-endurance endeavor that pushes the human digestive system to its limit and for some, is just as exciting or high stakes as a football game.

"With this kind of focus from participants, it might seem reasonable to place competitive eating among the ranks of other legitimate sports; a strong audience base, highly organized league structure and meticulous training regimen add an element of validity, and Major League Eating considers competitive eating a demanding athletic undertaking," Gabriel Muller, an editorial associate with the Atlantic said in the article, "The High Art of Competitive Eating."

On the other side, an article titled "Is competitive eating really a sport?" by XenLife said, "Competitive eating is not a sport and will never be a legitimate sport. It is a spectacle, a novelty, and just plain entertainment. Yes, there is an organizing body, media coverage and dedication of the competitors. Many see no point of calling competitive eating a sport because it only calls attention to gluttony and fame-hungry promoters."

No matter your conclusions on the sportdom of competitive eating, the entertainment value and community built around it cannot be denied. Do competitors deserve to call themselves athletes or is it enough for eating as many pumpkin pies as you can in 10 minutes to keep with the tradition of simple competition that started it all?



PHOTO PROVIDED BY AM NEW YORK

Ten-Minute Run Challenge

After reading about the energy benefits of daily, brief morning runs, I decided to commit to running ten minutes each day before school — at 5:30 in the morning, for five days.

Day one:
The Process: 5:30 a.m. is early for everyone. I'm tired, but confident that after the run I'll have more energy. Getting started was easy, but by the end of the run I was winded.
The Day: Once I arrive at school, I'm not feeling much of a difference. If anything, my legs are sore and I still feel tired.

Day two:
The Process: I'm feeling tired, but not nearly as tired as yesterday. After taking a hot shower yesterday, I decided to take a cold shower today, which boosted my energy.
The Day: I feel more energized than yesterday, but I'm convinced it was the cold shower. My energy level didn't fall until after school.

Day three:
The Process: Today's run was largely the same as every other day. It was tiring, but not bad. I decided to take a hot shower this time to see if yesterday's energy was caused by the shower.
The Day: Now I'm thinking the run was probably the source of Tuesday's energy boost, as I felt the same today as I did yesterday — without the cold shower and with the same run.

Day four:
The Process: Two more days to go! I felt relatively average today, with little soreness. I've definitely felt positive effects in my mood and energy levels so far, so I'm looking forward to the day.
The Day: I'm feeling good so far today, despite a test I was stressed for, which is great. The one downside of today was that, because of my run, I was behind in getting ready for school, a slight inconvenience.

Day five:
The Process: Today I decided to be proactive and add 5 minutes to my run. The soreness of my legs is pretty much gone by now, and the run felt less exhausting than in days prior.
The Day: By now I can say that the morning runs have given me more energy. I feel better at school and have an easier time falling asleep at night, an unexpected benefit.

The experience: 9/10

GRAPHIC BY LEO GORDON

A python's experience through four days of intermittent fasting

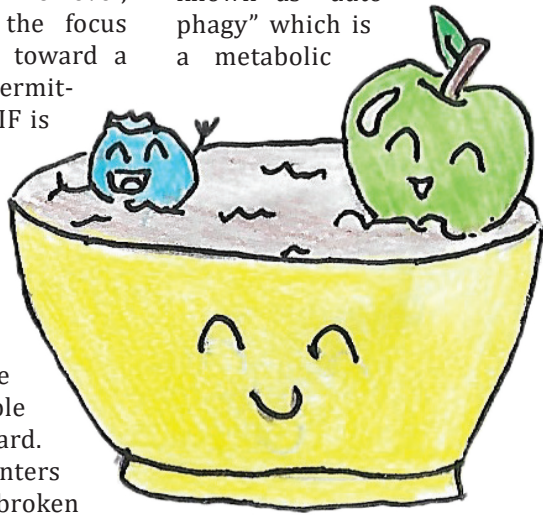
by Ella Hechlik
Editor-in-Chief

Ideas and opinions about health, dieting and food consumption take up a large part of the media that we see every day. But almost all diets have relatively similar ideas — low carb, low fat or low sugar. However, in recent years the focus has shifted more toward a “diet” called Intermittent fasting or IF. IF is different, as it is not necessarily about what you are eating, but more of a focus on when you are eating.

The science behind IF is simple and straightforward. The food we eat enters the body and is broken down into sugar, which your cells use right away for energy, and then store the excess sugar in fat cells. Insulin is a hormone secreted by the pancreas that allows the flow of sugar into the fat cells. Therefore, if our insulin levels are lowered, then the cells can release the stored sugar and the body will start to burn off the fat instead of storing it. So, IF is all about keeping your insulin levels low enough for long enough, so that your body begins to burn off the fat cells.

IF is similar to traditional diets in that it is based on a caloric deficit (consuming less calories while still func-

tioning at current weight). However, IF is not just for weight loss. In fact, there is a lot of research to suggest that IF can lead to some amazing results. According to Harvard Medical School, after 24 hours of fasting, your body goes into a state known as “autophagy” which is a metabolic



path - way that helps clear out cell debris. Also, many individuals who do try IF agree that their focus level increased and their overall appetite decreased.

According to a study done by the US National Institute of Health, “fasting has been shown to improve biomarkers of disease, reduce oxidative stress and preserve learning and memory functioning.” However, most of the research has been done on animals and human research is at the early stages.

I started by picking which IF approach would work best for me as an indi-

vidual. Knowing the 18:6 fast is most popular and deemed for “beginners”, I decided that would be my best option. This approach includes eating for a six hour window, and then fasting for 18. It also recommends skipping breakfast so that a majority of your hours of fasting happen while you sleep.

Day One:

I started off by skipping breakfast, which often occurs when I am in a rush. So, I did not feel very hungry. Although, after a few hours of being at school, I started to get hungry around lunch time which is pretty normal. My six hour window opened at 1:00, so I ate all my meals which included oatmeal and fruit for breakfast, veggies and hummus for lunch, pretzels for a snack and chicken with vegetables for dinner before 7:00p.m. Although at first I was distracted by my hunger, I realized it came in waves rather than a constant feeling.

Day Two:

I woke up on day two hungry. My body was so used to eating at certain times that my brain was telling me to eat, even if I didn’t need to until later in the day. Again, I skipped breakfast and just ate lunch, a small snack and a

big dinner. Day two was definitely the hardest as I was still trying to break a habit. However, I noticed I was more focused, and felt less tired than normal.

Day Three:

On day three I felt great. I woke up and did not even think about breakfast. My day flew by and before I even realized, it was time to eat lunch and then dinner. I did not feel the need to eat a snack that day. By this time I was used to it, and overall my mood had improved.

Day Four:

I found my groove on day four. I was not thinking about food at all, and my mood and focus improved significantly for the entire day.

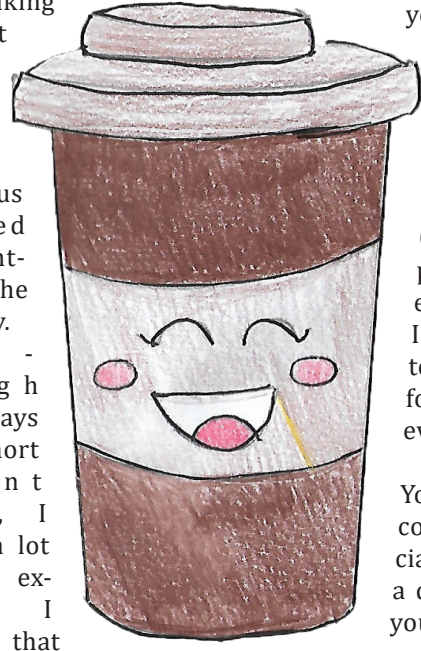
Although four days is a short amount of time, I learned a lot from the experience. I realized that

a lot of the time I thought I was hungry, I was actually just stuck on a schedule in my own brain and that I didn’t actually need to eat right then and there. After the first day hump, I felt my focus improve significantly, especially at school. It kept me on track to make sure I was eating dinner before 7:00p.m. which was nice as I did not have to worry about eating too late at night.

The only downside I recognized was that I became a lot more dependent on caffeine than before, because I was supplementing breakfast with coffee. I did not really have to limit what I ate, only when I ate which is a big difference from traditional diet plans. If you plan to do this, the key is to pick

an IF plan that works for you. They can all be individualized, so that you can still be productive while making healthy changes. Overall, IF was a positive experience for me and I will continue to use different forms of it in my everyday life.

Editor’s Note: You should always consult your physician before making a drastic change in your diet.



GRAPHICS BY PEYTON HARRIS

TOGETHER
WE CAN
MAKE THE DIFFERENCE



BE SAFE. GET EDUCATED.
STAY HEALTHY.
CALL: 844-922-2777
CANCOMMUNITYHEALTH.ORG
FOLLOW US    

Pine View Teachers share their nifty homemade knick-knacks on Etsy

by Naina Chauhan
News Editor

Personalized Poems by John

Need something special for your special someone? Forgot it was your mom's birthday today? What better than a handwritten, heartfelt poem. Not everyone has the prolific genius of a poet, but lucky for you John Shea comes close enough. Just give him the name and your relationship to the recipient, the occasion, a copy of your signature for him to imitate, and your IQ (he puts special effort in deciding the degree of mediocrity to ensure that the recipient believes you wrote it).

cleanse the soul, and a variety of spice based hand-pressed essential oils to clear the mind.

IKonic K-Pop

As a long-time K-pop fan (before it became a fad for the fakers) Maggie Higgins has spent years traveling the globe collecting concert t-shirts from the most iconic and game-changing band in the history of mankind — BTS. Now past her fanatic BTS phase (she has moved onto to more sophisticated artists like G-Dragon), she has decided

ed to sell her concert t-shirts. The prices range from \$150 to \$1,500 (the most expensive was signed by THE Jungkook)

Kombucha for the soul

As an expert in human psychology, Lance Bergman spent years researching the true key to happiness in life and has finally come to a single, simple answer — kombucha. The extremely healthy, fizzy, spiritually fulfilling beverage is difficult to perfect. However, through years of trial and substantial error Bergman has developed a winning recipe. Combing the acidic, citrusy flavors of grapefruit with the tangy, herbal ones of ginger, Bergman's recipe is sure to satisfy the senses.

Cr-As-Y Labcoats

As an M.D. who majored in chemistry and a current high school chemistry teacher, Jay Skipper has spent his share of time in a lab coat. Contrary to the belief of the non-STEM population, he is a firm believer that chemistry is periodically fun and has created a solution to show the whole world what a spontaneous group of people they are through personalized lab coats. Previous designs have been as crazy as monogrammed lab

coats using chemical symbols! For an extra \$10, you can even pre-order his specialized Mole Day lab coats (designs vary according to the theme of the year).

Life Advice by Mattia

Are you a confused, lost Millennial or Gen-Zer just looking for some direction in life? Lucky for you, Mark Mattia is there to save you from your aimless tendencies that will likely leave you with an ex-

tremely expensive and useless college degree (also referred to as "the arts"). In his revolutionary book, "Mattia's Manifesto," Mattia outlines everything you need to know to live a comfortable life from choosing a "suitable" marriage partner, investing in the stock market, the importance

of a back-up plan, and whether luxury items (like children) are worth it. This book is filled with catch-phrases that you will never forget ("what a life with a wife") and will guide you to a pain-free life.



PHOTOS BY ELLA WILLIAMS

Red, White & You

by Anna Labiner
Entertainment Editor

As any American can attest, singing the national anthem, the "Star-Spangled Banner," at any event, whether it be a baseball game or a graduation ceremony, promotes a sense of national unity and patriotism that truly represents what it means to be a proud citizen of our fine country. Yet as a chorus of regular Americans with extremely sub-par voices and lack of vocal range attempt to screech out the high notes (which can only be belted out by Whitney Houston... or Fergie), one must step back and ponder why such average people are forced to sing such a difficult song. Thanks a lot, Francis Scott Key.



GRAPHIC BY LORA RINI

In order to provide Americans with a simpler, catchier national anthem I propose swapping out the "Star-Spangled Banner" with another American classic — "American Boy" by Estelle feat. Kanye West. This iconic anthem is American through and through and truly embodies the richness of our culture and grandeur of all our major cities.

I would personally much rather hear a stadium full of sports fans flawlessly chant this ageless bop than attempt to reach an octave of the "Star-Spangled Banner" that is wildly outside their vocal range. A switch to "American Boy" will effectively revive

patriotism and pull us out of the political turmoil we have faced in the past few years.

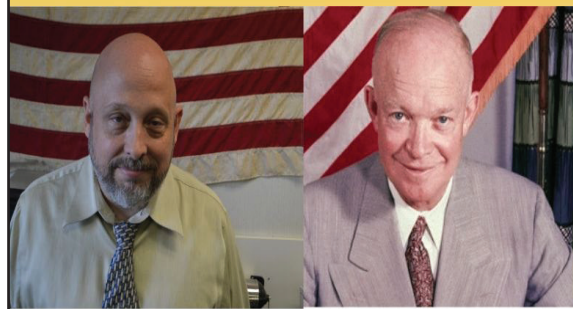
It does not matter whether you're a Democrat or a Republican because anyone and everyone can enjoy the musical genius of Estelle and Kanye. Step aside Frank Sinatra and Katy Perry, the real American sweethearts are coming through. Besides its catchy tune, the well-thought-out lyrics of this song are what made it my first choice

for replacing the national anthem. When Estelle said, "I never been to Brooklyn, and I'd like to see what's good. Dress in all your fancy clothes. Sneaker's looking fresh to death, I'm loving those shell toes. Walking that walk. Talk that slick talk. I'm liking this American Boy. American Boy," I shed a tear because it reminds me how far we have come as a nation and the strides we have taken to become the global superpower that we are today.

While the explicit nature of some of the lyrics in "American Boy" may seem daunting and inappropriate to some, there is always the clean version, and honestly, we could use something to spice up our national anthem. The switch to "American Boy" is truly the change we need in our current political climate, and I hope to gain a massive following after publishing this article. Viv e la Revolution!

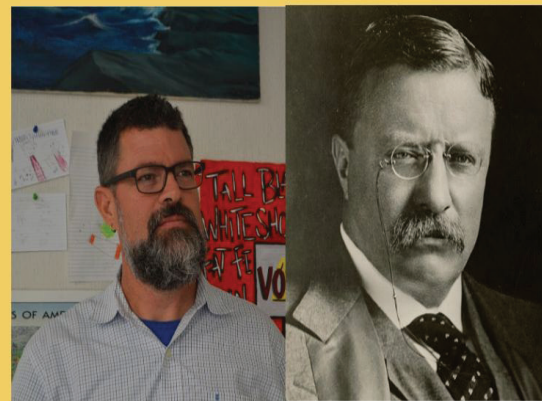
ON THE BASIS OF VIBES

A FORMAL ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL FIGURES AND PINE VIEW TEACHERS



MR. WOLFINGER : DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

- Bald
- Republican but kind of a Democrat
- Fan of World War II
- Better than Mr. Schweig
- Strong ties to the Midwest



MR. CARNEY : TEDDY ROOSEVELT

- Physically powerful
- Lifts logs
- Mentally powerful
- Strongly tied to the canals
- Miscellaneous power



MR. SCHWEIG : THOMAS JEFFERSON

- Reads a lot of books (unlike Wolfinger)
- Defeated a tiny man (the tiny man is Wolfinger)
- Writes better than Wolfinger
- 7'3"



MRS. MELTON : QUEEN ELIZABETH II

- Listens to others and responds to concerns, useful when mediating Wolfinger and Schweig
- Been to royal wedding
- Tied to the crown
- Huge love of dogs

GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON AND ELLA HECHLIK

MEME OF THE MONTH:

OK BOOMER.

ORIGIN:

"Ok boomer" is a trend circulating social media platforms created to mock or dismiss Baby Boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) for being outdated and primitive. Though the exact origin is unknown, the phrase was first seen being used in April of 2018, as Twitter users started mocking politicians' Tweets. However, the trend has just recently gained popularity.



ABOUT:

Since January of 2019, the phrase has been used by multiple users on separate occasions to ridicule and make light of the generation gap between Millennials and Baby Boomers. The trend has sparked controversy, however, as the older generation has taken offense to the sudden ridicule of their naivety of pop culture.

[a column]

A Procrastinator's Guide to Writing Essays

How to write an essay an hour before its deadline: a tutorial.

Let's be honest — we've all been there. Whether this is a result of procrastination or fatigue, or you didn't realize there was something due or have obtained a distaste for the class in general, you still have to turn something in to keep up that 4.9 GPA Pine View requires. There are many stages to this process that we all know and love.

First, panic sets in. You look at your phone and recognize the date from the back of your mind. Once the laptop or paper is out, you must find a way to conceal the fact that you're doing this in class. Trust me, having your paper taken by a teacher is not fun. I recommend using your clothing to your advantage. If absolutely necessary, ask the person next to you if you can use their hoodie as coverage.

Second, find a way to look engaged in whatever is happening in class while simultaneously blocking it out and focusing on your last-minute assignment. For example, imagine you're in social studies teacher Roma Jagdish's class and you're supposed to be doing "Key Issues." Randomly call out words remotely related to the lesson going on. General fact + a few adjectives here or there = safety.



Elena D'Amato, Asst. Humor Editor

Third, avoid eye contact with your teacher. It's a pretty known fact that teachers have a suspicion radar built into them. By avoiding looking at them, it's like the old rule of hide 'n' seek: If you can't see them, they can't see you.

Lastly, lower your expectations. It's a hard pill to swallow as Pine View students, but it's crucial — quantity is better than quality at this point. To those people who are class pets: getting an 85 is not the end of the world. You know who you are. Breathe.

Congratulations! You wrote an essay in under an hour and in the class before its deadline. It isn't your best work, hopefully, but it is better than a zero in the grade book, assuming your work is better than a zero.

It's a pretty known fact that teachers have a suspicion radar built into them

GRAPHIC BY OLIVIA HANSEN

Who's that Pokémon?

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

BASIC Angela Wilson HP | 30 ⚡

Eukaryotic Pokémon. HT: 8'0" WT: 6.02x10²³.

Micropipette Strike Attack (MSA)
Armed with a micropipette in each hand, Wilson uses this attack as a defensive mechanism against potential threats, like English and history majors. After encountering such an enemy, Wilson deploys her micropipettes and effectively vanquishes her foes. This attack is so powerful because few understand the mechanics of the micropipette, and if one is broken under her watch, Wilson launches an even more powerful counter-attack, fueled by fury and the knowledge of how expensive the tool is.

Mitosis Duplication Technique
When challenged, Wilson often deploys a duplicating technique in which she harnesses the power of mitosis to divide her cells in half and create a separate being (with the same amount of chromosomes). This attack is incredibly powerful, and is often fatal for Wilson's opponents. The only way to counter the attack is to distract Wilson with an open bottle of solution before striking back.

weakness: ⚡ resistance: ⚡
retreat: ⚡

GRAPHIC BY ANNA LABINER

Dan's Fan City: A Review

Blowing away all the competition, Dan's Fan City is the destination for all your cooling needs

by Elizabeth Hopkins
Asst. Editor-in-Chief

The crown jewel of Tami-am Trail is hidden in plain sight. Tucked away, many on their commute pass by the storefront without heed. But that's a shame. While the exterior appears ridiculous, almost bemusing, remember that looks can be deceiving. I'm talking about Dan's Fan City, Sarasota's essential hub for all your fan needs.

A spacious parking lot awaits patrons. How thoughtful. Upon entering, you are greeted with nothing but fans, for as far as the eye can see. A whole city of them. On the ceiling? Fans. On the walls? Fans. All revolving at one pace, in sync, as if they have been expecting you.

The space is breezy, and a gentle whirring sets a relaxing, welcoming tone. What a joy, what a gift.

Patrons may ask themselves: Have I died and gone to fan heaven? No, you haven't, but that is Dan's Fan City for you — truly bringing the

heat when it comes to cooling things down (with fans).

The fan connoisseur will be pleased with diverse selection and superior customer service. However, luxury doesn't come cheap, and Dan's Fan City exemplifies this. After all, getting the creme de la creme has its price. You can certainly bet on competitive prices. That's the Dan's Fan City guarantee.

I must address, however, that the fans themselves aren't up for chatting with patrons, despite the fact its namesake is Dan's Fan City, which suggests that the fans are residents and that Dan occupies more of a mayoral position. Obviously, I was expecting a city of real fans. But, when I tried to ask the fans some questions about what it was like to live in Dan's city, as it were, Dan noticed, and when I asked him why on earth they refuse to respond, he told me, actually,

that's not how it works, and the fans are just sold, and they can't talk and don't work there. He was looking at me really funny, and I assumed this was a clear expression of guilt. Was he afraid of being held accountable for horrific wrongdoing?

I was concerned that Dan may be keeping the fans on the premises against their will, forcing them into silence, to live in fear. I even considered contacting the authorities. Although I had my doubts, ultimately I decided to trust Dan and take him at his word. Of course, this revelation would be very surprising to anyone.

Anyhoo, come on down to Dan's Fan City, where pleasure is in store. But whatever you do, do not try to talk to the fans. This may upset Dan.



[staff editorial]

Why does the hare have to beat the tortoise?

Students who work well under limited time and pressure are given plenty of opportunity to succeed. But, other students are left behind.

Is faster really better? SATs, AP exams, times tables, and FSA — we've all spent our entire lives with sweaty palms nervously glancing at the clock. When it comes to expectations, especially within the educational system, there seems to be this pressing notion that faster means smarter, better and superior. Why does this preconception exist, and when did speed become the primary correlation to success?

Since the beginning of school, education has taught us two things: work hard and work fast. The idea of intelligence not only includes the quality of one's ideas and depth of thought, but how fast one can produce

these critical ideas.

After taking a closer look, it's evident the factor of time does more harm than good.

Individual learning styles come in all forms. There are the students who use pressure as a motivation factor and the students who prefer to take things slowly and completely analyze the entire nature of a

pressure — the ones who can see a question, write the first thing that comes to mind, and be satisfied with an imperfect outcome. This is the type of student standardized tests are tailored to, and this notion of speediness over accuracy has slipped into a societal norm, leaving the slower thinkers completely in the dust.

According to a Minnesota Council of Teachers of Mathematics article "Faster Isn't Smarter," "Some students respond well to competitive and timed situations, thriving on the pressure to bring out their best; others have quite a different reaction."

Intelligence in high school is based on grades, grades are based on tests, and tests have a time limit. If a student knows the information but runs out of time, the

student will receive a lower grade than what they deserve.

The notion that if a student can't complete a task in time, they are incapable of doing that task at all, underscores why our current approach is so flawed — because plenty of students have more knowledge, prepare for their exams and hold a wealth of information, but can't perform as well during a stressful, time-limited environment.

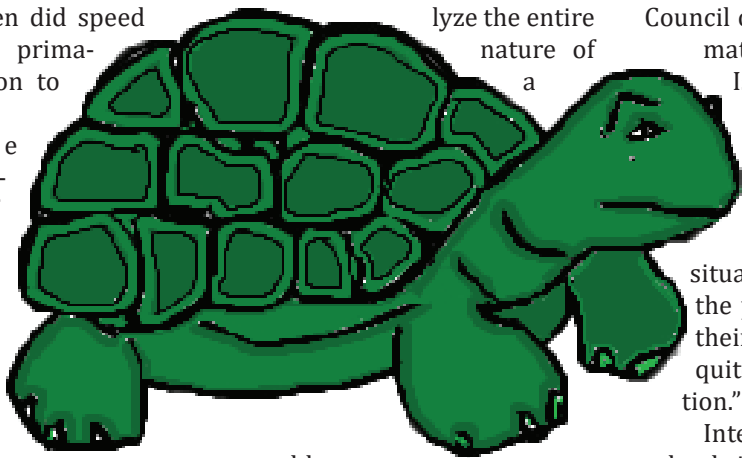
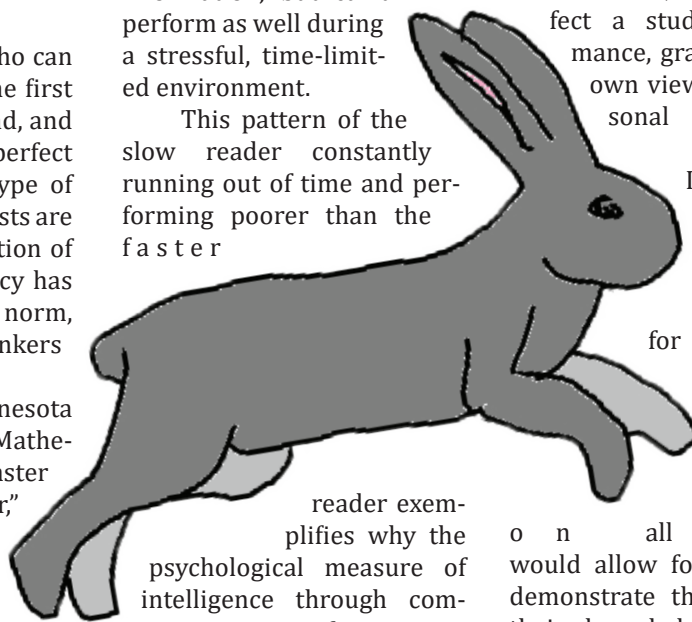
This pattern of the slow reader constantly running out of time and performing poorer than the faster

of test anxiety I feel like it puts a lot of unneeded pressure on students," eleventh-grader Cece Plass said.

By relieving students of time, teachers can feel certain that a student's exam displays the entire extent of their knowledge. With the factor of a time limit, outside variables, other than what one simply doesn't know, can greatly affect a student's performance, grades and their own view of their personal intelligence.

In order to foster a more accessible academic environment for all, teachers should ideally strive for the elimination of time limits on all exams. This would allow for students to demonstrate the entirety of their knowledge and overcome test anxiety. Realizing it may be unreasonable to suggest the immediate amending of a large portion of the foundation of our educational system, the simple replacement of a traditional timed exam with something like a take-home essay assignment may be a perfect place to start.

GRAPHICS BY MAHITHA RAMACHANDRAN



Reimagining America's approach to higher education

by Naina Chauhan
News Editor

At one juncture in the board game Life, the path diverges into two options — the debt-inducing college path or the affordable trade school. The jobs associated with a trade school degree pay significantly less but they still allow for equal chances for the player to win the game. In real life, the game plays out differently — as trade school is often not an option that is encouraged and promoted, the only option available has left Americans owing \$1.5 trillion in student loans and unable to find a job that pays them adequately given their level of skill. It raises the question if our current system is providing today's young people a chance to 'win.'

Solving the college debt crisis and the myriad of consequences that accompany it is not a simple game. The changes required to fix it would require an entire upheaval of the American system and values of education at its foundation. Before we even start to think about these major structural changes, we need to acknowledge that not everyone in our society is cut out for college.

Imagine two students, both eleventh-graders in high school. One is a straight-A student; the other falls in the lower B and C range. The first student is in the 95th percentile for standardized testing, and the other falls in the lower quartile, around the 75th. Our education system paves the way for the first student to success and sets the second student up for failure. Ultimately, for the second student, college may not be the right choice for them — higher education in America is synonymous with a four-year college education but there are other forms of education beyond high school that are

just as beneficial if not more to an entire ignored cohort of the population. With some guidance, that student could explore a two-year college degree or trade program for a fraction of the cost and end up with a job comparable to one that requires a degree. However, according to Forbes, 48% of Americans will enter college without ever knowing that they had other options.

Conversely, Germany has utilized

student proceeds to gymnasium (an advanced form of high school), or stadt school (a more traditional high school).

Gymnasium students proceed through high school and go to college, choosing a major depending on their grades and scores on standardized exams.

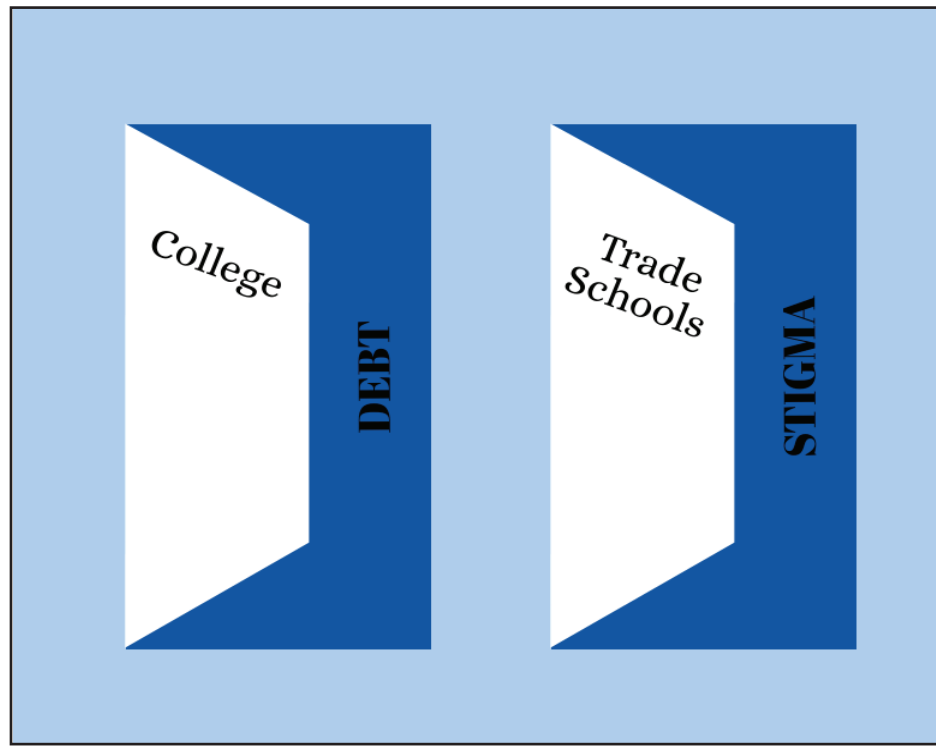
The students at stadt school can either go to wirtschaftsgymnasium (a trade school) where they are able to not

system has lent itself to creating an educated, skilled and enormously productive population.

Accounting, dental hygiene, secretarial posts, carpentry, are some of the hundreds of careers that do not require a bachelor's degree. The Federal Reserve of New York states that research has shown that the demand for college graduates has leveled off. Yet in America, 70% of contractors cannot find skilled workers, even though the amount of construction projects has only increased as Associated General Contractors of America finds. This same trend can be seen among many other similar fields — America has college graduates thousands of dollars in debt unable to find jobs, yet there are thousands of job opportunities available that do not even require a degree.

Currently, it is infeasible to implement a strategy urging students to consider trade school or two-year college as an alternative. Not only do college-educated workers make one million more dollars in the span of their life, but government funding is currently only one billion dollars. Until the federal government increases funding for these alternate and incredibly important pathways, they will not only be viewed as lesser to the public but simply won't have enough resources to provide a sufficient education.

America is and has always been a haven for prosperity, growth and success. Throughout our history, we have continuously adapted and changed, leaving us as the leading nation in almost every regard. Today, we have reached a point which calls for change — there must be a serious upheaval in both the structure of the education system and what we view as "valuable" in an education. Everyone deserves a fair chance at the game of life.



GRAPHIC BY PEYTON HARRIS

the more open approach of providing their students with options, earning them the second most skilled workforce in the world. Students start elementary school in first grade, and following fourth grade, their teacher of five years evaluates each student and recommends whether the

only learn the skills they are practicing with a professional, but also go to school to learn any other skills they may need in this field. For example, a student studying carpentry would learn with a master carpenter for three days of the week and go to school the other two days to learn accounting so they can handle the finance side of owning a carpentry shop. This

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[guest editorial]

Corruption: The hidden figure in American society



by Zach Gallus
Grade 11

It's a perplexing thought: Are the men and women that we elect to office serving the people, or are they serving themselves? By asking such questions, we're accused of disparaging our democracy as a whole and those who work to sustain it. Yet, more often than ever, our military, our intelligence agencies and mega-corporations, not our elected officials, have an increasing influence on the media, our elections, our laws and our daily lives.

The theme of corruption has been thrown around in the news lately on both sides of the aisle, specifically oriented toward for-

eign bodies. Although not explicitly considered corruption, lobbying is an everyday practice in Washington. Each year, lobbyists contribute extraordinary amounts of money, \$2.6 billion in 2019 alone, according to Lee Drutman, a political scientist and author, into our political system. Then, they reap the benefits. The pharmaceutical industry, infamously known as Big Pharma, has massive influence on the creation of laws beneficial to their profit margins. And, it's at the expense of Americans. The same story applies to every other corporation — the short end of the stick is bestowed upon the American people.

Notable government agencies, such as the NSA and CIA, have been believed since their inception to be vital tools that protect Americans. Yet, they spy on everyday Americans to capture information beneficial to them. They capitalize on the trust of the American people to turn their desires of reform into significant changes in the law.

Yes, the media is involved as well. On both sides, they use their influence to promote

their own political agendas. They cherry-pick news stories beneficial to their own agenda, leaving out every story that may be used against them. The media should strive to produce news stories that provide a well-rounded summary of recent events that affect everyday Americans, and as students, we should support news organizations that work towards this goal.

Evidence of corruption in America is everywhere. It exists in the past testimonies of congressmen and agency officials, in the paychecks of our politicians, in the classified documents extracted by whistle-blowers, in reports by daring journalists and in the everyday events on Capitol Hill. These practices have been woven into the fabric of American government by the American voters; thus, it has been considered impossible to eliminate, or even address, this issue since Americans have brought it upon themselves.

Although no individual person can confront these evident truths, comprehension of the issue at hand is absolutely necessary. We as students, as citizens and as future voters must be knowledgeable of the power of our vote, and as a collective, act. Vote to support candidates who support transparency in government, but also vote with your money — support organizations that don't lobby politicians with their money, overpowering the will of the American people. Throughout history, the collective has been shown to overcome the oppressive authority, and forge a superior future — we should strive to overcome that authority.

[a column]

Student activists get less respect than they deserve

Picture this: a 16-year-old girl who has selflessly devoted herself to saving our planet is called a "mentally-ill Swedish child" and is accused of practicing "medieval witchcraft" — all because she peacefully protests inaction on climate change.

It might sound crazy, but youth activists, who are simply fighting for the common good, have faced relentless, shameful attacks that, in today's society, are the unfortunate consequences of fighting for what is right.

The rise of activism among students is a wake up call for the politicians and journalists who delegitimize their efforts. They understand the momentum is behind progress and change — not the status quo. But, they don't know how to handle the transition toward progress. Adults are threatened by these teenagers, because they fear they aren't as strong as them. Resorting to childish name-calling in an attempt to bring others down, instead of lifting themselves up to reality, is irresponsible.

Labeling a girl with Asperger's syndrome as being "mentally ill" is not only insensitive and disrespectful, but also it is not the brightest way to strengthen the argument that "the governing should be left to the adults." How can they disrespect youth activists when they get blisteringly offended when someone, for example, advocates for saving the planet we all inhabit together?

By no means am I saying that mutual disagreements regarding the topics of activism should be ignored. Healthy debate is part of what makes America work. However, we can



Ben Gordon
Opinion Editor

all agree that activists should be treated with the respect they have earned for putting themselves out there to fight for what they believe in.

Take a look at the relationship between student activists advocating for climate change and the New York City government. New York City schools

allowed all students' absences to be excused for the Worldwide Climate Strike on September 20. School leaders neither condoned nor condemned

the student activists — but they understood the value of protest and activism, and let students make the decision to attend themselves. This kind of mutual respect among student activists and adults is what fosters progress in our communities.

To the adults who belittle teenage girls fighting for our planet or protecting their classmates, either learn the basic tenets of civility, or stop to think about why teenagers have to be activists in the first place — because the adults who irresponsibly joke about activism are too afraid to be activists themselves.

Conventional instruction pushes students away from reading for pleasure

by Zoe Merritt
Features Editor

While close reading and analysis are essential to English classes, the tendency to detach ourselves so entirely from the text to the point that it becomes insipid and turns students away is misguided.

Upon being handed the first-ever Folger Shakespeare Library book, I was excited. I was ready to see what the famed Shakespeare had to offer in "As You Like It." I went home that day, eager to read the first few scenes, as had been assigned for reading that night.

To say I was let down would be an understatement. My sixth-grade brain was confronted with English that read like a foreign language. And what little notes I received from my teacher about the nightly reading was an instruction in mechanics: how to decode this, remember that. There was no life to it.

Now, I have grown as a reader. Since then, I have realized that Shakespeare's works are some of my favorites. But it took years to break that mindset and forge a personal connection with the book in my hands.

In 2019, when the novels are anywhere from fifty years to centuries-old, we must remember that the books we analyze were the popular fiction of the time, printed for the masses to read and written for them to see onstage. When we can't have a moment to experience the story itself alongside study and analysis, the

work loses some of its value and nuance. It becomes just another piece of text to slog through and a hunt to pull out relevant quotes, not a story that deserves to receive not only a critical eye, but personal investment and engagement, too.

In my own experience, it becomes easier to look for metaphors and remember character names (and most importantly, plot points) when I can connect with the text in the way I would with a book I am reading for personal enjoyment. This "connection" includes frivolities, not just being intrigued by the story.

I am blessed to have a friend group equally as bookish and geeky as myself, and some of my best times with them have been discussing Shakespeare or assigned reading. It has resulted in passionate monologues, year-long inside jokes, and

often the pursuit of more of the author's work. All because I ended up in a place where I could be, in the most basic of terms, casual with the novel. Because, in a way, we are still as much the peasants in standing room at the

Globe Theatre as we are high-tech Generation Z students, who would rather play Minecraft than trudge through "Hamlet."

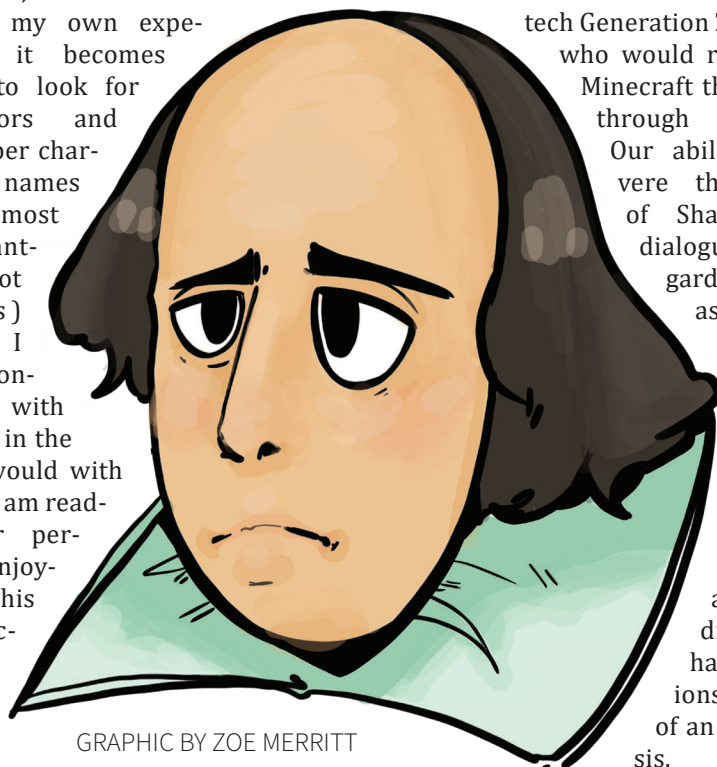
Our ability to revere the quality of Shakespeare's dialogue and regard his works as high literature cannot overpower our ability to laugh at jokes and awkward dialogue or have opinions outside of an essay thesis.

We're lucky here at Pine View to have the teachers that we do, who care about how we receive the work and whether or not we like it. Not to say that there aren't English teachers in this world who are also perfectly content to send you off with a book you hardly understand, possibly turning you off from reading

altogether if you were already on the fence.

This brings me to one of my last points: students who loathe the reading they are assigned are less likely to pursue the hobby outside of class if they didn't walk in already a reader. For all the books that can get kids hooked, there are just as many that can do the opposite. This is especially important in those tender years of middle school. Not providing the right environment to foster a love of reading through classic literature like Shakespeare but instead using his works as a long list of quotes and motifs to memorize can make the world's greatest plays into something that turns students off reading for years.

How we study literature today is a privilege and an integral part of our education — assigned reading and the study of classic books ensures that we challenge ourselves as critical thinkers and analysts — but some of our conventional teaching methods need to be rethought. This isn't an argument against knowledge checks or final exams, but assignments like these are meant to enhance our reading experience, not be the end all be all of our literary journeys. The only advice I can give? Stop worrying about being apathetically cool and take the chance to laugh at Shakespeare. You understood that sly joke, why not point it out to your friend? Get heated over your least favorite character and discuss it over lunch in the cafeteria. In the end, it's just a book. It's meant to be enjoyed.



GRAPHIC BY ZOE MERRITT

Finding your Faith: the Islamic Rite of Passage

Tenth-grader embarks on pilgrimage with her family for Umrah

by Peyton Harris

Under the sweltering Meccan sun, tenth-grader Hafsa Mahmud felt faint as she circled the Holy Kaaba, the most sacred site in all of Islam. Barely able to walk, her parents encouraged her to finish Tawaf, the process of circling the Holy Kaaba seven times counter-clockwise.

This, among many other rituals, comprise Umrah, a significant event in the Islamic religion. Umrah is a set of rituals completed during the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Millions of Muslims come from all over the world to complete Umrah, men clad in "ihram" clothing: two white cloths without seams or stitches, one of which covers the body from the waist down and one that is gathered around the shoulder; the women wearing modest clothing. The outfits during

the pilgrimage are meant to shed all signs of wealth and societal class, symbolizing the equality of all Muslims under the eyes of Allah.

Mahmud and her family traveled to Mecca from May 28 to June 4 of 2019, planning

of intention, making it clear to Allah that the pilgrimage is being done for the right reasons.

After arriving in Mecca, Mahmud and her family had to follow the rules outlined in the Quran and Sunnah for the pilgrimage, such as not engaging in violence, using cologne or shaving. After bathing and praying, they completed Tawaf, prayed two rakats, and sipped water from the Zam Zam well, the sacred well which according to the Quran opened

in the desert to save Hajar, the wife of Prophet Ibrahim, and Is'mail, their son, from dying of thirst. Mahmud then walked between the hills of Safa and Marwa seven times, finally completing Umrah. To complete the pilgrimage, she also trimmed her hair.

"It was really different from what I thought it'd be like. I thought it would be pretty simple, but there was a



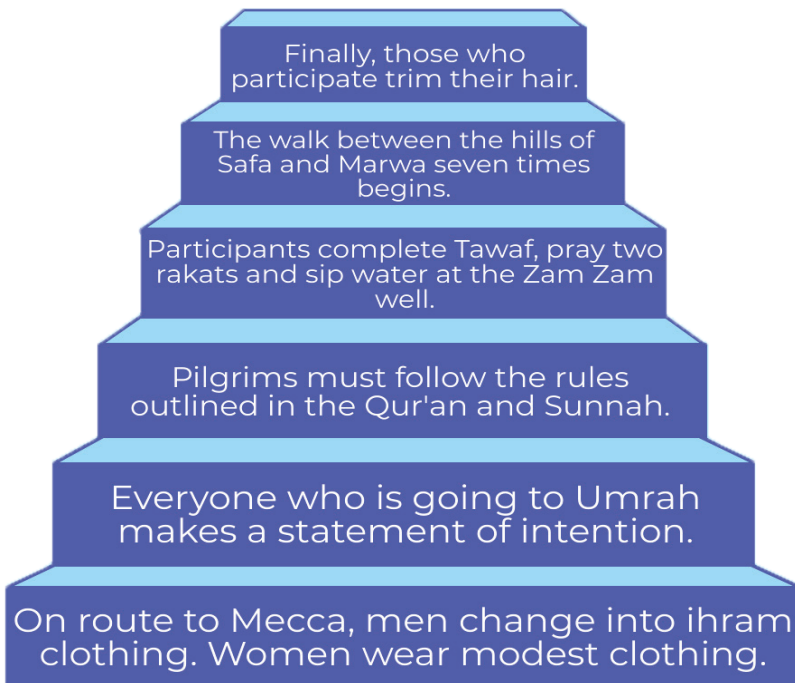
Tenth-grader Hafsa Mahmud poses in front of the Holy Kaaba. The Holy Kaaba plays a vital role in Umrah, which Mahmud participated in. PHOTO PROVIDED BY HAFSAH MAHMUD



Thousands of people crowd in front of the Holy Kaaba. They circle the Holy Kaaba several times in order to complete Umrah. PHOTO PROVIDED BY HAFSAH MAHMUD

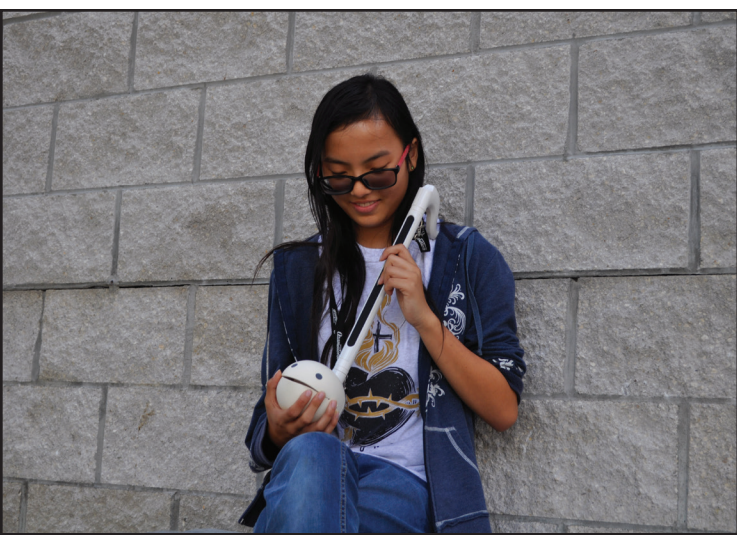
lot to it," Mahmud said. "I feel like religion takes a big role in my life. Ever since I performed Umrah, I felt more religious

and closer to God. I feel a more deeper connection to God and try my best to follow everything in my religion."



GRAPHIC BY SARAH CATALANO

Embracing the oddities of music



Tenth-grader Casey Consbrook poses with her otamatone. Consbrook has been collecting unique instruments like the otamatone since she was two. PHOTO BY SARAH CATALANO

by Sarah Catalano

With honks and clicks and twangs galore, tenth-grader Casey Consbrook's eclectic collection of funky music-makers truly brings a creative flare to musical life. Since she was two years old, Consbrook has been playing away at any unusual instrument she can get her hands on — without ever reading a page of sheet music.

Consbrook said it all began with a Radioshack elephant keyboard. Small, pink and designed for the clumsy hands of a child, it was the first thing that drew her into the colorful world of music.

"They just handed it to me when I was like three, and then I was obsessed with it," Consbrook said.

However, she only used it to improvise, until one day, she stumbled into the first three notes of a Christmas song. In that moment, she realized her potential — she could find a

tune by ear.

In second grade, her parents gave her an electric keyboard. They enrolled her in piano lessons in a dual-purpose gymnastics facility, under the watchful eye of her teacher. Consbrook listened to the teacher play and memorized each note, never having to read sheet music, something she says she somewhat regrets.

Consbrook's impressive methods may not have left space for conventional musical education, but they fueled a unique talent. Her mother played piano, but Consbrook was mainly influenced by her own studies — an ever-growing interest in all that made noise, side-by-side with an ever-growing collection of instruments.

Using the electric keyboard from second grade, Consbrook plays by ear alone, holding the notes of a song in her mind and matching them to a key.

"It's a different skill set — you can't find sheet music for an

otamatone... It's a lot of figuring it out by yourself," tenth-grader Summer Bosman, a friend of Consbrook, said.

As a piano-player, Bosman says she holds a lot of respect for Consbrook's ability to play by ear. "You have your idea of 'This is what we're used to music sounding like' and then you have abstract, outside of [the norm]."

Alongside the keyboard, Consbrook also boasts an otamatone, melodica, piano horn, pocket operator and theramin. Each one is very different and often reliant on the musician's ability to estimate where notes will be. The otamatone, shaped like a music note with a wide mouth and eyes, is her favorite.

"Every otamatone is different," she said. "Every model will have slight variations in where the notes are set. I mostly just figured it out the way I figured out how to whistle — you start knowing where one particular note is, and then you just have to guess."

In the future, Consbrook imagines a choir of otamatones.

"The otamatone is monophonic — it only makes one note at a time, so you'd need a lot of people to play proper chords and stuff. I've always thought Hallelujah would sound particularly majestic."

"I can bring them to school and people go 'What's that? Whenever they go 'The otamatone is stupid,' I kind of always hand it to them and they [can't play it]," Consbrook said. "If they looked like a stereotypical instrument, they wouldn't be as eye-catching. Even though they don't sound that weird, they look non-traditional, and that makes people pay attention."

But while Consbrook enjoys breaking through the perceptions of her peers, she says the real joy for her is in simply being able to create music.

"Sometimes I sit at home and I just play songs until my mom tells me to shut up," she said.

[a column]

Post-Productivity Blues

by Ella Hechlik

Editor-In-Chief

For me, switching between junior and senior year has been difficult. We all know that junior year is rough — the class load, knowing its your final chance to fix your grades for college, the ACT and SAT, etc. Junior year is the in-between year, the "no longer an underclassman, but not close enough to senior year" year. But, we all make it through and finally, we get to enjoy the last year. But is it exactly what's expected?

Everyone always talked about how awful junior year was. So, at the beginning of last year, I decided to put my head down and just get through it the best I could. But when I finally came up for air,

things looked a lot different. I had prioritized school before anything else for nine long months, and it was because I felt I had to maintain my grades and extracurriculars. However, once that's over (and it does all eventually end) you look up and senior year is staring you in the face.

Senior year has given me a lot more free time. The workload has lessened considerably, which also gives me the opportunity to reflect. I realized that last year I barely dealt with any of the problems in my life because I couldn't, I didn't have time to think about anything except school. I stayed with my head down, and plowed forward, not looking up. But now, I have all this free time that I'm not used to, and surprisingly, it's difficult.

I've been finding myself taking on extra work to fill my free time. I haven't been used



Ella Hechlik, Editor-in-Chief

to working this little because my junior year was constant, nonstop, and my brain struggles with what to do with all the time I have. Free time equals facing the things that are easy to ignore and not solve, like relationships with friends and family.

This is a problem I hear a lot of students talk about as well, filling free time with more and more activities. Learning to mask any problems with productivity.

And the thing is, it worked. I didn't have to deal with a lot of things. Obviously, this is unhealthy and it eventually catches up with you both physically and mentally. For me, it caught up this year. I still find myself trying to find activities to fill free time, because I know free time actually equals facing your problems. I think it's a Pine View problem, feeling like free time is bad. I know so many kids who feel the same way, who avoid real issues with productivity. And, it can be hard to see from the outside because you appear to be doing well, still working.

So, bear in mind what your productivity actually means, or what it may be masking.

I still find myself trying to find activities to fill free time, because I know free time actually equals facing your problems.