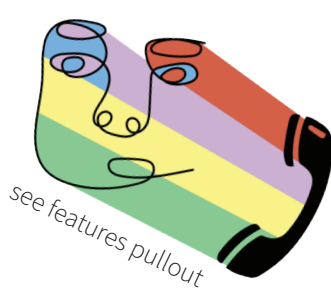


the Torch



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Sarasota County addresses racial discrimination in academic settings



A group of Christians pray before the September 15 school board meeting. The gathering of people, spawned from the Facebook group 'Concerned Parents of Sarasota Schools,' argued in opposition of racial sensitivity training, controversial educational videos and the student mask policy after praying and anointing the building with oil in hopes that the school board would side with their cause. PHOTO BY GRACE JOHNSON

by Grace Johnson and Peyton Harris
 Match Editor-in-Chief & Opinion Editor

Across the country, as the presence of the Black Lives Matter movement increased over the summer, systematic racism was progressively criticized in all shapes and forms. Here in Sarasota, the subjects of racial biases and cultural insensitivities within our own schools became a growing conversation.

June 3, then-interim Superintendent Mitsi Corcoran presented Sarasota Schools' initial response to the escalating broadcasting of the Black Lives Matter movement through a Facebook post acknowledging, that all students have the right to learn equally. The statement claimed that the district will do their best to address incidents of bias. Corcoran concluded by applauding students for protesting for justice and police reform.

Continuing in their support of students of color, Sarasota County Schools

established a \$115,000 contract with Dr. Sherroky Hollie to hold seven racial and cultural sensitivity training seminars with Sarasota County Schools' faculty and staff members. However, after Hollie's first session received some negative responses, newly appointed Superintendent Dr. Brennan Asplen tabled the rest of Hollie's lessons. Asplen later responded in an email, when asked why the contract was pulled, that poor timing and "lack of structure for rollout" were to blame.

At the school board meeting, a group of (predominantly white) parents, who discuss Sarasota County School Board decisions on Facebook under the group name 'Concerned Parents of Sarasota Schools' had 17 members speak. They were later asked to leave due to aggressive behavior. The group has 1,600 members and counting, often sport red t-shirts, and have made a habit of lengthening board meetings. Their common

argument consists of pleas to let parents choose when to teach their children about the Black Lives Matter movement, which many called a terrorist organization, and claimed that the BrainPOP video was an example Sarasota County Schools indoctrinating their children with leftist ideology.

A total of seven Sarasota County students spoke as well, four of them being Pine View alumni. Many of them reflected on experiences of bias in regard to their races, one being 2019 Pine View alumnus, Nabil Shariff.

"This notion that diversity training is indoctrination...feels like an insult to the mission that the schools should have. I can tell you as a Pakistani-Indian, Muslim-American that a collective regard in positive relations for the fellow different-looking student is far from perfect," Shariff said.

He expounded upon multiple inci-

dents where he had experienced discrimination because of his skin color. Some of the most horrifying regarded him as a "curry-smelling monster," and claimed that he wasn't in school on 9/11 because he was "celebrating." Again, these are only two of the several traumatic instances he recounted. However, rather than blaming the kids who bullied him, Shariff turned to the schools and the lack of diversity education offered as the true reason behind the discrimination he faced.

"I'm not positing that everyone's racist, and those who engaged in that behavior aren't explicitly racist or bad people, because that is not what's at hand. I can guarantee you that if there had been some training in place, I'm sure that I and other minorities would have had a vastly different experience." Shariff said.

Item 13 of that meeting proposed the establishment of a contract between the School Board and Dr. Javar Godfrey, which had a financial impact of about \$38,000 — significantly less than the cost of Hollie's contract.

"[Asplen] caved into a vocal minority who claimed Hollie was a 'racist, BLM trained indoctrinator.' This was the wrong thing to do," Shariff said in regard to item 13. "If Dr. Hollie was the first step, this is only the first sentence."

The decision to flag the Black Lives Matter BrainPOP video, along with other controversial videos as "Sensitive Content" was made at this meeting as well. Some parents were upset that the video went unremoved. Brennan later clarified at the Oct. 6 meeting that deleting the video entirely is not possible.

Seeing an opportunity to confront racism within the school's community, 2017 Pine View alumna Olympia Spivey created a petition demanding change from the school system. The petition lists both short and long-term goals to achieve an equitable environment — universal gifted testing within the county being a central goal in order to provide minority students with better access to gifted education.

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Exploring academic honesty in a time of remote learning

by Sarah Catalano
 Features Editor

As the Sarasota County education system adjusts to dual-classroom settings this year, remote students face their computers — and a choice — each day.

While the implementation of technology in school has enabled learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, it also facilitates academically dishonest behaviors. Students are now expected to uphold their integrity, even in more relaxed environments.

Despite the change, no cases of potential academic dishonesty at the high school level of Pine View have warranted administrative involvement so far. County-wide statistics from progress-checking assessments like iReady offer no data to indicate any trend among remote students.

"Especially at the older grade levels, there's a little bit of difference, a little increase in the percentage of kids remotely doing better, but you can't make a conclusion from that...Those kids who are remote might be more capable of being remote," Assistant Superintendent Dr. Laura Kingsley said. "I still would not go so far as to say academic honesty has been involved any more than in a typical year."

Twelfth-grader Nic Butakow, currently enrolled in remote learning, administrates "Pine View Support Group," a Discord server for high school students

to exchange school-related information. The 300-plus-member server upholds a strict set of rules relating to academic honesty.

With approximately half of students participating in remote learning, Butakow said the server has become

cially the entire internet, so I would not say it's a level playing field at all."

Teachers are already implementing procedures to avoid these issues. Pre-Algebra and AP Calculus BC teacher Shane Melton, in his first year teaching at Pine View, recently studied at USF. Melton said



Social Studies teacher John Schweig monitors both online and in-person students taking tests. Due to new online testing, teachers have implemented guidelines for online students to follow while taking a test. PHOTO BY ANNA LABINER

a valuable resource. Students can ask classmates questions about due dates, assignments, and zoom links.

"Personally, I haven't seen an increase in cheating," Butakow said. "It's a lot harder for [teachers] to look at the whole class at once. [Remote students] have their computer, and access to basi-

experiencing pandemic learning as both a student and teacher has given him insight on "what works and what doesn't."

Inspired by the policies of one USF professor, Melton developed a set of online test-taking guidelines to create equity between remote and traditional learners. Under the policy, students download

a College Board lockdown browser to restrict activity during test-taking and cameras are angled toward their testing space.

Other teachers, such as AP Language and Composition teachers Jessica Hentges and Christopher Pauling, have had similar successes in establishing equal grounds for students to learn and test upon. Utilizing online tools such as Blackboard Learn, they've created a system that looks the same regardless of how students attend class.

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 Manipulation of tragedy for profit

Community tackles racial tensions

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by Grace Johnson and Peyton Harris

Match Editor-in-Chief & Opinion Editor

"I think that part of [the inspiration for the petition] was that this past summer we saw the resurgence of Black Lives Matter with the murder of George Floyd and Ahmaud Abernathy...Talking with my peers and reflecting upon our experiences at Pine View in comparison to college, a lot of us realized a lot about our racial upbringing that we maybe didn't see while in that 'Pine View bubble,'" Spivey, a current student at New York University, said.

"While I was at Pine View, I honestly can't recall many substantive conversations surrounding race or racial equity...Overall there wasn't really a sense of progress or even a starting point," 2015 graduate Pedro Rubiano said. "That's changed in a positive way due to the work of people like Olympia who are a part of creating a conversation. In that way, it's a huge step forward. Simply having a conversation that didn't exist before is progress within itself, despite, of course, it not being enough."

The petition gained traction quickly, garnering nearly 800 signatures as well as pub-

licity from the Sarasota-Herald Tribune.

In an email as a response to questions about the petition, Principal Dr. Stephen Covert addressed the efforts made by Pine View.

"Writing a petition and getting people to sign it I hope will make Ms. Spivey feel like she did something to address the challenge and opportunity of diversity and racism," Dr. Covert wrote.

"What I believe are concrete steps to actually make a difference are actions like getting speakers to come to campus and address access and opportunity of minority students, Pine View paying for universal screening so that every single child at all Title I elementary schools has access and opportunity to be screened for gifted services, and our school supporting the work of DiGS and Diversity Council."

However, some question whether or not universal gifted testing will make a huge change in Pine View's demographics.

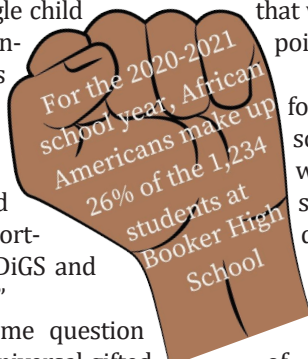
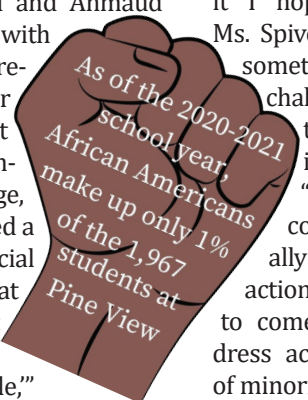
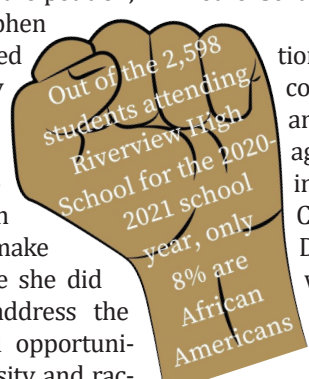
"I know a few Black people that are like 'oh, I want to come [to Pine View], but there are no others like me.' As long as people still have that mentality, no one's going to come even if everyone can access gifted testing

and qualify to go to the school," twelfth-grader and President of Diversity Council at Pine View, Bethel Schandorf-Lartey said.

Beyond the petition, many Pine View community members are taking action against racial discrimination in education. Clubs like DiGS and Diversity Council are working to educate the student body on racial injustice, and teacher Scott Wolfinger established Pine View's first African-American History Honors course.

Looking from afar, Sarasota County has not done much to aid students of color facing discrimination, but that doesn't mean that people aren't actively working harder to do more or that we won't ever reach a point of equity.

"Honestly, I think, for the most part, the school board does want to support their students..." Schandorf-Lartey said. "But then, if they do that, it feels like they're making some sort of political statement, and that gets them a lot of contention from parents. And they have to listen to parents above anyone else. I think there are a lot of well-intentioned people that really want to support the students, support the teachers, and the movements that we're taking part in."



Academic structure shifts in class

continued from page 1

by Sarah Catalano

Features Editor

New techniques have already taken root at Pine View, as teachers shift their assessments to best fit their courses. In some classes, students may create models or write essays to demonstrate mastery, as opposed to traditional multiple-choice question formats.

"Each department's definitely having conversations [like] 'what is the purpose of assessment,'" Assistant Principal Kate Marcotte said. "It's not the purpose of giving a test just to give a test. It's really feedback for the student and for the teacher to know, 'is the student mastering or understanding those concepts' and if not, what supports are needed, and if they are, how can they enrich or extend those opportunities."

And while alternative assessments have yielded success, an open environment between teachers and students proves to be just as important.

In her fifth year at Pine View, Hentges has established one such system with her students through the Remind app. Students contact her directly with questions, while she notifies the class of any important information.

This year, she said, this is more important than ever, valu-

ing the ability to be transparent with students.

"I would hope that [my students] would just do the very best they can, and be honest," Hentges said. "If there was ever a question of academic honesty,

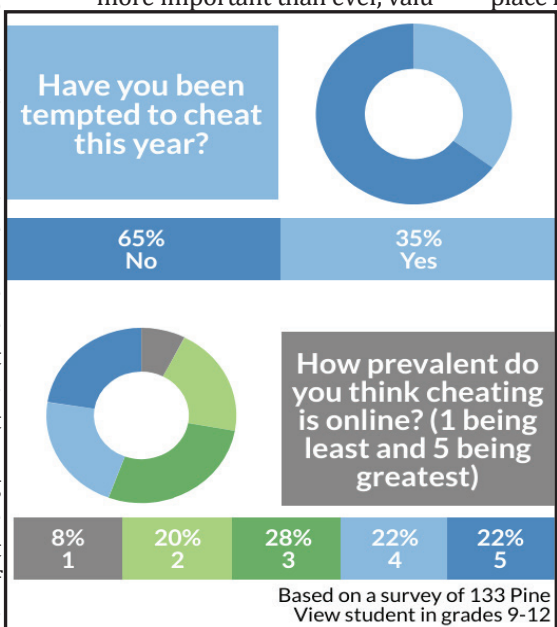
it's kind of a learning lesson. I would want to talk to them and say... 'It happened, and we're going to move forward and try again.'"

The administration of major, statewide assessments remains largely uncertain. Following the plan currently in place for the FSA this year, small groups of remote students will take the test in a safe location — a process the county put into practice with various summer exams.

"In the end, if you do cheat on a test — it's cliché at this point — but you are cheating yourself," Melton said. "If your foundation has cracks in it but you add more on top of it, those cracks just get bigger."

Amidst the confusion of pandemic learning, it truly rests on students to carry on Pine View's well-worn 212 philosophy. As teachers strive to provide the best opportunities they can, remote and traditional learners alike adapt to new circumstances and are challenged to improve them.

GRAPHIC BY ISABELLA GASKILL



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IN BRIEF

New COVID-19 test centers open in Sarasota County

by Olivia Hansen

Copy Editor

In light of reopening schools in the midst of a worldwide health crisis, Sarasota County Schools has opened additional COVID-19 testing centers. These sites are specifically designed for Sarasota County educational staff and students, to ensure the well-being of those who were sent back to school during this time.

Superintendent Brennan Asplen enforced this initiative with the intention of reducing quarantine times for teachers and students who have been exposed to the virus. The priority right now is staff and student safety, which is highlighted in Sarasota County School-board's recent initiatives in response to the virus. Alongside the new testing centers, Sarasota County Schools has implemented new social dis-

tancing guidelines and mandatory restrictions to reduce infection rates in schools.

These testing sites prioritize efficiency as well as safety. After getting tested, individuals at these locations receive their results in the next 24-48 hours. Furthermore, the same protocols remain regarding students and staff who tested positive for the virus — a mandatory 14-day self-isolation period, as well as those who came within six feet of the infected individual.

"The testing center's efficacy and professionalism made the whole experience less frightening, especially in times like this," twelfth-grader Ashley Pelton, who recently tested negative for COVID-19, said.

These testing centers will be located at the Department of Health and the School District's transportation hub.

Students work with Girls Inc. to create SAVE program

by Sebastian Genelhu-Bazan

Humor Editor

Girls Inc. Taking Action, a subsection of the Girls Inc. organization, has introduced a new program with the help of some high-school volunteers. The SAVE (sexual abuse/violence education) program is an inter-organizational advocacy program that took off this summer, where in a few Girls Inc. volunteers spent their summer learning about the problems that directly affect women and girls, and are currently in contact with crisis centers to learn more about sexual assault advocacy.

Girls Inc. as a whole equips girls to deal with feminine issues, such as but are not limited to, gender, economic, and social barriers among society. They help deal with this by giving girls that enter their organization long-lasting mentoring relationships, a pro-girl environment, and research-based programming to assist girls in growing up healthy, educated and independent.

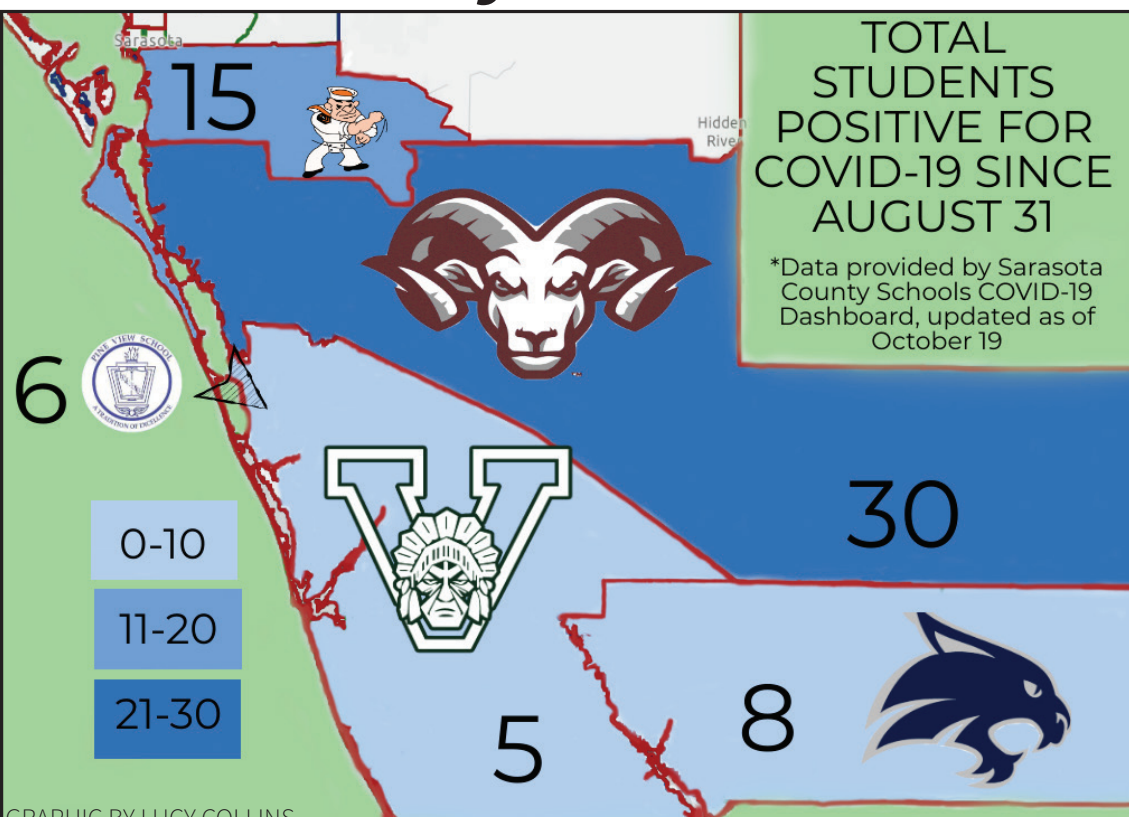
Twelfth-grader Kiran

Kadiyala co-founded the SAVE program with another Pine View student, eleventh-grader Grace Johnson, among a few other girls from other schools. "It was rewarding and inspiring and has gifted me with a support group I had never experienced before," Kadiyala said.

Independently researching statistics relevant to the topic of sexual assault and education, the young leaders create infographics, post on social media, and talk with national representatives from Girls Inc. to aid their cause. Their eventual goal is to have a bill drafted towards educating students on sexual assault in classrooms to bring to our local representative.

"I learned how to foster relationships with much higher executives and reach out to leaders on my own accord without the backing of an established organization," Kadiyala said. "My biggest takeaway was that the most effective advocacy comes from listening to others' stories and sharing them."

COVID-19 By the Numbers



GRAPHIC BY LUCY COLLINS

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"A sound mind in a sound body is a full but short description of a happy state in this world."

Suncoast research project sparks student involvement

by Courtney Nelson
Asst. News Editor

Over the summer, numerous Pine View Students joined the Brain Health Initiative (BHI) as they embarked on a mission to understand the complexities of the brain. Through the Boys and Girls Club, tenth-grader Nathan Widjaja, eleventh-graders Erick Morales, Grace Johnson and Edward Shen, along with twelfth-graders Max Banach, Grace Jiang, Noah Kunkel, and Rosenna Chan joined the initiative with the Harvard Research Hospital.

The cross-sectional study has focused on mental illnesses, nutrition, aging, memory, and how to create a healthier Suncoast. By beginning the research locally, a starting point into what will become a larger study in the future has been created. The initiative gives volunteers like Banach and Widjaja the opportunity to go out of their comfort zones and find connections between the BHI and branching into fields of study later on in the future. BHI gives opportunities to play in a field of study relevant to research and science.

"I'm interested in doing research [in the future], maybe get a major in physics, but something that is categorized as pre-med is not something that's ever struck my interest. I'd say that this has been above all, an educational moment, to learn of something that I wouldn't have in a separate career path," Banach said.

The students' responsibility in the study is comprised of analyzing data from the local population and helping with the creation of surveys. Currently, the surveys focus on COVID-19 and its ef-

fect on the community's general well-being. The initiative is working to obtain data to see which aspect of brain health they should tackle first when creating a 'living laboratory' out of the Suncoast region to improve brain health in order to decrease the likelihood of degenerative brain diseases such as Alzheimers.

According to the Brain Health Initiative website, "Neuro-logic and men-t a l

health symptoms of COVID-19 infections are common, diverse and often severe. This is why it is important to understand the long and short-term effects."

"I learned a lot more than I thought I would," Banach said. "For the most part, I thought I'd be a lackey, but we started right off the bat with presentations by doctors, took that information, and presented it back in our own way. We've done a lot of personal research of specific factors: nutrition, brain disorders, COVID-19, stress resilience, and well-being."

The initiative is located in the Suncoast/Sarasota region which benefits the large demographic of elderly citizens; however, the study is looking to expand among all age groups. As a longitudinal study, the initiative hopes to see the long-term effect of encouraging brain healthy practices in a community.

"It's so important because of Sarasota's older residents, making sure their needs are addressed and understanding brain factors for practitioners and doctors to involve... we send out research and develop surveys to learn what could lead to healthier and longer lives," Banach said. Continuing from the summer, volunteers meet once a week on Thursday evenings for a series of lectures. After the lectures are completed, the program requires the student scholars to complete what's remaining of their 20-hour

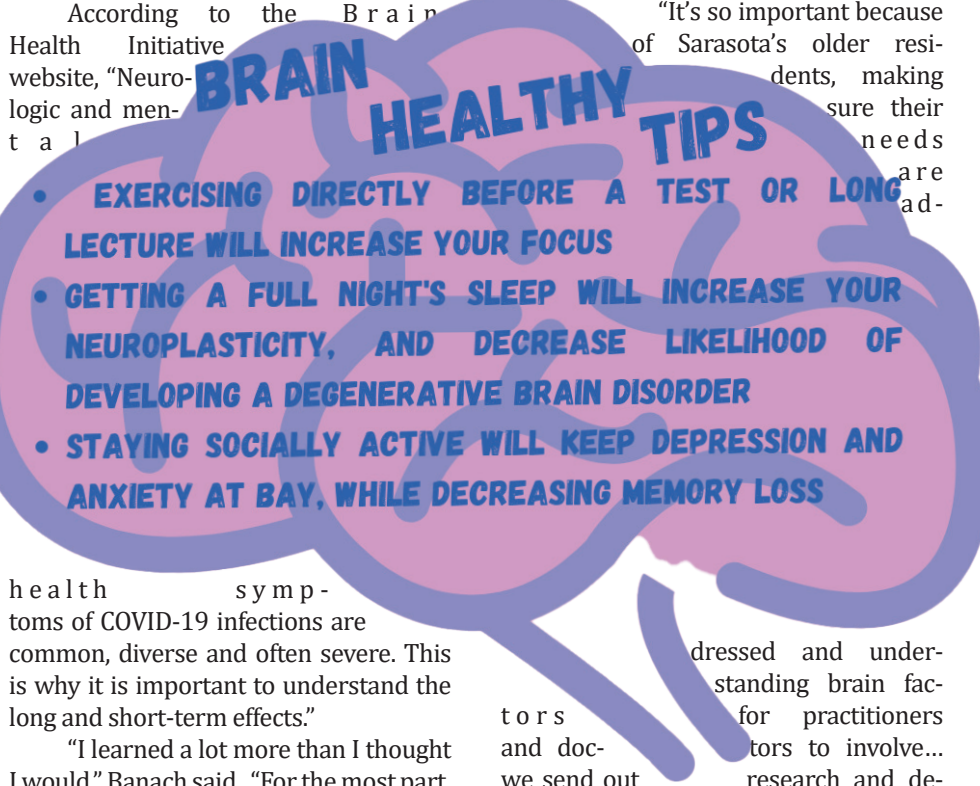
commitment in assisting with analyzing surveys and data. The program provides high schoolers with an opportunity to help their community of both elderly and young simultaneously.

"With the first meeting, we simply discussed what Brain Health was and that it's often overlooked in society. Professors and educators would tell us what we could do to mitigate brain health problems. So far, the initiative has been primarily focused through Zoom lectures," Widjaja said.

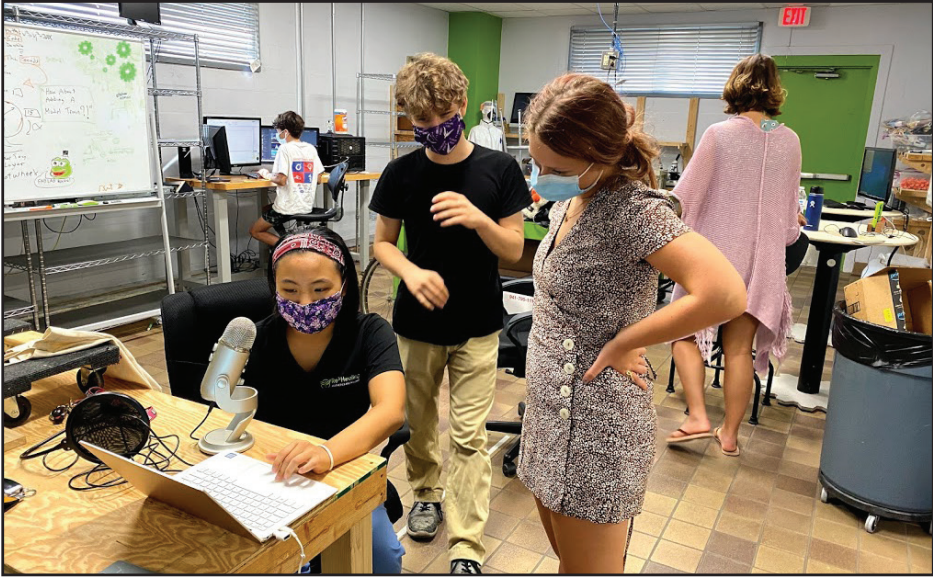
Because brain health has not been prioritized for decades, it has caused struggles in finding the origins of illness, what can be done to prevent them, and how to live a healthier life. According to Widjaja, the biggest part of learning and discovering is to share the results so everyone can work toward a common goal which cannot be accomplished if people are indifferent about the topic. Suncoast had decided to change that indifference with the program by, "Building Brain Healthy Communities for the Florida Suncoast and Beyond."

Taking the dive into the initiative was the first step for new volunteers, but the experience is worth it; they have much opportunity to gain knowledge and inform the public. Student volunteers have much say in the process and work alongside doctors.

"Prior to joining the program, I was part of the general public who really didn't highlight the importance of brain health," Widjaja said, "But now I really do think I understand why it's important, how to improve brain health, how to prevent brain illness."



COVIDucation developed to teach younger students



2020 Alumni Alexander Gage and Claire Wang work alongside twelfth-grader Alexiya Mikerina to preview the COVIDucation website. In constructing the website, students were led by Mimi Faulhaber and divided into three teams: a content team, the user-experience team, and a development team. PHOTO COURTESY OF MIMI FAULHABER

by Lora Rini
Asst. Match Editor

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the changing expectations and guidelines can be hard to keep track of for students. Over the summer, 11 student volunteers worked together to design COVIDucation, an educational website targeted toward elementary schoolers.

COVIDucation, a website intended to teach younger students about COVID-19 and community safety, was developed by the Student Community Innovation Program (SCIP) in collaboration with the school board. The SCIP is composed of Pine View students and alumni who volunteer at the Faulhaber Fab Lab, which is located at the Suncoast Science Center in Sarasota. The students working on the website were led by team leader Mimi Faulhaber. Having recently graduated from college, Faulhaber began to work on the project on very short notice.

"It was very impromptu, so a lot of the students were already involved with the Fab Lab and were kind of just around during the summer because their opportunities had been canceled," Faulhaber said.

COVIDucation is divided into three chapters, each containing self-paced lessons and short quizzes. Each chapter follows a storyline about a knight "fighting" COVID-19, with each lesson encompassing topics necessary for children to know about the virus such as, "Why was my school canceled?" "Face Masks," and "What is a virus?"

The students working on the website were divided into three teams. The content team did research and put together information for the website; the user-experience team designed the look of the website using wireframes, which is like an outline for the website, branding sheets, and logos; and the development teams did the coding. As the team leader, Faulhaber coordinated the work and meetings and handled communication with the school board.

Twelfth-grader Alexiya Mikerina, who was part of the content team, shared her experience with COVIDucation.

"I loved just seeing it come together. At first, when we just had the scripts, it was just documents of words, but then once we were starting to add the animations and recording the voice recordings...it was definitely [at] the point where we saw it really coming together and forming into a real project," Mikerina said.

Feedback for COVIDucation has been positive, with the website gaining over 2,000 clicks within the first three weeks of school.

Working on the website every week from late June to mid-August, the SCIP did the majority of the work over Zoom due to social-distancing standards. It was a lot of work, but Faulhaber thinks it definitely paid off.

"Everything was done pretty much by high school students, so I think it's really great that we were able to actually put together a working website that people are using, and hopefully making an impact on our community," Faulhaber said.

RED OR BLUE?

Millions of Americans will vote in the Nov. 3 election. Can't decide who to support? Below are the platforms of the two major -party candidates.

BIDEN HARRIS

- Implement nationwide mask mandate
- Increase minimum wage to \$15/hour
- Universal 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave
- Raise corporate tax rate from 21 % to 28%
- Public option for government-financed healthcare
- Decriminalize recreational marijuana
- Abolish private prisons
- Eliminate carbon emissions by 2035
- Repeal Hyde Amendment (reverse restrictions on federal funding for abortions)
- Implement federal assault weapons ban
- Extend federal anti-discrimination protections to gay and transgender people
- Make public colleges free for families making under \$125,000 per year

TRUMP PENCE

MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!

2020

- No minimum wage increase
- 12 weeks paid leave for federal government workers
- Maintain lower corporate tax rate of 21%
- Dismantle the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare)
- Enforce federal anti-marijuana laws
- Maintain use of private prisons
- Dismantle Obama-era environmental legislation
- Increase restrictions on abortion
- Opposes federal assault weapons ban
- Ban bump stocks
- Support ban on transgender people serving in military

GRAPHIC BY BEN GORDON

Pine View welcomes new educators and perspective for the 2020-2021 school year

During a period of countless vacancies due to Covid-19, the Pine View community opens its doors to four new high school teachers and a new Assistant Principal. Each of these educators comes bearing a mission and a story.

ILLUSTRATION BY MAHITHA RAMACHANDRAN

Kate Marcotte: High School Assistant Principal

by Mahitha Ramachandran
Sci&Tech Editor

Starting a new job during a global pandemic is certainly no simple task, but Pine View's new High School Assistant Principal Kate Marcotte has taken on her new role with enthusiasm, eagerness and empathy. Having replaced the previous Assistant Principal, Tara Spielman, Marcotte is excited to be working in a unique place like Pine View.

"I knew that I was going to be joining a very involved and supportive community," Marcotte said. "I get to work not only with students who are high performers but also with teachers and families who truly want the best educational experiences for their students."

While growing up in Sarasota, Marcotte developed a lifelong love of learning. She played saxophone in her middle school band, and volleyball and softball at Venice High School while taking AP, DE and other advanced classes. Marcotte's love for learning and the opportunity to forge connections with her classmates and

teachers eventually inspired her to pursue a career in education.

After earning her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from the University of South Florida, Marcotte became a kindergarten teacher at Atwater Elementary as a long-term substitute, a job that introduced



PHOTO BY GABRIELE NAVICKIS

her to the field.

Certified in all subject areas for grades K-9, Marcotte was eventually hired at Venice Middle School, where she worked as a science and social studies teacher. Three years into that position, she was asked to work with the Gulf

Coast Community Foundation to pilot the TechActive "Classrooms of Tomorrow," which are now in all the Sarasota County middle schools, including Pine View, ultimately leading to a role working as a District Specialist in implementing these classrooms across the county.

Marcotte went on to earn administrative positions at Sarasota Middle School and Woodland Middle School. Now with a total of 11 years working in education under her belt, Marcotte has joined the high school administrative team at Pine View.

Coming into a new job alone is a demanding transition, but doing so at a public school during a pandemic is its own challenge entirely.

"For me, the transition is always really exciting. Getting to learn a new place and figuring out what my role is to help support is very appealing to me. Coming in during a pandemic, though, is definitely very unusual," Marcotte said.

Marcotte explains that components of being an administrator look very similar

regardless of the school; at the core of the role, she wants to help create the best environment for students.

"Being in a pandemic, the biggest part of that transition has been finding creative ways to adjust the way we do things. We are trying to think outside the box to continue things that are really important for our students, and that's difficult to do sometimes when you don't know what the prior history is at the school," Marcotte said. "I'm finding myself asking lots of questions about how things would look normally or traditionally so that we can blend those important values and aspects into

the new way of doing things."

Due to COVID-19, this school year has been defined by collective adjustment to new procedures and unusual routines for all students and staff,

but paired with a new job, this novelty is amplified for Marcotte. Still, she is enthusiastic about all the opportunities she has to work with students and families and to become part of the Pine View community.

My main goal is to be a role model for students and for staff, a support system for our families and our teachers, and an advocate for whatever the voice is that needs to be heard,"
Kate Marcotte,
Assistant Principal

"My main goal is to be a role model for students and for staff, a support system for our families and our teachers and an advocate for whatever the voice is that needs to be heard," Marcotte said.

Shane Melton: AP Calculus BC and Algebra I

by Lora Rini
Asst. Match Editor-in-Chief

Many people are making life changes in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and Shane Melton is no exception. In his first year as a high school teacher, Melton has begun teaching AP Calculus BC and Pre-Algebra.

Melton has had a deep interest in science and math from a young age. Recently graduating from the University of South Florida with a bachelor's degree in physics, he hopes to eventually obtain a master's degree as well, possibly in teaching.

Prior to starting at Pine View, Melton worked as a data analyst for Aqua Mizer, a company that manufactures a part that serves to save water in toilets. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Aqua Mizer was not doing as well as it had in the past, so Melton decided to look for a job elsewhere.

He was made aware of the opening at Pine View by his wife, AP World History teacher Robin Melton, who has worked at the school for 13 years. Although this is Melton's first year as a teacher, he is not new to the Pine View community.

"There are at least 10 or 12 teachers who are all part of the Social Studies department, that's what Mrs. Melton's a part of, that I've known for 10 years. Wolfinger's one of them, and he's the godfather to our daughter," Melton said.

He has also met many other teachers through his wife, notably participating in a fantasy football league with her and several other Pine View teachers for the past six or seven years.

Melton is adapting quickly to the school, and he constantly asks his students for input and advice on his teaching. Tenth-grader Nathan Widja-

ja greatly appreciates this and thinks that Melton's teaching style is very effective.

"He wants us all to succeed, and he knows that it's a difficult subject — you can tell how much work he puts into his lesson plans. Whenever someone emails him a question for home-

He just really cares about us, and he wants to see us succeed in his class and also on the AP exam,"
Nathan Widjaja,
tenth-grader

work, he'll reply with a fully worked-out solution to the question. He just really cares about us, and he wants to see us succeed in his class and also on the AP exam," Widjaja said.

So far, Melton enjoys teaching. He likes the material, but the relationships that he has formed with his students stand out as his favorite part of the job.

"You develop all these little relationships that brighten up your day on occasion. Like when you have a student that maybe is struggling, and then they finally get it and they have that 'aha' moment right in front of you — it's a really nice feeling to see that. Little moments like that make a big difference," Melton said.



PHOTO BY TIFFANY YU

Mercy Donohue: English II Honors

by Alyson Mizanin
Sports Editor

Adapting to change has been an undeniable tenet of 2020, but very few can say that such adaptation has come in the form of being hired six weeks into the school year. English teacher Mercy Donohue, the newest addition to Pine View's English Department, can do just that. With a Bachelor of Arts degree from upstate New York's Colgate University and a myriad of other certifications, Donohue is looking forward to sharing her love for literature with her English II Honors students.

Born at a Washington state army base, Donohue has connections to states across the country. She moved to Miami for job opportunities and taught within Miami-Dade County at schools such as G. Holmes Braddock High and the Center for International Education. She was teaching a variety of gifted, college prep and Cambridge courses in English and social studies.

Donohue's love for English is evident in everything from the poetry she enjoys writing to the innumerable books she loves. Though she cannot cite a specific favorite book, as doing so is "like asking me what my favorite food is." Donohue enjoys literature that draws on colloquialisms and historical events, which corresponds with certain works in the English II curriculum, such as Mark Twain's "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" and Arthur Miller's "The Crucible."

"[English] allows me to talk about literary elements, which I think are puzzle pieces that authors use to put together a whole other piece of art. It also allows me to talk about interdisciplinary things like psychology and sociology and history and science, de-

pending on what we're talking about. I get to bring in other subjects when I'm talking about English, so I don't really feel like I'm doing just one thing — I'm doing a little of all of it," Donohue said.

Donohue applied for the job after seeing the open position in mid-September and was called back two days later. Official screening from the district lengthened the process. October 6 marked her first day in her new classroom.

"When she first started, I was nervous for her because I know it'd be really stressful to come in after a few weeks, but she popped in and fit in so well. She is so nice, kind-hearted and empathetic toward us after we have had a substitute for so long," tenth-grader Hana Han said of her new English teacher.

Donohue is looking to remedy the disconnect caused by COVID-19 guidelines. Her usual teaching style incorporates moving around the classroom and supervising group-led discussions. New mandates affected these tremendously, but Donohue is making the most out of what she can. Her close attention to detail has helped students like tenth-grader Jacob Koshy, who is a remote student.

"One of the best things about her is that whenever she moves and lectures the class, she moves the camera so we look at the class while she lectures or ask questions. It's the little things...She gets all the students involved. It's only her second week, and she's already doing really well compared to some of my subs and teachers," Koshy said.

All in all, Donohue is excited about her future at the school.

"I wouldn't want to leave here. I wouldn't want to go back to any of my other schools," she said.



PHOTO BY KAI SPRUNGER

Tammy Madden: English II Honors, Creative Writing, Speech, and DE Introduction to Literature

by Alyson Mizanin
Sports Editor

The words “ordinary” and “typical” do not suffice in describing new English teacher Tammy Madden, but “published playwright” does. Madden has two decades’ worth of experience with teaching students in grades 10-12. This year, she teaches English II Honors, Creative Writing, Speech and, come second semester, Dual Enrollment (DE) Introduction to Literature.

Hailing from Marion, North Carolina, Madden always dreamt of being involved in the world of theater and literature. Madden began acting when she was nine years old. Due to English’s close relationship with drama, both in and out of the classroom, Madden knew that pursuing a career in English was the path for her.

Madden has various degrees from different colleges: a bachelor’s in English Creative Writing from Montreat College in Montreat, North Carolina; a master’s in English Literature from Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, New York; and a master’s in Educational Leadership from Concordian

University in Portland, Oregon. These qualifications cinched her position as part of Pine View’s English staff; in fact, shortly after Madden was interviewed by Principal Dr. Stephen Covert toward the beginning of the summer, she was hired on the spot.

Though Madden has experience working at both Title 1 Schools and college and career academies, Pine View is unlike any place she has taught at before.



PHOTO BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

“I absolutely love it here – I call it teacher heaven. All the students here are very driven to do their work and do well. That’s very nice from a teacher’s point of view,” she said. “The sense of community here surprised me. It’s hard these days to find a school with the sense of community, where parents and teachers and families are involved, and everyone cares. That is a pleasant surprise.”

Madden has been planning the curriculum for all students taking English II, given that Pine View is still looking for another teacher for the course. Jym Froelich, who substitutes for the open position, is deeply appreciative of Madden’s dedication to-

ward making English II the best that it can be.

“Mrs. Madden has been the glue holding things together, keeping the lessons and units flowing with pur-

“Mrs. Madden has been the glue holding things together, keeping the lessons and units flowing with purpose and engagement... I’ve found a new friend in her and cannot praise her selflessness enough,”
Jym Froelich,
ESE Teacher

pose and engagement... She has been doing her job extremely well, burdened with the unsolicited obligation of keeping [my] five classes going strong. I’ve found a new friend in her

and cannot praise her selflessness enough,” Froelich wrote via Remind.

When she is not planning, Madden enjoys writing – particularly in relation to theater. Three of her plays have been officially published. The one that “gets the most press,” according to Madden, is her adaptation of Oscar Wilde’s, “The Canterville Ghost.” Madden draws inspiration for writing from the world around her, especially in the realm of injustice.

Tenth-grader Maya Frankowski starts off her school day with Madden’s English II class.

“She seems really passionate about English and all the literature we’re going to be reading this year. So far, we’ve done a lot of writing, and I really like it because it’s genuinely opened up my mind from a long period of dormancy from writing,” Frankowski said.

Madden looks forward to seeing how all her classes develop, particularly DE Introduction to Literature and English II. While some of her all-time favorite books, such as “The Color of Water” and “The Crucible,” are part of the English II curriculum, experience with being a DE instructor in the past makes her excited to see how working with it this year will turn out. Regardless of what the future holds, Madden is beyond happy to be in “teacher heaven.”

[an infographic]

New Classes for the 2020-2021 School Year

African American History Honors — Scott Wolfinger

- Grade 9-12 honors social studies course
- Examines events that affected African Americans throughout history
- Content includes West African heritage, the Middle Passage and Triangular Trade, the African diaspora, enslavement and emancipation, the Abolition movement, Black nationalism, and Civil Rights movements
- 0.5 credit, one semester, no prerequisites



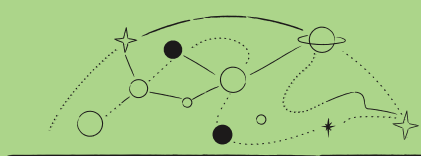
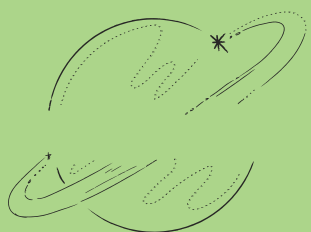
Personal Financial Literacy Honors — Eida Gullick

- Grade 9-12 honors social studies course
- Content includes economics, financial literacy, mathematics, language arts for literacy in history/social studies and speaking and listening
- Concepts include scarcity, choice, opportunity cost, and cost/benefit analysis with emphasis on economic decision-making in real life
- 1.0 credit



DE Astronomy — Dylan Bell

- Dual enrollment course on PV approved by USFSM
- Fall semester: AST 2002 — introductory course providing an overview of astronomy to aid further study
- Spring semester: AST 2004 — introductory course detailing stellar astronomy and cosmology
- No required prerequisites



GRAPHIC BY PEYTON HARRIS

Dean Ball: French II

by Zoe Merritt
Entertainment Editor

When Dean Ball started picking up “little kid” German while living in West Berlin, no one knew where his love for languages would take him. Five languages, three master’s degrees and years of travel later, he discovered his passion for teaching. Today the French II and middle school world language teacher can be found in his flag-adorned room, excited to share his knowledge with students beginning their language journey.

Before entering the field of education, Ball served in the Air Force, like his father, and looks back on his time positively.

“I got stationed in Germany as my dad did, and I was over there when the wall came down. So, I grew up with this big division, the Cold War, the Soviet Union, the United States,” Ball said as he recounted



PHOTO BY ISABELLA KULAWIK

one of the most impactful moments of his time served. “All of a sudden, I look on T.V. and people are standing on the Berlin Wall. I thought ‘That’s crazy! I can’t believe that’s happening!’”

As a person with a unique story, it is not surprising that before receiving his first of three master’s degrees, in counseling, Ball believed that he would end up a church pastor. However, he later found that what attracted him to the profession, would influence his career in education.

“What I admired most about the many aspects of being a pastor of a church was the fact that they were also teachers. I liked any sermon that delved into the big picture of where this was happening, who was involved, what was the historical setting,” Ball said.

Ball earned his first master’s degree at Boston University. He then went on to earn his second and third degrees, teaching foreign language and administration, at the University of Alaska in

Anchorage. Remaining in Anchorage, he taught German for 15 years.

“I started substituting, and I thought ‘this is it, this is who I am. I’m a teacher,’” Ball said. “It wasn’t a job for me, I really enjoyed the interaction and energy between me and the kids.”

Packed between the end of his time in the Air Force and start at Pine View is over 20 years in teaching — first as a Spanish, French and German substitute teacher and later administrator for a German immersion school in Alaska. Retiring early, Ball moved to Florida where an offer to substitute for his neighbor at Venice High School brought him back to teaching.

Welcomed by a supportive community of language teachers here on campus, Ball has come to find Pine View ideal for his methods of teaching, which include a lesson followed by engaging stu-

dents through finding connections. He stresses the individuality of one’s goals with learning a foreign language and the rapport established from learning a new tongue, no matter the number of English learners in that country.

“I tell the kids that every language you learn, it’s that many million people you can communicate with... I have this passion, and I want the kids to realize they can have this passion, too,” Ball said.

Down the line, Ball hopes to create more language courses at Pine View to encourage the love of language. It is a dream of his to establish a German program at Pine View and an exchange program with the school he used to work with from his time in Alaska.

“I offer them the tools, teach them how to use the tools to acquire a language,” Ball said. “Then they have to use those tools to create a more personal connection, and they have some ownership of that.”



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Adjusting to Remote Learning vs. Procedures on Campus

Remote Learning

by Leo Gordon
Editor-in-Chief

In the age of the COVID-19 pandemic, the issue of returning to schools has become one of political, social and medical consequence. Globally, millions of students are learning from home, and locally, out of the over 35,000 students enrolled in Sarasota County Schools, 10,160 chose to attend school remotely this fall.

On top of the learning environment changes associated with attending school at home rather than on campus, many Pine View students describe the technology linked to remote learning as one of the most consequential changes in their learning experience.

"It's been tough trying to work through a system where there's much less social interaction and engagement than usual," twelfth-grader Krishna Dhimar said. "The worst part is that the technology involved in remote learning makes me feel less motivated."

A direct result of the rise of remote learning, the popularity of video conferencing sites like Zoom, Google Meet and Microsoft Teams has surged exponentially since last year. Zoom alone has experienced a thirtyfold increase in its number of daily users since December.

Despite its popularity, many teachers, new to the virtual educational sphere, find the software necessary but difficult to use.

"The biggest difficulty for me has been keeping Zoom kids engaged during labs," AP Biology and Biotechnology teacher Angela Keiper said. "I felt like I was going to be able to make it work, but it hasn't been as easy or successful as I thought it'd be."

Some students, overwhelmed by the stark contrast between remote and in-person learning, decided to enroll in physical classes after having started virtually.

"I felt as if I wasn't fully and effectively participating in the classroom as much as the in-person students were, and I was more prone to distractions," twelfth-grader Noah Kunkel said.

Ultimately, though it comes with its own set of issues,

the additional safety offered to students and families by remote learning is, according to some students, worth the cost.

"Remote learning is the best option for my family because my dad works in the medical field. Even with precautions in place, if I were exposed at school, myself, my family, and my dad's patients would be at risk," twelfth-grader Kate Haggarty, who plans on attending school remotely until second semester, said.

In-Person Learning

by Gabriele Navickis
Asst. Entertainment Editor

In an effort to keep the classroom safe, sanitary and practical, Pine View, like all Sarasota County schools, has implemented new protocols. While these efforts serve to adapt to new challenges amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, not all these changes are visible to the student.

One of the more noticeable changes on campus

has been the addition of clear desk dividers, which creates an additional barrier between students and staff. Implemented in every school in the county, they offer even more protection from germs and bacteria on top of masks and social distancing guidelines. These new physical protectants have received different reactions from students. In a poll of 16 students from grades nine to 12, 15 out of 16 said that they do not feel safer with the added shields and feel that they serve no real purpose.

"We always lean back or aren't directly behind them, so they don't really do anything," ninth-grader Ella Pappas said.

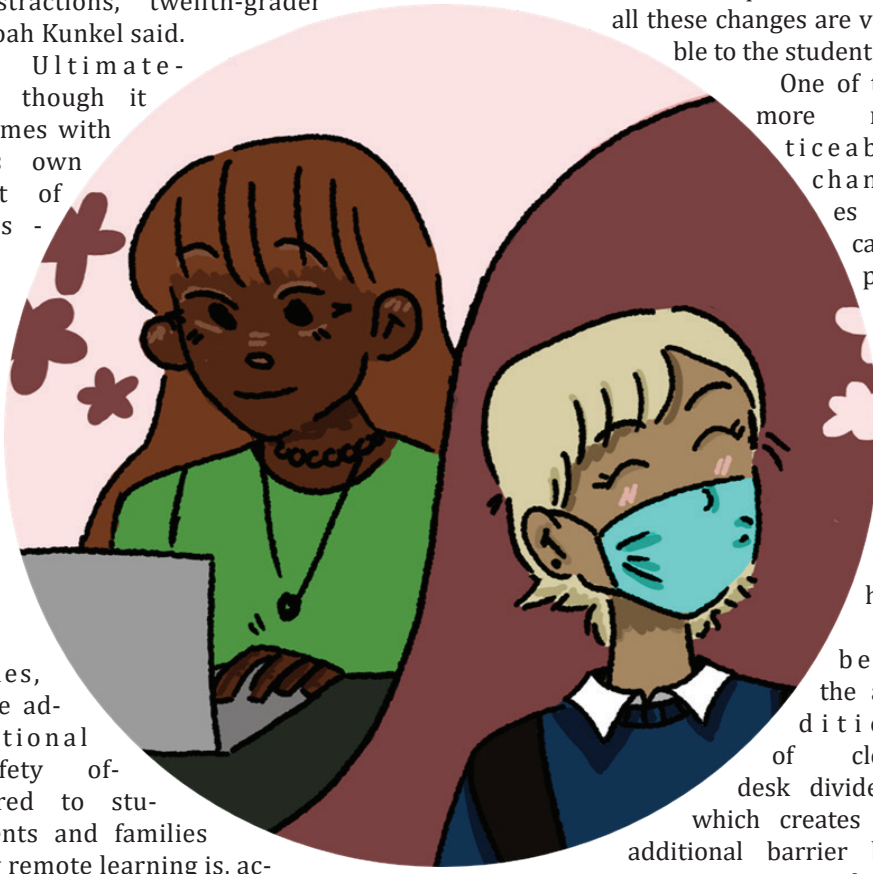
While there are varying opinions on the effectiveness of shields, they remain part of county protocol and will remain in classes until further notice.

A less noticeable change on campus has been the campus-wide application of OMNI Shield OS 75 Antimicrobial Protectant, an antimicrobial surface coating designed to stop the growth of odor and stain-causing bacteria on almost any surface. The product claims to provide "persistent and continuous surface protection" and is now being sprayed onto benches, desks, desk dividers, the elementary playground, picnic tables, doors, and more every sixty to ninety days. Soon the school will start spraying computer labs with the coating, too. This is to ensure that any potentially harmful germs or bacteria left behind by students will be eliminated, helping to further prevent spread of the virus.

"It's being sprayed on all surfaces including doors, walls, tables, everything and typically every ninety days is when it is applied," Pine View Middle School Assistant Principal Melissa Abele said.

With masks, shields, constant wiping and cleaning, comes a new way of life for students, teachers, administration, and the custodial staff. There continue to be new implementations and changes within classrooms as new challenges occur with the transfer of in-person and remote students. The county, Pine View, and all students and staff will likely have to continue to adapt into the distant future as the virus waxes and wanes.

For now, Pine View's motto for the year serves to remind students of this principle: "Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean."



GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

Teacher builds a celestial machine over quarantine

by Lora Rini

Asst. Match Editor

The COVID-19 pandemic inspired many to take on ambitious projects, and Pine View physics and calculus teacher Roger Siegel was no exception. In fact, he spent over 100 hours this summer making a machine that he calls a "celestial signpost."

Siegel started this project after watching a video on Grady Hillhouse's YouTube channel called "Practical Engineering." Siegel watches Hillhouse's videos frequently, and especially enjoys the civil engineering content that he posts.

The celestial signpost is a machine that points to where different celestial objects are in the sky, including the International Space Station, the Hubble Space Telescope, the moon, the other

planets, and Pluto. Siegel uses the app Sky View to check the accuracy of his machine. The app has a similar purpose to the machine: it shows the celestial objects that are in space above where the camera on his phone is pointed.

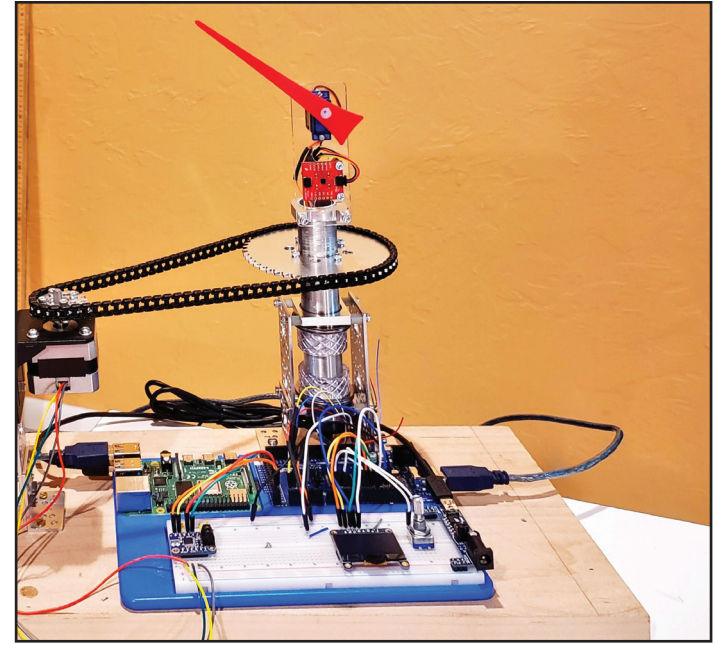
The body of the machine is composed of gears, computers, and several metal and plastic parts that make up the framework. The top is a wooden skewer that, when pointing to the International Space Station, moves slightly slower than the minute hand on a clock.

The machine's computing is done by a Raspberry Pi, a microcomputer, and an Arduino, which is a controller, meaning it receives feedback more quickly than a computer and is more specialized. This project also involved a lot of coding, which Siegel

initially attempted before deciding that it was too difficult.

He employed eleventh-grader Jason Beckmann, a home-schooled student, to write the code for him. Beckmann also taught Siegel how to do the coding as he went. Siegel was introduced to Beckmann through engineering teacher Andrew Wormington, the advisor of the Pine View robotics team, of which Beckmann is a member. They worked on the project together for three or four weeks over the summer. According to Beckmann, this was a relatively simple project for him, as Siegel was able to find a library, which is a package of prebuilt coding functions that somebody else had already created.

"[The library] would give you the position of the satellites and the planets and stuff



The "celestial signpost" which physics and calculus teacher Roger Siegel built during quarantine sits in his home. The machine is programmed to point at specific objects in the sky including the planets and the Hubble Space Telescope. PHOTO PROVIDED BY ROGER SIEGEL

that you're trying to track. So what we had to do was get that data from the Raspberry Pi, which was a computer, to the Arduino, which was a little microcontroller. And then the Arduino would then point out the coordinate it was given," Beckmann said.

Siegel purchased most of the materials needed to build the machine online, but the part that stands out to him the most is the one that he made. The part in question is a plastic piece that holds up the skewer and connects it to the rest of the machine. Siegel designed this piece in Fusion 360, software that can be used to create models of 2D and 3D objects, and then he cut it out using the laser cutter at the Faulhaber Fab Lab.

"When you design something, and then you put it into the machine and it comes out and it looks like you designed it, it really feels good. Even though of course that's the way it's supposed to be, it's really, really neat. It gives you a sense of accomplishment,

building something," Siegel said.

Siegel sees his current signpost as more of a prototype than a finished product. He hopes to make another one with plexiglass parts and a more compact shape. He also wants to add the center of the galaxy, Key West, and the altitude of all of the celestial bodies to the display.

Siegel refers to his machine as a celestial signpost because its purpose is simply to point to where things are. Initially, it may seem different from a traditional signpost because, unlike locations on Earth, space is a destination that seems out of reach. However, Siegel hopes to show that this is not necessarily true. To put it into perspective, Sarasota is closer to what is considered space than it is to most of the other states.

"If you drive to Jacksonville, that's as far as space is," Siegel said. People think space is far — it's actually very close, you just can't get there."

our planet & a global pandemic

human impact by the numbers

U.S. airlines consumed **12,807.5 million** gallons of fuel Jan through Aug 2019, and **7,697.7 million** gallons in 2020.

It's predicted that **3 out of 4** used disposable masks will end up in oceans or landfills.

Daily global CO2 emissions decreased by **17%** at their peak in April compared to 2019.

Individual countries' emissions decreased by **26%** at their peaks.

Countries returned to within **5%** of 2019 levels as activities resumed in June.

GRAPHIC BY SARAH CATALANO



Global disposable mask sales are estimated to have increased to **\$166,000,000,000** versus last year's 800 million.

Sources: ICOS, the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, the UN

Big Blue Grilled Cheese Co.

Tiffany Yu
Match Asst. Editor-in-Chief

With the popularization of food truck culture coming about at the turn of the last decade, it comes to no surprise that patrons can find practically any cuisine they like on two sets of wheels. Big Blue Grilled Cheese Company, located in the Sarasota-Bradenton area, is one of these food trucks giving it's modern take on a traditional homey meal everyone has come to know and love.

"My family is vegetarian, and so when we were doing research we were struggling with finding other trucks that had any vegetarian options, and we knew that as a business and as a family we wanted something that appealed to us, but also appealed to most people; so we kind of came up with this idea for grilled cheese and then went from there," Company owner Brenna Foster said.

Big Blue Grilled Cheese Company is owned and run by Foster and her husband Jose Rios, who both have more than a decade of restaurant experience under their belts; however, the food truck is the first business they have owned or managed. They filed the officiating paperwork, which established their business, this February, but due to COVID setbacks, they only came around to receive their license in late April to early May. Their idea came to fruition in June of this year when they finally got to hit the roads.

Currently, the food truck has yet to have a stand-in location, primarily traveling around HOAs and apartment buildings in Sarasota and Bra-



A local, family owned food truck, Big Blue offers unique specials and twists on grilled cheese, a home favorite. The truck's menu can be found on their Facebook page. PHOTO BY TIFFANY YU

denton. However, this coming October Big Blue will have a spot at the Phillipi Farmhouse Market on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Big Blue can be found at this location until April of next year. Following their stay at the Farmhouse Market, Foster and Rios have big hopes and dreams to expand.

"Right now it's still a real work in progress because my husband still has a day job and so we're sort of transitioning, but we would love to be able to do this full-time, and I think once we get to full-time status with the truck we'll be kind of able to pick and choose our days and that'll help a lot with the kids and balancing their schedule with ours," Foster said.

When paying a visit to Big Blue, one is greeted by two friendly faces and a detailed but simple menu. Every sandwich costs \$8 and comes with a bag of potato chips. The recommended "Popper," sports rich sharp cheddar cheese, and pickled jalapeno, which gives it the signature 'pop' it

was named after, along with a unique and smooth cream cheese filling infused with raspberry in between two thick, golden-brown toasted slices of white bread.

This unique and utterly delicious sandwich was perfectly balanced; there was the sweetness of the cream cheese, the spicy kick of the jalapeno, the saltiness of the cheddar, and the buttery crunch of the bread, which came in perfect proportion to the filling. Not only was the sandwich a delight, but so were the owners who are skilled in the kitchen and beyond pleasant to speak with.

You can find their day to day location on their Facebook page.

"Well, everybody likes grilled cheese, right? You can't go wrong at Big Blue, there's something for everybody," Foster said with a smile.



[a column] Media Meta: The subtle power of dialogue in film

Well-written dialogue might be one of the most important aspects of a good film, but it's also tricky to get right. Writers must use dialogue to convey information to an audience while also making conversations seem natural between characters. Often, there's a lot the audience needs to learn that would be unnatural for characters to talk about.

So, what makes good dialogue? If you're not looking for it, it might be hard to spot. Well-written dialogue shouldn't stand out to the audience. It should seem natural, unnoticeable, while also implicitly conveying important concepts to the audience.

Let's take the dialogue from "The Social Network" (2010), for example, written by David Fincher. The opening scene focuses on protagonist Mark Zuckerberg (Jesse Eisenberg) and his girlfriend Erica Albright (Rooney Mara) in a bar talking about Finals Clubs (a Harvard social club), and how desperate Mark is to get into one. This is a normal topic for a college couple to be talking about, so Fincher takes advantage of that and uses it to characterize Mark as an arrogant college student obsessed with success.

Throughout the scene, Mark jumps from topic to topic, leaving his girlfriend trying to catch up. Fincher uses this to show us both how intelligent Mark is but also how he doesn't quite see Erica as an equal, preferring to speak at her rather than with her.

After several painful minutes of Mark's arrogance, Erica snaps and breaks up with him, telling him the reason that



Isabella Gaskill
Web Administrative Editor

girls don't like him is not that he's a nerd, but because he is incredibly rude (although she uses much stronger language). And boom, within this conversation we have both characterized Mark and set up a conflict between him and Erica that will continue throughout the whole movie.

"The Social Network" is a perfect example of dialogue that comes across as natural but is packed with implicit characterization. For me, it's what makes it a five-star film. No matter how good a plot is or how compelling your characters are, dialogue can make or break a film. So during your next movie night, pay a little extra attention to how the characters speak to each other and see if it seems natural to you.



Celebrities in Politics: Controversial or Necessary?

Lily Quartermaine
Spark Asst. Editor

A favorite celebrity — it's something everyone has, and if they don't, then their best friend does. With so much content about our favorite musicians and actresses constantly being fed to us through news programs, talk shows, paparazzi tabloids, reality shows, etc., it's almost as if we are becoming too informed. The way that celebrities portray themselves is extremely influential, hence the widely accepted title for most internet stars, "influencers." The question is — should these celebrities put a cap on just how much of their life they choose to share?

Frankly, politics have always been a huge part of the entertainment industry. Talk show hosts like Stephen Colbert and Jimmy Kimmel express their liberal views nightly with no shame; one of the most popular shows on television, Saturday Night Live, does frequent political parody pieces, not holding back when it comes to crude

humor. Numerous celebrities also have no problem expressing their thoughts on President Donald Trump.

When asked if the president should see her show at the 2017 Tony Awards, Patti Lupone, one of the most recognizable names in theater, said proudly, "Well I hope he doesn't, because I won't perform if he does... Because I hate [him]."

However, this dilemma has become increasingly trickier to navigate recently due to the uprising of several political movements, namely Black Lives Matter and the fight for trans rights. Popular creators find themselves with audiences composed of these alienated groups, and the pressure for them to speak up is high. These (typically

young-audience) argue that content-creators have the responsibility to use their highly influential platform for education

and standing up for marginalized groups. Others believe that politics and entertainment should be separate, and that entertainers have no such righteous duty. It's easy for spectators to speak on this, not knowing the true consequences of having an audience and just how easy it is to immediately lose one.

A stark example of this scenario is J.K. Rowling, the author of one of the most popular book series of all time, Harry Potter. Earlier this year, Rowling spoke out about her views on the trans community, stating in a tweet.

"People who menstruate.' I'm sure there used to be a word for those people. Someone help me out. Wumben? Wimpund? Woomud?" In the tweet she refers to an article that used the term "people who menstruate" instead of "women" since nonbinary people and transgender men can also menstruate. Rowling has not backed down on her stance on the issue, even after numerous fans and fellow celebrities have called her out.

Even Daniel Radcliffe, the actor of the titular role in the Harry Potter film series, responded to the backlash.

"While Jo [Rowling] is unquestionably responsible for the course my life has taken... I feel compelled to say something at this moment. Transgender women

are women. Any statement to the contrary erases the identity and dignity of transgender people and goes against all advice

giving- professional health care associations who have far more expertise on this subject matter than either Jo or I," Radcliffe said, going so far as to condemn the author of his breakout role for sharing her controversial views.

Despite the shocking outrage amongst Rowling's fandom and the dreadful consequences of her sharing her controversial opinion, fans still push for their favorite creators to speak up. An example of politics and entertainment mixing perfectly is found in proclaimed activist and popular musician Andrew Hozier-Byrne.

Hozier-Byrne frequently donates and promotes fundraisers for prominent social justice causes, such as domestic abuse and most recently, Black Lives Matter. His contributions, although politically charged,

receive generally positive views and are seen by his fanbase as a testament to his good character.

Even if they know it will be an example of good

character or a chance to help someone, it is understandable for some creators to choose to stay quiet. Although usually justified, the internet is known for being ruthless in destroying careers when a creator does something they deem inappropriate. When it comes to the internet's infamous routine of cancel culture, it's hard to predict what the outcome of a potentially controversial statement could be. We as fans must remember that how celebrities look on social media and the fanbase that they retain is a large majority of their job. However, this in no way excuses them from being held accountable for discriminatory views or speaking up for those marginalized. It is not a creator's job to defend others, but it has proved to be enormously favorable by fans when creators speak up for those who need it.



Student Podcaster's Roundtable

Brianna Nelson
Spark Editor-In-Chief

With many students having extra time on their hands, new podcasts close to the Pine View community are being created with young people gaining experience and building their audiences in the podcasting sphere. The Torch has interviewed multiple student podcasters on the experience of producing full-fledged audio content including Brian Zhang (Grade 12) with Nuggets, Max Banach (Grade 12) with A Sequence of Events, and Nabil Shariff (Pine View class of 2019) with Filmatic.

Tell me a little bit about your podcast:

Brian Zhang: The Nuggets podcast is an interview style show where I talk with three people about trending social and political topics to get their thoughts. I chose the name Nuggets because I wanted to keep things short and easily digestible. Each person gets 15 minutes on air, but I always end up talking with them personally much longer. After I upload one episode about each individual's thoughts, the next week I upload an episode where I gather everyone who spoke along with one additional person to have a group dialogue. You can stream the Nuggets podcast on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, or YouTube.

Max Banach: The name of the podcast is "A Sequence of Events" on Youtube. Overall, my podcast is more of a long-form discussion about current events, news, and politics. By taking on different guests, I can get different perspectives on a given issue that might not be able to happen in a regular short conversation.

Nabil Shariff: The podcast is called Filmatic and it's a podcast I created to discuss and analyze movies, film, and pop culture.

What inspired you to

create your podcast?

BZ: As I was following the BLM movement I felt that many people reposted the same stories and same messages without knowing the full story or situation, and many others simply feel worried that expressing their opinion would get them "cancelled." More than

Listen to Sequence of Events on Youtube



anything I wanted to have a platform where people can talk together about issues without being afraid of being judged. Real substantial process doesn't come from spreading one message, it comes from multiple perspectives and all of us coming together for that cause, and I decided to make the Nuggets podcast to be a catalyst for that message.

NS: I've been obsessed with film my whole life, and unfortunately it's not something I can really pursue, so making this really just started as an outlet for me to discuss my passion and create content around it.

What is your favorite part of making your podcast?

BZ: My favorite part of podcasting is talking to people and hearing their thoughts and enthusiasm. Having a platform where you feel you can speak freely is what I wanted to cultivate, and I feel that me and my guests know that coming in.

Having a genuine dialogue with people is the most rewarding aspect for me. Coming out of each discussion I feel I gained a new look on the issues along with a deeper sense of understanding and respect for the person I've talked with. It's truly awesome.

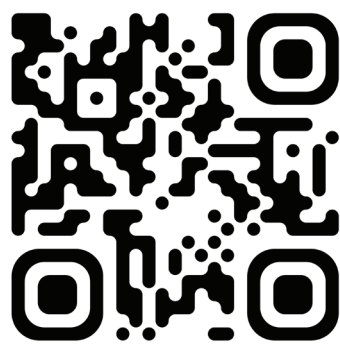
MB: My favorite part about making my own podcast was the chance to talk to others for an extended period of time when I might not otherwise. The school environment doesn't really lend itself to having hours-long conversations with people, and you don't get to fully understand the logic behind their beliefs.

NS: My favorite part of making the show is definitely the joy of having something tangible to attribute my passions to- and getting to include my friends in that endeavor.

Is there anything about your podcast that you found surprising in the process of making it?

BZ: One of the most surprising aspect for me was the amount of time spent editing. Whenever I watch videos I hear YouTubers and other content creators talk about how they are editing, and I felt it wouldn't be too bad for podcasting, but I was surprised. It can easily take 8-10 hours to edit and process each episode. Recording is the fun part, edit-

Listen to Filmatic on Apple Podcasts



Listen to Nuggets on Apple Podcasts



ing is the rough part.

MB: The most surprising thing about hosting a podcast is the cost associated. I have been able to get by hosting episodes on YouTube, but when I went on Spotify and Apple Music free hosting platforms don't really cut it. Monthly memberships are super cost-prohibitive, especially since most people listen to podcasts on one of the three sites

How do you continue to improve your podcast and what is important to you in making those changes?

BZ: I've thought of branching into more philosophical thoughts and introspection, though, only the future will tell how well that goes. Though, as I continue the podcast the most important aspect to me is staying true to my original message of a judgement free platform to discuss these issues.

MB: The biggest overall improvement to a podcast is always quality. That includes audio, video, and content. Besides better equipment, making sure the topics of conversation flow from one to the next makes the conversation easier to listen to without making listeners become disinterested.

NS: When I consider how to improve my podcast, what I really am trying to think about is the audience. What can

I do to make this more appealing to them? How can I make my content more digestible? More entertaining? Because having done this for almost a year now, I have found that becoming an entertainer and exhuming that spirit in production is really the name of the game here.

Do you have any advice for aspiring podcasters?

BZ: Just go for it! I never realized how large the podcasting community was and how chill they are. If you are passionate about something or have something to say, say it loudly. Now more than ever we have all the resources at our fingertips to spread our thoughts, and maybe even change the world. I would make sure to have a dedicated microphone as clear audio is one of the most satisfying things to hear in podcasts. Don't think too much about it and go in with a fun, optimistic mindset, and people will listen.

MB: The best advice I can do for anyone who wants to start a podcast is to listen, listen, listen. Besides hearing how other podcasts sound and how they're formatted, figure out how they're actually made and what it takes to make one. A lot of people go in thinking it's just like a YouTube video, but to be hosted on other platforms it takes a lot more than that.

NS: My advice to anyone who wants to start a podcast—there is literally nothing in your way. As I said before, it is one of the easiest forms of online entertainment to create—it costs nothing, all you need is a half-decent idea, a working computer, a pair of apple earbuds (I promise the sound quality is actually really good), and a little bit of drive. If you truly have the craving to do it, and you're OK with no one but a handful of acquaintances listening in the very rough beginning, I promise it will work out fine.

GRAPHIC BY ZOE MERRITT

Beautiful Smiles for a Lifetime

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Athletes' Involvement with Politics

In the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement, history proves that athletes fighting for what they believe in is nothing new

by **Zoe Merritt**
Entertainment Editor

Though sports are conduits of entertainment, their history as mediums of social protest date back to the sixth century AD with the Nika riots of Constantinople. Modern-day athletes speaking on highly-debated topics such as racial equality and police brutality follow the long lineage of athletes who have used their platforms to voice their opinions. In the United States, this form of protest was seen in the baseball fields of the 1940s, and is present in the basketball courts of 2020.

Starting at first base for the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947, Jackie Robinson was the first black man in Major League Baseball (MLB). His appointment to the position marked the end of 60 years of segregation in the sport. Throughout his career, Robinson dealt with racist verbal abuse from fans and teammates alike. The bigotry was not confined to the field; Robinson was wrongfully arrested for refusing to comply when asked to sit at the back of a segregated bus while serving in the U.S. Army. In his autobiography "I Never Had It Made," Robinson's words hold true to many today: "I cannot stand and sing the anthem. I cannot salute the flag; I know that I am a black man in a white world." Robinson's experience serves as a cue for us to stop thinking of athletes as a separate group of people who are unaffected by social issues, but as normal people.

Though separated by decades of differences, the experiences of trailblazers such as Muhammad Ali and Jackie Robinson in comparison with the stories from contemporary greats follow a similar pattern. Growing up under segregation, Ali challenged the role forced upon black athletes that can still be heard today: play the game, enjoy the fame, and stay out of politics. This sentiment was repeated by Fox News anchor Laura In-

graham in response to LeBron James' comments on President Donald Trump. "It's always unwise to seek political advice from someone who gets paid \$100 million a year to bounce a ball," Ingraham said. "Keep the political commentary to yourself...Shut up and dribble."

Nowadays, over 80% of NBA players and over 70% of NFL players are black. These athletes are not merely jerseys with numbers on the back of them. They do not cease to exist once the buzzer sounds. Their profession does not negate their constitu-

tion-
al right
to speak free-ly
and protest injustice
peacefully.

Yet after years of hard work, it has become a topic of debate of whether or not athletes can use their platforms their skills have earned them. Former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick refuted that idea perfectly: "This is bigger than football and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way."

In a move of solidarity, several athletes of color have made a stand. In response to the shooting of Jacob Blake, the

National Basketball Association (NBA)'s Milwaukee Bucks did not play their play-off game. They released the following statement as an explanation: "Despite the overwhelming plea for change, there has been no action, so our focus today cannot be on basketball." The Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) similarly postponed several games. WNBA president and Los Angeles Sparks player Nneka Ogwumike explained that the league's decision was "not a boycott," but "a day of reflection... informed action and mobilization."

Action was not limited to basketball; MLB, Major League Soccer (MLS), National Football League (NFL), and National Hockey League (NHL), respectively, rescheduled practices and games in order to "voice to each other, our coaches and our staff where we stand on the real issues around race and police brutality," according to a statement released by the NFL's Chicago Bears. Individual activism has been taken as well. For instance, tennis player Naomi Osaka's decision to not participate in the Western & Southern Open semifinals led to the tournament being moved to a later date.

"Before I am an athlete, I am a black woman. And as a black woman I feel as though there are much more important matters at hand that need immediate attention, rather than watching me play tennis," Osaka said.

The world of sports does not exist in a bubble separate from the real world's issues — though the NBA may have been in a literal one. Despite the appearances they make on TV, athletes are still human. To ask them to "keep quiet and play ball" is to deny them not only their Americanism, but their humanity, too. In a time when division reigns supreme, understanding that the situations today are patterns of the past is integral to achieving true equality for all Americans.



GRAPHIC BY ZOE MERRITT

MASKS FOR EXERCISE

Even in the middle of a pandemic, there are ways to work out efficiently and safely. Here are a few of our favorite, reusable masks to wear the next time you break a sweat:

- Athleta Made to Move Mask**
3 pack for \$25
find at athleta.gap.com
- The Well Movement Mask**
3 pack for \$18
find at the-well.com
- Koral Netz Face Mask**
\$20 each
find at koral.com
- Under Armour Sportsmask**
\$30 each
find at underarmour.com
- Atoms Everyday Mask**
\$12 each
find at atoms.com

WRITTEN BY KASUMI WADE
GRAPHIC BY MAHITHA RAMACHANDRAN

[an infographic]

WORKOUT

AT HOME

Let's be honest: during some point of quarantine, you were scrolling through Chloe Ting's workout TikToks, made the mistake of looking down at your potato-chip covered shirt, and decided that now was the time to change your habits. Well, fast-forward a few months, and you haven't done an up and down plank since April. As we get back into the groove of school, it is essential to remember to stay healthy with this full-body workout.

BEGINNER	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
Repeat 2 times	Repeat 3-4 times	Repeat 5 times
MOBILITY WARM-UP 8 inward hip rotations, 8 outward hip rotations (each side) 8 forward arm circles 8 backward arm circles 12 reverse lunges to knee raise (each leg) 20 crunches	CIRCUIT 1 10 hand release pushups* 10 lateral lunge knee drives (each leg) 25 plank taps *perform on knees to modify down	
	READY!	
	30 SEC REST	
CIRCUIT 2 20 forearm plank hip drops (alternating) 15 squats with a 10-rep pulse at the end 10 dumbbell hip lift chest press (use a heavy textbook or water gallons as a substitute for dumbbells)	30 SEC REST	FINISHER 5 dumbbell burpee curl presses 10 lateral bounds (alternating)
COOL DOWN 30 second standing quad stretch - 30 second core abdominal stretch - 30 second child's pose		

Student athletes prosper despite pandemic-induced hurdles

All facets of life have been greatly affected by COVID-19 and the guidelines that have been put in place because of it. Though mask-wearing and social-distancing are now commonplace, the following students have learned to adapt. From crew to track and everything in between, these five students have succeeded in their respective sports while facing both their opponents and the challenges of this year.

Daria Tiubin

by Kai Sprunger

Match Layout Artist

Planning to play volleyball throughout high school and into college, tenth-grader Daria Tiubin was looking forward to what this upcoming season would hold. However, due to COVID-19, her volleyball career has been deeply affected. This year's volleyball season has continued at the price of masks, fewer overall games and less travel, so as to improve safety.

Tiubin has actively been

as a middle blocker, where she played in the center. According to Tiubin, she enjoys the blocking and hitting aspects of her new position.

Even with COVID-19, the team spirit and teamwork are uninterrupted.

"We are still intense and scream and uplift one another, whether we are on the court or on the sidelines or in practice," she said.

Following protocols for social outings, several guidelines are being put in place for this season, including mask wearing and social distancing. All students participating in Sarasota County Schools extracurriculars are required to check regularly for any

symptoms; though none of the players on Tiubin's team have

been affected, she said that everyone on the team has been vigilant. Multiple volleyball games have been cancelled because traveling out of the county for sporting events is no longer allowed. Though Tiubin "really enjoyed" the traveling aspect of her sport, she understands that not doing so this season is for the greater good. Tiubin was especially looking forward to an annual meet in Miami, in which select teams compete in an "intense and pushing" tournament, according to Tiubin.

Tiubin's experience on the Venice Indians team has been nothing but positive, despite recent challenges.

"It's honestly really fun to connect with the girls and create a bond and play your heart out on the court. And we have the most amazing coaching staff. All the girls are so talented — it's so cool," she said.

One of Tiubin's friends on the team is fellow tenth-grader Ashley Reynolds, who is a setter. Like Tiubin, Reynolds also aspires to play past high school.

"Winning really big tough games against teams that are supposed to beat you is an amazing feeling and those times are probably the best experiences that I have with Daria," Reynolds said. "She is a great player and friend to me. I can't wait for our next two years playing together and hopefully we can win a championship together!"

Tiubin and her team are doing their best with dealing with the setbacks that COVID-19 has brought. Though Tiubin wants to ensure the safety of herself and her teammates by following COVID-19 guidelines, she looks forward to when games will return to normal.



LEFT: Daria Tiubin (second to left, top-row) poses with her team after winning their nineteenth straight District Championship Oct. 15. RIGHT: Tiubin gets focused from her position as a right side/outside hitter. She has been a hitter for a year. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY DARIA TIUBIN

playing volleyball for half a decade. She currently plays for Venice High School's varsity team and loves it; "I wouldn't have chosen any other school," she said.

Tiubin has been playing right side/outside hitter for a year after formerly being a middle blocker for two years. The position requires that she plays both defense and offense while blocking hits from the opposing team, which differs from her past experience

Sean Farrell

by Isabella Kulawik

Web Section Editor

Home to eleventh-grader Sean Farrell is the soccer field. As a striker for the U18 Boys FC Sarasota team, he is accustomed to what a normal soccer game looks like: crowds packed full of excited onlookers and members of opposing teams ready to strike. However, because of COVID-19, parts of the sport have changed to ensure that players, coaches, and spectators stay safe.

Farrell has been playing soccer since he was around five years old. He was introduced to

cer Association (FYSA) guidelines detail that teams can only practice, train, and hold tryouts for the first two weeks of playing. Along with no contact playing for those first weeks, spectators are encouraged to stay at home. After those two weeks have passed, games start, and playing on the field continues. Though restrictions exist, Farrell still feels connected to the team.

"Team spirit hasn't really changed. We still have a lot of fun together," he said.

Eleventh-grader Luke Schroeter, who plays center back, has known Farrell for years.

"Sean doesn't really run out of energy. His playstyle is always just keep running, which is really nice. He plays up top and he likes to play striker and get



the sport earlier in life because his father grew up playing soccer at a similarly young age. Farrell decided to play for FC Sarasota when he moved to Florida from New Jersey five years ago. This year, he has been tasked with adapting to the new soccer regulations for this season.

"It is a little scarier because of the virus, but I'll try not to stand around people. Other than that, it's kind of the same. It doesn't really feel that different. I still want to play," Farrell said.

One major change to come out of the new COVID-19 guidelines is the physical separation between players, which can lead to a mental one as well.

"Usually at practice, if my coach needs help picking cones and other stuff up, I would help him. I'm trying not to do that because of the virus, so I can't be as helpful. I do kind of feel bad about that," Farrell said.

With the start of the season, the new Florida Youth Soc-

LEFT: Sean Farrell (left) scores a goal. Farrell has been playing soccer for the majority of his life. RIGHT: Farrell (left) runs down the field with the ball, opposition hot on his heels. He hopes to continue improving as a player throughout the rest of high school. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY SEAN FARRELL

really far up to shoot as much as he can," Schroeter said.

With his parents and players like Sergio Agüero, Leo Messi, and Cristiano Ronaldo as sources of inspiration, Farrell continues to play with the same level of spirit as he does normally, even when the circumstances are not currently ideal.

For now, Farrell continues to play soccer. His team has had games every week.

"We haven't started the season well. It'll take time, but I think we'll do well this year; we've got the quality, but we only have 13 players," Farrell said.

Areesh Lalani

by Lily Quartermaine

Asst. Spark Editor-in-Chief

Evidence of Sarasota Crew's influence on Sarasota County's students is easy to find, be it through commendation in the headlines of local papers or the proud display of the words in students' social media biographies. Twelfth-grader Areesh Lalani has found himself part of the wave of enthusiasm for crew since he started freshman year.

Although Lalani was not previously involved with athletics prior to high school, Sarasota Crew was conveniently located and loved by a lot of his friends, so he decided to give it a shot.

"Crew is a good fit for me because I have the ability to [coxswain], which meant that I could still be a part of a competitive team environment without having to be physically gifted," Lalani said, smiling.

Prior to COVID-19, crew was a huge time commitment for Lalani. He would attend crew six days a week, running from 3:15 PM-7:00 PM on weekdays and for four hours on Saturdays. However, with the new safety restrictions put in place by the organization,

Lalani's role as a coxswain has shifted.

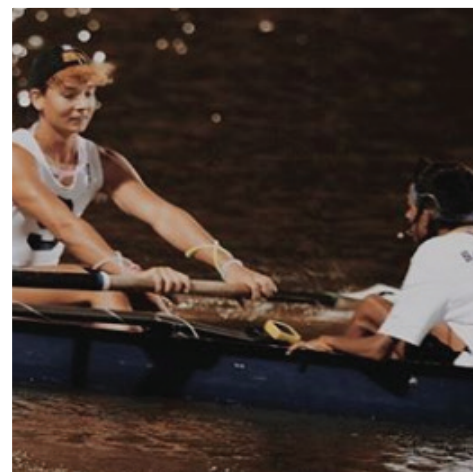
A coxswain's role deals only with team boats, containing either four or eight people. Due to the inability to social distance on a crowded team, boatrowers are currently only rowing in single boats; this will eventually progress to doubles and pairs, which still do not require coxswains.

Lalani still attends practice, but only a few days a week and only spends his time on land. He dedicates most of his time at meetings to working out and coaching elementary schoolers. There are two hour "time shifts" that prevent the rowers from being grouped together at the same time, which Lalani feels creates a "level of disconnect."

One of Lalani's close friends and fellow members of crew twelfth-grader Josh Wang had no hesitation when asked to give a statement about Lalani's impeccable character.

"One could easily call him a natural leader and role model for the team... His reliability and resilience for success sets him apart from many others. His worth ethic and constant strive for excellence is admi-

nable, and most importantly, he is a great friend," Wang said.



Lalani credits crew with helping in the areas of time management, leadership, and teamwork. Even though Lalani's role as a coxswain is heavily leadership-based, rowing is fundamentally a team sport that teaches both individual and group reliance skills.

Although hopes are high for the

future, motivation is inevitably low for young athletes. Lalani — alongside other members — finds himself between a rock and a hard place this year with this notion: "I try and work hard, but it is easy to give up, knowing that

you're doing work for a season you don't even know is going to happen," Lalani said.

As far as college goes, Lalani's capability to get recruited has been impaired.

Several of Lalani's possible colleges have cancelled their 2020-2021 seasons due to COVID-19, which means that students meant to play this year are delayed until the 2021-2022 season. This makes it a lot harder for rising college freshmen like Lalani to get enlisted, as these colleges already have spots taken that would normally go to his class.

A lot of schools have also cut funding from their extracurriculars — including sports — in order to move money into COVID-19 regulations. Nevertheless, recruitment is still something Lalani hopes and plans to pursue in the future.

Despite Lalani's dynamics shifting in seemingly inconvenient ways, he still finds ways to stay positive about the situation in true Pine View spirit.

"I look forward to my future in crew, we get a chance to reap the reward from our work in the spring season, and this being my last, I'm very excited," he said.

LEFT: Areesh Lalani (center left) stands for a picture with his teammates after they won the 2018 FSRA State Championship. RIGHT: Lalani (right) works alongside teammate Walker Hutchinson for a competition in Oklahoma City. Lalani's decision to pursue crew brought him major success. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY AREESH LALANI

Nikolas Pinto

by Gabriele Navickis
Asst. Entertainment Editor

When it comes to high school tackle football, it can be hard to imagine a game with social distancing, constant sanitizing, and face masks. Ninth-grader Nikolas Pinto and Sarasota High School's Sailors have been doing just that, managing to successfully adapt to this year's changes.

Pinto has been "casually" playing football since kindergarten, but started playing

it where we can. When push comes to shove, it's tackle football, and you can't tackle someone from six feet away," Pinto said.

One of the unique difficulties of this season has been cancellations of teams due to COVID-19. Ever since a complete quarantine for the football programs at Bradenton Christian School and O'Dea High School, local teams have been extra careful about following safety protocol.

The year has come with its successes, like the Sailors winning 14 to 6 against Charlotte High's junior varsity Fightin' Tarpons team.

Pinto plans to continue playing



LEFT: Nikolas Pinto poses for a photo before a game. He dreams of pursuing football in college. RIGHT: Pinto gets ready to throw the ball for a touchdown. He is inspired by players like quarterback Tom Brady.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY NIKOLAS PINTO

competitively in fourth grade. He is the freshman team quarterback and does not anticipate changing that, as "QB has always been my thing," he said. The New England Patriots are his main inspiration for pursuing the sport.

Football's physicality is undeniable, but Pinto has been trying his best to stay as safe as possible during these times.

"Football, it's a physical game, but we're limiting

football throughout high school. He hopes to play football in college, though he is not certain of what the future holds.

Will Hartvigsen

by Eva-May Elmer
Match Layout Artist

Tenth-grader Will Hartvigsen is running on the path to success in track and cross country. He started running track for the Pine View Middle School track team, and now runs cross country and track for the varsity Sarasota Sailors team at Sarasota High School.

Hartvigsen started running because of his family's involvement in athletics. As high schoolers, Hartvigsen's parents both played sports. Hartvigsen's brother, Pine View Class of 2019 graduate Ben Hartvigsen, succeeded in running track throughout high school; he now runs for Harvard.

"Watching his success just inspired me to try out for track in seventh grade and ever since, I've been in love," Hartvigsen said.

With track falling in the second semester of school each year, COVID-19 directly affected Hartvigsen's season. It was at one March meet at Venice High in which, due to the increased global concern about the pandemic, Hartvigsen's team realized that that meet would be their last for the foreseeable future.

Initially, Hartvigsen's coach decided to eliminate team practices altogether. This plan was followed for about a month, with each team member practicing alone on their own time. The coach then did a time trial for each teammate to test whether they were able to beat the personal records they achieved prior to COVID-19. After this, the track season ended.

Hartvigsen, alongside the rest of the Sarasota Sail-

ors, then started training for the cross country season over the summer. Meets required masks and other precautions for the safety of all people — players, coaches, and spectators — involved.



LEFT: Will Hartvigsen and other Sailors compete against local runners. He has been running competitively since seventh grade. RIGHT: Hartvigsen runs to the finish line. Though this year has different procedures, Hartvigsen continues to succeed. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY WILL HARTVIGSEN

Though the Sailors usually travel far for competitions all across Florida and the southeast region of the United States, they are staying close to home this season to ensure that everyone stays safe and healthy.

Earlier in the season, the team was supposed to travel to Tallahassee to race at the Florida State University (FSU) cross country course, but Hartvigsen's coach ultimately decided to keep them home. This was because having each individual member regularly tested for COVID-19 while following all safety guidelines during the competitions would be difficult. The farthest they have traveled as

of now is Lakeland for a hard course and good competition.

"This summer, we had to cancel our trip up to North Carolina because of the coronavirus. Many teammates, myself included, were very disappointed by this news.

We couldn't let it take us down. We worked together to keep each other safe and keep the cross country season alive," Cyrus Hannah, Sarasota High twelfth-grader, and Hart-

vigsen's teammate, said.

Although races are undoubtedly different this year, according to Hartvigsen, COVID-19 has only affected his performance minimally.

"At the smaller races, having less competition has made fast times a little bit harder to come by," Hartvigsen said.

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How to beef up your college app

By Brianna Nelson
Spark Editor-in-Chief

Now is the time many of us are either revamping our college applications or making them for the first time. Either way, as a professional resume maker and editor myself, I have a few pieces of advice that I always love to give my clients to give their curriculum vitae the boost it deserves.

Embellishment:

The best way to improve your resume is to simply lie. Let's be honest, nobody here is auditing your resume. Nobody is actually going around calling your references or confirming where and who you worked for. Nobody cares which skills you have because they will probably train you on the job an entirely different way. Nobody cares. I can assure you that nobody is actually going to confirm if you are REALLY the president of some club or the manager of wherever you work. References are a scam anyways.

Hook the reader with an attention grabbing detail:

When someone scans your resume, you want to make sure that something catches their eye and the easiest and most effective way to do that is to immediately get something wrong. Consider misspelling something bold and eye catching, "Educatoin," "Expierience," maybe even your name.

Demonstrate your connections:

Let's be honest, no high-schooler has the skills or education to simply get jobs by applying like a normal person. Because of this, present yourself as a well connected and

powerful person that the company or college simply cannot deny. It is critical to tactfully and subtly weave into your resume that your dad is actually a high ranking government official, or you hang a long, standing connection to a past President.

Ensure adequate details:

When it comes to resume writing, remember that more is more! When I say this, I mean colleges and workplaces want to know every waking detail of every thing you have ever done in your life. Really, if you think about it, six page resumes are the new one page resumes. Having every highschool course you have ever taken, paragraphs worth of elaboration on your ninth grade volunteer experience, and completely irrelevant details are absolutely REQUIRED in this economy.

Brainstorm your skills:


In your skills section, as I mentioned before, nobody is doing the legwork to check this. Consider the following:

Did you take 3 years of basic Spanish of which you remember none? Consider rebranding to "Intermediate Spanish Fluency"


Do you know how to type in a Word Document and about nothing else? Consider "Proficient in Microsoft Office."

Do you constantly overshare about every waking moment of your life on Twitter? Consider "Social Media Management Skills."

With these skills, you are absolutely empowered to land any job or acceptance you apply for. In the end, upload your PDF, kiss the screen, and manifest your truth.




Teacher's Zoom Log



Zoom of 9/1/20

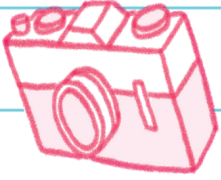
First zoom of the year! One of my students stood still for 5 minutes straight... was I supposed to think his camera was frozen?




Zoom of 9/15/20

When are they going to realize that I can read the chat, too??

Zoom of 10/10/20




DID ONE OF MY STUDENTS JUST GET KIDNPPED ON THE ZOOM????




Zoom of 10/15/20

They keep asking me who's standing behind me... I LIVE ALONE!!!

Zoom 10/20/20



Some kids fell asleep today so I'm screen-sharing "Finding Nemo" for them to watch when they wake up. Hopefully they like it!



Zoom of 10/30/20

Update on the kidnapping: It was a prank... Someone's not getting an extension on their project.

GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

Who do I pick? Choosing between two cavaliers

By Madi Holmes
Copy Editor

This is tough. I like them both.

As I lay solemn on my couch, eyes gazing at the flatscreen tuned into some biased news channel, I take a moment to applaud the two candidates pictured in front of me. I could not think of any better representatives for America — two white elderly men. Nice.

Ahhhh... sweet, sweet American politics.

Although unable to vote, I went into the debate hoping to become educated on the policies of both candidates. With an open mind, I snuggled up on my couch, ready to tune in to one of the first

informed than ever! Just kidding... who needs policy ideology when you can learn fun facts and roasts about each candidate? (Very smart move by the debate organizers).

Every forced, petty insult relayed by the candidates felt written by a fedora-wearing millennial, inciting cringes so strong they could count as an ab workout. The supposed "political

should've brushed over the mask comment, given he



event" almost felt like a bad episode of Real Housewives. Give both dudes some hair extensions, fake lashes and lip filler and you could have fooled me.

Although my mood was quickly killed thinking about the impending doom of my country, I found myself holding

back uncontrollable cackles. One time at the thought of Biden sporting a mask larger than the circumference of his head and another time imagining Trump not interrupting someone. Trump probably

contracted COVID-19 only a few days later. Maybe the clown comment was valid.

The debate was so intense, I quickly became overwhelmed on behalf of voters. How can anyone choose between these two heroes? I'm grateful for my underage status or I would have been hovering and shifting my pencil in the voting booth for hours.

Tik-Tok also seemed to provide me with many memes, making the decision ever so strenuous, absolutely exhausting me.

Anyways, I never figured out who to chose as my preference. Trump or Biden? Who? The thing is, I don't vote for teen choice awards.

GRAPHICS BY ANNA LABINER AND LEO GORDON

The Inside of a Breakout Room

By Isabella Gaskill
Web Administrative Director

Online schooling means a lot of us are adapting to new learning environments and trying to make it work as best we can. There's been a lot of leeway for both students and teachers alike as we both try to do our best given the current circumstances. One thing that cannot be excused, however, is the use of the torturous breakout rooms.

I'm sure that many of my fellow students can relate to the terrible experience of this feature of Zoom. Your teacher puts you in a breakout room, hoping that you will collaborate on a problem or get to know your classmates. But in reality, if you weren't previously acquainted with your unfortunate partners, nobody will even go as far as to unmute themselves. Everybody will sit there silently, feeling too awkward to even look directly into the camera.

As a concerned student, I'm here to express what we're all thinking: breakout rooms are completely unnecessary and a waste of valuable student time. Dealing with both online and in-person students already limits our learning time a considerable amount and putting students in breakout rooms for 5 minutes of uncomfortable silence isn't helping anyone learn.

And if by some miracle you do get to talk in your breakout room, that conversation usually isn't helping anyone. After awkward introductions, the first thing that anyone says is usually "Do you guys know what we're even supposed to be doing?" And after the students who actually paid attention get around to explaining everything, we are usually already being taken back to the main group.

Even when we're lucky enough to be able to work on some problems collaboratively, if we get stuck, we once again lapse into that grueling silence while we wait to be brought back to the main group so the teacher can explain.

And, by far, the worst experience of a breakout room is being stuck with a bunch of people you don't know who are all somehow friends

with each other. As they talk with each other, you are stuck muted trying to act like you aren't eavesdropping (which you totally are) by staring into space or pretending to do work when you're really just doodling on old homework.

No matter what, the breakout room is an aspect of Zoom that must be left in the past. The only thing that it brings to online schooling is painful awkwardness. We've only been in school for a little while now, so we have ample time to cut this dreadful practice out of our online schooling.



debates I was competent enough to understand. Five minutes in, I realized my newfound competence didn't even matter. I was eager to learn and sure wasn't disappointed. I honestly felt more

MEME OF THE MONTH

“The 2020 Debates and the memes that came from it”

Origin

Starting Sept. 29, 2020, on national television, President Donald Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden debated over several topics concerning the United States. From this came one of the biggest influx of memes the world has seen since “Megusta.”

3rd grade teachers: There are 3 states of matter

The kid who knows about Plasma:



Total time on head: 2 mins
Unlike Pence, the fly respect the rules and left when its time was up



About

In their respective debates, Trump and Biden both interrupted the other with sarcastic commentary, annoying everyone and causing all of America to worry for our country in the years to come. With Pence's fellow fly, memes were inevitable. Aside from that, it sparked potential conspiracy theories from the right, assuming the fly is a spy.

Popular Derivatives

Chris Wallace at the beginning of the debate

Chris Wallace at the end of the debate



GRAPHIC BY SEBASTIAN GENELHU-BAZAN

Photos provided by Reddit

[a column]

Among Us: sweeping the nation and world

“There are two imposters among us.”

Among Us, the 2018 party game carrying the fourth quarter of 2020, is bringing everyone a good time in this already distasteful year.

The game, a mix of other popular games like Trouble in Terrorist Town, Mafia, Mindnight and Town of Salem have almost everyone in the world going crazy, bringing people together and breaking friendships alike.

Free to play on the App Store and \$5 on the gaming program Steam, the game blew up two years after its initial release, as people were idly browsing for a game to pass time during quarantine.

After popular online streamers like xQc started playing the game with fellow streamers like Pokimane and famous YouTube star PewDiePie, over 100 million people followed along.

At its peak, the game reached 3.8 million concurrent players on mobile and PC combined.

Okay, okay. Frankly, all of you guys reading this probably know how this game works. But for the sake of structure and form, I have to explain how it works.



Sebastian Genelhu-Bazan
Asst. Humor Editor

trying to do all their technical tasks required to win the game. Role number two is the infamous imposter, who hinders the crewmates from doing their tasks by act of assassination to win the game.

The really impressive thing that Among Us has done is surpass the popularity of

possibly one of the most promising games of the year, Fall Guys. I n Fall Guys, players run obstacle

courses as a small bean fighting for the crown against 59 other players in one server. The game took the world by storm for its simplistic controls and addictive nature.

But of course, as is with all video games, I follow a wise friend's words: “The game will always become way too overhyped and just get overplayed and much less popular until another game takes its place.”

When manifestation turns into global devastation

By Anna Labiner
Assistant Editor-in-Chief

Mass riots and Twitter feuds have consumed Pine View's student body after tenth-grader Manny Festation issued a backhanded apology for his role in manifesting 2020 — the dumpster fire of the century. Not realizing the mystical power that accompanied his actions, Festation spent months manifesting that 2020 would be a year unlike any other — one that would stand out.

Obviously, the universe misinterpreted his request, as Festation leaves countless communities floundering in the wake of his seemingly harmless summertime hobby.

“I literally just wrote ‘2020’ 100 times on a notebook page and thought about it really hard for like ten minutes,” Festation said, “I feel like I don't deserve this hate. My social media presence is in shambles and no one at school will even look me in the eye. Dr. Covert even blocked me on Instagram.”

Taking up the practice of manifestation was a huge trend over the summer — one that many people tried their hand at, though, none had results as disastrous as Festation's. Whether this

was some kind of user-error or the result of a strange alignment of the universe, he warns others of partaking in this trend.

“I honestly may just go back to organized religion when I really want something — I'm too traumatized to try manifesting again, which is really a shame because it made me feel very spiritual. I bought so many candles at Marshall's to do my manifesting that the employees all knew me by name by the end of the summer,” Festation said.

After the news got around of his influence in the course of 2020, Festation issued an apology via Twitter, though many took issue with his nonchalant attitude, claiming that the apology did not match up to the crime at hand. After refusing to revise his statement, the Pine View community struck back, with the student body organizing “anti-Manny” walkouts, complete with signs and megaphones.

Many students took to Twitter to vent their concerns. The larger Twitter community jumped on the cause as well, with the hashtag: “#mannyisoverparty” trending at number four

for three days. Prominent figures, notably Anderson Cooper, Megan Thee Stallion, Ted Cruz, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez also hopped on the trend,

“I'm not one to promote cancel culture,” Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said in a tweet, “but if I ever see this kid in person, It's on sight. #CANCELLED.”

As of now, Festation walks the Pine View campus with shame, a victim of a crime that he did not intend to commit. All he wanted was an eventful year, and what procured of his manifestation was something so much worse.

“I know things are bad right now, but the internet will move on,” Festation said, in a moment of optimism, “People cancel celebrities all the time and they all bounce back within weeks, regardless of what they did. You can really get away with anything.”

This may be wishful thinking on Festations part, but the major takeaway of his experience is to manifest at your own risk, and to not underestimate the power of the universe. If you want something bad enough, you might just get it.



1. ✨ Think about something ✨
2. ✨ Hope for the best lol ✨



GRAPHIC BY LEO GORDON

[guest editorials]

The case for Vice President Joe Biden

by Ethan Temple
Grade 12

As a 17-year old, it isn't really expected of me to give a coherent, genuine response to the question "Who would I vote for President?" Normally, I'm asked, "How're college apps going?". Yet we no longer live normally, as we inch closer to a fiery crossroads, a boiling point.

Pitted between a divisive incumbent and a nigh ancient politician, Nov. 3rd has all but infected us nearly as much as COVID-19. And here I am to answer that seemingly innocuous, seminal question essential to the duties of an American citizen.

Bluntly speaking, I would choose Biden, but for reasons beyond politics. Over the past few months, I have seen both candidates, both parties, less as oppugnant, imperious factions, and instead as cohorts that adhere to one creed: make America great. Though faithful, they execute irreconcilable agendas, leading them into an ideological swamp, indecisive and quarrelsome.

Central to this stands the President, whose job is, above all else, to safeguard our interests; in a republic, this requires compromise and cooperation. Trump, while he advanced our interests domestically and abroad, failed to grasp that fundamental rule, instead prodding his perceived 'enemies' for political points.

For years, Trump called Democrats names; scapegoats; 'traitors;' in kind, his allies echoed his rhetoric, dashing any hopes of bipartisan aid. That isn't to say Dem-

ocrats are victims; they too deny him bipartisan support and echo harsh rhetoric, amplifying the crippling schism that hobbles our government's authority. Such virulence has impacted even the public; where once we civilly discussed our opinions, we now decry each other as "socialists" or "fascists" merely for holding entrenched, polarized, ideologies. Though a trend for decades, with some brandings oft warranted, such vitriol has become frighteningly overused under Trump, aided by government distrust, infoglut and demagoguery taking their tolls, brewing a storm of discordance, engulfing America on a scale not seen since the Civil War.

However, nobody should pin the blame solely on the powers that be, for this is a fault we all bear; we've fed

this loop of dysfunctionality, birthing such a divisive, reckless president to begin with. Our exposure to 'echo chambers,' scantily researched information and a psyche where dissension is met with aggression, has led to a point where America has become weak, indecisive and vulnerable. And much as it'd be easy to say that Trump is at fault, I refrain from saying such; while he is guilty of pushing hardline nonsense, which inflames our aggressive complacency, we share in the blame for not confronting him about his lies. Such lack of skepticism has deepened our misguidance, division and hostility, and it threatens to destroy what we have cultivated over our 250 year history.

We mustn't let that

happen, for our sake and for America's.

My point of this is simple: rather than continue the incessant bickerings between "MAGA" and "#Biden," the head-splitting coverage of chaos that is fueled by persistent, presidential pandemonium, we must elect a man with moderate views, a moderate disposition and a moderate voice. A man who doesn't seek to take guns, defund the police, or discredit religion, but, instead, wishes to help heal a nation in turmoil. A man like Joe Biden.

I'd expound upon his platform for reform, yet I refrain, for the thing we need urgently, as a people, is unity. Without unity, we are without reform, aligning ourselves for disaster. Biden doesn't want disaster. Rather, he wants concord, unity and reform. And he'll fight for them — for you.

For his faults, his 47 years, his cavalierity, he's been shaped by these and knows that governing effectively requires compromise, responsibility, patience, and reconciliation. Biden fights to work with, and for us because he sees the country not by who's a Democrat or who's a Republican, but who's a patriot. And are we not all patriots at the day's end? He himself is a patriot who is willing to cross the aisle at whatever cost it'll take to make America great, because that is what anybody who loves this country would do.

Elect Joe Biden, not as a Republican or a Democrat, but as an American, who loves America.

The case for President Donald Trump

by William Vest
Grade 12

The American people called the 2016 presidential election the most tumultuous in our great country's history. They were wrong — they had no idea what was coming their way. The election between President Donald Trump and Secretary Hillary Clinton was elementary compared to the current election between President Donald Trump and Former Vice President Joe Biden. The vicious campaigning between the two candidates has sparked more than typical animosity between family and friends in the past few months, increasing anticipation for the nearing election.

While America is undeniably ready for all the arguing and angst to be over, it is imperative that the decision on who to vote for is made thoughtfully. It is an American's duty to exercise their endowed rights. Every vote counts.

When it comes down to the two options, which some may refer to as the lesser of two evils, the incumbent President Donald Trump is the clear choice for who should lead our country. Let us consider the facts. Most Trump supporters will mention the progress made in terms of unemployment and the economy. Trump's presidency officially began on January 20, 2017. In January of 2017, America's unemployment rate was sitting at 4.7%. Three years later, in January of 2020, the American unemployment rate had dropped

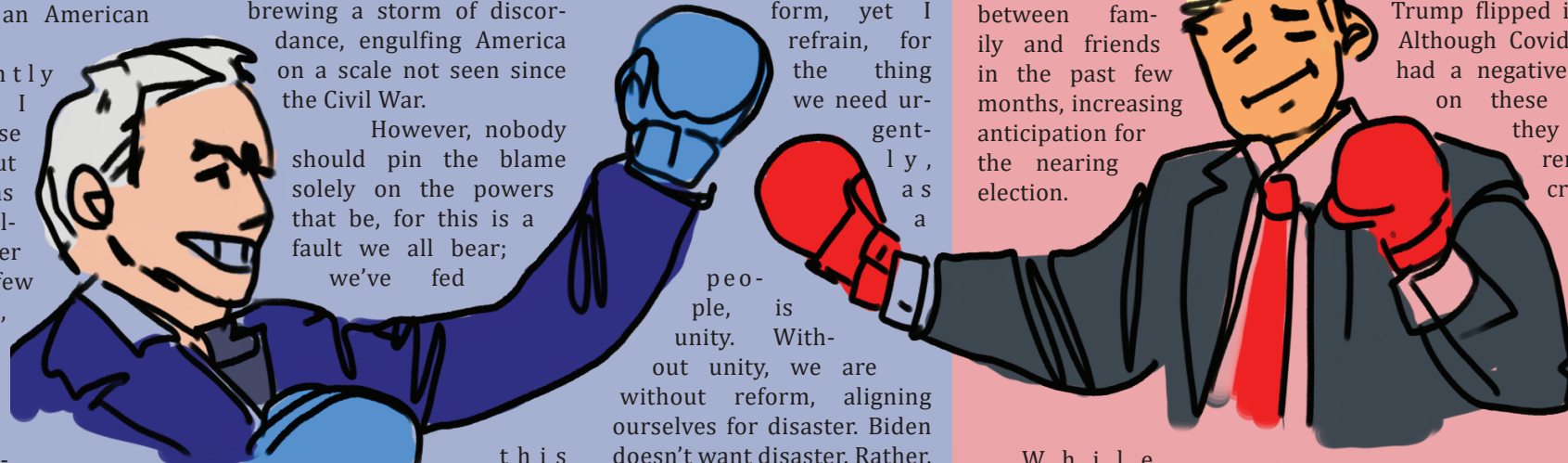
even further to 3.6%. According to the Census Bureau in 2019 African and Hispanic Americans saw a 7% increase in real median income.

With the rise of Covid-19 the unemployment rate raised steadily, peaking at 13.3% in May, yet by August Trump has already managed to bring it back down to 8.4%. As of January 2020, nearly seven million jobs have been created in the United States with upwards of four hundred thousand in manufacturing. Manufacturing jobs are all-important in the "blue wall" states in the upper midwest that Trump flipped in 2016. Although Covid-19 has had a negative impact on these figures, they are currently increasing.

These trends are predicted to continue under the current administration and economic climate.

Notice how I refer to him as the "best" choice. Is Donald Trump the ideal president? Is he charismatic like John F. Kennedy or Ronald Reagan? No, but is Biden? Trump is a businessman, and he's no one's puppet. What has Biden told us he plans to do besides getting Trump out of office? The two-party system is relentlessly criticized, but like it or not, it is reality.

As American citizens, we must consider what each candidate represents when we cast our votes. Trump's platform will ensure a stronger America, a richer America, and an America that will endure for years to come.



GRAPHIC BY ZOE MERRITT

The history and implications of the model minority myth

by Felicity Chang and Joanna Malvas
Multimedia Editor and Focus Editor

Whether it was a vibrant post discussing civil rights issues, or the viral videos of "Chinese-virus" related hate crimes, or even the uncomfortable dinner table topics with your family, there has been increasingly more awareness on the current exacerbated racial tensions felt by Asian and African Americans alike.

While the reality is that these two minority groups face differ in historical and circumstantial context, there's no doubt that unity past racial lenses is needed. Yet, one tool that has sharpened the divide between these groups, severing this unity, is the model minority myth.

The myth is defined by the fallacious generalization that the Asian American demographic has climbed up the socioeconomic ladder due to inherent qualities such as intelligence, compliance or hard-working values.

Myth or not, there is somewhat of a basis to this claim. According to the Pew Research Center analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau, the top 10th percentile of Asian Americans earn more than any other racial group; in turn, they also have higher standards of living. In addition, Asian Americans have the highest median household income, standing at \$73,060 in 2015, higher than the \$53,600 among all U.S. households.

But there are disparities hidden beneath the surface of these blanket statistics. Despite having the highest median income of any racial group, Asian Americans also have the largest

income gap. A 2013 study by the Pew Research Center states that the difference in standard of living between Asian Americans at the top and bottom of the income ladder almost doubled from 1970 to 2016, with the distribution of income becoming the most unbalanced out of all U.S. major racial groups. In consideration to the term "Asian American" spanning across 43 different ethnic groups, it is evident that the wealthiest demographics cloud judgement of how Asians are performing socio-economically. Statistical

discrepancy aside, others still argue that the "model minority" concept has positive implications for Asian Americans. Conversely, Asian Americans haven't always received positive treatment or tolerance. After enduring the grueling history of Japanese internment camps, the Chinese Exclusion Act and "Yellow Peril" these groups only started to experience collective success when discrimination

against them lessened. Yet, there is fragility in this model minority status, as it is easily shattered or utilized whenever it is politically convenient. This has been especially true this year. For instance, with the COVID-19 pandemic, blatant xenophobia against Asian Americans, specifically Chinese Americans, has surfaced and resurfaced time and time again. The model minority myth did nothing to protect Asian Americans against discrimination, as this next-door-neighbor stereotype can be replaced by racial slurs in the blink of an eye.

To add on, the model minority stereotype has further hurt other minorities, more specifically, the African American community. This myth has been used to degrade the unique struggles African Americans have endured. Bianca Mabute-Louie, an adjunct professor of Ethnic Studies at Laney College, perfectly encapsulates the dismissive attitudes, as she had elaborated, "[The myth] came about when Black power movements were starting to gain momentum, so [politicians] were trying to undercut

those movements and say, 'Asians have experienced racism in this country, but because of hard work, they've been able to pull themselves up out of racism by their bootstraps and have the American Dream, so why can't you?'"

However, for African Americans who have been directly impacted by systemic racism, for those people to pick themselves up by the bootstraps, would mean going against the grain of a multitude of issues that are caused by broader historical implications such as redlining, Jim Crow laws, segregation and so on. For example, a study released in 2019 by the Economic Policy Institute think tank had found that when compared to White workers, African American workers were more likely to be unemployed at every education level.

Of course, while our Asian parents have exemplified the American Dream and have shown their tenacity through their journeys as immigrants — which they should be honored and respected for — their journeys shouldn't be used to dismiss the tangible injustices and matters that have wronged African Americans for generations. And, the model minority myth does exactly that. With its definition placing Asian Americans on a pedestal, calling them the "good minority," it directly implies that there must be a bad minority.

By this token, we shouldn't embrace such generalizations to honor one group at the expense of another. Instead, we must move in solidarity, respect each others' differences, empathize with each others' struggles, and embrace the similarities that transcend cultural color.



A NEED FOR UNITY

GRAPHIC BY FELICITY CHANG

Performative activism in corporate America

by Olivia Hansen
Copy Editor

Nationwide protests broke out following the death of George Floyd in May, precipitating action and sparking outrage throughout America. Police and rioters created escalation during peaceful protests, stirring tensions between demonstrators and law enforcement. This discourse consumed public news and changed the way America saw the Black Lives Matter movement.

In the heat of the moment, glass was broken, things were thrown, and all of this was caught on camera. Entrepreneurs Paul Chelms and Jing Wen saw this as an opportunity to profit. Collecting shards of glass from demonstrations in Charleston, the couple created a line of jewelry. \$240 for The Breonna, \$480 for The Elijah, \$45 for The Tamir. Almost as if these lives embody a negotiable price.

Chelms and Wen faced backlash for the dehumanizing, disturbing and insensitive exploitation of violence against Black bodies for profit. However, this trend of profiting off of the Black Lives Matter movement is not uncommon.

As activism becomes streamlined into social media, and #BLM is the number one trending hashtag, corporate rates go up, capitalizing off of

Americans' vulnerability and giving back nothing in return. We are living in the digital age and there is a significant obligation for corporations to put forth an image of support and allyship towards the movement, whether it be performative or meaningful.

But what does support really look like? It's incredibly subjective. But when Fox News announces that they "condemn racism" but contribute nothing to the movement, it is not support. When corporations preach against racial injustice but continue to abuse their workers

rather than an opportunity for celebration and education. Rather than donating to the movement, we see big brands use it as their "theme of the month," with pride-related garments and merchandise.

That said, entering a new age of empowerment through the use of social media can be valuable for marginalized communities, as we see mutual aid organizations raise money through online donations. And we do see organizations such as Adidas and Apple implementing initiatives to promote diversity and combat racial injustice.

However, many corporations do not use this new technological advancement in a significant and impactful way; instead, they use it to build their own pseudo-"woke"-brand, giving nothing in return. They use Americans' fear and anger to profit while simultaneously instituting no reform within their companies or making any significant impact.

While these actions are not sufficient in ending systematic racism and police brutality in America, they are the first step. The intention behind activism in corporate America is crucial to its effectiveness, as genuineness and enactment are directly proportional. And while it is not always earnest, this widespread expression of support lays the foundation for change to come.



GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON

and face discrimination lawsuits, it is not support. When the NFL posts for #BlackOutTuesday (which in itself was essentially trivial) but condemns and ostracizes one of their own, Colin Kaepernick, for kneeling during the national anthem to protest police brutality, it is not support. It's a mockery.

Likewise, we have seen similar patterns of disrespect towards minority groups in America every June, as corporate America has turned Pride Month into a branded holiday,

[staff editorial] Evaluating the use of social media for news

Today there is information abound. We have our classic powerhouse news outlets: New York Times, Fox News, Wallstreet Journal; then podcasts, bloggers, radio hosts; and as of recently, social media: a frenzy of short, bold, headlines — yellow journalism to the nth degree. Perhaps most importantly is the news we ourselves disseminate — each of us has the power to share news to our hundreds of followers with a single click. We are bombarded with a nonstop flow of information, but how do we differentiate between it all?

Fake news, or misleading news exists in every form: liberal and conservative, large news corporations to independent bloggers, presidents and politicians.

Misleading reports plagued the Black Lives Matter protests in which isolated destructive acts on the part of marginal protesters characterized the entire movement as violent.

Where we see some of the biggest abuse is in social media, though. In the past few

months alone, there have been countless examples. California legalizing pedophilia, the Gen Z Tik Tok trend which convinced young adults to tattoo themselves with a Nazi symbol, a resurgence of "PizzaGate." These are all instances where a single Google search would have clarified that they were false.

Since commonsensemedia.org finds that 54% of teenagers use social media as their main source of news, it's clear how so many of us are affected by this phenomenon. If we see something on our friends' stories enough, it must be true, right?

The world of information that we have at our fingertips can be overwhelming, but it is also a form of empowerment. The majority of us cannot yet vote, but we all have the ability to actively take advantage of the resources available to us in becoming an educated member of society. The power to publish information without being subject to the same edits and fact-checking of traditional journalists comes with responsibility: you must take it upon

yourself to truly understand what you are sharing.

However, none of this holds true if you do not care about the truth. In a largely bipartisan nation, it is easy to be close-minded. Allowing yourself to blindly absorb information that aligns with your values relinquishes your power of individual thought — you are merely a microphone for someone else. If we continue to disregard the truth we will lead ourselves to an Orwellian end — one where the truth no longer holds any importance. We must retain an open mind so we can make an informed decision on what we consider to be true. This means that we have to look beyond a single news outlet, one administration, or one party.

We are a few days away from one of the biggest elections we have witnessed. We are seeing record breaking early voting and widespread engagement, notably amongst young voters. The civic duty for us non-voters is to understand the platforms of both Joe Biden and Donald Trump — beyond

[a column] Bring back the value of compromise

The quarantine period of March-June, in conjunction with a resurgence of attention on the Black Lives Matter movement, led to a "political awakening" for many teenagers. When one becomes aware of the history and corruption that is found in the systems and institutions around them, such as the two-party system, it can be easy to want to throw it all away in favor of more equitable alternatives that seem obviously advantageous. This revolutionary attitude was adopted by a lot of Generation Z activists on social media — and while I can agree with most of these points, the revolutionists of our generation seem to forget that Rome wasn't built (or torn down) in a day.

In order to get the change we want, there has to be cooperation with the systems we disagree with. That, after all, is the foundation of politics — steps toward the progressive future we envision is accomplished through compromise and gradual reform. That point tends to be lost, especially during these strikingly polarizing times: the concept of political discussion from both sides of the aisle has all but disappeared.

Both sides dismiss each other, exemplifying the hypocrisy they accuse the other of. Bipartisanship is regarded with disdain, and there seems to be a refusal to understand that compromise is necessary to obtain points for one's side.

Stigmatizing politics, especially social issues, only hurts our aspirations for the future.



Peyton Harris
Opinion Editor

Change cannot be made unless we seek to understand and learn from opposing perspectives. We need to be able to criticize systems while understanding that we have to cooperate within them. We should be able to have conversations with opposing perspectives without resorting to petty insults.

This election is one of the first that Generation Z is able to vote in, and by encouraging a "all or nothing" attitude through actions such as write-in ballots supporting our favored primary candidate or abstaining in hopes of inspiring a revolution, we are breeding another generation of non-voters. Regardless of your opinion on voting systems or even the candidates, it is absolutely vital and important to make your voice count, to have a say in the future we will live in. Revolutionary changes in our systems will not come from irresponsible voting choices or divide attitudes among one's own party.

The Verdict

	COVIDucation: We are excited to see educational resources regarding COVID-being provided to students.	
	Sensitivity Training: We are sad to see opposition to racial sensitivity training.	
	S.A.F.E: We are happy to see resources regarding sexual violence being provided to students.	
	Academic Dishonesty: We are sad to see challenges involving academic dishonesty arise from concurrent learning.	

the small graphic your political-active friend reposted.

We aren't the only ones guilty of bandwagoning, but we are the ones that have the greatest opportunity to evolve. As young adults, we are at the cusp

of the rest of our lives, and thus we must take initiative now to begin this process of becoming educated, open-minded, and conscious adults. Perhaps that means that today you start with two clicks instead of one.

the Torch

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Pine View alumna launches podcast for cultural discussion

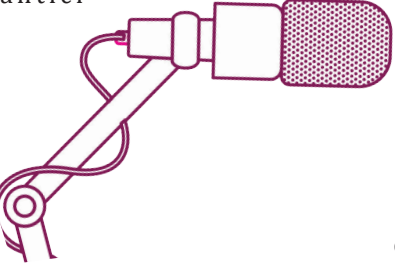


Engaging in multicultural and political discussion, Weronika Przepiora (left), Minyoung Kim (middle) and Sravya Kamarajugadda spoke about their own experiences in Kamarajugadda's podcast, "CommonDifferences." Since late July this year, 10 podcast episodes have been added to YouTube. PHOTO COURTESY OF SRAVYA KAMARAJUGADDA

By Alyson Mizanin
Sports Editor

Back in July, Pine View class of 2016 graduate Sravya Kamarajugadda was scrolling through YouTube when she was recommended a TedTalk of musician Daryl Davis; he spoke on his experience changing the mindset of a Ku Klux Klan member as a Black man. Having been inspired by Davis' patience and diplomacy, as well as the wave of Black Lives Matter protests over the summer, Kamarajugadda launched her podcast, CommonDifferences. The name itself represents the message, as Kamarajugadda explained that, "even though all of us are unique, we're more similar than people think, and those differences bring people together."

Originally, Kamarajugadda was not anti-



pating the creation of an actual podcast. Her goal was to make various 15 to 20 minute-long videos in which she would talk with a guest about their unique cultural identity. Kamarajugadda soon discovered that the content of these videos was far beyond her initial assumptions, both in length and depth. Several listeners began coining the term "podcast," and so Kamarajugadda ran with it.

Fellow 2016 Pine View graduate Weronika Przepiora was a major part of CommonDifferences' creation. After she bonded with Kamarajugadda in their Organic Chemistry class five years ago, the two went on to become close friends and roommates at the University of Florida. Przepiora helped plan and lay out the podcast to support Kamarajugadda in creating a platform that combats cultural ignorance.

POC Experience
Unity
Racism
Cultural differences

"There's a lot of prejudices and stereotypes that contribute to people having false opinions about other cultures and nationalities," Przepiora said. "With a podcast like this, even though it's small, it gives individuals the opportunity to share their different experiences to show that people aren't so different than what we might first assume. Sharing different stories gives people the knowledge and background so we can break down barriers that prejudices form."

Even Kamarajugadda's own experiences motivated her to spread awareness on her podcast. One notable situation was when she was on a medical trip in Peru Mar. 2019. After Kamarajugadda helped a group of traveling Americans converse with Spanish-speaking ice cream shop workers, the trio was "clearly shocked"

when she told them she was an American, too. However, when given the opportunity to travel throughout the United States for March Madness later that year, Kamarajugadda came to

With a podcast like this, even though it's small, it gives individuals an opportunity to show their experiences..."

Sravya Kamarajugadda
Pine View Alumna

understand that the group likely came from an area that had a mainly white population.

"I realized that they weren't discriminating specifically against me, but that they were never exposed to somebody like me. That's part of where the idea for the podcast came from. I have this platform where I can show people who lack access to POC within a white community, to show that we exist and that we're from the United States," Kamarajugadda said.

Regarding other political and cultural discussions, CommonDifferences includes conversations be-

tween Kamarajugadda and her friends, who all speak of their firsthand experiences.

"In the news especially, I feel like many of the people who talk aren't the people who are living in the moment right now. They're rehashing stories that happened to other people," Kamarajugadda said. "The people who are talking in CommonDifferences are the ones that have experienced it. The podcast feels like a conversation two friends are having as opposed to a traditional interview, and that hopefully makes it more interesting to listen to."

Ten podcast episodes have been uploaded to YouTube since late July, but Kamarajugadda hopes to expand her platform to Spotify as well.

"I've changed as a person in that I've listened more, comparing the first podcast to the most recent one. I found that as I did more and more of these, all I really needed to do was listen. I'm hoping that the more videos I do, the more this grows, so that it'll eventually reach more people and make a great impact," Kamarajugadda said.

PV alumna competes in a televised baking show

By Sarah Hassan
News Editor

Combining her love for Halloween with her talent for baking, 2016 Pine View alumna Amy McBride participated in "Halloween Wars," a baking show competition aired on the Food Network Channel Sep. 2020.

In her early years, McBride developed an interest in cake-baking because of her grandmother. With this in mind, McBride attended a cake decorating class headed by Lyndsy McDonald, who would be her future boss. During her time at Pine View, McBride tried to find new ways to incorporate cakes into Pine View traditions, such as Mole Day and Valentine's Day.

In high school, McBride started to work at Pastries by Design, the same local bakery she had gone to for her first cake decorating class. McBride began a long friendship with McDonald, the owner of the bakery.

Although Pastries by Design ended up closing a few years ago, McBride decided to follow McDonald to the Ritz Carlton in Sarasota, where McDonald was the Executive Pastry Chef.

McBride's participation and success in the televised competition the "2017 Halloween Baking Championship" on the Food Network channel influenced McBride to send an auditioning tape to the network.

"I guess I wanted to see if I could do it. I feel like I've done these giant gingerbread houses and cakes [at the Ritz Carlton] for so long. I've worked under pressure for so long; I mean [Halloween Wars] has a com-



Diligently working on various five-hour long baking missions, Amy McBride competed in the Food Network's "Halloween Wars". McBride had to construct a large, four-by-four foot cake. PHOTO COURTESY OF AMY MCBRIDE

pletely different environment, but I just wanted to see how well we would do," McBride said.

After a long wait, McBride was surprised by a call from the network. The network set up an interview, then invited McBride to be filmed on "Halloween Wars" August of last year. The show consisted of five episodes, in which six randomly chosen

teams of three — a cake artist, sugar artist, and pumpkin carver — competed with each other with two challenges per episode.

The first challenge consisted of a smaller task which took 45 minutes, while the second challenge of creating a four-by-four foot cake took up five hours.

McBride even went out of her comfort zone when she was randomly selected to step up as the spokesperson of her team, Team Candy Coroners. McBride admitted that watching herself on television was unusual, even though she had already seen herself work as an assistant for another show, "The Food Network Challenge." This show was

filmed after "Halloween Wars" in October 2019, but it aired earlier, in December that year.

While filming the two shows, McBride had been working at the Ritz Carlton as the supervisor for her fifth and final year. Through this experience, McBride realized she still had a lot to learn about dessert making.

"I always say that I learned [baking] in reverse. I could decorate cakes really well before I actually learned baking, because I did most of that baking knowledge through the Ritz, but I think that's what I really love is to make things taste as good as they look. So, my focus has always been on presentation, but you can't really just have that; you have to back it up," McBride said.

Currently, McBride is still perfecting her craft of cakes for clients, exploring creative freedom in her own designs. She also now works at the Sarasota culinary center, Metz, handling its logistics and account management.

With the current global pandemic, McBride's plans to travel and attend chef classes and cake competitions came to an end for this year. Despite these setbacks, this year has still given McBride the opportunity to refine her pastry-making and chocolate sculpting skills.

[a column] Everything is crazy

As we approach the home stretch of what has been one of the weirdest and most violently unpredictable years of our lives, the time has come to introduce myself as editor of what's shaping up to be a similarly-unpredictable volume of the Torch.

Hi everyone, my name is Leo, and everything is crazy right now.

I didn't expect to spend the first six weeks of my senior year behind a screen, and I'm sure none of you did, either. Most of us have waited years for our first Senior Friday, our first senior class meeting and other iconic senior traditions, only to see them brushed aside by — of all things — a global pandemic.

As we remain optimistic, it's important to realize that our time at Pine View has made us who we are as people. We've survived three years of all-nighters, stress-induced coffee runs and countless hours of studying, and I know that we will survive, even thrive, in our own special version of senior year at Pine View.

Three years ago, freshman Leo walked into the Torchable, or rather, the Torch portable, a bit confused. Absorbing the papers, coffee mugs and posters scattered throughout the brown, cave-like box, I saw

As we remain optimistic, it's important to realize that our time at Pine View has made us who we are as people.



By Leo Gordon,
Editor-in-Chief

the older staff members as a different species. They were loud, mature and knew what they were doing. I was overwhelmed, disoriented and had no idea what I was doing.

As a senior, I see myself, my fellow senior Journalism classmates, or J4s and the rest of the Class of 2021 in those who

led before — the old, mature, well-spoken seniors who at one point seemed like an alien species. Even if you don't feel

senior-year-ish today, remember that we have earned and should be proud of our place as seniors at Pine View. We got through the last three years together, and like every class before us, we'll make it to the end, regardless of what Ms. Rona has to say about it.

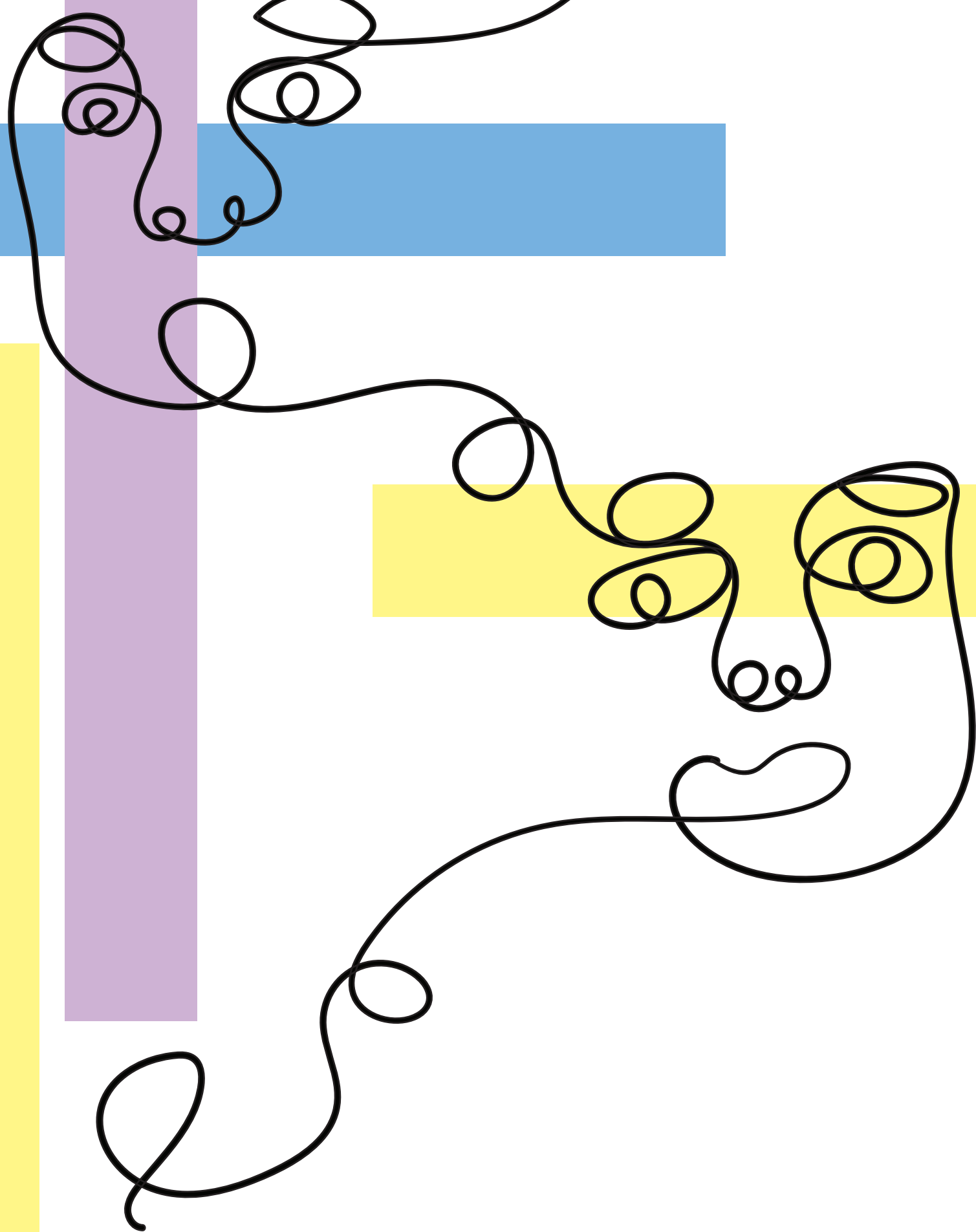


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ANSWERING THE CALL



It's no secret that this year differs from every other. Students and teachers have answered the call to fill needs they see in their communities, doing their parts to leave the world better than they found it. The Torch spoke with individuals who dialed in new skills during the pandemic, from counting cases to crocheting to rigorous cleaning. In this spread, we'll pick up the phone to listen to their stories. 2020 called—and Pine View answered.

Twelfth-grader gets involved in COVID-19 research

by **Kasumi Wade**
Managing Editor

Finding ways to support the medical community in unprecedented times, twelfth-grader Sage Yenari has spent the last 6 months assisting doctors at Sarasota Memorial Hospital (SMH) by participating in the SMH COVID-19 Research Taskforce.

Having two doctors as parents, Yenari has always been fascinated with the medical field. She first began to volunteer two years ago with the Florida State University Internal Medicine Residency Program at SMH. She initially helped out at the Sarasota Memorial Internal Medicine practice in the community of Newtown. In Newtown, Yenari assisted the doctors with a plethora of tasks, from prepping and stocking exam rooms to assisting in checking patients. As COVID-19 began to reach Sarasota County, Yenari began looking for new ways to give back.

“Because everyone around the world was being affected by the virus, I wanted to do anything I could to help alleviate some stress and move the research process along, so that the world could, hopefully, start to get back to normal,”

Yenari said.

Yenari contacted Dr. Wilhelm Wiese-Rometsch, Program Director at the SMH practice in Newtown and Associate Professor at the FSU College of Medicine, about possible ways to conduct research at SMH.

“I wanted to do anything I could to help alleviate some stress and move the research process along.”
Sage Yenari,
twelfth-grader

Wiese-Rometsch informed her of the hospital’s need for help regarding chart reviewing and data analysis.

“We are grateful to Sage for her unconditional dedication and giving of her time to advance the knowledge and science of COVID-19,” Wiese-Rometsch said. “It is so inspiring when we see students

give back to their own community.”

Working primarily through Zoom meetings with other researchers, Yenari spent numerous hours each week as part of the “Effectiveness in COVID-19 Patients of Plasma Infusion Survivors: All-Hands Marshaled” project. With SMH, she engaged in data mining to determine when convalescent plasma can be used as a treatment for COVID-19. Convalescent plasma therapy utilizes blood from fully recovered COVID-19 patients by separating antibodies to give to those suffering from the virus.

Yenari sorted through each SMH COVID-19 patient chart, medical and emergency room record, learning how patients were exposed, where they were coming from, and if they had been to the emergency room before. With this information, she constructed Excel spreadsheets to organize visit numbers, medical history, symptoms, age, weight, height, gender, comorbidities, vitals and CT scan results.

According to Yenari, watching the age of COVID-19 patients drop and become closer to that of herself and her family has been scary.

“Working with SMH has shown me just how irresponsible some people are being. It is sad and frustrating that it’s now become a matter of politics when people should just be able to see the scientific facts, believe them, take them seriously and follow safety precautions,” Yenari said.

Yenari has continued to work with the SMH doctors as their collected data is being published. In order to be published, medical research is submitted to various academic societies — in this case, the American Medical Association (AMA). Yenari will help formally present the project’s data at the 2020 Research Symposium of the American Medical Association, which will be held this December.

According to Yenari, working with the doctors at SMH, and having the ability to see the effects of COVID-19 on the community first-hand has been a meaningful and eye-opening experience.

“The opportunities I have had through SMH has given me a real insight into the medical world,” Yenari said. “It introduced me to the language of medicine and I am grateful to have these publications under my belt.”

Alumni create a safe space amid uncertainty

by **Brianna Nelson**
Spark Editor-in-Chief

Severed from normalcy, most of our world has been transformed to accommodate isolation and protect ourselves and our families from COVID-19. But for those who need the help and support most, new paths have been forged in an uncertain world.

For LGBTQ+ youth in Sarasota, many were split from affirming communities, such as ALSO Youth and school Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA), and were forced to face unsupportive families in a time of already intense personal and nationwide turmoil.

“At the beginning, I spent my days completely isolated in my room. It felt like it was my only safe haven. There was a certain tension that I just felt when I left my room and was around my family,” Pine View Class of 2020 graduate Carlton Leffler wrote in an article titled “The Feels” about his experience with isolation as an LGBTQ+ youth and the importance of safe spaces. The article was published in *Naked Truth*, a magazine created by the Planned Parenthood Peer Education group in South West Central Florida.

Both Leffler and his fellow Class of 2020 graduate Kacie Bates were active LGBTQ+ advocates and educators at places like Pine View GSA and ALSO Youth, and also found their own community there. The situa-

tion, however, quickly changed with sudden school closures and various LGBTQ+ supportive community organizations. Faced with uncharted territory, Bates worked to create a new online safe space for LGBTQ+ youth in the Sarasota area and beyond.

Seeking for comfort in the midst of lockdown, Bates saw the shutdowns of the places where she would normally connect with her friends and realized the virus was more serious than anyone had originally thought. Stuck inside, Discord created a space for a new server titled “Unofficial ALSO Virtual Center” with the functionality of voice channels and spaces to type to friends and other server members. For Bates, connection and support are the core of the server.

“Pretty much it’s just about being accepting of other people, feeling validated, and a safe space to feel included and expressive,” Bates said.

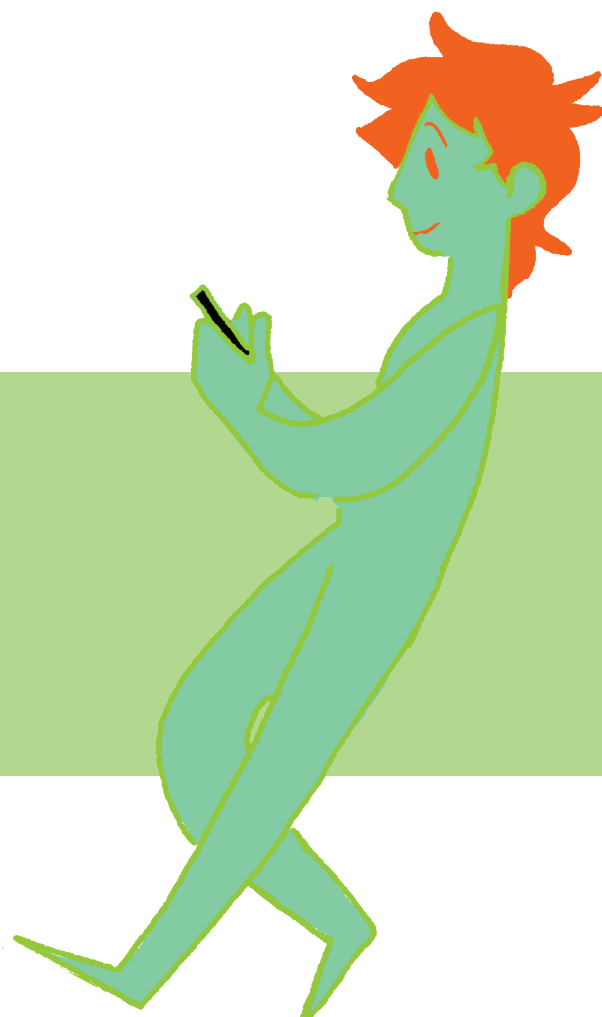
The group creates various spaces and channels for identity specific and general life discussion, whether that be a support chat for only transgender youth or a venting channel to express emotions. While the server was obviously created during a time of uncertainty on a societal level, it was also during a time in which many of the members were in the process of transitioning to college and needed extra support in that way.

“I know it helped out a lot of people that needed help and felt stuck. I’m thinking back to when all of us were back in school and stuck at home and it was so confusing. A lot of people were thankful and grateful for having a place to talk to people and connect so we didn’t feel completely isolated,” Bates said.

The group, though not officially tied to ALSO Youth, was strongly influenced by the environment and friendships formed at the Drop-in Center in Downtown Sarasota. Though many still are not able to return due to safety or their new lives in college, the space creates a long lasting network of support for its over 45 youths who interact daily.

“I think it’s really important when a lot of us are still isolated to our homes, [to recognize] that a lot of people in the LGBTQ community don’t have totally affirming households or even a safe space. When we lack these resources we were trying to do the best we could to keep the community going. We keep each other safe and validated in our identities and expression,” Bates said.

“I know it helped a lot of people that needed help and felt stuck.”
Kacie Bates,
Pine View Graduate



When opportunity calls...

by Lucy Collins
Social Media Editor

After the world skidded to a halt, eleventh-grader Julie Bui let her artistic talent guide her to a fruitful return. Bui has picked up two new hobbies since March — wool felting and crocheting — that quickly developed from a relaxing pastime into a business.

In the late spring, Bui decided to take up the art of wool felting — inspired by the masterpieces her friends had created over the years, as well as social media.

“I thought that was really cool and because I had so much free time, I thought, ‘Why not just go for it,’” Bui said.

Wool felting consists of poking a piece of fabric with a needle until it develops into the intended shape. Over the next few months, Bui persistently studied techniques until she mastered them — first felting, then crochet — with YouTube as her greatest ally, guiding her through simple patterns. The creation of a mochi ball taught her the basics. Slowly she built her database of patterns, scouring the internet in search of new ones

to keep her target audience engaged. An idea soon came to her.

By August, Bui mastered her techniques enough to sell her products through her business, Bulie’s Bundles. Her main attractions are her plushies (stuffed toy animals) and hand-sized honeybees. At this point, though, her ability allows her to create almost anything a customer asks. Since starting her business, she even recreated someone’s pet.

The products’ prices depend

“I thought, ‘Why not just go for it?’”
Julie Bui,
eleventh-grader

on multiple factors: complexity of the product, time devoted to creating it, size and the colors used.

For example, black wool is more difficult to work with compared to other colors because it is harder to see.

“I tend to price myself on the cheap side because I want my products to be accessible to students. That’s who I’m catering for, students and children,” Bui said.

The majority of her business is conducted through her Instagram, @Bulies_Bundles.



Several of eleventh-grader Julie Bui’s “mochi buddies” are stacked for display. These items were among the first patterns Bui learned, and the first to be sold when Bui’s online business first took off in Aug. 2020. PHOTO PROVIDED BY JULIE BUI

She also has an Etsy page of the same name. During the summer, she estimated that she spent about 60% of her day working and developing her talent. These days, only about an hour is required of her per night.

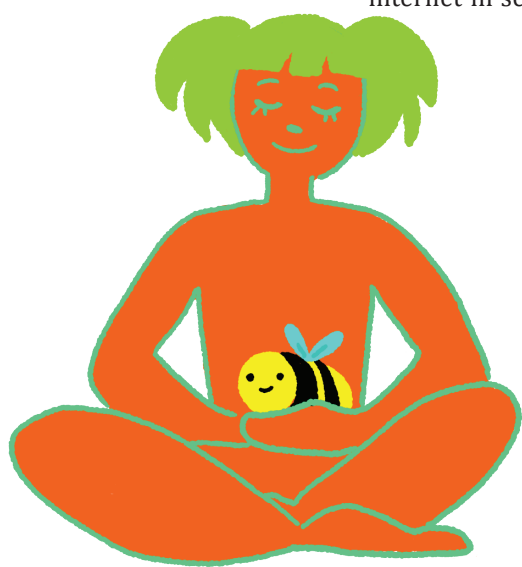
Eleventh-grader Cami Greenwald, who bought through the Bulie’s Bundles Instagram, purchased a wool-felted hamster and crocheted mochi ball.

“They sit next to my hamster’s cage and he loves it! They’re super cute,” Greenwald

said.

In the future, Bui’s goal is to increase charity donation. She currently sets aside 15 percent of her profits from each purchase of a honeybee plush to donate to the Honeybee Conservancy, a national organization working towards saving the honeybees. She is also working on developing new products of which the revenue can be donated to a charity.

Check out her Instagram for a special Halloween item, available now!



Increased workload puts a strain on custodial staff

by Joanna Malvas
Focus Editor

As COVID-19 presents new challenges to staff and students alike, there’s no doubt that the hardworking custodial staff behind the scenes are putting an immense amount of effort into ensuring the safety of all students. Following the decisions of several custodial workers to take leaves of absence this year, the Sarasota County School District hired new substitute workers to fill in the gaps.

In a typical work shift, daytime and evening custodial staff fulfill new sanitization

procedures in addition to their regular maintenance routines. Essentially, having to accomplish all of these tasks during the same shift has pushed the staff to reevaluate priorities. For example, staff members would have to spend less time on maintenance tasks, such as lawn mowing, in order to have more time to sanitize key touch points.

Substitute daytime head custodian, Elizabeth Houtghatling, expressed how their team is currently understaffed by three people, despite the added obligations. Because of this, the team has to alternate

tasks, prioritizing sanitization, then doing lawn maintenance.

“Filling in this position is, of course, a new school for me... I have to juggle making sure all the calls are covered, and making sure that the school looks good,” Houtghatling said.

On the other hand, workers on the night shift often have to work one to two

time in order to complete all the necessary cleaning tasks.

“I would say, on average, it’s added at least two hours per person. With the added work, we’ve actually had to go into overtime at night because of COVID,” Houtghatling said.

Having worked at Pine View for years, Head Nighttime Custodian Gloria Demasi recognizes the pressure present in the atmosphere in this unprecedented school year.

“I want people to know because the team works very hard, and we make mistakes because we’re human. People stay late to get everything done, and we try our best,” Demasi said.

As far as new substitute staff members, students can spot daytime custodian

Raymond Mckee with his signature hat.

Moving all the way down from Georgia, Raymond Mckee decided to become a substitute custodian this year when his wife, Tammy Madden, accepted a 10th grade English teaching position on campus. They were living

in Georgia, she was teaching during the day, and I was custodian in the evening... We would talk on the phone when I’d have dinner, and we’d live for the weekends. Now, we actually have time together,” Mckee said.

Despite this year presenting more challenges for the custodial staff, Demasi still feels thankful to be a part of the supportive environment that Pine View offers.

“There’s so many good things about Pine View. The teachers, admin, the people I love — you always have people willing to help the staff. There’s definitely a difference at Pine View,” Demasi said.



Custodian Raymond McKee sanitizes the picnic tables with disinfectant spray during sixth period. Due to Covid-19, the custodial staff has taken on new responsibilities to ensure the school’s cleanliness.

PHOTO BY JOANNA MALVAS

Pine View family experiences the virus first-hand

by Ben Gordon
Web Editor-in-Chief

As COVID-19 cases skyrocketed in Florida through the month of July, most could not imagine it would affect their own family. Unfortunately for twelfth-grader Keleigh Koeniger and her family, they faced firsthand the reality of a pandemic that has infected over seven million Americans.

What started as a normal Friday night quickly changed for the worse when Koeniger's mother, Leigh Koeniger, found herself with a small cough. Thinking nothing of it, she decided to sleep on it, hoping the cough would disappear the following morning.

"I thought I was just imagining things," Leigh said. "But the next morning, I had chills, a fever, and a headache, and I knew something was wrong."

The next morning, Koeniger was experiencing symptoms as well, so her family headed to the testing center near the UTC mall for confirmation. Koeniger's test came back negative, but Leigh's was positive.

"I was scared I was dying," Leigh said. "My doctor told me it would get worse before it

got better, and I didn't think it could get much worse."

Koeniger had felt symptoms for days, but, unsure of the accuracy of her first test that had come back negative, ordered an at-home kit, which also came back negative.

"I think I must have done the test wrong," Koeniger said. "The instructions were very unclear and didn't match the test that I was given, so I had to do my best on my own."

The Koenigers expressed concerns that, like them, people would take tests without clear instructions that yielded inaccurate test results. They wondered: how can the public prevent the spread of the virus when they are unsure if their own results are accurate? Can they go to the grocery store? Should they quarantine for two weeks even though their test came back negative?

Despite a grueling week or two, the Koenigers were lucky to beat the virus without any remaining side effects.

"I'm glad we were able to get through it," Koeniger said. "It showed us how serious this virus is — everyone needs to keep being careful, because the pandemic is not close to being over."

"I was scared I was dying. My doctor told me it would get much worse before it got better, and I didn't think it could get much worse."

Leigh Koeniger,
Parent



Family separates to spare risk

by Sarah Hassan
News Editor

As COVID-19 has infiltrated daily life, constant changes have been made to adjust, within stores, schools, and even homes. For the first five weeks of school, Pine View social studies teacher Scott Wolfinger took precautionary measures by isolating himself from his family.

Wolfinger ultimately decided to live apart from his family since his wife, Deborah Wolfinger, has a pre-existing condition which affects her

lungs. During the summer, he brought up the option of isolating himself to his wife, to which she reluctantly agreed.

"She didn't want me to, but she also wanted me to. She understood," Wolfinger said. "She's worried about me getting something, but she also understood that this is...three less things I have to worry about, my three family members not being exposed in any way whatsoever."

Wanting to spend every possible second before school with his family, Wolfinger moved to his temporary living arrangement, a friend's condo, directly after the first day of school, taking all his belongings with him in his car. Although his commute to Pine View is longer than from his home, Wolfinger felt assured that he was keeping his family safe.

Living with this assurance during the five weeks of isolation, Wolfinger would visit his family every day to pick up food. He communicated with his family over the phone twice each day and talked to his children from a safe distance when visiting.

"I've been around my family with the strictest safe

measures that you would reasonably use. I told them...If I had COVID, would you be able to feel comfortable sitting this far?" Wolfinger said.

Although he was apart from his family, Wolfinger found one advantage to isolation — improved concentration when preparing for his classes — but eventually, after seeing

"Everyone has their own level of concern, and it's different for everyone."

Scott Wolfinger,
teacher

the number of COVID-19 cases somewhat stabilized, he decided to return home.

"You can only stay away from your family so long, I mean there comes a point where you say, 'Okay, things haven't gotten dramatically worse, so after a period of time, I need to go back,'" Wolfinger said.

Both of Wolfinger's children (eighth-grader Brooke and fifth-grader Tyler Wolfin-

ger) enrolled in remote-learning. Due to schedule changes among the eighth-grade social studies teachers, Brooke Wolfinger, was able to see him each day in his class.

"As a result of what we are doing with this, I'm really glad I'm able to have her in there because I'm able to see her," Scott Wolfinger said.

As for his son, Wolfinger is looking forward to Tyler attending his first year at Pine View after first quarter, when both of his children are to return to campus.

After Wolfinger returned home, the family's schedule reverted back to normalcy.

"I am glad we can all be together again. It wasn't quite the same without him," Brooke Wolfinger said.

As the pandemic continues to provide unprecedented situations, each family takes a different approach to their safety.

"The way I talk to my kids in class about this is, everyone has their own level of concern, and it is different for everyone," Scott Wolfinger said. "Some people don't need to do something like this, and my situation indicated that I needed to be much more cautious."



Pine View history teacher Scott Wolfinger visits his children. Due to concerns about COVID-19, Wolfinger chose to stay isolated from his family for five weeks after school started. PHOTO PROVIDED BY SCOTT WOLFINGER