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Seniors cast their first ballot in November election

by Mahitha Ramachandran
Sci & Tech Editor

Though most high school students are not yet able to vote, for some of-age Pine View seniors, the 2020 election marked their first chance to participate in our democracy. For them, this election was historic not only in its record-breaking turnout but also in its context within a pandemic.

Among these first-time voters, each had a unique experience at the voting booth. Twelfth-grader Julia Kourelakos had just turned 18 at the end of October and was glad that she was able to vote in the 2020 election.

"I was pretty excited. I felt very lucky that I was getting in right under the wire to be able to vote in this election, and that I wouldn't have to wait another four years," she said.

Kourelakos voted in-person at the Fruitville Library the Sunday before election day.

"My parents and I carpoled together to go vote," she said. "We waited outside and it was crowded but socially distanced. We got waived in, waited in another

long line, then we were all handed ballots. They asked me if I was a first-time voter and I said 'yes,' and then

the polling station clapped for me. I think it's just a thing they're obligated to do, but it was fun."

When Kourelakos had her ID checked, the woman checking her license made everyone clap for her a second time. Finally, after waiting in line with her family and receiving applause more than once, Kourelakos was able to cast her very first ballot.

"Overall, though, it was a really nice experience, and a lot easier than I was expecting it to be," Kourelakos said.

Twelfth-grader Alex Ivanchev also voted early and in-person. He voted at the Venice Supervisor of Elections Office after his shift as a poll worker.

"On the last day of early voting, when I had some free time and there were fewer people coming in, I got my ballot, filled it out, put it in the tabulator, and called it a day," Ivanchev said.

He wanted to vote in-person for a reason.

"My plan was to vote in-person because I wanted to make sure that once I

put my ballot in the tabulator, it was going to be counted and I could see in front of my eyes that it was counted," he said.

Working at the polls and voting for the first time made the experience extra special for Ivanchev, and he remembers exactly how he felt in the moment.

"When I was just about to put my ballot into the tabulator, I just stood there for a minute," he said. "I was thinking about how I am a first-generation American within my family and how a lot of people are not able to vote. I realized how much of a gift it was that I could vote and contribute towards our democracy."

This election, several voters decided to vote by mail as an easier and safer alternative to going to a polling station. Twelfth-grader and first-time voter Rosenna Chan was one of them.

"When I received my ballot in the mail, I opened it up, and it was surprisingly overwhelming," she said. "Usually when we think of voting, we think of 'I'm voting for this candidate for president' and that's it. But there are so many other things on the ballot to vote for, and that's what really caught me off guard."

After googling some of

did you vote queen 🥰

omg yes ofc 🙌

girl this is a HISTORIC election!!!!



the Florida amendments and other things on the ballot, Chan made her choices, sealed up her ballot, and dropped it off at a ballot box. She said the experience was really meaningful, specifically with this election being her first.

"I was definitely excited because it was my first time, but especially because of this election," she said. "We are in such polarized political times, and even though it can feel like my vote isn't going to count, it is going to count."

Though each of these first-time voters had individually unique experiences voting, they all agree that watching the election results come in while knowing their votes were a part of the count was a source of pride.

"Especially with the amendments, seeing my vote go towards those was really meaningful. Some of them passed that I voted on, and I know they will benefit me later in life," Chan said.

GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON

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The influence of segregation on gifted education

by Grace Johnson
Match Editor-in-Chief

The first large scale study of giftedness was conducted by Lewis Terman, the creator of the Stanford-Binet Test. As weighty an accomplishment as this was, Terman was better known for his deep belief in eugenics and support of the restrictive breeding of humans to create an 'ideal race,' as reported by The Stanford Daily. Giftedness, as Terman defined it, excluded everyone beyond cis-gendered, straight, white men. The history of 'giftedness' is consequentially riddled with bias, most distinctly in the form of racism, the repercussions of which still reverberate today.

While the first gifted education program in the United States was formed in the early 20th century, the concept of 'giftedness' did not gain traction until the 1950s, first officially addressed under law in 1975, according to the National Association for Gifted Children. With the passing of Brown v. The Board of Education in 1954, schools were forced to integrate, but gifted programs within schools became a way to segregate Black and white students within the same school, as detailed in the New York Times' podcast "Nice White Parents."

This strategy for perpetuating segregation was present on a national scale, but what about locally?

According to Newtown Alive, it was

in 1961, seven years after Brown v. The Board of Education was passed, when a federal lawsuit was filed against Sarasota County concerning their refusal to desegregate schools. Booker schools began to close in 1962 to encourage integration, but it was not until 1967 that Sarasota County forced all schools to integrate on a court order.

Pine View was founded in 1968, though it didn't open until Jan. 1969, almost directly after the court-mandated integration in the county's schools. While all other public schools were being forced to integrate, Pine View's admission requirements — including a parent or teacher recommendation, a gifted screening test, and an IQ test — were easily manipulated so that the school could keep Black students out, in turn making Pine View more attractive to white families.

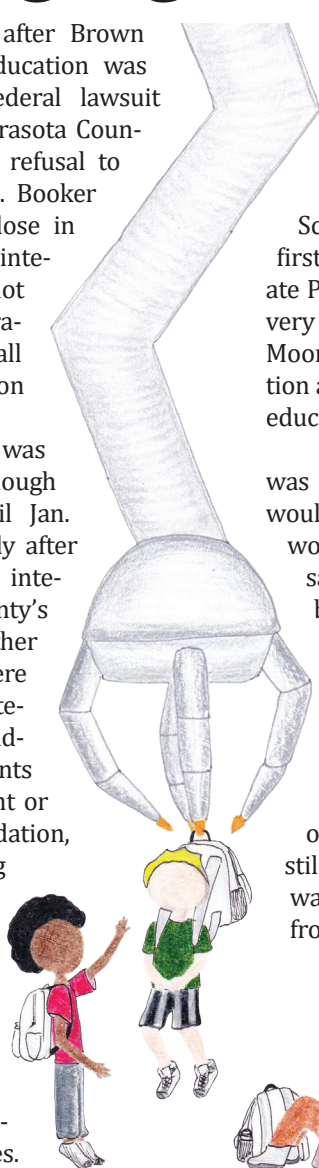
And with little knowledge of the school's purpose, admission process, and even existence, Black families were successfully kept away.

Principal of McIntosh Middle School Dr. Harriet Moore became the first African American female to graduate Pine View in 1979. Being one of the very few Black students in the school, Moore faced several racial discrimination accounts trying to receive the gifted education she needed.

"My test administrator said she was ill. She told my parents that she would still like to test me, but that she would test me at her home," Moore said. Moore's parents agreed and brought her to the administrator's house, where she was tested in front of a glass door leading out to the administrator's backyard.

"I could see outside, and, as she was testing me, her children were playing in the pool right outside the window," Moore said. "I still ended up [at Pine View], but that was something done to try to keep me from going there."

According to US News and World Report, 52 years after its founding, Pine View's student population is just one percent Black, this statistic being the



same as it was back during Moore's school career. Pine View's current lack of diversity spurs from the same qualification-based issues that have been prevalent since 1968.

Vinay Konuru of the class of 2020 founded the club DiGS (Diversity in Gifted Schools) to combat this issue. To try to expand diversity in gifted education, the club first had to grasp an understanding of what hindered it.

GRAPHIC BY MAHITHA RAMACHANDRAN

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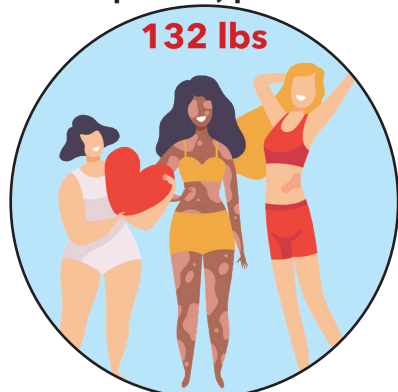
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Pine View mourns the loss of a student
Ethan Isaacs is commemorated

Voting amidst the COVID-19 pandemic

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by Mahitha Ramachandran

Sci & Tech Editor

Kourelakos had a similar feeling watching the more local results come in.

"It was definitely interesting seeing all the smaller runoff races and the amendments to the Florida constitution and recognizing them as things I'd voted on. Before, in 2016, I don't even remember seeing those things, probably because they just didn't matter to me back then," she said.

Despite this election being far from normal, these first-time voters made sure their voices were heard by casting their very first ballots. Why? Because they believe voting is important, especially for young people.

Chan said she went out of her way to make sure she was registered to vote and would receive a ballot in the mail because she believes in the importance of voting.

"Even if you don't think your vote is going to count, you genuinely just don't know. Your vote could be that one difference that causes an amendment to get passed or for a candidate to get a politi-



Pictured above is the Sarasota County Elections Office located in Downtown Sarasota. Polls were open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on election day. PHOTO BY LEO GORDON

cal seat," Chan said.

Ivanchev is similarly enthusiastic about participating in the election but believes there are still hurdles in the voting process, such as voter suppression among people who were previously convicted in Florida and the electoral college rendering some people's votes virtually futile. However, he still wants to see everyone who is able to vote to do so, especially in the younger demographic.

"Just think about all those people who are not able to vote and would love to," Ivanchev said. "A lot of our representatives are dirt old, and we need more representa-

tion for younger generations. They offer an important fresh perspective to the political scene."

Though there is still much work to do, Kourelakos has hope for her generation.

"I think a lot of the shifts in areas that went from one party to another were caused by young people. Our generation seems to be the most enthusiastic voting base of young people in a while," Kourelakos said. "Even if you live in a majority red or blue state, taking the time to educate yourself on the issues and becoming informed about the political process helps our country run smoothly."

Racial discrimination and giftedness

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by Grace Johnson

Match Editor-in-Chief

"The main driver of the lack of diversity in gifted programs is not the IQ tests themselves," Konuru said, maintaining that there is proven bias in these tests as they are based on written and verbal components that are not representative of all cultures and races. "The bigger factor, at least right now, is the teacher recommendation process. Wealthier families who know about the process will be able to just hire a private psychologist, and they don't even need teacher recommendation letters. But, lower-income students and African American students are recommended to take this test at a significantly lower rate than white and Asian American students."

These racial biases of teachers go further than just keeping kids from gifted education, though. Moore described how what may be seen as gifted in a white or Asian child is categorized as a learning disability in a Black or brown child.

"Looking at academic achievement, it's not about what kids can or cannot do. It's a racial disparity because the only people who are trailing behind are the Black and brown children. That's a systemic problem," Moore said.

The bias against Black and brown students in gifted edu-

- 1954**: Brown v. Board of Education overruled "separate but equal" principle and called for desegregation of schools
- 1961**: Federal lawsuit filed against Sarasota County after refusal to desegregate
- 1962**: Bay Haven Elementary becomes first school in Sarasota to become integrated with 29 Black students
- 1967**: Sarasota County orders all schools to integrate
- 1968**: Pine View is founded
- 1979**: Harriet Moore becomes the first African American female to graduate from Pine View

GRAPHIC BY MAHITHA RAMACHANDRAN
Source: New Town Alive

cation has been present since the concept materialized. On a smaller scale, the same biases have had a ripple effect through the Pine View community.

"Because schools were desegregating when Pine View was made, it introduced this bias that caused a disparity — the issue is that we've let the problem snowball over the last fifty years," Konuru said, explaining that small efforts have been made to integrate Pine View fully, but to no avail. Some recent efforts include principal Dr. Stephen Covert's expansion of universal screening tests to Title I schools, and several seminars advocating for change. Still, Pine View demographics remain unchanged.

Konuru noticed one major flaw in the action being taken this summer in a petition started by several alumni.

"It was mainly alumni who were pushing to solve this problem... The voices that mean the most are the students' because those are the ones who are affected the most. It's bad for everyone — we're not exposed to different groups of people, and so many other students aren't getting the education they need to thrive. It's our development that's at stake. We're the ones who are affected, so we're the ones who need to be speaking."

Konuru said that maintaining the momentum of this past summer is a step toward such progress.

IN BRIEF

Speech and Debate earns Leading Chapter Award

by Gabriele Navickis

Asst. Entertainment Editor

Pine View School has earned the 2019-2020 Leading Chapter Award in the Florida Sunshine District given out by the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA).

The award is based on competitive points earned by an NSDA member school in each of the 25 districts. Students from each school attended Speech and Debate tournaments and earned points based on how well they performed. If participants collect enough points, they earn a degree, and each year, the school with the highest collected points is the winner. In addition to this year, Pine View's Speech and Debate team earned the

Leading Chapter Award in 2013.

For the president of Pine View's Speech and Debate club, Grace Kim, winning the Florida Sunshine District award was a major achievement.

"I was pretty excited when PV won because speech and debate has been pretty hard to run this year and it's pretty nerve-racking since it's hard to get students to agree to compete now that it's online," Kim said. "No one wants to just sit at their computer all day doing a debate tournament on the weekend, but when we won, I was super excited because it felt like, even though things are kind of rough because of Corona, students are still being recognized for their work."

Pine View welcomes new club: National Art Honor Society

by Sebastian Genelhu-Bazan

Humor Editor

Calling all artists and art enthusiasts, a new chapter of the National Art Honor Society (NAHS) has been established at Pine View. Sponsored by Sharon Salamon and founded by eleventh-grader Layna Malave, the club meets in room 803 every Thursday.

"I noticed at the beginning of the school year that Pine View did not have an art club of any sort, this was very disappointing and upsetting to me because Pine View has so many great artists and art is so important in so many ways," Malave said. "I just wanted to make a club dedicated to making art and sharing our love for it."

Malave reached out to Salamon about the idea of an art club and NAHS was born.

"By being a part of NAHS,

you could potentially get scholarships and many other opportunities to get your art published or at least share it. Art is definitely a passion of mine, and I really just want to make people happy with it," Malave said.

At meetings, NAHS discusses art history and completes small activities related to art, though Malave has bigger plans. She plans to begin personal art projects and group projects around the school.

"I'm so excited to get this club really started because I know it can be something great. And if you're a high-schooler and you do art, I'd highly recommend joining for lots of art fun and community in these tough times," Malave said. "I hope to make this club a comfortable and safe space for people to do what they love."

Web Features

To read more on these stories, as well as other pieces not featured in our print edition, see PVTorch.com

["Remembering Blake Bennett, Class of 2016"](#)

A life of radiance, one of love, one of talent – a life lived and embodied in the hearts of the people he touched throughout his life – is how Blake Bennett's legacy could be described.

[2020-2021 Level Teachers of the Year announced](#)

Overall, the 2020-2021 Pine View School Teacher of the Year moving on to represent the school at the district level is middle school science teacher Hali Flahavan.

Class of 2021 implements initiative



Twelfth-grader Noah Kunkel places students' messages on the windows of the Student Union before Thanksgiving Break. In an effort to increase schoolwide community, the Class of 2021 implemented 'The Giving Thanks Project,' in which students and staff members wrote a brief note thanking someone around them. Scan the QR code to read some of the thoughtful words about those who make up the Pine View community. PHOTO BY ISABELLA KULAWIK



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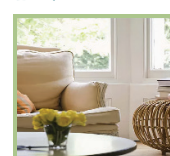
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"A sound mind in a sound body is a full but short description of a happy state in this world."

Sarasota County's Handling of Sexual Harassment Reports

by Peyton Harris

Opinion Editor

According Merriam-Webster, sexual harassment is defined as "unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature." In reference to school, it is defined as unwanted and unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that interferes with the right to receive an equal educational opportunity. Federal courts recognize two types of sexual harassment.

The first is known as quid pro quo harassment, occurring when a school employee bases an educational decision on the student's submission to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

The other is known as hostile-environment harassment, including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature by an employee, another student, or a third party.

According to a past survey in 1993 from the American Association of University Women, with a sample size of 2064 students from grades 8-11, 83% of the girls and 78% of the boys reported experiencing sexual harassment in school. A similar study based in Connecticut from 1993 to 1994 found that 78% of the surveyed

students had experienced at least one incident of sexual harassment in high school (92% of the girls and 57% of the boys).

In the U.S., schools are required to

harassment. It includes both forms and lists several examples, such as unwelcome sexual advances, propositions, invitations, and flirtations. However, the exact bounds of what conduct will

person's subjective belief alone that behavior is offensive does not necessarily mean the conduct rises to the level of a policy violation. The behavior must also be objectively offensive to meet the definition of prohibited sexual harassment."

There are two ways to go about reporting an incident of sexual harassment: a formal or informal report.

In an informal complaint, a student reports the incident to a teacher, other employee, school administration or district Title IX Officer, whether orally or in writing. Pine View's local Title IX Officer is Asst. Principal Roy Sprinkle, the previous district Title IX Officer. The Title IX Officer will then either issue an informal resolution or appoint someone else to do so. An example of an informal resolution is distributing a copy of the Policy 2.71 as a reminder to the individuals where the respondent works.

A formal complaint can be filed in the same method as an informal complaint. The

Title IX Officer then determines if the report fits the criteria to constitute an incident of sexual harassment. If the Title IX Officer finds that the report alleges the prohibited behavior, an investigation will be pursued.

GRAPHIC BY SARAH CATALANO

Sarasota County Schools Sexual Harassment Report Process

Formal Report

Student reports the incident to a teacher, school administration, Title IX Officer, or other employee.

Title IX Officer determines if the report fits the criteria to constitute an incident of sexual harassment.

If the Title IX Officer finds that the report alleges the prohibited behavior, an investigation will be pursued.

Informal Report

Student reports the incident to a teacher, school administration, Title IX Officer, or other employee.

Title IX Officer issues an informal resolution or appoints someone else to do so.

result in ramifications are ambiguous.

"For purposes of this policy, actions or conduct shall be considered 'unwelcome' if the student, employee or non-employee did not request or invite it and regarded the conduct as undesirable or offensive. However, a

Student takes STEM to heart

by Sarah Hassan

News Editor

With a single step into his first-ever engineering class in ninth grade, eleventh-grader Diego Morales did not expect to have his fully-drawn out plan for the future completely changed.

Wanting to walk down the same path as his father, Morales had settled on a career as an architect for eight years. However, after deciding to take an engineering class, which was sparked by his interest in architecture, Morales' plans for his future began to shift; he decided to fully dedicate his time toward the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) field.

After being exposed to the STEM world for a short but impactful period of time, Morales developed an avid love for the field, one of the reasons being that it allows people from all over the world to develop leadership skills.

"STEM...stands for so much more than the four to five words in the acronym. STEM is an inspiration around the world and gives countless opportunities to people of different races, ethnicities, genders, and backgrounds," Morales said, "It encourages people to be different and to try to participate as there is always something for everyone, you just have to find what that may be on your own."

In his three years of high school, Morales has participated in a variety of STEM-related activities within and outside of the classroom. At Pine View, he takes part in FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics, as the Computer Aid Drafting (CAD) captain. Additionally, in TSA (Technology Student Association), he and his partner, twelfth-grader Caleb McCue, placed second for the Technology Problem Solving challenge at a state-level competition.

While leading and helping the CAD team at Pine View, Morales also does not hesitate to aid others inside the engineering class. "In a lot of classes, socialization, to a degree, is kind of discouraged because they want kids to focus. In my class, the collaboration is a major component," engineering teacher and robotics club sponsor Andrew Wormington said, "Diego is a big part of that with his partners and people that he works with. So he's a great collaborator. As a student, again, he works hard and he brings a good sense of security into the classroom."

Outside of school, Morales is a valuable asset to the Fab Lab/Suncoast Sci-

ence Center. He is part of the 13-member executive committee of the Remote Control (RC) Car event, where kids compete with each other after enhancing their skills with their remote control cars. As a member of the committee, Morales helps with designing the two tracks that kids will race on. This year, he will help with the main circular track and the obstacles that are a surprise for children, parents, and volunteers.

Morales is also one of the leaders for the Suncoast Science Center's STEM Saturdays, which are four-hour-long classes designed to teach children about a specific branch of the STEM field. Morales had created his own content and taught fourth and fifth-graders in a Robotics Camp.

With heavy involvement in engineering, Morales has accrued various skills throughout the years and been able to adjust to any challenge, yet he remains humble.

"It's funny because you'll say something about his skillset or whatever else, and he's going to shake his head and laugh it off; he doesn't have a big ego," Wormington said. "When someone has a skillset and or ability, sometimes there's a little bit of swagger that goes along with it, and he's... humble is the way to describe it. He's reserved in the kind of flaunting of his knowledge and skills, but he's willing to share and assist others..."

Out of every activity, Morales acknowledges FIRST Robotics as his most impactful and life-changing event.

"I have met so many incredible people and been supplied with numerous opportunities that I would have never been given had I not joined the club," Morales said, "I hope to continue on for next year and lead the team to victory in whatever ways I am able should I take on the Head Captain role after this season."

To accompany his STEM-driven course, Morales is currently taking AP Biology, AP Physics C, and DE Calculus 3/Differential Equations. He strives to major in Mechanical Engineering or Bioengineering, with his connection to architecture still in his blood because of his future plan of working with 3D models for big companies.

"I would really love to work on 3D Modeling and Mechanical Engineering for certain companies, like NASA for example, as 3D Computer Aided Design is my favorite aspect of engineering, and the thought of being able to construct models virtually and physically for as big a company as that would be an absolute dream for me," Morales said.



PHOTO BY GRACE JOHNSON

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF ! !

With the state of the world right now, change may seem impossible. It's easy to get discouraged or overwhelmed with all the current injustices we are fighting against. Perhaps it's helpful to look back on our history at a few of the times good prevailed against evil and mirrored our current journeys. **History repeating itself isn't always bad. Sometimes, it can inspire us to keep moving with the ebbs and flows of our past.**



Crowds rallying for gay rights during the Stonewall Riots, 1969

The Pine View GSA manning a booth at a pride festival, 50 years later.



Students rallying against pollution on the first Earth Day: April 22 1970.

Sarasota Students4Climate protesting climate change, 50 years later.



GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

Pine View introduces a new set of faces to campus

After establishing a new normal for the Pine View school year, Pine View welcomes three additional staffers onto campus.

McKenzie Miller: Eighth Grade English and English 1 Honors

by Lucy Collins
Social Media Editor

Though she began at Pine View during uncertain times, eighth- and ninth-grade English teacher McKenzie Miller strives to create a positive environment in her classroom and teach her students the timeless and relevant aspects of classical novels. Her youth and liveliness bring a fresh perspective to campus.

Born and raised in Sarasota, Miller spent fifth and sixth grade attending Pine View, eventually leaving and completing her secondary education at Venice Middle School and Venice High School when her mother, who taught at Pine View at the time, left as well. She finished her own schooling at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida. With a degree in secondary English education in hand, Miller began working right away at Loggers Run Middle School teaching seventh- and eighth-grade ELA and eighth-grade World History.

Two years later, Miller transitioned to working as a corporate trainer for a hospitality-based technology company in the Palm Beach area, where she taught adults how to use the products on webinars. But after about a year and a half working at two companies in Boca Raton, she realized she preferred teaching younger students rather than adults, and she stepped back into the world of English, teaching eleventh- and twelfth-grade.

After living in the Palm Beach area for eight years, Miller returned to Sarasota for the proximity to her friends and family. The search began for a teaching position on the Sarasota County Schools website. A job at Pine View with her exact qualifications presented itself, and Miller jumped at the opportunity. She moved back with Ollie, her hyper five-year-old boxer-lab mixed rescue dog.

"Pine View always had that higher standard of education in their students, just the higher caliber in general, so I always respected that," Miller said, "Going to Pine View for a little bit gave me a different viewpoint because I lived it, so getting a job at Pine View, I feel awesome."

Miller joined the Pine View Commu-

nity at the beginning of the second quarter. Since there was nothing left to finish from the first quarter, her transition was a smooth process, she explained. Though arriving at an odd time, Miller has had no issues navigating technology and only struggles to ensure both her in-person and remote learners can participate.

"Because she is young, I think she understands the students a little better," ninth-grader Mark Lyda said, "She understands and relates to us, then interacts with us as another student would."

She wants her classroom to be an encouraging space, focusing on positive feedback as opposed to negative. Rather than preaching to her students, she hopes her classes work as a team to teach.

"I want to help students understand that what they learn in school can apply to their real life. That's the biggest question that you get, especially in English, just remembering the theme: to not feeling so small in the world when you have an issue when there are stories and poems from a hundred years ago that somebody was struggling with what you're struggling with," Miller said.

Miller would like to impact her students in a positive way from a few different angles, one of them being about body positivity. She wants to model a confident young woman to her students, which is hard to find, she said. Miller explains that she exercises for health rather than to punish her body.

"In college, I was in a sorority, and I was very involved with philanthropy... associated disorders. It just raises awareness of some of the detriments society sends to young women and men based on these crazy standards. When I'm scrolling through social media I make sure it's only positive people I'm seeing. When someone makes me feel upset, I unfollow them," Miller said.

In her downtime, Miller enjoys exercising and eating out at restaurants with friends. A pillar in her life is the mantra "mind, body and soul," which reminds her to take care of herself. Miller ends every Friday telling her students to "do something kind for yourself" over the weekend, no matter how small.



PHOTO BY SEBASTIAN GENELHU-BAZAN

Konstantin Menshikov: Student Assistance Program Specialist

by Lora Rini
Asst. Match Editor

After an international counseling experience and a lifetime of interest in psychology and mental health, Konstantin Menshikov is now Pine View's new Student Assistance Program Specialist. The Student Assistance Program, which provides counseling and academic assistance to students, is new to Pine View, but Menshikov is approaching the job with empathy and enthusiasm.

Menshikov has always been fascinated with how the mind works. He realized this was an area of study he wanted to explore further, so he took Psychology 101 and Social Psychology at a local college in New Jersey during his senior year of high school. He then received a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Florida Atlantic University.

"I went to school in Jersey and back then, things were not as politically correct, and mental health was not really something that was looked at as an important issue. I had to figure a lot of things out on my own, which made it difficult- I still persevered, but it would have been a lot more helpful if I had different avenues for support," Menshikov said.

In the U.S., a specific level of licensing is required to practice therapy. However, this is not the case in the Ukraine, where Menshikov worked at an inpatient rehab facility from Nov. of 2018 to Nov. of 2019. This work allowed him to receive training in areas such as cognitive behavioral therapy, which would not have been possible in the U.S. unless he had a higher level of certification. He counseled people with substance abuse issues there and eventually returned to the United States at the end of 2019.

Menshikov worked at Coastal Behavioral Healthcare for a few months until it merged with a nonprofit company called First Step. First Step runs the Student Assistance Program, so it was there that he got the opportunity to work as a Student Assistance Program Specialist. While currently working his new job at Pine View, Menshikov is also working on a master's degree in social work at Saint Leo University.

Before he began working at Pine View, Menshikov shadowed Allison Phinney, the Student Assistance Program Specialist at Sarasota High School, for a day. He was mainly there to observe, but he contributed to some of the discussions as well.

"When I had one student who was coming in for counseling services," Phinney said, "[Menshikov] did chime in, and he was wonderful. He was super appropriate and knowledgeable, and his aspect, meaning the way he presents, was really calming. He's a really nice person to be around that my students trusted."

At Pine View, Menshikov helps students both academically and with mental health issues. His portable is a drop-in center, so students are free to stop by whenever they feel like it. They can also establish a time to come talk to him, and all discussions Menshikov has with students are kept confidential.

"If they want some support I can give them guidance and help, or if they just want to talk about something and have somebody listen, that's also a function of me being here. Other than that, there's also helping students on the academic front, so if they're having troubles with any of their classes, if they want a place to do some work after school - this is a place for them," Menshikov said.

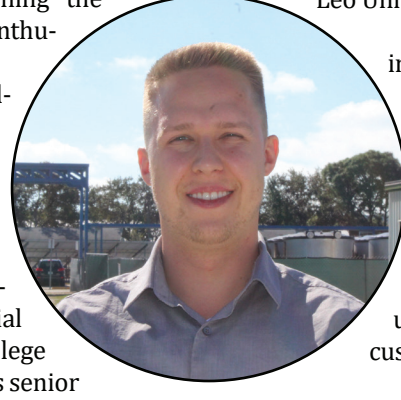


PHOTO BY LEO GORDON

...if they just want to talk about something and have somebody listen, that's also a function of me being here.'

Konstantin Menshikov, Student Assistance Program Specialist

Jessica Patella: Anatomy and Physiology Honors

by Alyson Mizanin
Sports Editor

Dr. Jessica Patella, N.D., was a middle-schooler attending Pine View when she witnessed firsthand how cardiologist Dr. Mahfouz El Shahawy, M.D., saved her grandfather's life. It was then when she realized that she wanted to work in the medical field. Though her direction changed over the years, a sense of cosmic balance is served now that Patella is the newest addition to the science department as the Anatomy & Physiology Honors teacher.

"Middle school me would have never thought about coming back to Pine View. Never in a million years did I think I would even teach," Patella said, laughing.

Born and raised in Sarasota, Patella's experiences with El Shahawy set her on the path to becoming a doctor. She graduated from Sarasota High through their Math, Science, and Technology (MaST) research program. Patella went on to pursue a Pre-Med track at Florida State University (FSU), but ended up changing her major to Exercise Physiology.

While at FSU, Patella did rotations alongside El Shahawy. Over the course of his now fifty-year career, El Shahawy organized - and still maintains - a cardiovascular disease risk assessment program that operates under a simple mantra: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." As Patella spent more time working alongside him, the impor-

tance of prevention was cemented for her. It was for this reason, among others, that Patella would later graduate and earn her doctorate from the Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine.

When talking about his former mentee, El Shahawy could not help but praise Patella.

"[Even] when she was younger, she was always very mature, very responsible. Jessica is innovative and she likes to educate herself. She never quit promoting herself scientifically and socially," he said.

After graduation, Patella and her husband moved to North Carolina. She opened up her own private practice, but the number of people she could reach was limited. After a friend's recommendation, Patella took a teaching position for anatomy and nutrition at Sandhills Community College.

"I went into that classroom and I completely fell in love," Patella said. "[Some of my students] started by drinking 2-liter bottles of Coke, but by the end of my class, one lady came up to me and told me she was off soda and just drinking water. Older adults were feeding their families differently, and it was the most magical thing because I realized what a massive ripple effect teaching had."

Patella spent a year teaching at Sandhills Community College before she and her husband traveled across Europe together. It was then when her high school principal reached out to her about a teaching position at Sarasota Military Academy



PHOTO BY ISABELLA KULAWIK

(SMA). Over her six-year tenure at SMA, Patella taught AP and IB Psychology, Anatomy & Physiology Honors, and Biology Honors, and created both a nutrition class and a Careers in Medicine program, which evolved into an oncology internship.

As the number of dual enrollment students increased at SMA, fewer students pursued Patella's unique courses, which led Patella to look online and come across a job opening at Pine View.

"The timing was not mine at all... I felt really connected with the teachers here. I'm really excited to have some students who are excited to learn. That's what I loved when I came to Pine View; it's this safe space to truly be excited about learning," she said.

Both El Shahawy and tenth-grader Aravind Rajeev described Patella as being "very motivated." Rajeev is a student in one of the three Anatomy & Physiology

classes Patella is teaching this year. Patella's first day, Nov. 4, as the official teacher for the course shocked him.

"Our first assignment with her was to write a few paragraphs about our personal growth. I just expected a grade, but she provided us all with feedback. It was really thoughtful and responsive. I appreciate that her willingness to learn about her students is like our willingness to learn about anatomy," Rajeev said.

As the year progresses, further teaching - and pig dissections - are on the horizon for Patella. Having known Patella for over two decades, El Shahawy knows good things are in store.

"She is very sincere. I love her family, love her parents, love her kids, love her husband... The students should be very pleased they have someone of that caliber and concern and expertise," El Shahawy said.



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Internal Monologues

by Madi Holmes

Copy Editor

Whether rehearsing a looming stressful conversation or silently singing along to a cheesy radio jingle — your inner voice is making this possible, and you are probably taking it for granted. If you are perplexed by the concept of an inner voice, you may not even have one.

Although uncommon, studies show some humans lack an internal monologue, or the ability to talk to themselves without audibly verbalizing. This may seem unimaginable to those who often narrate daily activities and thoughts and rely heavily upon a constant internal companion. Imagining a world of internal narration is similarly daunting for those unable to express conversation cognitively. This has led to the topic being highly contested and researched throughout scientific and social communities.

The phenomenon of inner speech is most accurately depicted as a spectrum, with the fewest amount of people having it 100% or 0% of the time. According to an article by My Modern Met, verbal and visual thinking are closely linked. A majority of the population has a combination of thinking conversationally and

abstractly, with a small population lacking the power to “talk to themselves.”

Classic questions that arise when people who experience internal conversation discover that some lack this ability include: “How is reading possible?” and “What do thoughts resemble without words?”

Many abstract thinkers will reply that reading is possible by mouthing words and visualizing sentences and that thoughts are more often seen rather than heard internally. This is most likely what people with internal monologues find so impossible and confusing.

An example of this difference in thinking manifests in a situation where a person with an internal monologue would note to their internal self, “I need milk” as a reminder while a person lacking inner speech pictures themselves at the store buying the milk. Some will visualize a 3D, colored apple when asked to, while others can only see a 2D grey sketch, proving another nuance among human thinking.

Next time you catch yourself narrating or pondering your day, take a moment to appreciate the inner voice or detailed visualizations guiding you; it is one more thing that makes you unique!

Are we addicted to Social Media?

by Eva-May Elmer

Match Layout Artist

Generation Z — the generation of social media. Kids are supposedly addicted to social media, resulting in constant assemblies and discussions about technology addiction. Nearly every problem is somehow a direct result of technology and how adolescents spend too much time on electronics. Say “I have a headache” or “I’m tired,” and you are bound to be met with, “It’s all that time you spend on your phone, that’s why.”

Addiction is a difficult thing to pinpoint, both for the person experiencing it and the people surrounding someone with it. It usually is followed by denial, aggression and many other negative effects. Addiction to electronics, however, is a term that many people reiterate without truly understanding it.

The world we know evolves on a daily basis; advancements in technology are being made and affecting the way we live. The majority of people own smart devices and that is likely the way it will continue until it is widespread. This is not necessarily a bad thing; just because cell phones and technological devices are

so commonly integrated into society, that does not mean everyone who uses them is addicted.

Teens and children of each generation have their own defining accessory: toys, television, and trading cards, for example. This generation grew up with online games, the internet, Netflix, and more. Maybe this generation’s children will have hoverboards and holograms.

Now more than ever, kids



and teens are on the internet to fill all the spare time they have, stuck in the house, and even talking to others virtually, trying to socialize the best they can.

With the accessibility of technology, many teens now have virtual friends as well as physical friends. The question

on many minds is: Will physical friends be fully replaced by virtual ones? Throughout 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic, lots of changes have had to be made regarding the way we socialize with one another.

Virtual friends don’t have the extra weight of meeting up in person to keep the friendship alive. A virtual friend can be texted, called, or video-chatted, and in a pandemic, eliminates the risk of spreading a (potentially) deadly disease.

Replacing physical friends with virtual friends would be a big change from normal life, but not from COVID-19 life. This replacement depends on the future of the way life is approached, and COVID-19 kick-started an inevitable change, though perhaps earlier than expected.

Maybe life will go back to how it was pre-pandemic after a vaccine is released. Maybe it will not and life will never be the same. Virtual meetings and virtual friends may become the new normal. For now, uncertainty is all we have. Only time will tell how technology will progress and affect our generation and the next.

GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

A Guide to Viruses

What is a Virus?

Viruses are tiny microorganisms made up of DNA or RNA. They require a host cell to live and inject genetic material to damage or change the cell. Viruses reproduce rapidly and overwhelm the immune system of a host organism.



How does it spread?

Transmission largely depends on the type of virus. For example, COVID-19 spreads through respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing. Other viruses may spread from skin-to-skin contact or through bodily fluids.



Evolution of a Virus

Mutations in genetic material can change traits and abilities of the virus. An example of a mutation is resistance to treatment; mutations such as this which protect the virus increase in frequency as a virus evolves.



Ways to Prevent Spread of a Virus

Protecting yourself and others from a virus is essential in controlling spread. It’s important to wash your hands often, wear a mask, get tested, and quarantine if you believe you have been in contact with the virus. Stay safe!



GRAPHIC BY COURTNEY NELSON

New AI and Machine Learning Club

by Felicity Chang

Multimedia Editor

With the rising developments in artificial intelligence and new technologies, eleventh-grader Sonica Prakash founded the AI and Machine Learning Club (AI Club) at the start of this academic year. It was a recent idea since she programmed before in computer science courses and wanted to explore a new area of study.

“I thought it would be cool to bring it to the high school level and increase interest and awareness in AI because I feel like, especially in the future, it’s already becoming such a big part of society,” Prakash said.

The AI Club meets virtually through Zoom from 2-3 p.m. every Wednesday and is sponsored by physics teacher Roger Siegel. It’s available to all high school students, with no prerequisites. Currently, there are seven to eight members who actively attend the meetings and the club is “always looking for more,” according to Prakash.

With an end goal of building machine learning projects, the club is in the process of teaching all members basic data

science and AI skills through Python, a programming language. Utilizing Jupyter Notebook, an Integrated Development Environment (IDE), Prakash shows sections of code to the rest of the members, who are able to follow along with easy access to the documents. The lessons are interactive; each member has the opportunity to pitch in and provide their own perspective.

Each meeting focuses on a different component of machine learning; a few examples are data visualization, image recognition, and language processing. According to twelfth-grader Grace Jiang, the vice president of the club, the topics they discuss can be humorous. At one meeting, they brainstormed a fictional character named Bob and his scores in each of his classes: Arabic, Physics, Ice Cream, P.E., and Cup Stacking.

According to Prakash, one of the main incentives for members to partake in club activities is the possibility of implementing artificial intelligence and machine learning in real life.

“One of the reasons why I started the club was because it was present, you know like,



Sonica Prakash, Grade 11 PHOTO COURTESY OF SONICA PRAKASH

all around us,” she said. “Even something as simple as Siri in your phone is artificial intelligence...one aspect of machine learning that most people don’t first think of is the ability to look at an image and have the computer diagnose a patient without physical testing.”

Although the artificial intelligence of today may not be the sentient androids of science fiction, the application of such technologies has become increasingly more relevant.

“We talk about how robots are going to replace us, but the people developing robots and AI can’t be replaced,” Jiang said.



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The Show Must Go On: Pandemic Performances

In this turbulent time, everyone has been affected by COVID-19 in some way. For artists and performers, however, the pandemic and its barriers have presented new spaces for problemsolving and performance that put safety first.

[Sailor Circus during Quarantine]

Sarah Catalano
Features Editor

The Sailor Circus arena has typically welcomed crowds in with a bright “CIRCUS” sign flashing cheerfully over an outdoor concession stand. For now, however, they’ve traded hot pretzels for hand sanitizer and cotton candy for temperature checks. The concession stand, boarded up for the practice season, now serves as an outdoor hand-washing station for students, just outside the entrance.

When the pandemic first hit Florida in spring of 2020, shows were cancelled and practices were postponed. The circus quickly developed a plan for a downsized version of their yearly summer camp, with a smaller staff, fewer campers and new safety protocols. This past September, students returned to the arena to practice for the winter season with updated guidelines and a streamlined practice space.

Rikki Hettig-Rolfe Meaux, Education Associate and Coach, said that students had adapted well to new procedures. This season, Hettig-Rolfe Meaux coaches several acts, and has stepped into a new role as acting manager — coordinating practice times, communicating with students and families and making sure the circus runs smoothly.

“Some of it has been a learning curve where I didn’t have a teacher, so it was a little bit stressful, but nice in that I get to know the students all even more and what’s going on with everybody,” she said. “[It’s]

kind of a role I feel like I was already partially in, but now it’s actually mine to do — so, different, good, stressful.”

After washing their hands for the CDC-recommended 20 seconds, students enter the arena, where they present their wrist or forehead for a temperature check. Masks are required at all times, with exception to some aerial acts in which students are more than six feet apart (for these acts, masks may only be removed while on equipment). Additionally, hand-sanitizing stations have been installed throughout the arena and equipment is wiped down or sanitized between uses.

In 2018, years of fund-

“I would say that [the show] will still be magical, but at the same time it is affected from a performer’s perspective”

Rikki Hettig-Rolfe Meaux

raising and a generous community enabled the Circus Arts Conservatory (CAC) to break ground on long-awaited arena renovations. After a year of practice and performance in its temporary home at the Big Top tent at Nathan Benderson, the circus put on its 70th anniversary spring shows in a nearly unrecognizable arena.



Tenth-grader Iris Dahlborg practices aerial hammock while wearing her mask. With three years of circus experience, Dahlborg will also be performing as a clown, skater, Spanish web aerialist, and as an understudy for ringmasters. PHOTO BY SARAH CATALANO

Now equipped with air-conditioning for the first time ever, shiny new seating replaced the creaky wooden stands and rusty chairs, easy-to-clean flooring replaced the performance floor’s worn carpet, and every corner proudly boasts the CAC’s classic red and yellow.

The renovation, it turned out, came just in time.

“I think they would have not been able to see this place as clean in the manner that people can see it now, because it looks so much cleaner, and it is so much cleaner.... It might have been shut down, not being able to return to practice in the old arena,” Hettig-Rolfe Meaux said.

This December, the Sailor Circus academy will open its doors to the public. The 72nd annual winter shows will occur from Dec. 26-30 with limited seats to allow for social distancing, and a pre-recorded video of the show broadcast online. Audience members will follow all the same procedures as students — hand-washing, temp checks, social distancing — however, the hand-washing stations will be split into pods to allow use of

the concession stand.

Despite this year’s restrictions, the cast and crew are optimistic.

“I would say that it will still be magical, but at the same time it is affected from the performers’ perspective... I’ve done a few virtual shows over the summer and a few shows with just very minimal audience, and even though I’m a professional, I find it really hard to connect with my virtual audience as well, or even kind of just give that same energy because you don’t feel the energy of the crowd if the crowd isn’t there,” Hettig-Rolfe Meaux said.

She continued, “One positive way it could be affected is that when we’re videoing the show we can get different angles that one audience member might not see, we can see a person’s face a little better, we can rewind and go forward, we can use ‘movie magic’ a bit, we can slo-mo... that’s a lot of exciting stuff that affects the performance in a positive way.”

With the introduction of virtual tickets, students can reach audiences who otherwise would not have had the opportunity.

“[Virtual tickets are] definitely another source of income,” twelfth-grader Tommy

Johnson said, “and it would be a great investment for them to get a filming crew and make a DVD like Cirque de Soleil does.”

Johnson practices skating, aerial silks, swinging cradle, and acrobatics this season. He expressed hopes that this year will demonstrate the circus’s ability to adapt to change, and that “people really underestimate it, it’s a lot harder than people think it is, and I really enjoy it and I’m passionate about it.”

Outside of student performances, the circus continues to respond to community needs in new ways. The Education and Outreach Programs have utilized zoom calls and a video program titled CAC Connects to bring circus joy to schools and nursing homes; the “Marvelous Miraculous Circus Machine,” a cause-and-effect contraption (similar to a Rube-Goldberg machine) that takes up a large portion of the 28000 square foot arena, will be published online for classroom use.

“I’m excited to be back now... we’re like family,” tenth-grader Iris Dahlborg said. “We are doing our very best to keep [the audience] and the performers safe, and still uphold the circus experience. Come see the show because it’s going to be amazing.”

[FST during Quarantine]

Lily Quartermaine

Asst. Spark Editor-in-Chief

Florida Studio Theatre (FST), since its establishment in 1973 by Joe Spelman, has become one of the most beloved and prominent cultivators of Sarasota’s rich artistic culture. However, as COVID-19 cases began to surge in early 2020, theaters globally found themselves struggling with how to handle the virus. With FST being such an important part of Sarasota, and theater relying on in-person interactions and intimacy, the company’s decision in early 2020 to halt all performances was devastating for the staff and audiences alike.

The theater is now taking special precautions to ensure the safety of its staff and students. Social distancing is kept in mind, as well as proper sanitization and face coverings. Most of the classes FST offers for teens and adults have been either adapted to Zoom or are socially distanced. However, all public performances have been cancelled since March.

The idea of not being able to perform with one another takes a huge toll on those working at FST, but the safety of their audiences and staff is a number one priority.

“Our whole work is centered around performing and having a live audience, but at the time, we listened to experts that told us, for the safety of our staff and patrons, we needed to not gather. We care so much about our audience, and you really can’t do live theatre with-



Caroline Kaiser, FST’s Director of Children’s Theatre, hosts Zoom Into Playwriting, a live, virtual experience streamed directly into students’ classrooms, keeping this program and similar opportunities open for students. PHOTO BY SARAH HALEY

out them. Without the audience, we are just playing pretend in a dark room. So for us we knew we had to cancel shows to keep people safe,” Caroline Kaiser, Director of Children’s Theatre, said in an interview over e-mail.

Without the connection between a performer and an audience, audiences lose one of the main appeals of theater — vulnerability.

“What I miss most is getting to talk to the audience before and after the show. Theater for me is all about connection and community. Sometimes that can be difficult to experience on a virtual platform. Oh, and I miss the laughter. Nothing is better than hearing 200 people laugh together. There have been studies done that when people are seeing live theater

together, their heartbeats sync up and beat as one.” Kaiser reflected.

Kaiser manages and oversees the theater’s “Write A Play” program, which highlights young playwrights and offers them the opportunity to have their original plays performed by the theater. Fortunately, this program can be adapted for Zoom. The “Write A Play” program is now able to reach students over video-calling, which Kaiser considers a positive impact.

Kaiser has also worked on developing the Playmakers tour to be suitable for Zoom. The tour occurs three times a day for elementary students in which the group produces an improvised and interactive “TV Show” where they perform plays written by children. The young audience then works with Teaching Artists

and actors to share their ideas, where their suggestions are used to improvise and write a play.

Despite COVID-19 being an extremely complicated and disheartening struggle, FST manages to stay incredibly resilient. During this tumultuous quarantine, they have been putting their free time to good use.

“One thing that FST has really focused on is new play development. So, working with playwrights that we know or know of to develop new plans that eventually will be produced with the intent of being performed.” FST’s Public Relations Associate Lydia Baxter said.

“We haven’t just been sitting around. The company really has focused on how we can use this time so that we can hit the ground running when we get started again,” she said.

The staff has been working incredibly hard and keeping an open and positive mindset on where the future of FST will take them. Innovative, unusual and creative ideas are blooming every day behind the socially distanced doors of FST, and the staff is growing more and more eager to share them with audiences every day.

When asked about the return of the theater, Kaiser put it simply and with endearing sentiment: “When we do go back to in-person performances, and I do believe that time is coming, I think we will all smile a little wider, and be even more grateful than before to get to make art.”

MASCULINITY, QUEERNESS, & THE FUTURE OF POP

Dorian Electra

GRAPHICS BY ZOE MERRITT

Brianna Nelson
Spark Editor-in-Chief

Emerging from a cacophony of whip cracks and ultra-synthetic beats, Dorian Electra, donning their perfect pencil mustache, represents a new face in pop music in both sound and identity, creating a unique experience for listeners.

On first encounter, Electra's music can be confusing, electrifying and intriguing in the same breath. Their music is loud, thematic and unapologetic in its excess.

A genderfluid hyperpop artist, Electra has made a name for themselves by working with some of the biggest names in their flank of the industry (including Charli XCX and 100 gecs) and releasing 2 projects thus far: concept album "Flamboyant" and incel character study "My Agenda." Their work, now at the forefront of the hyperpop scene, represents unabashed flamboyancy with their bombastic productions that frame their legitimate social critiques.

Electra's identity, first and foremost, informs the listener of the work they do. From song to song and project to project, Electra's music morphs from character to character on both their albums thus far, shaping their voice into a selection of archetypes that discuss gender, sexuality and internet culture all with a dash of satire and trollish-ness.

On "Flamboyant", their full album,

the pieces of their identity and politics fuse into an exhilarating ride which shifts from discussions of toxic masculinity, machismo and capitalism to a full declaration of pride in identity by its second half.

On "Career Boy" and "Man to Man," Electra recontextualizes masculine expectations and struggles in a glossy pop exterior. The Career Boy is addicted to his work, enjoying the pain of pushing himself to the limits and performing the expectation that men are meant to be breadwinners. The boxers of "Man to Man" represent the literal battle it is for men to lay bare their emotions in a culture where vulnerability is looked down upon.

"Man to Man" literally represents a double entendre in its meaning as both a fight and a genuine heartfelt conversation. In this first half of the album, Electra plays a dramatized character who fulfills roles set upon them which prioritize power and self-flagellation over the genuine best interests of the characters Electra portrays and the harmful impacts of machismo and masculine expectations.

There is a noticeable shift in the album around "Musical Genius" and "Flamboyant," where the characters Electra plays become less of caricatures and more about unabashed queerness and reclamation of flamboyance. As an LGBTQ+ artist, Electra is unafraid to take a look at external views of their community in pieces like "Live By the

Sword," which places an expectation on queer people to suffer for their identity as well as intracommunity and internal conversations about acceptance within one's self on pieces like "Adam and Steve." Excluding the Deluxe pieces, the album ends on "fReAkY 4 Life," a proclamation of acceptance by Electra, which extends that same offer of pride to the listener.

Electra's identity and experience position them so uniquely to cover these topics and fluidly move between characters and themes. Their music feels empowering, validating and provides a sense of community for queer folks. In a March 24 conversation posted on YouTube with Anthony Fantano, creator of "The Needle Drop" and music critic, Electra speaks directly to feedback they received and interpretations of their music, where these interpretations of trans and non-binary people in places of power and succeeding in their workplace provides inspiration to them when they feel out of place. The genre has found itself a home for these discussions of queer experience, gender and its expression.

With their recently completed sophomore project in

"My Agenda," Electra continues their discussions of toxic masculinity, incel archetypes and the comedic interpretation of the LGBTQ+ "agenda." Switching between a seething, incel edge-lord to an interpretation of themselves as a 'scary' LGBTQ+ activist, asking if the listener has read their blog and seen their army marching down to city hall. It is a satirical project, but one that continues with Electra's MO of real, relevant social critique.

What's next for Electra? Other than a steady stream of music videos for their most recent album, not much else has been said. Either way, the queer representation and biting music of Dorian Electra continues to represent the face of a new wave of pop artists who are unafraid, exuberant and not afraid to be a bit trollish.



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TOP SECRET



THIS END UP

For millions of years, the bones of ancient creatures have lain preserved within the earth. Trilobites, leviathan mammoths, even large mosquitos have fallen out of time, only to be discovered years later. Deep underground, where crystals creep slowly up walls and stalactites drip and echo, the greatest secrets are found. This cycle, the Torch will be unearthing the rich treasures of Pine View. What lies buried beneath the surface?

I keep telling my friend about the boy I like, but my friend is that boy.

I would tell him, but



he likes someone else.



I commit extensive tax fraud



I have a crush

on someone

I can't date

because

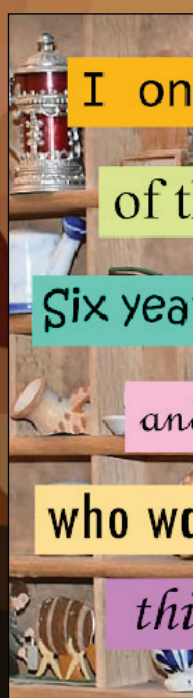
we work together

I always buy two chocolate milks:

one for later



and one for the road.



I TAKE A NAP EVERY DAY IN HISTORY.



I HATE THE NOVEL FRANKENSTEIN WITH A BURNING PASSION.

LIKE, WE GET IT VICTOR, YOUR LIFE SUCKS. NO NEED TO DESCRIBE IT A MILLION TIMES.

I literally cannot stop listening to anime music for shows I don't even watch. It's a problem. I don't know what a jojo is but i'll belt

BLOODY STREAM

at the top of my lungs and summon a demon while i do it because the song is in japanese.

please send help.

one time i walked out of a store with a shirt i forgot to pay for and didn't go back because **TOO EMBARRASSED.**

I THINK I SMELL REALLY BAD and no one tells me. I am a clean person, I just still have that (HOPEFULLY) IRRATIONAL FEAR...

my life is defined from one iced coffee to the next.

ice broke a shelf in a part of the house rarely visited. years later, my mom discovered it and blamed it on my sister, who is too young at the time to remember things and couldn't disprove it.

deep down i want to quit school and become a minecraft youtuber

I had a falling out with my best friend earlier this fall.
Why do I feel relieved?

Sometimes I ask the teacher if I can "go to the bathroom" just so I can turn off my zoom camera

Delivered

Disclaimer: All confessions are anonymous and presumed to be works of fiction.

TIPS TO IMPROVE EYE STRAIN

Take a 20-second break from screen time every 20 minutes



Keep your room softly, but not dimly, lit

Consider protective eyewear like blue light glasses

Adjust computer brightness to a comfortable level

Switch computer to "night mode" (yellow light, not blue)

EYE EXERCISES

Eye rolls: look to your right and roll your eyes up towards the sky. Next, roll your eyes down to the left and then to the ground. Repeat ten times.

The Eye Press: Close your eyes and inhale deeply. Put all your (sanitized) fingers on your eyelids and press lightly, hold them for about ten seconds. Slowly let go of your eyes. Repeat ten times.

Palm Eye Exercise: Cup your (washed) hands over the sockets of your closed eyes. Stare into the far back of the dark space. Watch as residual hues of your vision slowly turn to black. Hold for 30 seconds.

Write on the Wall: Stand facing a blank wall at least eight feet away, and imagine your eyes are lasers, writing a message on the wall. Write for about 20 seconds, repeat for a total of 2 minutes.

GRAPHIC BY ISABELLA GASKILL

Virtual learning brings questions to student health

by Ben Gordon
Web Editor-in-Chief

Every morning, virtual Pine View students start their day with the same mundane pattern: wake up ten minutes before school starts, quickly get ready, and get comfy- you'll be sitting in the same seat for up to six hours.

According to NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, over half of students in the United States were enrolled in virtual learning programs. At Pine View, the numbers vary based on grade level. But one thing is certain: a significant portion of our peers are forced to choose between back-to-back hours of minimal social interaction or potentially exposing themselves to a dangerous virus.

While many questions are posed about the safety of virtual learning, concern arises because of the lack of social interaction between friends and classmates during school hours and the resulting decline in happiness. This dilemma did not start with the COVID-19 pandemic, though; homeschooled students have long grappled with less opportunities to engage in constructive and engaging conversations with their peers.

Combined with grappling with the loss of a family member, or even financial stability as a result of the pandemic, "Stu-

dents are experiencing more depression, suicidal ideation, and anxiety than any generation before them," according to the American Psychological Association.

Diminished social interaction can lead to diminished mental health, but part of this problem can be ameliorated through technology like social media.

Virtual learning's effects on physical health, though, are less adaptable. With



GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

students spending up to six hours staring at a computer screen with short five-minute breaks in between, students may experience dry, tired eyes.

According to the Ophthalmology Times, headaches, tired eyes, and dryness occur because people "do not blink as often while using computers and other digital devices, leaving eyes dry and irritated."

Doctors recommend, if possible, that students take a 20-second break from looking at any screen every 20 minutes. If that's not enough, try ad-

justing the brightness on your screen, avoid using your device in a dark room, and put down your device an hour before bedtime.

As virtual learners sit in their desk chairs, attempting to stay awake, the lack of physical activity — even from walking between classes on campus — may take a toll on their physical health. For some students, school is the only place where they can meet their physical activity needs.

According to Andrew Rundle, head of an obesity research project within the Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health, the weight students gain as they stay home is unlikely to be lost when they return to school. This isn't an easy problem to solve. There are few ways to encourage or enforce physical activity when students aren't on campus, which is an unfortunate reality.

As we face an uncertain 2021, we don't know what schooling will look like in the near future. For now, the choice students and families have to make — between potentially risking their and their family's health or experiencing a less-than-optimal school year — should be enough to stress over. If you're learning on campus, follow COVID-19 safety guidelines, and if you're learning virtually, do your best to keep your mental and physical health as healthy as you can manage.

Tenth-grader shines — and flies — with cheer

by Felicity Chang
Web Multimedia Editor

It was game day. Chairs lined one section of the field. Spectators filled the metal bleachers. A white banner adorned with an illustration of two rams butting heads hung above the crowd. On the left side of the stadium stood the varsity cheerleaders of Riverview High School, and on the right was the junior varsity cheer team; amidst it all, tenth-grader Juna Hatta-Langedyk braced for the unexpected. Their coach was nowhere to be seen. They had no mat for their tumbling passes. A teammate was missing.

"It's very important to be part of a team when you're cheering. If somebody doesn't come to a game, or if somebody isn't here to stunt or something, the whole thing gets messed up. We all have to work together to make everything work," Hatta-Langedyk said. "I got thrown into the stunt that does the time-out cheers, so I had to be the base for that. My stunt group got the other girl, but at the end of the day, we won [the football game], and everything actually turned out fine."

It was the beginning of her ninth-grade year when Hatta-Langedyk joined the Riverview junior varsity cheer team. She had five years of experience in gymnastics, which aided her in tumbling and her time as a flyer — the cheerleader being lifted and thrown during stunts.

"When I quit gymnastics and started doing cheer, I wasn't practicing so much all the time," she said. "I had to learn how to work out on my own, which was kind of hard, and with school cheer, you can't win or lose. I feel like I'm cheering for my coach, and I should be cheering for the crowd ... We cheer, I try to do my best, but you can't really win."

According to Hatta-Langedyk, school cheer is not as physically demanding as competitive cheerleading. However, athleticism is still involved.

"You get pretty tired on gamedays," she said. "We cheer and stunt the whole time. We have stunts for halftime and

time-outs — we also stunt at kick-off. When there's a touchdown, we do push-ups with the number of points they have."

At the end of summer this year, Hatta-Langedyk's cheer team went to the National Cheerleaders Association (NCA) camp to learn chants, dances, and new stunts. One of her teammates, tenth-grader Nova Pollard, was new to cheering with the team.

"At the end of camp, we did our band chant in front of the NCA coaches and other girls at the camp. We were all super nervous, but we did great and got a really good score. I think this really brought us all closer," Pollard said.

Though she is a Pine View student, Hatta-Langedyk said she feels like she has more spirit for Riverview than Pine View. During Riverview's homecoming last year, the junior varsity cheer team made their own float — decorated with a large American flag — that they cheered on top of. They had two weekends to prepare for the event, and the theme was "Hometown Heroes." According to Hatta-Langedyk, she was asked to homecoming by one of her teammates, who made a poster and surprised her at the end of cheer practice.

This past summer, Hatta-Langedyk's best friend accompanied her to Glebe Park — a neighborhood park in Siesta Key — to record videos for virtual try-outs, as the team had to adjust their plans due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I was trying to get it perfect, so I didn't submit any of the videos I recorded. You can't save it, so you either submit or you don't, so I kept re-recording. It was very last minute," she said. "Then it started pouring, ten minutes before it was due, so I went outside of my house, on the concrete, while it was still raining. I submitted it two minutes past the time and said to my friend, 'Lilly Mae, I'm quitting cheer.' I still didn't get the video the way I wanted it, but they still let me cheer."

Making it on the team again, according to Hatta-Langedyk, was her greatest accomplishment as an athlete.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JUNA HATTA-LANGEDYK

Twelfth-grader finds his footing on the lacrosse field

by Tiffany Yu
Asst. Match Editor-in-Chief

When it comes to lacrosse, twelfth-grader Weston Trandem runs the field. Trandem began playing lacrosse the summer of his fifth grade year, which was when he first discovered his fervor for the game. Not immediately gaining traction, through hard work and dedication Trandem has managed to find his footing— both literally and metaphorically— in lacrosse.

"Weston was the kid whose grandmother agreed to pay him fifty cents every time he didn't fall down during a play. This was soccer. It continued in lacrosse. He seemed to not be able to keep his balance. Athletics was not his strong point. But the day he turned 14, he became a beast and found his solid ground. He started varsity lacrosse his freshman year and is now going on to be a captain of the Venice High lacrosse team," Allison Trandem, Trandem's mother, said.

Lacrosse is a competitive team-based sport focused on speed, skill, and overall fitness, all of which Trandem has mastered over the span of his high school career. He was first inspired to begin playing lacrosse by his friends, who were playing the sport at the time.

"It was interesting and different from anything I had ever played before," Trandem said.

Now, the captain of his varsity lacrosse team at Venice High, Trandem plays every day of the week at afternoon practices, which are typically two hours long. He thoroughly enjoys lacrosse and attests his commitment

to the sport to his love for the game. Trandem plays defense and long stick midfield, two of the more demanding positions in the sport, both mentally and physically; however, Trandem always tries to find ways to stay positive in order to keep both his team and himself performing their best and pushing themselves to the limit.

"The hardest part is to always stay positive during the games. When you're down multiple goals, it's hard to keep the team spirits high. You can always come back," Trandem said.

Through the hardships that inevitably come with the difficult job of leading a team, Trandem's mother proves to be one of his biggest supporters.

"One of my favorite things is the pride he takes in himself. He comes home and tells me about all the great checks he made. He is often put on the top scorer to shut them down. The skills improve with every game and I love watching that happen," she said.

Trandem brings both heart and skill onto the field during the season, but exhibits this as well as he continues training during the off season. Trandem loves the fast paced nature of the game, how it's not boring to play or watch, and most importantly the sport itself.

"He has become quite a leader and an athlete," Allison Trandem said.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ALLISON TRANDEM



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Eleventh-grader earns spot at Olympic trials

by Mahitha Ramachandran
Sci-Tech Editor

Jumping into a freezing cold pool early in the morning is nothing new for eleventh-grader Liam Custer. He trains more than twenty hours every week with the Sarasota Sharks swim team, and it has paid off; Custer recently had some major swimming success.

At the age of seven, Custer began his swimming career on the Lakewood Ranch Lightning, a small local team.

"We had a pool in our old house's backyard, and I would swim and get super competitive, so my mom told me I should join the swim team," Custer said. "I remember trying out and I could barely swim, so that's where it all started."

Nine years later, swimming has become an integral part of his life. He now swims year-round with the Sarasota Sharks as well as for Riverview High School during the high school season, which ended at the beginning of November.

The end of this year's unique high school swim season was marked by the Florida High School Athletic Association Swimming Championship Nov. 7 at the Sailfish Splash Waterpark and Aquatics Center. Custer swam in this meet after competing his way through districts and regionals, then qualifying for state. In the state championship, he swam the 500 free and the 200 individual medley (IM), which are shorter races than the ones he would normally swim outside of high school meets.

"I swim longer events with the Sharks that high school season doesn't offer, so I swim different events in high school season than the ones I would

normally be better at," he said. "I would say my best events are the mile, the 1000 and the 400 IM, which is 100 of each stroke."

Despite this, Custer took first place in the 500 free and the 200 IM at the state championship, also setting new personal records for both races. These gold medals strengthened his rank as one of the top recruits in the nation for his graduating class.

Though the high school season is over, Custer's dedication to swimming is year-round.

In fact, leaving little time to recover from the high school state meet, Custer swam in the U.S. Open just a week after. This national event is typically held annually in one location, and swimmers from across the country travel to that location to participate.

Like many other events, though, the COVID-19 pandemic forced some changes to that traditional arrangement. Thus, the 2020 U.S. Open had nine different locations across the nation, one of which was Selby Aquatic Center, where the Sarasota Sharks practice. Custer joined his Shark teammates in hosting this event as well as participating in it. Swimming the 200 free, 400 free, 800 free, 1500 free, 400 IM, and 200 back, Custer faced a full week-end competing against some of the best swimmers in the country.

Custer's rankings make it clear that he is an accomplished swimmer, but that does not mean he is immune to nerves before a big meet.

"I definitely get pretty nervous, but in a good way. As I am getting ready to go, I channel my nervous energy into positive. You have to hone in on what you're doing and focus on the effort and energy that you are going to put into it," he said.

Using this strategy of transforming his nerves to energy for the race, Custer faced

competitive, as Custer swam in heats with college-level and even Olympic-level athletes throughout the meet.

In the 200 backstroke, he swam in the lane next to 12-time Olympic medalist Ryan Lochte: "I could see him pushing off the wall, and after the race it was really cool to just be able to say 'Good job, dude,'" Custer said.

After competing in two large meets and coming out of them with two gold medals and two Olympic trial qualifying times, Custer was pleased with how he did in his races.

"Both of those meets were super good benchmarks. It's still early in the season and there's lots more to look forward to," he said.

Being able to swim in these highly competitive events comes with extensive practice, something which Custer knows well. Although COVID-19 has sometimes altered his schedule and the specific times that his team trains, Custer's week is nevertheless filled with swim practice.

With so much hard work and so many hours dedicated to swim, it would be easy for Custer to skip practices or quit swimming, especially coupled with the workload of a Pine View student. Instead, he finds the motivation to constantly push himself.

"Even though it's so hard,

you can feel yourself getting faster," Custer said. "When you are super sore, you know that it's going to pay off in the end and you are going to perform better, which is ultimately the end goal. Just knowing that you will get better by putting in that effort is worth it."

This drive that Custer puts into swimming does not go unnoticed by his coaches. CEO and Head Coach of the Sarasota Sharks, Brent Arckey, said that he began to recognize Custer's potential when he was around twelve or thirteen.

"He's just a really good racer. He's always been super competitive and really has a desire to get better," Arckey said.

Looking to the future, Custer wants to continue training and swimming and hopes to eventually compete at the Division I level in college. In the nearer future, he is looking forward to swimming in the Olympic trials in June of 2021. For now, he wants to focus on succeeding in swimming as well as academics, and values putting in the effort.

"Just as in the pool I would give 100 percent of my effort into training and competitions, I like to give 100 percent of effort into everything that I do," he said.

From trying out for the local kids' team to competing alongside Olympic gold-medalists, Custer's swimming career has been a notable journey, and possibly one that has many more stories and successes to come.

"He's a smart kid, he's hardworking, and he's going to be good at whatever he puts his mind to," Arckey said. "I think he is capable of maybe even more than he realizes he's capable of."



Eleventh-grader Liam Custer swims in the U.S. Open Nov. 13. Custer had Olympic trial qualifying times in two events and will compete in the 2021 Olympic trials in June. PHOTO PROVIDED BY LIAM CUSTER

his six events at the U.S. Open.

"The first race was the 800, and I ended up dropping like 15 seconds and getting an Olympic trial time, so I was super happy about that," Custer said. "It was a goal of mine, so knowing while you are racing that you are going fast and then touching the wall and seeing the scoreboard is really cool."

Custer went on to get another Olympic trial qualifying time in the 1500 free, which he swam on the last day of the meet. All his races were highly

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My Boyfriend: The Face of Feminism

by Brianna Nelson
Spark Editor-in-Chief

Susan B. Anthony, Alice Roe and now my boyfriend. He is taking his place among the greats of feminism — ever since he stuck a Planned Parenthood sticker to the back of his laptop, women's rights activists have been emboldened by the presence of such a powerful leader.

Within moments of his sticker application, seismic shifts for women shook the American political and social establishments.

Instantly, the wage gap closed, sexual harassment ceased to exist and reproductive rights were secured nationwide. All it took was one sticker, and decades of mistreatment and abuse simply ceased to exist.

When asked about his plan for the future of the movement as the face of feminism, my boyfriend responded, "More women."

Though unclear, these words moved a nation. Galvanized, organizers around the country became more empowered than ever after devastating blows on the Supreme Court and in Congress.

In fact, many feminists now feel more secure in the future of this movement with men at the face of it.

Sure, activists have been working on protecting rights of those most vulnerable for

decades, but a man who just learned what an IUD is presents a more serious face to the general public.

"I'm tired of the tactics feminists have been using thus far. Protests? What is that even for?" my boyfriend asked.

Still he has stated he is always learning. Today, after attending a seminar, he asked for an explainer on why catcalling was harmful before interjecting that "If I were a woman, I think it would be a compliment."

Criticisms have been lobbied from certain wings of the movement. As someone who only interacts with two women — his mom and his girlfriend — questions have been asked about his qualifications to fully and comprehensively encompass the movement.

In response, my boyfriend, wordlessly, flashes his "I Stand with Planned Parenthood" sticker.

Already, my boyfriend has been offered positions as the CEO of Planned Parenthood, CEO of NARAL, and Dean of Barnard College.

He will be carefully considering his options over the next few weeks but is excited to bring the feminist movement up to speed in a man's world.

To emulate his success, simply purchase any commercially-available Planned Parenthood or RBG sticker.

IF YOU KNOW...

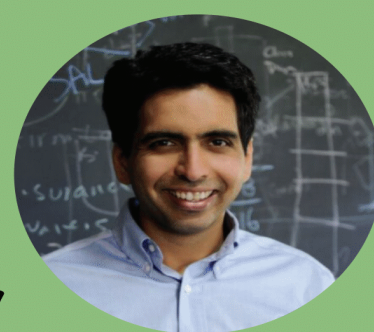


Jay Skipper

You are

2

Degrees of Separation away from:



Sal Khan



Blake Wiley

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Wayne Gretzky



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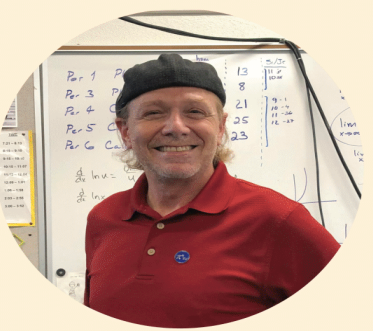
You are

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Ashton Kutcher



Roger Siegel

You are

3

Degrees of Separation away from:



Jane Fonda

GRAPHIC BY ANNA LABINER

212 Wall of Fame meets Love Island

by Leo Gordon
Editor-in-Chief

In a break from tradition, the Pine View Administration announced through e-mail their plan to convert the process of selecting 212 Wall of Fame honorees from the typical nomination process to an intense, weeks-long elimination game.

"We want to make our students work for this. If you want to be on the Wall of Fame, you better make sure that one extra degree is enough to power not one, but multiple trains," High School Assistant Principal Kate Marcotte said in the email sent to Pine View families.

According to the announcement, teacher-nominated students will be led first to the multi-purpose room, where they will be divided by grade level. Each group, the email explains, will begin with five students, who will be asked a series of questions in front of a camera. Questions will range from advanced calculus to detailed world history and beyond.

"The first student in

each grade level who is unable to complete the square will be eliminated on the spot, no exceptions, period," Marcotte said.

The remaining four students in each grade will then be subjected to a live-in challenge, wherein the nominees must live together — in a mobile learning cottage— for six weeks. During the live-in phase, contestants will participate in a variety of thrilling activities like calculus trivia nights, hours-long Socratic seminars, and timed APUSH note taking sessions.

The rest of the Pine View

student body, Marcotte explains, will receive daily updates through the morning announcements. As students form opinions on their nominated peers' performances in challenges, they will be given the right to vote "normal degree" students out of the mobile learning cottage. Votes will be processed through a newly developed Blackboard Learn voting program.

The majority of students, though confused by the abruptly changed policy, are looking forward to the new selection process.

"Yeah, honestly, we just got the idea from Love Island," Marcotte said.

"I've been waiting for this since second grade."

Ecstra Deghri, eleventh-grader

loveisland x
pv wall of fame



Remote learning eliminates patriotism



by Olivia Hansen
Copy Editor

I like to begin my day in a particular format. I wake up, get ready, have a bagel, go to school, say the pledge of allegiance, as anyone would.

However, my daily morning routine has shifted a bit. As a remote student, I no longer have the privilege of standing in unison with my peers to recite our pledge of allegiance as a patriotic community. Rather, I sit in my kitchen and enviously listen to my in-person classmates perform such an incredible speech together.

You may be thinking, Olivia, just get your own flag and recite the pledge of allegiance in your kitchen. However, as tempting as that may sound, it is simply not the same.

To truly experience the time-honored daily tradition, it's crucial that my devotion for the pledge is matched with those around me.

As a remote student, I have truly lost my sense of patriotism.

I have tried to compensate for the gut-wrenching

hole in my day that has been stripped from me. For instance, I spend one or two hours each night at sundown reciting the Declaration of Independence, along with other historical documents exemplifying our nation's brilliance.

I wouldn't consider this nationalistic, but rather, necessary and normal. I have also decorated my Honda Civic with American merchandise, again, completely normal behavior, and I have redesigned my wardrobe so it reflects our country's spirit and pride. This was quite simple to do since I knew some bitter individuals who had American merch that they didn't want anymore for some reason.

But regardless, as much as I miss the proud 15 seconds of vocalized adoration for my country, I really enjoy waking up at 7:15 a.m. rather than 6:00 a.m. But we will see.

Sometimes you have to prioritize your patriotism before your sleep schedule, so if I'm back in-person for the second semester, you will know why.

GRAPHIC BY SEBASTIAN GENELHU-BAZAN AND OLIVIA HANSEN

MEME OF THE MONTH

Though the phrase was first coined through a Twitter post on July 12th, 2020, the term "to wake up and choose violence" rose to popularity again through late-November and early-December through people on TikTok and Twitter using the phrase to react to comebacks.



"WOKE UP AND CHOSE VIOLENCE"



The meme first was used to describe pets and different animals, but as the year went on it was used to describe someone on social media being super hostile with little provocation, just being mean-spirited in general.



GRAPHIC BY SEBASTIAN GENELHU-BAZAN

[a column]

The Torch's Holiday Wish List: A Guide to Gift Giving

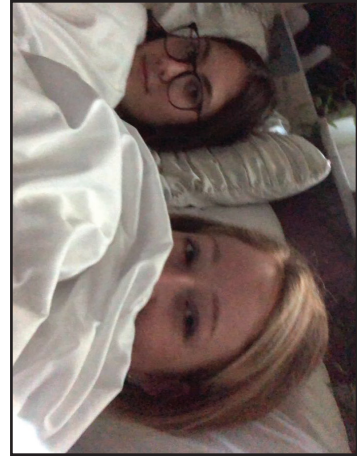
As a tradition, The Torch does Secret Snowflake, where everyone is randomly assigned an individual to gift a special item. Here are the favorite picks from our super-secret wishlist in case one of you happens to be our Secret Snowflake.

We're ditching the generic request for an iPhone 12 and adding some early 2000s spice into life. KIDZ BOP is a renowned music conglomeration that has been topping the charts for decades, until recently, as its fanbase has dwindled to a small group of die-hard fans. We believe the old-fashioned way is the only way to listen to our favorite "By Kids for Kids" mixtape. This holiday season, we hope to say goodbye to Spotify and hello to that 2005 CD player we always wanted.

Holiday Dollar Tree pencils. You know when you win a competition in class and your teacher

gives you a themed, unsharpened pencil and you get that rush of excitement and joy? Well, we crave this sensation 24/7. Plus, these funky pencils are a bargain if you are shopping at Five Below! This gift is ideal considering both quality and quantity, as one does not have to splurge to get an ample supply of these splendid office accessories. Show your holiday funk by flashing these bad boys in the classroom!

Capris. Capris, whether they be khaki (the best ones), denim, or another fun type of fabric, are a staple piece in any wardrobe. Are they pants? Are they shorts? The world will never know. We will keep them



Madi Holmes and Olivia Hansen
Copy Editors

guessing.

Water Pick. We have bad breath and frequently complain about the tedious act of brushing our teeth. Please get us a water pick! This nifty device is sure

We have bad breath and frequently complain about the tedious act of brushing our teeth.

to spice up our mundane morning routine. Our personal favorite is the Aquarius Water Flosser (Amazon only)

Even though the wet summer season

has passed, we Floridians expect rainy days year-round. As students of an outdoor school, we should constantly be prepared. Matching ponchos with our names on them will earn bonus points.

Goggles and swim gear. We take pride in our pool-day attire both inside and outside the water. Itching to ditch our boring, foggy Walmart goggles, the Speedo Vanquisher 2.0 Mirrored goggles in lime green is a game-changer. The electric color and impressive product design will not only get us numerous compliments but the most pristine underwater vision for our most intense games of Marco Polo.

The 2020 Bad Humor Planner Round-Up

by Kasumi Wade and Odelia Tiutyama
Managing Editor and News Editor

Every cycle, Torchies submit ideas to the best section in the paper: Humor. One problem though, only five people on this publication are actually funny. You should be thankful you never had to actually see these stories in print:

Cats versus dogs graphic
That's it. We are obsessed with the detail!

NRA sends new American flags to replace all the ones filled with bullet holes

Dark, Edgy, Angsty but I'm not sure how Mr. Lerner thought this would fly by administrative approval

I've never downloaded TikTok, so I could do a funny story on thinking I am superior for being different and never dancing to Savage or having done any challenges

I really see your superiority complex for jumping out. Sorry you're not cool #Savage

Someone gets arrested and a life sentence for reading the Herald Tribune without a subscription

Nobody cares about journalism. NEXT!

On New Year's everyone is waiting for 2020 to just be over already but instead of

it turning to January 1st at midnight it turns to December 32nd

Stuck in an infinite hellscape, very 2020!!

I trip all the time on campus. ALL THE TIME. So, a story where a kid trips over a root, breaks their arms and sues the school. The school makes everything on campus super flat, and gets rid of all the trees, sidewalks, stairs etc, so it's just grass and shell so no one can trip. And then, they rename the school "Shell View."

The minecraft influence, really appeals to our gamer audience!

"People who are going on the coolest summer trips!" But in reality it's just some kid named Dave that's like going to Legoland. Or just some really boring or weirdly eccentric places like a diary farm in the middle of nowhere.

No attacking our corporate sponsors, sorry :(

A piece on the water fountains **where somethings growing on it, and that fungus could try and take over the school. It could start eating students, so the article could become a warning for all students to stay away from these unknown organisms. To stay safe, students should walk under the covered walkways, considering that's**

the solution for almost everything at Pine View.

Obsessed with the detail, but um...what.

"Dr. Covert" is a comic book style villain using the "new building" and "construction" to build his new supervillain lair, where he plots taking over Sarasota.

Who says this isn't happening? Maybe you should have a chat with Dr. Covert

PV pride day flex zone

This is awesome. Concise, and to the point, intricately illustrating a brilliant potential article.

Y'know those pillows that have sequins where one side is a picture and the other side is a different picture? I'm thinking of a review of a pillow where one side was red, and then you push the sequins and it's Nicholas Cage's face.

Love this! However, I find it would be difficult to create a 500-600 word article about Nick Cage's transformation into a decorative sofa asset. However, I would personally love to acquire such an artifact, for educational purposes of course.

Students petition to change Pine View's mascot from the python to a rat in celebration of 50 years of rat infestations

Though niche, I feel as

if this portrays Pine View in a somewhat negative light. However, it is important to be honest with our readers.

Local man confused by lack of peaches in impeachment inquiry

I too was confused by the lack of peaches in Donald Trump's impeachment inquiry. Unclear why this was sent to Humor. Maybe meant for News?

High-school student arrested for using college-ruled paper

Mrs. Hollar would be proud. I respect this idea, but again, not so much a Humor article, closer to a News article.

In an effort to improve riding conditions for Sarasota's neglected bike riders, Sarasota announced a plan to add lanes for cyclists that they can use to lie motionless after getting hit by a car.

Definitely sensitive content.

Some senior gets their first rose after years of wanting one during the French Honor Society's Valentine's day event could be cute!

As a senior who has never received a rose from someone other than my mom, this hits too close to home. Did not laugh reading this. Very unfunny.

Summer expectations vs

reality could be cool?

Why the question mark? This is a very cool idea. However, the hesitancy in the tone of this planner makes me reluctant to grant you the privilege that is writing a humor story.

Student asks mom to bring note to school just so Ms. Reyka says his name over the intercom

I did this once, but people found out. I don't feel like being targeted today, so I will pass on this article idea.

We should do a humor story about how Pine View starts the class rank system and everyone goes crazy. People plot against each other, and try to sabotage each other, and the office is overwhelmed by the schedule changes of kids trying to get into AP classes. This would be soooooo funny I swear.

I wouldn't swear on this... **Pine View Pick Up Lines.**

Are you made of copper and tellurium? Because you're CuTe. I know hundreds of Pi digits, but what I really want to know is the 7 digits of your phone number.

So to cap off 2020, what if we took all the bad planners (I know I have more than terrible ones) and we made them into a story?

The Perpetuation of Fatphobia Through Diet Culture

by **Grace Johnson**
Match Editor-In Chief

A couple of weeks ago, a classmate asked me if I had lost weight. The question caught me off guard. I replied with a no, which felt awkward. The interaction stuck with me, and later that day, I went home and stepped on my mom's bathroom scale. My classmate's assessment had actually been right — I had lost ten pounds since the last time I weighed myself, three months ago. Surprised, I felt happy. But there are a lot of things wrong with that.

As a kid, when my mom wanted to go to the gym, she would sometimes ask, "Do you want a fit mommy or a fat mommy?" My siblings and I, wanting her to stay home and play with us, would tell her we wanted a fat mommy; then, we would laugh. Our response was a joke. This was wrong. But even beyond the morality of it, my mom's logic was scientifically flawed. Being fat is not the opposite of being fit.

Most bodies fall into one of three metabolic categories, called somatotypes: ectomorphs, endomorphs and mesomorphs. According to the University of Houston, ectomorphs easily lose weight but have a hard time gaining it, endomorphs easily gain weight but struggle to lose it, and mesomorphs can both gain and lose weight quite easily.

Often, endomorphs are considered overweight and unhealthy even when their activity level and nutrition is above average, while ectomorphs can be thin and considered conventionally attractive, all-the-while having a very unhealthy lifestyle.

Health is not determined by BMI or weight, instead determined by what a person puts into their body, as well

as one's level of exercise. While this is a scientific fact, the idea that "fatness" is unhealthy is still maintained in our society. Why? Because the standard of beauty is dictating how we view people. The equivocation of weight loss to better health is not coming from a caring civilization. Rather, it spurs from fatphobia.

According to the Seattle Times, fatphobia is a prejudice that emerges from a dislike of overweight people coinciding with the belief that they are lazy, glutinous and unhealthy. These stereotypes are maintained by societal conditioning that thinness is the epitome of beauty, which leads to discrimination against fat people in jobs, court, health care, adoption, and many more aspects of everyday life, affecting women disproportionately more than men.

Just like with other forms of discrimination, fatphobia can be covert. While overweight people are often openly discriminated against, the implicit bias of a comment or joke can be more common, and, unfortunately, even more damaging towards perpetuating false stereotypes associated with being overweight.

The idea that fat people are unfit is not only scientific

ally incorrect, but it leads to an unhealthy diet culture rooted in fat-shaming disguised as concern for one's health. Diets are often implemented for the purpose of losing weight; in this sense, dieting is different from eat-

often prescribe diets for the overweight that would be considered eating disorders for those of an average or a below-average weight. Even though this prescription is coming from a doctor, it normalizes "yo-yo weight loss" or "weight cycling," the unhealthy process of losing and gaining weight repeatedly.

The effect of fatphobia's embrace in medicine is not light, especially for women. Generally, it is women who are held to unrealistic physical standards by society, and, according to a study conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA), while women are receiving this physical criticism from the outside world, they also are receiving it from themselves. This is called the self-objectification theory, and it results in a vast array of detrimental effects beyond those of physical health.

A particular APA study found that when women were tested in a swimsuit, their math performances decreased and led to restrained eating. In a sweater, these same women performed better, and under the same experimental circumstances, men showed no such difference in either outfit. Our culture's obsession with

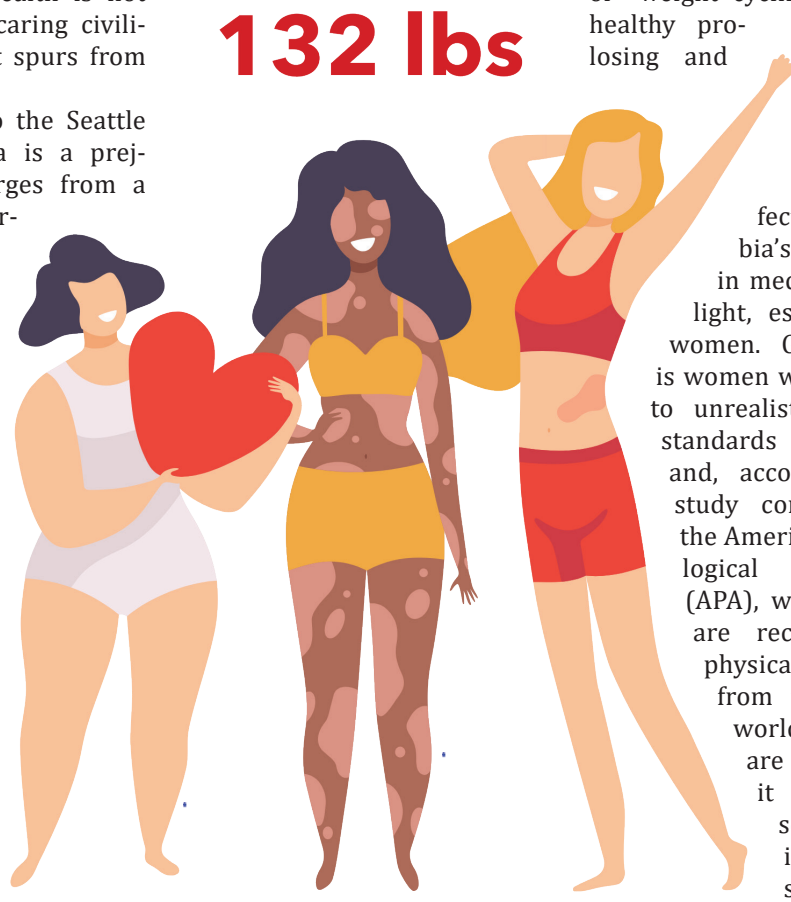
women's body types and the resulting fatphobia decreases self-esteem in a way that women begin to equate negative physical perceptions of themselves to intellectual ones.

Instead of unhealthy diets, people should embrace healthy lifestyles, and in this process, potentially lose weight. Health isn't dependent upon physical appearance, and diets shouldn't be either. As long as fatphobic stereotypes are perpetuated with no scientific basis, the adverse effects of diet culture will persist.

After growing up with a friend who died from anorexia, my mom never equated being skinny to being pretty outright. She's never body-shamed me or my siblings; it was the opposite, as my mom often showered my sisters and I with body-positive affirmations.

Still, even in elementary school, looking in my bathroom mirror and sucking my stomach in because, like a normal 8-year-old, my stomach wasn't flat. I thought that I could hide it — that I should hide it — because, like most Americans, I grew up with the misconception that being fat equated to being unworthy, ugly and unlovable.

When I stepped on that scale those few weeks ago, I didn't know exactly why I lost weight. Regardless, the happiness I felt was problematic. Being ten pounds lighter made me feel more valuable as a human being. My classmate, as well as a few others, said the same with their "compliments." It wasn't a success, though, it was an anomaly. The idea of getting on the scale and seeing those ten pounds reappear scares me. It shouldn't.



140 lbs

145 lbs

ing healthy and can be extremely damaging. Because eating healthy can become a financial burden, many opt for skipping meals to cut calories, begin taking appetite suppressant pills or go about other unhealthy methods of losing weight.

Even among medical professionals, fatphobia appears, resulting in serious consequences. According to the National Eating Disorders Association, doctors

Heterosexual in a Homosexual Family

by **Isabella Kuwalik**
Web Section Editor

According to the United States Census Bureau, there are 191,000 children living with same-sex parents as of 2019. This is an exponentially small number compared to children with heterosexual parents. This number was even smaller when my two moms decided to have a child in 2004. The two-year-long journey of having a child was difficult, worrying if their future child would be discriminated against for having two moms, finding the right donor, etc. Despite all this, I was born on June 20, 2006, in Syracuse, New York.

Today's world has brought a new era of acceptance for members of the LGBTQ+ community. While total equality is not yet a reality, conditions continue to improve all over the world. As the LGBTQ+ youth of today grow older they can create families, a privilege that many did not have until recently.

The process of choosing the right donor is a lengthy one. My parents decided to go to the Sperm Bank of California, a non-profit, which set the standards for other sperm banks

in the country. People find a donor by looking through applications of men between 20 and 39 years old. This is difficult for many reasons; you are essentially choosing someone you hope has good characteristics from a sheet of paper.

Being a biological daughter of a donor is as interesting as picking a donor. I have at least seven half-siblings, that I know of, around the country who I have

homophobic, but most people don't realize the question is either of these things. I have two parents — it just so happens I don't have a father — instead, I have twice the mom power in my life. Having gay parents has come with open lessons of sexuality, gender, and love, and I wouldn't want it any other way.

I have always been told, "you fall in love with the person, not the gender," meaning that everyone has preferences regarding gender, but ultimately you love someone's personality. My parents showed me it doesn't matter who you love as long as you are happy and treated with respect. Even though I identify as straight, this was a valuable lesson on relationships that I learned from a younger age than most.

Through the years I also learned about the hate towards the LGBTQ+ community. I never understood the amount of homophobia that surrounded the U.S. until I was 9 years old, attending St. Petersburg PRIDE. A woman holding offensive pamphlets approached me and said,

"You can still save yourself."

My parents were astonished. I was confused until I processed what happened. Until that moment I wanted to be gay; I saw my parents relationship and thought that was what I wanted my life to be. Of course, I could not choose my own sexuality and in a rather hilarious conversation, my parents explained they could tell I

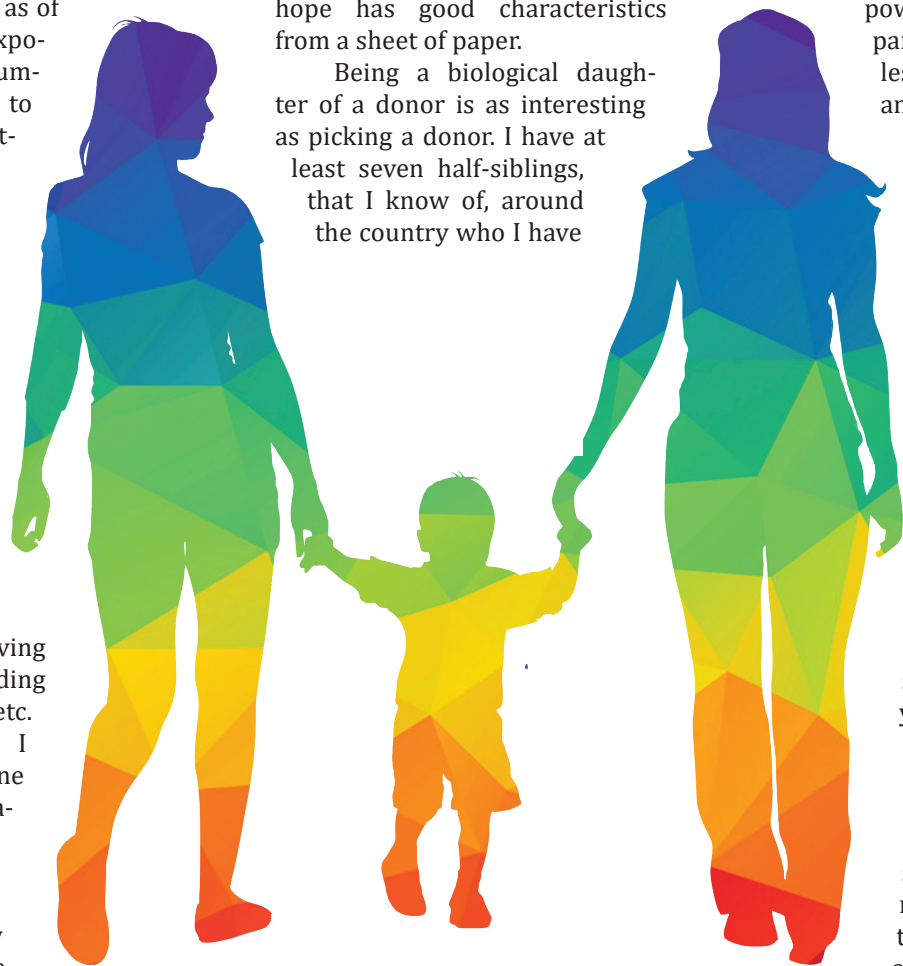
was sad about not being gay.

Regardless, I never faced blatant bigotry and hate other than that moment. Whether people decide not to say things to my face or not feel any hate towards me I don't know, and I don't want to know. I am proud of myself and my family.

I am only 14 years old and this is my experience up to now of what it's like to have gay parents. However, the world is constantly changing and my perspective is bound to change with it, so I can't say my experiences are similar to others because I simply don't know. What I do know is society is becoming more open and accepting of nontraditional families and when you decide, just know that it will work out in the end.

Despite the changes that have already been made, Florida continues to have a difficult time making progress in regards to equal rights for members of the LGBTQ+ community. Florida lawmakers introduced four anti-LGBTQ+ bills in January of 2020. House Bills 1365, 305, 537, and House Concurrent Resolution 239 removes the conditions that have improved. The bills introduce legislation that could make it a second-degree felony to provide certain treatments to transgender children, repeal the laws that protect people from being fired due to discrimination based on sexuality and legalize conversion therapy in areas where it is currently banned.

While these bills still have to endure much deliberation before they can be put into practice, it is disheartening to watch states continue to fight change for the better. There is still hope, as the next generation continues to fight for societal change. This is why my moms decided to have me, they hoped that society would continue to make the country a better place for families like ours.



GRAPHICS BY BRIANNA NELSON

never met. These siblings can be found through the sperm bank or ancestry websites, but sometimes these siblings do not want any contact with people related to the donor. I will not be able to meet my donor until 18 due to his decision of anonymity.

People often ask if I miss my father. To that I reply, "No, how could I miss something I have never had?"

The question is as stupid as it is

Individualism During the Pandemic

by Olivia Hansen
Copy Editor

I try not to judge others for their political affiliation. But I do even though I shouldn't, especially considering that such individual viewpoints stem from reflection and research, as well as influence from one's community and environment. However, we are not living in normal times. And when the "political opinion" at hand jeopardizes the safety of those around you, I no longer feel required to exempt you from my personal scrutiny.

Let's take a look at 2020, objectively: over 280,000 Americans dead, a spike of unemployment, and a drastic lifestyle change for practically everyone. Overall, a generally low point in our lives. Luckily, there are ways to settle this seemingly perpetual nightmare, and it's simpler than limiting your social encounters, closing businesses, or even rushing an antidote of some sort. Yes, it's wearing a mask.

Despite evidence of masks drastically reducing COVID-19 growth rates, the U.S. remains the epicenter, with an uproar of opposition towards such safety measures. America's nationalistic makeup encouraged such backlash, as partisanship and animosity soared in the recent months, demonstrating our nation's superiority complex.

Our nation, which grew steadily in partisanship under Trump's presidency, was un-



able to agree on simple things. The moral high-standing of the left clashed with the unwavering notion of the right to "maintain their freedom," making a compromise inconceivable. To anti-maskers, when individual freedom is on the line, compassion and empathy become inconsequential.

America's individualistic framework revealed itself in response to COVID-19. This mindset has been ingrained in

the tapestry of America since its inception, that looking out for anyone other than yourself is an indicator of weakness. Since the Revolutionary War, America has renounced any establishment that threatens individual freedom.

This tendency began with enlightenment thinkers such as Adam Smith and his theory of the "invisible hand," promoting the individualism which creates an atmosphere of selfish behaviors. However, as we prioritize the importance of valuing independence and autonomy, we lose a culture of a social support network; this negatively affects our country as a whole.

I don't mean to insinuate that we should entirely shift

our country's socio-economic framework, but as Americans, it's imperative we change our mindset, especially when it comes to prioritizing the health and safety of those around us. America was never designed with community values in mind, and as a result, we have exasperated the risk of losing the loved ones around us to avoid minor discomfort. Compassion has never been a core American value, and we have been reminded of this during the pandemic.

But we have seen our country unite before, especially during times of crisis such as World War II, as rationing became integrated into American society to compensate for those fighting for our lives. Though it's not feasible to compare a global pandemic to a world war, similar precautions take place, and the most efficient way to overcome such crises is to establish community values and work together for the greater good — something that has been lacking during COVID-19.

Though we have seen our nation shift to a construct that emphasizes independence over societal well-being, it's still possible to cultivate a union of both. If we can learn and adapt to societal changes, while continuing to prioritize individual freedom and keeping the welfare and safety in mind, we can sustain a prosperous nation.

[a column]

'Yellow Fever' On the Rise

As a biracial girl, I often feel stuck in a limbo of internal division — too white to be Korean and too Korean to be white. Despite my DNA being equally distributed between my two heritages, I'm clearly white-passing, and I'd be the first to admit that I benefit from white privilege. Yet despite this, I am acutely aware that the Korean side of me results in being treated differently.

When I was younger, I thought the worst racism I experienced was limited to jokes about my eyes or an over-exaggerated Chinese accent to "communicate" with me. The fact that I'm not even Chinese was irrelevant. But as I grew older, the racism I experienced transformed into a more subtle form.

During early high school, a boy told me he was glad I was half Asian because Asian girls are "just so pretty and smart." When I started maturing in my social and political awareness, I realized this was not a compliment, but a display of the fetishization of East Asian women.

Sometimes referred to as "yellow fever," this trend has existed for centuries. It stems from stereotypes painting East Asian women as obedient and submissive characters, such as the Geisha, a female Japanese entertainer. The Geisha role originated in the seventh century, but became popularized in America when Victorian men visited port cities in Japan and were enamored by the image of Asian women. During World War II, the common use of Asian prostitutes only further devel-



Peyton Harris
Opinion Editor

oped yellow fever. The Geisha persona was then projected onto all East Asian women as a result of the misconception that all Asian women look alike.

Yellow fever is often dismissed as a benefit to East Asian women: "who wouldn't want to be seen as attractive?" But attraction based on bigotry is not a preference — it's racism. It forces East Asian women to evaluate every man's attraction as authentic or simply due to their race.

Race shouldn't be a factor in attraction at all, especially if it's built off of preconceived notions of said race.

I am tired of going on social media to see a post about how a boy prefers East Asian girls over other races and the comments being filled with praise. I am tired of being pushed into a man's narrow perception of what an East Asian woman is. No, I am not subservient or anything else that a man might have seen in a movie about Asia once. No, I am not flattered by romantic advances on the basis of my race.

[staff editorial]

An Ode to the Progress of 2020

In a couple weeks, we will take down our 2020 calendars as midnight celebrations ring in the new year. But as we prepare to put up new calendars, write 2021 on our assignments, and make resolutions that we may or may not stick to, the question arises: how will we remember the year 2020?

Perhaps it would be easiest to simply label it as a crazy year that we can forget about, but maybe that easy solution is not the right one. After all, the pandemic is not over. People are still dying from police brutality. A new president is yet to be inaugurated.

Despite all its craziness, this year has taught us much about our world, country, and personal values, lessons which must be remembered and utilized in the next year and far beyond it. With a closer look at what 2020 truly entailed, it becomes clear that its plethora of "crazy" events were not isolated instances; rather, they revealed a deeply intertwined set of events and issues which transcend the year 2020.

The masks, sanitation, social-distancing, and virtual platforms that will likely ac-

company many of this year's New Year's Eve gatherings and parties highlight the circumstance which arguably defined 2020: COVID-19. Regardless of individual beliefs about the pandemic, it is fact that it completely changed the course of this year.

Since schools were pushed online for the end of the school year in March, the COVID-19 pandemic has transformed everyday life for students, teachers, and their families. For some, quarantine was a time of self-improvement and discovery.

However, quarantine also produced many periods of struggle. Many of the struggles which several families faced through quarantine as a result of unemployment, discrimination, and subsequent lack of access to food and healthcare revealed underlying issues within a dysfunctional American government.

Instead of a swift response

to a virus that was a threat to the nation as a whole, already pernicious partisan lines were drawn even deeper, and shoved into a context that they had no place in. This dangerous divide was not 2020-centric; it preceded this year, and though its existence had been overt, a lack of action to combat this toxic divisiveness allowed the

corona virus to take advantage of it. As a result, minority communities were disproportionately affected by the pandemic, and many families continue to suffer immense losses.

Coupled with the tragic of Americans infected with corona virus were several equally tragic deaths resulting from police brutality, specifically in the Black community. When George Floyd was killed by a police officer in late May, nationwide protest broke out. The Black Lives Matter movement surged around the country, especially on social media platforms.

That is what 2020 brought— not the issues, but awareness of them.

the Torch

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Remembering sixth-grader Ethan Isaacs

by Grace Johnson, Match Editor-in-Chief

Contributing Reporters: Joanna Malvas (Focus Editor), Mahitha Ramachandran (Sci & Tech Editor), Alyson Mizazin (Sports Editor), Isabella Kulawik (Web Section Editor)

According to his family, sixth-grader Ethan Isaacs marched to the beat of his own drum. He loved pranking his brother, eating whole desserts in single bites, constructing and deconstructing Lego sets, working on puzzles in the library during lunchtime, collecting rocks, mastering complex board games like Catan or Chess, and methodically approaching any problem in his way, whether it be feeding the dog or naming a go-kart.

Ethan was injured in a sailing accident Saturday, November 21 and later passed at the hospital.

"He was a very happy kid, very cheerful. He was always smiling and laughing. He was strong-willed, very determined," Ethan's mom, Mindy Isaacs, said. "I'm thankful for the joy that he brought us and the happiness and the laughter."

Ethan's joy was contagious everywhere he went — school, chess club, sailing, the tennis courts, the FabLab, and so on. He was happy, and he made others happy.

"We would be running and [Ethan] would start skipping all of a sudden," Mindy said, smiling and laughing behind her mask.

Ethan's grandpa, Van Sudduth, interrupted to get up and demonstrate the way Ethan taught him to cross his legs while skipping. He said he still skips that way to warm up before pickleball.

Mindy reflected on the family's time in quarantine where they played board games, biked the legacy trail, hiked, and tried to make every day an adventure. The family was very close already, but Ethan and his Brother, Tanner Isaacs, were inseparable. Their grandmother, Linda Sudduth, agreed.

"My neighbor told us she had never seen two brothers so close; it was actually quite abnormal," Linda said.

Ethan and his grandparents were very close, too. Their eyes lit up as they talked about their grandson. Van shared another story, explaining how he taught Ethan that 'math is money.'

"I would have five or so dollars and say, 'If you can solve the math problems then you win,' and he would win them. We started to call him ol' money bags because he would save all of it," Sudduth said.

He went on to say that sometimes Ethan would answer questions so quickly that he had to take a minute or so to do the calculations himself. After catching up to his grandson, he said Ethan was always right.

The family passed around a note Ethan wrote about how "ants have besieged the condo!" in reference to his grandparents' house in Naples. His handwriting was big and very neat, Linda said she thought it was on the same level as "a forty-year-old."

Ethan would often observe and write about everyday things that others might view as mundane. He would sometimes spend all day studying what was going on around him, and those nights he would shout, "Breaking news!" before letting the family know what had happened during the day.

"In first grade, Ethan's teacher thought he had a hearing problem," Mindy said, "because he wasn't responding in class, but when we got him tested, we realized he was gifted. He was just a perfectionist and wasn't going to give an answer unless he knew it was right."

Moving from Kentucky to

Sarasota two and a half years ago, Ethan started Pine View in fourth grade. Ethan's teachers were also well-aware of his intellect.

"[Ethan] was off-the-charts-smart," social studies teacher Liz Ballard, who had also been his PE teacher in fourth and fifth grade said. "Not only that, he skipped a grade, so he was young for his age.... He was just a good, sweet boy. It's quite a loss."

Peggy Barber, Ethan's fifth-grade teacher in science, math, and language arts, struggled at times while speaking of Ethan's potential.

"I really think he would have majorly contributed to the world of science in some way," Barber said with her hand on



her heart and a faint break in her voice. "He would have either come up with an invention that hadn't been thought of, or he would've saved the world in some way."

According to his family, he sometimes used his intelligence to do what all kids do — try to get out of chores — only he did it his own way.

"If he didn't want to do what you asked him to do, he would look at you — he didn't say 'no,' he didn't throw a tantrum, he didn't run away. He wasn't obstinate, but you could tell he was thinking, 'Do I really want to do this?' and if not, 'How do I get out of this?'" Linda said. "You'd think he was a lawyer the way he would argue his case... it was like a monologue of all the reasons why he was right."

Ethan's persistence, combined with his intelligence, was a powerful force.

"Feeding the dog was Ethan's chore and he wanted to figure out a way to get out of it. So, he created an automatic dog-feeder," Mindy said, while describing his STEM fair winning



Isaacs brought his creative problem solving abilities to last year's science fair. He won the competition with his 3000 Feederator, an automatic dog feeding machine. PHOTO COURTESY OF MARIE ROSANDER

invention, the Dog Feederator 3000.

Science teacher Marie Rosander was Ethan's teacher this year, but she got to know him last year during the STEM fair.

"His friends always described him as the person who cheered them up. He had a great sense of humor, and he has one of those little personalities who you know will grow up and will do something in this world," Rosander said.

When he wasn't competing in the science fair, Ethan might be found dancing — just not in the fifth-grade ballroom dance unit in gym class.

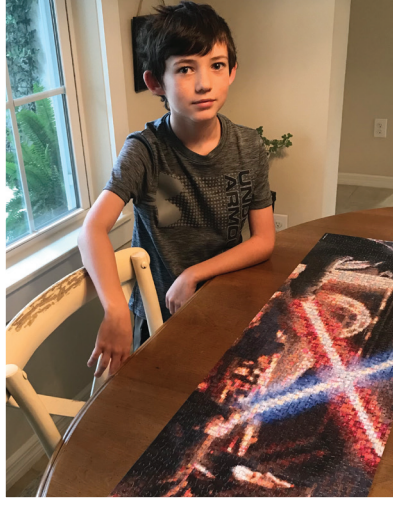
"Ethan loved to dance, his Papi got him this hat..." Linda said, referring to her husband beside her.

Van continued the thought, gesturing to his head, "I had the name 'Dance King' written on it, and he would put it on."

However, when it came to an audience outside of the family, Ethan would not show off his skills.

"Ethan is the only student I ever excused from ballroom dance, because he hated it so much... I finally said to him, 'Ethan, go to the media center and write a report on these dances.' And he grabbed the assignment sheet from me and ran out of the gym and ran to the media center," Ballard said.

"But in front of us," Mindy said, "he would dance... We have a video of him making a



Fourth-grade teacher Eduardo Maron spoke fondly of Isaacs' kindness and clever sense of humor. He said Isaacs connected with his friends over profound interests such as Star Wars. PHOTOS COURTESY OF MINDY ISAACS

peanut butter and jelly sandwich to a Michael Jackson song and he was just dancing. He loved to dance — you never got to know all the sides of him unless he was comfortable."

Ethan got comfortable with Pine View quickly. Though moving to a new state in the middle of elementary school is hard for anyone, Ethan was so perfectly fit for Pine View that his shyness soon faded after making close friends.

"He loved Pine View. He was proud to be at Pine View," Mindy said. "He loved all his classes, he loved his teachers, his friends. He just really thrived there. It was a really good environment for him."

"He was a year younger than all of his classmates, but there was an old-soul quality or mentality about him," Barber said, reflecting on the visibility of his thought process. "It would take a while; you would have to sit there and let him think. You could see him processing, and he would look at you for a few seconds before the first word would come out, but we knew it was going to be worth the wait, because once he spoke he always had something important to say."

"[Ethan] was a great student... very quiet and shy, but when he came out of his shell, he had a wonderful personality and a very funny sense of humor," Eduardo Maron, Ethan's fourth-grade teacher, said. "I remember when we did 'Fun Friday,' he'd opt to stay inside with his buds, and they would stack dominoes together — that was his thing. They would try to build these



Fifth-grade teacher Peggy Barber believed that Ethan Isaacs would have done great things. "He would have either come up with an invention that hadn't been thought of, or he would've saved the world in some way," she said. PHOTO COURTESY OF PEGGY BARBER

big domino stacks, when you'd knock one of them over, it's a chain reaction."

"I think Ethan really came to love Pine View and the friends he made here," Ballard said, wiping away tears. "And I think Pine View was the perfect place for him. Being in a school for gifted kids, he kind of found his home in a sense. This is where he belonged; it may have taken him a couple of months to fit in, but once he did, he really did."

"Honestly, I'm just going to miss him," Ethan's friend, sixth-grader Shivam Patel said, explaining the grief he felt for his friend.

Another of his friends, Om Patel, spoke of how he was always helping people, "If you spilled your water he would help you clean it up or if you dropped your crayons he would help you pick them up."

"Every weekend we would go on bike rides, and... we would just bike around the community and if it was a bad week, say we got a bad grade on a test, he would always make jokes and make us laugh so that we wouldn't feel bad about our grades," Krish Gandhi said about his experiences with Ethan and their shared friend, sixth-grader Aadi Bhensdadia.

"He will always be remembered by everyone who knew him," Bhensdadia said.

Hearing from Ethan's friends and teachers has helped the Isaacs family through their grieving process.

"[The Pine View communi-

ty] has not hesitated to reach out. Mrs. Hazlet sent a card. She said, 'I still remember his freckled face.' Mrs. Barber talked about how sweet he was, and she sent pictures," Mindy said. "We're grateful for the memories. It really helps us to know that he did have an impact in other people's lives. Telling us that, that means a lot."

Ethan's classmates sent artwork, poems, and letters to the Isaacs family.

"The perspective that the kids offered, too, helped us with grieving. Whether it was with pictures or with words, the students helped us more with healing than some adults. A lot of adults don't know what to say when someone dies. They feel awkward or that they might hurt the person's feelings. But with the students, they were just honest. They shared from the heart and it was just very, very beautiful," Mindy said.

Mindy said that the family is starting a memorial fund in Ethan's name and hoping to get legislation passed related to boating safety.

"We want him to be remembered," Linda chimed in.

The family held a small private service in memory of Ethan three weeks ago but is in the process of planning a school-wide memorial service.

"Ethan really does live on," Van said, his proud smile shining throughout the interview — an interview that was more full of laughter than it was tears, because that's who Ethan was. That is who Ethan will always be.

[a column] Unity in Moving Forward

by Leo Gordon
Editor-in-Chief

As we approach the end of 2020, I'll repeat what you've already heard a million times. It's been a difficult year.

The calendar year started normally, only to be thrown into a period of absolute chaos by mid-March. Our schools, families, friendships, and communities changed dramatically as the virus raged amidst a national reckoning with racial injustice.

Despite the challenges we've faced this year, Pine View students have met the demands of difficult courses, maintained a close community, supported friends and family, and in the midst of it all, applied for college. But you already knew this.

One of the most difficult challenges the Pine View community has faced this year is the loss of two of our own, Blake Bennett (class of 2016) and sixth-grader Ethan Isaacs. In remembering their impacts on the Pine View community and beyond, we remember their talents, legacies, and beautiful personalities.

I distinctly remember my first year at Pine View, when a high school student passed away



Leo Gordon,
Editor-in-Chief

unexpectedly in the middle of the school year. Though, as a second grader I didn't totally understand what was going on or the scope of what had happened, I saw the humanity of Pine View and its students and faculty. Students gathered to mourn the loss of a friend and valuable member of the community. This year, I have seen the same unity, and hope to see more of it.

And while we don't know exactly what this new year will bring — a vaccine? a return to normalcy? the restoration of Pine View traditions? — we'll use our unique environment to make the best of it, and to remember those who we have lost along the way.