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**INTREPID TORCH JOURNALISTS  
SPEAK TO AN EXPERT ABOUT  
COVID-19 VACCINATIONS**

# Local facilities and policy-makers look to the future as vaccinations increase

Senior centers give a glimpse of post-pandemic life with herd immunity

## MEANWHILE, IN THE YEAR 2020...

January 31 — WHO Declares COVID-19 a Global Health Emergency

March 11 — WHO Declares COVID-19 a Pandemic

March 25 — Reports Find Extended Shutdowns Can Delay Second Wave

March 26 — Senate Passes CARES Act

June 10 — US COVID-19 Cases Reach 2 Million

July 9 — WHO Announces COVID-19 Can Be Airborne

August 17 — COVID-19 Now the Third-Leading Cause of Death in the US

August 23 — Convalescent Plasma Is Cleared for Use by FDA

September 1 — US Rejects WHO Global COVID-19 Vaccine Effort

November 4 — US Reports Unprecedented 100,000 Cases in 1 Day

by Felicity Chang and Lucy Collins  
Multimedia Editor and Social Media Editor

With the global rollout of vaccines, schools and other public facilities are taking tentative steps towards reopening. In the Sarasota County School Board, five elected members finalize COVID-19 policies. The current plan lasts until June of 2021, but the members have the option to replace it earlier. According to the school board, changes to the plan are not being implemented as of mid-March.

The Spring 2021 Education Plans for all counties within Florida can be found on the Florida Department of Education website. Policies depend on a few factors, including spread in the community and hospitalization numbers.

All changes will be in accordance with CDC guidelines. Levels of community transmission of the virus depend on the “total number of new cases per 100,000 persons in the past seven days” and the percentage of positive tests in the past seven days (including nucleic acid amplification and RT-PCR tests). Low transmission of COVID-19 is characterized by between zero and nine new cases per 100,000 and less than five percent positive testing. Local data is received from the epidemiologists at the Sarasota Health Department.

Schools will close if schools are experiencing an

uncontrollable spread of the virus or if a rapid rise in cases causes a burden on the health care capacity, according to the CDC.

“There are people who have differing opinions,” school nurse Beth Banco said, “But the schools rely on the experts and will not change policies from pressure from somebody that’s not in the medical or health community. The schools have to do what the health department and the CDC say to do.”

Banco received her Bachelors of Nursing at Clemson University and practiced in fields including oncology, critical care, and school health. Since the health department employs her directly, she participated in administering COVID-19 tests and interviewing patients in March of 2020.

The patients’ interview responses, which were put into a database, revealed their symptoms and activities prior to contracting the illness. Scientific experts used this information to develop a better understanding of the virus. Now that schools are in full session again, Banco’s job consists of answering numerous questions relating to COVID-19, including what to do when testing positive or getting contact traced.

As with most of the pandemic thus far, the consensus is “wait and see.” Sarasota County has seen low transmission rates and few students testing positive once

contact traced. Next year, however, these quarantine requirements are predicted to remain, with the development of a three-feet-apart rule rather than six. Other policies that are likely to continue include cleaning and distance of desks. As of now only the Pfizer vaccine is approved for 16 and older, so vaccine distribution will have few effects on the planning — clinical trials for children to receive the vaccine are in progress, with hopes of at least one being released within the next year.

“COVID is not something that is going to disappear any time soon. You still need to be vigilant with your health, even if you are vaccinated. Vaccinations are never one-hundred percent,” Banco said.

Places that have received widespread vaccination, such as nursing centers, are starting to accept visitors, given that all visiting families follow correct protocol and guidelines.

Registered nurse Qinghua Wu, who works in geriatrics at ProMedica Senior Care, said that policies and decisions are ultimately passed down from the state government. Data is a driving factor in the reopening of any public institution, with infection rates being a main component.

The eligible residents and healthcare workers at ProMedica Senior Care were one of the first groups to get the Pfizer vaccine in January of this year. According to Wu, those who received the vaccine were strictly monitored for fluctuations in body temperature afterward, and all individuals were required to wear masks.

“Based on the data, so far, it’s been working pretty well.

A vaccine serves as an extra layer of protection. After the first dose, you gain based on different vaccines, not 100% immunity, and only after the second dose you have all the antibodies,” she said. “It’s not optional. It’s not any different from other vaccines, and everybody should have it if you’re eligible.”

Due to the fact that there were no new cases in the nursing home for the month of March and herd immunity — at least 70% of employees and patients being vaccinated — was achieved, small group visitations started on March 23. According to Wu, simple, effective precautions such as wearing masks and washing hands should still be taken, and the public should not let their guard down.

“I cannot speak for everybody. I can only speak from experience. A little discipline, a little sacrifice, and it’s a big win-win for everybody,” she said. “We cannot control everybody but we can control ourselves.... I am a healthcare professional. I believe in science, and science should be based on data.”

Procedures at the nursing facility provide a perspective and slight glimpse into the general process, and reaction, of reopening to the public. Although window visits with distancing through glass panels were available before, families were not able to meet without physical separation.

“They were excited to see family members, to be able to hug them again,” Wu said. “A lot of the families have not been able to see each other or touch each other for over a year now, so it’s very exciting to finally be able to see, to hold each others’ hands, and give each other a hug.”

“A little discipline, a little sacrifice, and it’s a big win for everybody.”

Qinghua Wu,  
registered nurse

## What's THE INTERNET thinking about?

by Naina Chauhan  
Asst. Editor in Chief



### BREAD

After the initial shortage of toilet paper rolls, yeast and flour were next. Americans everywhere put on their aprons and tackled the sourdough starter. Instagram and Tik Tok feeds were filled with beautifully designed loaves with soft, chewy, crunchy interiors. For some, it was the beginning of a new hobby, but for many, it was a very time-consuming trend.



### HAIR-DOS

It was honestly a necessity for us all, but some took it further than others. Some went out and bought dye and completely transformed their hair (there were truly endless versions of the various ways to dye), others did a simple trim, many tried the DIY bangs trick, and some were brave enough to shave their head.



### TIE-DYE

Out from the depths of our elementary years, tie-dyeing reemerged. Gen Zers and millennials alike went to Walmart to buy bleach. While some of us still sport our tie-dyeing successes, there are many who failed to understand just how strong bleach can be and ruined a few shirts.

replaying the top trends of early quarantine



Manasota Pediatrics office on Unniversity Parkway holds a vaccine clinic for ages 16-18. Many Pine View eleventh- and twelfth-graders received their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine at Manasota Pediatrics in early April. PHOTO BY SARAH CATALANO

[herd immunity: a comic explanation]

QUARANTINE TRENDS CONTINUED

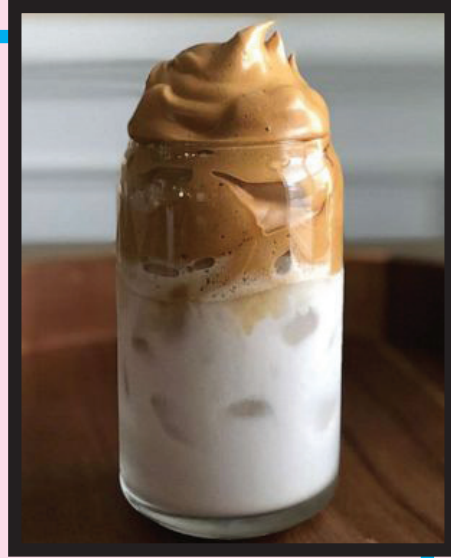
NETFLIX

Netflix pumped out quite a few big shows and movies during quarantine so it's safe to assume that most people binged at least one of them. For many, Tiger King marks the beginning of pandemic chaos, but those early months were packed with shows like Outer Banks, Love is Blind, and too many more to remember.



COFFEE

Dalegona was made popular on a South Korean's YouTube channel, but it reached the homes of many Americans through Tik Tok. Unable to pick up their daily dose of caffeine, people found whipped coffee to be a fun twist on their average latte. Even stars like Lizzo joined in on this recipe.



ANIMAL CROSSING

Before the pandemic was even on our horizons, millions of fans were looking forward to the New Horizons Animal Crossings game. Quarantine definitely allowed people to indulge in the new release. The world of Animal Crossings was a place of peace and unity — a much-needed escape from these 'uncertain times.'



Global pandemic highlights injustice present in American healthcare

by Courtney Nelson  
Asst. News Editor

In a survey conducted by "USA Today" at the start of the pandemic, over 45% of Americans believed specific organizations or people were to blame for the COVID-19 pandemic. A natural disaster that was dividing people physically was at the same time dividing people through prejudice, xenophobia, and violence.

The belief that China was to blame for the pandemic led to an onslaught of harassment and violence against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI). According to a "USA Today" poll, 25% of Asian-Americans had experienced or witnessed some form of the blame for COVID-19 early into the pandemic. Additionally, one-fifth of participants in the survey had family and friends that they worried would be discriminated against. Phrases like "the China virus" and "Kung-flu" proliferated across the country as prominent figures such as former President Donald J. Trump embraced the hateful language.

Racial minorities, disabled people, people with

existing conditions, and others are disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Preexisting social determinants of health such as healthcare access and poverty soon became an influence for risk factors, and for

**"THE AHA HAS LONG RECOGNIZED RACIAL DISPARITIES IN THE INCIDENCE AND PREVALENCE OF CERTAIN CHRONIC CONDITIONS, SUCH AS DIABETES, ASTHMA, AND HYPERTENSION — CONDITIONS THAT ARE BELIEVED TO AGGRAVATE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19. WE ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT OTHER FACTORS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH, BIAS, AND HISTORICAL MISTRUST OF AMERICA'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM, MAY BE RESULTING IN HIGHER RATES OF INFECTION AND DEATH IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR."**

Statement of the American Hospital Association for the Committee on Ways and Means of the U.S. House of Representatives

MAY 27, 2020

some, greatly increased the difficulty of seeking help and treatment for virus symptoms.

In a study done by Veterans Affairs researchers, "Black and Hispanic individuals were twice as likely to test positive for COVID-19, even after accounting for underlying health conditions, other demographics, and geographic location."

According to the CDC,

five major factors contribute to these statistics. Discrimination within the healthcare system itself; healthcare access and utilization; occupation; educational, income, and wealth gaps; and housing.

Those with little job flexibility may be unable to seek treatment for their symptoms because to do so would be risking their livelihood. Additionally, jobs that are disproportionately occupied by some ethnic and minority groups involve a greater risk of exposure than jobs majorly occupied by their white counterparts. Another theory suggests that multigen-

erational households and high population density among POC in urban areas could be contributing factors. Older people living in larger households may have found it more difficult to social distance practically.

"What Can We Do," the CDC wrote in a report on health equity. "Shared faith, family, and cultural bonds are common sources of social support. Finding ways to maintain support and connection, even when physically apart, can empower and encourage individuals and communities to protect themselves, care for those who become sick, keep kids healthy, and better cope with stress."

Since the first outbreak, more than 129 million people have been infected and more than 2 million have died worldwide. As the population continues to be vaccinated and the country looks forward to a return to "normalcy," public silence in response to discrimination and violence against POC remains largely unbroke-

- November 16 — Moderna Reveals Vaccine Efficacy Results
- January 5 — Moderna to Produce 600 Million Vaccine Doses
- January 19 — Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca to Test Vaccines in Adolescents
- January 27 — US Vaccine Supply to Increase by 50%
- February 1 — More Americans Vaccinated Than Infected With COVID-19
- February 12 — United States Purchases 200 Million Moderna, Pfizer Vaccines
- February 27 — Johnson & Johnson pledges to deliver 20 million doses to US by end of March
- March 8 — CDC Releases Guidance on Safe Activities for Fully Vaccinated Individuals
- March 19 — United States Administers 100 Millionth Vaccine

# Students anticipate & reflect



Ashley Pelton, 12th-grader

*What are you most looking forward to doing when it's safe to resume life like how it was before the pandemic?*

*"I've never been to a concert and I was supposed to go to one on my birthday last year, but it was cancelled. The thing I'm most looking forward to is going to a concert and seeing my favorite artist in concert."*

*What's one good thing that happened in your life because of the pandemic?*

*"My brothers coming home because I have two brothers in the air force academy and it's very difficult for my three brothers, my mom, and myself to be home all together. So having them home for an extended period of time. Like the five of us were really home for 2 months together, but those 2 months were valuable for my family. I'm very big on family and very close to my brothers and my mom so that was definitely a blessing for sure."*

*Do you have a favorite memory of them during those few months?*

*My brother who is closest in age to me, we came up with a tradition where we'd go on bike rides in the middle of the night like only when there was a full moon because there were no lights or anything but that was really fun. It was something we'd never done before — it just became a little tradition."*

## [letter from the staff]

*Dear Reader,*

*In light of the past year, the Torch staff extends its thanks to all the members of our community who, throughout this process, have brought compassion and community-minded action to our schools, cities, and larger communities. We also offer our sympathy to those who have lost friends, loved ones and neighbors as a result of the pandemic.*

*Through their action and perseverance, often putting themselves in danger for the sake of others, these community leaders — among them, doctors, nurses, first responders, teachers and other essential workers — have led us closer to a more responsible, proactive, and empathetic world.*

*Without these leaders, our schools, grocery stores, pharmacies, and medical infrastructure systems would be unable to function.*

*That said, the Torch hopes that our readers will remember the contributions of essential workers not only through the remainder of the pandemic, but after it comes to a close.*

*Sincerely,  
The Torch Staff*



Connor Lafo, 11th-grader

*What's something you started doing during the pandemic that you'd like to keep doing?*

*"Reading, I guess. Reading books because I just enjoy reading. I find it to be very intriguing and I feel like you can learn a lot more through reading than through a lot of more things. Especially non fiction books — that is kind of what I like to read, too. I feel like that kind of benefits you."*

*What would you do differently if you re-lived the pandemic?*

*"I would probably go back and work on- like during the earlier parts of it, during the summer or extended spring break — work on taking care of yourself. I would go back and figure out how to manage stress better because I feel like it'd be a great opportunity to do that especially since we had a really long break. And I feel like it would've been a good opportunity for me to get in touch with myself and like learn how to manage stress and just debunk a lot of things that I have, like a lot of feelings and stuff."*



Chloe Kortie, 11th grade

*What are you most looking forward to doing when it's safe to resume life like how it was before the pandemic?*

*"The little things of daily life I missed so much, like going to the grocery store, going around on the weekends. And also not having to worry about whenever you go somewhere, having to think 'oh did I bring my mask', 'am I really fully prepared to go to this place' and being able to interact with people in those places."*

*What's one good thing that happened in your life because of the pandemic?*

*"I think my life was really intense leading up to the pandemic. I had so many different things going on. School was really in full swing and I was in the middle of a play. I was doing so many different things with my friends. I was about to do 'Mama Mia', which is Pine View's drama show that was about to go on last year. Even though it would've been nice to finish that year and and finish through all the different things that I was doing, just after having so much an intense life, it was nice to have time to reflect .... I feel like I learned a lot over the pandemic. It gave me kind of a rest and a break, I'm looking forward to starting to go back to some of the things I used to do and start doing new things."*



see features pullout



## Trigger Warning: Exploring how content is handled in Sarasota County classrooms

by Grace Johnson  
Match Editor-in-Chief

A trigger, defined by the American Psychological Association dictionary of Psychology, is simply “a stimulus that elicits a reaction.” Though this initial definition is unornamented, Pine View Social Studies Department Chair Robin Melton explains the real weight the term carries.

“All triggers are different. That’s the first thing you need to understand. They’re things that can cause people to have really bad anxiety or to have a panic attack. They can bring up negative thoughts or feelings or memories,” Melton said. Teaching AP Psychology and AP World History, Melton frequently implements trigger warnings in the classroom. She says she thinks that their use should be more widespread over all subjects. “Social studies [has] classes like Psychology, Holocaust Honors, and the History of the Vietnam War. Other subjects have their edgy content, too, though. 1984, Beloved — these are books that have their purposes in English classes, but they cover some serious subjects.”

As Melton uses them, Trigger warnings are implemented so that they can prepare students for the lesson to come.

“There are things that come up in [course materials] that can be like ‘Woah,’ and if you’re not prepared for it, it can throw you for a loop. I think it’s important for there to be some type of warning. But, at the same time, a trigger warning doesn’t mean that it’s not important. It just means, ‘Hey, there’s some sensitive content in here; be prepared for that.’ It doesn’t take away from the importance of the topic or the novel or the lab or the video clip or whatever — it just means ‘Hey, heads up!’” Melton said.

Triggering topics, when mishandled, can not only bring up hard memories and cause symptoms of anxiety, but they can push struggling students to become worse with their conditions.

“I’ve struggled with self-harm in the past, and, often, I’ve noticed that when we talk about it in class, it makes me want to relapse sometimes when they go very in-depth about it,” a tenth-grader, who requested anonymity, said before clarifying that when a trigger warning is offered before a lesson, it helps her to prepare mentally.

Opposition to trigger warning implementation often comes from a concern that students won’t learn what they need to in avoiding uncomfortable topics. Eleventh-grader Jude Kolesar pointed out his opinion that this is a misconception of trigger warnings’ purpose.

“In my experience, it’s easier to deal with something if you know in advance that it’s going to be talked about. Mental preparation is vital in keeping control of emotions,” Kolesar said. “These topics are necessary and a fact of life. However, if someone does not feel comfortable talking about something they find upsetting, they shouldn’t have to. If the content is absolutely necessary to know, then a trigger warning should be included.”

Melton explained that, though rare, when tough subjects that students have experienced personally come up, she lets them sit out of in-class discussions.

“Unfortunately, I have had students who have had personal experience with topics like suicide. In these cases, I’ll sit them aside and say, ‘Look, I either want to prepare you, or I’m going to let you sit this one out... If you have questions, that’s fine, or we can sit down together.’ But, I’m not going to have [a student] sit here in an entire class of their peers and make them dredge up horrible memories,” Melton said.

While some teachers like Melton use trigger warnings, many teachers don’t. Eleventh-grader Sophia Brotz, who says she has sometimes struggled with mental health issues, emphasizes that the importance of trigger warnings is often overlooked.

“You never know what

types of things students go through outside of the classroom. Teachers don’t acknowledge that the [students in the] classroom may have experienced struggles discussed in class,” Brotz said. “There have been several times when we are required to discuss topics, such as rape or racism, in our classrooms which can be triggering for some students... There’s always a huge elephant in the room, and teachers choose to ignore it.”

Currently, teachers are not administered any training from the district on when or how to give trigger warnings in the classroom. Melton explains how, for her, it is not an exact science.

“Over the years of teaching, I have

tried to become aware of the different situations that enter my classroom. With AP Psychology, suicide, psychological disorders, eating disorders, or sometimes [other triggering topics can be] parenting or abuse — if students have experience with that or something is going on at home, that can cause anxiety or panic. In AP World History, obviously, the trigger warnings aren’t as frequent, but they exist. When we talk about genocide, war, violence — that’s when they come into play,” Melton said, explaining that especially before showing graphic images or videos, she will give content warnings to her students.

While there is no training directly regarding trigger warnings, that’s not to say teachers have no background in dealing with difficult subjects. Sarasota County Schools’ Media Relation Specialist Kelsey Whealy explained in an email that Kognito mental health education and awareness training was implemented for all staff in fall 2019. Online modules simulated common scenarios about mental health and behavioral issues in a safe environment, while in-person sessions recapped the online modules and offered group discussion about related thoughts or feelings.

Still, with the increased mental health education for students mandated by the state of Florida, tough conversation topics are be-

coming more frequent in classroom settings. Correspondingly, without teacher training on how to deal with such subjects, the number of students who must endure triggering experiences is rising.

July 2019, according to the Florida Department of Education, a five-hour minimum of mental health education was mandated for Florida public school students in grades six through 12. School districts were given individual jurisdiction on how to cover four components: (a) awareness of signs and symptoms, (b) process for getting or seeking help for themselves or others, (c) awareness of resources, and (d) what to do or say to peers struggling with mental health

disorders.

“The district developed a mental and behavioral health services resource and downloads webpage [to implement the state-mandated mental health education],” Whealy said in an email. She dictated that Sarasota County Schools has actually exceeded these state requirements, though they are always open to refining their programs.

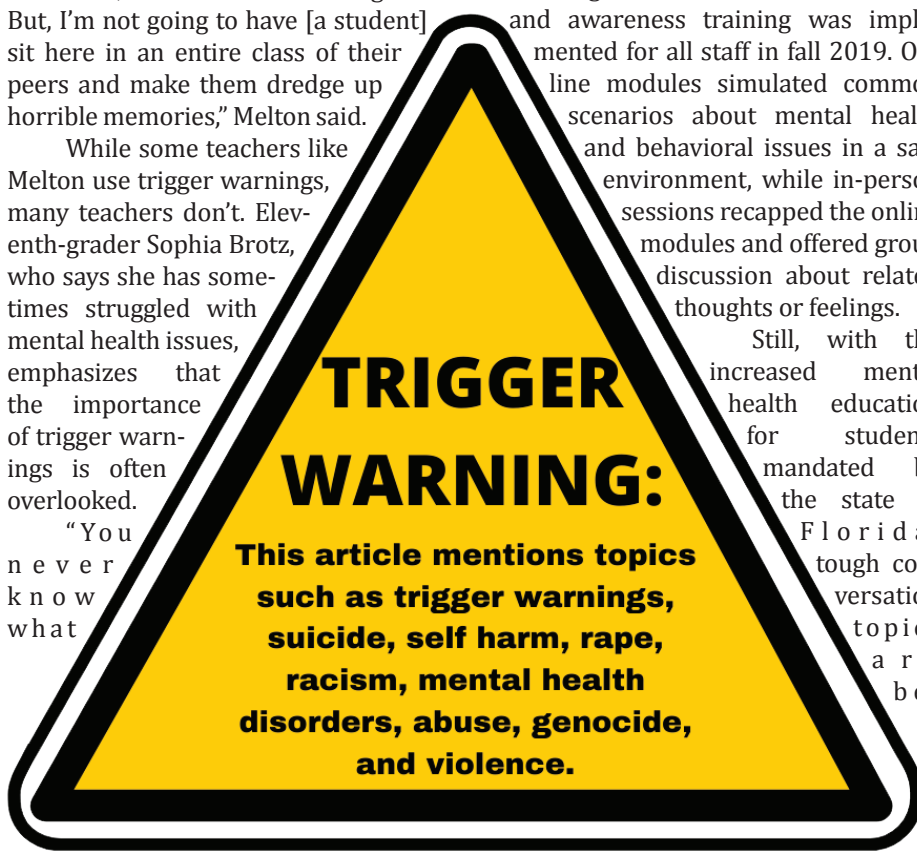
At Pine View, advisory periods have been implemented to administer these mental health modules that come as videos with writing prompts for students to respond to. Though they cover extreme subjects, these videos come without trigger warnings. Many students, like eleventh-grader Cassidy Park, and teachers alike, disapprove of this lack of content warning.

“Topics such as sexual abuse or mental illness should have warnings with them because a lot of students have experienced or are struggling with these issues, and having to face them out of the blue isn’t a beneficial approach,” Park said. “Periods to discuss mental health and big issues are important, but to make it better, warnings before big topics should be implemented.”

After supervising a tenth-grade video earlier that day, Melton said she felt somewhat shocked at the lack of warning that came with the intense content.

“Today in advisory, I know they’re doing the best they can, but this girl talked about her bullying scenario,” Melton said, widening her eyes as she continued. “By far, this was the most intense bullying I had ever heard of. I felt like it should have come with a warning, and I’m the teacher.”

GRAPHIC BY GRACE JOHNSON



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## PeaceJam highlights influential Black figures in Sarasota's history

by Leo Gordon  
Editor-in-Chief

Paying homage to some of Sarasota's most influential Black figures, Pine View PeaceJam spent a weekend creating a series of murals to be displayed on the fence surrounding the site of Pine View's new central building.

The murals were created to highlight the efforts and achievements of historical local leaders Dr. Harriet Moore, Lewis Colson, Wright Bush, and Emma E. Booker. Each mural, one for each of four figures, displays an image representing the leader and their contributions, followed by a description of their specific accomplishments.

Twelfth-grader and PeaceJam president Bethel Schandorf-Lartey hopes that by introducing a physical representation of local Black leaders' contributions in the Sarasota community to Pine View's campus, students will further their understanding and seek to learn more about the role of Black students, teachers and leaders in their community.

"I want more Pine View students to recognize that the Sarasota area has a wealth of Black history that goes largely unacknowledged in our discussions of diversity education and tolerance. To understand the present, we need to know our past. In other words, we may all know the name 'Booker,' but to learn who people such as Emma Booker really were and how they shaped the community we live in today was an eye-opening experience that I hope other PV kids can have as well," Schandorf-Lartey said.

Dr. Harriet Moore, the only person featured in the murals who is still alive, was recently named the new Director of Innovation and Equity. Moore was Pine View's first female Black graduate, graduating in a class of only 42 students in 1979.

In speaking with PeaceJam Vice president Samantha



Twelfth-grader Bethel Schandorf-Lartey and eleventh graders Anya Dennison and Zander Moricz sketch the design for a panel dedicated to Lewis Colson, the first Black man to settle in Sarasota. The four murals dedicated to Dr. Harriet Moore, Lewis Colson, Wright Bush, and Emma E. Booker will be displayed on the fence surrounding the construction of Pine View's new building. PHOTO BY BEN GORDON

Sineath, Moore described her experiences at Pine View as a young Black woman. Specifically, she recounted an event in which she and her classmates were disgusted by a former teacher's racist comments towards her. The teacher was forced to apologize to Moore, but her parents were not invited to hear his formal apology.

Lewis Colson, born in 1844, was the first Black man to settle in Sarasota. He was hired by the Florida Mortgage and Investment Company in 1884 to assist in the plotting of the town of Sarasota, and thereafter took steps that led to the growth of Sarasota's Black community. Today, Colson and his wife, Irene, are the only Black residents buried in Sarasota's Rosemary Cemetery.

Wright Bush advocated for education, entrepreneurship and civic responsibility throughout Newtown. He was also a trustee of the Sarasota Grammar School, Sarasota's first Black school.

Emma E. Booker, the namesake of Emma E. Booker Elementary School, was a teacher at the Sarasota Grammar School. She became principal of the school, which had no official building, in 1923. Students of the Sarasota Grammar School sat at desks made of orange crates, learning from hand-me-down books discarded from white schools.

Schandorf-Lartey hopes that, through the project, Pine View students will see the physical manifestation of PeaceJam's work on campus.

"In the future, we hope to do some more educational outreach right here on Pine View's campus. It'd be great to show the rest of the student body some of the things we've taught each other, and hope to teach future generations," Schandorf-Lartey said.

**"I want more Pine View students to recognize that the Sarasota area has a wealth of Black History that goes largely unacknowledged in our discussions of diversity education and tolerance"**

**Bethel Schandorf-Lartey, twelfth-grader**

"[Dr. Moore] was honored to be asked to be included," Sineath said. "She wants Pine View students to hear her story."

Though the other figures included in the murals have passed away, PeaceJam believes that their contributions to the Sarasota community are worth equal recognition on a campus-wide scale.

## IN BRIEF

### DiGS club alumni pay homage to their stories in a new book

by Odelia Tiutyama  
News Editor

In gifted education across the country, the contentious issue of systemic underrepresentation of students who have been discriminated against because of their race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status remains prevalent. In their book "Empowering Underrepresented Gifted Students: Perspectives from the Field," coeditors Dr. Joy Lawson Davis and Deb Douglas hope to give some of these students a voice and bring their stories to focus.

Among the numerous chapters written by students to address structural and educational inequality in gifted programs is one written by class of 2020 alumni and former Diversifying and Integrating Gifted Schools (DiGS) members Vinay Konuru, Diego Prestamo, Kaila Stafford, and Gabriel Monzon.

Following a town hall workshop organized by DiGS last spring, Davis approached the members about the impact their speeches had on her. Believing that the members' personal stories could inspire many, she presented the chapter to the club.

The chapter touches on these members' background and their specific experiences as minority students in gifted education.

Prestamo focused on his introduction to gifted educa-

tion, the transition to Pine View, and the influence that gifted programs have had on him.

Monzon spoke about his encounters at Brookside Middle School compared to Pine View, while Stafford concentrated on her experience as one of the few Black students at Pine View.

Konuru expanded upon the formation and history of DiGS and how he related to diversity in gifted education.

"I didn't realize it at first, but these are stories that need to be heard by everyone," Prestamo said. "The issue of race in gifted learning has been swept under the rug for too long, and although DiGS has made significant advances in the past few years, we are still trying to break the glass."

DiGS took on this challenge to show that they are just a few of the millions of students who have experienced the effects of educational inequality. By sharing their stories, Prestamo, Monzon, Stafford, and Konuru hope to call the book's audience to action. The book will be available this September.

"Gifted education is an investment," Prestamo said. "We told our stories to encourage others to advocate for their right to education programs that fit their needs. If our stories impact even one parent, student, or educator, we will have won a battle in this war."

### FBLA club advances in state competition

by Madi Holmes  
Copy Editor

Living up to a "tradition of excellence," Pine View's young chapter of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) is making a name for itself across the state, and soon the nation.

FBLA is a career readiness club that participates in various levels of competitions; first attending the district competition, then state competition, and finally competing nationally, having to meet higher qualifications in order to advance each time. FBLA competitions, usually held in person but online this year, test a diverse array of skills relating to business scored in both logical and speaking abilities during rounds of written and oral exams.

"There's always a couple [events] that are really popu-

lar like political science and international business but there's such a wide variety that our members are always picking different things," eleventh-grader and FBLA President, India Hirschowitz said.

Pine View's team has around 15 members, and all but one placed high enough at districts to advance to the state competition.

FBLA obviously is geared toward students eyeing a future in business, however, the club is not limited to only aspiring business majors.

"Personally I think anyone can join... it teaches you a lot of skills you honestly will use throughout your entire life," Hirschowitz said.

FBLA meets bi-weekly in English teacher Tammy Madden's room and can be reached through their Instagram page @pvfbla.

## Seniors dominate Spirit Week



During the week of March 29 to April 2, students had the opportunity to participate in Spirit Week. Daily themes included Decades, Tie-Dye, Super Hero, Tacky Tourist, and School Spirit. Additionally, each day included an after school activity for remote and in-person students. On Monday, students decorated different areas of the school according to the theme "Ride the Wave." Other challenges included disc golf scramble and soccer. Finally, the week ended with the Seniors winning dodgeball. To read more on the event, scan the QR code. PHOTO BY LINDSAY LUBERCKI



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# Sarasota school board addresses diversity issues

by Mahitha Ramachandran  
Sci-Tech Editor

According to the Sarasota County Schools website, the job of the School Board of Sarasota County is to set “policy for the school district that advances educational opportunities for all students.” The end of that goal, “for all students,” is the focus of the District Equity Committee, a new committee dedicated to ensuring that education across Sarasota County is accessible and equitable. The same focus is in mind for Dr. Harriet Moore, the new Director of Innovation and Equity, which is the leading role in for the committee.

In fall of 2020, newly appointed Sarasota School Board Superintendent Dr. Brennan Asplen decided that a separate committee and lead position were necessary to combat the achievement gap, also called the opportunity gap, and to establish sustained equity in education within the district.

These issues have been ongoing in Sarasota County, and although some initiatives have been implemented to “close the gap,” none have proven fully effective, as the opportunity gap continues to exist. Thus, the District Equity Committee and the role of Director of Innovation and Equity were formed.

“We have continued to be an outstanding district that performs very well. However, there is a certain population of students who are not performing at the same level as their same-age peers,” Moore said.

She continued, “Our African-American and Hispanic students are still falling far below their same-age white peers. That is one of the issues. Another is looking at our staffing and the fact that we have so few people of colors and other ethnicities within staffing in our district. Part of

the problem with the gap is students not feeling a sense of belonging: do they feel like they belong in those schools and those classrooms? And if not, why not? If students don’t feel like their dignity is being honored, then they are probably not going to perform and reach that level of achievement.”

Principal of Phoenix Academy, a school for students with learning challenges, Assistant Principal at Riverview High School, Manatee High School, and Palmetto High School, and many others. Her years of experience in education have prepared her for this new role, which Moore felt was the perfect next step for her.

“I have always dealt with issues about equity, diversity, and inclusion whether it was in my school, my work, or my community. I have just always been a part of those kinds of efforts, and I wanted to get more involved in that type of work,” Moore said, “At that time over the summer I did not know this position was going to open up. When we hired our new Superintendent, Dr. Asplen, he shared with the principals that he was going to be posting this position, and I was like, ‘Wow, that’s exactly what I want to do.’”

As Director of Innovation and Equity, Moore also serves as chair of the Equity Committee. Discussions about who would be considered to be on the committee to best serve its function commenced soon after its announcement. Although there were disagreements on what combination of people and perspectives would best allow the committee to serve its function, it was clear to the School Board that it would have to include a diverse group of people.

While the Equity Committee, now consisting of parents, organization representatives, retired educators, and more, was

formed prior to Moore’s hiring, one of Moore’s first decisions in her new role was adding four students onto the District Equity Committee, one each from Pine View, Sarasota High, Riverview High, and Booker High Schools. She felt that the student perspective was a crucial one to include in the conversations that the committee would be having.

“The students have an equal voice on the committee. They are expected to participate in the work. If they ever feel like they are not being heard they should let me know that,” Moore said.

Yu brings his perspective as a Korean-American student and experience with racism at school to the table at the committee meetings.

“Nobody really talks about racial injustice against Asians as much as they do with other races and communities. I think that’s one of the reasons why I was chosen; I have personal experience and perspective with that, and I can speak up about it,” he said.

Yu and the other members of the District Equity Committee are in the process of gathering and discussing the information about the issues that Sarasota schools are facing in regards to equality so that they can begin to form a structured plan towards solutions.

As chair of the committee among many other responsibilities, Moore has a long road ahead of her, but she is hopeful for the future.

“Equity is not a task. Equity is building a culture, which requires sustainability and accountability,” Moore said. “We have to focus on shaping inclusive environments intentionally designed to foster a sense of belonging. I think we can be successful, and I’m excited about where we are headed as a district.”

GRAPHIC BY MAHITHA RAMACHANDRAN

we just laid down ground rules and goals for the committee. Dr. Asplen and Dr. Moore went over FSA discrepancies in the scores between different races and ethnicities throughout the state of Florida,” Yu said. “There was a lot of interesting data they pulled up. We basically went over those statistics and different ways we could approach leveling those results out.”

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GRAPHIC BY MAHITHA RAMACHANDRAN



# 2021 Florida Legislative Session: Highlighted

## HB 1/ SB 484: Combating Public Disorder

Governor Ron DeSantis’s Riot Bill is a priority for this session in response to the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020. Key provisions include new prohibitions on violent or disorderly assemblies, obstructing roadways, destroying or toppling monuments and local governments reducing or slashing police budgets. It also introduces new mandatory minimum of 6 months jail time for striking an officer, no bail to protestors, no victim compensation if someone is injured in a protest, and more. The bill has been criticized for attacking freedom to assemble, endangering protestors and being destined to pass due to its priority from Senate President Wilton Simpson and DeSantis.

## HB 7041/ SB 90: Vote-by-mail Ballots

Following a record number of vote by mail ballots in the 2020 election, SB 90 has inched forward in the Senate as well as its House Counterpart and adds another potential hurdle for those who want to vote by mail in 2022. If the bill passes, it would require voters to reapply for vote by mail ballots every election cycle. It has been criticized for being partisan and adding another roadblock to make voting harder.

## HB 241/SB 582: Parental Rights

The controversial Parental Rights Bill is focused on giving parents more control and information regarding their children’s education and healthcare. Key points include requiring written parental consent for medical practitioners to treat or prescribe medication to minors, allow parents to access student records, and reiterating present powers of parents in accessing education materials for review. The bill has been met with harsh criticism from a variety of groups as being potentially dangerous for potentially outing LGBTQ+ youth who speak to school staff in confidence, being repetitive and unnecessary, and for infringing on the rights of minors.

## HB 545/ SB 410: Materials Harmful to Minors

Currently, the state of Florida uses an abstinence-based, opt-out policy for comprehensive health education, which does not require the teaching of sex ed and is expected to emphasize heterosexual marriage and abstinence as the social standard. This bill seeks to change the current system with the starkest change being that parents must opt their child into health education at their schools.

## HB 9/ SB 1608: Protecting Consumers Against Pandemic-related Fraud

A bipartisan bill looking to pass targets those exploiting COVID-19 to create scams relating to vaccines and personal protective equipment. These scams may be exchanging vaccine access for money or misrepresenting PPE equipment. It would also stiffen regulation on those spreading false or misleading information about vaccines or PPE with the intent to defraud.

## Sarasota County receives 12 electric school buses

by **Allyson Mizanin**  
Sports Editor

Following their over \$57 million settlement with Volkswagen, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been using its new funds to increase transportation-based sustainability around Florida. Their mission has led them to providing grants for electric school buses in counties belonging to Air Quality Priority Areas. Alongside neighboring Manatee, Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Polk counties, Sarasota is one of 23 counties eligible for these funds. It will be receiving 12 new electric buses.

An Air Quality Priority Area is one that is at heightened risk for six main air pollutants: carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide. Though some of these pollutants are naturally occurring, increased levels of them can become dangerous. Diesel exhaust is a major contributor to poor air quality. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) explains through their website that, though diesel engines have been getting cleaner over the years, “[d]iesel fuel...produces many harmful emissions when it is burned, and diesel-fueled vehicles are major

sources of harmful pollutants, such as ground-level ozone and particulate matter.”

The DEP is dedicated to eliminating these exhaust emissions through their Diesel Emissions Mitigation Program (DEMP). They launched their Electric School Bus Project as a branch of the DEMP Nov. 16, 2020. Through their website, [floridadep.gov](http://floridadep.gov), counties can apply for cost-reimbursement grants that cover up to 75% of the cost of an electric bus.

Upon purchase, the electric buses won't be added to the counties' existing fleets; rather, they'll replace Type C or Type D diesel buses with engine models that are from 2009 or older. These types can be differentiated by a few key physical characteristics: Type C buses have the conventional dog nose design with entrance doors behind the front wheels, while Type D buses have the transit-style flat nose design with entrance doors ahead of the front wheels.

Of Sarasota County's 320 total school buses, only 74 followed the replacement classifications laid out by the DEP. The county decided that, based on financial viability, 12 electric buses would be the best number to introduce at first.

“Before we invest a large amount of money in these electric buses, we want to identify any challenges moving forward,” Sarasota County Director of Transportation Jason Harris said. “That's why we started off with the 12.”

Each electric bus costs a quarter of a million dollars more than a diesel one; the models that are being introduced to Sarasota are \$365,000 a piece, as compared to their diesel counterparts being \$110,000 each. Harris notes that for the 12 buses, the county will pay about \$1.1 million to DEP's nearly \$3.25 million.

Those prices don't take energy costs into account. Each electric bus needs its own respective charging station. Installation for each station is around \$17,000, but will be covered at no cost by Florida Power and Light (FPL). Each station will have its own rapid charger, which “will charge the bus in approximately 3 hours,” according to Harris. This will make it possible for electric buses to do both morning and afternoon routes.

Though the district wants to begin electric bus rollout next school year, they're planning for it to officially start in the 2022-2023 school year. This extra time

will allow their manufacturer, Thomas Buses, a full 250-day window for delivery, as well as give the county the opportunity to learn more about the unknown factors associated with the rollout.

The long-term cost difference between diesel and electric buses is unknown because the exact cost of electricity to power the buses is still up in the air. Estimates will be cemented once the location of the FPL-funded charging stations is chosen; the county is working alongside FPL to decide on a location that'll maximize the 100 miles each electric bus can travel with air conditioning running at full blast.

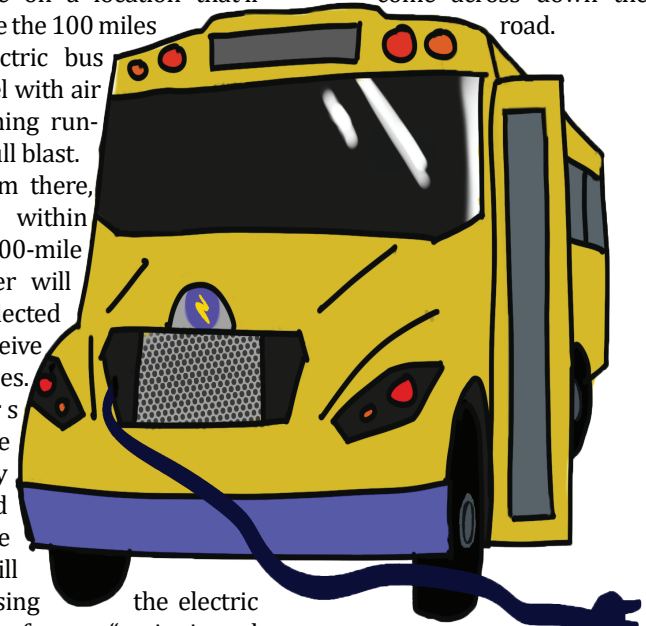
From there, routes within the 100-mile parameter will be selected to receive the buses. Drivers who were already assigned these routes will start using the electric buses after “minimal training because of the new op-

erating technology,” Harris said.

Though driving features will largely be the same, there's one major difference Harris pointed out about the new buses: they're “whisper-quiet.”

“You can be standing right next to one and not hear it. It's unbelievable how quiet the buses will operate in comparison to diesel buses,” Harris said.

As long as the DEMP continues providing grants, Sarasota County looks to replace their 62 remaining eligible buses once they've solved any hiccups they come across down the road.



GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON

## Addressing misconceptions about the COVID Vaccine

by **Lora Rini**  
Assistant Match Editor

After a year-long pandemic, a vaccine was finally released December 2020. Since then, an increasing number of people from all different age groups and professions have been given the opportunity to receive the vaccine. Beginning April 5, everyone aged 16 and older in Florida became eligible for their shot.

Though this was exciting news for many, the reception was not all positive. A significant number of people across the globe do not plan on getting vaccinated for varying reasons, many of which are merely rumors or misconceptions.

When first hearing about the distribution of vaccines, AP World History and Psychology teacher Robin Melton experienced some doubts, however, these reservations were soon settled, and she recently received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

“Honestly, when everybody started talking about a vaccine, there was a part of me that was like, ‘I think I'm going to wait a little bit and see how it goes before I want to get it,’ but then, as an opportunity came up for teachers to get it,” Melton said. “I honestly did it partially for myself, but more so for my students and my family — my dad is a diabetic and my mom has a heart condition, so I wanted to make sure I was safe for them.”

There are several components of the COVID-19 vaccine that make it different from typ-

ical vaccines. Due to the unique nature of the vaccine, as well as the dire circumstances under which it was produced, there are various false claims regarding its efficacy and legitimacy circulating via the internet or other social interactions. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) put some of these rumors to rest in an article called, “Myths and Facts About COVID-19 Vaccines.”

Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine is a viral vector vaccine that requires one dose to be fully effective. Essentially, the vaccine introduces a vector, or a harmless virus, to a cell, which causes spike proteins to be manufactured. Spike proteins are only found on the surface of the COVID-19 virus, so they are completely harmless. When they are displayed on the surface of a cell in our bodies, our immune system recognizes it as a threat and begins to produce antibodies.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine was the last to be distributed. Many of the staff at Pine View have gotten this vaccine already, including AP European History teacher Christine Braun.

“When I found out I was getting the [Johnson & Johnson]... I did feel a little more confident with that one, because I thought, ‘Okay, the first, earlier ones have already been given out — this

is the last one developed, which means they knew more. It's a one and done, I'm feeling much more secure with that one,” Braun said.

vaccine to induce the virus. It can cause some side effects, such as pain and redness on one's arm where the vaccine was injected, tiredness, nausea, and headaches. However, it is important to note that these side effects are not the virus.

Since COVID-19 tests are used to determine whether someone has a current COVID-19 infection, it is impossible for the vaccine to induce a positive test result. It is possible though that the vaccine may cause a positive antibody test result. Experts are currently researching this topic further.

Some of the people who are against getting the vaccine believe that since they already had COVID-19 once, they are immune to the virus. This is also false, as it is possible to be infected with COVID-19 twice.

Some counter the vaccine under the false claim that it is ineffective. While it is true that the vaccine is not 100 percent effective in preventing COVID-19, it is close, with around 95 percent effectiveness two weeks after the shot. Even in an unlikely event that one does get COVID-19 after being vaccinated, the shot will make the symptoms less severe.

The major rollout of the vaccine has also raised questions

regarding mask-wearing, specifically whether immunized people should still wear a face-covering in public. Even getting a shot, according to the Cleveland Clinic, it is possible that vaccinated people may be asymptomatic spreaders. Masks must be worn long-term to protect those who are immunocompromised or cannot receive a vaccine due to an allergy.

There are still limited doses of the vaccine, and at least 50 to 80 percent of people need to be vaccinated before we reach herd immunity. Until then, it is imperative that everybody continue to wear a mask in public, whether they have been vaccinated or not.

However, some aspects of daily life can return to normal for those who have already received a shot. After waiting for a sufficient time for the vaccine to take full effect, people can begin to gather in small groups without face coverings according to CDC guidelines. AP United States History teacher Scott Wolfinger has already begun to change his lifestyle in small, safety-conscious ways since being vaccinated.

“You know there are going to be people that are resistant to masks, and they don't affect me anymore, so that feels good. We're living our lives normally, like the CDC said to — they gave out guidelines saying, ‘Live your life, but wear a mask, be careful around people who haven't been vaccinated, but other than that, you can go about and do normal things now,’ so we're doing that,” Wolfinger said.

**Moderna**

- uses mRNA to replicate harmless spike protein
- 94 percent effective
- for ages 18+
- two shots, 28 days apart

**Pfizer-BioNTech**

- uses mRNA to replicate harmless spike protein
- 95 percent effective
- for ages 16+
- two shots, 21 days apart

**Johnson & Johnson**

- uses viral vector to replicate harmless spike protein
- 72 percent effective overall, 82 percent effective against severe disease
- for ages 18+
- one shot

GRAPHIC BY SARAH CATALANO

The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines are mRNA vaccines, which use mRNA to teach our cells to make spike proteins. Both brands' vaccines require two doses. A myth about mRNA vaccines is that they alter DNA, which is not the case because the vaccines do not ever interact with DNA.

Another false rumor is that the COVID-19 vaccine can cause a recipient to contract COVID-19. None of the current authorized vaccines contain the live virus, so there is no possibility for the

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# Teacher connects through music

by Alyson Mizanin  
Sports Editor

Based on the laws of probability, if you step into physics teacher Malele Nzeza's classroom, you'll likely find the average science class; depending on the day, students will be listening attentively as Nzeza lectures about force and motion and everything in between, or collaborating together while working on the day's lab.

If you're lucky, you'll enter what he calls "Dance Party Fridays." Before the last day of the week's lecture starts, he takes the time to play music for the class. The songs are different each week.

"sometimes it'll be a three-minute long Fall Out Boy music video. You just never know," eleventh-grader Cooper Couden said.

That element of just not knowing is what led up to the day that Nzeza shared his own music with his classes.

"One day, he decided to play a cover he did of a song...I would've never thought he was that good. I listened to a few of his other songs and they honestly blew me away," tenth-grader Nicole Lauren said.

The thing is, Nzeza's life doesn't exactly play by the rules of probability. Having been born in the Congo before moving to Belgium and eventually to America, music is one of the few parts of life that has remained constant for Nzeza over the years. It's the medium he has used—and still uses—to express himself since the age of 15.

"I came into the United States in the mid-'80s and I didn't know anybody. I went to a concert with people who loved the same music, and we

came together. Music brings people together. It's the universal language," Nzeza said.

Bringing people together is the purpose of Nzeza's YouTube channel: Malele. He had been playing for about 40 years before creating the channel in January 2019.

"I wanted to expose my music, give it to other people. A friend had a YouTube channel and recommended that I make one, so I decided that I would make videos and see what happens," Nzeza said.

Two years later, the channel is home to nine videos. Some are covers, while others are original pieces. One is a full album he released in January 2020. It's called "Aurora," named after and inspired by his daughter.

Prior to Aurora, Nzeza had released one album, called Rhythm of Life, in 2006. He notes the differences between the two albums come from developing his style of music through nuance.

"I've gotten better at playing guitar [since 2006], but the writing in Rhythm of Life was more complex. Aurora is a simpler album; the structure of the music is simpler. I've simplified the way I write music over time," Nzeza said.

That simplification is what makes the Aurora album feel like an extended letter to his daughter—a letter that Nzeza spent seven years writing. Aurora begins with an instrumental called "As the Sun Rises"; immediately following it, audio from right after his daughter's birth is combined with another soft instrumental. Comments like "She's gorgeous" and "She's so quiet" are heard in the listener's right ear as Nzeza plays on. It's

quiet, peaceful; the listener is immersed in the middle of a private moment—one of "the greatest events in my life," according to Nzeza—and the almost whisper-like comments from Nzeza's family cement that.

Another personal moment is shared in "Baby Talk," the fourth song on the album. It's an instrumental accompanied with the audio of Nzeza's wife trying to teach their daughter how to say "mama." She keeps saying "dada" instead.

The album continues for ten songs total, three of which have vocals from his friends. One song in particular stands out to Nzeza, as the vocals for it were sung by his friend, Twinkle. It's called "Learning to Live" and solidifies what Nzeza wanted for his daughter to get out of the album.

"Learning to Live" is like a letter I wrote to Aurora about the lessons I've learned in life, the same ones she'll learn herself someday," Nzeza said. "Twinkle made it her own because she had her own interpretation of it. She did a great job with it—way better than what I could've done."

Nzeza's life experiences have crafted the unique ways he writes his own music. He draws inspiration from works in different languages and genres.

"When I grew up, my siblings were into R&B. I had other family who listened to classical music. My parents listened to African music. My friends, the kids I hung around—they were into heavy metal. I incorporated all of those things into an appreciation for all types of music," Nzeza said.

His parents didn't allow



Physics teacher Malele Nzeza plays a cover of Justin Bieber's "Sorry" on the piano, which is uploaded on his YouTube Channel: Malele. Nzeza has been playing music since he was 15 as a way to express himself. PHOTO PROVIDED BY MALELE NZEZA

him to pursue music lessons, so Nzeza taught himself how to play. His first instrument was an acoustic guitar—"with a bowed neck, which made it really difficult to stay in tune," Nzeza said—that he got with a guitar-playing guidebook.

Once MTV came along, Nzeza watched the videos and learned how to play the songs that were featured. He started off simple before progressing into more complex pieces, citing heavy metal and jazz as major sources of inspiration because of the musicians' multifaceted abilities. Over the years, he has learned how to play acoustic, classical, and electric guitars, as well as the piano, keyboard, and bass.

Nzeza is always making new music; oftentimes, he's working on multiple songs at once. His most recent piece is called "Sarasota." He hasn't published it yet but plans on doing so soon.

"Sarasota inspires me. I love the place where I live. I think it's paradise here," he said.

Nzeza's experiences with both science and the arts have

given him the opportunity to discover their rarely-seen similarities.

"Both music and physics are art. Being able to solve equations is conceptual. Music is conceptual," Nzeza said. "When writing a song, you arrange the melody and create a structure. When you solve an equation, you follow a structure with rules that will flow with the outcomes. I can give an idea for how a tune is going to go and someone else will make it their own. Same with physics problems; we all solve it in a different way, but we hopefully come to the same conclusions."

"But when you're playing music, your brain hurts less than when you're doing physics," he added, laughing.

When thinking about retirement, Nzeza notes that neither music nor physics will be going anywhere.

"My life revolves around three things after family: physics, music, and martial arts. Those are the three things I've been doing forever and those are the three things I'll do forever," he said.

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## Local farmer uses sustainable agricultural method



Kaercher Family Farms uses vertical farming to grow rows of crops indoors. With special LED equipment containing red and blue chips on the color spectrum, the tinted lighting helps the plants grow successfully without sunlight. PHOTO PROVIDED BY MATTHEW KAERCHER

by Joanna Malvas  
Focus Editor

With sustainability, food production, and distribution being central concerns of many environmentalists and scientists, one agricultural method has seen early success and adopts an upward way of thinking. This method has been coined “vertical farming.”

Vertical farming’s priority is to maximize crop yield in a limited space; it exemplifies its name with produce being grown in vertically stacked layers, as reported by “The

Balance,” a small business blog. What makes this practice critically unorthodox, however, is the fact that these farms are located in indoor spaces, such as shipping containers or warehouses.

With the use of Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) technology, vertical farms can be established even in urban areas with the proper technology. Essential CEA products include artificial LED lighting, controlled temperature, and metal reflectors that simulate sunlight.

While lab-grown, mass-produce may sound like a technological advancement from a futuristic Sci-Fi film, there have actually been vertical farms established locally. Matthew Kaercher established his vertical farm in Pinellas Park after getting inspired by a greenhouse area featured in Disney World’s Epcot in 2010. Kaercher then began his exploration of sustainable agriculture through reading informative books, watching YouTube videos, and taking online university courses and trials.

While researching, Kaercher witnessed the lack of food distribution in areas of need arise.

“I think last year, through COVID, opened up the world’s eyes to how fragile the food supply is. But, it is a trend that I saw going back to 2014 and 2015. I have been in different countries all over the world — from Europe to Central America, to the islands in the Caribbean — it’s a growing problem,” Kaercher said.

Through the use of hydroponics, the horticulture practice of using nutrient-rich water in the absence of fertilized soil, Kaercher’s farm has been able to supply food for a

local hospital group throughout the pandemic. The farm has been able to further expand its consumer relations, supplying more hospitals, assisted living facilities, and restaurant businesses this year.

“Once COVID happened, [hospitals] shut down the cafeterias. Everything was going to be pre-made; everything was going to be grab-and-go to prevent people from gathering at salad bars. I was able to email their food and beverage coordinator and shift excess lettuce to different locations to keep food in hospitals,” Kaercher said.

Still, vertical farming has limitations, as public criticisms, such as those presented by the Economy League, express that vertical farming is heavily reliant on technology, is ‘overly engineered,’ and can be energy-intensive. Even for Kaercher, his farm is still supplied by the city’s electricity grid rather than solar energy. This is due to volatile Florida weather such as hurricanes or storms that could easily be detrimental to solar

panel technology, causing the entire farm to shut down if something were to happen. Nonetheless, Kaercher emphasizes that vertical farming is one of many environmentally progressive solutions.

“When you look at conventional farming and how globalized it’s become, there’s problems and advantages to both. But, when you’re talking about 9 billion to 10 billion people in the next 20 years, over half of them are going to live in major cities. It poses the question of where are you going to get food from?” Kaercher said.

Kaercher acknowledges that all the issues of sustainable agriculture can’t be solved by vertical farming, but he hopes to encourage fluidity in sustainable education and accessibility. For example, Kaercher has reached out to local Boys & Girls Clubs to teach hydroponics and has also been involved with research for regenerative agriculture in Costa Rica.

To learn more about Kaercher’s farm, visit his Facebook page @KaercherFamilyFarms.

## Florida Combats Sea Level Rise

by Felicity Chang  
Multimedia Editor

Arriving at the beach at daybreak with the alluring sight of sunlight reflecting across the surface of the water, slightly irritating yet familiar sensation of sand sticking between toes, and faint, lingering taste of sea salt from a passing breeze — this is the privilege Florida residents have from living on a peninsula. However, according to a study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the easily accessible coastline that has been praised for its beaches and resorts may be underwater by 2100, with cities such as Miami having a lock-in date of 2025.

This is not a new concept, as global warming has caused average sea levels to swell significantly from the start of the 20th century. Although many members of Florida’s state legislature have failed to acknowledge the existence of climate change in the past, rising sea levels and coastal flooding have proved to be a genuine, immediate threat to residences and commercial structures in the last few years. In 2020, Gov. Ron DeSantis signed Florida Senate Bill 178, forbidding tax dollars to be spent in coastal zones that have not taken measures to combat rising sea levels, and state lawmakers presented the “Always Ready” plan in February of this year.

Florida House Speaker Chris Sprowls spoke about lawmakers’ plan to commit \$100 million a year to address sea-level rise in a Feb. 26 press conference at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

“This legislation protects our homeowners from flooding events that upend lives, as well as our business owners, the backbone of our economy,” he said in a statement. “I fully believe this transformational public policy, this prepares Florida to deal with the implications of flooding, will be an example for the rest of the nation.”

The “Always Ready” proposal will be enacted across several different bills, with one of the main points being the offer of tax breaks for property owners who choose to elevate their homes to combat flooding. A resilience plan regarding rising sea levels was also mentioned; DeSantis proposed providing \$1 billion over the next four years to fund local efforts. Moreover, the plan will establish the Florida Flood Hub for Applied Research and Innovation within USF’s College of Marine Science, a hub focused on flood monitoring and sea level prediction.

“While some continued to debate word choices, we’re rolling up our sleeves and focusing on real problems that affect real business owners and real homeowners in our com-

munity,” Spowls said.

Environmental activists also spoke at USF, detailing their concerns regarding the state legislature’s plan.

“Our leaders must take the necessary steps to not only address these impacts but more importantly, acknowledge and address the root cause of this problem,” said Yoca Ardit-Rocha, executive director of the non-profit CLEO Institute.

Despite a continued lack of acknowledgment regarding Florida’s — and the globe’s — climate crisis, state lawmakers addressed impacts on infrastructure as well as the economy.

Miami Rep. Demi Bussatta Cabrera put forth the Environment, Agriculture and Flooding committee’s bills in the “Always Ready” plan. “The effects of flooding are felt all across the state in both coastal and inland communities, and we must address these threats using a coordinated statewide approach and this bill does just that,” she said.

GRAPHIC BY GABRIELE NAVICKIS

**DEBUNKING COMMON CLIMATE MYTHS**

Sources: National Geographic, WWF, Before the Flood, and CBS News

**MYTH: CLIMATE CHANGE ISN'T THAT SERIOUS BECAUSE IT STILL GETS COLD**

It is important to differentiate between climate and weather. If our climate was in balance, we would expect a roughly 1-to-1 ratio of record high temperatures to record lows over the course of a year. Instead, since the 2000's, we've seen a ratio closer to 2-to-1 in the U.S. In 2012 we reached 5-to-1, and 2016 was the hottest year in recorded history.

**MYTH: ANIMALS CAN JUST ADAPT TO THE CHANGING CLIMATE**

Many different animals are able to adapt to their environments, but at the rate that the climate is changing, it is starting to become impossible for many different species to adapt fast enough to keep up with their changing environments. In addition, many species have gone extinct because of habitat destruction caused by human activity.

**MYTH: CLIMATE CHANGE ISN'T HARMFUL TO HUMANS**

Changes to climate systems create more severe natural disasters. A report estimated that in 2012 alone, more than 32 million people were forced to leave their homes due to natural disasters related to global warming trends. In addition, rising sea levels, temperatures, and CO2 levels will have a huge negative effect on human physical and mental health, including increased hospitalizations for respiratory conditions.

## Q&A with a Climate Psychologist

An interview with Caroline Hickman, M.S., a lecturer in social work and climate psychology at the University of Bath in the U.K. and a practicing psychotherapist

by Mahitha Ramachandran  
Sci-Tech Editor

Q: What does it mean to have anxiety about the climate as a young person?

A: The feelings start with anxiety as you become aware of climate disasters, either locally or globally. But that anxiety is an emotionally healthy response. We measure mental health by our ability to respond accurately to the external world, and the external world will cause anxiety at the moment. Feeling that anxiety is also a sign of empathy and care about the world.

But there’s another side to it. As a young person, you then look to adults, people in power, to expect them to take care of you and the world. It’s a psychological expectation that

we will be looked after. As you realize you’re not being protected, in fact it’s the opposite of that, then you feel absolutely betrayed and abandoned by adults, particularly adults in power, like the government. That’s who we expect to protect society and act in the best interests of all of us. So there is a relational pain there. It’s not just personal; it’s also in relationship to the government and the adults around you who are failing to take action when they have the power to do so. So anxiety is the first feeling, but it’s not the last feeling. It goes into all these other emotions.

Q: Why do young people and adults often react differently to climate issues?

A: Young people are seeing it

as not just a climate-related problem but linked to global injustice and racial injustice and economic injustice. Young people are seeing this systemically. Sometimes adults are struggling with immediate concerns: how to put food on the table, how to look after family, how to deal with the coronavirus. They’re worried about surviving, and the coronavirus or losing their job is the more immediate threat for a lot of adults.

We have to call on adults to have empathy and stand in the shoes of young people and see it through their eyes. And many people need to also deal with their guilt and shame, because adults have fundamentally failed children and young

people here, and I think they need to be told that.

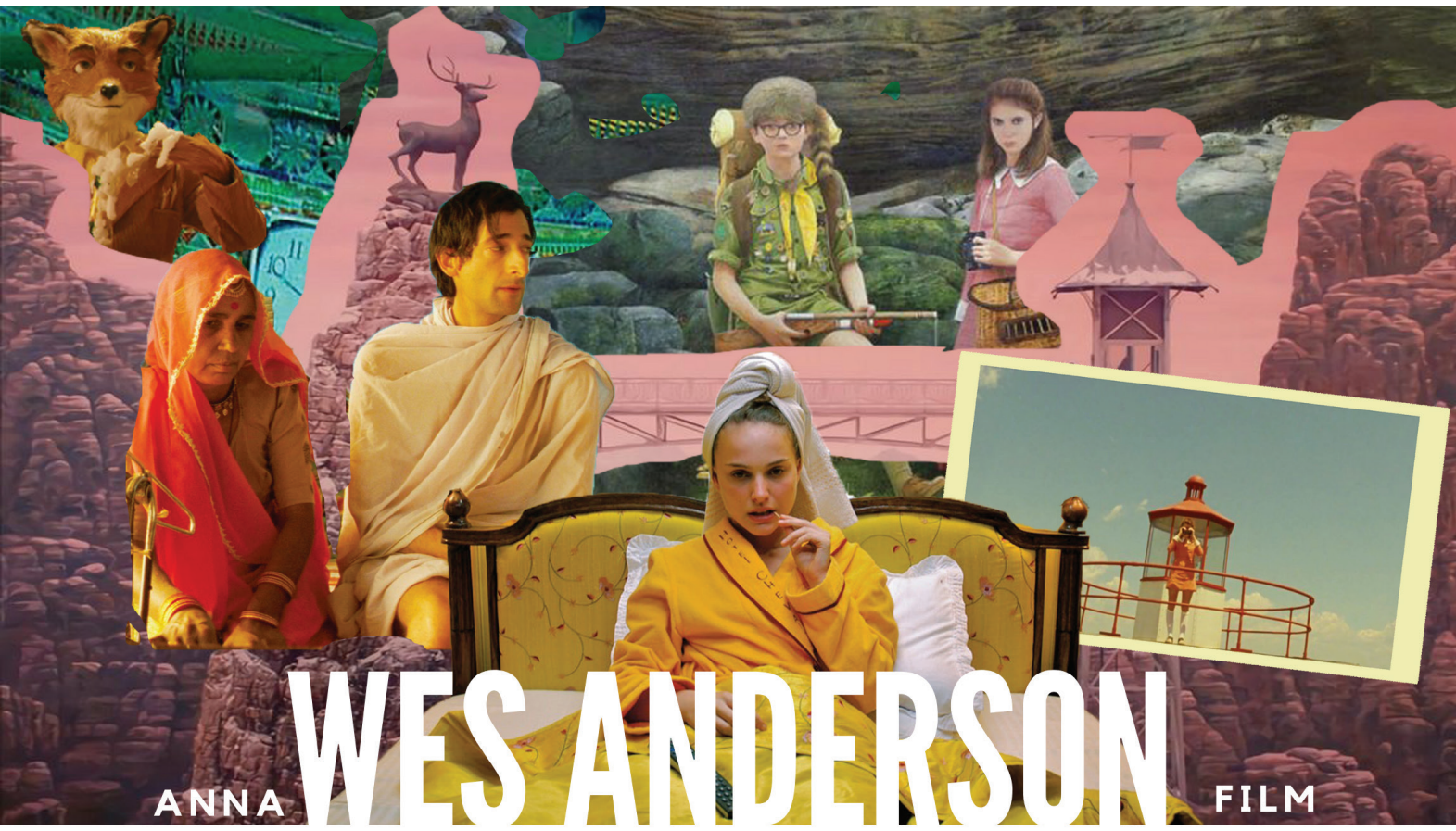
If we can say sorry about this, then actually that’s quite reparative, and then there’s a better chance of intergenerational action together.

Q: How do we combat climate-related anxiety and prevent it from hindering action?

A: Try and reframe the way you think about it. Tell yourself “No, I’m not eco-anxious, I’m eco-aware, I’m eco-alive.” Those feelings are uncomfortable, so you have to talk about it. The kind of container psychologically that you need is other people supporting you, like family or friends. Or you need to find a group where you’re

supporting each other. When people talk about fixing eco-anxiety through activism it frustrates me because that locates the problem in the individual when it’s a global problem. So we need the world to act.

We also need hope, but we need what in the Climate Psychology Alliance we call “radical hope.” Radical hope isn’t naive, it’s not like “Oh we’ll be alright.” It’s radical. It acknowledges that things are bad and getting worse but also the things we can and must do about it if we act together. Once we accept that it’s a mess and take responsibility for that, we can change it for the better.



ANNA LABINER'S

# WES ANDERSON

FILM RANKING

If Wes Anderson has accomplished anything artistically, it is developing his own idiosyncratic style. Art Nouveau color schemes, witty dialogue, rigid symmetry, recurring actors (Bill Murray, Tilda Swinton, Owen Wilson, Jason Schwartzman, and Angelica Houston), and characters with intense emotional baggage characterize a style that has become a cult classic.

There's something so precious about the way Anderson crafts a story, and though his style is certainly not for everyone, his movies appeal to me visually and emotionally in a way no other film can. Watching a Wes Anderson movie is like putting on a comfy sweater.

Each film is uniquely itself, and though it was challenging, I managed to rank my favorite Wes Anderson films for your viewing pleasure:

## 1 The Grand Budapest Hotel

This one should really come as no surprise. I think my favorite part of the movie (besides the fact that we get an appearance from Saoirse Ronan) is the way Anderson switches between filming styles — like the scene with the ski chase where the filmography switches from a classic to an animated style. These little clips that diverge from the standard method of filming add even more whimsy to a movie that is already drowning in charming oddities.

"The Grand Budapest Hotel" is the purest form of Anderson's style and is a culmination of the stylistic quirks from many of his other films.

## 2 Fantastic Mr. Fox

This is always the movie that I come back to when I need something comforting and nostalgic. Anderson does the book justice, and beyond the plot, the visual aspects are shockingly beautiful. It's pretty apparent how obsessive and precise Anderson was with the claymation, and the effort was well worth it — no space is left empty, and every frame contains little quirks and stylistic add-ins that pull you into the world of Mr. Fox and his friends.

## 3 Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou

Bill Murray has been in just about every movie ever made, but I still think this is his best role. The costumes (red beanies and blue jumpsuits) are iconic, and the choppy dialogue keeps the movie pretty fast-paced. Stylistically, the movie certainly measures up to Anderson's other films, and the sea life that's depicted is incredibly whimsical. Life Aquatic also, in my opinion, has one of the best soundtracks of all of Anderson's movies — featuring David Bowie songs covered in Portuguese.

## 4 The Darjeeling Limited

In most Wes Anderson film rankings, The Darjeeling Limited ends up pretty low on the list, which always surprised me. The dysfunctional family concept is all over Anderson's movies, and The Darjeeling Limited is no exception — the featured set of brothers are truly broken, but their distinctive mannerisms and growth through hardship as they go on an explorative train-ride through India make the film so powerful and bittersweet. Watching this movie makes my heart feel like it's glowing, and I really think it deserves more hype than it gets.

## 5 Rushmore

Another great Bill Murray moment, "Rushmore" features a very young Jason Schwartzman as the true embodiment

of a Pine View student. Max (Schwartzman) is an over-achieving student who is both incredibly wise and immature. Watching Rushmore, your heart hurts for Max, but he also has many moments where his actions make him irredeemable. If anything personifies the Pine View student, it's this movie, and I would highly recommend it.

## 6 Moonrise Kingdom

A cult classic, "Moonrise Kingdom" certainly lives up to the hype, but it doesn't feel as special to me as some of Anderson's other films. I can see why people love it so much, and it is a very heartwarming movie, but it just doesn't do it for me the way the prior films do.

However, performances by young actors Jared Gilman and Kara Hayward do make the film pretty iconic, and their deadpan humor and depiction of young love with the backdrop of an idealized version of Amer-

ica certainly make the film a staple when tackling the Anderson Cinematic Universe.

## 7 The Royal Tenenbaums

I feel the same way about this movie as I do about "Moonrise Kingdom" — I can see why they're favorites, but I just don't think they live up to movies like "Life Aquatic" and "Grand Budapest Hotel." I believe "The Royal Tenenbaums," in particular, has such a huge fanbase because of the cast, more specifically, Gwenevere Paltrow in her iconic depiction of Margot Tenenbaum. I really think that the characters are what make this movie, but the plot is a little meandering and doesn't feel very concrete (but the long shot at the end is always fun to watch).

## 8 Isle of Dogs

Don't get me wrong, I am a huge fan of claymation, and the visuals for "Isle of Dogs" are certainly comparable to those in "Fantastic Mr. Fox," but the plot was also a little meandering in this one. I could watch it with no sound and still enjoy it the same amount. More specifically, there is a scene in Isle of Dogs that pays homage to the beauty and simplicity of the art of sushi, showing a birds-eye view of the construction of a roll of sushi. This scene is so remarkably beautiful and aesthetically pleasing that I could watch it on repeat for an hour and be as satisfied as if I had watched the entire movie.

Anderson's dedication to style and technique is painfully evident in this movie, but it seems as though some of the plot was sacrificed for the sake of the aesthetic.

GRAPHICS BY SARAH CATALANO AND KAI SPRUNGER

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## The Torch's Pine View Tunes

by Joanna Malvas  
Focus Editor

It is no secret that the fast-paced culture at Pine View can be tough at times. Nevertheless, the Torch staff has personally selected some songs that are PV-personalized to our, well, special high school experience.



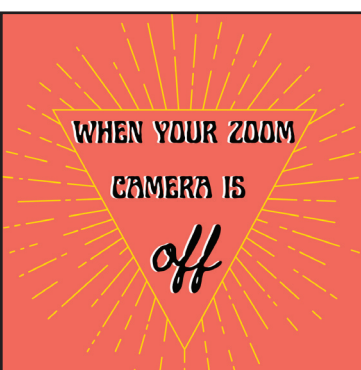
### Senior Skip Day Vibes

No matter what grade you're in, we all hit a point where we feel senioritis. When the weekend hits and it's finally time to kick back and relax, this set of songs is the go-to-playlist. With singalong, mainstream hits such as "Watermelon Sugar," to throwbacks such as "Banana Pancakes" by Jack Johnson, this playlist transforms that Saturday into a summer day.



### Model UN Madness

If you're in any of the following competitive clubs, such as Model UN, Speech and Debate, Future Business Leaders of America or Mock Trial club, you probably have a speech or entire paper that you haven't prepped. While your procrastination was self-willed, this playlist of classical music can help you get through this madness.



## SHOP LOCAL: BOOKSTORE EDITION

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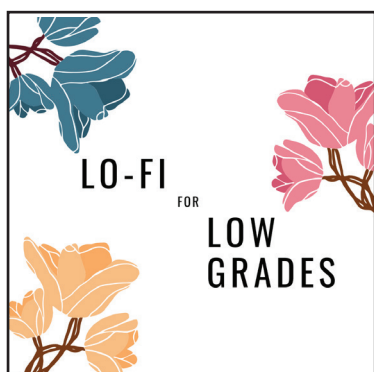
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### Lo-Fi for Low Grades

If there's one music genre that nobody can argue with, it's lofi. Lofi is perfect to suit any environment—whether it's quietly played in the background during late night study sessions in your bedroom or quick coffee runs to Starbucks—this playlist can ease your stress.



Find us on  
 Spotify  
at PV Torch



### Cram-for-the-Exam Type Beat

Let's be honest. You're not embodied with the 212-Pine-View-student spirit if you haven't been here at this point. Luckily for you, this playlist contains an intense list of motivational songs to get you through watching an entire unit's lecture at 2x speed. From hyped kpop songs like Blackpink's "Boombayah," to screamo rock songs such as "This Fire" by Killswitch, this playlist is sure to trigger some adrenaline.

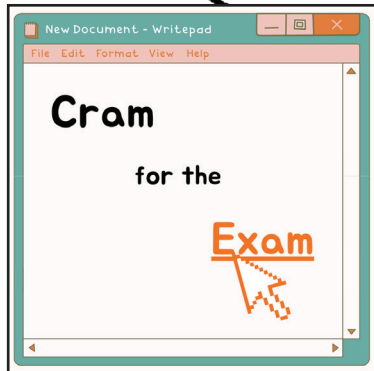
### When Your Zoom Camera is Off

As a remote kid myself, I understand the need to break up your day after sitting in the same room for six hours straight. Yet, this funky playlist can make your day a little less monotonous. When you need to dance your heart out or even just take a stretch, queue this playlist and you can easily turn your bedroom into a disco floor can ease your stress.



### POV: It's six a.m. and you're vibing in the shell lot

Sometimes, the place we may feel the safest is inside our cars. Whether it's a late night drive, or rather, in this case, an early morning drive, this is the time for you to vibe as your thoughts unwind. With this playlist including indie bedroom pop, as well as R&B-type songs, this playlist is a serene way to start your morning.



## [a column] Media Meta: the significance of a soundtrack

by Isabella Gaskill  
Web Administrative Editor

A movie's soundtrack is something that the viewers can take home with them and listen to long after they have seen the movie, so getting it right is an important aspect of a film. Although classical soundtracks and custom musical scores are amazing, there is something special to be said for movies whose soundtracks are comprised solely of popular tracks that the audience will recognize. Bringing together songs from different artists onto one cohesive soundtrack is difficult, but, if done right, it can make for an iconic soundtrack that viewers will talk about for years to come.

The line between an entertaining soundtrack and a blatant grab for the audiences' attention is a thin one. One example, "Suicide Squad," didn't even try to walk that line. While the soundtrack was well received by many, it is such a hodgepodge of random songs that it does not make sense. Under no circumstances should a Twenty-One Pilots song, a Panic! At the Disco cover of "Bohemian Rhapsody," and an Etta James song go on a soundtrack together, especially without a good reason.

Of course, music taste is subjective, so if you enjoy the soundtrack, that's fine. But the main issue is that these songs had very little to do with the movie itself, or rather, the story. It's a collection of songs intended to make the audience go "Oh, I love that song!" and keep their attention during an otherwise terrible movie.

Now forgive me for putting on my little tinfoil hat here; I think the reason "Suicide Squad" chose this type of soundtrack was to try to emulate the soundtrack from "Guardians of the Galaxy." The "Awesome Mix Vol. 1," as it is



dubbed in the first movie, was featured on countless merchandise items and playlists of those songs on Spotify have hundreds of thousands of likes. It became a major selling point for the movie, so it wouldn't be surprising if other movies tried to do something similar.

"Guardians of the Galaxy" is, of course, a fantastic movie with an honest, one-of-a-kind soundtrack. It's still a collection of well-loved songs, but each of these songs has personal significance to the main character, Peter Quill, because a major part of the story focuses on his mother, whom he got the playlist that makes up the soundtrack from. It's not a bunch of songs for the sake of having popular songs—it's more focused on the impact on the story.

"Baby Driver" did the same thing; its catchy soundtrack was used to drown out the main characters' tinnitus, allowing the music to become an important part of his character.

I truly love movies that pull songs from different artists to make an impactful and memorable soundtrack. But for it to be more than an attention-grabber, a soundtrack should have some sort of meaning to the piece. It's the connection between movie, music, and audience member that will make a soundtrack memorable.

**Recommended viewing:**  
"Baby Driver" & "The Perks of Being a Wallflower"

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# Biden establishes policy on transgender athletes

by Sarah Catalano  
Features Editor

Amidst the flurry of executive orders released on President Joe Biden's first day in office, Biden signed an "Executive Order on Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation."

The order reversed some limitations on transgender rights created under the Trump administration. It explicitly acknowledged the intersection of gender and racial identity, including "high levels of workplace discrimination, homelessness, and violence, including fatal violence" faced by black transgender Americans. Overall, the order was an official statement of the Biden administration's intentions to enforce the rights of these groups.

The Biden administration also withdrew support from a federal lawsuit that would restrict participation of transgender girls in high school sports.

Several cisgender runners in Connecticut had originally filed the lawsuit after two transgender runners on the girls team repeatedly won track events over their cisgender peers. The plaintiffs argued that competing against male-to-female (MTF) transgender runners had caused them to miss out on athletic titles and opportunities they otherwise would have won.

Former Attorney General William Barr signed a statement of interest in the case in March 2020 on the grounds that it violated Title IX, a federal law protecting equal opportunities for girls in school-re-

lated matters. The Justice and Education departments withdrew from the case in Feb. 2021.

Leading arguments against trans athletic participation hinge on differences in the biological sexes. Opponents of inclusion argue that trans women have an advantage in women's sports due to naturally higher levels of testosterone, which would allow them to be stronger, faster, and/or physically larger than their peers—even after hormonal transition.

Higher testosterone levels do increase muscle growth. A 1989 study by the National Library of Medicine found that cisgender males who were given pharmaceutical doses of testosterone over a 12 week period showed a 27% mean increase in their muscle protein synthesis.

These same effects are seen in female-to-male (FTM) transitioning athletes who undergo hormonal therapy, and since their lack of naturally-produced testosterone is viewed as a disadvantage, there is little debate over the fairness of

their participation on men's teams.

However, trans women who undertake feminizing hormone therapy will typically up their estrogen levels medically, both decreasing muscle mass and redistributing weight within three to six months. The maximum effects on muscle,

according to Mayo Clinic, are felt after one to two years.

In an online article, Outsports interviewed four trans women athletes, all of who testified that they had to work increasingly hard to reach the same level of achievement they met before transitioning.

Former NCAA goalie Athena Del Rosario, who was among the fastest on her high school's boys soccer team before medication, described her transition.

"I was passing fitness tests, but I wasn't the fastest. And I was in shape. But we had girls running six-and-a-half-minute miles, and I was around seven minutes, barely passing the mile test," Del Rosario said.

Savannah Burton, a professional dodgeball player who physically transitioned in her thirties, is quoted by Shape.com: "She describes a physical transformation that was thrilling as a transgender person and terrifying as an athlete. 'My mechanics of playing didn't change,' she says of her agility and coordination. 'But my muscle strength decreased significantly. I can't throw as hard.'"

In the article, fitness company founder Alexandria Gutierrez describes lifting 35 pound weights before her transition, only to struggle lifting 20 pound dumbbells after.

"We're just like all the other athletes," hockey player Jessica Platt said to Outsports. "Some of us have certain skills, certain talents. But we all work hard to get where we're at."

While changes to muscle mass and fat distribution are significantly affected by hormones, an athlete's physical size based on height and bone structure is unlikely to change in a medical transition.

On February 18, Biden's much anticipated Equality Act was introduced in the House of Representatives, a step towards fulfilling his promise of equality for the LGBTQ+ community.

As research on the effects of hormonal therapy continues, major sports leagues continue to discuss where to set boundaries on participation to provide the most equity for all athletes involved. And for most transitioning athletes, the benefits of feeling comfortable in their bodies outweigh the drawbacks of muscle loss. GRAPHICS BY SARAH CATALANO

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) requires one year of hormonal treatment for trans women to be eligible for a women's team.

16 states have policies in place to include transgender and nonbinary students in school athletic programs

14 states require medical proof of a transition

10 states allow schools to create their own policies

Under the NCAA, a trans male athlete may compete on women's teams up until he begins transitioning with testosterone.

1977

U.S. Supreme Court rules in favor of trans tennis player Renée Richards in her lawsuit against the US Open for banning her from participation.

2015

IOC updates requirements for trans women. Participants must show testosterone level of less than 10 nanomoles per liter for at least one year prior to competition, but surgery is not required.

2019

Research for the largest known study of trans athletes begins at Loughborough University in the U.K.

2021

Biden takes office as U.S. president and passes executive order to combat discrimination based on gender or sexuality.

2004

International Olympics Committee (IOC) allows transgender athletes to participate in the Olympic games, requiring proof of reassignment surgery and hormone therapy.

2016

Chris Mosier makes the Team U.S.A. sprint duathlon team, becoming the first out transgender person to make a U.S. national team.

2020

Chris Mosier becomes the first trans man to make the men's Olympic Trials.

## [column]

# Delving into the Overexertion of Modern Student Athletes

by Tiffany Yu  
Asst. Match Editor-in-Chief

As student participation in sports grows, competition is increasing alongside it. As a result, athletes are being pushed harder than ever before to succeed—or to simply keep up.

Anybody who has played a physically demanding sport is no stranger to phrases such as "pain is temporary" and "push yourself to the limit"; however, these widespread statements are being taken too far as injuries among student athletes are rampantly increasing.

People inherently try to be the best at what they do; while it is important to be driven, the constant comparison to others that comes with competition can lead to dangerous consequences. While many people exhibit the mental capacity and endurance to push themselves in attempt to keep up with their peers, others overestimate how much they can physically handle. Athletes who push past their bodily limit in turn cause trauma to their bodies, which can range from overexertion to hospitalization for broken bones or torn muscles.

All athletes are different: each has a unique build, and all are more or less susceptible to certain injuries. According to the Center for Wellness Without Borders, there are three different somatotypes, or body

types: ectomorph, endomorph, and mesomorph. Mesomorphs possess the ideal body type when it comes to athletics; however, not everyone is lucky enough to have the ideal genetic composition. Mesomorphs tend to be more muscular and less predisposed to sports injuries. When people attempt to keep pace with those who have a natural advantage, injuries or self-harm are the results.

**"The narrative has shifted; if an athlete isn't achieving a certain level or position, they're 'not good enough.'"**

Over time, these oftentimes self-inflicted injuries have become destigmatized. This normalization is in part due to society's ever-growing standards in not only professional athletics, but also in schools. According to Business Insider, with the evolution of higher education over the past 20 years, collegiate admissions' demand for more "well-rounded" students has increased exponentially. With students relying on excellence in athletics as well as academics, the narrative has shifted; if an athlete isn't achieving a certain level or position, they're "not good enough."

Whereas in the past injuries have kept athletes from playing for whole seasons or quitting their sport altogether, it seems more than ever before these injured athletes willingly throw themselves back into

the game at earliest possible notice, or actively injure themselves for their sport.

According to CBC News York, Toronto Blue Jays outfielder Jose Bautista had missed a month with wrist inflammation due to an unstable tendon. After immediately returning to the field, he hadn't played two complete games before heading back to the designated list (DL) due to aggravating the injury. At the time, Toronto was replete with injuries that forced them into last place, and nothing short of a miracle could propel them into the playoffs. In attempts to recover lost time, athletes such as Bautista end up stalling their recoveries.

Especially in more competitive and physically demanding sports, these athletes need to continuously practice and maintain a certain physique if they want to keep their positions. Thus, they throw themselves back into the very activity that brought them harm, risking their health for the sake of their sport.

With sports that favor certain body types or weights, there is even more pressure on these athletes. They find dangerous methods of weight loss to make certain weight brackets, a common practice in sports such as wrestling and cheerleading. On the flip-side,

in sports such as weightlifting and football, athletes are pushed to use bodybuilding supplements that in the long-run cause damage such as heart failure or seizures. Athletes develop disordered eating patterns such as bulimia or anorexia in order to maintain this idealistic image or weight put in place by their sport. This causes physical damage, as well as self-image and mental health issues because of these unrealistic expectations.

Athletics continue to be overall an unregulated field. Athletes are seen as expendable, only to be replaced by someone with the same ability and twice the motivation.

In February of this year,

all linked to his gymnastics club located in Dimonsdale, Michigan. Because of Geddert's high profile and promise in the field of gymnastics, the hundreds of girls who passed through his facility underwent historically unethical treatment in attempt to win favor.

Geddert's treatment of the gymnasts demonstrates that people are actively subjecting themselves to abuse in order to succeed, and will continue to undergo this abuse in order to stay successful. The unbridled nature of sports creates entertainment and undeniable competition, but at what cost?

According to John Hopkins Medicine, in the United States alone, around 30 million children and teens participate in various sports each year. Of these 30 million, there's reported to be over 3.5 million injuries that caused the athlete to require medical attention and spend time away from their sport.

Sports, by design, are meant to increase physical

activity and aid in maintaining good health, but the ever-changing athletic industry has warped these concepts. For the benefit of both competitors and coaches, the constant pressure put on student athletes to improve by any means necessary needs to be abandoned. GRAPHIC BY ZOE MERRITT



As we enter spring and approach summer, Sarasota's trails offer opportunities for athletics, leisure, and everything in between. Refer to the map below to learn about these trails.



## Exploring the Hiking and Biking Trails of Sarasota



# Student goes abroad to pursue international water polo

by Sarah Hassan  
News Editor

Change has been an undeniable part of life post-March 2020, but moving across the Atlantic Ocean to pursue a penchant for water polo is something only few have experienced, one of whom is twelfth-grader Ian Baca. He and his sister, Venice High twelfth-grader Amelia Baca, decided to go to Barcelona, Spain to enroll in the Barce-

lona International Water Polo Academy (BIWPA). Ian's water polo journey started with a sport he has "since grown to hate...with a burning passion," he said: swimming. Ian is a triplet and originally started out as a swimmer with his siblings Amelia and Pine View twelfth-grader Wes Baca

when the trio was around six years old. Ian played water polo with his teammates after swimming practice ended. Part of what furthered his involvement in the sport was his father, Jon Baca, who created a water polo team at the Venice YMCA.

In January, Ian and Amelia moved to Barcelona to start the program. The siblings were able to make the move to Spain because they completed all their

required credits last semester, which led to early graduations. In the program, Ian was randomly picked to join the Sant Feliu club for water polo, where the team competes with other clubs across Spain.

Ian had to take Spanish classes at a small college while residing in the country due to COVID-19 restriction issues with traveling visas. The use of Catalan in Barcelona was an obstacle for Ian; though he took Spanish throughout high school, Catalan's distinct differences led to some difficulties.

"I think I have pretty good Spanish. I can pull a conversation...If it's a conversation about a topic I'm not familiar with, it's a little rough," Ian said, "but conversations about water polo or food, those are pretty easy."

Ian not only had to adapt to cultural differences, but also to the different water polo style in Barcelona. Floridian water polo utilizes more of a tactical approach, while the BIWPA depends on physicality. Now, Ian uses his speed as an advantage. He's able to capture the ball within the first few seconds of the game; this is as opposed to his time in Venice, where Baca would use a tactical approach by coaching his team from the pool during a game.

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## [an infographic]

### BREAKING DOWN PROTEIN TYPES

By Kasumi Wade

#### Whey Protein

- high quality amino acid profiles
- acid-soluble, so is easily digested and delivered into the blood and muscles
- most used to help athletes in the recovery process, increase muscle strength post-training, and build and maintain muscle mass
- includes dairy and is highly processed

#### Soy Protein

- plant based
- not known to benefit bodybuilders as it includes phytoestrogens, which may decrease testosterone and increase estrogen if consumed excessively
- shown to benefit women specifically

#### Casein Protein

- inhibits whole body protein breakdown
- most advantages for those with muscle recovery issues
- best before bed because takes longer to digest (helps reduce muscle breakdown, while increasing muscle growth)
- great source of calcium

#### Egg Protein

- high levels of leucine, which stimulates muscle protein synthesis
- easy to digest
- most used by those with milk allergies and for weight loss
- includes key micronutrient and minerals

Source: Healthline GRAPHIC BY BRIANNA NELSON



Ian Baca (left) looks for someone to pass the ball to during the 2019 Junior Olympics in California. Baca has nearly a decade's worth of water polo experience. PHOTO PROVIDED BY IAN BACA

want to be the person to bring the team down. The game went exactly opposite; he lifted his team up after a penalty.

"Right after I got in, the person I was on messed up. I was able to steal the ball, so we were able to go on offense again, which was pretty good showing that the other team was not perfect, and they made mistakes as well," Ian said. "People can go into games thinking the other team is really good... especially if you don't know anything about the other team, [so] every little mistake really helps."

Since there is a limit to how many international players are within a game, Ian has only played one game so far. BIWPA encompasses athletes with a diverse set of skills; Ian takes these athletes' skills as a challenge, viewing them as intriguing rather than intimidating.

"I was more in anticipation because playing someone who is better than you is a really good way to learn. If they beat

you in something, then you can think, 'How do you do that?' and then you can either emulate or try to stop them so they can't do it again," Ian said.

This change in athletes' skills is significant, as prior to BIWPA, Wes and Ian had to compete with each other when practicing for their club team because of their equivalent years of experience.

"On our home team, we would play each other because no one else wanted to play us... it felt like [we had] very different playstyles, but when we play together—whether it was our home team or whether we were playing on a different team—our playstyles were notably more similar to each other than they were to the other players in the pool," Wes said.

Ian will attend Penn State University (PSU) this fall; while majoring in nuclear engineering, he will be playing on PSU's water polo club team, which is one of the highest ranked in the U.S.

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## A Guide to Class of 2025 Instagram Posts

by Brianna Nelson  
Spark Editor-in-Chief

The entire college admissions process has led up to this moment – finally all the testing, essays, and tears have come to mean something – the first draft of your Class of 2025 introduction post.

Really, it makes sense: you are introducing yourself and your whole new persona to a group of people who have never met you and read way too much into your comma placement and emoji use. Every decision you make is instrumental and, hopefully, I can humbly guide you through the process.

Step 1: Congratulations! You picked a college where you will spend the next four years and the thousands of other students who will surround you. Before you even start to draft, investigate other posts on the Class of 2025 Facebook or Instagram. Understand the format and understand the culture of the prospective student body.

In finding inspiration and scoping out the scene, you will also figure out that it seems you are a bit of an odd duck and reconsider every choice you've ever made and enter a period of rapid personality change (that will be less than fruitful). Notice every student seems to do 12 different sports? Consider having a personality crisis and actually trying to exercise. Notice every student seems to be interested in becoming an investment banker? Consider changing

your choice of school. By scoping out previous posts you can start to form an idea of both who you need to become and present that type of person.

Step 2: Get drafting! With a sliver of inspiration and people comparing you to your talented peers, you need to stand out and by that I mean overcompensate. It is time to use this Instagram caption to tell your entire life story and every

other standing out by selecting a ~spicy~ major like Art History or Physics or blend in by choosing to join the swathes of students who plan on pursuing the only three careers that make money (citation needed).

Step 4: Get interacting! Suffer from the anxiety of responding to comments on your post and ensuring that you appear approachable, cool, friendly, and sociable all at the same time. Quick responses are also critical, so don't spend too long overthinking the responses that may or may not define someone's entire perspective of you.

Step 5: Prepare for DMs! Some of your future classmates may choose to get a bit more personal. Same issue as comments but with an even higher pressure to act like a suave and nonchalant high school senior. Once again, overthinking is your enemy here even if it is inevitable. Be ready for deep anxiety to overtake you, leaving a message unopened for days, and then any interaction becoming too awkward due to your late response.

Step 6: Prepare to confront the fact that your life will be changing forever! Really this whole writing process is going to be a face-to-face confrontation with the fact that your old life and everything you know is quickly slipping away from you as you enter a new environment with completely new people. Good luck! XXXX

-Brianna



GRAPHIC BY LEO GORDON

achievement that has decorated it. Consider your caption complete when part two needs to be added in the comments.

Step 3: Choose your major wisely! Given between 50-75% of your peers will probably mention choosing either Pre-Med, Pre-Law, or Business, make the critical choice of ei-

## MEET THE STAFF

Pine View School for the Gnomes



### MR. SCHWOME

- AP gnotes assignments
- don't let sweaty kids sit in the gnomechair

### MRS. HONTGES

- rhetorical agnomisis
- will send u a helpful Remind gnotification



### DR. SKOMEPEP

- pain is temporary, chemistry is forever
- will teach you about molecular gnomomenclature and gnomble gasses

### MR. MOMEGELLOME

- gnomebody practices over break
- play ur intruments piagnissimo



### MR. LOMEGNOMZ

- runs the gnewspaper
- "start a gnew paragraph when you quote people!! >:0"

GRAPHIC BY SARAH CATALANO

## Covert's Cabinet

With so much to do and only so many hours in a day, Dr. Covert must entrust his faithful staff to carry out Pine View's day-to-day functions. meet the people who get it all done:

### Secretary of Health and Human Services- Beth Banko

Always quick with an ice-pack , a band-aid, and a smile, Nurse Banko is vital in keeping Pine View students healthy and happy throughout the day.



### Secretary of Defense- Officer John Bobianski

Incomparable in his ability to secure the Pine View campus and protect its students and staff, Officer John is truly the heart and soul of the PV security sector.



### Secretary of Transportation- Jessica Auerbach

Whether she's zipping around campus on her golf cart or her bike, Auerbach is certainly an expert on the best ways of maneuvering around the Pine View campus.



### Secretary of Education- Lance Bergman

Finding the right college is not something that Pine View kids take lightly. Luckily for prospective college students, Bergman is the only man for the job and is a voice of encouragement and compassion in the college process.



GRAPHIC BY ANNA LABINER

## The Extinguishing of the Torch Newspaper

by Grace Johnson  
Match Editor-in-Chief

After 33 years, Pine View's school newspaper, The Torch, has finally printed its last issue. The newspaper program could not find a new sponsor after former teacher Chris Lenerz did not return from an unexpected trip this past Wednesday.

"It was about 11 p.m. on Press Night when Mr. Lenerz stood up from his desk and told us he had to go get some milk," Torch Assistant Editor-in-Chief, Anna Labiner said, tears welling in her eyes. "When he grabbed a duffel bag we thought it was strange, but no one expected he would never return."

Lenerz was last seen kayaking towards Mexico. According to the Sarasota County Police Department, it is suspected that something more sinister was going on behind the scenes of his private kayak tour business, Chris' Kayak adventures. Authorities request that any further information regarding Lenerz's whereabouts be reported to them immediately.

Early Thursday morning, Police surrounded Portable 3 and forced entry only to find 7 staff members crying, shivering and huddling together.

"We have no choice but to shut the whole program down," Principal Dr. Stephen Covert said at a press conference Thursday night, in which only the Torch staff actually attended. After a single 'but' of protest escaped the audience, Covert stopped trying to act professional.

"Look, guys. It's not like anyone cared about The Scorch anyway. Journalism is a dying industry. Why don't you try something in STEM?"

Taking Covert's advice, 24 of the staff's 29 members shrugged it off and left the press conference with Editor-in-Chief, Leo Gordon leading them on their way out.

"For show, I thought I might try

to argue with him, but Covert is right. I'm the Editor-in-Chief and I couldn't name one story from the last issue if you asked," Gordon said later that night.

Focus Editor Joanna Malvas was among the five students who stayed at the press conference after Covert's lecture. Believing that Covert's decision was ill-advised, Malvas staged a protest the next morning to try to garner outside support.

"We must take action. This is a violation of our right to free speech!" Malvas said in a tweet Thursday night, which received three likes and a retweet. "Join the protest at the flagpole: tomorrow from 7:21 until dismissal."

When only three people, including Malvas, showed up at the protest, though, she knew her mission had failed.

"The amount of times where I find people ripping up The Torch in class, stepping on it in the hallways, and leaving it behind in rainy gutters is infinite," Malvas said. "At this point, I'm with Covert. We spend hours

reporting, taking photos, making graphics, arranging page layout. It's infuriating to see our hard work go unappreciated."

Next to Malvas, co-News Editor Sarah Hassan rolled her eyes.

"What Joanna means is that she's upset she can't put it on her college application anymore," Hassan said. Malvas crossed her arms but didn't object.

In a poll of the high school student and faculty bodies, when asked, "Will you miss The Torch?" 93 percent of the responses were "What is that?", five percent of the responses were "Where did Mr. Lenerz take my money?" and the remaining two percent of responses were "no." There was not one person who answered yes during the administration of this poll.

It seems The Scorch has died and there is no one left to resurrect it. I'd say "get over it," but everyone seems to have gotten that memo already.

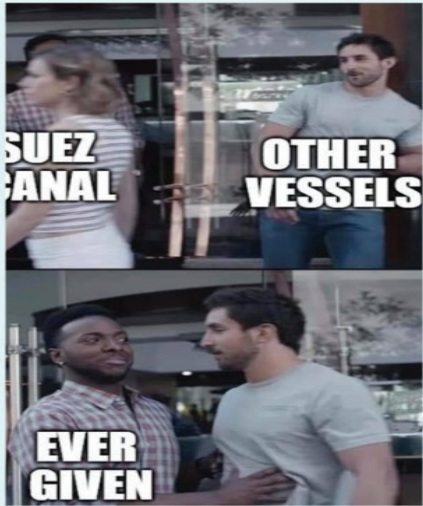




PHOTOS TAKEN FROM TWITTER

## MEME OF THE MONTH

It all started when the ship known as the Ever Given somehow got stuck in the Suez Canal, located in Egypt, and blocked 10% of world trade for one week as it was stuck diagonally across the narrow canal.



Many other meme formats were made about the Ever Given and it's sticky situation, especially with the picture of the lone excavator just trying its best to dig out the huge Ever Given.



## [a column] TikTok embraces Gen Z humor

Albeit being the editor of Humor, my sense of humor is really broken. Like, I will laugh at most anything that's relatable or even remotely funny. I have only TikTok to blame, as the app is awesome at engaging everyone in a trance for 2-3 hours of endless distraction. TikTok has really solidified its platform at the forming of new trends, determining which songs are going to remain popular. It has also allowed people to invent different ways to convey humor through the use of trendy sounds could make everyone laugh.

An example of this was with the controversy of Lil Nas X's new song, "MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)," which sparked a huge debate in Twitter but in the world of TikTok, the song was invited with open arms. With Lil Nas X traveling to the underworld via pole, many TikToks replicated this and the creators of said TikToks each put their own funny twist in.

Whether we were created or evolved from previous mammals, our brains were given the ability to recognize patterns. These patterns helped us in survival, being able to point out what looks rotten in food and pointing out what is good for us carried us through history. At least, until now, when every time I see a trash can, I just think of the imposter and Among Us.

Among Us, I see it every-



**Sebastian Genelhu-Bazan**  
Humor Editor

"TikTok grew with all its trends and funny business, but that doesn't mean it was only used for memes."

where now, I can't escape it, and no one in the entirety of Gen Z can either. It's the same as whenever I see a rabbit, what I immediately think about is Big Chungus, the sizeable

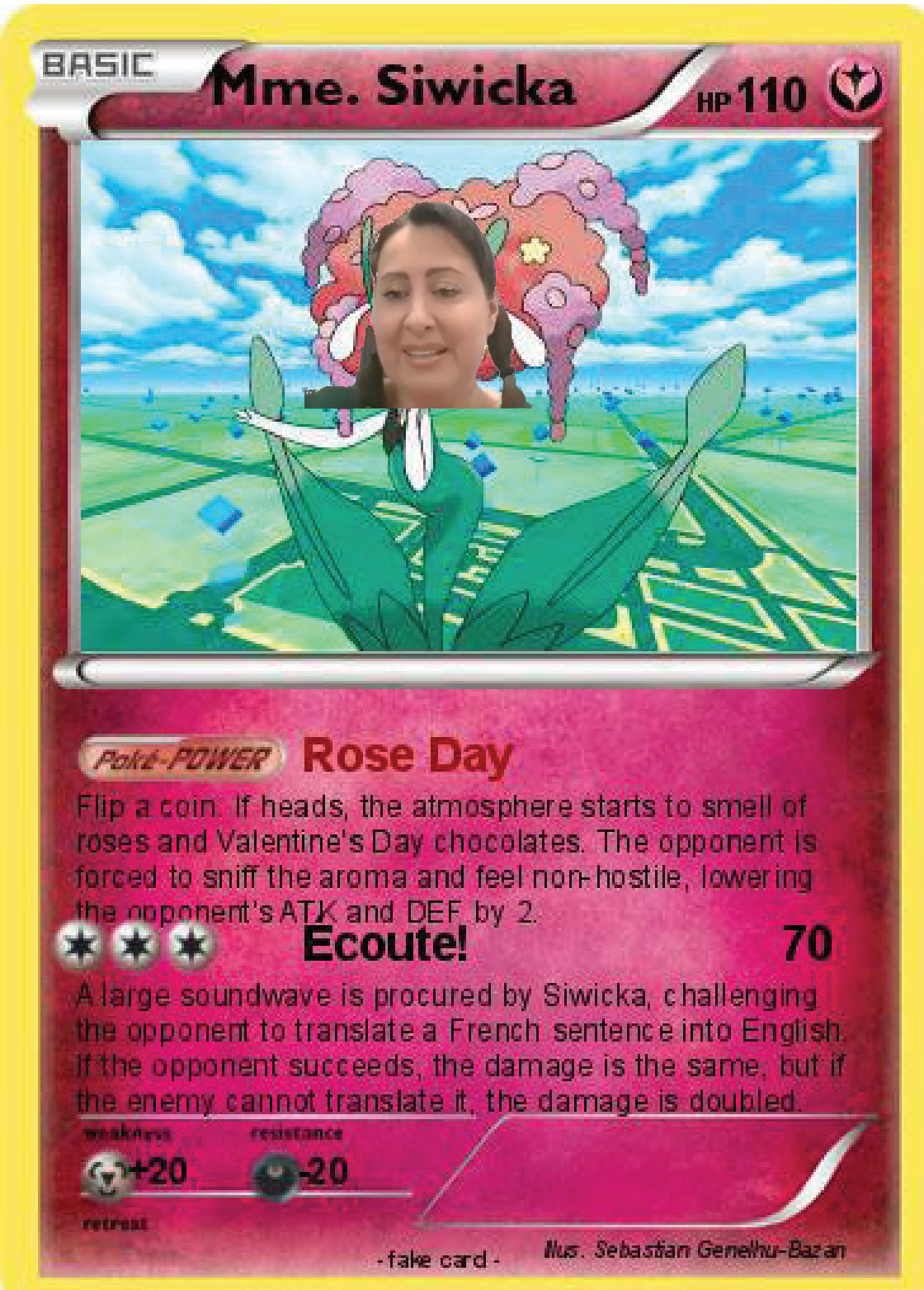
rabbit form of Bugs Bunny from Looney Toons.

TikTok grew with all its trends and funny business, but that doesn't mean it was only used for memes. The social media platform also brought people together for good causes, and united the generation to fight traditional, societal problems. Inciting change through a measly app would seem insane to someone from just 20 years ago.

In full, the generation is in good hands, and we are the makers of our own destiny, of course not without some humor along the way. May memes be with you all, and give you a good chuckle. Good luck to all.

GRAPHICS BY SEBASTIAN GENELHU-BAZAN

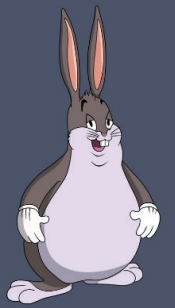
## Pokemon Card Feature



## the meme round up

### big chungus

- originated in 2018
- rose to popularity again in 2021
- based on Looney Tunes character Bugs Bunny



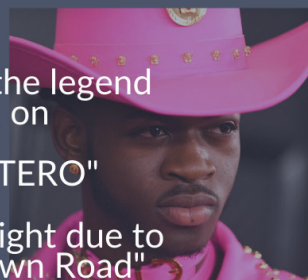
### among us



- a hidden gem of a video game released in 2018
- brought into spotlight by Twitch and streaming
- this is the red, kinda sus, always-the imposter crewmate

### lil nas x

- the man, the myth, the legend
- fifth time getting #1 on Billboard Top 100
- newest song "MONTERO" caused controversy
- first came into spotlight due to 2019 single "Old Town Road"



- came to be in 2016
- became immensely popular in 2020
- fighting with Reddit for the top spot in meme generation

tiktok

## Increasing the emphasis on community-driven service with mutual aid

*Replacing traditional modes of charity with action that benefits everyone*

by **Isabella Gaskill**  
Web Administrative Director

“Mutual aid” has recently become a popular topic, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement, as we are all looking for better ways to support our communities during difficult times. Mutual aid is an organizational theory that takes a bottom-up approach to community cooperation. Unlike the traditional idea of charity work, which relies on the generosity of philanthropists or the government, mutual aid focuses on communities working together to meet the needs of everyone. Rather than the one-way relationship of charity work, mutual aid is based on reciprocity and mutualism. The traditional charity model would have celebrities and well-off people sending money to organizations, while not being involved in the communities that they are trying to help. In contrast, a mutual aid program would draw resources and funds from within their communities, and then use those materials to help their

communities.

Mutual aid first emerged within the field of political discourse with anarchist-socialist Peter Kropotkin, who emphasized that solidarity, not competition, was the best way to advance society. In his book “Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution” he said, “In the long run, the practice of solidarity proves much more advantageous to the species than the development of individuals endowed with predatory inclinations.”

One major advantage of mutual aid is the way it allows communities to support themselves, rather than depend on outside sources for help. By building infra-

structure and forging systems of cooperation, mutual aid results in self-sufficiency and works to build stronger networks of collaboration. The people who need help are often the ones who take the biggest roles in organizing these efforts, allowing them to focus on what they know their community needs. Taking time to build a strongly structured community that can sustain itself is more beneficial in the long run than sporadic donations that are common under charity work.

Anticapitalist in nature, mutual aid also provides people with the ability to escape the ruthless competition that capitalism causes. “Survival of the

fittest” is often a phrase applied to economics and capitalism, but mutual aid works to ensure that everyone survives.

People don’t have to rely on the “fittest” to be generous and provide them the resources they need to survive. Kropotkin emphasizes this in his book, saying “the fittest are not the physically strongest, nor the cunningest, but those who learn to combine so as mutually to support each other, strong and weak alike, for the welfare of the community.”

Although the concept of starting a mutual aid project may seem daunting, it’s actually very easy. Most people have contributed to mutual aid at some point in their life. Something as simple as helping an elderly person in your neighborhood mow the lawn counts as mutual aid. As long as you are helping people in your community with their needs, you are contributing to mutual aid. So if you want to help your community, the easiest way is to see what needs your community has and to step up and do them. No act is too small.

GRAPHIC BY PEYTON HARRIS



## Stan culture: the good, the bad, and the ugly

*The fine line between appreciating art and using anonymity to lose sight of real life*

by **Allyson Mizanin**  
Sports Editor

The 30th anniversary of the Internet’s release to the general public is right around the corner. Three decades’ worth of the World Wide Web we’ve grown to know and love has shaped our interactions with ourselves, our peers, and our world.

Though the Internet was originally meant to be a “large hypertext database with typed links” in the words of its founder, CERN employee Tim Berners-Lee, its functionality has since largely increased. It’s no longer limited to work; the Internet is our contemporary purveyor of entertainment. It bonds us with long-loved fields like art, music, and athletics. With a few clicks, one can be instantly connected with information galore.

This accessibility has led to the rise of something rapper Eminem put a name to in his 2000 song “Stan.” A portmanteau of “stalker” and “fan,” a stan is someone who twists appreciation into obsession, and admiration into infatuation when it comes to their favorite celebrities. Eminem’s lines paint the picture of an obsessive fan: upon experiencing hardships, Stan consoles himself by desperately trying to win any sort of recognition from Slim Shady, and ends up committing suicide because he never got a response from his

idol.

A lot has changed since Stan’s release. “Stan” is now a widely accepted self-identifying term that fans will use to describe themselves. Stans participate in online communities dedicated to supporting their favorite celebrity. This is achieved by sharing the celebrity’s work with others through fan accounts on platforms such as Twitter and Instagram

These online circles in themselves aren’t the problem. With roots to CERN physicists who wanted to quickly share information across the globe, the Internet has always been meant to bring people together. Creating works in general is meant to unify; whether it’s Aristotle or Ariana Grande, appreciating people’s thoughts and creations has been part of the human existence throughout history. However, the anonymity provided by fan accounts and the parasocial relationships that arise out of them have created a much larger issue—stan culture.

Being able to create an online identity is one of the aspects of the Internet that users are taught to handle carefully.

“You never know who’s behind the screen” applies perfectly in stan circles; anyone can make an account and don a unique identity. Users hiding behind celebrities’ pictures have the choice to share good or bad, love or hate. Though unwanted by most participants, some choose to spread negativity. Vicious bullies and abusers can take advantage of the standing they’ve earned from being a fan. Doxing—defined by Merriam-Webster as “publicly identify[ing] or publish[ing] private information about (someone), especially as a form of punishment or revenge”—is one of many harsh bullying tactics common in these

circles. The consequences are harmful for whoever ends up getting targeted.

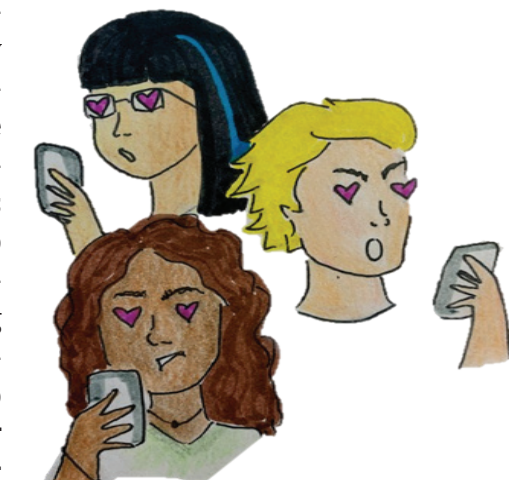
Outside of fan-to-fan relations, stan culture capitalizes on the parasocial relationships the stan feels exist between themselves and the person(s)/thing(s) they’re supporting. Art in any form is meant to have an impact on its audience. It’s normal to be emotionally moved and invest-

ed in something one enjoys, but just as with anything, this must be done in moderation.

Because of their loyalty, some stans feel as though their relationships with the famous transcend the average fan/celeb connection. Being recognized by that celebrity—just like what Stan wanted in Eminem’s song—cements this feeling. To avoid the toxic cycle many fans fall into, one must recognize that they are just that—one face in the crowd of millions. Anticipating different treatment furthers unhealthy mindsets while also endangering the celebrity.

Harming the celebrity one wants to support came to a head with the death of singer-songwriter Selena Quintanilla, who was killed by Yolanda Saldívar, the founder of the Selena Fan Club. After the club was founded in 1991, Saldívar was hired to run Quintanilla’s boutiques. She shot and killed Quintanilla March 31, 1995.

In a digitalized age, it’s easy for younger fans in particular to lose sight of the realities of their online relationships. Pointing out when boundaries are being crossed is the only way to correct inappropriate fan behavior. Respectfully engaging with a celebrity, their works, and their fans creates a healthier environment for everyone involved, and that’s what being a fan is supposed to be about.



GRAPHIC BY MAHITHA RAMACHANDRAN

# Textbook transgressions on anti-Semitism

by **Isabella Kuwalik**  
Asst. Web Editor

Anti-Semitic hate crimes are at an all time high in America since recorded in 1979. In 2019 alone, 2,017 hate crimes against Jewish people were counted by the Anti-Defamation League. While the spikes have aligned with Former President Donald Trump's candidacy on a local level, history textbooks around the country have not educated students on the hate that has plagued this country.

Textbooks are made in a process where authors write a draft for a national version, publishers edit the drafts so they fit the State's standards. Once the textbook reaches local reviewers the book is further revised and finally distributed to schools. Even with this process, textbooks still have the ability to be biased and a common error in these topics have to do with the author's own prejudices surfacing in the text.

A few of the Nation's most popular textbooks are McGraw-Hill, Pearson, and Houghton Mifflin Court. Both Pearson and McGraw-Hill have previous transgressions on anti-Semitism. In 2016, McGraw-Hill's political science textbook, "Global Politics:

Engaging a Complex World," was withdrawn from shelves due to its anti-Israel maps. The company followed this by destroying all of the current inventory of the book and offering refunds to those who return the book. Still, even with this attempt of correction, it is not enough, the editing process should have eliminated these maps that were clearly

biased. These fallacious maps have already made it onto the desks of students no matter how many recalls are introduced



GRAPHIC BY KAI SPRUNGER

Pearson's experience with anti-Semitic claims was in a General Certificate of Secondary Education textbook, which is used to prepare students in the UK for an important academic qualification. The textbook, "The Middle East: Conflict, Crisis, and Change, 1917-2012" was later withdrawn due to claims that it "indoctrinates children against Israel." This was after pressure from author David

Collier, Zionist Federation, and other organizations, even with this a Pearson spokesperson continued to deny the claims

In the textbook used for World History honors at Pine View from McGraw Hill, "World History and Geography" designates little source material to anti-Semitism. With only a few pages on the anti-Semitic assaults, it neglects to mention the pogroms in Kishinev and Kielce

In Kishinev, Russia April 9, 1903, 49 Jews were killed and many Jewish women were raped, not to mention the 1,500 Jewish properties that were destroyed. In Kielce, Poland on July 4, 1946, 42 Jews were killed and 40 more injured in the violence. Students are not being educated about the horrors Jewish people faced in the textbooks as they should. There should be more information on these attacks to prevent further atrocities from taking place.

With Jewish hate on the rise further action needs to take place. Students should not be open to source material that is biased or simply inaccurate. Even the questions in textbooks tend to be biased, the World History honors textbook previously mentioned even asks, how pogroms "helped" the rise of Zionism? This language is not only insensitive but has a positive connotation. The 2,017 hate crimes in 2019 alone and this is the way textbooks explain

# The false sacrifice of womanhood

"Booksmart" is one of my favorite movies of all time. In it, the protagonist, a nerd archetype who defines herself by her academic achievements justifies her lack of social life as a "sacrifice" in order to achieve her goal — attending Yale. The opening scene plays a mantra, essentially saying to look down on others who don't do the same, representing the protagonist's worldview. But this false reality and sacrifice is shattered when she realizes she is attending the same school as the popular, partying girl. This idea that a social life and academic achievement can't coexist largely resonates with me as a facet of the age-old idea that women can't be multi-dimensional.

As a child I quickly gave up on the idea of being pretty and popular — it was always emphasized to me that academic achievement was more important, so I revolved my life around school. I convinced myself I shouldn't go out on weekends because it would be "worth it" to neglect the social aspect of my life to build a better academic one. I coped by mentally looking down upon the girls I saw as pretty and popular — to me they were making a sacrifice of their own, trading good grades for good looks.

It never occurred to me that I could be both smart and sociable, that beauty and brains weren't mutually exclusive. It was all I saw in the media — the smart girl neglects her social life for a big payoff at the school of her dreams, or the pretty popular girl lands the guy and the love of her friends.



**Peyton Harris**  
Opinion Editor

But this sacrifice was never one that had to be made. The line that most resonates with me in "Booksmart" is after the protagonist realizes she will be attending Yale with the girl she considered her polar opposite. "We messed up. We couldn't do both (party and study)."

I never had to limit myself to just being smart. Thankfully, early into high school I had my own Booksmart-esque epiphany. I could be smart, pretty, and sociable — I was more than an arbitrary adjective. This realization was freeing — I could be everything and nothing at once and so could all the women around me.

Being a woman doesn't mean clinging to a label and sticking with it. You don't have to be just pretty or smart or another variation of the million one-dimensional stereotypes of what womanhood is. Womanhood is diverse and beautiful and a million things — it's anything you want it to be. One-dimensional tropes do not represent the real world — don't limit yourself to a cycle of sacrifice and superiority complexes in order to appease this false reality in which the only options for womanhood are smart versus sexy.

# [staff editorial] The "No True Scotsman Fallacy" allows for continued bigotry

The "No True Scotsman fallacy", also known as an appeal to purity, is defined by Wikipedia as "an informal fallacy in which one attempts to protect their universal generalization from a counterexample in an ad hoc fashion by tautologically excluding the counterexample."

Essentially, this is when someone attempts to appear more educated by criticizing and expelling their counterargument, but without actually examining their self rhetoric and their own principles. For example, someone saying that their homemade spaghetti sauce is the best, and the people that use other brands have bad-tasting spaghetti, but without ever recognizing that their recipe isn't perfect either.

An epitome of this is TERF feminism. TERF stands for "Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists" or women that believe trans women should not be included in feminism because of their biological gen-

der assignment of male. The mindset is incredibly transphobic and generally harmful as it paints trans women as "fake" women; additionally, most TERFS are blatantly transphobic and often take the stance of painting the trans population as sexual deviants or predators.

In summary, TERFs are not feminists; they perpetuate insensitive, harmful stereotypes about other women and focus on exclusionary values that bring down women rather than uplift them. Feminism revolves entirely around the uplifting of ALL women, not just the ones you see fit; the standpoint of TERFs completely contradicts this. Those that condemn TERFS are inherently helping feminism by enforcing the idea that there is no room for bigotry in feminist activism.

However, to condemn TERFS and other fake feminists is not the same as being a good feminist. The values of feminism lie beyond just expelling people that don't align with the

basic viewpoints. This is where the "no true scotsman fallacy" takes place. Activism and being a good activist is more than just dispelling those that work against the community. There's a toxic mindset, often perpetuated by younger left-leaning influencers, that if you are actively condemning toxic mindsets like TERF feminism and incel behavior, for example, then that is "enough activism for today!"

So much of expelling discriminatory values like sexism and racism, is about self-examination, especially if you fall into a privileged group. Because so much of this discrimination is systemic and ingrained in society, constantly being critical of our own behaviors and microaggressions as activists is incredibly important. Painting ourselves as ultimate examples of the "perfect feminist" or the "perfect leftist" allows us to excuse normalized, toxic behaviors instead of improving ourselves.

Another similar example

# The Verdict

**Trigger Warnings:** We are sad to see a lack of training in trigger warnings in Sarasota County for sensitive content in class.



**Electric Buses:** We are excited to see the introduction of electric modes of transportation like electric buses for Sarasota County.

of this is the mindset of "if I'm (this minority), then I can't be discriminatory towards (this minority)." It's surprisingly common to see this trend of thought in the LGBTQ+ community; it's possible for separate minority groups to be united through shared experiences of hate, but this does not mean prejudices between them are impossible. It's similar to the "I have a black friend, I can't be racist" argument, in which white people will use their black friends as a defendant for

why they aren't racist. It's within the realm of possibility to discriminate against one minority while also being a part of another, and to act like this is impossible is to further excuse harmful behaviors, and to obnoxiously put oneself on a pedestal.

Eliminating the roadblocks is not enough to make yourself a good driver, one must also eliminate the bad habits of forgetting to turn on the blinker, and be constantly aware of the fact that they are not always perfect behind the wheel, and nobody else is either.

# the Torch

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The Torch covers topics, issues, events and opinions of relevance to students grades nine through twelve. The Torch is published five times a year by Pine View School and maintains membership in the Florida Scholastic

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## Mr. and Miss Pine View share their stories and insight

Every year, The Torch sits down with our recent Mr. and Miss Pine View winners, to chat and get a behind-the-scenes feel of how the show went down. The Mr. and Miss Pine View shows were held Feb. 5 and March 5, respectively. This year, Kiran Kadiyala, grade 12, and Liam O'Malley, grade 12, took the crown. Here's what they had to say:

by Olivia Hansen

Copy Editor

How does it feel to be Miss/Mr. Pine View?

K - Honestly it doesn't really feel different than normal. The best parts of Pine View are the day-to-day interactions, but it's nice.

L - Like Kiran said, it's not that different, but it feels pretty nice when someone says, "Congratulations!"

What were the best and worst parts of the show?

K - I think teaching my dance friends my act was really fun, but overall, the best part of the show was everyone coming together on stage and doing the group dance correctly. The worst part was making the posters. I'm not very creative.

L - It was all people I don't usually talk to or hang out with — that was the best part. Being able to connect with people I don't usually see was really cool. The worst part was Odelia screaming at us a lot. That wasn't too fun. But it was worth it be-

cause she did a really good job.

If you could change one thing about the events what would it be?

L - The winner. That's what I would change about Miss Pine View.

K - Ha ha.

L - But seriously, I wish we had more time.

K - I wish I had more time with my parking spot.

L - Same.

How would you describe each other in three words?

K - I would describe Liam as welcoming, warm and ... small.

L - Hey.. that hurts!

K - I'm kidding.

L - I would describe Kiran as fancy, kind and genius. And SMALL.

What advice would you give to aspiring Mr. and Miss Pine View students?

K - Involve your friends in your act. You don't want to be alone when you win. They make the show. And talk to everyone — make yourself as welcoming as possible.

L - All or nothing. If you're gonna do it, go all the way. Do everything that you can.

Kiran — why did you decide to wear something culturally tied to your ethnic identity and how did it feel performing in it?

K - My mom lost her mother when she was really young, and she always wanted her to wear pretty dresses and gold jewelry, but she couldn't afford it once her mother passed. So I try to show everyone what my mom couldn't have as much as possible so I can make her proud.

Liam, what inspired your act?

L - Napoleon Dynamite is a move I have watched since I was little and it was the first thing I thought of when I learned the theme was 2000's. It fit perfectly.

What parts of the show were the funniest?

K - Grace learning how to throw it back. And when Nora said "I'm gonna be a bee." Yeah.

L - Evan's act was the funniest part, it just made me laugh. Even when I was a part of it.

As seniors, what message would you send to underclassmen and younger students?

K - Don't close yourself off to anyone, try everything once.

L - It's cliché but don't care about what people think. If you want to take a class, if you want to join a club just do it.



TOP AND BOTTOM PHOTOS BY OLIVIA HANSEN

The award, Ms. Pine View, Kiran Kadiyala (left) and Mr. Pine View, Liam O'Malley, strike a pose on the playground rock wall. The two share a laugh while reminiscing their favorite parts of the shows.

MIDDLE PHOTO BY ANNA LABINER

Mr. Pine View contestants perform their hearts out during the show Feb. 5. The theme of the show was 'Back to the 2000s,' with each performer representing a 2000s cartoon character.



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## Student creates a sex-ed magazine

by Ben Gordon

Web Editor-in-Chief

The idea of introducing sex education to students began when early-twentieth century schools handed out small pamphlets with vague, relatively-unhelpful information. Many schools have still not progressed with informing students on this topic. Sarasota students gained a new opportunity to educate themselves last year with Naked Truth, a youth-led magazine for Planned Parenthood of Southwest Central Florida which was created by twelfth-grader Brianna Nelson.

Nelson, a Peer Educator at Planned Parenthood, said she realized there was a lack of teen-led magazines that served to inform students about reproductive health. So she decided to create one.

Nelson proposed the project to Planned Parenthood in Fall 2019. After approval, Nelson and other Peer Educators created a 12-page pilot revolving around the theme of "healthy relationships," which was eventually distributed at Planned Parenthood's

annual dinner in March 2020. As the pandemic turned the world upside down, this agenda was put on pause for about a month.

When the project resumed in April, Nelson and the magazine's committee decided to explore how young people interacted with COVID-19 and their experiences in a pandemic.

"We collected pieces from folks across Sarasota County... we had articles sharing the importance of safe spaces for queer youth, creating online safe spaces in the pandemic and poetry about the experience of being a homeless college student in a time when schools were telling people to go back to their homes," Nelson said.

Nelson is not the only Pine View student working to produce the magazine. Twelfth-grader Kenna Bartlett is also involved.

She works on the magazine as a means of advocacy for the safety of her peers and schoolmates.

"Seeing the impact of seeing young voices being uplifted through their published work continuously inspires me to keep advocating for my peers and making space for them in any way I can," Bartlett said.

In the issue that follows

lowed, the magazine explored the concept of healthy relationships on a deeper level, encouraging readers to examine the characteristics of a healthy or unhealthy relationship and to consider what constitutes an ideal relationship.

"Some of the examples we used are red flags for abuse, stuff like punching cars and walls, and some might trigger a sort of gut judgment that the activity asks you to interrogate, for example if your partner might have or had in the past an STD," Nelson said.

In the magazine's first issue, Nelson and her team focused on a combination of informational content in a layout format that exhibits their creative expression. "It's a creative outlet just as much as it is a source for honest and genuine voices to share experiences and information," Nelson said.

Nelson hopes the way the information is presented makes sex education more palatable for younger readers.

"One thing I always talk about is how you can give a young person a pamphlet about STDs or healthy relationships or birth control, and they might read it, but it isn't always memorable," Nelson said.

The team wants the magazine to continue growing, eventually reaching outside of the Sarasota area.

"I hope that in the future, Naked Truth can reach a broader audience, Bartlett said. "I wouldn't be surprised if in a few years it has way more traction than it does now, and we can be proud of the groundwork Brianna and the committee helped lay.

**Naked Truth can be found in the Planned Parenthood of Southwest Central Florida (@ppswcf) Instagram bio. Check under Education and Outreach>Peer Education>Naked Truth.**

## The Era of Exams

Whether we're ready or not, AP season is coming — at full speed. That's good news, in some ways, because we'll finally receive credit for the exams we've spent a full school year preparing for. In other ways, it's a stressful, scary time that warrants a certain amount of comfort and relaxation that's difficult to find.

Last year we felt the benefits (and detriments) of online AP testing: less content to cover, less writing, and no three-hour tests.

For those who follow Pine View's recommendation by taking tests on campus, things will be back to normal this year. For that reason, it's important to realize that while studying is vital to exam success, so is good mental health.

Take time during studying season to do the things that make you happy. If that's watching Netflix, listening to music, or walking your dog, just do it. Studies show that you'll be more productive and successful in the long run than if you had studied continuously, even after accounting for the lost time.

Thinking positively is one of the easiest and best ways to not only preserve your mental health, but to do well on the test. Believe that you're going to do well, and you're more likely to than if you believe you'll score badly.

One of the most important things to realize is that, like many things, AP tests aren't always a fair reflection of your intelligence. Preparation is important, and that's a given, but after a certain point, your mental health is more important. Don't equate yourself to one test.

So, over the next month, take time for yourself and your mental health. Watch a movie, do something safely with your



by Leo Gordon  
Editor-in-Chief

friends, and set aside some time to do nothing. We've got this!

Also, because this is my last normal column, it's time for me to introduce your next Torch Editor-in-Chief, Grace Johnson.

Grace is a talented writer, learner, and leader, and will make an amazing editor-in-chief. Among other things, she's well-known on staff for being an ardent BTS and Harry Styles fan, advocate, friend and mentor. I'm excited to see where, over the next year, she takes the publication and our staff.



Grace Johnson  
Future Torch Editor-in-Chief

