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State Speaks: Be Silent



TOP LEFT: Receptionist Jennifer Reyka returns a sweatshirt to tenth-grader Natalia Twarowski before announcements begin. BOTTOM LEFT: The office, not required by law to adhere to the moment of silence, remains busy. TOP RIGHT: Students from second-grade teacher Joann Hershberger's class sit quietly during the moment of silence. BOTTOM RIGHT: Second-graders recite the Pledge of Allegiance prior to the moment of silence. PHOTOS BY LORA RINI AND ALYSON MIZANIN

by Lora Rini
Match Editor-in-Chief

With remote students returning to school in-person and Zoom classes becoming a thing of the past, this school year has been a return

to semi-normalcy for students across Florida. However, there is one notable change that affects students and teachers grades K-12: the introduction of a moment of silence.

House Bill 529 was passed

June 15 of this year and was made effective July 1. The goal of this law is to designate a time for young people to quietly reflect — something that may have been previously absent from their lives. According

to the Florida Senate website, teachers are prohibited from making suggestions to their students regarding how to use this time; instead, parents are encouraged to discuss options with their children. Common uses include meditation, prayer, or general reflection.

While the moment of silence only subtracts a minute or two of lesson time daily, it adds up to over three hours of reflection time during a single class year. This is part of what makes HB 529 a controversial topic.

"I feel that the moment of silence is unnecessary. Most students, if they have something to reflect on, they're going to be reflecting on it whether or not an allotted minute is provided," tenth-grader Dorian Carter said.

Carter is not alone in this opinion. The usefulness of a minute of silence is a topic of debate among many involved in Florida's education system.

"I've always had the opinion that the only laws that should be passed for education are laws that would help kids learn more, and this doesn't do that," AP US History teacher

Scott Wolfinger said. "It seems like it's more of an attempt to insert a political situation into schools, something that's being discussed in the culture wars."

HB 529 was politicized almost immediately. Voting records reveal that of the bill's 24 opponents in the House of Representatives, only one was a Republican. Sarasota County representative Joe Gruters, who has been an active member in the Republican Party of Sarasota for over 20 years, repeatedly voted in favor of the law, both in the Florida Senate and the Rules Committee.

While there are no mentions of prayer in the law, the bill's unavoidable link with religion has sparked controversy.

"To be able to provide each student the ability every day to be able to reflect and to be able to pray as they see fit [is important]. The idea that you can just push God out of every institution and be successful, I'm sorry, our founding fathers did not believe that," Governor Ron DeSantis said during the signing.

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Florida Board of Education Forbids CRT

by Peyton Harris and Lily Quartermaine
Asst. Editor-in-Chief and Entertainment Editor

As national debates around politicizing the classroom intensified, Florida's state Board of Education passed a new set of guidelines in June regarding historical education. The statute's most contested inclusion was in its forbiddance of Critical Race Theory (CRT).

A long-debated topic, CRT first appeared in the 1970s as an evolved subset of Critical Legal Studies (CLS), as stated in Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute (law.cornell.edu). As this source further explains, CLS is a movement dedicated to exposing how the wealthy benefit from the American legal system, whereas the poor and marginalized are systemically burdened by it. CRT, however, focuses mainly on the relationship between race, class, society, and the American government.

An article from Time Magazine emphasizes that there has been much argument over the vagueness sur-

rounding CRT, as there is no one stable definition being used across the country.

"None [of these definitions] offer clear guiderails to what precisely it means to ban CRT — no more talk of race as an identity? No discussion of laws or institutions that create racial stratification? Taken literally, some of the definitions also extend absurdly far," said Aziz Huq, a teacher at the University of Chicago Law

School (time.com).

The Florida legislature defines CRT as material that teaches "that racism is not merely the product of prejudice, but that racism is embedded in American society and its legal systems in order to uphold the supremacy of white persons."

The act explicitly forbids the teaching of the 1619 Project's website, "reframe the country's history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of black Americans at the very center of our national narrative." The act also forbids "defining American history as something other than the creation of a new nation based largely on universal principles stated in the Declaration of Independence." AP English Literature and English Honors III teacher Pamela Novak presented information from the 1619 Project in prior teaching. "I don't see [the sources I use] as controversial," Novak said. "I'll just be conscious and probably more concerned than I have in other years. I don't think it will really change what I can present to the students ... It's about presenting facts, presenting narratives, and then students use that information and [reading] to interpret and understand themselves."

GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

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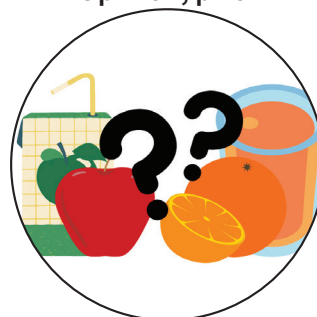
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Apple or Orange Juice?
Ending the heated debate

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Moment of silence speaks volumes

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by Lora Rini

Match Editor-in-Chief

Local Catholic private institution Cardinal Mooney High is not required to participate in the moment of silence; however, they incorporate a prayer into their morning announcements.

“Our students know what is expected of them, and more importantly, [they] actively participate in the morning prayer,” said Melissa Tomasso, Cardinal Mooney’s Marketing and Special Events Manager.

Prior to her job at Cardinal Mooney, Tomasso worked as a substitute teacher in Sarasota County. During her time in classrooms at Lakeview Elementary and Sarasota Mid-



dle, she occasionally witnessed students participate in practices similar to the moment of silence.

“I could see that it was a great opportunity for [students] anywhere from kindergarten all the way up to take a minute to recenter, take a minute to take a big breath,” Tomasso said.

Students might have different perceptions of the moment of silence depending on their age. During the moment of silence, classrooms in building 16 look very different from rooms of middle and high schoolers across campus.

“They really don’t understand it at all. They just kind of look at each other like ‘What am I supposed to do?’” second-grade teacher Joann Her-

shberger said.

However, she also cited a positive effect of the moment of silence on her students: “I think it calms them down from just going. It does kind of have a calming effect,” she said.

The fact that the Florida legislature has remained completely silent about the intentions of the moment of silence has sparked a lot of discussion. However, at this time, further clarity is not on the horizon for Florida’s students and educators. The Sarasota County school board declined to comment for this article on the grounds that they are only allowed to share information about the bill. It seems the uncertainty surrounding the law will remain until it is revisited by state representatives.

GRAPHICS BY LILY QUARTERMAINE



CRT ban’s impact on Pine View curricula

continued from page 1

by Peyton Harris and Lily Quartermaine

Asst. Editor-in-Chief & Entertainment Editor

Some teachers see the statute as an overreaction.

“[The public is] accusing teachers of doing something that they’re not doing. As the superintendent said in a school board meeting, nobody in Sarasota County is teaching critical race theory. I didn’t even know what it was until it got banned,” said Scott Wolfinger, who teaches African-American studies and AP US History.

AP World History and AP US Government teacher John Schweig criticized the ruling.

“When you teach about George Zimmerman or the parts of the US constitution that give allowance for the institution of slavery, are you teaching the theory of America that these legislators obviously fear? Those of us who deal with a close and honest look back

at history are going to discuss things and have the students pay attention to the things that aren’t going to make everybody comfortable,” Schweig said.

Despite the guidelines, Schweig said history teachers have seldom crossed the



line.

“That certainly doesn’t mean that we’re going off the rails and teaching this idea that all white people are racist. It is a fine line, of course, between having an open, honest view of the past and what [legislators] fear. [The people who fear this] are fighting against something that doesn’t really exist,” Schweig said.

Regardless of how the tumultuous years of 2020 and

2021 are individually perceived, their events will be transcribed in future history books and lesson plans. As this generation watches history progress before them, thus sprouts the question: do current events and opinions stay in or out of the classroom?

As far as the future of social studies, Wolfinger hopes that the legislature doesn’t stunt students’ growth.

“We need to stay away from those words [‘critical race theory’] because it’s so controversial to people,” Wolfinger said. “It’s unfortunate because it is a current event topic that you could say to AP US History kids. They’re very capable of taking a look because they’re fully formed in their opinions, but we’re not doing that because of the order. We don’t feel comfortable even bringing the topic up because some people in the community will take that as us indoctrinating kids with it.”

GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

Class of 2023 hosts car wash



Eleventh-grader Hana Han cleans her Jeep Rubicon at the Class of 2023’s Oct. 14 car wash. Though specific dates have yet to be finalized, the officers plan to schedule additional car washes in the future. PHOTO BY ALYSON MIZANIN

IN BRIEF

Locker pods set to be renovated or removed this year

by Felicity Chang

Web Editor-in-Chief

Administration plans to renovate the orange, blue, green, and yellow building locker pods this academic year. Whether the locker pods should be completely removed or merely cleaned and repainted has not been finalized.

In September, representatives from a remodeling company gave a quote for removing the lockers and completing any additional refinements. If the lockers were to be removed, Middle School Assistant Principal Melissa Abela said the available space would be used for club activities.

“[The lockers] are kind of old and rusted, and that space is kind of grimy. We really want to just freshen it up and make it look better,” Abela said.

In the case that lockers are removed, the gray building will be the only locker pod available to middle-school and high-school students. The lockers would be on a first-come-first-served basis, with twelfth grade taking priority, progressing down each grade level. Administration would also make sure those with health problems were provided a locker.

“We have kids who participate in sports and they want a

safe space to put their things so we’re trying to work on that, but right now, with everything going on with COVID, we’re ... holding off a little bit,” Abela said.

During the past two years, many textbooks and resources have become available online. According to Abela, that is part of the reason why lockers may not be as necessary anymore.

Twelfth-grader Joli Rea shares a different opinion.

“I use the lockers every year and this year specifically, I actually stopped bringing my laptop to school because it was making my backpack so heavy, which kind of sucks because I actually have to use it to do work in my classes,” Rea said.

With classes set to be in the new three-story building spring semester, there are also student concerns regarding a new aspect of traversing campus: stairs.

“I remember in fifth grade, [my backpack] was pretty darn heavy and now it’s a lot heavier. We had to bring it up the stairs, and it was like, questionable, but three flights of stairs with this thing sounds very intimidating,” ninth-grader Molly Whipple said.

Pine View offers academic support systems

by Sarah Hassan

Asst. Editor-in-Chief

At the beginning of the school year, Assistant Principal Tricia Allen proposed the idea of academically aiding students during the school year by creating two separate support programs for quarantined and in-person students.

Each program is divided into elementary, middle, and high school subsections. However, the quarantined program has more divisions for each subject. The main focus of the quarantined program is to help answer students’ questions, while the in-person branch helps with organization skills. Both aid in being a liaison between the student and their teachers.

While the quarantine program hasn’t received any students through Zoom yet, social studies teacher Roberto Lamela said that keeping the option available is necessary to ensure quarantined students can keep up with their coursework.

The in-person program,

on the other hand, has an increasing number of students. The middle school component already has about seven students and counting. Middle school art teacher and high school theater teacher Haley Brown assists her students with general routine and organization — skills ranging from turning in missing assignments to cleaning their backpacks. Brown also goes over lessons on a PowerPoint each week and reads a chapter from “The Social Blackbelt,” which gives general middle school advice.

Brown encourages students to come in even if they are not in middle school, as she had struggled with organization herself in the past.

“I didn’t actually learn until college, and that was a very intense experience, so if I can help make it an easier transition, come learn some skills,” Brown said. “Nothing you do is going to be inherent, it’s going to be something you have to learn through practice.”

Community fights back against mask mandate

by **Isabella Kulawik**
Sci-Tech Editor

An unadorned wooden podium stands in an establishment that, though home to debate, now sees unparalleled levels of scrutiny. This new center of biweekly controversy is the Sarasota County School Board meeting, and earlier this year, the frequent topic of conversation was mask mandates.

The school board issued a mask mandate Aug. 23, 2021 that was to remain in full effect for 90 days or until the positivity rate dropped below eight percent for three consecutive days. As of Sept. 27, masks were no longer enforced; the mandate was officially lifted Oct. 5.

Those in the medical field were some of the first affected by the mandate. Dr. Sheeba Mesghali, M.D., a board-certified internist and pediatrician of Gulf Coast Medical Group, quickly faced the ruling's repercussions from parents.

"In the 15 years that I have been practicing, I've never had that much stress about something as I have with the masks," Mesghali said.

The mandate didn't have a parental opt-out, so many began seeking professionals for an exemption. Mesghali's office experienced disarray, which she described as a "daily struggle."

"The phones wouldn't

stop ringing. People were begging for elimination or emission of the mask. We as a group immediately said we were not going to do any mask exemptions," Mesghali said.

Within walking distance of Mesghali's office, chiropractor Dr. Dan Busch of Twin Palms Chiropractic handed out over 500 medical opt-out forms. In an interview with CNN's Randi Kaye, Busch said that he was giving parents the right to make the choice for their children on whether to wear a face covering.

Both Busch and Dr. Erene Romanski of Twin Palms Chiropractic declined interviews with The Torch.

Prior to the mandate being lifted, Sarasota County Schools only accepted opt-out forms signed by medical and osteopathic doctors or an advanced registered nurse practitioner.

Logan Dean, a 13-year-old student at SKY Academy, received one of these forms because of his congenital nystagmus, an eye condition that causes involuntary eye movement. When school began last year, Dean began to receive head-

aches after wearing a mask.

"With his concentrating and different breathing, mixed with the vertigo and the eye movement, [the mask] was just overwhelming him," Ash-

ley Dean, Logan Dean's mother, said.

Even with the medical exemption, Ashley Dean said it was difficult to go through the process last year.

"It's just been a touchy subject. With my son going to school without a mask on, he may look like he could perfectly wear a mask, but it was really bad for him," Dean said.

Parents across the county have been voicing their concerns at board meetings. One such parent is Martin Hyde, who is running for election as a congressional representative for Florida's district 16.

"As a parent and also as a politician, I came at this with the whole mama bear thing. You get in front of somebody's cub, you're going to get a bad outcome. When you start talking about the government having loco parentis and usurping parental rights, there's bound to be a profound negative effect," Hyde said.

Hyde has played a large role in the parent's choice movement. "It's apples and oranges. You can't compare a school board member's feelings about you as somebody that they don't know to mine as a parent that's loved and nurtured their kid since the day they were born and until the day they die. It's really as feral as that, and that's why people are as animated as they are. It would do well for people to understand that it's not personal — it's instinctive, it's paternalis-

tic," Hyde said.

Hyde and others organized an event with two medical doctors at The Hollow in Venice to sign mask exemptions, which over 1,200 people attended.

Jimmy Cirillo, a commercial insurance agent and father of two, has also made his voice heard. Currently part of the student advisory counsel at Tatum Ridge Elementary, Cirillo intends to run as a school board member in the 2022 election.

"What this whole situation has done is that it's woken up a lot of parents. A lot of parents didn't get involved in their school boards, they didn't pay attention to the school board meetings, they didn't come out and speak. [The school board] has started enforcing all these tyrannical mandates ... it activated and mobilized a lot of parents," Cirillo said.

As doctors continue to educate on mask efficacy and others protest at school board meetings, there is a divide in the community. Parents are taking matters into their own hands.

"Your right to your opinion stops at my nose, and I don't mean from a mask perspective — I mean in terms of physicality. As a parent, as an American, I respect your right ... You may or may not agree with my beliefs but mine are just as sincere as anybody else's," Hyde said.



Martin Hyde poses in front of his congressional banner. He is running for District 16 because he wants to be a representative of the people of district 16 — "not a distant elite," he said. PHOTO COURTESY OF MARTIN HYDE

Sarasota County mitigates school staff shortages



Recruiters Christina Rogers-Hehr and Rashea Johnson hold a mini job fair at Brookside Middle. They plan on continuing to hold weekly job fairs throughout the county to fill the vacancies. PHOTO PROVIDED BY RASHEA JOHNSON

by **Alyson Mizanin**
News Editor

From shipping delays to rising product prices, the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftereffects have impacted all facets of life. Worker shortages have hurt industries across the country; like other counties in Florida, Sarasota County has been affected by a lack of district-wide school staff.

As of Oct. 20, there are 78 vacancies in the county: one administrative opening, 47 teaching openings, and 30 classified/non-instructional openings, which include custodial, food and nutrition, and transportation positions. This

data is updated daily at www.sarasota.k12.fl.us/jobs/.

Addressing and handling the vacancies is delegated to the Human Resources Department's recruitment team. Recruiters Rashea Johnson and Christina Rogers-Hehr work together to build the district's applicant pool by contacting those interested in working in the district. They spread the word of job openings and opportunities — as well as the benefits that come with these positions — through job fairs at schools, colleges, and local organizations.

In the past, the recruitment team had quarterly,

large-scale job fairs. Johnson and Rogers-Hehr now hold weekly mini job fairs at schools across the district. Though the district has yet to release data on how the fairs are impacting the vacancy numbers, the number of openings has steadily decreased over the course of the year.

Dr. Allison Foster, Executive Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations, said that the comparatively high salaries and benefits — such as dental, health, and medical insurance — provided by the district have led to Sarasota "doing better than most counties." She credits Johnson and Rogers-Hehr's efforts, as well as outside agencies like the Community Foundation, for helping fill the open positions.

"Unfortunately, the pandemic is hitting at a time where we had a lot of people that were close to retirement age reach that point of retirement," Foster said.

Of the 47 teaching openings, 15 are for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) positions.

Glenallen Elementary, a Title I school in North Port, currently has five vacancies, three of which are in ESE. Though staffing Glenallen is

always difficult because of their students' specific needs, this year has been particularly hard.

"We've got an amazing staff that is very used to going above and beyond in their normal, everyday duties. We have several staff members right now that have voluntarily made the decision to forgo their planning period," Assistant Principal Michelle Miller said.

Though Pine View no longer has any vacancies, ESE resource teacher Alevtina Lazareva notes that ESE positions are always hard to fill — re-

gardless of the year.

"[As an ESE resource teacher], I feel like I'm a life coach, tutor, cheerleader, and parent," Lazareva said. "It takes certain skill and extreme patience and love for children to be in ESE."

Though projections don't reveal when the 78 remaining vacancies will be filled, the Human Resources department remains hopeful.

"We won't be able to predict the job or labor market in the future, but we'll be trying to stay on the cutting edge so we can compete in any market," Foster said.

Boy Scouts' Philmont Trek



Twelfth-grader Cooper Couden and the other scouts of Troop 23 sit at the edge of Lover's Leap. Though the trek was difficult, Couden said he wouldn't hesitate to do it again. Scan the QR code to read the full story. PHOTO COURTESY OF COOPER COUDEN

Pine View introduces new staff and faculty for the 2021-2022 school year

As the world starts returning to some semblance of normalcy, Pine View welcomes the following four new faces to the school's ever-evolving framework.

Officer Eugene Williams: School Resource Officer

by Lucy Collins
Social Media Editor

From the Hillsborough Sheriff's Department to the crystal blue waters of the Philippines, School Resource Officer (SRO) Eugene Williams' background has prepared him to keep Pine View safe and secure.

Born in Tampa, Williams moved to Wesley Chapel in his childhood. He worked at Avila Golf Course after graduating high school and was a supervisor at Florida Gardens and Landscaping.

At 26 years old, Williams made his dream of working in law enforcement a reality and began at the Hillsborough sheriff's office. He attended St. Petersburg College by day and worked the 12-hour night shift. Williams stayed with the Hillsborough Sheriff's Department for 17 years. In his final three years, Williams supervised the busiest Juvenile Assessment



PHOTO BY LUCY COLLINS

Center in Florida, where an average of 20 kids came in daily.

Soon after, Williams needed a break from law enforcement. He and his family moved to the Philippines, where his wife is from. They built a house in the middle of a sugarcane field a mere hundred meters from the ocean on Cebu Island. His favorite part, he said, was the rooftop deck that overlooked the ocean, mountains, and city.

"My daughter and I swam and snorkeled everywhere, just exploring," Williams said. "I enjoyed life. I was retired."

His brother-in-law owned a fishing boat and nets, which they occasionally harvested from. Williams also free dove 15 to 20 feet down for sea urchins. They are a delicacy, though he didn't care for the dish.

"These people work hard every day and work for little money, but they're always smiling. That's just how they live life.

Even if they only make enough money to buy dinner that night, they're always smiling, and I really appreciate that," he said.

During their third summer in Cebu, Williams and his wife decided to move back to the U.S. for their daughter's education. In 2017, they moved to Pasco County. Williams began working in Pasco County Sheriff's Department before becoming SRO at Brookside Middle. This August, Williams jumped at the opening at Pine View.

"It's proactive law enforcement," Williams said. "I can be a role model to students. I can communicate with them and go into classes and present on different topics that hopefully have an effect on them that they hold on to. They don't want to get involved in the justice system on the wrong side."

On the weekend, Williams enjoys golfing, weightlifting, biking, and spending time with his family. At school, he can be found patrolling campus, interacting with students.

"I'm really mellow and quiet, but I get the job done. I take protecting everyone on campus seriously," Williams said.

understand statistics," Suchora said.

When she isn't teaching math, Suchora is busy taking care of six birds, five of which are fosters. She has a cockatiel, two parakeets, a sulphur-crested cockatoo, a red-fronted amazon, and a yellow-naped amazon, who is 65 years old.

She received the two amazons and the cockatoo at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, during which bird sanctuaries lost volunteers. Suchora notes that it's important to keep birds socialized prior to adoption so that they are ready to adapt to their new homes.

"They are so much more than you'd ever expect them to be. They can be affectionate,

they can be crazy, they can be naughty, they can be sweet," Suchora said. "Our cockatiel has the most amazing personality. I never, ever expected that out of a bird."

Suchora has also worked on modeling for the National Hurricane Center and auditing radiologists for breast cancer detection rates.

Suchora's son, eleventh-grader Jack Suchora, attends Pine View, which gives her insight on what the workload looks like from the student perspective.

"Teaching here has given me a great perspective on how demanding the typical Pine View schedule is for the students. I try to incorporate ideas from my son and from my students to help everyone be as successful as possible," Suchora said.

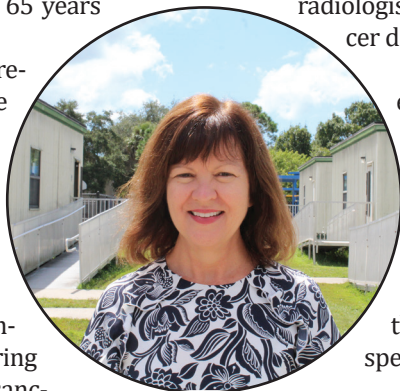


PHOTO BY ISABELLA GASKILL

Kathleen Suchora: AP Statistics and Precalculus Honors

by Isabella Gaskill
Torch Copy Editor

When Kathleen Suchora was offered a teaching position at Pine View in early August, she jumped right in. Though planning for the 2021-2022 school year had already begun, she accepted the position and began preparing to teach AP Statistics and Precalculus.

Suchora began teaching statistics over two decades ago. She got her undergraduate degree in math at the University of South Florida (USF) before pursuing a master's degree in statistics at the University of Central Florida (UCF). In 1995, she began teaching at UCF as a graduate student and taught there on and off until 2019. There, she mostly focused on preparing college students for research positions in other departments.

"[Statistics] applies to every field, every person. No matter what your major is, no matter what you are doing for your job, you have to be able to

Lana Marcotte: High School Assistant Principal

by Eva-May Elmer
Asst. Match Editor-in-Chief

One of Pine View's newest faces is High School Assistant Principal Lana Marcotte. Though they share the same surname, she isn't related to former assistant principal Kate Marcotte.

Born and raised in Sarasota, Marcotte went to the University of Central Florida (UCF) for her bachelor's degree in English Language Arts Education and the University of South Florida (USF) for her master's in Educational Leadership.

While at UCF, Marcotte did her junior internship at Winter Park High in Winter Park. She did her senior internship at Timber Creek High in Orlando, where she got hired and then worked for several years.

After taking on roles like ELA Department Chair and Middle School Team Leader, Marcotte realized, with the encouragement of her colleagues, that leadership-based work suited her well. She moved to St.



PHOTO BY ALYSON MIZANIN

Petersburg, then began working at Imagine School at Palmer Ranch as a teacher and eventually, as an administrator. She was there for seven years before teaching at Sarasota High.

Marcotte was drawn to Pine View because of how the mission statement met "unique needs of learners and focused on sparking curiosity," she said.

"I also heard amazingly awesome and open and caring the students are here. And so I ended up here," Marcotte said.

Marcotte has seen firsthand how Pine View's philosophies are lived out through both the faculty and students.

"Not only is there academic excellence [here], but even the involvement with the school community and the outer community as well," Marcotte said.

Marcotte would eventually love to be a school principal, though she said that "what I want most is happiness and spending time with family."

Ying Guo: 7th Grade Chinese, Chinese II and IV Honors

by Kai Sprunger
Asst. Match Editor-in-Chief

On a typical day, Chinese teacher Ying Guo can be found teaching her students through interactive programs like Kahoot! and Quizlet Live. Over the course of 15 years, she has taught in two countries and has enjoyed encouraging the language-learning process.

Guo grew up in China. Her father taught engineering and her mother taught English; Guo's parents inspired her to pursue her own teaching career. Guo's mother taught her English when she was five years old.

Guo majored in English literature at Tianjin Foreign Languages University and earned a master's degree in International Business from Leeds Beckett University. In 2006, she taught English at Tianjin Polytechnic University for seven years.

Then, Guo moved to Florida and began teaching at several schools, including the Sarasota Chinese Academy — a nonprofit school that has been open for 13 years. The staff consists of volunteers teaching Mandarin Chinese to students of all ages. Guo, the acting principal, has taught there for eight years and

plans to continue volunteering.

"I joined in 2014...the first day after Christmas. I am so proud of that, and I cannot forget that day," Guo said. "I am working day by day, and I love the kids over there."

Now, she also teaches Chinese at Pine View. She uses interactive games to help students learn Chinese.

"Mrs. Guo is good at technology. She is also willing to try different software to enhance the students' learning," Chinese teacher Kitty Wang said.

Guo has found the games fun and educationally beneficial.

"All the kids are loving interactive games. They engage them there and they learn faster from the game," Guo said.

She said that in a way, teaching is a "lifelong learning," as not only do students learn, but so do teachers. Guo feels that it is crucial to make sure she is teaching in the best way for every student.

"Somebody is learning in this way, but the other person is learning in that way. I need to consider everybody and take care of everyone in my class," Guo said.

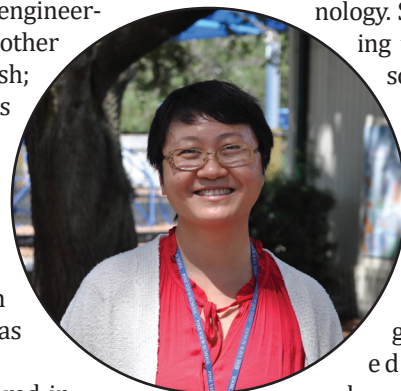


PHOTO BY KAI SPRUNGER

Building 17 combatting climate change

by Alyson Mizanin
News Editor

Though scientists disagree on the extent to which climate change will affect the world in the coming decades, projections reveal that change is inevitable — and not for the better. As one of the fastest growing states in the country, Florida cannot afford to pause its rapid infrastructure growth; instead, new buildings are being specially constructed to resist these environmental changes in the years to come. At Pine View, construction of building 17 and the plan to remove Pine View's 42 portables exemplify how modern projects must consider future environmental conditions.

According to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), Florida has experienced rising sea levels, air temperatures, runoff rates, and disease-carrying insect populations over the past century. With Florida being uniquely impacted by its ocean currents and wind and pressure systems. New constructions can make the world a little greener. Building 17 demonstrates how modern infrastructure is being fortified against climate change.

Construction of the building began with grubbing, or the clearing process, in which all the vegetation was removed. Save for a few raccoons and other critters, the team didn't come across much wildlife.

Project managers Steve Clark and Nathan Renner described the area as swamp-like. It sat at a low elevation with a roughly six to seven foot depression. This depression was leveled out with the creation of a building pad, which was made from almost ten thousand cubic yards of silver after four feet of fill had been poured.

The soil was then stabilized with vibro-replacement, a



Project manager Nathan Renner stands in front of the new building's air conditioning system. Powered by several chilled air units, the system is specially constructed to prevent outages.

PHOTO BY ALYSON MIZANIN

process by which a crane ring placed 303 stone columns ten to eighteen feet underground and reinforced them through water jet vibration. This was essential to prevent disproportional weight settlement.

Building 17 was specially designed to handle the flooding often experienced on campus. Runoff will be transported underground through the storm lines and emptied into the pond on the south side of campus.

As for withstanding natural disasters like hurricanes and tornadoes, building 17 is sufficiently equipped with impact-resistant doors and windows. This adheres to the building code's hurricane limits, considering Pine View — and all of Sarasota County — falls within the hurricane storm zone.

Florida's heat is worsening; in a July 2019 report, the Union of Concerned Scientists estimated that by mid-century, 105 days will exceed a heat index of 100 degrees Fahrenheit in Florida. These projections of rising temperatures, coupled with the fact that heat rises, led to building 17's air conditioning model, which is based on chilled water.

Building 17 has seven air handlers, six of which are chilled water units. The new structure by building 16 is Pine View's chilled water plant; two 200-ton chillers are there, with 100 tons going toward building 16 and the other 300, to building 17. The cold water, which is kept in thermal storage tanks in the structure, is pumped to the building through one of two pumps. This design, though redundant, guarantees that cooling will continue, even if a pump goes down.

Tandem Construction's work on campus won't be finished once building 17 is completed come January. They will be removing portables; according to Clark, they plan on replacing the trees removed.

"I've beat this drum consistently: it really is for the students. . . I consider this my village and all the students, my kids. . . When we opened up the courtyard, somebody took a picture of students using the benches at the Legacy Garden. I got it printed out and it's hanging in my office over there. I told the team, 'That right there, that's money—that's better than gold to me,'" Clark said.

What if Florida had mountains?

by Shelby Brann
Web Section Editor

Living in Florida comes with the acknowledgment of a few facts. One, Florida is quite literally the flattest state in America; two, this is most likely because of Florida's proximity to sea level; and three, Universal Orlando is better than Disney World (maybe not a fact). Florida has long been known as a sunny paradise with little to no elevation. However, what if this wasn't the case? What if Florida had mountains? If this was true, the Sunshine State's basic facts would be flipped upside down.

Roma Jagdish, AP Human Geography teacher, remarked that if Florida's terrain had high mountains, then a peculiar effect would most likely occur.

"When you have mountains, if they're high enough, you'll have the rain shadow effect. . . The rain shadow effect is

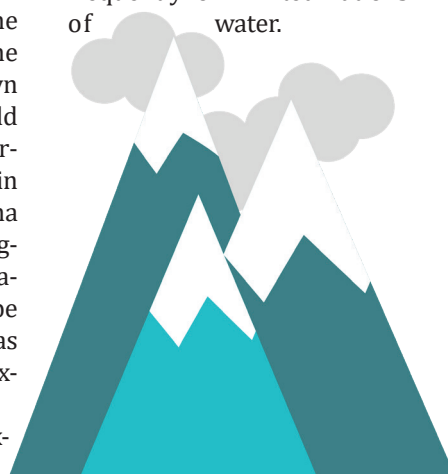
when the wind blows and the clouds ascend high, all the rain falls on the windward side and the leeward side is very different," Jagdish said.

The ridge of the mountains would result in two different climates. An example of this effect is in Chile, where the Andes Mountains separate the Atacama Desert — also known as the driest place in the world — and the rest of South America. Central South America is in direct contrast to the Atacama Desert; it brings to mind images of rain forests and precipitation. Its climate is known to be both wet and humid, whereas the Atacama Desert rarely experiences rainfall.

Jagdish continued to explain how growing up in India, she often experienced the rain shadow effect between the Central Highlands and Mumbai.

Though she moved from

India when she was ten months old, when she went back to India to visit relatives, she would often marvel at how relaxed the citizens of Mumbai were with water, whereas in the Highlands, citizens lived frequently on limited rations of water.



GRAPHIC BY SHELBY BRANN

David Yotsuda, life science teacher, further elaborated on the effects a mountain range

Aquifers in Florida and Flooded Basements

Whether it's broken umbrellas flapping in the wind or mud-filled potholes littering the shell lot, we are all privy to the fact that incessant rain is an integral part of the Floridian identity. In Florida, frequent basement flooding is much more common than in other states, which leads to mold infestations and water damage.

The Florida peninsula consists of limestone and porous carbonate rock, a structural base that is conducive to an expansive aquifer system.

However, these benefits are accompanied by a major consequence: collapse. Sinkholes may form due to the construction of underground basements, as the Florida Aquifer System is dangerously close to the surface.

Combined with the risks of mold damage from water seeping into structures, it's understandable why contractors and homeowners prefer Florida homes without basements — and without any pesky drip-dropping from ceilings.

Sources: University Press of Florida, U.S. Geological Survey

RESEARCH BY FELICITY CHANG GRAPHIC BY ISABELLA KULAWIK

would have on Florida.

"Our water resources would be different. For the water resources, we could put things in like reservoirs and have more river systems to collect that water," Yotsuda said.

Disappointingly, he continued to say that Florida was never at a chance of gaining mountains. He also stated that this is because of Florida's lack of tectonic plates and volcanoes surrounding its coast. These features can lead to the formation of mountains. Due to Florida's position far from any tectonic plate boundaries — the geographic features responsible for forming most volcanoes and mountains — it was never likely to gain mountains.

In addition, there's an obvious difference between the tropics of Florida and the ski slopes of the West. Mountains don't just affect rainfall; they

affect climate, as well. The temperature on top mountains is much colder than would be expected near the bottom. This is due to the mountain's distance upwards from sea level. This results in numerous ecosystems seemingly stacked upon each other.

Starting in the Neoproterozoic, the land that makes up Florida was a part of a supercontinent known as Gondwanaland. About 300 million years ago, Florida broke off from this supercontinent and became a part of North America's continental shelf.

The breakup of Pangea sparked the conversion of Florida to a peninsula. Despite being underwater and reforming there for quite some time — before resurfacing 23 million years ago — it seems that this eventful past has made Florida a diverse, though flat, ecosystem full of amazing creatures.

ULTIMATE HALLOWEEN THROWBACK MOVIES

by Lily Quartermaine
Entertainment Editor

What is it about fall that makes us want to be nostalgic so bad? The Halloween season reminding us of trick-or-treating as little kids? The chilly air reminding us of school Holiday parties? Honestly, I don't care why, I love it, and if you're like me, you have no problem feeding that nostalgia-craving emotional monster that lives inside your brain. So without further ado, here's The Torch's favorite fall throwback movies to satisfy your inner third-grader.

Hocus Pocus (1993) Dir. Kenny Ortega

This kooky Halloween classic really put a spell on kids of the 2000s. Uncover the legend of the weird, creepy and somehow iconic Sanderson sisters as they dazzle you with quirky spells, silly songs and incredibly large hairstyles.

This movie is hardly scary at all, with it's over the top, campy fashion and knowingly cliché storyline. This movie has every Halloween trope in the book, making it an absolute must-watch.

Halloweentown (1998) Dir. Duwayne Dunham

If you haven't somehow seen "Halloweentown," you should. This movie is WEIRD. I think all 2010s kids can relate to the feeling of a late fall night, turning on Disney and seeing that the channel is cranking out all it's old Halloween content.

Suddenly, this movie comes on with its insane storyline and abhorrent CGI: Hang on, why am I really invested? The cutesy familial themes in this movie discount the odd plot of Marnie Piper, a 13-year-old witch who is tasked with saving the fictional

paranormal city of Halloweentown. This is the film for seekers of original storylines with endearing undertones.

My Babysitter's A Vampire (2010) Dir. Bruce McDonald

Why do two high-schoolers have a babysitter that's also a high-schooler? I don't know! But she's a vampire, and she's hot! Benny and Ethan are two classic goofy teenage boys who have one goofy, classic teenage boy problem: their friend wants to eat them.

Actually, this movie is pretty good. Good enough to warrant its own series with 2 decent seasons. The plot may give you "cheesy 80s film" vibes, but trust me, it's not a bad thing. The dynamic between the two main characters is adorable and perfectly captures the classic "buddies vs. baddie" trope. If you're looking for a kitschy, nostalgic and all-

around wholesome Halloween film, this is the one.

Coraline (2009) Dir. Henry Selick

I know you know this one... "Coraline," the movie that haunts the dreams of every 2010s kid. "Oh, a fun animated movie!" WRONG. The mom's a cockroach! This movie is so unexpectedly scary, it's unfair.

Tween-age Coraline Jones is transported into another dimension through a portal she finds in her new house, and everything is perfect! (except it's not) Her parents are nice to her (actually they're bug people), her neighbors are nice to her (actually they want to sew buttons in her eyes), her friend Wybie is not annoying anymore (actually his mouth is sewn shut). What could go wrong? A lot, actually. If you're looking for a decent scare paired with a unique anima-

tion style, try "Coraline."

The Nightmare Before Christmas (1993) Dir. Henry Selick

Let's settle the debate. "The Nightmare Before Christmas" is a Halloween movie, not a Christmas movie, and a good one at that. The eerie yet oddly cute animation style is what pulls you in, and the charming main characters Sally and Jack are what keep you hooked.

The plot is endearingly adorable, with Jack Skellington, the Pumpkin King, simply trying to show his friends what a happy Christmas looks like, not realizing that he's jeopardizing the holiday as a whole. The movie definitely has its scary moments, but the lovely romance and squeaky little side characters combat the spookiness.

GRAPHICS BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

Who is The Final Girl?

by Grace Johnson
Editor-In-Chief

It's horror movie season once again, and as such, it is far past time to evaluate the "final girl" trope that weaves its way into almost every film on your Halloween must-binge list.

Who is the final girl? Simply stated, she's the last character left to confront the killer. However, she's best explained by professor Carol Clover, the woman who coined the term "final girl" in 1987.

"She is the one who encounters the mutilated bodies of her friends and perceives the full extent of the preceding horror and of her own peril; who is chased, cornered, wounded; whom we see scream, stagger, fall, rise, and scream again... she alone looks death in the face; but she alone also finds the strength either to stay the killer long enough to be rescued or to kill him herself," Clover said in her essay "Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film."

In Sean S. Cunningham's 1980 "Friday the 13th" film, Alice Hardy classically por-

trays the final girl. At a recently revamped summer camp, Hardy and her friends are preparing to be counselors when disaster strikes. One by one, Hardy's friends face death for only a few seconds before being killed off. Being the last person left, Hardy contrastingly knows of the danger she's in for a much longer duration, but can fight off the killer long enough to escape.

The 1979 sci-fi thriller "Alien" follows the Nostromo spaceship as an alien picks off crewmates until Ellen Ripley can clearly be identified as the film's final girl. The same concept is made fun of in the "Scream" series, where Sidney Prescott is the shallow girl who will step up given the right, terrifying circumstances. "The Shining" has Wendy Torrance, as "The Silence of the Lambs" has Clarice Starling, and the final girl appears many more times throughout the genre. This poses a question: is this trope outdated?

The philosophical and cultural background

of the final girl is extensive. The most basic structure of a



slasher movie with this trope has a male killer who portrays traditionally feminine characteristics while the final girl, who is usually innocent, depicts traditionally masculine traits. The other characters, both male and female, are often more worldly, and fit into their gender stereotypes more easily.

"The fact that we have in the killer a feminine male and in the main character a masculine female... would seem to suggest a loosening of the categories, or at least of the equation sex equals gender," Clover said, adding that the genre started breaking traditional gender stereotypes around and after 1978 — the same time when women were entering the workplace more regularly, when the stereotypes needed to be broken down in the real world, too.

Mixing gender stereotypes has always been something soci-

ety fears, making the horror genre an ironic fit for its film introduction. The final girl trope itself was terrifying to a culture that thrives off of division, a society that insists on classifying who any one person can be based on gender, race, socioeconomic status, and more before they can decide for themselves.

Ari Aster's "Midsommar" is a prime example of this. Combining cult horror with the final girl trope, the film is still shocking and unpredictable. The stereotypical trope is transformed into something new - Dani Ardor is complex and insane, while simultaneously at peace with her situation, ready to die. She isn't just the naive cheerleader or the ditzy girlfriend.

The misgivings over gender roles and other needless divisions in our world are far from resolved. As such, horror will continue to highlight them, but hopefully in a way that plays on and even adds to the fears of societal collapse that underly the common tropes like the final girl.

Fanart Fanatic

by Terry Shen
Match Layout Artist

Looking inside of ninth-grader Alexandra Wade's artistic mind, one might find a colorful painting of a frog croaking in the middle of a clear river. Perhaps they'll see a video game character launching fireworks, with an explosion of colors bursting in the sky. One might also see her envisioning her next piece of artwork, which could be anything from a few grey moths flying lazily around a lantern to a mythical beast zooming past towering mountains and dark blue oceans.

Wade's love for art started in second grade, when she looked at other students' art and was inspired to begin her own creative journey.

"I decided that I'd make it a competition, and my goal was to become better than them at drawing," Wade said. "Eventually I achieved that goal."

Wade draws inspiration from video games, books, and other creative pieces to create works in her favorite mediums, which range from digital art all the way to charcoal. She specializes in fanart, and her favorite subjects in-

clude moths and frogs. One of her favorite pieces that she herself has drawn is "King of Decay." Wade described it as "a mushroom guy" and said that it took her a very long time to complete.

For Wade, art is not just a hobby. She has also entered her art in competitions and was selected to be featured in the Art Center of Sarasota multiple times, even winning a medal for a piece that she described as a Chinese dragon protecting a staircase to the top of a mountain. Made of colored pencils and markers, the dragon is currently framed in her room. She hopes her talent will win a scholarship when she is

older.

"Alex is an exceptional student. She really views the world in a very cool unique way. And I wouldn't be surprised if we see her animating down the line in professional work," said Haley Brown, Middle School 2D Art and High School Theater teacher. Brown taught Wade in Middle School 2D Art.

While Wade is enrolled in many art classes at Pine View, she is also currently studying Computer Science Principles.

“Alex is an exceptional student. She really views the world in a very cool unique way.”

**Haley Brown,
Art and Theater Teacher**



"I want to go design stuff with my art," she said.

She mentioned power sources and other creative innovations as items on her list.

For now, Wade continues to find ways to be creative. She began writing a novel last year, and is currently working on it in its early stages. She plans to start a cosplay club at school.

"She's also a very accomplished cosplayer and has very cool cosplay outfits," Brown said.

Her love of cosplay is derived from her love of art — Wade said cosplay "relates to creating something physical in the real world."

Overall, Wade explained that her exploration of art has had a profound effect on her life and personal growth.

"Doing art made me a lot happier because some of the art pieces I did were when I was kind of sad," Wade said.



PHOTOS BY NINTH-GRADER ALEXANDRA WADE. "Neon Chaos" and "King of Decay" drawn by Alexandra Wade

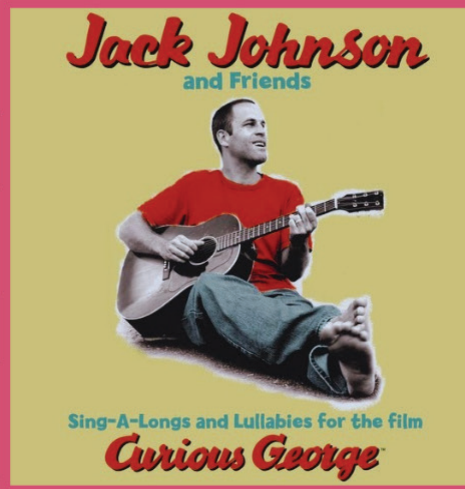
GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

♡ ☆ ✨ 🎵 *soundtrack spotlight* 🎵 ✨ ☆ ♡



Twilight Original Motion Picture Soundtrack (2008)

Honestly way better than you're expecting. "Muse," "Paramore," what could go wrong? Nothing, actually.



Sing-A-Long Songs and Lullabies for the film Curious George (2006)

Okay, I know what you're thinking, but hear me out! I've happy-cried to this album *quite* a few times.



Spiderman: Into The Spider-Verse (2018)

One of the best animated film soundtracks. Prepare to activate your spidey-senses, because this will make you feel like a hero!

32 YEARS OF HALLOWEEN

Telling the Story of Traditions Past with Elementary Teacher Misty Tucak

by Zoe Merritt
Graphics Editor

Though Misty Tuck has seen many a Pine View tradition come and go over the course of her thirty-two years on campus, the annual Elementary Fall Parade has not lost its magic.

"I've seen things go away, I've seen things tried

to be continued. But the things that have continued, to me, have changed to some respect," Tucak said.

Like many traditions inseparable from Pine View, the Fall Parade has its own unique history. According to Tucak, the parade was not born fully formed, but evolved from a previous

Halloween tradition on the old campus. The brainchild of former teacher Reva Levy, the tradition was a group effort from Levy and her third grade class. Letting her students decorate her portable and perform as characters, Levy created what Tucak called a "haunted house" for everyone on campus to walk through during their lunch.

"She was extremely creative. You would walk in her portable, and you cannot stop looking around. There was so much to see. So she actually let her class decorate her room," Tucak said about Levy, who began as an art teacher.

"And so, kind of reaching out beyond that we decided so that everybody could have the opportunity to have fun and be in the fall spirit, we would do a parade," Tucak said.

Initially, the costume theme was a free-for-all, students showing off their chosen costumes for the year, until new rules limiting student costumes from the county required Pine View teachers to evolve the parade.

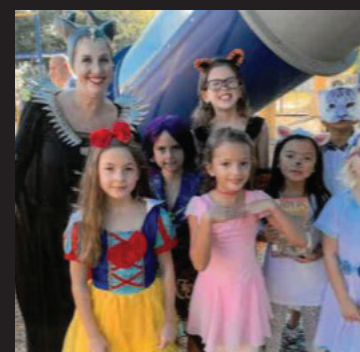
"We didn't want to stop the tradition. So the teachers got together and we said, okay, we'll make it educational," Tucak said.

Second grade became "anything out of a cardboard box," while third started homophones and homographs. This switch did anything but dampen Tucak's passion for the celebration, opening up new avenues for students to express their creativity.

For the past couple of years second grade has evolved again to storybook characters after safety concerns were raised about the boxes. Nonetheless, Tucak remembers several cardboard costumes fondly, among them a principal and his desk, dice, cereal boxes, and hot air balloons.

The parade was condensed to just second and third grade, remaining as such today. However, Tucak has not given up hope for an all-elementary parade, and still reaches out to fourth- and fifth-grade teachers about participating.

"I feel like it's a very child-oriented fun," she said.



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY MISTY TUCAK

GRAPHIC ON LEFT BY JIAYI ZHU

CANDY WARS

the Halloween bucket round up

On the night of Halloween, enthusiastic trick-or-treaters are released onto the streets. Which candies are loved, and which candies are left to rot in the bucket?

m&m's
You can never go wrong with M&M's! It's chocolate — and the crunch never gets old.

ALMOND JOY
Almond Joy is for sure a toss up amongst candy lovers. If it's not your thing, there'll always be someone waiting with open arms — as long as there are no lost friendships because of it.

Kit Kat
Kit Kats are yet another Halloween staple. Whether you eat it the normal way, the Kardashian way, or bite into both simultaneously (keep it private), you get a rush of flavors and textures.

Reese's
A fan favorite, Reese's are bound to end up in a happy trick or treaters' mouth eventually. It's a dad food, what's not to love?

Starburst
Bursts of color and fruity sensations are always welcomed after a mouthful of chocolate. If you're looking for drool-worthy tang, Starbursts are for you.

Wheel of Fortune: Pumpkin Edition

Although a fall staple, decorating pumpkins can be daunting. We hope to make it easier here! Just take a paperclip (or anything small), place it on each wheel, and spin to choose your pumpkin's features. Also, since carving pumpkins isn't for everyone, these fun designs can also be painted!

Eyes:



Nose:



Mouth:



SPIRIT HALLOWEEN

BEHIND THE SCENES

by Sarah Catalano
Copy Editor

Much like fair weather, Spirit Halloween appears in Sarasota in the autumn and is ghosted away scant months after. Ironically, it shares space with the ghosts of former stores, occupying empty retail locations. This year, the franchise has taken residence in the Gulf Gate Mall shopping center,

the interior space and add to the Halloween ambiance. The store is open mid-August to early November, and inventory is sold online during the off-season.

While the name suggests that the company's supply is limited to items like floppy Minecraft swords, Harlequin wigs, and plastic skeletons, holiday-enthusiasts can also find merchan-

"Our mission is to make hospitals less scary for kids and their families through support of the Child Life department at partner hospitals in our local communities."

Despite the pandemic, the program sent Halloween care packages to children who spent Halloween in hospitals in 2020, and are currently raising money to do so in 2021 — custom-



right at the corner of Clark Road and the Tamiami Trail, and is packed with paraphernalia to satisfy even the most fanatic Halloween fan.

Everything you see in the store has been constructed by Spirit workers. Starting in late July, they assemble display banners, miniature haunted houses, even the hole-punched black "walls" set up to disguise

dise themed after Christmas, Easter, St. Patrick's Day, and Fourth of July — sometimes with eerie twists — in their online store.

The franchise is also host to their very own charity program, Spirit of Children, that raises funds for art, music, and aquatic and pet therapies in hospitals.

According to the Spirit of Children Website,

ers who donate at check-out get to ring a purple cowbell.

Spirit Halloween stores are spread throughout the United States and Canada, but for this spooky season issue, we've focused on local trends and compiled a short list of Spirit's superlative items for the season. Enjoy!

HONORABLE MENTION

A. Banana suit, an obvious essential.

B. Boney birds, unexpectedly delightful.

C. Face mask, exclusively in Spirit Halloween!

TOP SELLERS



Beetlejuice Tombstones

These decorations are picture-perfect replicas of the prop from the movie, and have sold out at the Sarasota location (likely to be back in stock again).



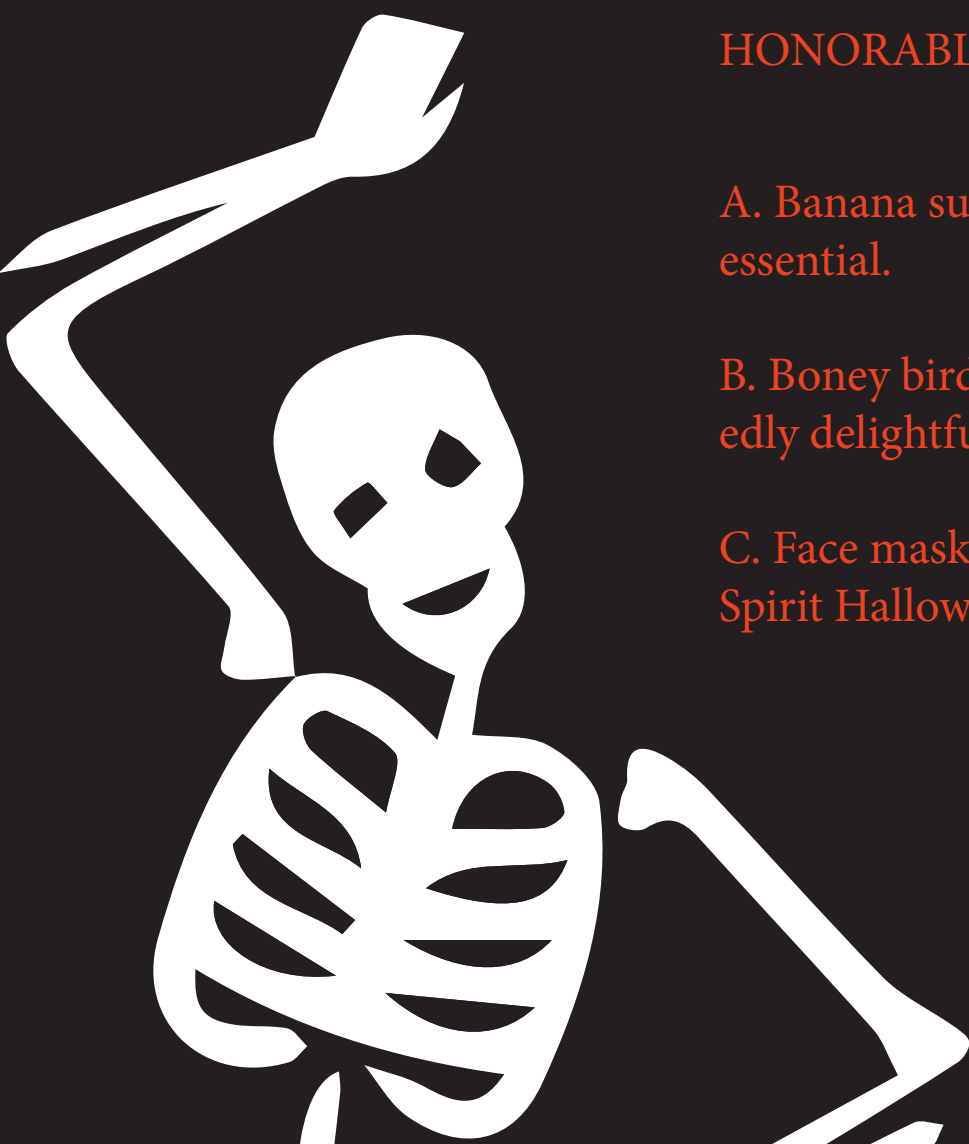
This Funky Skeleton

Another creepy addition to any enthusiast's front yard, these bones watch the observer with lifelike eyes — flat screens animated with slight side-to-side and blinking motions.



Pirate Gear

It's a pirate's life for everyone in Halloween 2021. Hats, hooks, and eye-patches are rapidly evacuating the shelves — sea-faring fashion is in.



Y2K? As if!

by Alyson Mizanin
News Editor

When uncertainty engulfed 2020, many turned to hallmarks of the recent past for comfort and security. Social media streamlined this process for millennials and Gen-Zers, whose rose-tinted glasses colored them partial to the years defining their early childhoods: the mid-to-late-1990s and early-to-mid-2000s.

Out of 2020 came a resurgence of trends that defined the 1990s and 2000s. This timeframe can be divided into two separate — though often misidentified — eras: Y2K (1995-2003) and McBling (2003-2008).

The 2003 overlap between Y2K and McBling explains the confusion between the eras, though their aesthetics and attitudes are vastly different. Where Y2K is functional, McBling is luxurious — in a knockoff way. Y2K is unisex and utilitarian, complete with midriff-revealing sportswear and baggy cargo pants, while McBling is flashy and ultrafeminine, famous for rhinestones and low-rise jeans.

Y2K — What Really is It?

Come 1995, the world buzzed with excitement over the possibilities the new millennium held. Many hoped the future would include cultural blending and rapid technological advancement. This excitement for

the millennium inspired futuristic designs that were grounded by preexisting trends from the 1960s and early 1990s.

Shiny, synthetic, and iridescent materials like leather, latex, nylon, and PVC plastic were some of Y2K's favorites. Items were sleek and monochromatic.

As hip-hop culture bled into the mainstream, street and sportswear were popularized with futuristic elements. Windbreakers, puffer jackets, and loose cargo pants became wide-

spread. Through their music videos, artists like Aaliyah, Missy Elliott, and TLC shared the aesthetic, which deviated from past expectations for women to wear tight clothing.

These trends both drew inspiration from movies like *The Matrix* (1999) and the *Spy Kids* series, all of which had their own visions of futuristic worlds.

McBling — Y2K's Afterpar-

ty McBling — a term coined in 2016 — was a sharp contrast from Y2K's minimalist aesthetics, instead turning to lavish maximalism.

Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie popularized the McBling aesthetic with their pop culture influence. The show *The Simple Life* connected celebrities and everyday people in ways never before seen; the rich and famous were now only a few camera or keyboard clicks away.

Much of McBling's look was inspired by the 1970s' disco and female liberation movements. McBling furthered these messages through miniskirts, low-rise jeans, and baby tees with ironic slogans; the McBling aesthetic at large focused on unlimited expressions of femininity.

Rap and hip-hop cultures of the 1980s and 1990s spearheaded the oversized logos and nameplate chains that McBling adopted. Though Hilton is often credited as the head of the McBling era, the impact of artists like Lil Kim, Foxy Brown, and Mary J. Blige cannot be understated.

Accessories were complete only after they'd been bedazzled. Makeup similarly needed sparkly touches, frosted lips, thin eyebrows, and lots of body shimmer.

Media played a similar role in McBling's successes: Movies like *Legally Blonde* (2001) and *Mean Girls* (2004) embodied the unique McBling look.

FASHION FEVER "Mean Girls" edition



by Eva-May Elmer,
Match Asst. Editor-in-Chief

Hey everyone, I'm Eva-May, and I love fashion in every way, shape and form. I also have many potentially unpopular opinions on fashion, so I thought I'd share them to stir the pot and start some conversations. To start off my column in an iconic way, I chose an iconic movie: "Mean Girls." "Mean Girls" embodies 2000s fashion trends perfectly, and I think a lot of us would love to travel back to that era because of this movie.

The hilarious scene where Cady, Karen, Regina and Gretchen all walk down the hallway together, and Cady falls in the trash, features several iconic outfits. Cady's outfit from this scene is my favorite. The coordination is on point, the colors are cute and just everything about it is perfection. Gretchen's outfit is my second favorite. Red compliments her skin tone and looks great on her, making for an overall amazing look.

The scene where Regina tries on the Spring Fling dress she reserved also features some great outfits. They are all wearing mini skirts, which I love. Karen's outfit is slightly basic, but cute. Gretchen's outfit is awesome; the skirt and baby tee with the chunky belt is a look and a half. Cady's outfit is alright — it has a sim-

ilar vibe to Karen's but I honestly like it less.

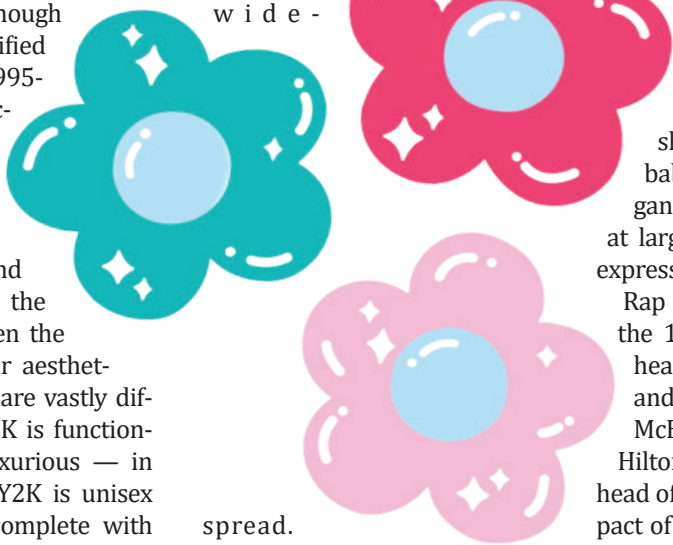
I'm sure you've heard of, or seen, the scene in the movie where Regina acts fake and compliments a girl's skirt that she actually hates. I love that girl's outfit and not in the way Regina means — I love it genuinely. The subtle color coordination is clever and I'm a sucker for a good plaid mini skirt.

Spooky season is here, and the Halloween looks in "Mean Girls" were a complete and utter moment. I don't care what anyone says; Regina, Gretchen and Karen's Halloween costumes were incredible. Regina's bunny costume was super cute, Karen's mouse outfit was perfect and Gretchen's cat costume was a full latex situation, which she pulled off effortlessly.

The highly anticipated Spring Fling created quite a bit of drama throughout the movie, but the looks served at the end made it all worth it. Unfortunately, Cady wears her mathletes uniform, so I'm not talking about her look. No hate, but actually yes, hate, because I would have loved to see a formal look from her. Regina's dress, featured in the previous try-on scene, is stunning, a bit understated, but beautiful. Janis and Damian really pulled it out of the bag here with matching suits. In-cre-di-ble.

It's safe to say that this movie has a ton of awesome fashion moments, and it is personally one of my favorite 2000s movies for fashion inspiration and just watching in general. I'll help Gretchen out here, the looks were so fetch!

GRAPHICS BY LILY QUARTERMAINE



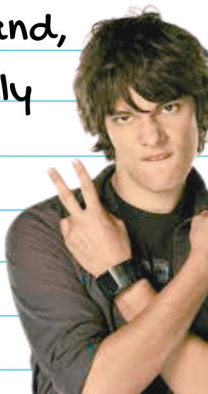
the goofball

are you the kooky comic relief, uplifting your friends with silly jokes and your unique style?



the older brother

are you mean to your siblings, in a band, and desperately swooning over a girl out of your league?



which 2000s trope are you?

the perfect boy

are you broody, mysterious and devilishly handsome (and maybe hiding a deep, dark secret?)



the mean girl

are you the queen bee of your school, scaring everyone with your harsh personality and stellar style?



MUST-HAVES

- a good plaid skirt
- baby tees
- color coordination!

- Focuses on upper body strength.
- Requires quick reaction time, responsibility, and decision making skills.
- Teaches a deeper understanding of nautical skills.
- Higher risk of injury.
- Complicated equipment
- Usually one to three people per boat.

Sailing VERSUS ROWING

GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

- Focuses on leg strength.
- Extremely competitive and team-oriented.
- Requires intense drive, commitment and resilience.
- Lower chance of injury.
- Overall very good for cardiovascular health.
- Usually multiple people rowing on the boat.

Double the Standards, Double the Issues

by Joanna Malvas
Managing Editor

With women's professional sports continuing to grow in the sports industry, recent research reveals that coverage of women's sports falls short compared to that of men's. As entertainment networks and news companies base their funding distribution on viewership, women's sports coverage is continually minimized, which in turn leads to less views.

The Bard College Digital Commons study, entitled "The Gender Wage Gap in Sports: Explaining the Pay Gap in Sports," explains that ESPN pays the WNBA an average of \$25 million per year for the rights to broadcast their games.

Meanwhile, ESPN has been paying \$1.4 billion per year to the NBA to live stream games, reports Cork Gaines, a sports editor at Business Insider.

As women's sports receive a fraction of the amount of funding that men's sports receive, female coverage is also minimized, with female sports receiving 5.7 percent of ESPN's broadcasted airtime. As a result, discourse within the sports journalism community has been brought forward in the interpretation of these numbers. For instance, Dan Shaughnessy from the Boston Globe believes that the funding gap is justified, as women's sports inherently receive less viewership.

On the other hand, other sports journalists and commentators argue that the gap is part of a cyclical cause-and-effect chain: a lack of viewership comes from a lack of funding, as less viewership leads to short-circuited funding.

Moreover, coverage of

Meanwhile, similar behaviors in Williams' male counterparts are often overlooked. For example, Roger Federer's poor sportsmanship and aggression have been dismissed under the guise of mental health.

This lack of female coverage and constructive media correlates with the statistics of women in sports journalism. In the same way that there is a lack of female sports coverage, there is also a lack of female sports journalists.

As Patrick S. Washburn and Chris Lamb had written in their book, "Sports Journalism: A History of Glory, Fame and Technonology," 88 percent of sports columnists and 94 percent of sports editors are white, and 93 percent of columnists were male.

The book further states, "The Institute for Diversity

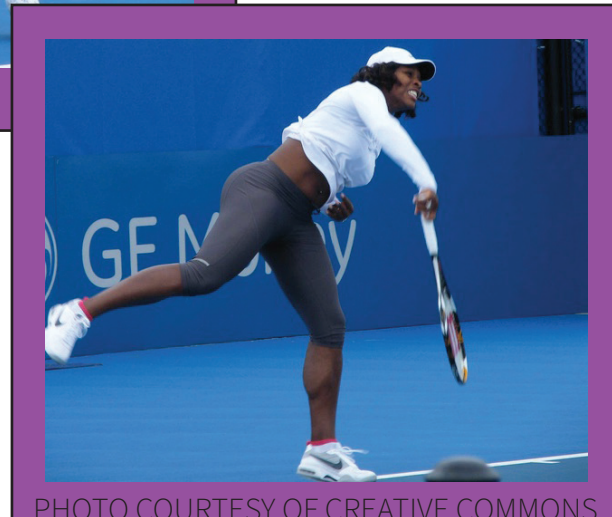


PHOTO COURTESY OF CREATIVE COMMONS

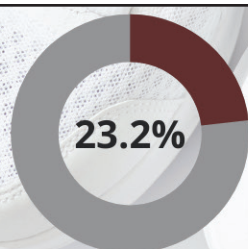
female athletes does not always emphasize performance or athletic prowess. Instead, coverage within the past few years has revealed that, in many cases, double standards against women are still pervasive.

For instance, Anna Kessel from The Guardian reports on how Serena Williams faces criticism regarding issues of sportsmanship and aggressive behaviors displayed on court, such as slamming her racket.

and Ethics in Sports at the University of Central Florida gave the media, including print and broadcast, an 'F' grade for gender representation among columnists and editors."

While there has been a growing presence of female athletes in the sports industry, sports news and media has yet to fully reflect this growth.

taking ATHLETICS to the EXTREMES



According to the CDC's 2018 National Health Survey, this is the percent of adults aged 18 and over who met both aerobic and muscle-strengthening physical activity guidelines.

American athletes dominate in elite-level sports, yet most of the adult population does not meet the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention's physical activity guidelines. Here's what we know about this peculiar dichotomy regarding athletics in the U.S.



“

I think Pine View kids are perfectionists, and if they're not going to be the best, [sports] might not be something they jump into. And I think that's silly, because learning how to do fun things, whether you're playing golf, or tennis, or roller skating, or even going fishing, these are things that you're going to want to do when you're 30, 40, 50 years of age.

social studies teacher Liz Ballard

”

DIHYDROGEN MONOXIDE

And what you can do about it

What is dihydrogen monoxide?

Dihydrogen monoxide is a colorless, odorless chemical that has invaded our schools, homes, and produce, and even our tap water. It has no discernible flavor or texture, and is lethal when inhaled.

Why should I care?

Dihydrogen monoxide is made up of the same atomic components in poison ivy, cobra venom, and TNT... Yet you and your family are ingesting up to 8 POUNDS of it each day!

This chemical has been found in 100% of our local water pipes. Our government officials are completely aware of this, and have still done nothing!

TAKE ACTION

SPEAK OUT: Talk to your friends and neighbors about the dangers of dihydrogen monoxide.

MAKE THE SWITCH: Replace bottled and tap water with your own naturally curated water from local rivers and streams.

RESIST: Refuse to patronize restaurants, hotels, and businesses that use dihydrogen monoxide.

Only together can we spark change to take the first steps in eliminating dihydrogen monoxide from our world.

Visit the FAQs page on dhmo.org for more information.

How to be a ladies man *A Terry Shen Special*

by **Aly Zaleski and Terry Shen**
Humor Editor & Match Layout Editor

Torch Staff decided to take some initiative and interview our lone male in how he's become such an alpha while constantly surrounded by women.



Aly Zaleski: What made you the ladies man you are today?

Terry Shen: I eat protein powder. I go to the gym twice every day. I've got a snap score of like, a million. They can't compete. I have Supreme merch. I've got lady after lady after lady. They follow me around like an entourage. You can look at my Spotify, I've got Travis Scott on loop. It's my gym playlist.

AZ: What's your workout routine?

TS: I do 100 pull-ups in 100 seconds. I deadlift 400 pounds. I bench 450. They can't compete. I got my gym bros with me at all times. None of

GRAPHIC ON LEFT BY SARAH CATALANO

them have as many ladies as me. I'm better than everyone, let's be real.

AZ: What's your favorite post-workout snack or meal?

TS: I've got a strawberry smoothie with more protein powder. Protein powder [is] my life. My smoothie [is] 50% protein powder, 1% strawberry, 49% hard work and sweat.

AZ: Who was your inspiration?

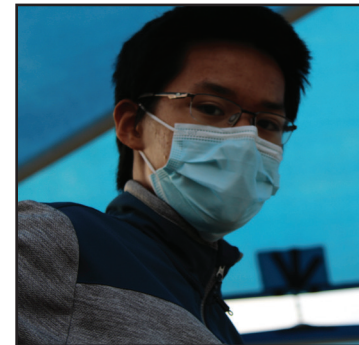
TS: My greatest inspiration is me. People look up to me because I'm super fit. They want my ladies. They can't compare.

AZ: What is your advice for people who want to be like you?

TS: They can't. Give up. No one will ever be me. They can't compare.

AZ: Who is they?

TS: I'm better than everyone else. Figure it out.



PHOTOS BY ALY ZALESKI

THE NIGHTMARE ON PYTHON PATH

OUT NOW! IN THEATERS ONLY

MS. HENTGES
"THE FIGHTER"

MS. MCLEOD
"THE GUY WITH THE BASEBALL BAT"

MR. LENERZ
"THE DAMSEL IN DISTRESS"

MR. MELTON
"THE THINKER"



Westfield Mall: A Critic's View

by Sarah Catalano
Copy Editor

Writing to you now, reader, is Thaddeus D. Bunn, intrepid critic, dust bunny extraordinaire, connoisseur of fine locations, and winner of the prestigious Silver Grime Award. In the course of this article, I shall be presenting my candid thoughts on the establishment known as Westfield Mall.

In my time as a critic, I have traveled far and wide, exploring unknowns, narrowly escaping death by vacuum, and tumbling across astonishing distances of up to 48 inches.

Nothing, however, could prepare me for what I encountered at Westfield Mall.

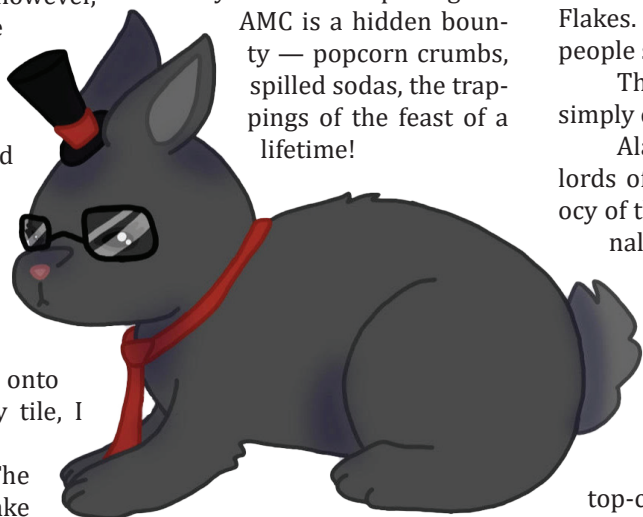
I entered through the picturesque AMC entrance. My expectations, of course, were as low as the tongue of a dog in July. As I tumbled onto the cracked creamy tile, I was filled with awe.

The majesty! The beauty! Readers, take me at my word when I say there is very little in this world that impresses me. But when I first drifted over the threshold of those greasy glass doors, choirs sang. A paradise, untouched by human traffic and cleaning habits — thick dust piled underneath the tables, in front of empty restaurants, around the various pop-up candy stands and arcade machines.

The ceilings high above me were tastefully decorated with delicate cracks and mossy brown water stains. Most luxuriously, on every

sweet particle of dust, there is the lingering smell of popcorn and disinfectants. The infusions alone would cost a fortune on the open market, and yet here they are, free to all who drift the graciously empty halls! A dust bunny with time to spare could tumble down the stained carpets of the theater for hours, or drift from Dippin' Dots machine to Pacman without a care in the world.

Wide-open hallways provide smooth passage beneath the various attractions: claw machines, sunglass stands, a lone Zoltar that speaks to the passing traveler. Beneath every seat in the prestigious AMC is a hidden bounty — popcorn crumbs, spilled sodas, the trappings of the feast of a lifetime!



Much to my gleeful surprise, unexplained mops, caution signs, and trashcans of differing sizes pepper the hallways, all adding to the tasteful and sophisticated ambience.

Furthermore, the place has installed human security guards to keep the silly creatures out after sunset. Innovation truly is alive!

It seemed like paradise. And yet, I was determined to unearth the most horrible, terrible, clean (I shudder) secrets this apparent wonder-

land was hiding from me. As I neared the opposite end of the establishment, it became clear where the Achille's heel of this miraculous palace of delights lay.

Costco.

What a nightmare! Spotless gray floors are trampled by children's sandals. Women in strangely patterned yoga pants push rickety carts of death to and fro, filled to the brim with bulk snack foods. The aisles seethe with horrifying machines, footsteps, vendors, blaring TV screens and dangling inflatable rafts. I was nearly overrun by a frantic human bearing a roasted chicken and a 60-pound bag of Frosted Flakes. And, worst of all... the people sell vacuums.

This is a class of evil I simply cannot condone.

Alas, I cannot blame the lords of Westfield for the idiocy of these humans. In my final evaluation, I will omit the dreadful Costco as a factor and consider only those areas I deem acceptable as part of the esteemed location.

I predict the top-caliber amenities here will propel this excellent establishment to thrive in years to come. To any youth wishing to pioneer ahead of the bandwagon, my advice is to visit now, while the crowds are still low. To any readers who might have a say in the matter, my advice is to eliminate that awful Costco. It simply can't be good for business.

Westfield must be one of the greatest facilities I have ever reviewed. I give it an unequivocal 6/5 fluffs. Invest now, folks, invest now — Westfield is bound to be a hit.

GRAPHIC BY ALY ZALESKI

Aly's Average Advice

'I don't know - grades I guess?' - Cal Haas



Aly Zaleski
Humor Editor

I asked some students about their current life problems — here is my reposnse.

You just have to work hard. You are at Pine View School for the gifted and untalented; you can't doubt yourself. Another thing you can't do is put anything before your classes. Harvard doesn't want to see that you're living a good life. What? You don't want to go to Harvard? Too bad.

I truly believe that the first and only thing you should do when you get home after your six to eight hour school day is more homework. Yes, of course I know you were just doing work on the drive home. Huh? You don't know how to write and drive at the same time? Seriously? I can't solve all your problems.

Listen, all you have to do is go the extra degree. We all know how overused the saying is, but it's true. Yeah, yeah, I know water can boil under 212° at a certain altitude, but that wasn't my point. You're a smart student and

you have to take advantage of that. If I'm wrong and you truly are a horrible student then I suggest using Quizlet

Online educational tools are always a good route to go down. As stated previously, Quizlet is one of the best. Along those lines are Kahoot!, Gimkit, and Quizizz. Teachers often offer these resources through their classes and make you link your account. It's actually quite a fun way to learn.

On Gimkit, there's different modes such as The Floor is Lava and Humans vs. Zombies. A class favorite is often Trust No One, because why learn when you can play Among Us?

One thing you have to learn over the course of your time at Pine View is how to manage your time. No one can teach you this except

for yourself. You have to find what works for you. Listen to some music for focus, take small breaks — you know — all the stuff you plan to do before you end up just going on your phone for hours. If you can't figure it out, honestly, just set a timer or something.

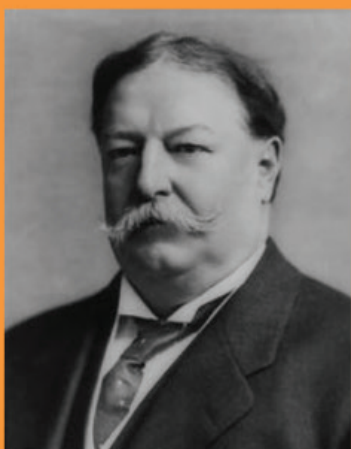
Cal, listen, I don't know you very well. A lot of people in my grade, however, are fairly convinced that they do. And, you know, when it really comes down to it, connections can be just as important as a high school education. Based on that alone, I think you'll be set for life. Good luck out there.

"Reality is wrong. Dreams are for real." -Tupac

If I'm wrong and you truly are a horrible student, then I suggest using Quizlet.

GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

OVERDONE HALLOWEEN CONSTUMES



27th President of the United States
William Howard Taft



Aro from The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1 and 2 (2011)



Nicki Minaj's infamous alter ego Roman Holiday



Sinjin Van Cleef, fan favorite heartthrob of the 2010 hit show Victorious.

Decisions, decisions... determining distinctions

Choice feminism doesn't allow differentiation between autonomy and choice

by Peyton Harris

Assistant Editor-in-Chief

Choice feminism is a subset of fourth wave feminism that is often defined as the belief that the individual choices of a woman are inherently feminist, and that the mere expression of one's individuality is empowering. Under this belief, it's feminist to wear or not wear makeup, to go out or to stay in, to prefer blue over pink or vice versa.

But is a choice really a choice if it's limited by a number of factors? And is a choice really an empowering one if it inevitably feeds back into the patriarchy, the traditional social system dominated by men?

Choice does not imply full autonomy. A woman's capacity for choice is restricted by societal limits on her agency.

For example, a woman might technically have the choice between getting married or not, but her agency in that decision is limited by a number of factors like upbringing, wealth, etc.

To imply that choice, without consideration for agency, is equivalent to empowerment or power, is a dangerous as-

sumption. Choice can't really be of free will without agency, which can't be achieved without liberation, and liberation is not achieved through the means of claiming that every limited choice is inherently feminist.

The presumption of choice under the patriarchy brings an onslaught of misconception. The sense of pride attached to this perceived choice only reinforces patriarchal norms. For example, the choice of wearing or not wearing makeup. The idea that a woman can choose to put on makeup solely for her-

self counterintuitively leads

into the patriarchal "prerequisite" to womanhood, falling into traditional beauty standards established, once again, by patriarchy. Is it truly a feminist choice to wear makeup when in doing so we only adhere to the male gaze?

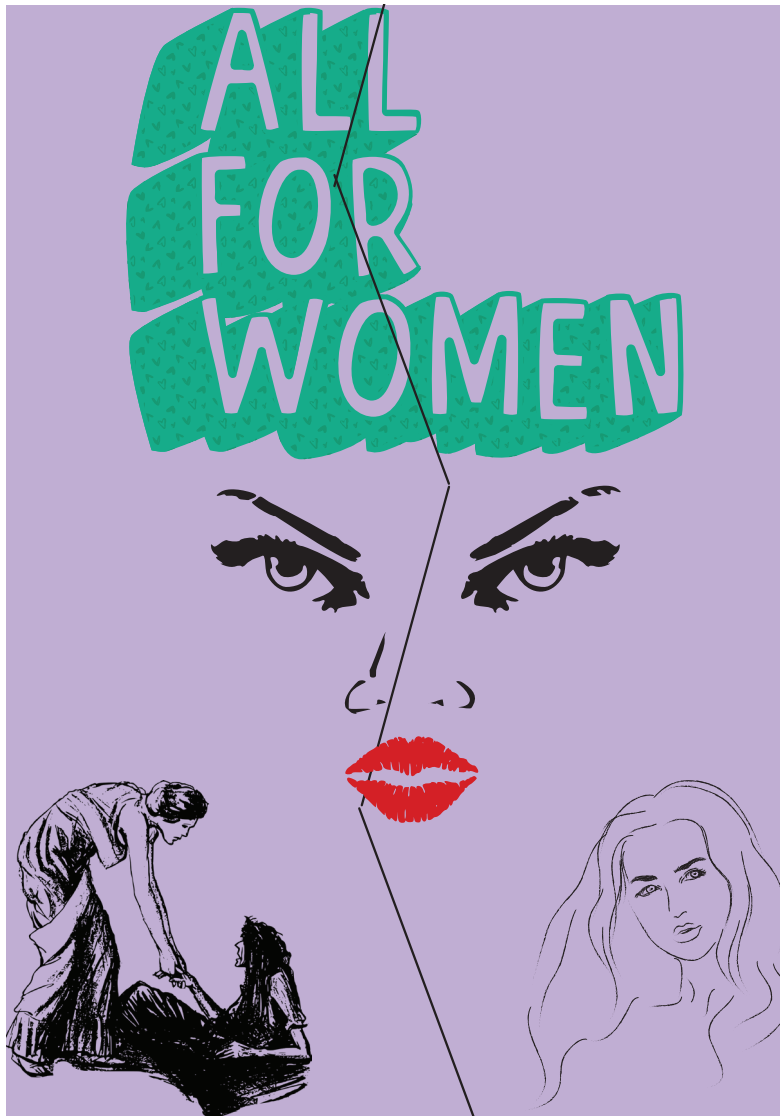
Examining this more closely shows the intersection with identities other than gender, such as race, sexual orientation, or religion.

More marginalized identities bring other restrictions on a woman's agency. According to Warwick, a woman of color experiences less autonomy in her ability to go to work without makeup for fear of being seen as "unkempt," thus restricting her ability to fully choose to wear makeup, while a white woman might not experience that same level of pressure.

This is not to say that we live in a bleak box in which every perceived action women take somehow inadvertently strengthens the patriarchy. Choices, however limited by women's inherently restricted agency, are just that: choices. They're not inherently feminist or anti-feminist, and can simply exist without furthering or hindering women's liberation.

Choice feminism has its merits; women should be free to choose whatever path or existence they want. However, this methodology doesn't allow for distinction between choice and agency, and puts all women under an all-encompassing perspective when the reality is that every woman is different and therefore is affected by autonomy differently.

GRAPHIC BY PEYTON HARRIS



[staff editorial]

For those experiencing activism guilt

Learn how to cope with feeling stagnant in an ever-growing political climate

It's easy to feel like you're not doing enough. Watching the news is a daily torment, with every day seeming like one step forward and three steps back. This unsettling feeling is something the Torch has coined "activism guilt" and, frankly, it sucks.

Activism guilt is a really weird feeling. It starts out with feeling like you're not doing enough, a strong feeling of discouragement and disappointment. Then, it turns into something else: shame. You may start to feel even more upset with your psyche: you might ask "Why am I feeling sorry for myself?"

And the truth is, it's okay, you're not alone. Letting yourself shrink to something small in such a big world is easy. So many of us young activists are truly powerless in certain situations. Some people's minds can't be changed, and not every person can be helped. The easiest way to get over this is to face the facts: You can't read every article, you can't sign every petition and you can't talk to every legislator. And it's okay to feel disappointed because of that.

Standing up for the causes you believe in doesn't mean that you need to get your nails done in the style of a political symbol. However, the first step to dismantling something you don't agree with is making sure you follow your own beliefs. A lot of activism nowadays starts with yourself.

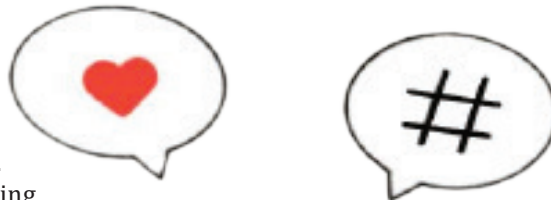
Educating yourself and researching the topics you believe in before taking a stance is always the priority. It's also about making sure you unlearn systematic discriminatory views and acknowledging your own privileges.

An opinion means nothing if

you don't have substantial intellect and reasoning to back it.

However, this is not an ex-

ample. What you believe in is an incredibly important part of being an activist; and making sure that what you believe in is well-informed. The mindset



of "nothing I can do is going to change anything anyway," is incredibly damaging to one's motivation and very unhealthy.

It is true in some cases — not everything you do is going to necessarily make an incredible change. But how are you supposed to know? Maybe that rally you skipped would have educated a passerby, or that petition you scrolled past could have changed someone's life. Small changes are still changes; all it takes is one decision of yours and the Butterfly Effect will handle the rest.

Social media is a big perpetrator of activism guilt. For most teenagers, Instagram is one of their top news sources

and a major outlet for social opinions; a research article by APNORC.org discovered that 76% of American teens use Instagram.

The idea of talking about serious situations like racial justice and sexual assault on a social media platform creates a strange dynamic. Would posting that infographic be inappropriate since your profile is usually pretty humorous? But if you don't, aren't you choosing to stay silent? What's posting an infographic going to do anyway? Social media makes it much easier to feel this guilt — with constant news being funneled into your feed, even on a platform where you usually just browse memes and pretty pictures of your friends.

In the end, we can't fix everything, and sometimes, we can't even try, and that's okay. But don't let that push you into a hole. Shame and guilt are perfectly valid emotions, and they can be really discouraging, but they can also be transformed into something motivational. Don't let yourself hide away — you have a voice for a reason, and it's your choice whether you want to speak up or stay quiet.

The focus on STEM majors

by **Shelby Brann**
Web Asst. Editor-in-Chief

In a world where hard facts and information are valued, it's easy to cast away the idea of liberal arts majors as being silly or simple. Pine View itself has traditionally been viewed as a STEM school by many due to the renowned math program and advanced classes. In Sarasota Magazine, it was reported as the No. 8 magnet high school in the country and as No. 23 for STEM high schools.

However, I believe students and teachers feel that because Pine View has such great STEM classes, such as advanced math, science, and engineering classes, the English and history departments are somehow lesser in comparison.

However, the quality of these courses don't exist in a vacuum. Pine View has excellent humanities programs, despite their comparative lack of recognition.

Ninth-grade English teacher, Tammy Madden, is one of many to notice the difference in attention between the fine arts and the STEM classes at Pine View.

"I feel like Pine View is more like a STEM school, even though it's not advertised as one," Madden said. "I came from a STEM school in Georgia and Pine View reminds me a lot of that, because the focus is a lot on the math and sciences."

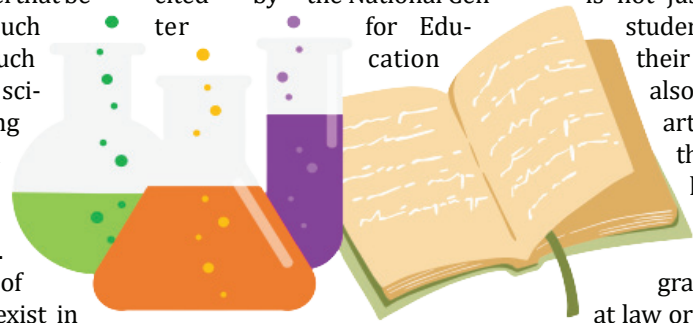
The misconception that STEM skills outweigh humanities is a pattern that applies nationally. In the current state of affairs, including the pandemic, it's difficult to imagine the impact that a few essays or poems can have when the country is staring down both a pandemic and numerous economic challenges. Which has left many asking, "What's the point in humanities if the world feels like it's falling apart?"

An analysis conducted by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences confirmed that the number of bachelor's

degrees earned in the liberal arts decreased by 27% from the year 2012 to 2018. This decrease was found in some of the humanities' most popular majors, such as English literature, history, and classics.

One journalist, in an article published by The Atlantic, wrote, "Almost every humanities field has seen a rapid drop in majors: History is down about 45 percent from its 2007 peak, while the number of English majors has fallen by nearly half since the late 1990s."

(The data they referred to was cited by the National Center



for Education website.)

According to the College Board website, universities are usually looking for three years of math. However, more competitive colleges seek out four or more. There's numerous lists of classes that students should look at that relate to science and arithmetic, but very few relating to English except for the traditional courses necessary for graduation (English I, English II, English III).

Part of this misunderstanding is because of the general perception that liberal arts majors aren't as hard as STEM majors — student discussions and online articles debating the importance of liberal arts sometimes frame humanities as an "easy route."

A common stereotype is that the humanities aren't as economically valued as STEM-based careers. This is said to be because of the differences in salary between STEM-related careers and careers that lean towards the liberal arts. In a study conducted by the Census Bureau, it was found that engineering and computer science majors from the ages of 23 to

25 in full time jobs received an average of \$61,744 in 2017. This salary was 37 percent higher than the the starting salary average earned by those who majored in the social sciences. However, the study also found that all male college graduates had an average salary of \$111,870 by age 40, whereas males who majored in history or social science had an average salary of \$131,154.

With time, a liberal arts major can be just as profitable as a STEM-based job. The idea of unprofitable majors is not just damaging to a student's perception of their intelligence, it's also untrue. Liberal arts majors can open the door to a lifelong career and a suitable income. They can lead to graduate programs at law or business schools, two gateways to great futures.

Beyond that, many liberal arts students have gone on to start and create real change. A sterling example of this is former president Barack Obama, who dual majored in English literature and political science, as well as former Supreme Court justice, Ruth Bader Ginsberg, who first received her Bachelor of Arts degree at Cornell University before going on to study at Harvard Law School.

"There's no dance department; there's a music department, but again, I think, I really think — in fact, I know — with the parents and the support that's here, if we had somebody to run it, we could have a massive, amazing fine arts program, which would help round us out," Madden said.

In addition, it's not just about professions or education. It's not only about knowledge; it's about joy and comfort in words and stories. Sometimes, unintentionally or not, people can forget what the liberal arts are there for in the first place — to encourage young scholars to pursue a passion that makes them happy.

Tiffany's Epiphanies:

Apple vs Orange Juice

As of late, I have found myself in the aisle of my local Publix, sweating bullets over the possible ramifications of an incredibly important selection: apple or orange juice?

On one hand, my mom likes orange juice better; she says she doesn't like those who drink apple juice because it's worse for the Florida citrus-centric economy. "People who drink apple juice just want to see our state burn."

However, as I went to check out with my orange juice, the weirdest thing happened! The bagger told me to take into consideration how buying orange juice may offend people who are allergic to oranges. I should have realized that it would be insensitive to drink it when there are people who can't be exposed to the fruit.

Taking this into account, I



went back to the aisle.

As I went back to pick out apple juice instead, a shopper grabbed my hand and forced me to put it back on the shelf. He told me how it was unnatural to drink apple juice; "apples should be consumed in their solid state off the tree, as Mother Nature intended." I tried to offer my perspective, but he told me he refused to consider anyone who drinks juice's side.

Eventually, a store manager approached me and asked if I had taken lemonade into consideration. Al-



Tiffany Yu
Opinion Editor
most immediately after I expressed interest, he told me that lemonade isn't really juice. Why did he even bring it up then?

In our current grocery climate, the topic of juice selection is incredibly nuanced and multi-faceted. There's no juice that will satisfy everyone, and an individual's taste can change regularly. Sometimes,

people

want a n

in-between; take a mild cranberry, for example.

Once you finally decide on what juice you want, you still have to take into consideration a plethora of different brands. To those who don't even drink juice, I have to ask— how did you form your opinion on juice in the first place?

Approaching the end of my visit, another customer wandered up to me and asked me which juice she should buy. Obviously, I told her to buy _____.

GRAPHIC BY LINDSAY LUBERECKI

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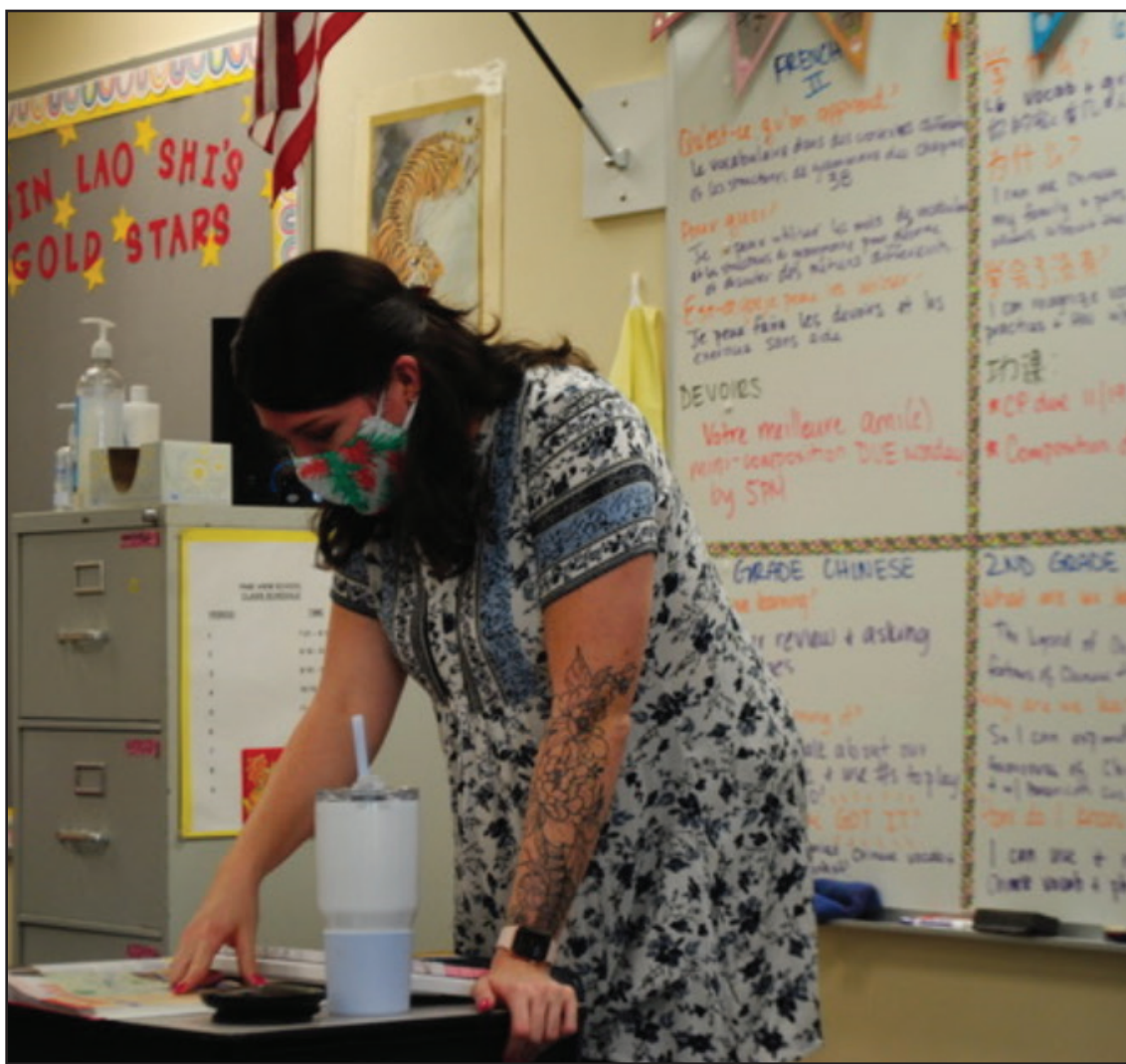
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PHOTO BY SHELBY BRANN



Good talk with Grace

Life's a balance



by Grace Johnson
Editor-in-Chief

Hi Pine View! I'm beyond excited to introduce myself to you as The Torch's Editor-in-Chief. My name is Grace Johnson, and I came to Pine View in ninth grade. In my free time, I love watching horror movies and Korean dramas, going to theme parks, reading sci-fi or fantasy novels, and listening to a wide range of music — whether it's the Beatles, Eliot Smith, BTS, Harry Styles, or The Backseat Lovers.

However, the time I get to spend doing any of that is limited, as free time is for most Pine View students. As the ambitious, hardworking archetypes we are, our diligence is both admirable and scary. We set ourselves up for burnout — at least I did.

My junior year was packed with the loads of APs and extra-curriculars we're told will get us into college, and I walked away

with the GPA and officer positions I aimed for. However, I also left eleventh grade exhausted and unmotivated. In exchange for a bolstered resume, I lost the time to sleep, eat well, exercise, and relax.

I told myself I'd make it through because I always have. I did get through, but it was taxing. What's worse, I could always relate to my classmates who were carrying loads just as heavy as, or heavier than, mine.

Pine View is an amazing school, where students have the opportunity to pile lots on their plates. Sometimes it seems like everyone else effortlessly piles their plates sky high. However, something always has to give. Every Pine View student is human, but that's easy to forget when striving for perfection.

As a school, we need to learn to say "no," to take days off when mental or physical health requires, and to put as much effort into fitting self care into our schedules as studying. Neglecting basic human necessities — whether that's sleeping, exercising, or hanging out with friends — for schoolwork is unhealthy and a detriment. Coming back from burnout, from losing motivation for what you love, is tough.

Life's a balance. Don't let your scale tilt too far towards any side.

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