

## Pine View alum on Russian-Ukrainian War



Class of 2000 alumnus Nolan Peterson (left) stands alongside a member of the Ukrainian Center for Security and Cooperation in Avdiivka, Ukraine, in October 2021. Peterson has served as a war correspondent in Ukraine for the past eight years. PHOTO PROVIDED BY NOLAN PETERSON

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**by Felicity Chang**  
Web Editor-in-Chief

When an interview with Pine View graduate and war correspondent Nolan Peterson began, he turned his camera toward his window in Kyiv, Ukraine and commented that the occasional pulse of artillery or boom of missile strikes might not be audible through Zoom. He described how the tranquil sunset at the Dnipro River in Kyiv was infused by wisps of orange light and quaint whispers of couples walking. The scene was juxtaposed by the sharp, stuttered sounds of rifles.

“It’s always more powerful to see the impact of a war in civilian life,” said Peterson, currently a senior editor at Coffee or Die Magazine. “War destroys and disrupts people’s dreams and desires and their families... To go out there and observe these people and to talk to them, as they are in their hometown, watching a battle — it just really reinforces the overall tragedy of what’s going on here.”

When Peterson graduated from Pine View in 2000, he pursued his dream of becoming a pilot by attending the U.S. Air Force Academy. After the Sept. 11 attacks, he served as a U.S. Air Force Special Operations pilot in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

“Having been to war as a combatant, you lose any romantic idea of what war is. You don’t look at it as an adventure, you look at it more as a tragedy,” he

said.

When Peterson returned home, he realized that people in the relatively isolated U.S. had the privilege to remain ignorant about “some of the darker parts of humanity” and pursued his desire to bring Americans more accurate global narratives as a war correspondent.

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict existed long before the Feb. 24 invasion. Peterson has been in Ukraine since 2014.

He spent eight days embedded at the frontlines with the Ukrainian military in 2015. There, he met Vasiliy, a soldier in his 50s who would throw his body over Peterson’s whenever snipers began shooting at them.

“It was really very moving that he would do that, that he was willing to basically die to protect me because he was so grateful that an American was out there telling his story, his war,” Peterson said.

He also met a 19-year-old soldier named Daniel. The two quickly became friends; when Peterson left the frontlines, they stayed in touch, lightheartedly making plans for Daniel to visit the U.S. Soon after those conversations, Daniel suffered a severe head injury and returned home to recover. Two weeks after he left for war again, Daniel was killed in battle.

A couple years after Daniel’s death, Peterson and his wife, Lilya, visited Daniel’s parents.

“Just the power of being there, telling somebody’s story, showing them that their story matters. It meant the world to them,” he said. “If there’s one lesson I’ve

learned through all my war reporting, my time in Ukraine, it’s that telling somebody’s story makes them feel like they’re not forgotten, and that what they’re doing is not in vain.”

Having lived in Ukraine for the past eight years, Peterson has experienced the effects of war on his own life, as he met Lilya in Ukraine. He said that, as a war reporter, it’s challenging to balance his family’s safety with his job.

“Telling somebody’s story makes them feel like they’re not forgotten, and that what they’re doing is not in vain,”  
**Nolan Peterson,**  
*war correspondent*

“It’s emotional,” he said. “I won’t lie, I cried... A lot of the soldiers I wrote about are friends of mine, who didn’t want to be soldiers again, and they had to go back to war. So, for me, it’s a very personal story.”

Some of the foreign fighters Peterson has conversed with are Americans who arrived to fight solely because they believe in what Ukraine is fighting for: democracy and freedom.

“I’ve always believed that Ukraine’s struggle since 2014, it has been a turning point in history where the future of democracy was going to be decided,” Peterson said. “To now see how Ukraine’s cause has influenced people around the world. It’s like I’ve had this secret inside of me for eight years that I’ve suddenly shared with the whole world.”

For Ukrainians, the momentum of life carries on through the threat of war — children still run around in bomb shelters as their parents watch speeches by Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky on their phones. The fear of random missile attacks remains, especially after an estimated 600 civilians were confirmed dead in the Mariupol theater bombing.

“You stand there and you get that little chill down your spine. The hair stands up in the back of your neck. You just think, God, I hope a missile doesn’t come hit at this time,” Peterson said. “A missile doesn’t care what your nationality is, who you are, how much experience you have in war zones, how careful you have been. It’s just a matter of fate.”

Peterson hopes that his first-hand accounts in Ukraine can inform international audiences of the reality of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

“In the last eight years, I have to admit, there were many times when I thought, ‘Why am I still in Ukraine? What am I still doing here?’” he said. “I’m so thankful that I stayed because I have a chance to report on this war and help tell this story.”

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Coronation of the Cobalt Prince  
Welcome the one and only David Bayer

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## Free lunch may be discontinued

by Terry Shen  
Match Layout Artist

The Student Union — complete with students' excited chattering and smiles from the Food Service staff — has welcomed students for meals free of charge for the past two school years. Unless the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) extends their Child Nutrition Program waivers, this free meal program will go away in the 2022-2023 school year.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, school districts across the United States were given waivers by the USDA, allowing them to serve free meals to students throughout the country. The current waiver guarantees access to free lunches through June 30, 2022. As of May 8, the USDA hasn't extended this free meal plan for the coming year, meaning that schools will be forced to go back to traditional meal plans and costs.

food of the student union, and because it was free to 'give it a try.'"

Wittstruck and her associates make sure that an abundant variety of foods are offered, so as to suit the needs and diets of all students.

more about free and reduced lunch through Sarasota County Schools' website.

"We were excited to see so many new faces this year," Wittstruck wrote. "We are hoping the food and experience in the Student Union this year will bring them back next year, even if they have to pay a minimal price ... [we] will 'leave the light on' for all who want to venture in and enjoy."



Regardless of whether meals will be free to all students next year, the free and reduced lunch program will continue operating. This program helps students at certain income requirements access meals in schools. Families can apply for free or reduced lunch through school meal applications and learn

Students pass through the busy lunch line, getting their food. While lunch has been free for the past two years, the program may go away.

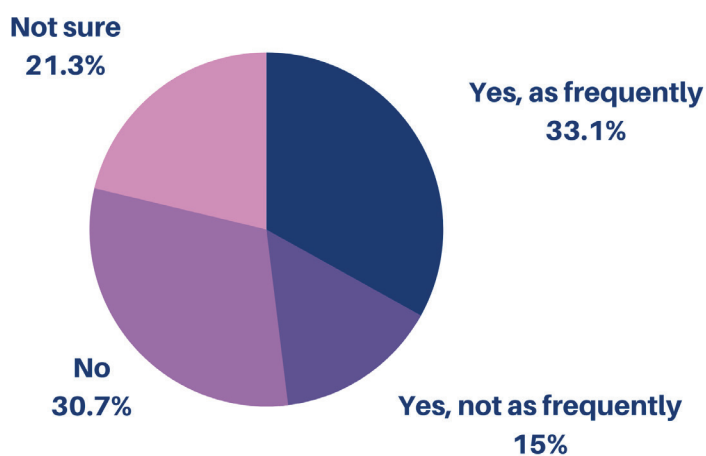
PHOTOS BY TERRY SHEN

GRAPHICS BY LINDSAY LUBERECKI

**21.7%**  
of students who got school lunch in the past two years didn't in prior years

### Will you continue getting school lunch next year?

129 ninth, tenth, and eleventh-graders surveyed



Free meals have helped reduce food insecurity at schools across the nation. Pine View Food Service Manager Angela Wittstruck has seen the effects of free meals at Pine View firsthand.

Wittstruck wrote in an email that there have been "successes of welcoming students who have not experienced the healthy nutritious

## A 'Sweet' Performance



Ninth-grader Andres Cortes drags tenth-grader Ava Pappas as twelfth-graders Summer Bossman and Layna Malave look on in shock during "Candyland Live." The play was written and performed by the high school theater class for elementary schoolers. PHOTO BY LINDSAY LUBERECKI

## IN BRIEF

### HOSA members qualify for international competition

by Faith Bossman  
Features Editor

At the 2022 Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) State Leadership Conference (SLC) this April, six talented Pine View students won on the Florida state level in their respective categories and qualified for this summer's international competition in Nashville, Tennessee.

Pine View SLC attendees participated in competitions ranging from ethical applications of medicine to community awareness endeavors.

HOSA president twelfth-grader Asha Puthanveetil said that a lot of the success achieved in HOSA

comes from preparation outside of the club.

"I was really proud of all of them. I know that it's really hard to be a part of HOSA because sometimes you have to study for these competitions on your own time," she said.

With hundreds of participants across the state competing, qualifying for internationals is difficult, so six students making it from one school is impressive.

Puthanveetil notes that HOSA provides club members with opportunities that she finds eye-opening.

"HOSA is a great stepping stone into the medical career pathways," Puthanveetil said.

GRAPHIC BY KAI SPRUNGER

#### International Qualifiers at the HOSA State Leadership Conference

Juna Hatta-Langedyk

Nutrition (1st place)

Kara Wegrzynek

Medical & Law Ethics (2nd place)

Xinyi Liu

Medical Math (2nd place)

Hana Han and Leila Mackenzie

Duo in Forensic Science (2nd place)

Divya Puthanveetil

Human Growth & Development (4th place)

## SAT to be administered online beginning in 2024

by Sanya Patel

Assistant Match Editor-in-Chief

For nearly 100 years, the SAT has been a staple in students' high school careers. These standard pencil-and-paper exams, however, will be upgraded in the coming years. CollegeBoard has announced that starting in 2024, all students will be taking the SAT online.

This announcement has brought about many mixed feelings. There's a lot of room for error when it comes to taking online exams, so having tech support staff on standby is needed "to ensure that if anything happens, you've got someone there to help with putting that back together," said testing coordinator Lori Wiley, who has facilitated assessments at Pine View for the past four years. Because the exam needs

to be administered on school computers, testing availability may become limited.

"What I'm not sure of is if that is going to require us to only test during the school day or how that is going to impact our Saturdays," Wiley said.

However, the online SAT comes with perks. The new version of the exam will be only two hours instead of three. The reading passages will be shorter, and students will be allowed to use a calculator on the entire math section. Grading will also take less time.

"I can see it affording kind of a streamline in terms of getting your scores back. There is much less processing time," Wiley said.

Over the summer, teachers and staff will be attending training sessions to learn more details regarding online SAT testing protocols.

GRAPHICS BY SANJA PATEL



# Math team places among top in nation

by Sarah Catalano  
Copy Editor

As the clock ticks to zero, five up-perclassmen study their computers. Twelfth-graders Uday Goyat, Max Rudin, and John Halcomb and eleventh-graders Nolan Boucher and Lisa Zhang pour over data and manipulate models. Several hours into the 14-hour MathWorks Math Modeling Challenge, they're running on a pizza lunch, a PDQ dinner, and jocular team spirit.

The challenge? Model the proportion of jobs that are remote-ready, whether workers will be permitted to work remotely, and which individuals will choose to do so; then, predict the percentage of workers that will go remote for a given metro area.

"I was excited," Goyat said. "I kind of predicted that because every year [MathWorks] gives you a haiku to keep you guessing, so you can predict what [the challenge] is. Remote work was one of the topics I thought it was going to be."

In the annual challenge, a team's success is often dependent on its ability to find good data — the accuracy of a model can be altered by the precision of the points. Pine View's team struck gold a few hours into the challenge when they discovered a link to more in-depth data hidden within the set they'd been given.

"The most impressive part is al-

ways finding good data that you can actually use to train [machine intelligence]," Goyat said. "What set us apart from other teams was the other teams just use averages — we had 17,000 data

month later to present to a panel of five judges April 25. The team returned victorious, having secured a first-place position for Technical Computing and third in the country overall.

"We're talking about 600 to 1,000 teams, and they're not pushovers," statistics teacher and team sponsor Mark Mattia said. "A lot of these go to science highs and there are magnet schools and gifted schools, and there's every kind of school represented, even international schools. It's tough to impress the judges."



Above: Nolan Boucher, Max Rudin, and Uday Goyat pose with their award checks.

The team placed first in the nation in the Technical Computing category. Right: Competitors from all the finalist teams pose together. Their competition was held in New York. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY MATHWORKS VIA FACEBOOK



points; they had 50. When you have 50 data points, your machine learning model isn't that good at classifying."

The team's meticulous formatting, well-written delivery, and innovative solution took them to New York City a

The team used software to model the number of people who would be working in various fields, and then predicted how these numbers would change. Using data on the proportion of people in each field that currently work

remotely, they projected how many people would be working remotely in the future.

"Our model can be used as sort of a lower bound to help governments and agencies figure out how they should react," Rudin said. "City governments have to consider where to allocate funds. One of the things we considered was congestion on roadways. If you have a lot more people working remotely then there's not going to be as many highway lanes and stuff, so those funds would be better spent somewhere else."

According to Mattia, the competition has increasingly emphasized programming over theoretical mathematics in recent years. For Goyat, who intends to major in computer science, the challenge was an opportunity to shine.

In addition to their recognition, the winners received a total of \$13,000 in scholarships to be divided among the five team members. Their success is one in a series; Pine View's Mu Alpha Theta members have consistently placed high in the rankings for the past four years.

While this year's graduating seniors will leave spaces behind them, they expressed confidence in the capabilities of future team members.

"I got to know all my friends better... working together on the competition, especially with the 14-hour day like that — that was really fun," Rudin said.

# Molly Owens commits to Naval Academy

by Jada Davidson  
Sports Editor

"Molly Owens, twelfth grade, to the office, please. Molly Owens, to the office," a voice announced over the loudspeaker one day.

Puzzled, Owens followed the loudspeaker's directions and arrived at the office, where Principal Dr. Stephen Covert, college resource officer Lance Bergman, and 11-12 grade guidance counselor Lynn Halcomb, among others, were waiting. Upon Owens' arrival, the phone on Covert's desk rang, and he excused himself to answer it. Covert held the phone up as a congresswoman on the other end of the call announced that Owens was appointed to the Naval Academy.

"It was just so unbelievable. I was speechless," Owens said.

Her father, Dennis Owens, recalls when his daughter brought home the news.

"I was very proud. I never thought she'd want to be like me, but she wanted to follow in my footsteps. It's a good education, and I'm really happy for her," Dennis Owens said.

To go to the Naval Academy, one must be nominated by a member of Congress; Gregory Steube, Florida's District 17 representative, nominated Owens.

Born in China while the anti-natalist policy was still in effect, Owens was adopted by her parents when she was one year old.

"I've always wanted to serve my country," Owens said. "America was full of opportunities, and I am grateful for all

the things this country has done for me. The way for me to express my gratitude is to serve my country in the Navy."

When Owens was in sixth grade, her father's work in the Navy inspired her and later led to her decision to go into the Naval Academy and serve in the United States military. Dennis Owens recalls how his daughter learned about the Navy through him.

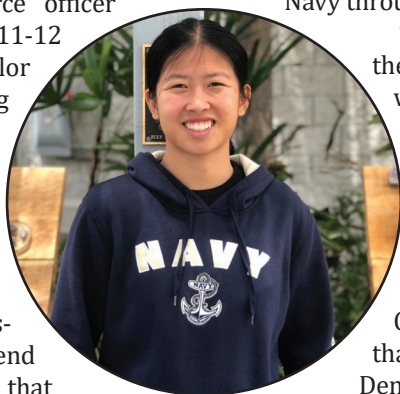


PHOTO BY JADA DAVIDSON

"I told her that I traveled the world on a ship and went to the Panama Canal for 18 months, and I went on a destroyer in the Mediterranean Sea... We were mostly following Russian submarines during the Cold War in 1969. I'd say that it's a family legacy," Dennis Owens said, noting that he, his brother, and his father all served the country.

In order to get into the Naval Academy, one must pass a strict fitness exam known as the Candidate Fitness Exam (CFA), which consists of activities like pull-ups, push-ups, and a mile run. Those who become Naval Academy students are known as training midshipment. Besides training to become certified commission officers, training midshipment participate in academics and work within their major. Owens' major is currently undecided.

She looks forward to what the future holds at the Naval Academy.

"[The Naval Academy has] an incredible student body that feels like a closely-knit community, because everyone is working towards the same goal. The new midshipment can easily make friends and support one other," Owens said.

# Vir Patel graduates early, begins medical program

by Lily Quartermaine  
Entertainment Editor

Eleventh-grader Vir Patel has always had an interest in the medical field, but his desire to learn more peaked unexpectedly at a DukeTip summer program. Patel fractured his ankle while playing soccer during the trip, which caused him to have to leave early. Coincidentally, his father broke his leg around the same time; both Patel and his father needed to visit orthopedists, and the treatments interested Patel.

"I shadowed the orthopedist that treated my dad and we ended up doing the osteopathic manipulative medicine treatment. It connected with me because it really helped my dad," Patel said.

As Patel received more opportunities to develop his medical knowledge, his intrigue in the topic increased.

"My dad got me in contact with different orthopedists. I watched surgeries, foreign body removals, trigger finger releases, hip and joint surgeries, there were so many," Patel said. "I'd say I had watched at least 30 or 40 surgeries in that shadowing. I was like, 'Wow, I really like surgery, specifically orthopedics.' That was the main impetus for my interest in medicine, specifically orthopedic surgery and osteopathic medicine."

Eleventh-grader Evan Cressell-Simmons, a close friend of Patel's, attests to Patel's strength as both a student and friend.

"Vir is one of the most reliable people in my life; he's the kind of person you ask for advice with friends, family, et cetera, and he had always been incredibly helpful as a peer when it comes to schoolwork and testing advice," Cressell-Simmons said.

Because of his academic success, Patel will be graduating from Pine View a year early and participating in a seven year medical program at Nova Southeastern University, receiving his bachelor's degree in 2025.

As an early grad, Patel is excited to start his medical journey, but he also mourns the loss of some high school experiences.

"It definitely is an isolating experience... what I was doing is a little unorthodox, in that I decided to graduate a year early because of [dual enrollment]," he said. "I kind of missed out on some of the typical senior things and activities because of my dual enrollment at SCF. I'm not on campus and I don't get to see my on campus friends as much."

When asked if he had any advice to aspiring medical students, Patel gave a thoughtful response.

"Just slow down and take the time to enjoy what you're doing right now. There's so many avenues and chances that you can get to become a physician... There's no fault to when you want to become a doctor," Patel said. "Don't rush into it, and be sure that you want to do it... Medicine is not the only answer if that's what your parents are telling you. Do what makes you happy."



PHOTO PROVIDED BY VIR PATEL

## Saying goodbye to Pine View giants

We've all heard it before: "If I have seen further than others, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." There's truth in that statement — a substantial part of Pine View students' success can be attributed to the foundation that teachers and staff provide. With the following staff members leaving Pine View after this school year, we wish them the best in their futures and honor them and their legacies with these stories.

### Jenny Reyka

by Alyson Mizanin  
News Editor

Receptionist Jenny Reyka smiles as she recalls some of her favorite memories from her tenure at Pine View. Each time she delves into a new story, she's stopped by a new smiling face.

"I was called to the office," one student explained, fidgeting with the bottom of his shirt.

"Oh, that's right," Reyka said, nodding. "You need to see Nurse Banko in the clinic."

Another student handed Reyka a few dollar bills, asking her to please pass the money onto someone he couldn't find.

"Okay. I'll hold it so I won't forget it," she said.

In the middle of her explanation that both she and social studies teacher Lois Myers attended the same middle and high schools in Ohio, an elementary school student dressed in Star Wars gear entered the office with an expression that, after her 22 years at Pine View, Reyka recognized as timid confusion.

"Hey, I like your shirt!" she said. "Do you need any help?"

"I was called to see Mr. Sprinkle," the student said.

"Go to the hallway. Make a left. Fourth opening on your left is Ms. Bufkin. He'll be in there with her. Thanks, honey," she said, before returning to marvel at the odds of her and Myers ending up at Pine View together many years later.

After each brief conversation, Reyka smiles.

"This is what I love most about the job," she said. "Every day, it's a new adventure. I love the busy. I love the crazy days when my head's spinning. Those are the best."

After 22 years of laughs, practical jokes, and countless memories at Pine View, Reyka will retire before the start of next school year.

"I'll miss getting up at 4:45 in the morning the most," Reyka said with a laugh. "No — I'll miss the kids, the staff, the friends. I try to learn the kids'

names, make them feel welcome. That I will miss."

Reyka's ability to make students, parents, and staff alike feel welcome in the office is what parent and office volunteer Brenda Firlie credits as the reason her family so quickly felt at home in the Pine View environment.

"We came from St. Louis. I remember calling the office and talking to her, and then one day coming in. She made us feel welcome from that first day," Firlie said. "I remember going in there and feeling like we had a best friend heading out. It's been that way ever since. She was an instant connection."

That same sense of connection is what led to receptionist Maureen Borden working at Pine View in 2012. With Borden's three sons having attended Pine View starting in 2004, Reyka called Borden when the receptionist position opened.

**"I knew I could go to [Mrs. Reyka] and just be myself... Seeing her was the light of my day,"**  
**Meera Nair,**  
**Class of 2021 alumna**

"She's the heart and soul of Pine View," Borden said. "When I would call, I loved when she picked up the phone because I knew I would get help... With my boys, we've had a beautiful Pine View experience because she's here."

Though her official position may be receptionist, Reyka's work at Pine View cannot be limited to just one title. A breast cancer survivor, Reyka has led staff-wide, monthly "Wear Pink" days with the pur-

pose of raising money for Relay for Life, noting how special the events are to her — and how "anything with pink, I like, with the breast cancer awareness," she said.

She's a mentor, a guide, a shoulder to cry and laugh on — and Class of 2021 alumna Meera Nair knows this well. The two grew to know each other during Nair's Key Club presidency, as Reyka has sponsored the club for the past five years.

"I don't think I would've been able to get through Pine View without her by my side," Nair said. "Seeing Mrs. Reyka whenever I came into the office, I knew I could go to her and just be myself... Seeing her was the light of my day. Throughout all my years at Pine View, she was the main person on the staff that I bonded with."

Reyka's work at Pine View began by chance. After she and her husband moved to Florida, they opened a balloon store and adopted their daughter, Jessica Reyka. Reyka stayed at home for a couple of years before interning at an LTM balloon store. A Pine View kitchen manager came in one day and told her about an opening on the kitchen staff; because she knew that her daughter, Jessica Reyka, was going to go to Pine View, the job was a great fit.

Reyka worked in the kitchen for two years before spending six months in the ESE department and another six as a secretary. When the front receptionist position opened, Reyka took it, saying that she "never looked back."

Second-grade teacher Misty Tucak recalls when she and Reyka sold dodgeball t-shirts together, oftentimes competing to see who could sell more. It was during those moments that "we learned so much about each other's work ethics. We complemented each other... She's such a good friend. I'm going to miss her so much. There's nothing she wouldn't do for anybody. She is the rock of Pine View," Tucak said.

Reyka's presence at Pine View has bonded the community in ways that will be felt long after her retirement.

"There'll be a lot of tears shed when she goes — mine included. I couldn't have asked

### Scan QR codes to read stories honoring the careers of other retirees

#### Joann Hershberger



PHOTO BY LORA RINI

#### Kathy Shepler



PHOTO BY JOANNA MALVAS



for a better person to introduce us to Pine View and guide us throughout the years," Firlie said. "She will always be fondly known to my family. She has a special place in my kids' hearts."

In the coming months, Reyka looks forward to traveling and visiting her daughter

in Denver.

"I'd like to volunteer. I can come back and volunteer here," she said, smiling. "I've loved getting to know the kids, seeing them come in second grade and then graduate ... If there's one thing I want to say to Pine View, it's 'Wake up and smile.'"



Jenny Reyka (center-right) stands alongside Pine View administrators after being recognized as the 2020-2021 School Related Employee of the Year. After having worked at Pine View for 22 years, her impact on the school is immeasurable. PHOTO POSTED ON PVTORCH.COM FACEBOOK ACCOUNT DEC. 9, 2020

# Lois Myers

by Lindsay Luberecki  
Assistant News Editor

In a classroom tucked into Building 17, students spend their days rehearsing history-themed plays, trying on costumes, and penning Hamilton-based rap battles. In front of it all stands social studies teacher Lois Myers. Having taught at Pine View for twenty years and working in Sarasota County for thirty, Myers will retire at the end of this school year.

After beginning a family of her own, Myers decided that she wanted to be a teacher. She and her family moved to Florida, and she attended the University of South Florida to obtain necessary teaching certification.

When Myers first came to Pine View, she was hired as a fourth-grade science teacher. Laughing, she explained how this was an interesting experience for her, as she had to “study very hard to keep up with Pine View fourth-graders [in science].” Her true interest, though, lay in history.

“From childhood, history has always intrigued me,” Myers said. “If we don’t understand how and why people have made the decisions that they did, we can always continue to repeat them.”

When a spot to teach fourth-grade Florida history opened, she took the opportunity. It was then that she met

current social studies teacher Christine Braun.

“She was the fourth-grade team leader,” Braun said. “Being a new teacher, and having lots of questions, I went to [her] often for advice, and she was... very good at inspiring me.”



PHOTO BY LINDSAY LUBERECKI

Myers left an impact on elementary students not only through teaching fourth and fifth grade, but also through her devotion to the school outside of class. Myers worked with fifth-grade teacher James Ross to begin the elementary school drama club.

After instructing elementary history for some time, Myers began teaching eighth grade, which she said was her favorite grade due to their maturity level and the “conversations we can have.” Myers continued to share her love of theater through her class, having her students rehearse and put on plays about

different historical topics.

Ninth-grader Braden Cressell-Simmons was in Myers’ class twice: once in fourth and once in eighth.

“We did a play [in fourth grade], and I was one of the main characters. I thought that was fun... A bunch of people from other classes came in to see it,” Cressell-Simmons said.

“It was a lot of fun, projects and thinking outside the box,” said ninth-grader Shalini Nair, who had Myers in eighth grade. “She didn’t really lecture, she more so talked to us ... it was like we were her friends.”

**“I wish her nothing but the happiest in her retirement. She deserves it. She earned it,”**  
**James Ross,**  
*fifth-grade teacher*

Myers has touched her coworkers’ lives in addition to those of her students. Braun describes her as “one of the most fair people I’ve ever met... She understands people make mistakes; she doesn’t judge. I can’t tell you how many times she’s



Lois Myers (center) poses in costume during a past History Club simulation themed around women’s suffrage. Her two-decade-long Pine View tenure comes with memories she’ll never forget.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY LOIS MYERS

helped me professionally and personally.”

Myers has fond memories of teaching needlepoint and other crafts at ADVEX (Advance and Explore), a past Pine View program where students could try out different skills other than their core curricula. She also helped with Seacamp, a four-day excursion to Big Pine Key where students learned about marine biology. She helped expand the curriculum to both include fourth-graders and allow students to go thrice.

“She did a lot of volunteer work with [Seacamp] and poured blood, sweat, and tears into that program,” Braun said.

Teaching at Pine View has taught Myers her own lessons.

“The love for humanity I see from kids at this school is

stronger than I’ve ever seen it anywhere else,” she said.

Reflecting on her retirement, Myers plans to make use of her newfound time.

“I’m going to read more books. I’m going to go to the beach. I have my boys and my grandsons to spend more time with,” she said.

Ross and Braun both leave Myers with heartfelt going-away messages.

“She’s one of those people I’m going to think of every now and then when I move, and I have to call because I miss so terribly,” Braun said.

“I’m so proud,” Ross said. “She’s a wonderful teacher and human being, and I wish her nothing but the happiest in her retirement. She deserves it. She earned it.”

# Christine Braun

by Isabella Kulawik  
Sci-Tech Editor

Masterpieces from over the ages line the walls of Building 17’s Room 221. In the corner the “Mona Lisa” smiles; on the back wall “Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog” by Caspar David Friedrich stands amongst the waves. Amidst it all is social studies teacher Christine Braun. After 17 years of calling Pine View her home, Braun will move on to write a new chapter of her personal history in Tennessee.

Braun first worked as a clerk in Michigan in the family court branch of the judicial system, where she aspired to become a lawyer. However, all her life Braun truly wanted to be a teacher; when a teaching

program opened at a nearby university, she got her chance.

**“She really helped me learn about how to love learning,”**  
**India Hirschowitz,**  
*twelfth-grader*

“At four, I did make my parents buy me a chalkboard, and I did put stuffed animals in front of it. And I used to teach and my mom would buy me stickers, and I would grade their paperwork. And so it was

common knowledge that I always wanted to be a teacher,” Braun said.

Braun started teaching in Michigan, but when she and her husband moved to Florida, Pine View came into the picture. After interviewing for multiple schools in Sarasota County, she chose Pine View and was hired as a fourth-grade teacher. As soon as all the paperwork was completed, Braun was asked to start teaching the very next day. In two weeks, she worked with the other members of the fourth-grade team to prepare for the start of school.

“Those ladies saved my butt, and then I just dove in. I loved it. Absolutely loved it... This has always been the right choice. I’ve loved those other schools, too, and I know a lot of people that work at those other schools, but this was the right choice for me,” Braun said.

Braun later taught middle and high school classes. She has won multiple awards during her time at Pine View, including Sarasota County’s Middle School Teacher of the Year.

Her care and dedication to inspiring students has touched the hearts of many. Braun taught Pine View Class of 2021 alumna Marielle Newmark in multiple classes; now, Newmark is earning her teaching degree from Florida State

University because of Braun’s influence in her life.

“She cared so deeply about the kids themselves, rather than just teaching the content and getting through the class,” Newmark said.

Twelfth-grader India Hirschowitz has also been impacted by Braun. Hirschowitz



PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHRISTINE BRAUN

is currently the president of the Pine View Archives Club, which Braun sponsors, and she has been in Braun’s classes for many years.

“She has given me the Archives Club, which has been a really nice thing for me. I really enjoy it. It’s always been like a nice, safe place for me over the years,” Hirschowitz said. “And she really helped me learn about how to love learning.”

In her time working at Pine View, Braun has made

close connections with many people on campus.

“My husband and I, when we moved here, we didn’t know a soul. No one. We knew no one in Florida, and Pine View’s become family to me,” Braun said.

Lois Myers, a middle school social studies teacher and prior fourth grade teacher, has worked with Braun from the very start. They met each other on the day Braun interviewed for the job. Over the years, they became close friends.

“That day that we hired her, she came in and just wowed us,” Myers said. “The way she could talk, and her excitement about education... It was amazing.”

From the tea parties she held to the times she dressed up in eighteenth century garb to play Madame de Pompadour, Braun has been a Pine View mainstay. She looks forward to teaching college level courses in Tennessee and has emphasized to former students that her door is always open.

“It’s a gift. It’s been a gift to get to know some of these kids. I think the kids here are absolutely incredible. I think all kids are incredible. I think you don’t get into teaching if you don’t love children. But I have come across some people here that I know are just going to blow my mind as adults,” Braun said.



Christine Braun (middle) poses for a picture after winning Sarasota County’s Middle School Teacher of the Year award. Braun’s dedication to her students is universally appreciated by all those she has taught. PHOTO BY HALEIGH BROWN

## Krystal Tran works to help neonates



Krystal Tran teaches life science students about the structure of DNA with the Biomedical Engineering Society. Tran has dedicated time working with neonatal science to further her research.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY KRYSTAL TRAN

by Terry Shen  
Match Layout Artist

When eleventh-grader Krystal Tran began researching irritable bowel syndrome, she never would have guessed that she would end up working alongside USF Assistant Professor Stephanie Prescott NNP BC, Ph.D.

Tran's involvement in the STEM field began years ago with her first research project. Tran investigated the role of brachyspira on the human

gut microbiome in influencing irritable bowel syndrome, suggesting lactobacilli as a probiotic treatment.

Outside of this research, she also serves as the Vice President of Biomedical Engineering Society, the Science National Honor Society Treasurer, and the Health and Education Initiatives president. She is also set to be the president of Biomedical Engineering Society next school year. On top of this, she was a

Sunshine State Scholar, one of two STEM students chosen to represent Sarasota County at a state convention.

After Prescott became aware of Tran's research on irritable bowel syndrome, Tran began working with her on neonatal pain assessment tool research. Neonates, also known as newborn infants, are children in their first four weeks of life. This period is also statistically when children are at most risk.

Because neonates are unable to communicate, neonatal pain assessment tools are used to detect pain and collect valuable information regarding underlying medical problems.

"Nurses use these neonatal pain assessment tools to translate their crying, their painful expressions, and their squirming around. They compile these factors to determine a pain score to determine how a baby is feeling," Tran said.

The pain score helps nurses provide pain reducing treatment and make sure the baby is comfortable.

"This is really important for the development long term," Tran said.

Her current literature review compares neonatal pain assessment tools with each other. Prescott explained that a

literature review is a "very organized system of identifying all the literature that is known about your field. It's just a set of ever narrowing questions."

Tran and Prescott will be publishing the literature review in the near future as co-authors.



Tran attends the 2022 Sunshine State Scholar Convention in Orlando. Tran has aided Professor Prescott with research at USF this year. PHOTO PROVIDED BY KRYSTAL TRAN

Pain assessment tools often have certain benefits and drawbacks, making some more practical to use in certain circumstances in comparison to others.

"Some have behavior parameters, some are physiological parameters, some have high inter-rater reliability, which means they can be used

across nurses and still have the same score," Tran said.

She compares neonatal pain assessment tools by observing past research to see if certain pain assessment tools have specific factors.

As Tran's research has been remote, she plans on meeting Prescott face to face during the summer on visits to the lab where Prescott works.

"I want to have her come in and teach her some of the techniques that we do in the lab so that it gives her experience," Prescott said. "We'll teach her skills that all labs use."

Working with Tran, Prescott said she's been impressed with Tran's ability.

"She's interested, she works hard, she seems to be excited by doing the project, she's been great to work with, I'm just impressed with her," Prescott said.

Tran plans to continue her involvement in the STEM field and hopes to go to medical school. In more specific terms, she hopes to go into gynecological oncology.

"I want to be a gynecologist that can uplift women. I want to be able to make women feel comfortable with their doctors and help them to the best of my ability," Tran said.

## Elon Musk wants to buy Twitter for \$44 million.

### Now what? MORE LENIENT CONTENT POLICIES

"If it's a gray area, let the tweet exist," said Musk, a self-proclaimed "free speech absolutist," at a TED conference.



Musk said that Twitter Blue, the premium subscription launched in 2021, should be cheaper with an ad-free incentive.

### 'EDIT' FEATURE FOR TWEETS

Although some expressed fear that an "edit" button could be abused, Musk said he is in favor of letting users change their posts after publication.





Connor Lafo



## Getting to know Mister and Miss Pine View

Joanna Malvas



by Sarah Hassan

Assistant Editor-in-Chief

**You two have known each other for a really long time. How long has that been?**

Joanna Malvas: Since third? Yeah, that's like, nearly a decade.

**What was the inspiration for your act?**

JM: So I did the fan girl song, and I must say, I've been a true fan girl since middle school. Ever since I set my eyes on BTS. You may laugh, but they impacted my life, and because of that, I was like, "Oh, dude, I should do something funny. I should do something that I want all my friends to do," because I knew I wanted to do an act with friends. I was like, I should do the fan girl song.

Connor Lafo: My act somewhat came together a little last minute. I had an idea where I was going to do "Inside Out." I was actually originally supposed to be singing an Olivia Rodrigo song. And then I realized — I had a self aware moment — I can't sing. Then we're like, "Oh, I'm going to do an 'Inside Out' skit," and then I was like, "that's not funny." So then the week before the show, I was like, "Hey directors, what if I changed it?" So something that was always kind of a joke that I thought I could do was a thing called impressions corner. That was in my act, but it was just because I really liked doing impressions.

JM: That's another thing, too. He would always do impressions. Every single time we hung out.

CL: I'm really bad at them.

JM: Well, you won Mr. Pine View, so it really paid off.

**Is there anything you'd like to change about your act?**

JM: No, I think the only thing I would change is how stressed I was feeling about it. Well, I wasn't stressed, per se, but I was like, "Oh, my gosh, this needs to be executed perfectly." And then I was like, "Hey, it's senior year. It's Miss Pine View. This is just to have fun." And so I think by the time the act came around, it was just fun. So the only thing I would change was my attitude.

CL: So I'm really glad I did it with my friends, as well. It was kind of an enjoyable thing to have them in there because it's kind of sharing that moment with them. But what I would change is I wouldn't do a Kermit impression because I realized I really can't do a Kermit impression. It's bad.

**What was the best part of the entire event?**

JM: I don't know. I think it's cheesy, and it's overstated, but it's just like making friends. I couldn't attend every single rehearsal, but every time I attended rehearsal, I would be so excited ... When I was going to rehearsal, it would be the highlight of my day. So not just the show night, but the whole process of the show coming together... [And] just making friends with people that I've never really talked to or people that I've never noticed...

CL: I think Joanna is definitely

right. It's like people you meet. It's the fact that you're doing the dance, and then people just doing choreography prior to the show ... We're making jokes the entire time, but we're also trying to learn [the choreography], and it's a really enjoyable experience to just be messing around with people like that. Also, Waffle House after the show was so much fun because we were all so close by that point. We were all kind of celebrating what happened at the show. And it's not even who won ... It was just, we did that together.

**What was your reaction to winning?**



Connor Lafo (left) and Joanna Malvas (right), laughing as always. LEFT PHOTO PROVIDED BY JOANNA MALVAS, RIGHT PHOTO BY JIAYI ZHU

JM: Shock. I think I was like, "Oh, I'm so excited for the other girls to get Miss Pine View," and then it was when they announced the second runner up, and then my name, and I was like, "Oh, geez, what just happened..." Then, on the ride home, I was just being very sentimental. Because I think it was by the time the show was over, I was like, "Man, it's over." I don't know, just shock and nostalgia.

CL: Just shock. I guess I kind of didn't really expect it. I thought, "Oh, it'll be someone else," because I felt other people might be more deserving of winning.

JM: It's so hard to describe the moment of it because it just doesn't feel real.

CL: So, I was just shocked. Like, yeah, utter. "What?" and they picked me up and I don't even remember them picking me up. They almost crowd surf me. I have no recollection of that ... It was a really sweet moment, and you're so right about the nostalgia.

**So how does it feel to be the Mr. and Miss Pine View?**

CL: Mr. Wiley has not stopped calling me Mr. Pine View. Mr. Nzeza calls me Mr. Pine View occasionally. I'm not annoyed. It's just funny. It feels good.

JM: I like it. At first it was like something that was a little weird, but then when you go to the office, Mrs. Borden's writing me a pass and she's like, "Oh, Miss Pine View needs a pass." Like Mrs. Borden knows me! ... Then Miss Reyka too she goes, "Oh, my gosh, Miss Pine View." I'm like, "I've made my mark. Mrs. Reyka knows me." I think it's just the idea of the administration knowing you because they get a lot of faces coming in and out of the office. And they're icons, I feel like Mrs. Reyka has been here for my entire time at Pine View. So ... the

fact that she calls me by Miss Pine View. I'm like, "Wow, that is the most special thing." It warms my heart every single day.

CL: You're right how it felt. It felt somewhat awkward, but also the boys from the show were being really funny about it because every time they'd see me they'd be like, "Mr. Pine View sir," and I'd say "at ease." It was really funny, though ... but you're right, administrators know who I am now, which is something that never happened to me...I've never had Mrs. Borden write Mr. Pine View, yet.

JM: Oh, I guess I'm just special.



CL: Oh, yeah, I guess you're the better of the Pine View people.

JM: Sorry, I'm sorry. \*laughs\*

**Were there any memorable moments in the event?**

JM: I think everything was memorable. And I don't mean to exaggerate that. Because I do remember everyone's act. I remember, "Oh, this happened, and this happened." ... There is this one moment. We had a Miss Pine View hang out at Maya Gordon's house. That was a lot of fun, and I remember on that Friday we were hanging out, it was my birthday, but I didn't plan on anything because I was having my debut. So I was like, "I'm not going to do anything right before my birthday," but then they ended up surprising me with a cake, and that was really, really sweet. And I was like, "It's just so nice to have these group of girls around me." Everyone's so supportive. Everyone's so sweet...

CL: My sister surprised me. I had

no idea my sister was going to be there for the show. My parents secretly flew her out for the show, so she came to the show, and I [said] she was my role model. So she got to hear me saying the role model thing about how she's so special to me ... I was looking in the crowd, my family's waving at me and I'm like, "Why are you waving at me?" and then I saw my sister, and I immediately was just overwhelmed. Then I went backstage, and I was hugging people because I was so emotional from that because it's so magical to have my sister be there for it ... It's something she's going to remember, something I'm going to remember... I just remember going backstage, and I was crying, and I was saying "Grace is here" to people as if they know what that means. It impacted me so much...

JM: For me, the people I brought were my Filipino youth group. So, they were people I've grown up with, since diapers, and that was nice ... Yeah, it was very sweet ... they're like an extension of my family, too.

**Any advice to aspiring candidates?**

CL: No real advice, just have fun.

JM: Bring all your loved ones, bring your friends, bring people that you want to see to see you. Even if you don't win, you want your family and ... friends there and have your friends do the acts.

CL: Make sure you're in it to have fun and not to win. I think that when you're in it to have fun, it's so magical. It makes so many memories. And just enjoy the fact that you're being given an opportunity to interact with people who you've not really interacted with. Even though I've been there since third grade, there were people in Mr. Pine View that I really did not interact with, but it gave me such a unique opportunity to meet them and kind of get to know them.

JM: Actually, my advice is just do it. You don't need a reason. Just do it. Even if you have 10 extracurriculars, 500 APs your senior year, none of it matters. Just do it. It's gonna be so much fun.

CL: You don't even act. The act will come to you.

GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE



With Hassan spectating amusedly, Malvas and Lafo exchange familiar banter. From left to right: Sarah Hassan, Joanna Malvas, Connor Lafo. PHOTOS BY JIAYI ZHU

## Prepping the canvas...

### Erin Hickey

By Jiayi Zhu  
Match Layout Artist

Shape. Movement. Rhythm. Color. These are just a few things twelfth-grader Erin Hickey likes to incorporate into her art. Whether it takes form in collages, jewelry, or sculptures, Hickey describes her work as the best representation of herself. She plans to continue nurturing her zeal for art at the University of South Florida, majoring in Art History this fall.

According to Hickey, art has act-



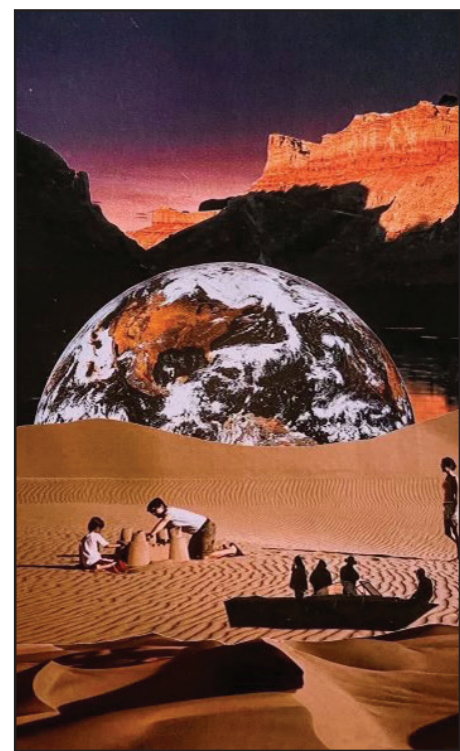
ed as a lifelong creative escape from all the stressors in life. From integrating her skills in school projects to winning a silver key in the Scholastic Art and Writing Contest, she said art has positively impacted her life and personal identity.

“ [ A r t has] really helped me find myself and be a lot more comfortable in my own skin — knowing that I can create something, and it only belongs to me, and no one else can do that... That’s really helped me with being comfortable

and knowing that I’m my own person,” Hickey said. “I can’t compare myself to anybody else because you can’t really compare one piece of art to another ... It’s always going to be something different. It’s kind of just like how people are.”

Hickey hopes that her degree in Art History will help her “explore more of what this world has to offer” and allow her to travel to places that she’s interested in. To her, traveling would be beneficial to learn more about different areas and art’s influence on people and their decisions.

“I really enjoy all cultures of art. But I’m possibly looking into discovery, so an archaeology spin on it,” Hickey said. “I think it’s just interesting that every culture is so separate, but they all have this one unity of art tying them together.” PHOTO (LEFT) BY JIAYI ZHU, PHOTO (RIGHT) PROVIDED BY ERIN HICKEY



### Layna Malave

By Sarah Catalano  
Copy Editor

President and founder of Pine View’s own National Art Honor Society, twelfth-grader Layna Malave has found her niche in visual art — animals, often horses, unicorns, and other fantastical creatures, come to life through the meticulous strokes of her colored pencils.

Malave has been consistently recognized for her talent and skill, winning contests such as the Salvador Dali Student Surrealist Art Exhibit in 2021



and 2022. In 2021, her piece “Juice” was displayed in the museum, and this year her piece “Unicorn” is part of the online exhibition. But between projects, she says, a more “comfortable, cartoony style” is her go-to.

Approaching her art with a practical, down-to-earth attitude, Malave committed to the discipline early in high school, and continuing into college was an obvious step. “Art has always been a part of me,” Malave said. “I remember drawing in preschool, probably whenever I could pick up a crayon. I just remember always liking it. And I remember looking at other kids, things they were scribbling in kindergarten and being like, ‘That’s not how you draw a horse.’ Because they would draw a smiley face. Like a human smiley face on a horse body. And that didn’t make any sense.”

The college choice came down to Ringling or the Savannah College of Art

and Design (SCAD). Cost effective, close to home, and with small, one-on-one class sizes, Ringling was ultimately the right fit for Malave, who admired the quality of art produced by its students.

Malave plans to pursue an illustration major on a visual development route. Through the program she will grow her skills in character design, concept art, and composition — opening possibilities to build a career as an illustrator and work on pre-pro-



duction in movies, TV shows, or books.

“I’m most excited for probably the people I will meet along the way, because being in an environment of all art students is going to be insane... It’s going to be really nice to be able to really connect on a different level to other people all having a common goal and wanting to make art,” Malave said.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY LAYNA MALAVE

### Chloe Kortie

By Lily Quartermaine  
Entertainment Editor

You may have seen her work on the cover of Pine View’s spring musical playbill, or perhaps on her Instagram account, where she posts charming portraits of her friends, complete with intimate graphite sketches and watercolors that dance across the page. Regardless of where you’ve seen twelfth-grader Chloe Kortie’s art, you’ll never forget it.

Kortie has always been interest-



ed in art, but did not begin dedicating herself to it officially until the pandemic.

“I would go through different phases of things I like. In the background, even though I wasn’t taking it seriously, I was always kind of doing art,” Kortie said. It’s always kind of been there without me realizing it until recently.”

Kortie began seriously committing to her artwork during the pandemic, taking the free time to hone her skills.

“As I did more and more of it, it started to feel like ‘Yeah, I could really do this.’”

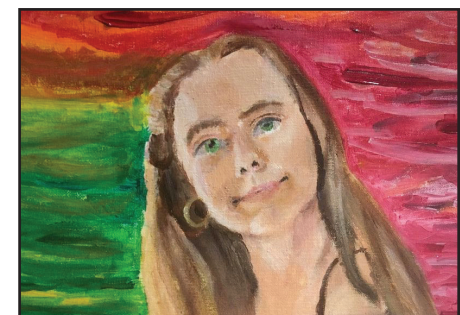
Since being accepted into Florida International University (FIU) in Miami, Kortie has been ecstatic to begin working in the art program. She will be majoring in art at FIU, which covers a variety of subjects such as art history, 2D art, and 3D art.

“They have a big focus on figure drawing and portraits, and I love doing that kind of thing,” Kortie said.

Kortie sees her future as one full of art, but also stability.

“I’m not looking to be an artist in the traditional sense,” she said. “I think that’s a good thing about modern art jobs. Nowadays, it feels like there’s stuff out there where I can have a stable job, and either be surrounded by art or making art.”

When asked if she had any ad-



vice for students at Pine View wishing to go into art in the future, Kortie offered a realistic, yet wholesome, reply.

“Just be clear about what you want – have a clear end goal in mind. Don’t jump into it eyes closed, head-first. Think about the actual jobs associated with art, and which, if any, you would like to do... If art is really what you want to do, go for it! Be flexible.” PHOTO (LEFT) BY LILY QUARTERMAINE, PHOTO (RIGHT) PROVIDED BY CHLOE KORTIE



# ...and taking the stage

## Diana Stepanova

By Kai Sprunger  
Assistant Match Editor-in-Chief

A beaming light focused on the stage, illuminating the actors and actresses, while rows upon rows of people in the distance watched from afar, shuffling in their seats. In the center of the stage, twelfth-grader Diana Stepanova's friends hugged her tightly, refusing to let go as they tearfully bid her farewell. Stepanova's character, one of four university students, was leaving behind Russia and her close friends in the play. However, her friends were not just bidding farewell to the character she played that night; they were also saying goodbye to Stepanova, who, like the role she played, was leaving Russia the very next day.

Stepanova discovered theater as a middle-schooler in Russia after trying out various extracurriculars. Once she began acting, she never looked back, and

continued practicing the art form even when she moved to the United States.

Currently a senior, Stepanova has been doing theater for seven years and plans on continuing it past high school and through her enrollment at the University of Central Florida (UCF). Although her plans might change, she is considering minoring in theater or stage management and majoring in finance or statistics at the university.

"Of course, it's going to have hard moments, but it's life and I'm ready to face whatever the college brings. But of course, I'm looking forward to getting the education," Stepanova said.

At Pine View, she was able to take theater as an elective, which increased her interest in both theater and stage management. Along with that, it was the source of many shared memories amongst her and her classmates.

Many of these memories came from when she directed "Candyland Live," a play that she and the rest of the theater class put on for second-graders April 29. One of her classmates and close friends, twelfth-grader Layna Malave, especially remembers when Stepanova was showing her how to act as a character for the play.

"She just brought so much panic and energy into it," Malave said.

Although Stepanova is leaving Pine View and graduating, she is still grateful for all of the memories it gave her.

She is excited to go to UCF. Even though adulthood can be daunting, Stepanova is looking forward to it and can't wait to continue doing theater past high school.

"I really love this school so much, but I'm very looking forward to, as they say, opening a new chapter in my life," Stepanova said.



PHOTO BY JIAYI ZHU

## Laura Gayre

By Joanna Malvas  
Managing Editor

At the young age of eight, current twelfth-grader Laura Gayre was left with a difficult decision, as her mother wanted her to choose a single pursuit out of her multiple hobbies. To her mother's surprise, Gayre chose ballet. While ballet has been a "test of character" for Gayre, she said she fell in love with this artistic pursuit and will continue ballet in college as she studies at Vanderbilt University.

Gayre has been training in ballet since she was three. She expressed how her 15-year-long journey has taught her principles of discipline, as she learned to navigate through balancing technique and enjoyment of the art.

"Having to look at yourself in the mirror for three hours a day and you feel like you have to be perfect, and you want to be able to express yourself," Gayre said, "or when you feel like you're not good enough to express yourself — like good enough at dance

— it can be really difficult. I think it has taught me to be very disciplined, but I think there's another side to ballet that has taught me to not worry as much about the technique but to worry about just loving it."

Gayre dances for the Sarasota Ballet Margaret Barbieri Conservatory, learning two choreographed dances a year and performing in multiple shows. The studio hosts spring showcases, free shows for nursing homes, and has an annual circus-themed "Nutcracker" show in December. Gayre currently trains with an intensive schedule, attending practice from 4 to 7 pm six days a week.

Additionally, through the studio, Gayre has been able to take on a lead role in community work through dancing. In one of the shows, the studio reenacted storybook plots for little kids, in which she starred as Gwendalin the Graceful Pig. When describing the Margaret Bar-

bieri Conservatory, Gayre explains how she loves the support and community that her studio fosters.

"I think there is a certain community that is really special about my studio," Gayre said. "I've been to several studios and I've danced with so many different people. I think there's a really dark side to the ballet world — there's a lot of competition... I think the most rewarding part about my ballet experience right now is definitely the kids, as well as having such a nice community where I can just enjoy dancing."

At Vanderbilt, Gayre will be auditioning for the university's ballet company. As the studio's schedule involves a less intensive schedule than her current schedule, Gayre is excited to be able to engage in a new college experience and to have more flexibility in exploring other avenues of passion.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY LAURA GAYRE



## Gryffin Wilkens-Plumley

By Peyton Harris  
Assistant Editor-in-Chief

At the age of nine, now-twelfth-grader Gryffin Wilkens-Plumley discovered a new home in Players Theatre — but not in the musical theater department, where he was originally taking classes.

"My interest was piqued by the disciplined and methodical nature of ballet. It felt like something that could combine both my artistic fancy and my need for order, discipline, flexibility, and strength," Wilkens-Plumley said. "I continued because it felt good, and because I was getting better. More recently I've been in something of a hiatus since the financials underlying my ballet classes broke down, and COVID discouraged me."

Besides COVID-19, Wilkens-Plumley has faced numerous other challenges in the ballet world,

especially as a male ballerina; nevertheless, he finds ways to prevail.

"There obviously are some [stereotypes] — that we're all gay, that we're feminine, that we're weird. Honestly, it's not that bad — for me, being a dancer and knowing what it's really like makes it that I don't feel hurt when people think that stuff. It's more like, 'Well that sucks for them that they don't know, right?' Honestly, it's just made it so that I've come to care less and less about what people think in all realms of life, and that has made me happier overall," Wilkens-Plumley said.

Since being accepted into Yale, Wilkens-Plumley's intrigue in ballet has only increased.

"But now that COVID is, hopefully, waning, and I have access to an available program at Yale, I cannot wait to get back into it... I will have to

get new tights, I'm a little bigger now," Wilkens-Plumley said with a laugh.

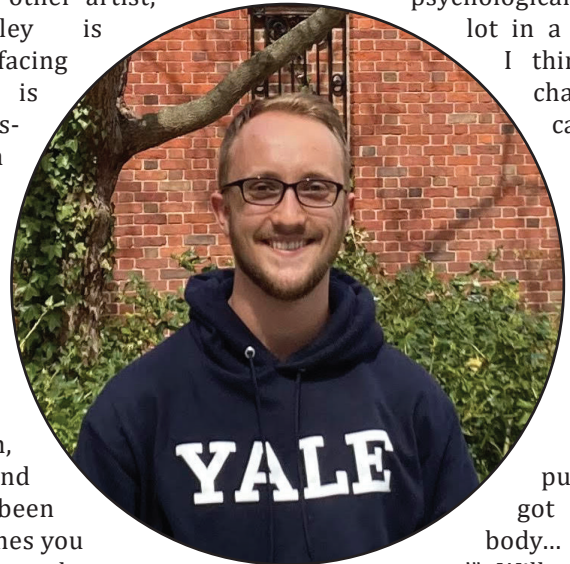
Like any other artist, Wilkens-Plumley is constantly facing critique. He is currently frustrated with how his psychological disposition affects his dancing.

"I can struggle with combining exertion, technique, and grace. I've been told that at times you can see the struggle too much in my face, that my motions are too swift and distinct rath-

er than effortlessly fluid," he said. "I think that my trouble there has been psychological... I've grown a lot in a short time, and I think that with a change in attitude I can let it happen."

Overall, Wilkens-Plumley is excited to continue his career in dance and looks forward to his ballet-filled future. "Billy Elliot put it best: 'I've got this fire in my body... like electricity,'" Wilkens-Plumley said.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY GRYFFIN WILKENS-PLUMLEY



## Pythons journey into collegiate sports

As the 2021-2022 school year comes to a close, the Class of 2022 is saying goodbye to Pine View and hello to what the future holds. The following students will take their athletics to new levels with collegiate sports.

### Cole Firlie

by Jada Davidson  
Sports Editor

Since he was five years old, twelfth-grader Cole Firlie has dedicated his time outside of school to competitive swimming, which has helped him pursue his goal of competing as a swimmer in college. With a steady record of accomplishments behind him, Firlie looks forward to his future — swimming throughout college and, eventually, at the 2024 Olympic Trials.

Firlie's Olympic goal isn't his only impressive feat. This year, he applied exclusively to the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

"A lot of people are surprised to hear I didn't apply to any backup schools, but I was confident that I was qualified enough to be admitted," Firlie said. "After my visit, I just had a gut feeling that this school was going to be my home for the next four years, so I just followed and trusted that feeling. Of course, like anyone else would be, I was still a little nervous when the moment of truth actually



PHOTO PROVIDED BY COLE FIRLIE

came, but I'm very happy everything worked out as planned."

Firlie cites his older brother Brendan Firlie, a Pine View graduate and current senior at Princeton University, as a major role model over the past few years.

Although his future career is uncertain, Firlie is leaning towards a career in finance. Aside from swimming and academics, Firlie said he "would like to be more involved in extracurricular clubs as well, which [he] didn't really get a chance to do much in high school."

He's particularly interested in MIT's Sloan Business Club (SBC). Held in high regard, SBC is selective when it comes to choosing members. The many meetings and events they host allow members to focus and improve upon their skillsets in three key initiatives: finance, consulting, and entrepreneurship.

While Firlie has a lot to balance as he continues his journey at MIT, his mantra is simple, but impactful: "Don't stress too much, it'll all work out in the end," he said.

### Kylah Buckle

by Jiayi Zhu  
Match Layout Artist

With ten years of track and field experience under her belt, twelfth-grader Kylah Buckle has committed to North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NCA&T), where she will be attending with a D1 scholarship for track and field and majoring in psychology.

Having started track and field when she was seven, Buckle was inspired by her father and coach, Karl Buckle, who also has a track background.

"She's a model in everything that she does. Student, athlete, she's disciplined. You have to be able to allocate your time properly in order to do track and field. And she believes in herself," Karl Buckle said.

Buckle has seen herself grow as an athlete beyond her physical achievements.

"You don't know what's next for yourself," Buckle said. "You should just focus on where you were last year, and then where you are this year, and... you see how much you've changed both mentally and in your times... It was hard for me for a while. I was thinking, 'People are running these times, and I'm not.' But I think



PHOTO BY JIAYI ZHU

I'll get there."

While becoming a professional athlete is Buckle's prioritized route, her backup plan is to study medicine so she can become a pediatric nurse. No matter what the future holds, she's confident in her decision to attend the university.

"Going [to NCAT] and feeling the environment — I don't know, it just felt like a family down there," Buckle said. "I'm really excited to go in August."

In 2020, Buckle won first place in the AAU Junior Olympic Games 400-meter dash with a time of 56.43 seconds.

Although she said she's overcoming mental barriers that appear during her races, Buckle is proud of her accomplishments — and it's just the beginning.

Karl Buckle recalls thinking that his daughter was going to be an Olympian since the start of her track career.

"You'll be hearing a lot about her [in the future] because she's very, very gifted, talented, self-driven, and she doesn't like to lose," he said. "That's what it takes to make it as a professional, and that's the direction she wants to go."

### Sarah Sensenbrenner

by Alyson Mizanin  
News Editor

Swimming is second nature for twelfth-grader Sarah Sensenbrenner, whose introduction to the sport came at age two when her father threw her into a kiddie pool — an experience that she said she wouldn't recommend. Fifteen years and countless swim meets later, Sensenbrenner will swim for the University of Miami in the coming fall.

Sensenbrenner joined the Sarasota Sharks in first grade. Come middle school, she began swimming competitively. She swam for Venice High for her first three years of high school before competing for Riverview senior year, all while swimming for the Sharks during club seasons.

Riverview student Addison Sauickie swims for the Sharks and the Riverview team. She was seven years old when she met Sensenbrenner.

"She's come out of her shell and grown a lot over the years, as an athlete and a person. She's always so consistent — she never misses practice, and she always has motivation and a

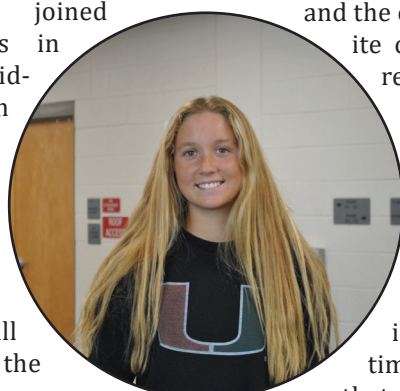


PHOTO BY ALYSON MIZANIN

good attitude," Sauickie said.

Though Sensenbrenner originally intended on leaving Florida after high school, she found that UMiami was her perfect fit.

"I always knew I wanted to swim in college because I can't imagine life without it," Sensenbrenner said. "It sounds so cheesy, but over the coronavirus, I swam open water and I just loved it. I love the water. I love the beach... Miami is right on the water, and the coaches were my favorite coaches to talk to. I'm really interested in the programs UMiami offers, and the community is really involved too — they teach little kids how to swim."

Sensenbrenner hopes to participate in the NCAA during her time at UMiami, noting that it's something she'd like to do "not only to represent the school, but also for myself — I want to keep growing and getting better."

Sauickie anticipates more success in her friend's future.

"I look to see Sarah get an Olympic trial card or an international team trial cut. She's capable of that," Sauickie said. "I'm really happy for her."

### Joshua Wang

by Isabella Kulawik  
Sci-Tech Editor

Under the shade of a semi-transparent black tarp, twelfth-grader Joshua Wang works with his teammates to set up shells for practice at Nathan Benderson Park. As Sarasota Crew's Captain, Wang practices tirelessly seven days a week to find the best ways to help his team improve.

Through all his hard work and dedication, Wang has been recruited by Columbia University, where he will continue his rowing journey and start his pre-med track.

Wang began rowing in seventh grade. Over the years, he and his teams have achieved countless accomplishments, such as winning second place nationally in the Mens Lightweight Eight and fourth place in the Mens Varsity Eight boat.

Wang has gained more than just medals through Sarasota Crew.

"I've made the greatest friends to this point in my life through Crew," he said. "Going through our practices and seeing them for so much of the day has kind of built this bond with



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JOSHUA WANG

the people there... you just grow super close to these people."

Twelfth-grader Max Marsh is an assistant captain who also joined Sarasota Crew in seventh grade.

Marsh has noticed how Wang has grown since their time in middle school, both as an athlete and a leader.

"I was in the Novice C boat. He was in the A boat at the time. And he was just a strong leader on that team; he was ... very helpful to all the lower guys. At that time, being in a slower boat than him, he didn't really have to have a connection," Marsh said. "He's very helpful and very supportive the entire time."

As Wang prepares to go onto Columbia, he looks forward to seeing what the city holds and plans to continue fostering his zeal for rowing as he watches his years of hard work pay off.

"In rowing, it's very apparent if you put the time and energy in hard work and put your focus on things that you need to focus on, the results will come and you will be rewarded for your work," he said.

# Isabella DeLeo

by Kai Sprunger

Assistant Match Editor-in-Chief

Almost every nook and cranny of twelfth-grader Isabella DeLeo's wall is filled with glittering medals and trophies. When rays of light peek through DeLeo's window, the awards sparkle, like how the water glistens in the sun on the hottest of summer days. For DeLeo, the memories she shares with her friends through Sarasota Crew are far more valuable and worth their weight in gold.

DeLeo will attend Georgetown University in the fall, where she will row for the Georgetown University Womens Lightweight Rowing (G130).

"I'm really excited to finally get to meet the team in person because I've been talking with a lot of them over text," DeLeo said. "I love D.C., and Georgetown is just so charming and amazing."

Now the Womens Varsity Team captain, DeLeo has been rowing since seventh grade. She was encouraged to join Sarasota Crew by her friends; over her years on the team, she has made many new ones along the way.

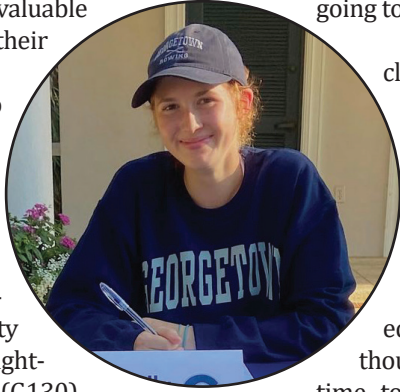


PHOTO COURTESY OF ISABELLA DELEO

"My favorite part is for sure the people I have met, my teammates, because I have a bond with them that's different from anything I've ever experienced in my life," she said. "We've been getting up with each other for crazy early hours for years, so we all click. I know everyone on my team, and I can talk to them very easily. It's super nice to be close with everyone, and it's something I'm going to miss."

DeLeo is close friends with Grace Buchen, a twelfth-grader at Riverview High. Their friendship is rooted in rowing, though they spend time together outside of the sport as well.

"She has gone absolutely above and beyond, especially being captain this year. She fit into the role perfectly and she's accomplished so much," Buchen said. "It's really nice seeing her do so well in the sport we love."

Although she will be leaving Sarasota Crew behind, the radiant memories from rowing with her team will still stay with DeLeo through her journey at Georgetown.

# Liam Custer

by Felicity Chang

Web Editor-in-Chief

The fan above the Sarasota Sharks pool whirled as competitors prepared for the Mixed 1650 Free event at the 2020 Florida Virtual Winter Championships. At first glance, this meet was just like any other — the weather was fair, the afternoon sun bounced off the water, and the bleachers were empty due to COVID-19 safety protocols.

Twelfth-grader Liam Custer, who was 16 years old at the time, felt his legs ache as he warmed up. His teammate stood along the row of people at the end of the pool who held counters in the water. In a race like the

1650, a code is established so the swimmers know their pace — if Custer's 50-meter split time was slower than before, his teammate was to shake the counter, and if the split was faster, they were to keep it still.

"I just remember going out super easy, and they kept it still, and then I intentionally went a slow 50 to gauge how fast I needed to go. They still kept it still, so then I was like, 'Oh wow, I'm actually going re-

ally fast here," Custer said.

When Custer touched the wall and glanced up at the scoreboard, he was taken aback — he had broken the 15-16 1650 National Age Group record by almost eight seconds.

"I made sure I was looking at the right name and time, and I slapped the water in celebration, which I never do," he said.

According to Custer, he improved greatly over quarantine, going from not being ranked to being in the top five of his class.

"The reset of the pandemic, I think, helped him to fall in love with the sport again," said Melanie Custer, Liam's mother. "That was when he was able to take his swimming to the next level."

After being recruited by top colleges across the country, Custer committed to Stanford University.

When asked what advice he would give to his sophomore self, he said, "Make your goals bigger than you thought you could ever accomplish. Hard work beats everything, and if you set your mind to something, then you will more often than not be able to achieve it."



PHOTO BY FELICITY CHANG

# Max O'Meara

by Sanya Patel

Assistant Match Editor-in-Chief

Sarasota Crew is one of the most well-known sports that Pine View students participate in. Like many others, twelfth-grader Max O'Meara started rowing when he was in middle school. Unlike many, O'Meara decided to stay.

"I first started just getting introduced from my friends," O'Meara said. "They have a middle school program where it's very nonchalant and really not serious... Definitely at the beginning, I was just doing it for the friend group, and then later on, just doing it for myself."

Unlike other sports where everyone is given a certain position to play, many rowers change placement on the boats throughout their careers. At the beginning of his career, O'Meara was six seat, but he has since moved to seats five, three, and one, as well as the bow.



PHOTO BY SANJA PATEL

Crew has not only been a fun experience for O'Meara, but it has taught him a lot, as well.

"Crew is very good at teaching you time management and discipline," O'Meara said. "It takes up four hours every day, five or six days

of the week, so that's a whole twenty-four hours you're losing from the week."

One of his teammates, twelfth-grader Max Marsh, describes O'Meara as a quiet but

hardworking individual who is an inspiration to lightweight rowers.

"He's very fast and never passes up an opportunity to get faster," Marsh said.

O'Meara grew from being the 26th-fastest to the eighth-fastest on the team in one year. He placed eighth at the Head of the Charles Regatta, one of the biggest rowing competitions in the world.

O'Meara plans to continue rowing at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania. Before rowing, he hadn't found anything that piqued his interest. As he went on through the high school program, O'Meara was shown what he was truly capable of.

"Before I did Crew, I was really lost and blurred out with my future. I didn't have a direct plan or anything," he said. "My future brightened a lot, and I was able to see I have a lot more potential than I [thought I] did."

# Weelo Ghamra

by Tiffany Yu

Opinion Editor

Filled with the excitement and relief of seeing the culmination of years of hard work come to a head, twelfth-grader Walid "Weelo" Ghamra came to a fateful decision Oct. 30.

That day, Ghamra proudly verbally committed to Cornell University for rowing.

Beginning his college process the June going into his junior year, Ghamra began reaching out to coaches and filling out recruitment forms. Throughout junior year, Ghamra stayed in contact with these collegiate programs, sending them his updated times, grades, and race results. Faced with the pressure of meeting D1 level rowing standards, Ghamra dedicated all his time to the process.

"All of senior year is immensely stressful with recruit-

ing as it's basically a full time job. You need to keep communicating with... various coaches at once while going on constant college visits that



PHOTO PROVIDED BY WEELO GHAMRA

basically job interviews that decide the next four years of your life," Ghamra said. "All this needs to be done while still trying to keep grades up and perform at an elite level at practice

and races, making senior fall full of pressure if you don't have the opportunity to commit early."

Ghamra's biggest achievement in rowing — besides being recruited as a D1 rower — has been being invited to selection camp for the Junior National Team this summer and being honored the opportunity to possibly race at the World Championships under team USA.

While rowing will be an integral part of Ghamra's college journey, he plans on focusing on his education. Planning on majoring in Biology and Society on a pre-med track with a commitment to the Cornell heavyweight rowing team, Ghamra has his work cut out for him — but has proven time and time again that he excels in anything he puts his mind to.

# Tyler Horler

by Faith Bossman

Features Editor

Having started rowing five years ago, twelfth-grader Tyler Horler's discipline and hard work sent him to one of the best colleges nationally: Harvard.

Horler recalls what rowing was like when he first started in eighth grade.

"I didn't really understand it. It's kind of hard, and I was pretty bad. I've only gotten good at it in the last year or two," Horler said. "A lot of the friends I had were a lot better than me. I felt kind of overwhelmed."

Horler was inspired to keep rowing after seeing where the sport could take him, so he persisted.

As Horler improved, he became one of the top rowers on his team. He was selected to go to an Olympic training center

in California.

"It's good to get to a bigger environment where everyone is my speed or faster. It pushed me a lot," Horler said.



PHOTO BY FAITH BOSSMAN

At the Junior World Championships in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, Horler won gold in the Mens Eight.

Rowing has improved his

school performance despite how busy it makes him.

"Before rowing, I was a pretty bad student. I almost failed out of Pine View twice for a low GPA," Horler said. "But after rowing, I picked up this sense of responsibility, because I knew that I was entering high school and my high school transcript was starting to matter a lot, and colleges could actually see it."

Horler's hard work in both rowing and school led him to success: acceptance to Harvard.

"I wanted to give up a few times. It's really tough, and sometimes you don't see a lot of progress," Horler said. "A major slogan you will hear is to trust the process, still go to practice every day, and stay committed to the hard work even if it feels impossible."



## COME ONE, COME ALL DAVID BAYER CORONATION

A ONE-NIGHT ONLY EXPERIENCE

MAY 32, 2022  
MEET AT 58.93155 AMU

ADMIT ONE  
OR TWENTY SEVEN.  
THE MORE, THE MERRIER.

GRAPHIC BY ALYSON MIZANIN

by Will Hartvigsen  
Guest Contributor

I've been blessed with the friendship of the one and only David Bayer for about three years. It's an honor to have the opportunity to invite you all to his Cobalt Prince coronation May 32, 2022.

If you couldn't attend this year's Cobalt, you really missed out. Approximately three people followed the Met Gala theme, which was two more than the number of celebrities who adhered to this year's Gilded Age Met Gala theme — way to go, Pine View! Outfits of all hues and contours got the evening off to a quick start.

Despite everyone's efforts, there was none to match that of Bayer, who flaunted his navy blue Men's Warehouse suit and pants with a spectacular white shirt and striped blue tie. Fashionistas from all over the world, i.e., the Pine View student population, couldn't help but be amazed by his groundbreaking outfit — one that had been seen by quite literally no one before.

The real jaw dropper was his DESPICABLE ME MINIONS 6 IMAGE PROJECTOR WATCH. Every person at the event found themselves fixated on the projected image of a minion — one that

came from none other than Bayer. As for the case of Cobalt Princess Hana Han, she was fortunate enough to get the opportunity to stand on the podium with him as she awed the crowd with her bedazzled black dress — all while she was awed by Bayer.

As I'm sure all of you know, Bayer has always been the star of the show, starting off his illustrious career as a star basketball player. Standing at 5'8 with a 5.8 percent three-point percentage, his talents were often compared to those of Tony Snell. It's a beautiful coincidence that the atomic mass of cobalt is  $5.8 \times 10^1$  amu; Bayer was prac-

tically destined for Cobalt royalty since the day he was born. Unfortunately, during a local charity game, he succumbed to a minor thumb injury that effectively ended his career.

Despite this setback, Bayer continued along his path of stardom, finding himself DJing major community events like the Pine View middle school Winter Jam. His talents spilled into politics when he was elected co-historian of the Class of 2023. He and I vied alongside Tommy Bartlett for next year's Chem Jesters positions; unfortunately, Bayer's hilarity was cited as "too much to handle,"

and we lost the race.

Even as Bayer's crowning seems well overdue, his hard-fought efforts to make it to the top deserve recognition. Join us May 32 for the official coronation of David Andrew Bayer. Poutine, Tim Horton's, and other Canadian delicacies will be served. There will be live music performed by The Weeknd, Justin Bieber, and other Canadian artists. Do not forget about the crowning itself presented by the legendary Kevin Lovo.

The people chose Bayer as their Cobalt Prince, and now he is looking to return the deed to the people with an outstanding event.

# Life as an Alpha: A Terry Shen Special

by Aly Zaleski  
Humor Editor

Aly Zaleski: I heard you've recently graduated. How did you work your way through all four years of high school in just a few months?

Terry Shen: I finally settled down. I had to take some responsibility as an extremely buff man. I got married to the grind. That 50% protein powder is now 100%. I'm nothing but protein.

AZ: Have you made any changes to your workout routine over your high school career?

TS: 100 pull-ups is a joke now. Try 800. The deadlift is up to almost a thousand. Basically too much to count. I can count. Just not that high. The bench is also up there somewhere. I'm just better.

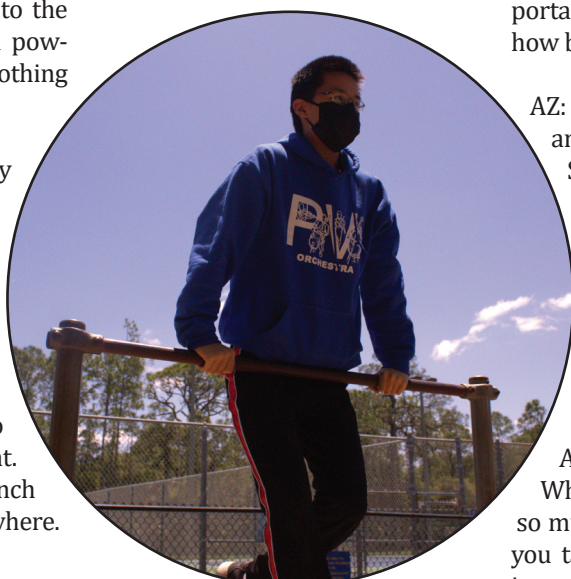
AZ: I've done some digging and found out that there will be four more guys joining Torch next year. Do you think this will be a good addition?

TS: You know, I don't think I'll be able to go back after this. It'll be shameful knowing that the dude bros joining Torch will never be as good as me. I'm a legend. They can't step up to my

level.

AZ: Do you think there will be some kind of competition between the new members?

TS: The only competition they have to worry about is with me. We all know they'll never lift like me. Not even close. It's obvious they're just a bunch



of beta males. I'm the alpha around here.

AZ: Despite settling down with the grind, do you have any updates on the lady front?

TS: Of course. Honestly, I'm offended you didn't ask earlier, but I'm no snowflake. My entourage has basically turned into a cult. They love me. I don't

love them. It works out.

AZ: Do you have a favorite member of your cult?

TS: The best member of the cult is me. Subjectively.

AZ: Do you mean objectively?

TS: I don't do vocab. It's not important enough compared to how buff I am.

AZ: Right... Has there been any updates to the Terry Shen Playlist™?

TS: David Goggins inspirational speeches, and Zyzz motivation. Helps me during the workouts. It's like protein for your ears.

AZ: Protein for your ears! What a sensation. Thank you so much Mr. Shen, I appreciate you taking the time to do this interview with me. I've learned a lot. On a final note, is there anything you want to leave the readers with?

TS: Yeah. For sure.

AZ: That's amazing, thank you for the inspirational words.

TS: Mhm.

AZ: Goodbye, Mr. Shen.



PHOTOS BY ALY ZALESKI

## A Tragedy of ‘Grad’ Proportions

by **Lindsay Luberecki**  
Assistant News Editor

1:00 pm — This is the greatest day of my life! All the work, all the horribleness of high school is finally culminating in this very moment — my graduation day. The ceremony starts soon, and I cannot wait. I’m all dressed up in my cap and gown, and I’m going to meet all of my friends beforehand so that we can take lots of pictures. Nothing, and I mean nothing, could make this day go wrong. I even stayed up late last night decorating my cap like a scrapbook, with glitter and sequins and a bunch of my favorite photos of my friends and me. Hours of work and half a bottle of glue later, it was finally done. I’m thinking that I’ll hang it on my wall after today, so that I can remember it forever.

5:30 pm — Things are going so well, it’s uncanny. We’re here at the Van Wezel and all sitting together, and I’m just so proud of everyone! My parents and grandparents are here, as well as all my annoying cousins. Today is the one day that I’ll tolerate seeing them. It’s just so nice to see everyone and, for once in my life, to have a whole day about celebrating just me. I’m looking around, and I can see faces of excitement and smiles. Camera flashes catch my attention out of the corner of my eye, and I can hear lots of chatter and laughter. The room

is buzzing with the anticipation of what’s to come.

5:46 pm — It’s almost time for us to toss our caps. I’ve always seen this in movies, and I bet it’s going to be just as magical as it seems! The cheering, the laughing, everyone doing one final high school tradition together. It’s just perfect. The excitement in the room is almost palpable, even more so than before.

not have also thrown everything else I brought with me. These belongings included: Chapstick, a keychain...oh yeah, and my car keys themselves, my phone, and my wallet. As I let go of that cap, it was like slow motion, as I saw everything valuable that I own fly up into the chaos with it. Everyone else is hugging each other and crying. I’m crying too, but for an entirely different reason. Getting stuck underneath chairs was not my idea of a celebration.

6:15 pm — Well, I spent pretty much the rest of the ceremony looking for all of my stuff, and to no avail. All I gained from the experience was many new bruises, a headache, and a lot of tears on my gown. My friends and I had this whole plan to go out to eat at this insanely fancy restaurant and celebrate the biggest night of our life so far. I had to cancel, you know, because I now have absolutely no money to my name. I can’t call or text anyone, and I can’t drive myself home or anywhere else. I’ll have to say goodbye to my peaceful morning car rides with nothing but me, coffee, and music for a while. And tonight, I guess I’ll have to sit in the middle seat of my parents’ car in shame, listening to my cousins fight and throw things at each other while I try to get off the mascara tearstains under my eyes.

**A Final Word** — Let this serve as a warning to all of you who are excited for your graduation. Make sure that you’re mindful of what’s in your hands. Don’t throw away everything valuable you own. It could end badly.

GRAPHIC BY LINDSAY LUBERECKI



6:02 pm — This is the worst day of my life. I’m currently on the floor of the Van Wezel crawling underneath seats and dodging people’s feet. Why, may you ask? Well, when I threw that godforsaken cap into the air, I may or may

## Aly’s Average Advice

*“I want soda and chocolate milk in the water fountains.” -Mark Schroeter*



by **Aly Zaleski**  
Humor Editor

For the senior edition of the Torch, I’ve taken it upon myself to do my column this cycle on the request of a sophomore.

Now, listen, everyone loves soda. Everyone loves chocolate milk. That’s the obvious choice. I think this is a little boring, to be quite honest with you. You know what isn’t? Mixing them.

For my first piece of advice, I think chocolate milk soda is the move. I mean, you can make carbonated chocolate milk. It’s just as disturbing but I don’t know. It doesn’t have the same ring. Thinking about what specific sodas to mix it with is a tricky one.

On one hand, Sprite would be good to keep the flavor neutral, but at the same time, chocolate milk flavored fanta sounds like the move. Administration will be so absolutely appalled that they’ll have no choice but to approve

your request. Disgust is a very good motivator. Trust me. I would know

Yeah, I know the thought of chocolate milk soda is horrendous. I guess if you’re too boring to understand my genius, we can do something different. Next, I say you do it yourself. If you want a job done right, you have to do it yourself, right? Just bring in a few jugs of chocolate milk and some liter bottles of soda. Separately this time. If you can maneuver your way inside the water fountains and fill them, good on you. Don’t put in too much, though. Keep it a limited time experience.

Alright, you can’t mix them and you can’t sneak in jugs of chocolate milk. What’s next? I’ll tell you what’s next. Drink water. Stop being chronically online. What, you can’t just drink water? Is basic health not good enough for you? Next it’s going to be coffee and energy drinks. This has gone too far. I am so incredibly tired of you guys. All of you. I’ve been giving you guys advice all year and this is what I get? Now you can’t even drink water? I’m done spoon feeding the entire student body.

I think this is going to be it from me. No, really, this is my goodbye. I really won’t miss you guys at all. I hope you’ve all enjoyed my advice this year. I sure haven’t. Much love.

*“I don’t care about your cataract.” -Alyssandra Zaleski*

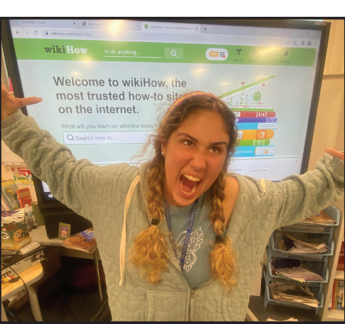
## Top Five Most Useful Wikihows


by **Grace Johnson**  
Editor-in-Chief

Ever feel in need of advice? Instructions? The secrets of the universe? Not me, thanks to Wikihow. In just a few masterfully-illustrated steps, Wikihow provides the answers to literally every conceivable question.

As an avid fan and frequenter of the site, I know which specific wikihow articles come in handy the most. I’ve ranked the top 5, each of which, I promise, you will continue to reference for the rest of your life. You’re welcome.

I love WikiHow.






**How to Look Like You Are Pulling Your Thumb Off**

156,285 views  
Updated 1 year ago

**5.**

“Step 4: Bend your right thumb at a 90° angle and lay it on the side of your left hand so that the knuckles of your thumbs are touching.”




**How to Stop Simping in 24 Hours**

3,146 views  
Updated 1 month ago

**4.**

“Step 11: Respect the women in your life.”



**How to Love**

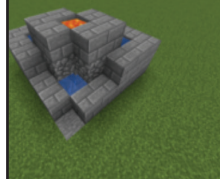
9,746,317 views  
Expert Co-Authored  
Updated 3 weeks ago

**3.**

“Step 7: Accept that you don’t need a partner to feel complete.”

PHOTOS BY LORA RINI

GRAPHICS BY GRACE JOHNSON

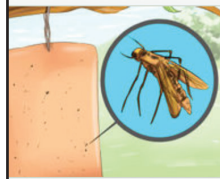


**How to Make a Dual Cobblestone Generator in Minecraft**

49,449 views  
Updated 2 years ago

**2.**

“Step 13: Place the Bucket of lava in the top hole.”

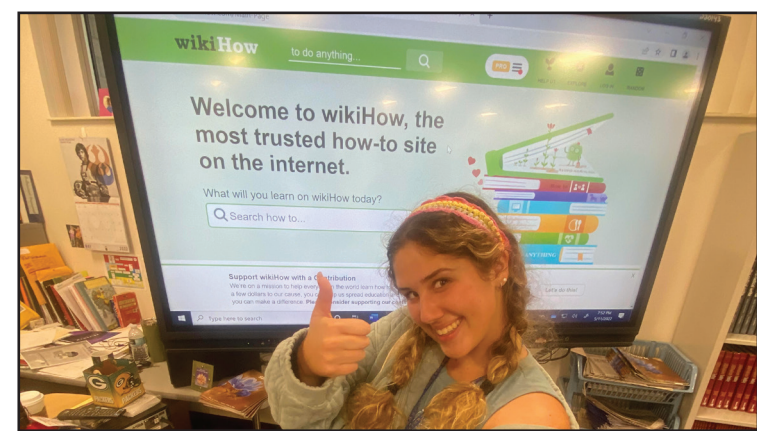


**How to Treat Sweet Itch in Horses**

28,763 views  
Expert Co-Authored  
Updated 1 week ago

**1.**

“Step 2: Administer cortico-steroids.”



## Dear Underclassmen

a letter from Joanna Malvas  
our beloved managing editor

*Dear Underclassmen,*  
Today is Tuesday, April 19. I know that when you are reading this, when this article is published and permanently printed in ink in our last issue of The Torch for the 2021-2022 school year, I will only have a week left of senior year. With that being said, as a graduating senior and soon-to-be college freshman, I urge you as an underclassman to make the most of your time at Pine View. I've spent time reflecting and rewriting this column over and over again in hopes of saying something profound, but I believe that living your high school life to its fullest is one of the best pieces of advice I can give out of my eleven years here at Pine View.

In all honesty, I reached this epiphany after crying on my way home from my last local Speech and Debate tournament while listening to the soundtrack of High School

Musical 3: Senior Year. I left the tournament feeling immensely grateful that after experiencing the feeling of exhilaration from delivering my last few Extemp speeches and crafting @pineviewsd TikToks with the entire team.

After that day, I learned that not every valuable experience or endeavor can be captured by a college resume. Still, do it anyway. Take any opportunity that you can to make memories and trust me when I say that high school flies by quickly. Take the opportunity to step out of your comfort zone and to embarrass yourself in front of the class here and there, to make mistakes and to be bold. You do not want to leave high school without having had any fond experiences and funny pictures to look back on.

On another note, while Pine View pushes us to "go the extra degree" in our aca-

demics and passions, the culture of our campus is quite individualistic. Oftentimes, we become one-track-minded in forging a picture-esque college application through overloading on AP classes and extracurriculars. We get caught up in our own busyness, fostering a high-strung environment that cultivates toxic competition and mental wellbeing. To this, I say, know your limits. Yes, beefing up your college resume is important, but not at the cost of consistently degrading your physical and mental health. This is a lesson that I'm consistently learning in my life. Understand that the number of all-nighters or power study sessions that you pull throughout high school isn't a number to brag about, nor is it going to guarantee you a spot at your dream school. To keep it simple, work smarter, not harder, and learn to prioritize.

As far as practical advice, learn what productivity habits work best for you, such as making a Google Calendar to plan out a schedule for even the simplest of daily tasks. I tend to get distracted easily, so I find facetimeing a study buddy to be extremely helpful. In a weird way, I like to romanticize studying in order to motivate myself. This process looks like keeping my desk area clean or studying at an aesthetic coffee shop on a Sunday morning. Otherwise, associating studying with stress can lead to procrastination, and nobody likes that.

To add on, take advantage of after school hours if your teachers offer that extra time. Again, take advantage of the opportunities around you in order to pass that test (don't be passive about passing, even if you know the subject). For rising juniors and seniors, do listen to Mr. Bergman and try to keep your

email inbox clean. I suggest making a separate email account when applying to college, because my inbox got completely flooded junior year.

Lastly, whether you've been going to Pine View since middle or elementary school, or whether you came to PV recently, just know that being at this school in itself is an achievement and it's a lot to handle. Don't compare yourself to others, as everyone is gifted in their own talents and skills. For example, I can't do math to save my life. Nonetheless, I still survived. Just know that I'm proud of you for making it this far!

Anyways, good luck to all of you; I know that you can survive high school and do great things far beyond our swampy campus.

That's all!

*Signing off as a Torchie for the last time,*  
Joanna Malvas

## The Verdict



**Seniors pursue collegiate arts and sports: We're excited to see what the future holds for the Class of 2022.**



**Free school lunch discontinued: It's unfortunate that universal free school lunch will likely no longer be offered in Sarasota County.**



**Pine View MathWorks team wins big: We're proud of the five students who brought the MathWorks team to international triumph.**

## the Torch

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# Something is better than nothing

## *In defense of mental health modules*

by **Grace Johnson**  
Editor-in-Chief

“Don’t forget we have Advisory today.” Cue the grumbles.

The school day is interrupted to watch mental health modules with objectively poor production quality. The complaints come naturally. We’re all certainly guilty of griping from time to time, but it’s time we all start to catch ourselves.

People complain about the topics being too broad, or the solutions being too simple: “They don’t explain or mention every symptom.” “They act like exercise can cure all mental illness.” “They don’t talk enough about medication as an option.” The list of complaints towards this unidentified “they” is practically infinite. The complaints aren’t completely unfounded, but check the context of the situation— check the privilege surrounding such comments.

Mental health resources are scarce. In October 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry accompanied by the Children’s Hospital Association declared a National Emergency in Child and Adolescent Mental Health. A large part of this is due to the lack of resources

available to address it, especially in the communities that need it the most.

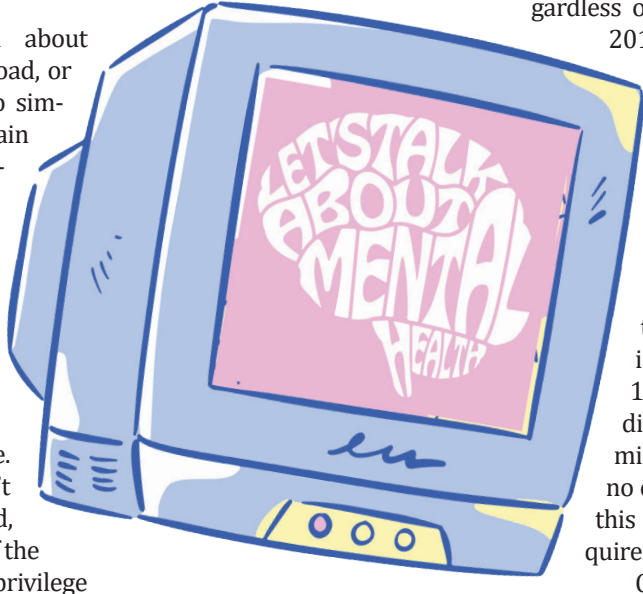
The NIH puts it succinctly: “Not only are resources for mental health scarce, they are also inequitably distributed—between countries, between regions, and within communities. Populations with high rates of socioeconomic

pactful coping mechanism, nor does everyone have access to psychiatrists and medical solutions. Keeping the modules general allows them to reach more people.

After the Parkland shooting in 2018, calls to create a standardized mental health curriculum were coming from every corner of the state, regardless of party lines. In July 2019, the Florida Department of Education granted this wish, requiring school districts to create and mandate 5 hours of mental health education covering specific topics for students in grades six through 12. At the time, school districts were given minimal guidelines and no extra funding to meet this important new requirement.

Constructive criticism is one thing; what we were given is not perfect, but murmuring complaints among friends is not complacent, it’s actively hurting the cause. The calls for mental health education were there for a reason. Just because you might already know the material, does not mean that the person sitting next to you does.

GRAPHIC BY ISABELLA KULAWIK



deprivation have the highest need for mental health care, but the lowest access to it.”

The topics these modules discuss are broad, the solutions they offer are simple— but there’s a reason behind that. Not everyone knows the basic symptoms that accompany common disorders. Not everyone knows that exercise is a highly recommended and im-

# The Edge of Seventeen

by **Alyson Mizanin**  
News Editor

Life is like a rollercoaster. We enter this journey eager to become tall enough, mature enough to experience the big thrills. Once the ride and a good portion of our lives are over, we’d do anything to live it all over again.

So, if life is a rollercoaster, then adolescence is the steady inclination to the top of the ride, the feel of the wind in your hair, the sight of a whole new world unfurling around you — only to get stopped right before the big drop. Anticipation abounds as teenagers await entrance into adulthood, to feel the highs regardless of the lows, the twists in exchange for the turns.

Caught in limbo between childhood and adulthood, it should come as no shock that many teens push the envelope to chase the thrill of nonlegitimate “adulthood.” Adolescent rebellion isn’t anything new; the rulebreakers of the ‘80s and ‘90s became the overprotective parents of today, and modern teens will eventually shift into their parents’ roles. That’s part of the cycle of life — rebelling and then joining the cause.

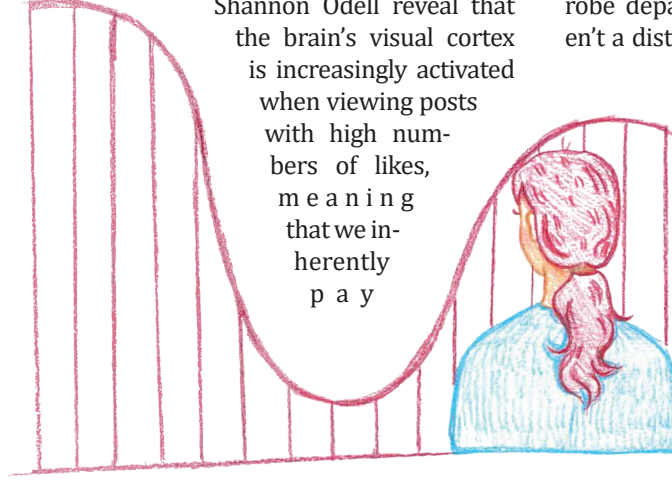
Modern teenage exploration and self-expression, however, has been shaped by

today’s media mediums. In a 2018 study, the National Center for Biotechnology Information found that the average American child signs up for a social media account by age 12 — the peak of awkward adolescence. Upon the creation of their first Instagram and TikTok accounts, these children pick up on the fact that attention in the form of likes, views, and follows comes as an exchange — and teenage awkwardness impedes their involvement in this deal.

Now more than ever, children want to avoid the awkwardness of adolescence because of internet-born “cringe culture,” which is harassment targeted toward people who openly share their unconventional interests. It has evolved into shaming children for being children, both on and offline. Under these beliefs, innocence is humiliating. Naivety is embarrassing. Childhood is something to be ashamed of. Children

are forced to choose between growing up or facing incessant harassment. It’s no shock some choose the former.

It doesn’t help that the most successful teenagers on social media are those that mimic adult behaviors. MRI scans shared by neuroscientist Shannon Odell reveal that the brain’s visual cortex is increasingly activated when viewing posts with high numbers of likes, meaning that we inherently pay



more attention to these posts — and children consume this type of content more frequently as their internet accessibility increases.

Seeing how teenage influencers succeed, young audiences turn to cosmetic, wardrobe, and behavioral changes to attract the same attention their idols get. This relationship is defined by late Stanford psychology professor Albert Ban-

# Tiffany’s Epiphanies

## *Goodbyes and see you later*

As the school year comes to a close, the arrival of the new freshman class and the departure of the seniors becomes increasingly palpable with each passing day. Over the course of the past school year, I’ve been struggling to come to terms with the fact that there’ll be a day when I walk this campus and there’ll no longer be students in the grades above me — people that I regard to be some of my closest friends and inspirations. It’s beyond difficult to grasp that I will soon have to assume the role of the “senior friend” — a guide to those in the grades below me.

However, graduation is loss on a small scale. People tend to exaggerate the idea of their upperclassmen friends leaving — many of whom stay in state for college and return for the holidays. It’s innate that people will always find their ways back to each other if there is a will. Even if there is a loss of communication, that friendship never really goes away; the lessons and memories are lasting.

I don’t intend to let go of my friends, but if we drift, I hope I’ve imparted something of value onto them as they have onto me.

Loss and temporariness are parts of life; they are what create the connections we have with each other. The idea that



**Tiffany Yu**  
Opinion Editor

there is limited time, and that companionship in any capacity is temporary — that’s what drives us to love and spend time with each other.

Life isn’t stagnant; you’re always meeting new people, making new experiences. It’s especially true during the transition from high school to college, let alone the entire span of your adolescence. We’re constantly learning, loving, and growing.

As you lose people, you must come to terms with the fact that there are silver linings; losing them doesn’t negate the time you spent together. Regardless of it all, I will still be bawling my eyes out at this year’s graduation. Knowing what I do now, I’ll allow myself to be sad, devastated, angry — but just for a bit. Whether it’s goodbye or a see you later, I know it’s all for something.

dura’s social cognitive theory, which posits that observation is a key part of shaping behavior.

In a 2016 study, market research company Mintel found that one in seven American children aged 12 to 14 wore makeup for the sole purpose of looking older. As for the wardrobe department, preteens aren’t a distinct market anymore.

Tween-oriented clothing and makeup chains like Justice and Claire’s have been shutting their physical doors since pre-pandemic times. Once they reach middle school, adolescents have two distinct apparel pathways: child or adult-oriented. Seeking approval both on and offline, adolescents choose the latter, donning particular types of clothes for the sake of “fitting in.”

Doctoral psychology and neuroscience student Leon Li found in a 2021 study that by age three, children value fitting in over personal preference. That desire to “fit in” — and effectively avoid ostracization and bullying — is the crux of

this issue: teenagers are being pressured into abandoning their awkward phases in favor of dangerously embracing mature behavior at a young age.

When young adulthood is interpreted through the lens of modern media, some may feel inadequate — as though “average” experiences aren’t enough when compared with the exploitation and overdramatization of teen experiences portrayed elsewhere. But beyond the universal uncertainty that occurs during this time, teenagehood can’t be defined in merely one way.

Adolescence is a growing pain. Giving it up to chase internet-born pipe dreams only causes more suffering. To live as oneself — regardless of whether this aligns with the portrayals of teenage existence in media — is the sole route to truly finding oneself.

Be embarrassing. Make mistakes. Stay in. Go out. Do what you want — not because you’re living a fantasy created by media, but because you’re living your own life. You’re somewhere near 17 — the experiences you have now will be ones you look back on in 5, 10, 15 years. Let them be ones you can laugh at instead of regretting.

GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

## Caption Contest



PHOTO BY GRACE JOHNSON

**Congratulations to last issue's winner, tenth-grader Naomi Dale**

*"ultimate nerds."*

## Good talk with Grace *Last Column*



by Grace Johnson  
Editor-in-Chief

When my college decisions were finalized and it became clear I'd be in California for the next four years, my mom started crying. I mean, I'm moving across the country in four months. I'm leaving literally everything I know; I'll be thousands of miles and three time zones away from everyone I love. It's a big change.

But, it's not a big loss, even though change can often feel that way. As we approach the end of the school year, we're all facing change. Each individual decides how they'll approach change. Why dwell on what you're losing, when you can view change through the lens of what you're gaining?

Speaking of gaining with change, I am so excited to introduce you to The Torch's next Editor-in-Chief: Alyson Mizanin.

Alyson is a confident,

hilarious, and hardworking staff-member, friend, and storyteller. She's visibly passionate about journalism and there is no doubt in my mind that she will improve this paper with every change she makes. There is so much to look forward to as Alyson takes the helm of The Torch.

Thank you for having me as your Torch Editor-in-Chief this year, Pine View. I am endlessly grateful for the last four years on this staff. Joining Torch was undoubtedly the greatest decision I made in high school. I've changed, grown, and gained so much.

Though change is inevitable, so are certain constants. I'm thankful that, through the change we've all experienced in the last few years, The Torch has been a constant. The staff-members change, the paper itself changes, but the uplifting spirit of the publication and the Pine View community remains.



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