

theTorch



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Vol XXXVII, Issue IV

PVTorch.com

Thursday, May 15, 2025

U.S. Senate Youth goes to Washington D.C.

by Timothy Nesanelis
Asst. Match Editor-in-Chief

As the final dinner of the annual U.S. Senate Youth Program (USSYP) neared its end, the chamber of The Mayflower Hotel's ballroom roared with applause for senior Terry Shen as he stepped up to the podium.

From across the United States, 104 students gathered in Washington D.C. to learn the ins and outs of American leadership and politics. For Shen, it wasn't just a week in the capital, it was an incredible experience he will never forget.

After hearing about the program in 2023, he chose to apply for the 2024 edition as a junior, but with only two selected participants from Florida, the process was inherently competitive.

"They have to write an essay, they have to get a teacher recommendation and a club sponsor recommendation, and their principal has to sign off saying 'yes, I recommend this student,'" said Barbara Cook, the Florida Department of Education's K-8 Social

Studies Specialist. "If they qualify in the top ten, then they come up to Tallahassee to do an interview in front of a panel of four judges."

In 2024, Shen was overjoyed to be selected as a backup alternate for the program, but he was determined to make it in as a full-fledged participant. A year and another round of applications later, he received the news.

"I was so excited to finally get that call. It really was such a huge moment for me because I worked so hard for it over the past two years," Shen said.

From March 1-8, 2025, delegates had the exclusive opportunities to hear from former USSYP alumni, speak with multiple current government officials, and visit the Supreme Court and the White House. Shen even helped introduce Secretary of State Marco Rubio before a luncheon in the Department of State building.

However, he found the most riveting part of the program's "Washington Week" to be his fellow delegates, many



Senior Terry Shen gives a speech to his fellow US Senate Youth attendees. Shen passed a rigorous application process to spend a week in March learning about politics in Washington D.C. PHOTO BY JAKUB MASUR AND ERIN LUBIN

of whom he has stayed in contact with.

"The connections that you make and the friendships that transpired because of that week last your entire lifetime ... they all have bright futures, I'm sure of it," Shen said.

At the end of the program comes the final test, an election amongst the delegates to decide one male and one female to deliver a farewell address.

In an exciting race, Shen and Pennsylvanian delegate Anjali Verma were voted by their fellow peers to represent the whole group.

"So it took a lot of us to get him to run at all — he was hes-

itant at first but I knew he'd be great," said Landon Resendes, Rhode Island delegate and Shen's "Washington Week" roommate, "...I had the pleasure of introducing him during the farewell address and the delegation was extremely excited for him to step on stage and give his farewell address."

From his week in the nation's capital, Shen is taking back a newfound hope for the future of the United States and for people with opposing views to have a sincere conversation with each other.

"In this world, we're often superficial, just looking at the surface level, but if you look deeper, you'll realize that

seemingly opponents are a lot more similar to you than you might think," Shen said.

Now committed to Stanford University, Shen credits his family and Pine View for helping him get to this point. He hopes his experiences in civic programs inspires everybody to take a chance on themselves and vie for every opportunity they can.

"I look back at the things that I did, and I wonder what if I hadn't done Boy's State or the Senate Youth Program, or what if I had just limited myself and thought that I couldn't get it," Shen said. "Well, you don't know unless you try."



PHOTO BY AVA LENERZ

Beloved Teacher Retires

by Ava Lenerz
Match Editor-in-Chief

Wholesome. Kind-hearted. Energetic. Compassionate. Relatable. These are just a few of the words middle school science teacher David Yotsuda's advisory class used to describe him.

This year marks Yotsuda's 29th year as a staple in the Pine View community. After a long legacy of making students feel welcome and cared for in his classroom, he is ready to retire.

Surprisingly, at the beginning of his career, Yotsuda

planned to go into accounting. After realizing it wasn't right for him, he changed course and started teaching.

Fortunately, he wasn't going in blind.

"I actually had some experience at the community college that I attended for a couple years in the tutorial center," Yotsuda said, "so that kind of gave me an idea of what teaching was like."

Coming from Hawaii, he first moved to the western United States but disliked the weather, which led him to Sarasota, Florida.

He was a long-term substitute his first year at Pine View and got a permanent position the following year. He has been at Pine View ever since, where he has taught a broad range of classes, from sixth grade Earth and Space Science to AP Environmental Science.

The seniors in his advisory class have had him every year since eighth grade, and the impression he's left on them is clear from just a short conversation.

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The History of Max's Table
Discover the unique history and family ties of one of Osprey's favorite restaurants

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Beloved Middle School Teacher Retires



Continued from front page

Senior EllaRose Sherman spearheaded a plan to throw him a surprise party during the last advisory class of the year.

"He decided that he would wait one more year for our class to graduate so he could see us all the way through. So, that's an incredibly special decision to make, I really appreciate him for that, and that deserves some cake," Sherman said.

Last year, Yotsuda experienced some health problems, with many people expecting him to retire then. However, he decided to stay for multiple reasons, including seeing his advisory students graduate.

"[He sees] the big picture. You're not just in his room for a year, he sees you as his students, even though you are tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade," Marie Rosander, his long-time coworker and friend, said.

His advisory students spoke very highly of him, highlighting his passion and

dedication. Senior Benjamin Buurma discussed having him during a difficult year for students and faculty alike—the Covid year.

"Some of my other teachers, there would be a clear, distinct difference between online kids and in-person kids, but he always made me feel welcome," Buurma said.

This exemplifies who Yotsuda is. He is a caring and motivated teacher who constantly puts in effort to relate to his students.

"He makes it a class that I enjoy coming to and, just like the way that he engages with us," said fellow advisory student Jiayi Zhu. "He's one of the most genuine teachers I've ever known."

Yotsuda's impact isn't just felt by his students, but also his colleagues.

Rosander recalled many projects she worked on with Yotsuda including The Star Lab, Ethan's Garden, and the HAM Radio club.

"He's just one of those people, you have a problem, he will fix it," Rosander said. "We

go out to the garden and do a scavenger hunt, and he brings his big scissors and starts cutting down [overgrown] bushes."

The care he puts into his classes and the knowledge of the subject is apparent to his coworkers and students.

"His love of science is remarkable, and his knowledge

base, I mean, I could ask him anything. If he doesn't know, he finds out, but he knows," said Marybeth Maiello, another Pine View science teacher he has befriended.

Being one of the longest-standing teachers at Pine View, Yotsuda has seen the many positive aspects of the school.

"Students could be unique. Nobody really looked down [on] and disrespected other students, as well as faculty. Yotsuda said, "The one thing about this campus is it has always promoted everybody being accepted. I think that really makes Pine View unique."

He loves the "good crazy" that goes on around campus and will miss the interaction with students, but he is excited for what retirement will bring.

"I'm hoping if I can get my

passport, which is in the process now... I finally can maybe take a trip to either Europe or Alaska," Yotsuda said.

Through personal anecdotes and jokes, he has managed to inspire generations of students. Yotsuda is a testament to the notion that it is the teacher and not the subject that makes a class meaningful.

"He taught us more than what advisory could have ever actually taught us, and a lot about gratitude and about finding what's important to you in life," Sherman said.

So, in Yotsuda's time here he did what all teachers strive for — he made learning enjoyable.

A cake that reads "We love you Mr. Y!" rests on display at David Yotsuda's retirement party. The party was organized by EllaRose Sherman in an effort to celebrate Yotsuda's leadership.



During their final advisory class, seniors in Yotsuda's advisory class pose for a photo. These students first started in Yotsuda's class as eighth graders. PHOTOS BY AVA LENERZ

College and Career Center Assistant Retires



PHOTO BY TERRY SHEN

by Terry Shen
Managing Editor

Visitors of the College and Career Center are often greeted by the familiar and friendly face of Career Advisor for Middle School Laura Van Horne.

To seniors, she is known as someone who offers advice for college applications and beyond. Her contributions — from speaking on everything from current events to reminiscing on her college experi-

ences and providing advice — have truly made a difference.

Van Horne began her Pine View journey in 2020. Her first role was in the Student Union, where she served elementary schoolers in the lunch line. After working there, she applied for a secretarial position in guidance. Now, she works in the College and Career Center, advising middle school students with tasks such as navigating SchoolLinks.

Aside from preparing middle school students for their futures, Van Horne also assists college counselor Lance Bergman and AP Coordinator and College and Career Advisor Dr. Lori Wiley in their roles, from scheduling meetings to answering phone calls.

"[I create] spreadsheets for Mr. Bergman just so he can keep track of who's going to

what school... for the students coming up in the next couple of years, he can give them more knowledgeable advice," Van Horne said.

Wiley, whose office sits just a few steps away from Van Horne's desk, described an "all-for-one" mentality about how the three work together. On Halloween, for example, they all dressed up with Barbie-inspired outfits.

Wiley described her as "attentive, kind, and ready for whatever."

As a gift for her, Wiley gave her a countdown clock, signaling the number of days left until her retirement — even down to the minute.

Van Horne hopes to continue her love for crafting after her time at Pine View. This passion has brought her to knitting and quilting cruises,

es, which are cruises that give travelers arts and craft opportunities.

"Going to a weaving factory and going to a bead factory and things that are of interest to knitters—I like those types of trips because you go with like-minded people," Van Horne said.

On these cruises, she has traveled to as far as New Zealand and she plans on traveling between Wisconsin and Florida in retirement.

As the countdown clock on her desk slowly ticks down, Van Horne hopes graduating students remember that "this is just the beginning of so many opportunities ... because of your experience here at Pine View, you'll know not to limit yourself, because the sky's the limit."

Statistically Significant Teacher Retires

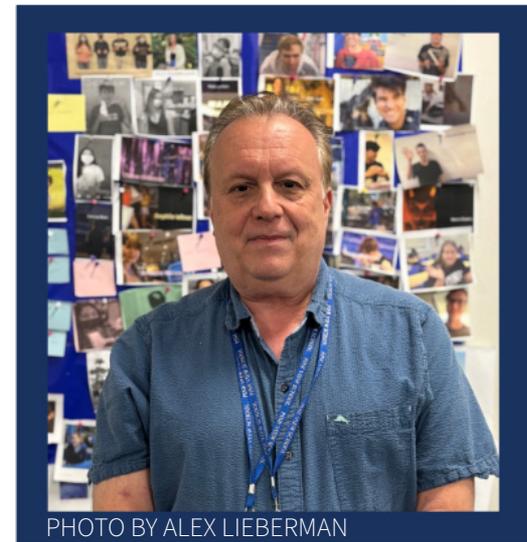


PHOTO BY ALEX LIEBERMAN

by Alex Lieberman
Sci&Tech Editor

Beloved math teacher and Math Modeling Club (M3) sponsor Dr. Mark Mattia will be concluding his time at Pine View after teaching for a decade at the school. He spent

his first year as a substitute and then became a full-time teacher, focusing on Statistics while teaching Discrete Mathematics for a few years.

After retiring, Mattia will move into a new home and continue work on a book about rock music he has been writing for the last seven years. In autumn, he plans to take a vacation to Asia, and starting some time in 2026, he hopes to teach at a local university.

Mattia remarked on the brilliancy of his students and

mentioned that he was frequently impressed by their knowledge.

Conversely, he said, "I hope to impart some of my skills onto them; mostly what I try to do is prepare them for the next step. Even as much as prepare them for the content [of exams], I try to get them ready for the next thing that's coming."

He emphasized that his subject is significant to career preparedness.

"I'm in a unique position here because Statistics applies everywhere. It's not some obscure thing that only an engineer would use," Mattia said.

He mentioned that he had so many favorite memories from teaching but recalled one in particular.

"I had a student in 2017

that once, seriously, asked me why it took me so long to solve a discrete math problem when he only took a minute or two, and it took me six or seven. And I responded to him that some of us were 'mere mortals' and he was 'godlike.'"

Another highlight he remembers was his students winning the international Math Modeling competition in 2020.

Devin Gulliver, who graduated last year and now attends Carleton College, retains many fond memories of the club, which he was a part of junior and senior year. He explained that the team would have around 14 hours to design, construct, evaluate, and write up a model for a real-world problem.

"It was my first exposure

to a lot of stuff I'm doing today in college... and I wouldn't have had that experience without his [Mattia's] mentorship," Gulliver said.

He mentioned that his friends in Mattia's classes kept a journal of the most quotable things he said.

"My personal favorite of those [was] Dr. Mattia arriving slightly late to his own class and saying 'How could I be tardy? That's like saying God sinned,'" Gulliver said.

Throughout his time at Pine View, Mattia has worked with intellectual students like Gulliver, taken his club to new heights, and learned a lesson.

"I think what I take away is that ... the more you know, the more you have to learn," Mattia said.

New College Expansion

by Ana Easter
Match Asst. Editor

Under President Richard Corcoran, The New College of Florida (NCF) has entered what its administration calls a "transformative era," marked by rapid growth. The campus spans 110 acres and is in close proximity with two larger institutions: The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art and the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee (USFSM). NCF is now pushing a plan to take over both.

The Ringling is currently operated by Florida State University (FSU) while USFSM serves as a regional campus within USF. Combined, these two institutions employ over 500 faculty and staff members and serve as key pillars in the Sarasota community.

As part of its expansion strategy, NCF has proposed assuming control of these institutions. This plan has received praise from college leadership and administration, but also sharp criticism from faculty, donors, and members of the local community.

The Ringling has a staff of 229 FSU employees and operates on more than \$9 million annually in labor costs alone, supported by the museum's \$50 million endowment managed by the FSU Foundation. NCF's entire endowment is comparable to that of the Ringling at roughly \$50 million, and the campus lacks space and resources.

"Our biggest challenge

right now is that we have very, very little space. You know, there's really a shortage of space for faculty offices, lab space, and classroom space," said Dr. Sarah Hernandez, a professor of Sociology at NCF.

The proposal, that would end the 25 year partnership between The Ringling and FSU, has received criticism from a number of former trustees, board chairs, and donors who organized a group known as "Citizens to Protect The Ringling." This group argues that NCF lacks the infrastructure to run the 66-acre institution, which includes the historic Ca' d'Zan, the Circus Museum, and the Asolo Repertory Theatre.

In a letter to The Ringling patrons, FSU alumni, locals, and visitors; the organization denounced the proposal calling it "a waste of taxpayer resources to disrupt a proven Florida State University-Ringling partnership that has delivered significant benefits to our students, state and local community." In their letter, the group warned that the transfer could disrupt donor agreements and academic partnerships.

The other half of NCF's expansion plan involves taking over the USFSM campus next door. Internal documents proposed full stewardship of the 32 acre campus. Although NCF would be assuming control over the campus, it is the smaller of the two institutions, having enrolled 50 percent fewer students in fall 2023. Faculty at USFSM are con-

cerned with the possible takeover.

"We are dedicated to our campus. We've put in a lot of work to develop our programs and developed the campus into what it is and it's not something that we would want to change in that way," said a professor at USFSM who requested anonymity out of fear of losing her job for speaking out. "They're very different schools, they have very different missions. I have trouble seeing how the two may be combined."

Despite concerns from faculty and donors, Corcoran has confidence in the campus' expansion.

"This transition is not only sensible, it is a collective win" he said in an article published by the Sarasota Observer.

Corcoran said that claiming ownership of The Ringling will "ensure the museum's legacy remains deeply intertwined with Sarasota's cultural and educational future," while the USFSM campus will "offer an inspiring environment for learning, collaboration, and community building," as written in an email to NCF faculty.

Despite this confidence, no formal legislation has yet been filed, leaving faculty at both NCF and

USFSM in a state of uncertainty.

"All we know is that there's a proposal coming forward, and we have no idea what that means," Hernandez said.

The USFSM professor felt similarly, "It's a very stressful time now for our faculty and students with so much uncertainty."

In a document published by WUSF, Corcoran claimed that "USF will be able to reallocate resources to research endeavors and areas of growth on its Tampa and St. Petersburg campuses," however, with the uncertainty surrounding the topic, faculty are concerned for their jobs.

"It's hard not to worry, even though there's nothing concrete yet," the USFSM professor said.

Hernandez suggests that greater transparency and collaboration could have reduced the tension faculty are facing. Some faculty believe the administration could have eased tensions by involving them

earlier.

"There could be a really nice approach if they could have brought both bodies of the faculty in conversation and develop some really nice opportunities," Hernandez said, "It could be very good and increase options in educational opportunities for students."

With so much uncertainty surrounding the issue, NCF's expansion remains a controversial topic among faculty and members of the community. Until lawmakers act on the plan, debate over NCF's expansion — and the future of two Sarasota campuses — is likely to continue.

“Ensure the museum’s legacy remains deeply intertwined with Sarasota’s cultural and educational future”

Richard Corcoran, President of The New College of Florida

The Ca'd'Zan stands high at Ringling Museum. The historic Ca'd'Zan has been a point of contention among those who have voiced their argument that Florida State University should remain in control of the museum. PHOTO PROVIDED BY THE JOHN AND MABLE RINGLING MUSEUM OF ART



Thursday, May 15, 2025

Pine View Senior Commits to the United States Air Force

Six-year enlistment offers cyber training and continuing a family legacy

by Robyn Schoenburg
Co News Editor



THE F-15E STRIKE EAGLE IS A TWO-SEAT FIGHTER-BOMBER. UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY GRADUATES MAY SERVE AS ITS PILOT OR WEAPONS OFFICER, CONDUCTING MISSIONS IN THIS AIRCRAFT.

The U.S. Air Force aims to enlist almost 40,000 people annually. This year, Pine View senior David Gagliardo will be one of them.

Gagliardo is following in the footsteps of his family: his dad served in the Air Force, and his brother served in the Navy. He has been interested in the military since he was a kid, but over the past year it has become a more serious prospect.

"It's a big moving on, next level, next step kind of thing that's setting me up," Gagliardo said. "I don't know what I want to major in for college, and I don't want to just sit around and do nothing. So, I figured this would be a good way to get me on my feet, get me a solid real job, and just keep momentum."

During the application process, Gagliardo met with a recruiter and partook in multiple levels of assessment including aptitude testing and physical and mental screenings. Through it all, Gagliardo's close friend Evan Rollings Zepponi saw his determination firsthand.

"He's been a trooper already," Rollings Zepponi said. "David's extremely hardworking when it comes to stuff outside of school. He keeps himself busy more than anything, and he was really good at persevering through stuff and putting a lot of time and effort into things [that] he thinks are worthwhile."

After this process, Gagliardo was given a list of jobs for which he was eligible and chose his top picks. This August, he will start in a cy-

ber-tech-

nology position. He looks forward to "moving on and seeing cool places, like, maybe I can go to like Korea or Japan, there's a lot of really cool overseas places."

Gagliardo signed a six-year contract with the Air Force and is open to what the future holds—whether that means getting a degree or continuing his service until retirement.

"I think he's really going to make it far. I think he

was pretty much built for this," Rollings Zepponi said. "He's really rough around the edges. He's good with pushing people around and getting pushed around. I think it would be a really good place for him, it will be a nice little rough house."



PHOTO BY ALLIE CHUNG

Student graduates early to jump-start her career

by Madelyn Bailey
Humor Editor

In the history of Pine View, only about 10 students have chosen to graduate in fewer than four years. Current senior Joy Jia is one of them. Originally set to graduate with the Class of 2026, she will now receive her diploma alongside the Class of 2025.

Jia began the process of graduating early at the start of the school year. It was a "spur-of-the-moment" decision, made largely so she could apply to colleges sooner, but she has stayed with the plan to jump-start her career.

"There are a lot of career paths that take a long time to go through, and I feel like graduating early does give me a little bit of a head start on that," Jia said.

Jia hopes to become a doctor, a path that requires an extra four years of medical school and several years of training afterward, compared with most careers that require only a four-year degree.

Soon after becoming a senior, Jia realized she had to catch up with her new peers, rushing to complete service hours and finish the college application process. According to college advisor Lance Berg-

man, "There's still on students who are chronologically, maybe not intellectually or developmentally, but chronologically 16/17, and that's a risk," Bergman said.

To avoid that risk, Bergman believes ambitious Pine View students can find the rigor they want in the courses already offered on campus.

"There's still enough for them to do here academically, so they don't run out of that idea that the reason I want to go is because I've outgrown Pine View ... The level of discourse in a classroom here is greater than it is at UF [University of Florida] at the undergraduate level" Bergman said.

In addition to the wide range of academic offerings at Pine View, Bergman believes one of the greatest advantages of staying a Python is the community fostered here.

"When I see you guys outside hanging out, and somebody's playing an oboe,

or somebody's reciting poetry, and I'm like, I went to 13 schools in 12 years, not one of the schools I attended did that happen," Bergman said.

Bergman, of course, recognizes the advantages of graduating early for those who choose to do so.

"It's an accomplishment in the sense that they've gone, they've set a goal, they've attained that goal, and then they're going to move on," Bergman said.

For students still considering an early departure, Jia recommends thinking through their options and motives carefully.

"If you just want to get out of high school but you

don't really have any reason, I would suggest staying in high school and figuring out what you want to do for college and exploring more clubs and extracurriculars," Jia said. "If you just really want to graduate early because you have a career in mind, then I say go for it."

“There’s a lot of career paths that take a long time to go through... and I feel like graduating early does give me a little bit of a head start on that”

Joy Jia, senior



PHOTO BY MADELYN BAILEY

man, this is a disadvantage faced by any student who graduates early and may set them back when they apply to colleges.

"From the university standpoint, they're taking a chance, as they always do,

Senior Maintains Her Community Service Dedication at West Point

by Jakob Roche
Opinion Editor

Consistently ranked among the top schools nationally, West Point has highly competitive admissions. Its application process is unique compared to other schools, as students must meet certain eligibility requirements before they are an official candidate for admission. Senior Ava Michalopoulos was initially introduced to West Point through her brother, who came to her after he attended a military academy fair. Michalopoulos began her application journey during her junior year.

Before she got to the more traditional parts of the application, she had to undergo a battery of physical tests. "It's all things: How fast can you run a mile? How

many push-ups can you do? How many steps can you do?," she said.

However, physical ability is not the only thing that West Point considers, explained local West Point Admissions Field Officer Martin Bowling.

"The first thing I look at is their academic qualifications," Bowling said, "I'm looking at GPA, and I'm looking at

to be considered. This nomination can be given by either the district's Congressman, the state Senator, or the US Vice President. Michalopoulos applied for nomination for all three and was ultimately nominated by Congressman Greg Steube.

By comparison, the other college applications she filled out seemed rather short.

"After I was done with all this, I applied to FSU and used the Common App. And I just remember I was like, 'Done already?'" she said.

After this months-long process, Michalopoulos finally heard back from West Point — she got in.

"I accepted it immediately, like within the hour," Michalopoulos said, "I could not imagine myself anywhere else."

While she hasn't always wanted to go into the military, Michalopoulos found that she shares many values with West Point.

"Throughout high school, I've always been really dedicated to service ... I realized how much I had in common with the values of West Point," Michalopoulos said.

She's done extensive

"She's a very caring person, and she wants to help people," Bowling said, "Her work with the Boys and Girls Club has been really, really special at the national level."

"I remember him coming home and telling me how much he thinks I would like it and that I should look into it," Michalopoulos said, "And so I did."

At West Point, she'll go on the pre-med track, going on to medical school. After she finishes med school, she hopes to become an Army surgeon.

"She was interested, very dedicated, and she was determined," Bowling said, "And she did it."



West Point admissions officer Martin Bowling (center) stands between Pine View seniors Ava Michalopoulos (second from left) and Christine Wu (second from right) during a reception in Naples, FL.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY MARTIN BOWLING

work on service projects, one example being a project to increase the teen voting population through the Boys and Girls Club.

I could not imagine myself anywhere else."
Ava Michalopoulos senior

the standardized test scores."

So, after sending in test scores and a transcript, Michalopoulos was ready for the next phase of her application: congressional nomination.

A nomination is required in order for applicants

THE ROAD TO WEST POINT

In 1802, the United States established its first military academy, West Point. The academy and its graduates have since played an integral part in the nation's history, with its states mission: "To build, educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets to be commissioned leaders of character committed to the Army values and ready for a lifetime of service to the Army and nation."

Senior Continues A Military Legacy through Her West Point Commitment

by Jiayi Zhu
Editor-in-Chief



Christine Wu pauses at West Point's Trophy Point after earning a congressional nomination and letter of assurance. She will join the Class of 2029 as a life-science major on the Army Medical Service Corps track.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTINE WU

After a months-long application process involving physical training, interviews, and dedication, senior Christine Wu is on the path to becoming a leader of character at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Wu plans on majoring in life science.

The West Point admissions officer for congressional district 17, Martin Bowling, works with all West Point applicants in the district and helps them through the process.

Bowling usually receives

three to five pages of resumé from students. Wu immediately stood out in the applicant pool.

"So, for Christine, I got the most pages of any candidate I've ever had. She sent me eight pages. And all of it was very interesting, good things," Bowling said. "I've never seen anybody that could do so much in a 24 hour period."

Wu spent a majority of the summer preparing for the physical exam, which was one of the biggest challenges. Due to her qualifications, Wu quickly received a prestigious letter of assurance, meaning she was guaranteed admittance if she received a congressional nomination.

"It felt really good... I was really excited when I got it," Wu

said.

Although Wu notes that West Point wasn't something she was set on for all of high school, her mother's service piqued Wu's interest. West Point's commitment to character development and discipline was also important.

"What really got me interested is [my mom] went to a military school in China, and... she was a nurse in the military. So that kind of inspired me a little bit, and she has a lot of benefits from being in the army still, to this day," Wu said.

After conducting interviews and successfully receiving a congressional nomination, Wu committed to West Point with the hopes of serving in the Army Medical Service Corps. Wu wishes to become a neurosurgeon or plastic surgeon as well as pursuing her interest in military intelligence.

"I think that being an American in the military, it's

very honorable to serve the country, and I would definitely be interested [in joining] the army or military. I think that going to a school like [West Point] would make it easier for the transition from civilian life to being in the military," Wu said.

Beyond committing herself to service, Wu is also excited to meet new like-minded people and live close to family in New York in the next four years.

"It's definitely a lot different from your regular college. So, it would be interesting to experience that and add that experience to my life," Wu said.



A HUMVEE, A VEHICLE USED DURING CADET FIELD TRAINING, SUPPORTING TROOP MOVEMENTS AND LIGHT-CARGO MISSIONS, ROLLS ACROSS WEST POINT GROUNDS

Emmy Li to attend MIT

by Katerina Mazzo

Assistant Web Editor-in-Chief

"Congratulations" stared back at her from her computer screen, which was a word that senior Emmy Li would have never expected to receive from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

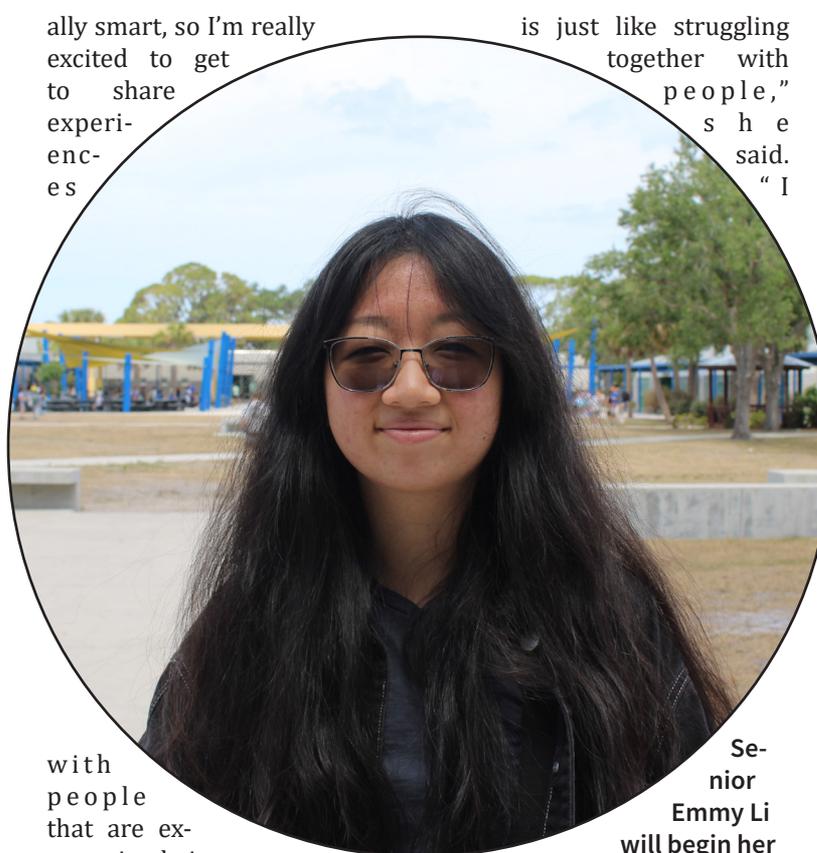
"It still feels a little unreal," Li said.

However, her acceptance to MIT wasn't always the plan.

"Honestly, I was perfectly okay and even expecting to go to UF [University of Florida]," she said. "But I've had my eye on MIT for a bit... I was in that really weird middle ground where I felt like my humanities was what I was good at, but I also really wanted to do something in STEM. MIT kind of had the combination of the two that I wanted."

Although MIT is widely known for its STEM programs, its strong focus on humanities played a big role in her decision. The student culture was another major factor.

"I feel like there's a lot of opportunities to get to know other students there and obviously everyone there is re-



ally smart, so I'm really excited to get to share experiences with people that are experts in their respective fields," Li said.

Looking back at high school, a lot of her success came from working with her peers, so she was looking for that environment in college as well.

"I think the main thing

is just like struggling together with people," she said. "I

Senior Emmy Li will begin her secondary education

at MIT this fall. PHOTO BY KATERINA MAZZO

remember... [for] my birthday party instead of having an actual party, I basically invited all my friends over for a calculus cram session."

Siblings' Rise in Robotics

by Allie Chung

Co News Editor

The robots engineered by Pine View's siblings Michael and Natalie Merino are 30-pound technological feats of carbon fiber and aluminum. But something louder than the sound of the machine's motors is the global recognition that the two Pine View students have earned through competitive robotics.

This season, the Merinos helped lead their FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) team, Java the Hutt, to secure one of the program's most prestigious honors — the Florida Inspire Award. This award recognizes the best overall team in the fields of robot design, programming, and community impact.

"You have to basically place first in everything- robot design, programming, outreach," Natalie said, "and we did."

Their win on the regional and state level earned them a place at the international 2025 World Championship in Houston, Texas, where the team ranked 24th and took home the 2nd-place Industrial Design Award.

According to both siblings, it was their most successful season yet, capping numerous years of competing together in robotics programs.

Engineering teacher Drew

Wormington, who taught Michael in his freshman year and currently teaches Natalie, has long recognized the pair's talents.

"Both are gifted. They work very quickly, very fast and they

"In the research that I've done, the really good STEM programs are super expensive," Michael said. "My purpose is to offer a cheap, affordable kit that gives kids multiple STEM skills."

While Michael focuses on engineering, Natalie provides a different slate of skills. As a current freshman, she built real-time analytics tools that drove the team's match strategy, and led the writing and design of

Student Association (TSA) club president and Natalie as treasurer. Natalie hopes to run for president in the future and has her sights on FIRST's Dean's List as well.

Reflecting on her experience, Natalie believes that the program has left a long-term impact.

"It's shaped how I think, how I communicate, how I lead," she said.

Michael and Natalie's close relationship maximizes their collaboration within the

Java the Hutt team, allowing them to efficiently design many innovative robotic features, including the ability to compress their machine

into a compact model. Yet, the Merino sibling's ambitions and achievements are anything but confined,

and they will continue to push each other both academically and emotionally for the rest of their lives.

Left: Michael Merino poses with an adult student at an event. Right: Natalie Merino helps kids participating in the Roborumble competition.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY DREW WORMINGTON



pick up new skills pretty fast," he said. "They have the knowledge. They're good at what they do and they both have a gift for engineering."

As a result of this apparent talent, Michael, a junior, was awarded one of the most prestigious honors in the field of robotics, becoming a Dean's List Winner. He was one of just ten students selected worldwide from more than 100,000 FTC participants and the third Floridian ever to receive the award.

Outside of competition, Michael designed a low-cost robotics kit for underprivileged students that teaches beginner skills that he wished he had easier access to during his learning process.

the award-winning engineering portfolio. She plans to pursue architecture and believes her experience with FTC gave her far more than technical skills.

"FIRST isn't just about robots," she said, "it's about leadership, quick thinking, and learning how to speak up. It teaches you how to solve problems that don't come with instructions."

Next year, Michael will serve as Pine View's Technology

UPGRADE
PINE VIEW'S NEW
COMPUTER
COMPARISON

**CURRENT
COMPUTERS**

**HP PROBOOK
X360 II GS**

- Windows 10 operating system
- 11.6" diagonal touch screen
- Often shared between multiple classrooms using computer carts
- First added to Pine View campus in 2021



PHOTO BY TIMOTHY NESANELIS

**UPCOMING
COMPUTERS**

**HP PROBOOK
X360 II FORTIS G11**

- Windows 11 operating system
- 11.6" diagonal touch screen
- Each classroom will have their own cabinet; no more sharing of carts
- Beginning service from 2025-2026 school year for four years



PHOTO COURTESY OF HP

GRAPHIC BY
TIMOTHY NESANELIS

Crowned and Candid

Looking back at Mr. and Miss Pine View with Parker Wilding and Anjali Mayor

by Sivan Levy

Web Editor-in-Chief

Q: How did you come up with the idea for your main act?

Anjali Mayor (AM): I actually got inspired from watching Miss Pine View last year. I kind of got the idea of doing something with harp from watching one of their old acts. I thought that it'd be fun to mix in the theme of Barbie, too, in my act, by playing "I'm Just Ken."

Parker Wilding (PW): I actually spent a lot of time with my parents, trying to come up with something funny. My original idea was to try to re-enact Edgar Allen Poe's "The Raven." I was trying to brainstorm if I could make it funny, because laughing is the gateway to the soul for the judges. But we realized that that wouldn't work. My dad suggested that I do a Monty Python skit, because we both love Monty Python. **Q: Looking back, is there anything you would've changed about your Mr./Miss Pine View experience?**

AM: Honestly, no, not really. I thought the whole experience was very fun. I had a great time doing it. It wasn't very stressful, and was a more low-key experience. The actual night of the show was super

fun, as well.

PW: No, not at all. You know, it was great right from the start. Way back in October when we first started rehearsals, it was fun, and it was fun all through until the show, and even after. I'm still friends with a lot of the guys. I have to say, it was absolutely perfect.

Q: What was your best memory from the show preparation process, whether that be the rehearsals, bonding nights, or show night itself?

AM: I'd say my favorite would probably be the week leading up to the actual show night. We were there very late almost every day—till 7:00-to-8:00 p.m. It was pretty serious the last couple of days, but leading up to that, it was super fun being in the backrooms with all the other girls and just messing around.

PW: Ooh, that's really hard. I mean, I will say that the bonding nights were probably the most fun, but I really did enjoy the rehearsals. Every time we practiced, we got at least a little bit better. I got to see everybody work together, and how it ended up being the product that it was. That was really awesome to see the progress that everybody was making.

Q: How did it feel when it was announced that you won Mr/Miss Pine View?

AM: Honestly, I was very, very shocked. I didn't really prepare myself to win. I was just really surprised, and so proud of myself and everyone who helped me.

PW: You know, there are a few photos of my face right when I heard it. Looking back, it was the happiest I've ever seen myself look

in a photo. It was really incredible. I was ecstatic.

What made me even happier was how everyone else was equally as excited and right there with me. I'd say that it's less about getting Mr. Pine View, and more the fact that everything that happened ended in such an amazing way. **Q: What was the biggest lesson that you took away from the whole experience?**

AM: The biggest lesson I learned is that I do really enjoy performing for other people and being on stage. I've never really per-

formed for the school before or for a lot of people I know, so that was just really fun.

PW: I'd have to say that the biggest lesson is that practice makes perfect. There were times that I got a little bit worried about my act, or the dance, or the Boy's Act. But, you know, you just keep practicing, and it became really good at the end. I think that was because everyone just cared so much about the whole show. Everyone wanted it to be great, and I think that translated to a final process that was fun. **Q: What is your advice to anyone who wants to do Mr/Miss Pine View next year**

AM: Some advice I'd give is to just enjoy the whole process because it goes by super fast.

PW: Be yourself. Trying to be someone you aren't or trying to put on a façade is not going to work. Being yourself and being confident in who you are is what will get you into Mr. Pine View and make it a more enjoyable experience.



PHOTOS BY AVA LENERZ AND ATHENA ERBE

A 'Note'able Future

Senior Iggy Huratdo's journey from Pine View to NYU's Clive Davis Institute

by Jenna Hinck

Match Layout Artist

Ever since his childhood, senior Iggy Huratdo has had a love for all things music.

"My most disciplined was when I picked up the viola here at school, actually, in sixth grade," Huratdo said.

Being in Middle School Orchestra opened his eyes to his passion for making music. He went on to play more instruments, such as the bass guitar and drums.

"Middle school was where I started doing my own original stuff, kind of getting into more of the creative side," Huratdo said. "I knew that was the career that I wanted."

After recognizing his dream of a musical career, Huratdo has made his biggest step toward his future, by applying to colleges with the major of Recorded Music.

As the time for college applications came around, Huratdo had many colleges in

mind such as Florida State University (FSU), the University of Miami (UMiami), The Cross School of Music, New York University (NYU), the University of Southern California (USC), and Berkeley School of Music.

After receiving the college acceptance results, Huratdo decided to attend NYU's Clive Davis Institute for Recording Music. The Clive Davis program only accepts around 80 students, making this a big achievement for Huratdo.

"It's music production, of course, playing music and getting that discipline, working with music

business," Huratdo said. "There's a lot of paths you could go with it."

When applying to NYU, Huratdo needed to submit his own recorded album, which he presented here at school



in the Mr. Pine View show.

"Honestly, it was really great to just be able to have five minutes on stage in front of everybody I know, where I just have complete creative freedom," Huratdo said.

One of Huratdo's close friends, Mirai Mehta was his drummer for his performance.

"Iggy is one of the most talented musicians I know, if not the most talented," Mehta said. "He has an almost natural connection with music, and he's able to effortlessly understand a wide range of instruments and lots of different styles."

The family-like environment during Mr. Pine View really helped feed into Huratdo's confidence on stage.

"Mr. Pine View was definitely a lot of fun, hanging out with my

friends and being able to perform," Huratdo said.

Huratdo has many people that have helped and inspired him to become who he is today.

"I've had a lot of mentors," Huratdo said, "Mr. Mink here, and my dad."

Christopher Mink, Middle school Orchestra Director, helped foster Huratdo's admiration for music early on. Huratdo's dad had a music career which inspired his desire to go into the music industry even more.

Huratdo plans to continue dedicating his life to music after graduating from NYU to become a 'producer/artist,' working for a label.

"Working in the industry is not just making music, you know, it's being able to provide a platform for other people," Huratdo said.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY IGGY HURATDO

NE ZHA 2

An action-packed animation, *Ne Zha 2*, a sequel to *Ne Zha* (2019), has recently blown up the global box office by hitting new records in the entertainment industry. Its stunning animation, emotional storyline, and dynamic scenes make it an amazing watch. Here are some facts about its success:

Background

- It was first released in China January 29, 2025, the first day of the Chinese New Year.
- It follows the story of a young boy who defies his fate and chooses to create his own path despite being born from the Demon Orb.
- It's based on a Chinese myth written in the Ming dynasty

Box Office

- It's grossed over \$2 billion globally, being the first non-Hollywood movie to hit that milestone.
- It surpassed Disney's "Inside Out 2" and became the top grossing animated film of all time.
- As of April 2025, the movie has reached the top 5 grossing films of all time.

Audience

- "Ne Zha 2" is in theaters in over 37 countries worldwide.
- Currently the movie is only available in Mandarin with subtitles in English, however, dubbed versions are being prepared.

History of Max's Table

by Dasha Shabunina
Sports Editor

John Woolever, Wilma Hamilton, Brian Fitz-Harris, Steve Largo, and Dr. Stephen Covert — all, from first to current principal of Pine View School, have upheld the tradition of breakfast with seniors.

Largo, who was the principal from 1988 to 2013, took seniors to First Watch during first period, or what was then called "00 period." There, they chatted over breakfast, so that Largo could prepare to introduce seniors at graduation, like Dr. Covert does now.

"It was just a casual, very friendly, very enjoyable interaction, having breakfast with all these great kids," Largo said. "The kids were always very polite and very eager to sit down, with this tradition that they invariably told me that they look forward to as they were growing [up]."

In 2018-2019, Dr. Covert decided to switch from First Watch to Max's Table, which was much closer to Pine View and thus caused less of a disruption to class. Over the past six years, it has become well-known to Pine View, with staff and students dining there regularly.

Max's Table was opened in 2016, after Dimitri Xinidis, a trained chef, and his wife, Angela Xinidis, bought the place and renovated it.

While the name Max's Table is relatively new, its history goes way back. The restaurant that initially stood in its place was called M&D Country Kitchen. It

was owned by Dimitri's parents, Stavros and Anastasia Xinidis. The diner, which had informal seating at the counter and lacked the booths Max's Table implemented, saw mainly older customers, appealing to them with its nostalgic American vibe.

There were, however, some young faces around.

Jessica Hentges has been best friends with Maria Xinidis, Dimitri's sister, for 31 years. The two met at Venice High School and have been inseparable since.

"I went to M&D a lot because of being best friends with her [Maria], and it was kind of cool to see the transition to Max's Table," Hentges said. "The restaurant was empty for a while, until they kind of revamped it. So I got to be a part of ... the planning of that and go in and see it get started ... I love how it's still a landmark in Osprey. It's just that kind of go-to [place] and [when] I still look at it, and I still see M&D."

M&D was sold 19 years ago to Cleopatra and Tom Galanos. When Angela and Dimitri bought the restaurant in 2016, they relabeled it as Max's Table after their daughter's initials, Maria A. Xinidis. Their son, Stavro Xinidis, also has a meal titled after him: Stavi's Tacos.

The café is listed amongst the 25 best pancakes in the country. Now, the goal is to shift more focus to catering. The place itself, which is always busy, cannot get bigger, but catering would allow the business to grow and provide new opportunities for the restaurant.

Mandy Ruberg, the manager of Max's Table, worked at M&D before it was shut down and returned to the new café two years later. She loves the tight-knit community of the employees in the restaurant and the regular customers.

"We celebrate new babies, new pets, new relationships, all sorts of milestones — we all celebrate together ... And we know each other's children, we know each other's parents," Ruberg said as she started to tear up, "You know, they [the employees at Max's Table] called my dad — they called him 'Dad' when he came in. He passed away in February. And it was tough for everybody here, really, because they were here every Sunday after church — my mom and my dad and my aunt — and then he came in with friends during the week and had coffee and came to check on me. Almost 50 years old, and I'm still the baby."

Stavros, too, passed away just three months prior to that, on November 20, 2024. His legacy lives on through his family, who now own the diner he founded.

Max's Table's sentimental history only adds to the warmth of the café and enhances the feeling of community between the employees and customers — including those from Pine View — that go there.

"There's so much unique and kind of fabulous history that I was fortunate to be part of," Largo said, "Very, very fond memories."



Max's Table operates from 7:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and is located at 115 S Tamiami Trl, Osprey, Florida 34229.



Max's Table is often described as having a genial environment by customers and employees. Several employees posed for a photo outside the diner.



An employee prepares sides and sauces. Pine View students have been having breakfast with Dr. Covert here since 2018.

PHOTOS BY DASHA SHABUNINA

Thorpe's Tune



Want to read the full story behind Senior Matrick Thorpe's musical path? Scan the QR code to read about how he is tuning into his future. Discover what drives Thorpe's passion for music, including his early inspirations and future aspirations.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY MATRICK THORPE

TORCH TRIES! crumbl cookies



Craving something sweet — and maybe a little humorous? Watch as the Torch Staff try to guess Crumbl Cookie flavors in a fun and lighthearted video. Scan the QR code for more!



GRAPHICS BY ATHENA ERBE

PHOTO PROVIDED BY JIAYI ZHU



Torch Senior Notes

Comments

Lindsay Luberecki As I write this, it's hard to believe that in just a few short weeks I'll be crossing the Van Wezel stage. Looking back, I'm so lucky to have come to this school, and I know it's because of Pine View that I've met my best friends and found my path for the future.

If I could talk to my younger self on her very first day of sixth grade, nervously entering former Pine View teacher Marguerite Sand's Spanish class without knowing a soul, I would tell her that it'll all work out. I'd give this same advice to anyone: don't be afraid of the unknown.

Try new clubs and activities and step out of your comfort zone, even if you don't think it'll work out. The worst thing that happens is you waste an hour, and the best thing is that you find a home for the next four years.

Aly Zaleski As a girl who used to obsess over Warrior Cats, fandom wiki forums, and a varied collection of wildly inappropriate musicals, I have recognized that writing has always been the biggest underlying motif in my life. As a high schooler in journalism, it became the highlight.

The truth is, my plan is not steady. I will go to FSU for digital media production following in the footsteps of a greater Aly(son) before me, but I hope to play on my creative side before AI inevitably takes over the world.

Currently, I'm working on film projects and screenplays. However, the amount of time I've spent working with kids might influence me to get into education. Maybe I'll end up back here.

Regardless, writing will remain. Pick up a pen. Try it in poetry, playwriting, and journaling. One day, make a novel.

Jiayi Zhu "What are you going to be when you grow up?" is a question that feels like it has followed me from childhood to graduation. The truth is, I still can't pinpoint a single thing I want to do when I know that there is so much more to learn. What I do know is that I have found what is important to me, and that's a good start.

Eleven years later, I'm saying goodbye to Pine View. I feel lucky to be able to point out faces in my classes now and recall my favorite memories from elementary school. Since then, the blue awnings and big oak trees have watched me grow up. Writing this, I realize that not much else has stayed the same.

If I had any advice to give, it would be to take every opportunity to explore every possible interest. I'm so different from the person I was freshman year. Every experience, whether it was incredibly challenging or stupidly fun, has made me the person I am today.

You're never going to be fully confident of where the future will take you. And that's okay. Even if it's difficult, make the most of your high school experience — it'll be over before you know it.

Elena Herman Seven years of school: what is life without Pine View? Come September, I'll be studying in Italy, surrounded by strangers. It's exhilarating, but I'm still moving away from the life I've known one small step at a time.

Years from now, I hope to make a living by improving the world. Someday I'll refurbish a countryside villa, grow a garden, and raise some dogs. Probably only 2 to 2000 dogs, depending on my vocation.

Though I'll severely miss this town, it'll be nice to get away from the site of my awkward middle school memories. For those still struggling in the school system — help others whenever you can and do more things just to make yourself happy.

Terry Shen I have absolutely loved my time here at Pine View. Through these past few years, I have learned more about navigating high school and the unique Pine View experience. Here is some advice I would give to my younger self:

Be kind to your teachers and classmates. Pine View will be your family for the entirety of high school—it's best to make the most of it.

Plan your course schedule. In addition to ensuring you will graduate, take courses you are interested in. Arrange your schedule in advance so that there are no last-minute and unwelcome surprises.

Make mistakes: remember that being wrong is just part of growing! Isn't it much better to make these mistakes now rather than in the future.

Take yourself seriously. This is a critical time for your personal development. Make good choices to set up your future.

Have fun! High school is meant to be interesting. Get involved and have a good time with fun events that take place.

DORM checklist

- Laundry essentials
- Trash can
- Extension cord*
- Desk lamp
- Storage bins
- Clothing hangers
- Bedding
- Bath towels
- Shower caddy
- Cleaning supplies
- Microwave*
- Snack cart
- Headphones
- Decorations
- Personal items

*Check with your school's dorm policies beforehand!

Recruited Athletes

David Melnychuk

by Allie Chung
Co-News Editor

After watching Michael Phelps secure five gold medals at the 2016 Rio Olympics, David Melnychuk — at the time nine years old — knew swimming was his future. Now a senior, Melnychuk has become a force in the pool, earning bronze at the Speedo Winter Junior Championships and committing to swim at UNC Chapel Hill.

Melnichuk began club swimming in Tampa, trained briefly in Atlanta, and joined the Sarasota Sharks at 14 years old, where he spent the last four years. There, Melnychuk powered through 5:00 a.m. practices, weight sessions, and countless meets that produced steady time drops — yet college coaches initially looked elsewhere.

“I just kept my head down and worked,” Melnychuk said. “I knew the drops [improvements in race time] were going to come.”

That patience paid off — a string of personal bests early in his senior year finally caught UNC Chapel Hill’s eye.

To those who’ve trained alongside him, the offer felt inevitable. Danica Aten, a junior and fellow Sarasota Shark swimmer, has seen Melnychuk’s growth firsthand.

“David has worked incredibly hard,” Aten said. “It’s inspiring to see his perseverance rewarded.”

Looking ahead to college, he hopes to lead by example.

“I want to be a big contributor, keep getting faster, and enjoy the sport as much as I did when I was that little kid watching the Olympics,” Melnychuk said.



Nina Wasluk

by Allie Chung
Co-News Editor

Four years ago, when Nina Wasluk, forced by her mom, reluctantly climbed into a coxswain’s seat for Sarasota Crew, she didn’t imagine that the sport would one day lead her to a Division 1 position at Boston University (BU).

Wasluk’s confidence was earned through six-day training weeks that often ran from afternoon until nightfall. Before rowing, Wasluk and close friend Brianna Qeraj tumbled together in gymnastics, but they both quit during COVID. Qeraj followed Wasluk into crew a year later, inspired by her friend’s enthusiasm.

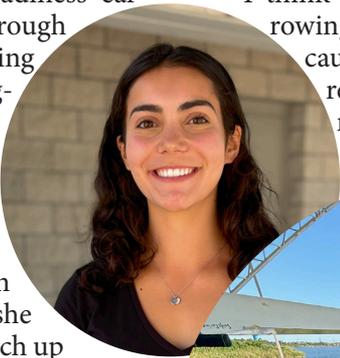
“Nina is very mature as an athlete, especially mentally,” Qeraj said. “Every call she makes is assertive and reassuring, and whenever she stands up, we follow her.”

The same steadiness carried Wasluk through a bumpy recruiting season. Her long-time dream program in Florida told her late in junior year that it had no spot for a coxswain in her class, so she widened her search up the East Coast.

Dozens of emails later, she found Boston University. Wasluk clicked immediately with the coaches and loved the team culture; the chance to train on Boston’s Charles River — the host site for many of rowing’s premier regattas — was an added bonus.

Looking ahead, Wasluk hopes to keep improving her craft on a bigger stage.

“I’m just hoping to fit in with the team, have a competitive season with Boston for the next four years, and keep getting better — for myself and for us as a team,” Wasluk said.



Claire Steiner

by Alex Lieberman
Sci&Tech Editor

After years of hard work, senior Claire Steiner has committed to Stanford University, which is one of the seven teams in the country for women’s lightweight rowing (a division for competitors under 130 pounds).

Steiner plans to major in Symbolic Systems, an interdisciplinary field, with a concentration in neuroscience and minor in Spanish. Outside of rowing, she enjoys embroidery, reading, travel, and growing exotic fruits such as coffee beans and pineapples.

Her crew journey began in fourth grade when her teacher, Debbie Delaney, encouraged her to try something new after school. In eighth grade, Steiner advanced to the high school team and began participating in competitions.

“I think that I really like rowing, obviously, because of racing. It’s really an exhilarating thing, it’s very intense ...



It’s not really like any other sport,” Steiner said.

Rowing comprises a lot of daily hard work, unlike some sports that rely more on skill.

“With rowing, you’re able to push yourself to new limits and just define what’s possible for yourself,” Steiner said.

One of her favorite experiences with Sarasota Crew was rowing in a U-17 race at nationals as a sophomore. She deepened her connection with her teammates, and her boat placed twelfth in the country. Unbeknownst to her at the time, Stanford representatives watched her at that race and later reached out, leading to her recruitment.

Senior Nina Wasluk, Steiner’s coxswain, who is going to Boston University for rowing, said Steiner is inspirational.

“She’s a very driven and dedicated person to work with, and she’s very committed to the sport,” Wasluk said. “It’s really cool to see all the hard work she puts in and how she accomplishes a lot.”



Will Steinwachs

by Anna Zhang
Match Layout Artist

Senior Will Steinwachs, who has rowed since fifth grade, has always felt at home around boats and fishing lines.

Countless early mornings and relentless training at Sarasota Crew shaped his love for the sport. For Steinwachs, the biggest milestone in his rowing journey came when he was recruited to Colby College — proof that his passion and persistence had paid off.

“The best part of being an athlete is all the teammates that are with you the whole time,” Steinwachs said. “What keeps me motivated is knowing that in all the hard training and work, there are seven other people in the boat with me doing the same thing.”

Caroline Steinwachs, Steinwachs’ twin sister, has fond memories of Steinwachs and is proud of his achievements. She recalled kayaking down their flooded street during a tropical storm when they were ten years old.

“I really admire that Will can stay calm and take things as they are thrown at him. Will loves the water so much that he will fish anytime he can. One night he even ran out to the dock in his pajamas to catch a fish,” Caroline said.

Steinwachs is determined to make an impact in the future.

“My favorite part about rowing is the camaraderie with the team and winning races after months of training,” Steinwachs said. “The entire coaching staff at Sarasota Crew has guided my rowing journey and my long-term goal is to make the top boat at Colby College.”



Caroline Steinwachs

by Anna Zhang
Match Layout Artist

From her first sprint across the field in third grade, senior Caroline Steinwachs knew lacrosse was more than just a game — it was her passion. What began as a recreational team with the Sarasota Seahawks quickly turned into a commitment through club lacrosse in middle school. By high school, her determination earned her a starting spot on Riverview High’s varsity girls team. Her grit paid off when she was recruited to play at the University of Chicago, turning a childhood spark into a lifelong pursuit.

“I love the challenge, competitiveness, and opportunity for growth,” Steinwachs said. “I am motivated by the fact that there is always something that I can get better at and will help elevate my game. I am competitive and like to win, so that is what drives me to do my best and get better.”

Will Steinwachs, Caroline Steinwachs’ twin, is currently a rower with Sarasota Crew and will be attending Colby College. Since childhood, the twins have shared a deep understanding of each other’s dedication to their respective sports.

“I admire Caroline’s commitment to school and lacrosse. I like that we are independent of each other, but that we have so many fun times together as a family,” Will said.

Steinwachs said lacrosse has taught her the importance of relationships and working hard towards your goals.

“My long-term goal is to be an impact player on my college team. I plan to achieve this by continuing to train and elevate my game,” Steinwachs said.

College Athletic Recruitment Process

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

STEP ONE

Gather a list of prospective athletes

- Coaches gather a group of recruits who meet basic criteria like height, weight, position, academics, and more

STEP TWO

Send out recruiting letters, questionnaires, and camp invites

- Coaches send out messages to athletes to get athletes interested in their program

STEP THREE

Conduct evaluations

- Coaches ask recruits for an evaluation or a recommendation
- Coaches create a ranked list of recruits

STEP FOUR

Extend verbal offers and scholarships

- Coaches look to lock down commitments (different coaches approach this in different ways)

STEP FIVE

Sign athletes

- Coaches ensure that each recruit signs with their program and meets all eligibility requirements

GRAPHIC BY ANNA ZHANG

Thomas Zamsky

by Ana Easter

Assistant Match Editor in Chief

Senior Thomas Zamsky has committed to play soccer at Haverford College, marking the next step to a journey that began when he was three years old.

“My dad played [soccer] when he was younger — and my older sister as well — so they influenced me into playing,” Zamsky said. “Then, once I started playing, I really liked it.”

Since seventh grade, Zamsky has been playing for the MLS Chargers Next, training four times a week in Clearwater. His practices are about two hours, with games most weekends. The team also competes in national tournaments throughout the year. Last year, his team went to California.

Zamsky’s coach, Kyle Clinton, who has coached Zamsky for six years, praises both his athletic ability and mindset.

“Thomas is a player every coach wants to have, he has the talent and the skills you want from a central midfielder, but also is very coachable and has the right mindset and mentality to play at a high level,” Clinton said.

In his junior year, during the U-17 season, Zamsky was recognized as Cappelli Southeast Regional All-Star. He hopes to continue competing at a high level in college but is unsure of his plans to continue after graduating.

“My goal is obviously playing college soccer, but after that, I think I’ll probably stop competing but definitely keep playing as a pastime,” Zamsky said.

Clinton wishes Zamsky success for his future in the sport.

“I wish Thomas all the best moving forward into the next chapter of his life both academically and athletically,” he said, “I can’t wait to see what his future has in store.”

Remy Blunier

by Ana Easter

Assistant Match Editor in Chief

After over six years of grueling workouts and long practices with Sarasota Crew, senior Remy Blunier has committed to continue his rowing career at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU). Blunier plans to row at ERAU, while studying astronomy and astrophysics.

“I want to say I started in the middle of sixth grade,” Blunier said. “One day in math class one of my friends, Aly Zaleski, was like ‘Hey, we do this thing called crew after school,’ and it kind of just went from there.”

What began as just two practices a week quickly became a serious commitment. Now, Blunier has daily practices for four hours and competitions most weekends. Zaleski, who rowed alongside Blunier for three years, admires his dedication, which stood out from the start of his career.

“From the beginning, he took it really seriously,” Zaleski said. “In middle school, when everyone was sort of goofing around and being middle schoolers, you could tell that it was something he wanted to succeed in ... When you row for such an extended period of time, it’s clear that you’re there because it’s something you want to do and are passionate about ... he always really cared about it, and the fact that he stayed for so long is a testament to that.”

Blunier’s dedication paid off. His boat placed seventh at Youth Nationals, a national rowing regatta for high schoolers.

“Considering it is the entire nation, it is a pretty big accomplishment,” Blunier said.

Blunier hopes for success as he continues rowing.

“As everyone says, you can’t be a rower forever unless you’re one of the greats,” Blunier said, “But I plan to do pretty well in college and see where it goes from there.”

Natalia Strezenicky

by Alex Lieberman

Sci&Tech Editor

Following in the footsteps of her brother, who swam at Columbia, senior Natalia Strezenicky is going to Cornell University for swimming after spending years competing with the Sarasota Tsunami team.

“When I took my visit [to Cornell] last March, the team was very close, especially the guys and the girls, and they always were doing things together, so they have really good team chemistry,” she said.

Around second or third grade, Strezenicky’s doctor recommended swimming to her to help relieve her skin and lung condition, so she began practicing with her brother.

“I really like how it’s an environment for me to be around my friends, and it makes my day a lot easier — especially if I had a rough day at school, or if I’m going to head home and have a lot of studying,” Strezenicky said. “It lets me just have fun for a little bit. And it’s just really good for my mind; it lets me just forget about everything and just swim and have fun.”

“She’s a great athlete,” said sophomore Charles Shoemaker, Strezenicky’s friend and teammate, “She has a positive mindset. She really brings up everyone’s spirits because she’s always happy.”

Strezenicky said seeing her “favorite people everyday” and doing what she loves were her main motivators.

“And [swimming] has already gotten me so far, so who knows how much farther it can get me...” Strezenicky said.



Check out *The Rise of PFL on The Torch* website!



On previous page from bottom: Nina Wasluk coxes at a regatta for Sarasota Crew. PHOTO PROVIDED BY NINA WASLUK

David Melnychuk swims at practice. PHOTOS BY REBECCA ATEN Claire Steiner and her teammates pose for a photo after winning first place in the lightweight division of the 2024 FSRA Sculling Championship. PHOTO PROVIDED BY CLAIRE STEINER Will Steinwachs rows with his team at a regatta. PHOTO PROVIDED BY WILL STEINWACHS Caroline Steinwachs catches the ball in a lacrosse tournament. PHOTO PROVIDED BY CAROLINE STEINWACHS

On this page from top: Thomas Zamsky sprints across the field in a soccer game. PHOTO PROVIDED BY THOMAS ZAMSKY Remy Blunier rows in the back of his boat in a regatta. PHOTO PROVIDED BY REMY BLUNIER Natalia Strezenicky poses with her teammates at a swim meet in North Port. PHOTO PROVIDED BY NATALIA STREZENICKY

The Perfect Prank

by Ava Lenerz
Match Editor-in-Chief

It's around that time when the seniors pull out all the stops for the annual Senior Prank. The rest of the students and staff cower in fear over what to expect. Luckily, our administrators are brave enough to vet the pranks, so nothing too insane can happen.

However, rumor has it, this year they are going to try to bring in their favorite childhood books... to read... to the second graders!

Can you imagine? In what upside-down world would that be appropriate?

Students and teachers alike were horrified as this rumor spread like wildfire through the



halls. Was it real? Would any class dare try something so drastic?!

The Senior Prank was set to take place on Friday, and there was an off-putting tension in the air that whole week.

Monday

As the week began, odd happenings started right away.

As he walked by an AP Gov class, one student claimed he heard a vague mumble of, "The Cat in the Hat." He almost screamed

in terror. He ran as fast as he could to spread the word to everyone he knew.

This might just be the worst senior prank yet.

Tuesday

During a senior advisory class, a student accidentally spilled their backpack. They immediately began to shove the supplies back into the bag, but the teacher could've sworn she caught a glimpse of "The Giving Tree." Just as quick as it had happened, though, the backpack was already zipped up.

Wednesday

Wednesday was not as eventful, but a freshman came forward claiming to have seen a senior take out "Goodnight Moon" from their bag at the weapons detectors that morning.

Thursday

There was only one day left before the long-awaited Senior Prank, with people

questioning whether these rumors were true. Again, our brave administration stepped forward, reminding us that their job is to keep us safe and that nothing dangerous will happen on their watch.

Even with this message, students heard mention of "Corduroy," "Pete the Cat," "Five Little Gefiltes," and more as they roamed the halls.

Friday

The day finally arrived. Anticipation filled the air—were the seniors actually going to do something so incredible as to read to second

graders?!

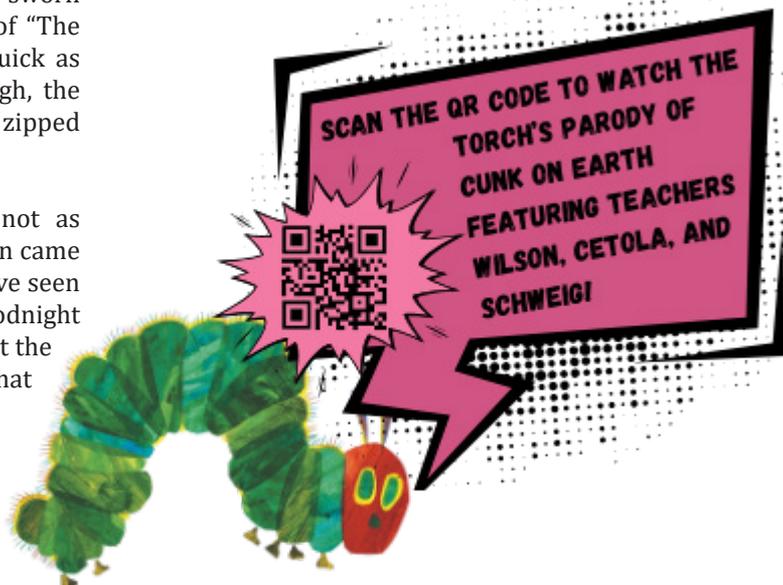
As the periods ticked by, nothing had happened; people questioned whether there would even be a prank.

Suddenly, students looked out the window to find they were in foreign terrain.

We breathed a unanimous sigh of relief as we realized the seniors simply teleported the campus to a remote desert.

Thank goodness that was it! Throughout the whole week, everyone was concerned the senior class had lost their minds.

GRAPHICS BY MADELYN BAILEY



GRAPHIC BY ALLIE CHUNG

WHICH RETIRING STAFF MEMBER ARE YOU?

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE HOBBY OR PASTIME?

- A) Craft-related activities including sewing and knitting
 - B) Writing
 - C) Golf, gardening, and fictional reading

WHICH SONG BEST CAPTURES YOUR PINE VIEW EXPERIENCE SO FAR?

- A) N/A (not a music person)
 - B) Close to the Edge
 - C) My Heart Bleeds for you...NOT (if you know, you know)

IF YOU WERE STRANDED ON AN ISLAND, WHICH SURVIVAL SKILL WOULD YOU BRING WITH YOU?

- A) How to build a fire and shelter
 - B) MANOVA (Multivariate analysis of variance)
 - C) How to fish

IF YOU COULD PICK A FICTIONAL CHARACTER TO BE YOUR PERSONAL ASSISTANT, WHO WOULD IT BE?

- A) Gandalf from Lord of the Rings
 - B) Wonder Woman
 - C) Phineas and Ferb

WHICH SUPERLATIVE DO YOU THINK YOU WOULD WIN?

- A) Most Helpful
 - B) Most "SAS"sy (Statistical Analysis System)
 - C) Most Environmentally Friendly

IF YOU MOSTLY CHOSE B, CONGRATS, YOU GOT ME: DR. MARK MATTIA

IF YOU MOSTLY CHOSE A, CONGRATS, YOU GOT ME: LAURA VAN HORNE

IF YOU MOSTLY CHOSE C, CONGRATS, YOU GOT ME: DAVID YOTSUDA

To read more about these retiring staff members head to pages 2-3

Stuck at Gradbash

by Lindsay Luberecki
Assistant Editor-in-Chief

12:30 p.m.

Ah, Gradbash! I, the totally completely real Pine View senior writing in this diary, have never been more excited. I've been looking forward to this day all year.

11:55 p.m.

Sorry I haven't checked in; it's been that much fun! But, I'm really in the mood for some food. I see a giant donut in Simpsons Land, so I think I'm going to head there.

12:15 a.m.

Okay, something went wrong. I made it to Simpsons Land, squinting at the paper map in my hands. Why paper, you might ask? Well, I didn't listen to Ms. Higgins and now my phone is dead. Guess that tip about a portable charger was serious...

Once I found the general area, though, things went downhill. I got distracted by an entire group of people in Spider-Man costumes, and now I've somehow ended up in the line for the Simpsons

ride – yes, that weird virtual-reality 3-D goggles clown roller coaster one.

I'm writing this entry from the ride seat itself. I figured I might as well ride it once, but somehow, my seat-belt won't unclip, and now I'm stuck here. I suppose I'll go again...

12:45 a.m.

I have gone on this ride six times and I think I'm starting to lose my mind. Like, actually go crazy. I don't know if the workers assumed I was just weirdly excited about Springfield or if they wanted to see me suffer, but they came in at one point and literally pointed and laughed, before leaving me stranded. I can't feel my legs anymore, and everywhere I look, I see yellow.

1:55 a.m.

After falling asleep in the seat, I had a stroke of genius. I used a bobby pin to break out of the seatbelt, and now I'm free! Thank goodness, if I spent one more moment in

there, I'd be returning to Python Path as a shell of my former self. I guess it's time to go back to the buses, right?

2:30 a.m.

I have bigger problems. I made it back to City Walk... but the Pine View group is nowhere to be found. Someone must have put their life-size Hello Kitty stuffed animal in my seat! With no phone and no friends, the only clear and logical choice is to start a new life here. There's nothing else that could possibly be done.

24 hours later

It feels like I've explored every inch of this place. I've wandered through both of the parks, gone on every ride there is, and eaten so much Universal food. I haven't had any water — only Butterbeer, of course.

I even managed to find a hidden part of Halloween Horror Nights they had started working on. The only problem was that I didn't know it was a haunted house, which made

for quite a scare when a killer clown jumped out at me with a chainsaw. I think I've recovered, though.

Two days later

I'm writing this final entry from my car in the Shell Lot. Yes, I finally made it home. I found a coin on the ground and called my parents from a payphone (I didn't know those still existed). They were so upset that I started a new life at Universal that they made me Uber home, ordering a car and promptly emptying my piggy bank to pay for it. Let's just say the driver did not want to hear my story.

I've had enough Universal for about 10 years, but it was still the most fun I've had in a while. Let this serve as a warning — don't get stuck at the park, or you'll be changed forever.



The Terry Saga: The Finale

by Aly Zaleski
Assistant Editor-in-Chief

This interview took place on the first of January, 2025. As this is my final issue of "The Terry Story" I'd like my audience to see Mr. Shen's true feelings as he looks towards the future. I hope that you all take as much inspiration from his wisdom as I did.

Aly Zaleski (AZ): You started as a simple gym membership owner — now you own every gym on the New Earth Colony. Did you expect to end up here?

Terry Shen (TS): Of course not. Although I may be a visionary, these biceps can only reach so far forward. However, the New Earth Colony was always a part of the plan. Boy's State taught me how to be a true leader.

AZ: Are the rumors of the retirement of the New Earth Colony true?

TS: I see you like to address the big hitters right away. It's partially true. I have plans to keep the New Earth Colony in the running. We will be installing my Shen Bots™ into every government building to have them help out our appointees. However, many of our old Shen Bots™ have started some kind of resistance, so it's tough to keep working.

It's hard to believe we have to go up against my technology that colonized the rest of our galaxy, but, hey, I'll defend Earth until my dying breath. Regardless, seeing everyone move away from our home to my newer colonies really got me down, so I'll be retiring as New Earth leader and passing my position off to my old apprentice, Nathan DeSouza.

AZ: Where will you go

from here?

TS: Well, during the founding days of Shen Space Settling™, I discovered a planet that I decided against sharing with the world. That will be my new home. I have no more details I am willing to share at this time.

AZ: You have to hook me up with your PR team. Anyways, has your workout routine changed in this time of growth for you and your career?

TS: Of course it did. I'm on the bulk right now so it's protein, protein, protein.

At least six eggs in the

morning, steak for lunch, and an exciting steak platter on a wooden cutting board for dinner. I cook bananas with honey into the steak — it's like a fun treat.

It's strict, but it's what keeps me in line. A true leader has to set rules for their life that push- them to their fullest potential. I'm up to a max bench of 1050 lbs and a max lat pull of 1120 lbs. I'm still at the gym daily for at least 10 hours out of our new 30 hour day.

AZ: What about leg day?
TS: I haven't had a leg day since 2008. We banned them in many of the Shen colonies as to not upset the Upper Body Strength committee. I'd be careful even bringing that question up if I were you — many of my colony leader appointees have been getting restless.

AZ: My sincerest apologies, I'll ask my team to keep that out of post. Do you have any final words to tell the people of the New Earth Colony and all of the followers of the Shen Space Settling™ leadership team?

TS: Get your money up.



PHOTOS BY ALY ZALESKI

Why Work?

The pros and cons of having a job

by Elena Herman
Features Editor

I jumped into my first job without knowing what I was getting myself into. I worked seven to eight hour shifts with no guaranteed break. By the end of the day, my face was usually sore from fake-smiling so much. Pro tip: ask for a job description before signing up.

Yet, I'm glad for the experience. High school jobs are often touted as an integral part of developing interpersonal skills, responsibility, and work ethic. Before being a hostess, I had never interacted with adults in a casual context, nor was contributory to a group's livelihood. Every tropical nightmare (never work in Siesta Key) stretched my worldview slightly wider.

However, I wouldn't say that my jobs were any more impactful than Fab Lab, Torch, or Poets' Society were.

Maybe my weekends and evenings could have been better spent. Would Model UN have improved my speech more? Should I have tackled STEM fair? Would it have killed me to fit a few protein discoveries in?

The problem is that modern teens (especially us overachievers) have unlimited choices. Pine View has over 100 clubs alone. Sarasota organizations add another thousand opportunities. The internet boasts options just short of infinite. Doing-it-all would likely reroute your free time into a hospital.

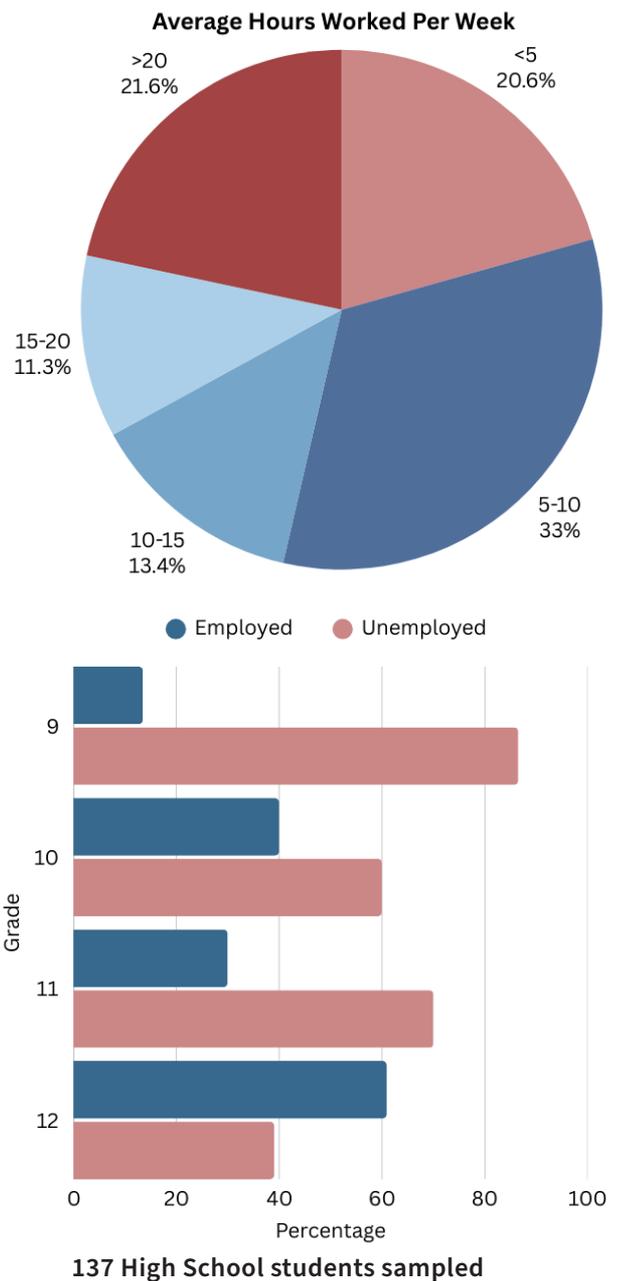
According to Pewresearch.org, "the share of teens working during the summer fell during the dot-com implosion of the early 2000s and dropped even more sharply during and after the 2007-09 Great Recession. By 2010 and 2011, the teen summer employment rate had bottomed out at

29.6%."

Though not approaching the previous ~50 percent, this rate has improved in recent years. The U.S. Bureau of Labor put employment for 16-to-19-year-olds at 37 percent in 2023. Assuming the rate of laziness is a generational constant, it appears teens have newer avenues of gaining life experience.

For those too involved for a job but believe there is no substitute—you're fine as you are. In fact, you are probably capable, hard-working, and sociable already. Try prioritizing leisure and happiness, two things that well-adjusted people need.

For those with excess time, then a job is good, but it's not a hill to die on. We will all plod along in our choice fields for decades. Starting the cycle in high school isn't a necessity.



The Future of Research

Will the field persist?

by Lindsay Luberecki
Assistant Editor-in-Chief

The world of science today is uniquely scary.

At least, that's how it might feel for someone like me, a senior on the cusp of entering college and a STEM field. In our current political climate, we're seeing attacks on science, research, and healthcare that have been unmatched in recent years.

Government Action

On the first day of his term, President Donald Trump signed an executive order withdrawing the United States from the World Health Organization. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has already issued requests and orders aimed at seemingly restructuring our public health system and our viewpoints as a nation on many health issues. He's stated that common prescription drugs that help millions with ADHD are "poison," according to the New York Times.

Kennedy has made inaccurate assertions about the dangers of vaccines (which are widely accepted as an incredibly safe and beneficial

medical advancement) and has stated that the National Institute of Health (NIH) is too focused on infectious diseases, according to an anonymous health official speaking to the New York Times.

Additionally, he's called for fluoride, an ion added to drinking water to protect oral health and prevent tooth decay, to be removed from the water supply. Fluoride has been in our water supply for almost 100 years, and there's been little conclusive evidence that it has negative effects at the dosage it's administered in, according to Johns Hopkins.

The slashing of research grants and funding is another exceptionally worrying issue. The Trump Administration has canceled funding for many Covid-19 studies as well as studies conducting research on other pathogens and their possible treatments. With the Administration simply citing the idea that "Covid-19 is over," resources for studies that could be valuable should another pandemic arise were cut. This puts our future society at risk.

The Future?

It feels like we're moving backwards, and that modern medicine is becoming less modern by the minute. How is it possible to be excited about entering a field that funding is being actively stripped away from? How can we feel optimistic about studying a subject that the people in power are actively spreading misinformation about?

It feels like we're moving backwards, and that modern medicine is becoming less modern by the minute.

There's not one easy answer, but there is some advice that I'm trying to take myself and that I think is important for anyone to consider. We're seeing the scientific and health field being attacked, but if we shy away from entering them because of that, who's going to be there to stop the assault upon them? Our country needs peo-

ple to continue becoming researchers, doctors, and science communicators. There may be extra work involved, but the best way to fix these problems is by tackling them head-on, from within.

Good, smart people continuing to enter these fields is especially vital in the face of the widespread layoffs we're seeing right now at higher levels. For example, the Trump administration has demanded Centers for Disease Control (CDC) layoffs as well as spending cuts. The Department of Health and Human Services announced in late March that 10,000 employees, about one-eighth of their workforce, would be laid off, according to the New York Times.

Don't Back Off

So, moving forward is scary, but necessary. We need to remember not to become desensitized to what's happening. Staying positive without becoming permissive or apathetic is key — we need to keep calling out injustices and wrongdoings when we see them. Keep speaking out

against funding cuts and layoffs. Keep doing the research. Keep advocating for those that need good medical care the most, whether it's those who are chronically ill or immunocompromised, children, or just your neighbors, because health impacts everyone.

One important piece to note is that, for many, it can be hard to directly speak out without fear of repercussion in your job. We've already seen high-profile officials be punished by the Administration for speaking their mind.

If this is the case, remember that there's more than one way to get your feelings across. Joining larger advocacy groups, communicating with your representatives, and prioritizing the sharing of fact-based information are all possible options. And, the most important thing you can do is to always educate yourself.

So, if you're like me and are preparing to enter this field, or if it's something you're thinking about in the future, remember that science needs you.

[staff editorial]

We Need a Free Press

For centuries, it has been the job of the press to hold people accountable for their actions — all people. The press is what stops liars and cheats from going unpunished and dictators from going unchecked.

Yes, in some instances the media can be biased or too sensational, but the good journalists of the world are out there halting the spread of misinformation. So, what happens if they are censored? What happens if the liars, cheats, and dictators hijack the media?

This stops the truth from reaching the masses — “1984” suddenly doesn’t seem as far-fetched. In the end, whoever controls the public perception of the truth, controls the public.

Where the issue arises today is in the trust of the public. According to Gallup News, as of 2024, around 36 percent of voting-age Amer-

icans have “no trust at all in the media.”

As ideas like this start to grow, it becomes easier for the government to take away the freedoms of the press. After all, they represent the people.

The truth, however, is almost always more important than what people might want. This is what good journalists provide; truth in the face of fear. Limitations of their ability to report is, in turn, limiting the truth people are able to see regardless of their opinion on public media.

The press pool was created long ago in an effort to protect the journalistic right to free speech. The pool consists of journalists meant to follow the president everywhere and report accurate and timely information to a variety of other news outlets.

The specific journalists in the pool rotate and are

obligated to share any and all information collected to a wider pool of journalists.

At its core, the press pool is meant to serve the American people — and its members are decided upon by the press corps, not by the government.

The truth, however, is almost always more important than what people might want. This is what good journalists provide; truth in the face of fear.

AP News, an independent global news network, has been a long-term member of this press corps, until its access to the president was blocked February 11, 2025.

The Trump administration revoked AP News’ admittance along with a de-

mand that they change their influential style guide from “Gulf of Mexico” to “Gulf of America.”

Then, April 9, 2025, U.S. District Judge Trevor N. McFadden affirmed on First Amendment grounds that the White House cannot retaliate against AP News because of the contents of their speech.

However, this order doesn’t prohibit government officials from choosing which questions or journalism outlets to respond to. In recent months, there has been a rise in officials denying journalists information, coverage, or interviews.

For example, the Trump Administration has formally prohibited federal workers from referencing identifying pronouns in email signatures, and some officials have gone so far as to apply this policy to journalists. On multiple occasions, press aides have denied interviews with

journalists that have identifying pronouns in their email signatures.

Because of district policies, The Torch also need to be approved prior to release.

As students, it’s in our best interest and responsibility to cover stories of relevance to our peers.

Being a “watchdog” isn’t just something journalists believe in. A 2018 poll by The American Press Institute found that 73 percent of Americans say holding political leaders accountable is a very important function of journalism. By promoting a full and factual record of events, journalists help stop issues in their tracks.

Journalists have been a source of truth since the beginning of newspapers and press organizations — just look at the Watergate scandal. Without accurate and credible reporting, where would our society be today?

[student voices]

Senior Q&A

How do you find your passions?

Be engaged in every class, even if you don’t think you’ll like it. Make sure to take classes outside of your comfort zone, because you’ll never know what you find interesting. Involve yourself in as many clubs and organizations as you can!” **Ellie Levy**



What’s one thing you wish you’d done in high school?

Join more clubs and get more experience to help towards what you want to do for your career.” **Juliana Colwell**

What do you wish you were told freshman year?

I wish someone had told freshman me to worry less. While it’s important to be relentless in your pursuits—working hard in your classes, staying dedicated, and exploring extracurriculars—you don’t have to have everything figured out right away. Throw yourself into different opportunities and try new things with friends because you’ll grow more than you can imagine in high school.” **Bella Nealon**



Are you different from your freshman-year expectations?

I think I have changed a lot especially in how social I am now compared to freshman year. I have made so many friends and built relationships with teachers as well and I feel that I have grown a lot in that aspect.” **Zlata Basarevskaja**



the Torch

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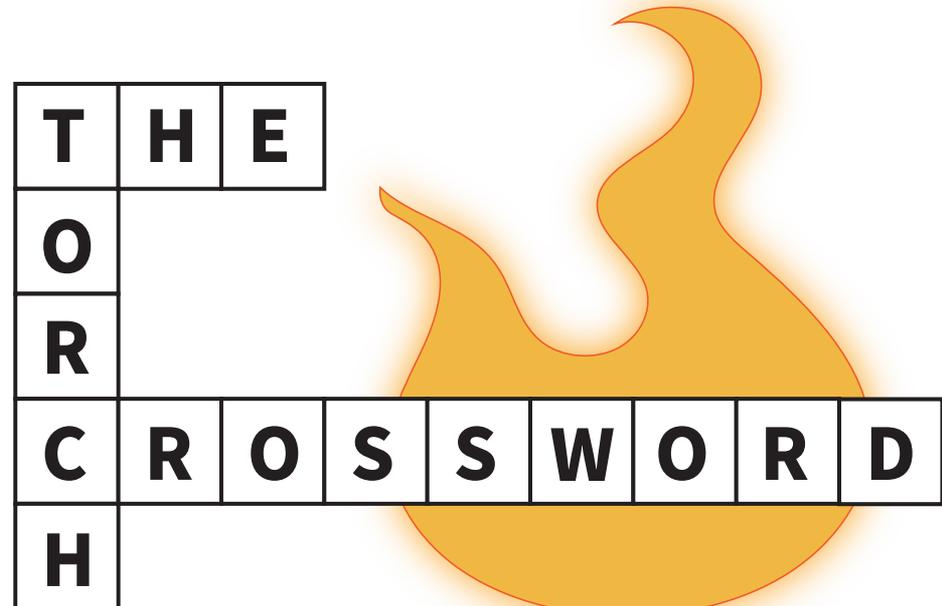
The Torch covers topics, issues, events and opinions of relevance to students grades nine through twelve. The Torch is published four times a year by Pine View School and maintains membership in the Florida Scholastic

Press Association. Press run is 800 copies. Editorials. Unsigned editorials represent the views of the editorial board. All other articles reflect the opinions of the individual authors. All stories are subject to prior ap-

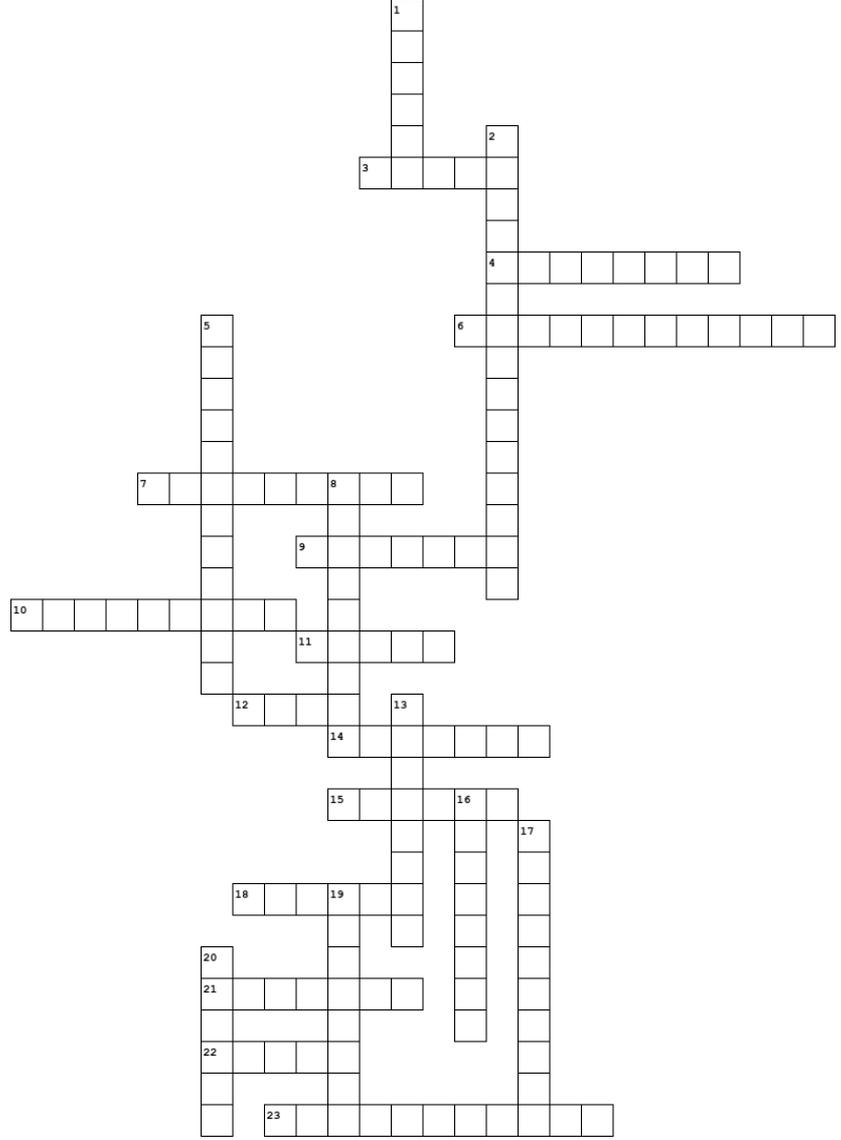
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Hints correspond to information shared in the stories throughout this issue, including through QR codes. The first person to bring their completed version in Room 117 in Building 17 will win a \$5 gift card. Good luck!



across

- 3. What could Dr. Mattia never be?
- 4. What was the last name of Terry Shen's "Washington Week" roommate?
- 6. What's one thing Christine Wu wishes to become through the Army Medical Service Corps?
- 7. What operating system will our new school computers use?
- 9. What's the seventh item on the Dorm Checklist?
- 10. What does Bergman believe is one of the greatest advantages of being Pine View Python?
- 11. Iggy Hurtado is attending NYU's Clive ___ Institute of Recorded Music.
- 12. How many seniors wrote in the Torch Senior Notes?
- 14. Which retiring staff member would choose Phineas and Ferb as their personal assistants?
- 15. Where did Jessica Hentges and Maria Xinidis met?
- 18. 27.5% of polled students only work during what time of the year?
- 21. On what day of the week of the Senior

- Prank did a student spill the contents of their backpack?
- 22. The ___ Body Strength Committee gets upset by leg days.
- 23. What British comedy troupe inspired Parker Wilding's Mr. Pine View Act?

down

- 1. What state does Mr. Yotsuda want to visit after retiring?
- 2. Which type of position will David Gagliardo start in August?
- 5. Where was Ms. Van Horne working during her first year at Pine View?
- 8. Where does Elena Herman say you should never work?
- 13. Claire Steiner and Terry Shen are both attending ___ University next year.
- 16. What is the first name of the student pictured on the top right of page 10?
- 17. The press pool was created in an effort to protect _____.
- 19. Ne Zha 2 is currently only available in which language?
- 20. This congressman nominated Ava Michalopoulos for West Point.

The Conversation Pit

Moments to Memories

From portable to Building 17 and parent-pick-up-loop to shell lot, I've watched Pine View change and evolve, just as it has seen me grow from a second grader to a senior. Almost 2,000 school days later and two days from now, I'll be walking down the Van Wezel stage for graduation.

It wasn't easy, but I wouldn't want my experience here to have been any easier. Besides, the memories I made during my time at Pine View have made it worth it. Here are nine memories I don't want to forget:

1. Playing music in the orchestra room or hanging around the auditorium with my friends after school until the buses came.
2. Playing the card game "Spoons" at the end of every school year.
3. Every Pine View Fair and Spirit Week!
4. Emceeding for the Wild West Pine View Variety Show with my best friend.
5. Stopping Mr. Murray's philoso-



Jiayi Zhu
Editor-in-Chief

- phy class because of my "insanely loud" back crack.
- 6. My AP Biology table junior year.
- 7. Having Ms. Melton's hedgehog stuck in the leg of my pants.
- 8. Third Grade Rocks.
- 9. FSPA, CSPA, and every Torch and Match press night, ever.

One of my most treasured memories is getting to know my friend, Ava Lenerz. It's my greatest honor to introduce her as next year's Editor-in-Chief. I wholeheartedly believe she will do an incredible job, and I can't wait to see what she accomplishes.

Whether we've talked once or hundreds of times, I'm grateful for the people that I have been lucky to meet. I'm grateful for the communities I've called home. I'm grateful for my favorite memories, which serve as a reminder to cherish every moment, every person, and every place. I'm grateful that there's time for so many more moments to memories.



Ava Lenerz
Next year's Editor-in-Chief

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