



# The Tower

94th Year: Issue 6

Princeton High School  
151 Moore Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540

November 2, 2022

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

### News & Features

2 School board election: meet the candidates

### Opinions

6 The value of online learning

### Vanguard

9 A brief history of shoes

### Arts & Entertainment

11 Films to binge with your Halloween candy

### Sports

14 PHS field hockey crowned division champions

## PHS EMBRACES DIVERSITY THROUGH HISPANIC HERITAGE CELEBRATIONS



photo: Emily Qian



photo: Emily Qian



photo: Emily Qian

Top left: A Hispanic heritage-themed bulletin board in a PHS hallway. Bottom left: Students performing a dance during the Hispanic Heritage Month assembly. (Left to right) Regina Sakar '24, Brian Donis '25, Sasha Caracalos '24, Osbaldo Morales '25, Dani Morales '26, Katie Santos '25. Right: PHS a cappella group Cloud Nine performing at the Hispanic Heritage Month assembly. (Left to right) Sarah Villamil '23, Brielle Moran '24, Leah Rose-Seiden '24, Brina Yang '24, Eva Zizak '23, Emma MacMillan '23, Reva Doshi '24, Riya Ravindran '23, Maggie Dooley '24, Sylvie LeBouef '24, Sofia Marcon '24, Bianca Orostizaga '23.

**Hangyeol Cheong**, STAFF WRITER  
**Brandon Zhu**, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

As PHS strives to embrace its diversity, it has placed importance in acknowledging and respecting the many cultures that make up its student body. One way in which it has done this is through its celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, lasting from September 15 to October 15, with this year marking its 54th year of celebration.

There are many ways the school celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month, including hosting a Hispanic Heritage Month assembly, reading the daily Pledge of Allegiance in Spanish, hosting Hispanic heritage exhibits in the Numina Gallery, and bringing back the popular door-decorating contest from last year.

“One of the things we pride ourselves in at Princeton High School is understanding world cultures,” said Frank Chmiel, the PHS Principal. “The way we build that empathy is by learning from different cultures, learning about them, and showing your support and honoring them.”

As part of the initiative to learn more about Hispanic Heritage Month, each grade attended an assembly during assigned periods on October 18. The assembly consisted of a number of performances by PHS students, all centered around the theme of celebration of Hispanic heritage.

Performances by the PHS a cappella groups were a major part of the assembly. Before

entering the auditorium, The Cat’s Meow, an all-female acapella group, welcomed the numerous students with a rendition of a song called “Vivir Mi Vida” by Marc Anthony, the top-selling tropical salsa artist of all time and winner of multiple Grammys. Cloud Nine, another PHS a cappella group, also performed at the assembly, singing a song named “Gracias A La Vida,” which was written by Mercedes Sosa, an Argentine singer.

“The assembly went really well! To prepare for it, we started to practice about two weeks in advance and every day at practice until the assembly. Bianca [Orostizaga] and Sarah [Villamil] are two Latina members in Cloud Nine and they helped us to learn the Spanish and the pronunciations,” said Leah Rose Seiden '24, a member of Cloud Nine.

Though this year’s assembly had similarities with last year’s, continuing with choral performances, dancing, and a flag parade, there were also noticeable differences. Possibly the most significant change was the shortened length of the event, aimed at leaving time for students to visit interactive stations posted outside the PAC.

“We cut half of the assembly in order to engage the students more. We want them to have more participation and one-on-one

interactions. It brings up the energy for the rest of the students,” said Jealyn Vega Ramos '23, Co-President of the Latinas Unidas club. “The stations we prepared after the assembly had things like the karaoke, the tattoos; things that we would typically see in our culture that many students don’t know about, or just could learn more about.”

In addition to the reduction in the length of the assembly, some of its performances were also modified in order to better highlight the diversity of Hispanic culture.

“One difference [from last year] was the flag entrance. Instead of having it from the doors, we had it on stage in order to again, acknowledge all of our flags, and all the countries very clearly,” Ramos said.

Another way that PHS is celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month this year is through the door-decoration contest. In this contest, students collaborate with both their peers and teachers to furnish their homeroom doors with Hispanic-themed decorations. They have until November 1, or Dia De Los Muertos, to finalize the decoration of their doors. This fun competition exposes students to many aspects of the vibrant culture of Latin America, including the traditional paper cutout ornaments commonly made during Cinco de Mayo, and the colorful skulls of Dia De Los Muertos.

Along with the assembly and celebrations, the Latinos Unidos Club and the school administrative team worked to come up with more creative and engaging ways to spread the Hispanic culture.

“There are multiple more ways we recognize the month, including some of the food we cook in the cafeteria, during the month, as well as some of the displays we have going on around the building,” said Chmiel. “Of course, the assembly is one of the climaxes of the way we recognize the month.”

While PHS is doing many things to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, there are still many ways that it could improve. Specifically, Ramos believes that because of how much aspects of Hispanic culture, such as music, are very influential to our day to day lives, Hispanic Heritage should continue to be celebrated all year long.

“We should be able to celebrate [Hispanic Heritage] all year long. Not just to enjoy the celebration once October 15 ends, [but also] be able to still acknowledge the fact that these Latino and Hispanic artists are making a change with their music,” Ramos said. ■



photo: Emily Qian

A part of an exhibit in the PHS Numina Gallery dedicated to celebrating Hispanic heritage.



# Meet the candidates!

## Princeton Public Schools school board election

Olivia Mao, NEWS & FEATURES CO-EDITOR  
 Matthew Chen, STAFF WRITER  
 Wenya Huan, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

### Dafna Kendal

#### What issues do you believe the district needs to address for education?

I like to make sure there's more representation of kids of color and kids with special needs in higher level classes. We just reviewed the data from last year and there were only three Black kids who took AP exams. That's not representative of the student body. We have to look at the prerequisites [for courses], and make sure they are not too burdensome to limit students from choosing courses they want to take.

#### Why are you interested in running for the school board?

I'm really proud of some of the things I've done. I was on the board when we moved the start time at the high school back to 8:20 a.m. Being on the school board means having the opportunity to do things that really affect students.

#### What are some experiences that prepared you to serve as the school board member?

I'm currently the board president. I've served as board vice president and have been on every board committee with six years experience in total. With all the turnover in administration, it's important to have board members who know how we have done things so that we continue the traditions that are very important in Princeton. For example, having high school graduation on the front lawn of PHS. We had to do it on the football field due to COVID, but we advocated for graduation to return to the front lawn for the Class of 2022.

#### What are your top priorities for the school?

We're a very well-regarded school district and I want to ensure that continues. I want to make sure that all kids have the opportunities they need.



photo courtesy: Dafna Kendal



photo courtesy: Rita Rafalovsky

### Rita Rafalovsky

#### What are your top priorities for the school?

In addition to education, mental health is no less important. We need to bring in psychologists who are experts in this area to create an assessment for us, and also some goals about where we need to be [in mental health] and how to make sure that our kids are doing well.

#### What issues do you believe the district needs to address for education?

If you look at the proficiency scores at the state level before and after COVID, our scores are, especially math, well below nearby schools (Montgomery and West Windsor). I refuse to think that our kids are any less smart than the kids in our neighboring schools. There's something else that's going on and we need to figure out what that is to address it for a well-rounded education.

#### Why are you interested in running for the school board?

I'm interested in running for the school board for the most important reason: to improve the quality of education that we have here.

#### What differentiates you from other candidates?

I am a first-generation immigrant. I went through the whole ESL experience and was put in some of the worst classes because I didn't speak the language. So I definitely have a lot of sympathy and understanding towards the kids who have been there. I feel like we are not leveraging the intellectual capital of the community that we have here. I would like to create some kind of metrics around it, and to create these champions so that we sort of have a pipeline of kids in our school district.

### Deborah Bronfeld

#### What differentiates you from other candidates?

I really speak my mind. I have voted no a lot. I know many of my board members never vote no. You know what, I'm not afraid to speak my mind. I'm really not, and I'm not afraid to say "I don't think this is the right direction." And I will always tell you why I'm voting a certain way.

#### What are some experiences that prepared you to serve as the school board member?

I went to public school. I've worked a lot in nonprofits and I feel a lot of nonprofit work is helping people and listening. I worked for an organization called Dress for Success, where we gave women business attire to go on interviews, and we set up a lot of interviewing. I've worked for a couple of food banks. My past with these nonprofits is a big part of me and I always want to help. Being on the board, I can speak for those who cannot.

#### Why are you interested in running for the school board?

I feel like I'm anything but status quo. I just want to keep improving [the district]. The pandemic definitely changed the direction of what we wanted to do, and what we could focus on. There's a lot more that I want to work on.

#### What issues do you believe the district needs to address for education?

We just need to make sure we have the teachers who are really there to teach you. I do know a couple people that stopped me and said they were just so impressed with the teachers on back to school night. I remember [parents from back to school night] saying that these teachers really want to teach their kids. Teachers just have this breadth of what they want to teach and they're here to teach.



photo courtesy: Deborah Bronfeld

### Susan Kanter



photo courtesy: Susan Kanter

#### Why are you interested in running for the school board?

I was PTO president at PHS for seven years, and I am running for a second term for school board, maybe one that's not as dominated by the pandemic. I am running to continue to support students social and emotional health, support academic programming that fits our students' interests, and continue my focus on sustainability improvements, maintenance and safety for our facilities.

#### What are your top priorities for the school?

The most important issue is to have the supports in place for health and wellness. I want to make sure kids are making those connections that they lost during the pandemic. The new movement space that we're going to incorporate into the gym and the learning classes, alongside the new schedule, really gives people time to both have physical wellness and to relax their brains.

#### What experiences prepared you to serve as the school board member?

I was a parent representative to bell committee that changed the start time and the schedule for student wellness. I provided parent input to the committee, which includes teachers and administrators working to change the schedule. Also as the PTO president, we gave parents a forum to provide feedback as committee worked. I had been involved in the facilities and the development of the referendum as well.

#### What issues do you believe the district needs to address for education?

We want to put in support so that every student feels they have someone who they can talk to. We need to find the balance for each student between academic challenges and finding courses that they're just interested in. Bringing them joy and taking care of themselves is equally important to me.



## Jeffrey Lucker soon to retire, leaving behind 54 year legacy at PHS

Daniel Guo, STAFF WRITER  
Matias Da Costa and Reed Sacks,  
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

After a 54-year career that began in January of 1969, Jeffrey Lucker, PHS Social Studies Teacher, will retire on February 1, 2023. His time at the school contributing to educational progress will undoubtedly leave behind a significant impact on students and teachers alike.

With a teacher as experienced as Lucker, people might easily assume that he was always passionate about teaching. While studying at the University of Wisconsin though, he had many differing interests. However, just as Lucker graduated with a major in history, the start of the Vietnam War brought with it a military service draft for anybody who was not in a select profession. Given that college students were draft exempt, Lucker had two options: either continue school in pursuit of his Master's Degree, or go to Vietnam. In the end, he went with the first option, and due to a strong affinity for history and teaching, he decided that education was what he wanted to pursue.

"Sometimes I say, in trying to decide whether to be a cellist or a doctor, I became a teacher. I actually thought of both and then somehow it became teaching," Lucker said.

After finishing his education and a short stint as a student teacher at a school in Wisconsin, Lucker moved to Princeton, New Jersey, after he was offered a job at PHS. While he had his doubts about the move, he quickly settled into the new position.

"I wanted to stay in Wisconsin, but there was nothing available," said Lucker. "One day, I got an opening in New Jersey, and it was for mid-year... I felt like I was doing what I was meant to do."

As a teacher, Lucker frequently draws upon his own experiences as a child in the New York public school system. He believes that the privilege of having good teachers in his early years allowed him to blossom into the accomplished educator he is now, and he hopes to set up a similar example for his students.

"When I was in high school, we had really good teachers," said Lucker. "One of [my] teachers was teaching in the aftermath of the Second World War. They [had] gone through the cost of college on the G.I. Bill, and they had gone to City College, which was called the poor man's Harvard at the time. They were very well educated, so I had good role models."

Interactions with students is another factor that compelled Lucker to keep teaching, as he believes that keeping his students engaged in his class is extremely important. Lucker's classes often consist mostly of student-driven discussions in which students are prompted to form their own thoughts and opinions about the content



Jeffrey Lucker teaching a lesson about world religions to his students. This year marks his 54th and final year teaching at PHS.

that they are learning. In addition, he accomplishes this goal by keeping his classes up to date with current events.

"I think that if you're a teacher, it's one of the best ways to learn something. [In] addition to enjoying the interaction with students, I enjoy preparing for class because I read and I try to keep my classes up to date [by looking] at new articles and new materials," Lucker said.

Lucker's emphasis on promoting student engagement and also preparing interesting lessons does not go unnoticed by his students. Kush Sharad '24, a student in one of Lucker's AP World History and Cultures classes, especially appreciates how much variety there is in his lessons from day to day.

"I like how he teaches in a lot of different ways, using videos, texts, and articles, not just one type like some of my other teachers," Sharad said.

Lucker's unique teacher style aims to further nurture his students' passion for learning. In keeping his students engaged, Lucker hopes that they take away both an increased knowledge of history and a love for the subject as well.

"I think it's important for everybody to understand history...because history is our memory and you need memory in order to survive," said Lucker. "It's a way of

finding out who you are, and where you came from, both as a country [and] as a people. It's a way of understanding the world better and appreciating [it]. Our present lives [are] products of the past."

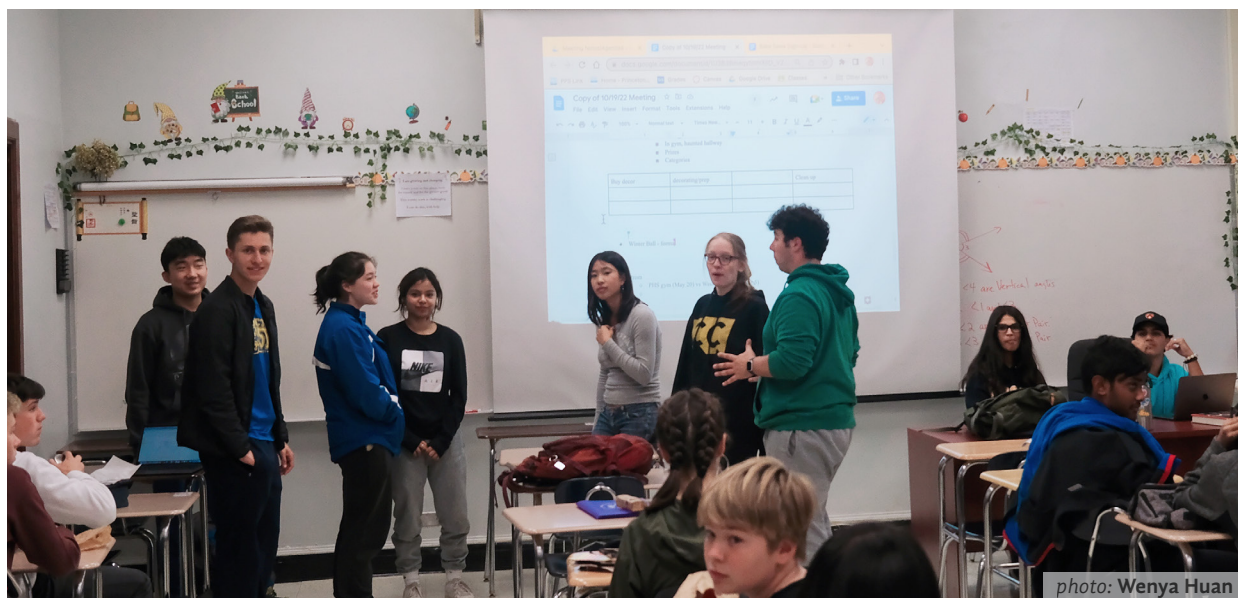
Along with his lesson planning, Lucker's vibrant personality is another thing which many students like about him. He constantly demonstrates his passion for the subject, making it hard for many students to not enjoy his class.

"Mr. Lucker is a really interesting person which makes him stand out from just being a good teacher... I feel that there are definitely some great takeaways from this class both from him and the subject," said Edward Cao '24, another student in one of Lucker's AP World History and Cultures classes.

Following his retirement, Lucker hopes to pursue his other interests such as running and going to the gym. He is also planning on continuing to learn more about history, auditing courses at Rutgers, and taking classes at the Evergreen Forum in Princeton. Possibly what he looks forward to the most, though, are his plans to travel to Europe, specifically Malta.

Lucker's dedication to teaching has inspired countless students. As he moves on, one thing will be certain: his legacy will remain at PHS. ■

## Creation of a Student Council general body hopes to increase student engagement



Members of the Student Council discussing Halloween plans during the first meeting which involved the newly created general body. (Left to right) Lawrence He '24, Aiden Linkov '24, Ashlena Brown '24, Rachel Guhathakurta '24, Ashley Chen '23, Katharina Mueller '23, Matthew Baglio '23.

Peter Eaton, NEWS AND FEATURES CO-EDITOR

Starting this year, the PHS Student Council will consist not only of elected members, but also of a general body, which will be open for all students to join. This move, made by both the advisors as well as elected members, hopes to create a more inclusive and engaging environment in the student council. The general body will attend weekly meetings along with the current Student Council members, allowing its members to have a prominent voice.

Student Council has been an organization at PHS for a long time; however, for most of the time that it has existed, it has been significantly influenced by the leadership of its advisors. Due to the limited number of students in the

council, it has struggled to put on all of its normal events, including the Homecoming and Prom dances, and relied on advisors as a result. Jennifer Li, PHS Mathematics Teacher, took the role of advisor for the council just over a year ago, and since then, she has made it one of her primary goals to make the student council more student-led.

"During my first four years at PHS, I saw that the group was very advisor-led," said Li. "There were a lot of meetings that the student body president ended up running. I'm trying to make that happen more for this school year and having the presidents create the agenda and also run meetings rather than the advisor."

Li hopes that the creation of a general body for the Student Council will help aid the council in the planning of their events. This would mean that with the addition of

the general body, a decreased workload will allow student council members to exhibit more leadership skills and rely less on the advisors.

"It's a lot of work for only 20-something students and then the four or five advisors to create, plan, and execute all these events alone. So I thought that we should allow students to join the Student Council, to just have more students, really, for all these events," Li said.

The existence of the general body will also provide a way for students who wouldn't normally participate in the council to get involved in school events. Additionally, as not every student who runs is able to win their election, the existence of the general body will ensure that all are now able to participate in the council regardless.

"The general body will allow us to get more ideas from students who might not feel like they want to have an elected position with the Student Council, and to have the full responsibility of being an elected member," said Li. "This means that they can still be a part of the group and have ideas heard."

Along with helping put on planning-intensive events, the creation of a general body for the Student Council is also hoped to help the Student Council improve their outreach efforts. It will achieve this by making it easier for students to get involved in Student Council-related activities if they want to.

"I think that the general body will allow the community to be more involved, and learn more about what the Student Council actually does, because not very many people are on it. So with general body members, we can hopefully have a wider outreach," said Ashlena Brown '24, president of her class.

While the Student Council general body has only had a couple meetings since its creation, it already has been successful at achieving its goal of building a greater connection between the student body and the student council.

"I thought it was cool taking part in student council decisions, as someone outside of the council," said Finn Neuneier '24, a member of the general body. "I'm excited to work with them to help plan events in the future." ■



**PRINCETON RECORD EXCHANGE**  
BUY & SELL • NEW & USED • CDs, DVDs & LPs



# OPINIONS

## Halloween: trick or treat?

Tamar Assayag, STAFF WRITER



graphic: Mia Gatzke

The season of witches and werewolves, of jack-o-lanterns and skeletons, and of superstitions and pranks, is just around the corner. Halloween delivers sugary scents and long-lasting memories, so why have so many of us highschoolers brushed aside this holiday that we once held so dear? Perhaps when we were younger we had this notion that someday we would outgrow this festivity, but have we?

Trick-or-treating on Halloween can provide high school students with a short break from external stress, as well as an opportunity to spend some quality time with younger siblings. Most importantly, Halloween grants us a chance to just have fun. After over two years of isolation from our neighbors and community where Halloween seemed, to many, like a safety risk, this wonderful event should definitely make a reappearance.

Halloween activities are a great way to take our minds off all of the tests, projects, and overdue assignments that collapse onto our plates during this time. For

juniors and seniors, this anxiety-free evening is a great way to wind down from the SATs, ACTs, and PSATs. Social activities reduce our stress from schoolwork, college applications, potential part-time jobs, and any other obligations we may have, boosting our mental health. At the end of the day, setting aside a few hours for Halloween won't make or break your GPA or sour your resume, so why not escape into a fantastical world for one night?

COVID-19 said no to opening doors to kids in silly costumes and no to trading candy with our friends and eating our share obsessively within the following weeks. But the majority of PHS is now unmasked, and Princetonians are generally less fearful of seeing each other's faces — a gradual return to normal is occurring, and this should include celebrating Halloween in all the ways that we missed out on. COVID-19 induced a massive amount of pressure and loss in so many, fracturing families and communities, so it's a blessing

that we may finally get to take back the Halloweens we lost. We often forget that Halloween isn't just about gorging on sweets and dressing up; it's about bringing our community together. On Hallow's Eve, almost every family across town makes an effort to create a positive (-ly spooky) experience for each other's children, buying candy and putting up decorations. It's a chance for kids and teens to say hello to and play pretend with their neighbors who they almost never see. We can't let the pandemic blow out the candles of this precious, unifying holiday.

Trick-or-treating can be a bonding experience, not just between friends or neighbors, but also between siblings. Taking your younger sibling trick-or-treating may at first sound like a tiresome evening, or even like a waste of time, but for some it may actually be extremely rewarding. Many teens (myself included) have a somewhat rocky relationship with their younger siblings, but a few hours together could strengthen this connection. Some of my most cherished memories have come from trick-or-treating with my younger brother when I was in middle school. That opportunity to spend some time with him truly brought us closer — we were usually surrounded by our own friends and we didn't make time to be around each other. With an abundance of other commitments and responsibilities, most of us could likely benefit from having this time to nourish our sibling relationships.

Just like finding a board game that was your favorite when you were younger and remembering why you adored it so much, rediscovering the anticipation for trick-or-treating may turn out to be an overwhelmingly positive experience. Yes, we are all growing and maturing, but that doesn't mean that we should completely discard the things that brought us joy. You'd be amazed at how enjoyable trick-or-treating can still be for us highschoolers. Be it thrifting clothing for elaborate costumes, exploring the nooks and crannies of Princeton, or roaming Princeton University at dark, Halloween will not disappoint.

With autumn finally upon us, Halloween is so close you can almost taste the delicious flavors of your favorite sweets. As kids, our most treasured pastime during this holiday season was trick-or-treating, but the belief that this can no longer be an activity we enjoy is simply not true. In fact, high school students could largely benefit from the opportunity to relieve stress, spend time bonding with family members and the rest of the community, and reclaim the giddy excitement of Halloween that many of us had as kids. After all we've been through, we deserve to love Halloween again, so don't be afraid to slip into a costume this year and prowl the streets. ■

## PHS Takes: How do we like to use our free periods?

Compiled by Thomas Zhang and Alexander Margulis, OPINIONS CO-EDITORS, and Tamar Assayag, STAFF WRITER

A collage of seven student photos, each with a speech bubble containing a quote about how they use their free periods. The photos are arranged in a roughly circular pattern. The quotes are: "I enjoy going for walks and hanging out with friends." (Lillian Gonzales '23), "I usually scroll on my phone and socialize." (Wolfgang Dorman-Schroeder '23), "I take the time to practice my saxophone for band." (Quentin Touzot '25), "I usually do my homework or watch a movie." (Clara Kleinman '25), "I like listening to music. Mazzy Star is one of my favorites!" (Navika Sonig '24), "Leave." (Kevin Ren '26), and "I usually do my homework or watch a movie." (Clara Kleinman '25). The photos are credited to Thomas Zhang, Tamar Assayag, and Alexander Margulis.



# PHS needs to rethink school spirit

Jane Bennett, STAFF WRITER

We constantly consume media that skews our perception of the ideal American high school experience. Popular shows like “Stranger Things” or “Riverdale” create a narrative that the so-called ideal high school experience is dominated by athletics. However, at PHS, that experience is far different. Many students place more emphasis on accelerated classes, college applications, and other academic achievements than they do on sports. Although it can be good for us to have an outlet for our academic stress, school spirit events such as forced pep rallies and monotonous spirit weeks do not actually bolster our camaraderie as students. There are better ways to bring about a sense of belonging among students at PHS.

PHS closed out September with the Homecoming football game, Pep Rally, Homecoming dance, a Spirit Week, and then opened October with the Week of Respect. Although many students participated in the activities, the vast majority of the student body tried to ignore the bombardment of school spirit events, and lots of students didn’t even know that they were occurring. For many students, the events felt like a nuisance more than anything else. The Pep Rally alone consumed three hours of the school day, wasting valuable time where students could have continued to learn in class or work on assignments. Personally, I had a lab due on the day of the Pep Rally and would have preferred to be in class rather than outside, obligated to participate. At least having the option to opt of the event would’ve been nice — instead, thanks to the security guard who made sure that students could not leave, despite the fact that classes had ended for the day, made participation feel like an inconvenience rather than an opportunity for students to feel closer together, and colored the entire event in a slightly dystopian light. In fact, making participation mandatory didn’t even increase our support of our school’s football team, because it made the event seem somewhat disingenuous, causing many students to only participate halfheartedly, if at all. If PHS had allowed students to participate without mandating it, the event — and by extension,

“The Pep Rally consumed three hours of the school day, wasting valuable time...”

the school spirit it was designed to create, would have felt more organic, and less like forced “fun”. For example, students weren’t forced to attend Homecoming, and it was far more exciting than the Pep Rally, because our connections with others felt genuine instead of orchestrated.

Even the most basic concepts behind our school spirit celebrations at PHS are flawed. Athletics make up a large part of our school spirit (again, despite the fact that the average PHS cares about athletics less than the average student at many other schools), but our Homecoming game and Pep Rally overemphasize male-dominated sports. Although PHS faculty encourage students to attend the Tiger Cage for all sports, the athletic events with the highest attendance are male-dominated. For example, the women’s tennis team has received minimal school support throughout the season, even though they are virtually undefeated. Similarly, whenever field hockey, women’s soccer, or volleyball have games, there are far fewer students in attendance than there are for men’s soccer or football. There were no pep rallies when the women’s soccer team advanced at MCTs, or when the women’s tennis team advanced at sectionals. However, when

our abysmal football team lost their Homecoming game, we were all encouraged to come out and watch. Spirit week should be about all sports at PHS, and it would be nice for the administration to encourage students to rally around all sports to meaningfully create a more supportive and inclusive student body.

Aside from Homecoming, PHS had Spirit Week and Week of Respect back to back, where the school rewarded students for dressing up in certain ways. However, considering how the only days that more than a handful of students seemed to participate were the dual pajama days, neither initiative was much of a success. Not only did the two weeks have extremely similar dress codes for each day of the week, making them feel redundant, there seemed to be no point to going the extra mile to dress up. Many students — myself included — wondered how dressing in pajamas could make us be more respectful of our peers and teachers. Instead of focusing on having the students dress uniformly for the Week of Respect, PHS should focus on actually creating a more respectful environment — one that



embraces differences. If they pushed us to compliment one another, or help people in our neighborhood, or say hi to people we’ve never spoken to before, PHS would actually be helping to make students more respectful. Rather than rewarding students for simply wearing a shirt, the school could encourage teachers and administrators to commend small acts of kindness that they witness from students. Respect is about being attentive to the feelings of others, not dressing like a “tacky tourist”.

Although all of these events can at first seem like a way for the student body to get closer together at the start of the year, they have never been particularly successful. For most students, they just feel superficial, and to various teachers, they might seem like needless distractions that throw off class schedules. Moreover, we should not have to look the same or dress the same to be able to respect one another. It is important that the PHS administration recognizes that we are not the Steve Harringtons or the Archie Andrews from the shows that we love, but real-life people who have their own senses of fashion, their own unique hobbies and extracurriculars, and their own individual ways of showing kindness. If the administration ends up organizing future “spirit weeks,” it should make sure that creativity and varied PHS activities (we have over a hundred active clubs!) are prioritized over uniformity, mandatory events, and, of course, sports. PHS needs to realize that students will only show true spirit when it’s of their own volition. ■

## CHEERS

STUFF WE LIKE

&

STUFF WE DON'T

## JEERS

HALLOWEEN!

HISPANIC HERITAGE month

Eating OUTSIDE during lunch

The A&E CROSSWORD

THE FOREVER STORY by JID

The NEW WING

ANDOR on Disney+

MIDNIGHTS by Taylor Swift

Malfunctioning PAPER TOWEL DISPENSERS

Broken AIR CONDITIONERS

Confusing SCHEDULES

Intimidating NAVIANCE SCATTERGRAPHS

SNL cold opens

Kanye West’s TWITTER

Cyclical RECESSIONS

TESTS



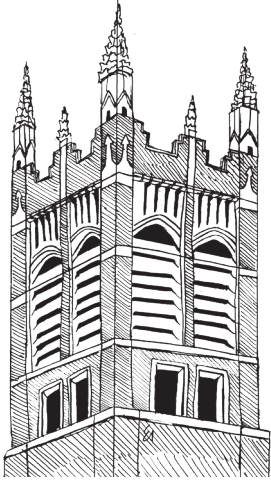
Wouldn't a cookie taste good right now?

PRINCETON'S HOMETOWN COOKIE SHOP

real ingredients. freshly baked. nut free. downright yummy.

14 Chambers Street | 603.266.5437 | www.milkncookies.online





## The value of online learning

### Editorial

It's hard to find anyone at PHS who wants to return to remote learning. The last couple years of Zoom meetings in lieu of in-person classes resulted in social isolation and a poor learning environment for students at PHS. With the world slowly recovering, the district debuted a new policy surrounding remote learning. The administration decreed that students are no longer allowed to learn virtually. This new policy, intended to bring a sense of normalcy back to PHS, means that even if a student is out of school because they have to quarantine with COVID-19, they are not allowed to participate in their classes using Zoom. However, such a policy is a step back for education.

Despite the obvious downsides to learning on Zoom, such as the inability for students to truly connect with teachers and peers, the application is still a valuable tool and should not be disparaged. Zoom is just one of many beneficial technologies that we were introduced to during the pandemic. For example, we all adapted to Canvas and are now comfortable using it for almost all of our assignments. We also adapted to online textbooks, eliminating the need to lend out physical copies which are easily lost. The district's efforts to move on from virtual learning ignore the benefits that it has offered and will be able to offer its students.

Requiring students to quarantine after contracting COVID-19 while simultaneously taking away their ability to virtually participate in class makes it difficult for them to stay up to date with their work. Therefore, this new decision encourages sick students to come into school when they are supposed to be quarantined or opt to not test for COVID-19 at all. While infection rates are low right now, our town is still not quite in the clear yet, with Mercer County

still exceeding 150 reported active cases as recently as October 5. Ignoring the reality that COVID-19 is still with us and making it harder for students to isolate will encourage transmission at the high school, and ultimately keep the pandemic around for longer.

Even beyond COVID-19, the district should also consider allowing students who are absent for other reasons to use Zoom; for instance, if a student had strep throat, they would still be able to follow along with a lecture from home. But if they were not allowed to listen in virtually, they would be compelled to attend school to understand the material, which could cause the contagious disease to quickly spread through the student body. Of course, students shouldn't be able to just stay home for any reason — the school should still enforce the absence limit and ask for forms of verification like doctor's notes.

Such a policy would not be without precedent: at Princeton University, professors are required to either Zoom sick students into class or record their lectures for the entire duration of the students' quarantine, thus ensuring that their students can remain engaged throughout the semester. While high school courses may not be as fast-paced or rigorous as university classes, they are still demanding — missing just one math class, for example, could leave a student an entire unit behind the rest of the class.

The pandemic was a painful period for everyone, but it would be a mistake to try to wipe away all of the things that it left behind. The district needs to reconsider its decision to cancel online learning. The worst thing PHS can do right now is forget all of the lessons that COVID-19 taught us. Permitting the careful use of applications like Zoom would benefit everyone at our school. ■

## How not to fail

Thomas Zhang and Alex Margulis, OPINIONS  
CO-EDITORS



graphic: Mia Gatzke

It's 12:30 a.m., and you have a lab report and an essay due tomorrow morning. Or is it this morning? Your brain is too tired and caffeine-charged to know — the only thing you are sure about is that your teachers are out to get you. It can sometimes feel like PHS is a big diabolical machine, the days populated by robotic teachers handing out assignment after assignment, the nights overrun by the task of completing the arduous paperwork that was handed out in the classroom. This, of course, is not the case. The vast majority of their teachers are kind, dedicated human beings, and above all, they want you to succeed. Yes, some of them could do better, but believe it or not, they are not completely to blame for all of your headaches.

For one, students should be aware of the time and effort that is required from advanced or AP classes before enrolling in five of them. They should ask themselves questions like: Can I take AP English

if I have soccer practice three days a week? If a student has to stay up until the twilight hours of the morning working on assignments, it is almost always that they have either overloaded themselves or have waited until the last minute to complete them.

Unfortunately, many of the avenues that teachers try to construct to help students find success in their classes are highly underutilized. Office hours, for example, are one of the best ways that students can make sure they fully understand the skills and concepts that were covered in class, since they can ask any questions they might have directly to the teacher. With a resource that powerful, it seems like every single student would want to go to as many of these office hour sessions as possible, but instead, only a select few regularly attend. Because the office hours are so helpful and demonstrate commitment to the class at hand, these students are almost exclusively the ones who get the highest grades on assessments. This creates almost a paradox: only the students who are already doing well continue to go to office hours, whereas the students who could benefit the most from them don't. Students should try to attend teachers' office hours regularly, even if they don't have any burning questions, though they should make sure that they know what they wish to discuss beforehand. Robert Corell, an AP Chemistry teacher, regularly encourages students to come to his room during lunch to work through homework and practice problems. After all, the single best place to do your chemistry homework is right beside your chemistry teacher.

There are also plenty of other avenues for getting in touch with a teacher about the subject matter other than office hours, like emailing them with questions or asking about anything that seems confusing during class time. PHS teachers don't want to make their content unnecessarily hard, and even though it can feel like some concepts are intentionally confusing,

these are the very problems students should ask about. If a teacher realizes that the entire class is stuck on one problem, they're likely to go over it again for everyone. No teacher wants their students to feel lost.

Teachers don't want their students to miss a homework assignment either. Although it's pretty common for students to say that they "didn't know there was homework" if they miss an English reading or a math worksheet, many teachers already have systems to solve this problem. Pretty much every teacher at PHS has a schedule where students can find the homework assignments that are due every week embedded on their Canvas page. Whether it comes in a slide show, a Google Doc, or even an expansive spreadsheet that covers homework assignments for the entire year, these schedules can help make sure that students never have to turn in homework late just because they forgot it existed. It's just like the textbooks that teachers send home at the beginning of the year, or the tutoring sessions that take place at the Ideas Center — the tools students need to succeed have already been handed to them, and the only thing stopping many students from scoring well on tests is that they haven't started to use them yet.

There are many more specific problems that students might have in their classes, like feeling as though the readings are too dense, or wanting to redo a problem on the test because you never learned one of the earlier math concepts that it included, that these methods might not directly address. Still, if students go into their classrooms remembering who teachers really are (humans who are passionate about helping their students succeed and sharing knowledge) instead of thinking of them as machines they have to "bypass" in order to get an A, they'll almost certainly see an increase in their grades, and, perhaps even more importantly, an increase in the enjoyment of their classes. ■

## The Tower

Princeton High School  
151 Moore Street, Princeton, New Jersey

© 2022 Staff of the Tower

**Editors-in-Chief** Christopher Bao, Julie Liu  
**Managing Editor** Cherie Sun  
**News & Features Editors** Peter Eaton, Olivia Mao  
**News & Features Staff** Matthew Chen, Hangyeol Cheong, Daniel Guo  
**Opinions Editors** Alexander Margulis, Thomas Zhang  
**Opinions Staff** Tamar Assayag, Jane Bennett  
**Vanguard Editors** Sophie Miller, Andrew Zhao  
**Vanguard Staff** Kristina Sarkisova  
**Arts & Entertainment Editors** Shumona Bhattacharjya, Rida Mian  
**Arts & Entertainment Staff** Sky Jo, Marina Peres, Sara Shahab Diaz  
**Sports Editors** Jessica Chen, Frankie Gamio  
**Sports Staff** Dester Selby-Salazar  
**Visuals Editors** Wenya Huan, Emily Qian, Lydia Madamopolou  
**Visuals Staff** Angela Wu  
**Head Copy Editors** Holly Christiansen, Sophie Feldman  
**Copy Staff** Eve Bertrand  
**Business Managers** Alex Greenberg, Ron Mishra, Debolina Sen  
**Online Editors** Bella Cui, Luke Tong  
**Advisors** Lauren King, Doug Levandowski

### Mission Statement

The Tower serves as a medium of information for the community through reporting and/or analyzing the inner workings of Princeton High School, the school district, and cultural and athletic events that affect the student body; providing a source of general news for parents, teachers, and peers; voicing various opinions from an informed group of writers; and maintaining quality in accurate content and appealing aesthetics, as well as upholding professionalism and journalistic integrity.

### Editorial Board

The Editorial Board of the Tower consists of a select group of 13 Tower 2022 staff members. The views of board members are accurately reflected in the editorial, which is co-written each month by the Board, with primary authorship changing monthly.

### Letter and Submission Policy

All letters and articles are welcome for consideration. Please e-mail all submissions to [phstowersenioreditors@gmail.com](mailto:phstowersenioreditors@gmail.com). The editors reserve the rights to alter letters for length and to edit articles. The Editor-in-Chief takes full responsibility for the content of this paper.

### Subscribe to the Tower

Receive Princeton High School's award-winning newspaper at your home or business for only \$25.00 per year. E-mail [business@thetowerphs.com](mailto:business@thetowerphs.com) or fill out the Subscription Form available under "Subscribe to the Tower" at [phs.princetonnj12.org](http://phs.princetonnj12.org). Your contribution helps to defray printing costs and to support student journalism at PHS.

### The Tower Online

The Tower is available to read online at [www.thetowerphs.com](http://www.thetowerphs.com).

The newspaper accepts advice from the administration and the advisors in regard to the newspaper's content; however, the final decision to print the content lies with the Editors-in-Chief. The Tower's articles do not necessarily represent the views of the administration, faculty, or staff.

The Tower editorial is written in part by Peter Eaton, who is the son of Board of Education member Beth Behrend.



# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



photo: Wenya Huan



photo: Wenya Huan

Left: PHS Choir performing at the concert on October 21. Right: chairs and tables are set up across the stage. The set for this concert was designed to resemble a Portuguese cafe.

## Portuguese Fado-themed operetta marks first PHS Choir concert of the year

Sky Jo and Sara Shahab Diaz, STAFF WRITERS

As leaves begin to fall and pumpkin season begins, the Princeton High School Choir, led by director Vincent Metallo and assistant director Sarah Pelletier, opened its Fall Concert on October 21. As a PHS tradition, the fall concert each year is an operetta—a themed opera with some of the words spoken rather than sung. An operetta is more interactive than a traditional choir concert is, as there is more decoration involved in the set design, and the singers are more accessible to the audience members.

The theme of the fall concert changes each year. Last year's operetta was based on the works of Stephen Sondheim, an American composer and lyricist known for his stage works. This year, the concert theme was Portuguese Fado music. Fado can be traced back 250 years ago, where it was originally considered to be the music of taverns and brothels. Primarily focused on life at sea, the emotion conveyed through its melancholy lyrics made Fado a beloved art form.

"Fado is a genre about grief or broken hearts. It's described as a sort of a wailing, and I think it's a very beautiful form of song," said Riya Menon '23, a singer for PHS Choir.

As they prepare for their upcoming trip to Portugal, the choir students learned about Portuguese culture and significance through the rehearsals and practices. The choir directors also made sure the students learned about the significance of the show on Portuguese music and tradition, and made sure to educate their students on the origins of Fado music before their preparation.

For this concert, choir students had to learn the lyrics along with an entirely new language.

"It's more difficult to learn the music because you're learning the notes as well as another language in such a short amount of time, but I like it because we get to learn something new and it's cool to learn the pronunciation and sing in another language," said Rowan Gilmore '23.

Through the help of PHS nurse Margarida Cruz, who is Portuguese, and numerous language lessons, PHS Choir students were able to perfect their pronunciation. This performance also gives students an opportunity to immerse themselves in a new culture in-depth as the process of understanding the language with its nuances is especially time-consuming.

"I was excited to learn about a different culture and language, especially since it's such a beautiful language," Menon said.

## Matty Baglio '23 reminisces on time well spent in theater

Heidi Engelbert, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

As the lights begin to dim on his high school career, Matty Baglio '23 reflects on his acting journey that started in middle school. Attending a camp at McCarter Theatre sparked his initial interest in theater, and he has spent his time performing ever since. Recently, you may have seen him performing as Aaron Fox in last year's spring musical "Curtains," Chip Tolentino in "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," or Lucas Beineke in "The Addams Family." Being involved in theater opened up many opportunities for Baglio, such as competing in the STANJ (Speech & Theatre Association of New Jersey) competition, which involved competing in categories such as improv pairs and musical solo. Theater has also given Baglio the opportunity to work with PHS Tech Crew on various school productions. His long-standing involvement in theater has also resulted in the creation of many long-lasting friendships, and he enjoys getting to participate in an environment that allows everyone to support and encourage one another.

### Which of your acting performances are you the most proud of?

I would probably say Aaron Fox in "Curtains," just because I had to put the most work into that one, but in "I Love You Because" sophomore year, I had a lead and it was really tough because the actors really couldn't see each other until close to the filming of the show. I would say those two.

### Who have you performed with that has influenced your acting the most?

If I had to choose one, I'd say Dean Morgan '22, because we were in the same cast last year in "Curtains," we had a bunch of scenes together, we worked very well together, and at the end of the day he helped me out with a lot. It was a very beneficial working relationship, and also we're friends, so that's good.

### What have you learned in the last few years that has helped you become a better performer?

Perform it like you're doing it for the very first time. Never perform anything like you've been practicing it for months even though you have, because you want the audience to feel like it's their first time experiencing it, and if you look bored onstage, they're not gonna get the same experience. One more, which is kind of clichéd, is that if you get onstage and you're nervous, you have to just trust yourself. That's it. Those two words, it kind of works every time.

### What do you enjoy the most about the experience of onstage acting?

It's kind of thrilling because it has to be perfect, but at the same time you can let your experience kind of soar throughout the whole show. I think you have opportunities whenever you're onstage to be someone that people remember, which is pretty cool.

### Do you think your younger self would have imagined that you'd perform as much as you do now?

Yes and no. I feel like I've always wanted to do these shows, but I've never thought about doing tech crew, which I do for the plays. I always thought that I would be able to do everything so seamlessly, but I've had to whittle it down to three big things that I do in high school: singing, acting, and baseball.

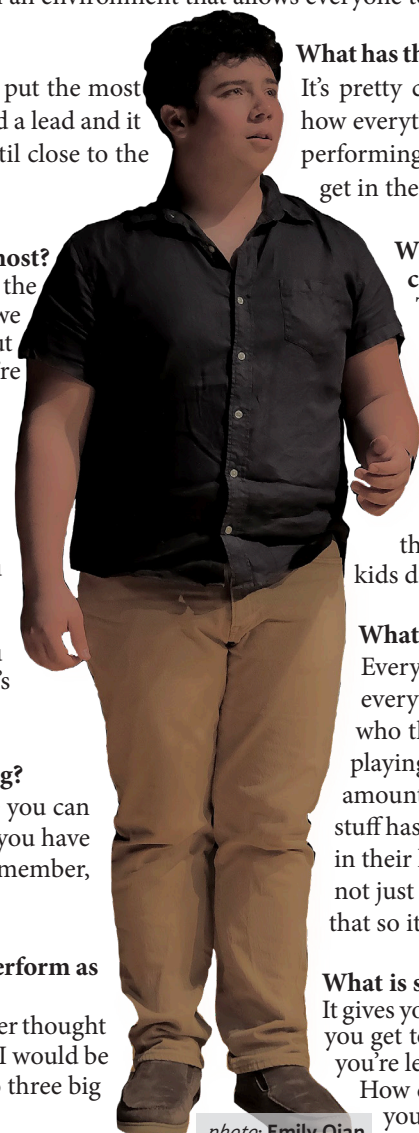


photo: Emily Qian

### What has the experience of getting to work on Tech Crew for shows been like?

It's pretty cool because I've never seen the backstage side, and now I know how everything runs and operates. I have a bigger respect for it now when I'm performing, because I know what needs to be done and I'm not gonna try to get in their way.

### What has the experience of getting to compete in the STANJ competition been like?

To be able to represent not only yourself, but also your school and the other talented people that you're there with, is very special. Everybody challenges one another to be the best they can be, but also encourages one another in order to be a great team.

### Was there anyone you looked up to that made you feel encouraged to get into acting?

I watched Disney Channel a lot as a kid, [so] I always wanted to do that. I was like, "Oh my god, I'm gonna be on a show." Watching those kids do that, and thinking, "I could do that!"

### What do you think is most important when trying to emulate a character?

Everybody in the world has an intricate life with a backstory for years, and every single day there's been something in that person's life that has affected who they are as a person. I think you have to remember that when you're playing a character, because you're not only just playing that character in that amount of time and that setting, but you're playing that character after all this stuff has happened in their life, and before everything that is going to happen in their life. You kind of have to remember that they're also a human, they're not just an enigma. They're a real person, and I think you have to remember that so it comes off as authentic.

### What is so special about acting that non-performers may not realize?

It gives you an outlook into another world. It's a different place from here, and you get to experience it as well as learn how to put it all into perspective: If you're learning about this other person, how does that affect your life here? How does becoming this person for two hours on a Saturday night help you in your life? ■



## Films to binge with your Halloween candy

### “It Follows”

**Todor Pophristic**, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It doesn't think. It doesn't feel. It doesn't give up. It follows.

The 2014 horror film “It Follows” won't startle you with jump scares or make your stomach turn with obscene gore. This doesn't make the movie any less scary, but it instead instills the viewer with creeping apprehension. “It Follows” revolves around a curse — when you're cursed, something or someone follows you with the intent and power to kill when it gets near you. “It” can be disguised as anything: a stranger in a crowd or even someone you know. It will follow at a slow pace, and the only way to get rid of it is to pass it on to someone else. Only you and the others who've had the disease can see it. In this case, “It Follows” focuses on the infected Jay, a 20-something-year-old woman living at her parents' house.

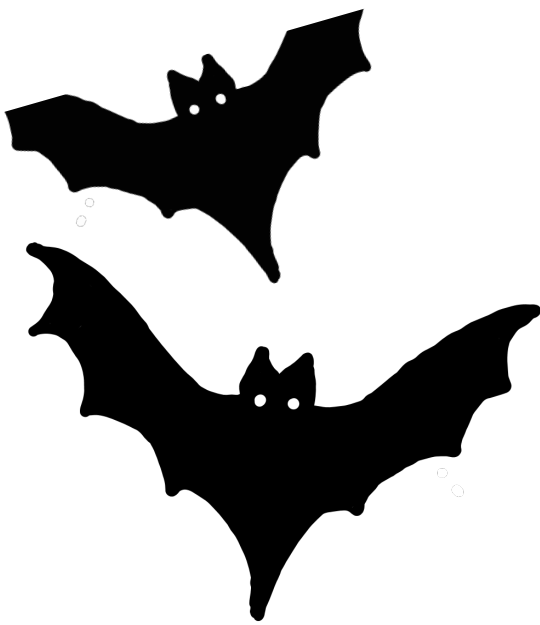
The film feels real by putting you in the game. We get many wide, slow zooming shots that reveal the environment in its entirety. In most of these shots, there's nothing. But in a good few you can spot something unknown leering in the background, coming closer toward the screen. Because of this, you are always looking around the screen to see if it's there, just as Jay does. The monster doesn't need to torture its victims to be scary; its existence is the torture. You feel just like Jay during the entire movie. You know something everyone else doesn't, but nobody believes you.

Even after the closing credits, it follows. ■

graphic: Emily Qian



graphic: Lydia Madamopolou



graphic: Lydia Madamopolou

### “I Know What You Did Last Summer”

**Sophie Zhang**, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Summer is supposed to be fun, but what if it's a horror? A thrilling slasher film that starts off in summer break, “I Know What You Did Last Summer” is perfect for when you want something fun but profound: discussions of what is right and wrong as well as how far we will go to protect our friends and ourselves.

The film opens with a view of the ocean and a cliff, where Julie (Jennifer Love Hewitt), Barry (Ryan Phillippe), Helen (Sarah Michelle Gellar), and Ray (Freddie Prinze Jr.) accidentally crash a car into a pedestrian. After covering up their crime, the four leave on bad terms, but find themselves working together as a fisherman hunts them down with his hook — a reference to the urban legend “The Hook.”

By bringing together many unique plot twists and jump scares, “I Know What You Did Last Summer” constantly keeps you on the edge of your seat. The characters can be frustrating at times with their resigned mentality, but they somehow make you want to root for them as they try to escape the killer. Part of what makes this film so compelling is seeing the characters deal with the consequences of their actions, including the guilt that holds them back from moving on. It is refreshing to watch the characters' growing care for one another despite their initial resentment towards each other. Although Kevin Williamson, screenwriter of “Scream,” may have intended for this novel adaptation to be a slasher, its themes of morality and remorse make it so much more than a stereotypical horror movie.

This film is a great choice for those who aren't a huge fan of gore, but enjoy some aspects of the horror genre, as well as morally gray characters. With its extraordinary cast and intriguing storyline, “I Know What You Did Last Summer” is a must watch that gives us a glimpse of supportive friendships, action-packed scenes, and everything in between. ■

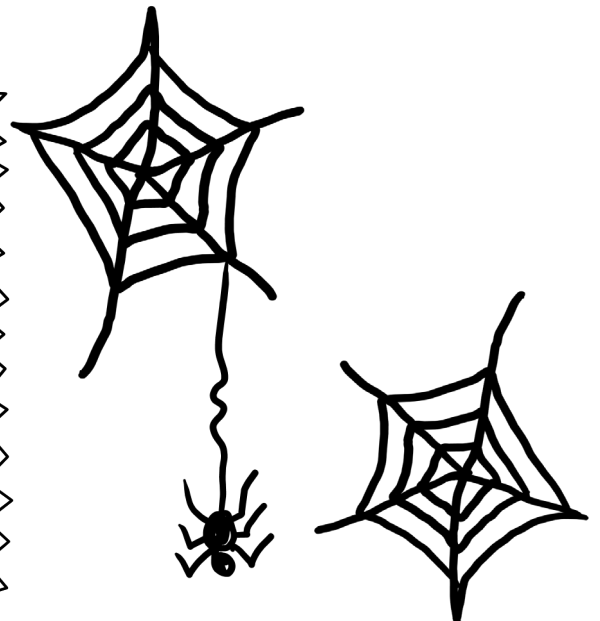
### “It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown”

**Anika Hadap**, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

There's something comforting about “It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown” that makes it the perfect fall movie. From the all-too-familiar music to the simple hand-drawn frames, it never fails to spark a sort of nostalgic joy in all viewers' hearts.

Released in 1966, the movie follows Charlie Brown, Snoopy, and the rest of the Peanuts gang on Halloween night. Wise and soft-spoken Linus is hoping to finally see the Great Pumpkin (essentially the Santa Claus of Halloween). Though ridiculed by his friends, Linus persists, deciding to wait for the Great Pumpkin in the pumpkin patch on Halloween night with Sally, Charlie Brown's younger sister. The rest of the group partakes in one of the purest forms of childhood joy: trick-or-treating. The two main storylines of the movie are interrupted by a three-minute long sequence showing Snoopy (dressed as a World War I flying ace) fighting with an imaginary enemy known only as the Red Baron. While a total shift from the rest of the movie, it's hard not to love this scene in all its bizarreness.

What makes this movie so lovable is its characters. Everyone in the movie has a memorable quirk that remains consistent throughout the whole franchise: Lucy and her advice booth, Pigpen and his dirt cloud, and Schroeder with his piano. The childlike innocence held by each one of them draws viewers back to the film each year. There is beauty in the film's simplicity. There are no massive conflicts, just a group of friends celebrating the simple joys in life. Charlie Brown and his friends embody everything that is beautiful about being a child. ■



graphic: Lydia Madamopolou



graphic: Lydia Madamopolou

### “Eraserhead”

**Luca Balescu**, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

David Lynch's “Eraserhead” (1977) is the closest the surrealist genius has come to making a typical jump scare laden horror movie, but anyone with a passing familiarity with Lynch knows that his movies, while generally creepy, can never truly be categorized as any one genre. “Eraserhead,” like Lynch's later works, such as “Mulholland Drive” and “Twin Peaks,” is creepy in a more off-putting than overtly frightening way.

The world of “Eraserhead” is a character of its own: a desolate industrial wasteland filled with the atmospheric whirring and whooshing noises of its factories. It's in this unfriendly world that protagonist Henry (Jack Nance) struggles to care for his deformed, alien-like baby.

Henry's baby is one of the most striking images in horror film history, and the circumstances that surround its appearance provide Lynch's trademark disconcerting surrealism. Without giving too much away, Henry is made aware of the child during an uncomfortable dinner with his girlfriend's parents, during which the chicken on the table begins moving its wings and hemorrhaging, seemingly portending the arrival of Henry's unnatural progeny. The fact that his visibly non-pregnant girlfriend delivers the baby mere minutes after she announces she is carrying it adds to the discomfort of anyone with a basic idea of how reproduction works.

Many of Lynch's movies inspire a sense of both beauty and discomfort that comes from the feeling that something is wrong, and “Eraserhead” exhibits this sublimely in every aspect of its production. Throughout the film, grotesque characters literally operate the machinery that runs this strange world. Henry's head is replaced with that of his baby, and a woman tempts Henry from inside his radiator, in a series of bizarre scenes made more otherworldly by the gorgeous black and white cinematography. A movie told less through dialogue and more through atmosphere, “Eraserhead” is an unforgettable cacophony of unexplained noises and visuals that come together to reveal the fear our protagonist feels towards parenting, lust, and himself in a shocking and disturbing finale. ■





## How Hispanic culture influenced our lives—in ways we never realized

graphics: Lydia Madamopoulou

Marina Peres, STAFF WRITER, and Avery McDowell, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Hispanic countries are all full of diversity, and no one is like the other, despite all having the same language in common. However, telenovelas are a cultural phenomenon present in all Hispanic countries. The word “telenovela” comes from the genre of being a novel (novela) performed on screen/television (tele). A Spanish equivalent to soap operas, telenovelas are always defined by their over-dramatic romances. The complex plot twists involving common themes of revenge and familial drama, leading up to the final, happy ending, were what originally resulted in widespread viewership of the genre in all Hispanic countries. The presence of telenovelas has been a staple in Hispanic households for generations now, uniting Hispanic nations through pure nostalgia.

Telenovelas today show that the genre has come a long way in the last decade or so. The original telenovelas are now being called out as antiquated as many of them portray sexist ideals, with common plot lines of a lower-class woman being “saved” by a wealthy man. Equally numerous telenovelas have long had solely light-skinned lead actors. Thankfully, in the last decade, there have been many developments in the genre, and more inclusive stories have commonly been depicted. One example of a telenovela that has rejected the patriarchal plot of a woman being “saved” by a man is Telemundo’s “La Reina del Sur,” a Spanish telenovela telling the story of Teresa Mendoza, a woman who deals with grief by becoming one of the world’s most powerful drug lords. Another revolutionary telenovela is Netflix’s “The House of Flowers,” a story set (as well as filmed and produced) in Mexico, revolving around the upper-class de la Mora family. The show is one of the genre’s first to include multiple LGBTQ+ leading characters, molding a promising future for the genre. Considering how telenovelas are expected to reflect Hispanic peoples, it is reassuring to see a more diverse demographic appearing, showing the masses just how unique and varied Latinx culture can be. By replacing the antiquated shows of the past with ones like “La Reina del Sur” and “House of Flowers,” telenovelas have been able to maintain their relevance, securing their place as a treasure in Hispanic culture for many decades to come.

One thing that telenovelas undoubtedly deserve credit for is providing representation of Latinx people to non-Latin countries, such as the United States. Most of the successful telenovelas in Spanish were turned into American replicas, which still starred Latinx actors but took place in the United States. Though it seems strange to keep remaking a show, these American adaptations were one of the first ways Hispanic culture was showcased in American television. For example, “Yo Soy Betty, la Fea,” a telenovela from Colombia, was made into ABC’s show “Ugly Betty” starring America Ferrera in 2006. The show was one of very few shows in the United States at the time that starred a Latina as the main character, and it quickly picked up success just as well as the Spanish original, “Yo Soy Betty, la Fea,” so much so that Ferrera became the first ever Latina to win the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Actress in a Comedy Show. A more recent example, The CW’s adaptation of the Venezuelan “Juana la Virgen,” “Jane the Virgin,” starring Gina Rodriguez, is undoubtedly the most successful American adaptation of a telenovela since “Ugly Betty.”

The American telenovela has reached a diverse audience across the country, even here at PHS, where students can be heard avidly speaking about their investment in the show.

“There are all these plot twists and so much drama that it keeps you watching,” said Melody Strum ’25. Hispanic telenovela culture has influenced North American culture in recent years, and not just that of Latin Americans.

Not only has the show spread Hispanic representation by being binge-watched by masses around the world, but it also has been exceptionally educational, teaching lessons on telenovelas

to its viewers. The importance of telenovelas in Hispanic culture is conveyed in “Jane the Virgin” through the character Rogelio (Jane’s father), a telenovela star, and lessons on how to analyze and understand telenovelas and their most common plotlines are conveyed through the third person narrator’s analytical storytelling. With telenovelas like “Ugly Betty” and “Jane the Virgin,” Hispanic-American people have been given more screen time and representation in American media, and on the televisions of students here at PHS. The presence of these shows gives hope for greater education on Hispanic culture in the United States. Aside from telenovelas, dance is another facet of Hispanic culture that has made an impact on our lives. For years, dance has been used and passed down through multiple generations in Latino culture. It can be a form of celebration for occasions such as weddings and birthdays. It brings people of all ages together and continues traditions that are specific to certain countries and their culture.

As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month through the many aspects of Hispanic culture, much of this commemoration is expressed through dance. PHS’s club Latinos Unidos will be performing their own choreography for an assembly on October 18.

Latinos Unidos, a group that celebrates the cultures and traditions of the Latinx community, is presenting the Hispanic Heritage Month assembly. For many, it is a welcoming and positive experience that unites Latinos at PHS. It is a space where students with similar interests can share their experiences, even if they come from different Latino backgrounds. Hispanic Heritage Month is an important time for everyone to become closer with the Latino community, appreciate its culture, and share it with others. The featured dance in the assembly combines styles from countries around the Latin-American world.

“It’s a collection of various dances that are prominent and well-known in most Spanish-speaking countries,” said Regina Sakar ’24.

A dance routine has been created by Sakar and Ozzy Morales ’25, which their group practices during lunch to ensure that everyone involved has the steps down before adding in new ones. For Sakar, dancing and choreographing have become some of her favorite pastimes. This performance is meant to represent various well-known dances from Hispanic countries.

“Preparing for this dance has been relatively fast-paced as we have only practiced for about a week so far,” said Sakar. “We’re excited to finalize the dance as we get closer to the performance date.” With the help of Morales’ prior knowledge about Hispanic dance, a few reference videos online, and other members of the club, the two were able to create their own dance that reflected elements of Spanish culture while also demonstrating their own style.

“When it comes to dances like merengue, cumbia, and bachata, the meaning ultimately comes down to just having fun and letting the music bring our community together,” Sakar said.

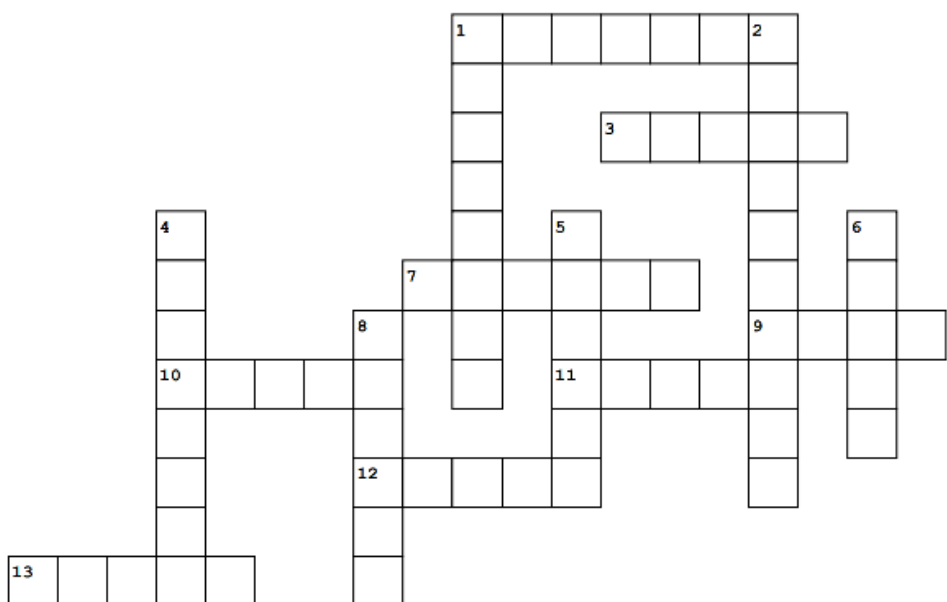
The routine is filled with rhythm, passion, and connecting with whoever is around you. Some types of Hispanic dance can be done more easily, although other types can be very challenging if they include quick movements such as rapid turns. Furthermore, dances that include partnerwork tend to be more intricate and complex. Some dancers devote their life’s work to training in Hispanic dance. It is very influential, considering that the music and steps that are used have also been incorporated into current pop music and dance styles. For example, there can be some connections between reggae and reggaeton music through their beat and rhythm.

The Latinos Unidos dance performance was a captivating display of Latinx culture, as dance is so integral to their expression and traditions. ■



## Fall crossword!

Chris Bao, CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, and Marina Peres, STAFF WRITER

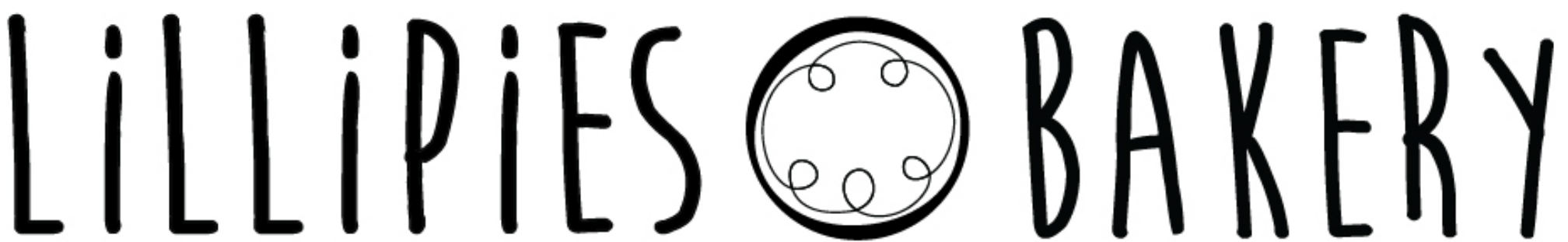


### Across:

- This is a common theme in telenovelas (hint: it’s in the Hispanic culture article)
- Along with 10-across, line by pirates, mermaids, and superheroes?
- The 13th
- In “I Know What You Did Last Summer” this is the preferred weapon of the murderer (hint: it’s in the film reviews)
- Along with 3-across, line by pirates, mermaids, and superheroes?
- Forbidden food
- In “It’s the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown,” this character is really attached to the idea of finding the “Great Pumpkin”
- \_\_\_ in the Shell, a 1995 animated neo-noir cyberpunk thriller film

### Down:

- In “It’s the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown,” who is the German pilot that Snoopy fights? (hint: it’s in the film reviews)
- An alien-like baby character influences the plot of this horror movie
- This whodunit musical was performed at PHS last spring (hint: it’s in the Student Artist of the Month article)
- A spooky supernatural family
- Who could not travel both roads in a yellow road?
- The main symbol of the Day of the Dead





# SPORTS



photo: Alexandra Sandt

Teammates Reva Doshi '24, Mia Ramirez '26, and Kayla Christopher '23 congratulate Sophie Gono '24 on a successful play during their game against Allentown.

## PHS Field Hockey team crowned division champions after successful season

Paulo Henry Barbosa, CONTRIBUTING WRITER  
Dester Selby-Salazar, SPORTS STAFF

On October 10, the PHS Field Hockey Team became the Colonial Valley Champions after winning 8-1 against Notre Dame. Currently gearing up for the New Jersey State Tournament, they have lost only once this season in all of their games.

From the start until now, the PHS Field Hockey Team has been undefeated. Their strong season can be attributed to their cooperative team chemistry and admirable work ethic, which some of the players have cultivated since they were children.

"We have people who have literally known each other since they were babies on the team," said Varsity Field Hockey Coach Heather Serverson. "Some of them grew up playing field hockey together and now they are playing for the high school team: that's just something you can't coach."

"I really like the tight-knit culture on the school's team [...] I feel like I get to connect with them on a more personal level."

While coaching this year's team, the players pushed themselves harder than the team in previous years.

"I think this group stands out because they seem hungrier, grittier, and tougher. They know what their abilities are, and they're not going to settle for anything," Serverson said.

Many of the players also play for a club team in addition to the school team, further contributing to their skill level. However, for midfielder Delaney Keegan '24, the team culture for the school team is much stronger than the club.

"I really like the tight-knit culture on the school's team. I hang out with them more than my club team, so I feel like I get to connect with them on a more personal level, it's just an overall better environment. I think this has really contributed to our successes as well," Keegan said.

In addition to their close team culture, each individual player on the team to contribute to their achievements.

"We have really strong players playing in all our positions. We don't really have any weak links and we're really versatile too. I think that a lot of players can play more than one position, which is really helpful," said DiGiacchino.

Being first seed in the Mercer County Tournaments gave them good matchups against other teams, which is what they've worked for all season long. On October 18, they competed in the Mercer County Tournament Semifinals, where they lost for the first time this season.

"I definitely [was] nervous [for the semifinals], but also excited. I think it's a little nerve wracking, but we [were] on an adrenaline rush from all the excitement [during] the round," Keegan said.

Though they are having a successful season so far, it's not over yet. The team still has to compete in the State Tournament, where they hope to advance far in the bracket.

"The most important thing is intensity," said DiGiacchino. "We've been playing for almost three months now, so it's important not to burn out. "Continue playing our game" has always been our motto and will be important in the last stretch of this season." ■

## Athlete Health Corner: Why Recovery is Crucial

Frankie Gamio, SPORTS CO-EDITOR

I have spent most of my life doing sports. Since I was nine, I have had at least six practices a week. However, I did not ever really learn how to take care of myself with the intense training. I had my first injury at 12, a rotator-cuff tear in my left shoulder, from swimming. Then, when I was 16, I compressed my left ribs and tore my left-lat, which is located in the shoulder area from rowing.

Compared to college athletes, many high school athletes do not have policies in place that protect them from over-exercising, dieting, and abusive coaching. These issues are also overlooked because high school athletes don't receive the same attention as college athletes.

Even worse, these young athletes have yet to learn how to properly recover and rest their bodies, leading to a greater risk of sports-related physical injuries. Most of these injuries occur at a young age and can even get worse over time. In my case, my rotator-cuff tear later contributed to an injury on my lat (a large flat muscle on the back).

The leading cause of sports injury is the specialization of a sport at a young age. Specialization of a sport is focusing on one sport all year-round. While specialization in a sport is crucial to skill development, especially for young athletes who dream of eventually committing to collegiate athletics or playing professionally, according to UCLA Medicine in 2021, the amount of injuries for children under 18 has greatly increased because of it. Specialization training plans usually entail frequent and demanding practices, using the same muscles all year round and allowing scarce opportunities to rest.

I started swimming competitively when I was six. I swam year round, which put a lot of pressure on the muscles that I used while I swam, especially my rotator cuff. Eventually, these muscles weren't able to keep up, causing injury. When I had these intense college training plans in rowing, during the height of the season, I could no longer properly recover. I was always tired, and I started to create bad technical habits as a result of my exhaustion. These habits snowballed into injury. It was after this time that I learned the hard way that if I was going to be training this intensely, I had to prioritize my recovery.

Proper recovery is a skill that all athletes need to learn while they are going through rigorous training.

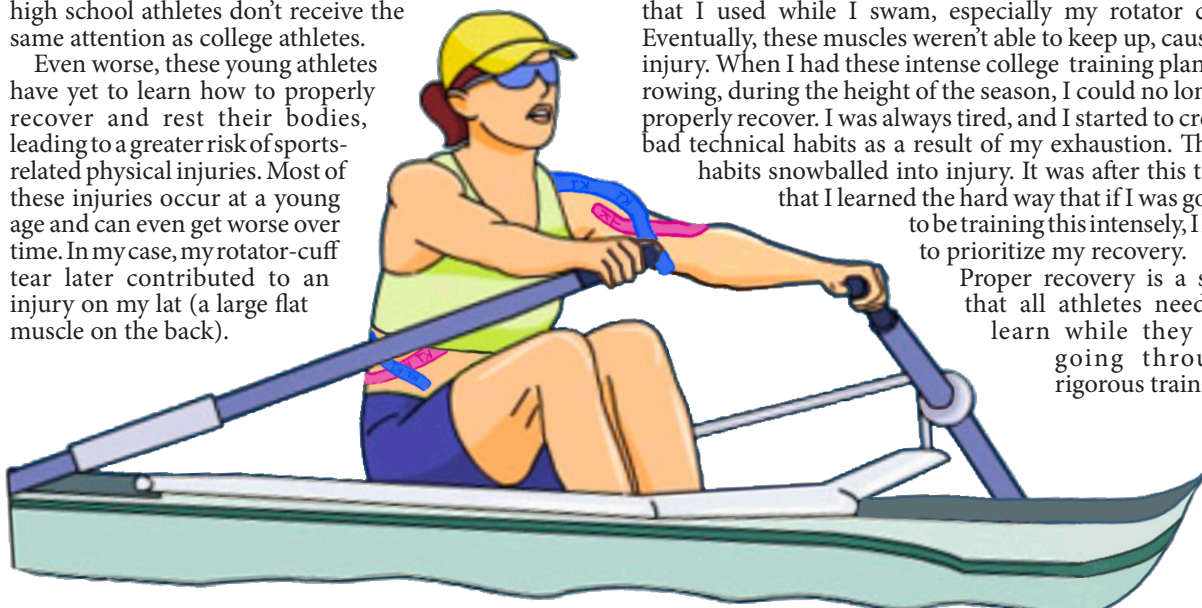
With a demanding course load and practice schedule, getting the seven to nine hours of sleep which most studies and journals argue is the minimum is not always attainable. Despite this, there are other ways in which athletes can maximize recovery. If sleeping cannot be made a priority, athletes must prioritize stretching, active recovery, compression garments, massage therapy, and nutrition.

According to a Gatorade Sports Science Institute study in 2014, stretching is most effective when the right exercises are implemented. Dynamic stretching should be used when you are about to do a workout or play a game, and passive stretching should be used afterward. Dynamic stretching is when you have a higher heart rate. Passive stretching is usually when you are laying or sitting down, and therefore do not raise your heart rate. Any physical therapy exercises an athlete may have should be conducted before and after practices and games. I now usually spend 30 minutes before practicing warming up through running, dynamic stretching, and physical therapy exercises.

Along with stretching, according to a Gatorade Sports Science Institute study in 2014, compression garments like KT tape create an "external pressure that reduces the intramuscular space available for swelling and promotes stable alignment of muscle fibers, attenuating the inflammatory response and reducing muscle soreness."

Cold therapy is also very effective for recovery. Before races, my teammates and I will usually do a quick 15-minute ice bath to reduce swelling and muscle damage. Lastly, in terms of nutrition, athletes should prioritize carbohydrates, protein, and electrolyte intake during peaks of their intense training.

Adding these habits does not help you completely reduce the risk of injury, they will reduce it significantly. In order to be our best, we must also exercise our abilities to take care of ourselves. ■



graphic: Wenya Huan



# Athletes of the Month

## Robin Roth '23: cross country

Taylor Jones, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Robin Roth '22 lines up alongside the 300 runners behind the start line as she awaits the gunshot for the race to begin. She is calm and is ready to attack all the hills on today's course. "Ready, set, bam!" The gun goes off and Roth strides into the distance.

Roth first fell in love with running through the Princeton Girls on the Run program in the third grade. She then joined her first cross-country team in 6th grade. What first started out as a hobby became more serious her freshman year when she joined the high school cross country and track teams.

"She came in and just put her head down and ran fast. And [over time] she's learned to contribute more than just running faster to the team. She's grown into being a realist about what success means," said Head Cross Country Coach James Smirk. "That you want to [run] to the absolute best of your ability, but it doesn't always mean that you win."

In addition to changing her outlook on success, over the years on the cross country team, Roth has grown as a runner and as a leader.

"She's stronger now than she has ever been and understands [the] race tactics better than she ever has. But more than anything, she's grown tremendously as a leader [by] understanding how to work with people and how to get people to understand what we're trying to do as a group," Smirk said.

Roth's favorite part of cross country is that she gets to come to practice everyday and converse with her teammates during and after workouts. The cross country team is a very close-knit community, so many of her best friends are also runners on the team.

"A lot of [my social life] overlaps with [running]. If I'm having some problems with school I can always go to the coaches, and they always help me get my life back together. The team is like my support system and part of my social life is bonding with the team," Roth said.

In addition to running with a supportive community, Roth loves the feeling of running itself.

"Running downhill on a hard race course feels like you're flying it's honestly the best feeling," Roth said.

Being a successful runner does not come without obstacles. Roth has been dealing with a knee injury for the past few months and also had COVID-19 recently. Due to her injury and the team's health guidelines, Roth was not able to train as she normally would. It was difficult adjusting back to the volume of her training but her teammates supported her and helped her make a full recovery.

"I see Robin putting in so much effort to recover from any setbacks she faces during the season, regardless of whether they are personal or team-based," said teammate Lucy Kreipke '23.

Ever since Roth began running seriously, she aspired to commit to run for a university. Her dream came true when Rutgers University reached out to her early on in the recruitment process. Roth will be continuing her athletic career on their Division I cross country and track team.

"On one of my official visits, I got to meet the team. They were all so nice and welcoming. The coaches are amazing, so I'm really excited," Roth said.

With years of running experience behind her, Roth wants young runners to know that they should focus on their own improvement when they are starting out.

"Sometimes you have to take a step back to take two steps forward. You don't need to be the sun the first time you run, you can be a star that still is a part of the solar system," Roth said. ■

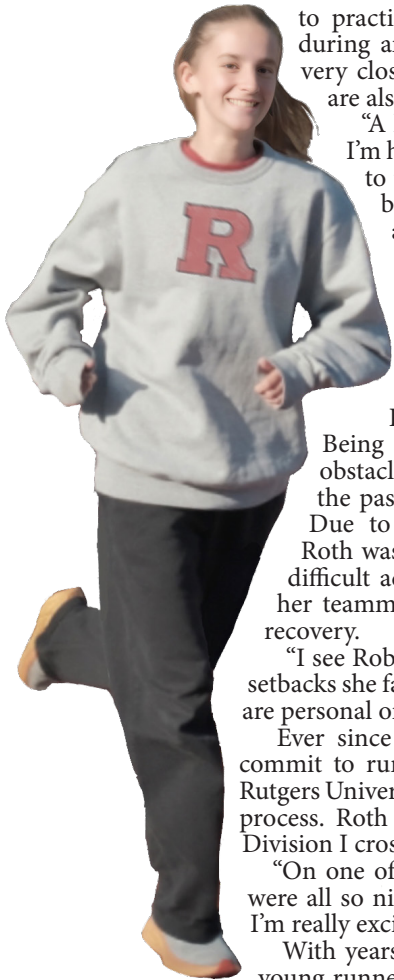


photo: Emily Qian

## Emanuel Noyola '23: soccer

Wenya Huan, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Emanuel Noyola '23 eyes the soccer ball as it is passed between two players on the other team. With calculated motions, Noyola swiftly intercepts and dribbles it towards the opposing team's goal. Quickening the pace of his steps, he fixes his gaze on the goalie and launches the ball at the goal. Roaring cheers erupt from the crowd as the ball hits the back of the net.

All athletes make mistakes in their lives, but only the good ones will learn to overcome them and become better. Varsity boys soccer midfielder Emanuel Noyola '23 shows that despite missing an opportunity for a big win, he was able to move forward and use his passion and persistence to achieve success.

Watching his uncles' soccer games as a child contributed to Emanuel Noyola's interest in soccer. He started playing when he was nine and only played soccer throughout his childhood, later continuing through high school.

Noyola's talent, consistency, and commitment to the game led to his influential performance on the field: becoming a varsity team member in his sophomore year and now an indispensable player on the boys varsity soccer team.

"He's very humble. He lets his play do the talking. He's a man of few words, but he makes a lot of very smart plays, and it makes you trust him," said teammate Jack Serxner '23.

Playing successfully at a varsity level does not come without doubts. After missing an opportunity to score an important goal in one of his sophomore year games, Noyola was in doubt of his career in soccer. However, he remembered his motivation to play when he was younger and realized that the desire he had to continue playing outweighed his mistake. As a result, Noyola persevered and continued his role on the soccer team.

"I told myself to not quit because I know how good I can be and I don't want to put my time into waste. I just needed to keep working hard and get better," Noyola said.

Noyola continued to dedicate his time to improving his soccer skills and learning from his coaches and captains. In his junior year he took more of a leadership role as an upperclassman, challenging himself to be more assertive on the field and be a role model for the younger players.

"He has developed a lot of confidence over the years as a player," said Jack Serxner. "He demands the ball more on the field. He has the belief in himself that he can make amazing plays on the field."

Not only is Noyola a hardworking athlete who always seeks to improve himself, but he has also shown strong abilities in supporting his teammates. As a senior on the team, Noyola tries to help his teammates and assist them for more scoring opportunities.

"In our first game against Trenton this season, he had the assists to Azariah Breitman. And we ended up winning one nil [zero]. He did a really good job of controlling the midfield...[and] played a huge part in this first goal we scored," Serxner said.

Noyola wishes to continue playing soccer in college, and as an athlete who has gained many experiences from his plays, he has advice for the incoming and current younger athletes of the PHS soccer team.

"Keep on going and focus on your own self. Always work hard to improve yourself and also help the people around you," Noyola said. ■



photo: Wenya Huan



SCAN THE QR  
CODES TO  
PICK ATHLETE  
OF THE  
MONTHS FOR  
THE WINTER  
EDITION





# Why athletes should take advantage of Option II

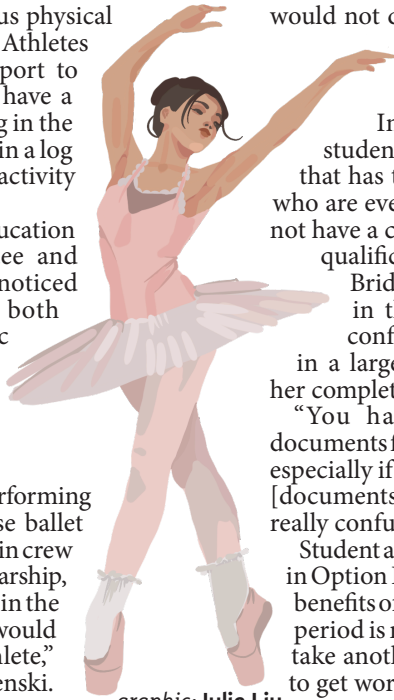
Jessica Chen, SPORTS CO-EDITOR

As the last bell rings to signal the end of the school day, Rebecca Zou '24 quickly leaves class and goes straight to a five-hour ballet practice. Zou is a level VI ballet dancer, the highest level at Central New Jersey Ballet. Her week consists of at least 24 hours of ballet practice on top of the workload from multiple AP classes, Sexual Awareness and Prevention club meetings, and tutoring sessions. To block out time in her schedule to do homework and relax, Zou participates in Option II for physical education.

Option II for physical education is an alternative pathway to complete physical education credits for PHS athletes that participate in rigorous physical activity for or outside of school. Athletes who participate in Option II report to the gym to take attendance, but have a free period instead of participating in the class. Instead, they need to maintain a log of at least 150 minutes of physical activity every week.

Six years ago, the Board of Education Student Achievement Committee and former Principal Gary Snyder noticed the large number of students both committing to high-level athletic activity and taking academically advanced courses. Soon after, the PPS Coaches Council began drafting the first version of the Option II guide.

"We've had students who were performing in New York as part of an intense ballet program and [some] participating in crew and trying to get a D[ivision] I scholarship, which are [all] very rigorous. Also, in the past, a lot of times the seasons would overlap if you're a three-season athlete," said Athletic Director Brian Dzbenski.



graphic: Julie Liu

"The mental health of our students became a [priority]. We wanted to do something for the students to try and give them some relief so that they'd have more time to commit to their studies."

Over the years, the number of eligible students increased as the athletic department added more pathways to the program. Now, students apply for one of the five "paths," which each describe a different criteria for Option II. For example, path A is for juniors and seniors that do three in-school sports, while path C is for juniors and seniors that do one in-school sport plus at least 150 minutes of off-season intense training.

"And then there's path E, which is for students who would not qualify for path A, B, C, or D. These are our students who are potential Olympians. They're at high-level training [beyond] the high school level," Dzbenski said.

In addition to applying for a pathway, students also need to have a sponsoring coach that has the correct qualifications. Most people who are eventually rejected from Option II do not have a coach that has the correct qualifications. For varsity rower Bridget Mulligan '24, this step in the process was slightly confusing, but being a rower in a large organization helped her complete this step.

"You have to get certain documents from your coach. And especially if you don't know what [documents] they are, [it] can be really confusing," Mulligan said.

Student athletes who participate in Option II have felt the intended benefits of the program. Their free period is not allowed to be used to take another class, so many use it to get work done or relax.



graphic: Julie Liu

"It's also nice to have that time during the day where instead of doing more physical activity on top of ballet, which seems so unnecessary, to have that little respite. I have a lot more free time during the school day that I can utilize to catch up on work that I've been missing," Zou said.

Although Option II gives athletes a break from their school day, they miss a crucial opportunity to learn new skills and create new relationships with peers.

"If they're a full-time football player, maybe they're not being introduced to the badminton and tennis skills. Athletes get pigeonholed into one sport and that's the only power they have, but when they play different sports, they have more diverse skills," said PHS Gym Teacher Carlos Salazar. "Students also are missing out on the interpersonal relationships with students that are maybe not athletes and also the fun that comes along with not competitive sports, but recreational fun sports, outside fresh air, sunshine, vitamin D, and great personalities from their PE teachers."

Still, for most students, teachers, and community members, the benefits outweigh the cons. Option II allows students to have more control over their schedule and successfully balance multiple activities.

"We're allowing the students to take responsibilities over their lives through Option II, and so therefore, we're trusting them to be using the time wisely and to fulfill the benefits that Option II was officially created with the support of the community at large," Salazar said.

Those who wish to participate in Option II next school year should attend the Option II webinar at the end of this year.

## PHS Takes: What is your favorite healthy snack you eat before exercising?

Jessica Chen and Frankie Gamio, SPORTS CO-EDITORS

"Probably apples and oranges because they have a lot of water content, so it's refreshing to eat."  
- Julia Wang '25



"Green grapes because they are really good, especially when they're crunchy."  
- Shawn Chuang '24



"Coconut chips because I like the crunchiness of them."  
- Hadar Hazan '23



"I like strawberries because they are really tasty."  
- Lilly Ludewig '26



graphics: Caroline Gu  
photos: Jessica Chen and Frankie Gamio



Juice Bar, Acai Bowls,  
Cold Pressed Juices, Smoothies,  
Green Smoothies, Quesadillas  
and a Juice Truck!

(609) 252-0300  
www.ticosjuicebar.com

# Tico's

**JUICE BAR**

33 Witherspoon Street, Princeton NJ