

The Tower

94th Year: Issue 7

Princeton High School
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HackPHS returns fully in person, the first time since 2019



photo: Jieruei Chang



photo: Jieruei Chang

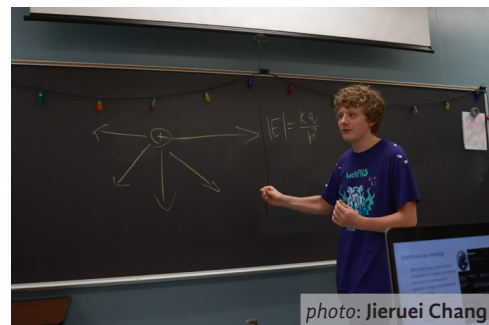


photo: Jieruei Chang

Top: HackPHS organizers presenting to participants during the opening ceremony of the event. (Left to right) Jieruei Chang '24, Shrey Khetan '24, Tommy Birge '24, Brian Jiang '24, Steve Xing '23, Arunima Suri '23, Amanda Sun '24. Bottom left: George Kopf '23 playing a game of ping pong. Bottom right: Connor Stewart '23 teaching a lesson on an introduction to circuitry.

Aman Kapur, Zoe Nuland, and Wenya Huan,
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Beginning on November 6, HackPHS 2022, a multi-day student-organized programming competition hosted at Princeton High School, brought with it more than 300 students entirely in person for the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

HackPHS is free to enter and open for all students to participate in. During the event, participants are encouraged to form teams and work on a coding or robotics project of their choosing. These projects are judged at the end of the twenty-four hours, with the winners receiving a number of prizes. For participants who don't feel as comfortable with coding, they can opt to not create a project, and instead attend a wide variety of fun, inclusive events and lectures that take place throughout the event.

"I went my freshman year not having any coding knowledge at all, and I still had a bunch of fun because I was able to attend intros to languages such as Java and Python, and then also other fun activities, like a chess tournament and trivia," said Davita Wrone '23, a design and technology organizer for HackPHS.

This year's HackPHS was successful in many ways, with over one hundred people in attendance and an overall positive participant response.

"I just felt like it was really fun because I got to stay overnight and just work in the school for the entire day," said Sophia Tsang '23, a participant at HackPHS. "There were a lot of snacks, and a lot of events and lectures that, even if you're not interested in computer science, were fun to listen to. Also just being able to look at other people's projects was really fun."

Continued on Page Two

With over twenty participating schools, PHS' instant decision day college fair returns bigger than ever

Peter Eaton, NEWS & FEATURES CO-EDITOR
Mattias Blix, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Lasting the entirety of the week of October 31, PHS' second annual Instant Decision Day College Fair aimed to lower the barriers associated with the process of applying to college. This event was open for all current seniors to participate in; students were able to sign up for fifteen-minute time slots. By the end of the week, close to eighty appointments had been made, with some students receiving non-binding acceptances from as many as seven colleges.

An Instant Decision Day College Fair was held last year as well, but at a much smaller scale. During last year's fair, with just four schools, the organizers hoped to gauge how the event would be received. Following its success, the event expanded into a full-fledged fair this year with more than twenty schools, including many in-state colleges, one out-of-state college, and two HBCUs.

"We were lucky that we had so many colleges willing to participate," said Nipurna Shah, a College and Career counselor at PHS who helped organize the event. "I think it was a win-win on both ends. It was a win for us and our students, but it was also a win for some colleges that might not ordinarily have come to Princeton to recruit in the past."

In preparation for their appointments, students were required to submit an application through the Common Application to the colleges in question at least five days prior to their meeting. Transcripts and recommendation letters were also required, meaning that in some scenarios, students would have to coordinate with their teachers in order to make sure that those were ready. The prior submission of their documents ensured that their application could be reviewed by a representative of the college before the fair.

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PPS welcomes a new therapy dog, named "Tiger" by students

Tiger set to start visiting the schools once he finishes his training this winter.

Matthew Chen, NEWS & FEATURES STAFF
Johanna Mueller and Elsa Barzilai,
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

With the holiday season approaching fast, the Princeton Public Schools district has announced an early gift for its students. A four-month-old Goldendoodle puppy, named "Tiger" by students at the elementary schools, is currently in the process of becoming a certified therapy dog. Once he finishes the certification process this winter, he will begin his work in the classroom. Rotating through the elementary schools and visiting the middle and high school occasionally, Tiger hopes to positively benefit the Princeton Public School students through mental engagement and emotional support.

"Tiger is going to be able to come in and visit students at the elementary, middle, and high schools," said Sarah Moore, the PPS Supervisor of Elementary Education. "Therapy pets help lower our cortisol levels and help us feel less stressed out. For younger students, it can help with reading engagement."

Growing up as a single child on a farm, Moore had spent much of her childhood around animals, whether it be the dogs and cats in her house or the horses that she rode. Living in an environment filled with animals allowed her to see all of the positive benefits that animals can bring, and has been a significant factor in her initiative to bring Tiger to the district.

"I have spent a lot of my childhood around animals and saw the therapeutic benefits they had," said Moore. "So I wanted to be able to bring some of that benefit to Princeton!"

Although Tiger is her first official therapy dog, fostering dogs is no foreign concept for Moore. She has been helping to take care of foster dogs for the Trenton Animal Shelter. Her previous experiences have allowed her to have a smoother transition as she takes on this new initiative.

"We have dogs pretty frequently that come in for some short-term fosters," said Moore. "So the idea of training is not new to me, but Tiger is my first official therapy dog."

Continued on Page Three



photo: Emily Qian



photo: Emily Qian

(Top) A whiteboard listing all of the students who received acceptances at the fair. (Bottom) The entryway to the fair, decorated to be college themed.

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Continued from Page One

Despite Tiger’s training being far from over, he has already made progress. His friendly demeanor and calm temperament make him perfect for an elementary school. Though adjusting to his new, busy environment takes time, Tiger is already doing some on-site training.

“[Tiger] comes into Valley Road on Fridays to work on some training in buildings,” said Moore. “There aren’t any students ... so he can get used to the different textures of floors and being in and out of buildings. He’s done really well with that.”

While Moore is taking on a current initiative to help the students of the Princeton Public Schools District, her educational journey started much earlier. After studying English as well as deaf and hard of hearing education at The College of New Jersey, and participating frequently in the deaf-blind project there, she saw an opportunity to combine her two areas of expertise.

Moore was able to use her experience with animals and the deaf-blind community to bring in Tiger, who, although not specifically trained for blind or deaf service, still requires similar training when going through certification to be able to positively interact with elementary school children. “I have worked with some people who are deaf-blind who sometimes used seeing eye dogs. A therapy dog is a little different in its purpose, but still falls under that umbrella of service animal,” Moore said.

When Tiger isn’t busy visiting schools and helping students, he enjoys napping on the couch, eating peanut butter, and playing with his favorite toy: a stuffed animal of Hedwig from Harry Potter.

Although Tiger will be spending most of his time at the elementary schools, his visits to the middle and high schools on Fridays will be something to look forward to for all PPS students. Andre Penn ’23, a student school board representative who was able to meet Tiger at a board meeting, believes that Tiger is going to really help out the district as a whole. ■



photo courtesy: Sarah Moore

The new PPS therapy dog, Tiger, stretching out during a visit to Johnson Park Elementary School. Tiger is set to start visiting PPS schools more often once he finishes his training this winter.

New security protocols announced at PHS

Leila Guitton, Asya Morozov, and
Meiya Xiong, CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

As announced in the Chmiel Spiel on November 2, a number of new security measures will soon be introduced at PHS, all with the goal of increasing student safety. Along with requiring all students and staff to wear ID badges, these new measures will prepare the school for an emergency by ensuring that all of the school’s doors and windows are numbered.

These changes were not prompted by any particular emergency, but rather are meant to improve the general safety of the school for everyone. PHS Assistant Principal Rashone Johnson stresses that he and the administration strive to make safety a priority for everyone at PHS.

“Everything that we do we’re doing for the safety of the entire building ... It’s not just one group of kids, we’ve got over 2,000 people that we’re trying to make sure are staying safe,” Johnson said.

The primary purpose of the lanyards will be to make it easier for staff to discern between students, visitors, and those who shouldn’t be in the building. Students will be given a colored lanyard and visitors a different-colored lanyard so that staff can easily tell the difference between the two.

According to Johnson, the lanyards will also make it easier for teachers to take attendance by letting students quickly record their attendance using student ID badges.

“Once we evolve, [students] will have the ability to tap into the rooms that [they are] going to for attendance... We’d be able to see where everybody is, and then we’ll be able to sooner know who’s here and who’s not here, accountability-wise, so it makes everything happen a lot quicker,” Johnson said.

Another new security measure is that numbers are going to be assigned to all doors and windows, ensuring that in the case of an emergency, emergency workers are able to navigate to where they need to be as fast as possible.

“When we’re talking about emergencies, time is extremely important, so we want [emergency workers] to be able to get to and know the situation as quickly as possible,” Johnson said.

The administration is attempting to have these new policies implemented as soon as possible. While the exact timing of these changes is dependent on when the supplies arrive, they hope to introduce the lanyard policy specifically sooner rather than later.

Johnson hopes that the changes will be instituted smoothly and, as a result, benefit PHS’s school climate. However, because of the limited amount of information that has been released about the plan, Johnson feared that it would receive some criticism.

Ero Christy ’25 expressed feelings that the new security measures were largely unneeded.

“I understand that a lot of the security policies were put in place because some kids [might come] in who aren’t supposed to, but I think [the new changes] are really unnecessary ... It doesn’t seem like it’s actually that much of a security issue,” Christy said.

Koen Moulton ’23 on the other hand isn’t as worried about the changes, as long as their impact on day-to-day learning stays small.



photo: Lydia Madamopoulos

PHS students entering through the main entrance at the Tower Building. New security measures will now require students and other visitors to enter only through designated entrances. (left to right) Alexandra Sandt ’25, Samara Raju ’24, Selena Wang ’23

“To be honest, as long as they don’t keep it too strict, then I’m okay with it, but if I have to constantly show my ID all the time, I think that would be pretty troublesome,” Moulton said.

In response to criticism regarding the plan, Johnson argues that student safety should be the biggest priority for the school. He hopes that going forward, students and educators alike will recognize the benefits of the new changes.

“We’ve heard some opinions, but everybody’s safety in the building trumps that stuff,” said Johnson. “[Wearing a lanyard] is not as big of an ask as you might think for the safety that it increases in the building.” ■

Twenty schools participate in Instant Decision Day College Fair

Continued from Page One

During the meeting itself, the representative of the college would have a conversation with the student about their goals and their plans for the future. Then, the representatives would notify the student on the spot whether or not they were admitted into the college.

“I think it was an overwhelming success,” said Shah. “I don’t have the exact number of acceptances yet, but a very large number of our students were accepted.”

The organizers of the fair tried their best to make the event an inclusive, positive environment for all students. The event was located upstairs in The New Wing, which the organizers filled with college-themed decorations and banners. Their efforts allowed the fair to be an impactful experience for many students.

“It’s been awesome. You know, the students come and they’re very grateful, and it takes a whole village to help them get here and apply, but they also have to put themselves out there. When they get accepted, we cheer and we take photos. I think it’s been life-changing,” said Martha Blandford, a Career and College counseling intern at PHS and an organizer of the event.

Sofia Sotomayor ’23, one of the attendees of the Instant Decision Day College Fair, has had no regrets about going. She heard about the event from one of her teachers and signed up alongside a couple of her friends. While she doesn’t plan on stopping her college search here, she is glad to have been able to get a couple applications out of the way early.

“I signed up for two schools, Drew and Rider University, I got into both, which is really nice. And so you know, coming from that, I really liked it, because it gave me the opportunity to not only know the decision, but also to have the time to think if I actually wanted to go to these colleges,” Sotomayor said.

Putting on an event like this was no easy task, requiring coordination from a large number of people, including students, teachers, administrators, cafeteria staff, and many more. In the end, however, the success of this year’s fair has ensured that plans for next year are already in the works. ■



photo: Emily Qian

Entrance of the Instant Decision Day College Fair, decorated with a whiteboard and flags of colleges at the fair.



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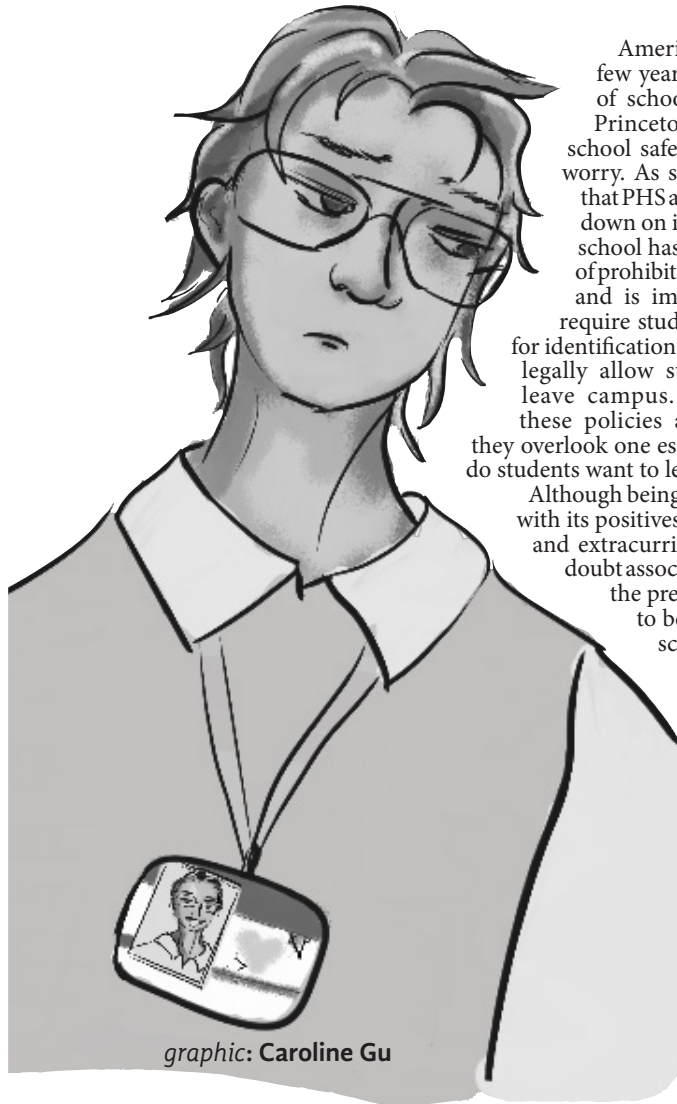
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OPINIONS

Improving PHS from inside out

Jane Bennett, STAFF WRITER and Katie Qin, CONTRIBUTING WRITER



graphic: Caroline Gu

America has become notorious in the past few years for the almost weekly occurrence of school shootings. Even in our town of Princeton, where violent crimes are rare, school safety has begun to become more of a worry. As such, it's completely understandable that PHS administrators have decided to double down on its security policies. For example, the school has begun to actually enforce its policy of prohibiting non-seniors from leaving campus and is implementing a measure which will require students to wear lanyards for identification. After all, PHS cannot legally allow students under 18 to leave campus. Ultimately, though these policies are well-intentioned, they overlook one essential question: Why do students want to leave in the first place? Although being on the campus comes with its positives, among them friends and extracurriculars, most of us no doubt associate PHS with stress, schoolwork, and the pressure from our families or ourselves to be successful. Unfortunately, being in school for eight hours a day can take a toll on students' mental health. As burnout progresses over months of the same monotonous routines, it becomes more and more difficult for us to enjoy going to school. So, it's no surprise that many PHS students want an escape from the building, allowing them to change up their schedule. The truth is that even with stricter security policies in place, students still find ways to leave during school hours. Unless the school wishes to station vigilant security guards at every entrance and exit and institute harsh penalties for students who choose to leave campus, students will continue to leave.

“ Even with stricter security policies in place, students will still find ways to leave.

However, there is a better way to prevent students from leaving than instituting a kind of border patrol. Such excessively strict measures would do more to arouse animosity against the administration than to protect students. Instead, we should find a middle ground. The school should institute moderately strict security measures, such as the addition of just a few more guards, in combination with a genuine and systematic effort to make school a place that students actually want to be.

On the whole, PHS should make the school more amenable to students who wish to escape from the often-stressful high school academic environment. That means that the school must try to come up with better ways for us non-seniors to be less stressed, especially while on campus. For example, the administration can use the sprawling new wing or one of our three courtyards to create a sort of “common room”, with activities like a Ping-Pong table or Spikeball sets. This way, the school could be made to feel more relaxing and inviting.

Furthermore, private study spaces could be created to encourage productivity during free periods, and the Tiger Cafe's hours could be expanded to provide hungry or decaffeinated students with a mid-day boost. These policies, along with others not listed here, would allow us to have a better relationship with PHS's campus, and hopefully help us non-seniors feel a little bit less anxious.

Of course, it's understandable that PHS wants to keep its students safe, which includes keeping its younger students on campus during times they don't have class and making sure that nobody can get into the building unless they're a member of PHS's community. Unfortunately, however, in the absence of further measures to improve the school environment, the addition of more easily evaded security measures are a waste of the school's resources. If the school truly wants to prevent students from leaving campus, it should pair reinforced security measures with new in-school amenities that would help students manage time or give them a break from the often stifling environment of PHS. As such, the administration would be knocking out two birds with one stone—one being school stress, and the other being school security. ■

PHS Takes: Favorite songs to listen to in the hallway

Compiled by Alexander Margulis and Thomas Zhang, OPINIONS CO-EDITORS

Milo Molina '26
photo: Thomas Zhang
"Ain't No Sunshine" by Bill Withers

Oleg Brennan '23
photo: Alexander Margulis
"Poetic Justice" by Kendrick Lamar

Larry He '24
photo: Thomas Zhang
"The Nights" by Avicii

Macaela Wilton '23
photo: Thomas Zhang
"LOVE." by Kendrick Lamar

Nick Ma '23
photo: Alexander Margulis
"\$ave Dat Money" by Lil Dicky

Sofia Porto Carreiro Datum '23
photo: Alexander Margulis
"The Adults Are Tking" by The Strokes



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PHS' curriculums should involve climate change

Kai Wilhelm and Iniya Karimanal,
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

This month, an impressive congregation of global leaders from over one hundred countries met for the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 27) occurred earlier this month, with ideas about how to deal with concerns such as the emission of greenhouse gasses and the steadily increasing number of natural disasters being at the forefront of most conversations. The conference mainly addressed how to deal with climate issues on a national level rather than a localized scale, but in actuality, state governments and communities, like high schools, are instrumental when it comes to combating global warming.

Climate action shouldn't just be up to the leaders and politicians who attended COP 27. Everyone, including students at Princeton High School, should engage in active conversations regarding both climate issues and solutions for those pressing problems. This starts with education, which plays a critical role in preparing students for participation in civic society. Education is critical to any social cause because it increases awareness of the issues at hand, spurring action, and eventually, change.

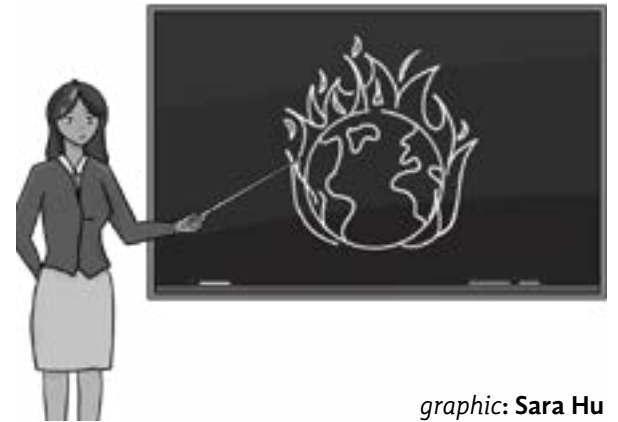
Curriculums must first stress that action is needed immediately. For many, it seems that all we can do is sit back and watch. The warming of the Earth is frequently portrayed as a distant phenomenon. When climate issues are being reported on, a deluge of far-off dates is thrown at

us. Everything is discussed in terms of deadlines, creating the image of an inevitable doomsday when climate change finally triggers the "end of the world," instead of as an ongoing, malleable process of warming.

As high school students, most of us are not thinking so far into the future. We can not fully imagine a time, decades from now, when Earth's situation is completely different. Most young adults are more concerned with short-term priorities such as academics and extracurricular activities. It's easy to believe that if we can't see the impacts of something right away, it's not worth paying attention to. Pretty much every student at PHS would much rather ace that math test or win that soccer game than even begin to ponder our ecological footprint. As a result, we delay taking action on climate change.

The practical applications of climate change are far-reaching in subjects such as math, art, economics, and science, to name a few. To spark such conversations about climate, educators should strive to incorporate current events and climate-related issues into their classes, lessons, and projects. Global warming isn't a topic that should be relegated to a single week-long unit in a middle school science class. Schools should teach about how we – as students – can contribute to reducing or stopping climate change and embrace sustainable practices. They should teach us how devastating the results will be if we do not begin to change.

They should not, however, make these lessons boring! The same way that PHS has injected readings and reckonings with LGBTQ issues in some assignments for science classes, they could encourage teachers to create innovative



graphic: Sara Hu

lessons involving climate change. A statistics class centered around analyzing the economic damage of a hurricane, or an English class dissecting an Oliver Tearle poem about global warming, would manage to both educate students about climate issues and offer them new avenues to learn about existing subject material.

Teachers should help students understand the severity and effects of climate change. Only through addressing the issue head on, by putting an emphasis on education about both its causes and effects, can PHS help raise the awareness that will eventually cause its students to take action. PHS has a moral obligation to help us combat the biggest problem that Earth faces today. As António Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations put it at COP 27, "We are in a battle for our lives. But it is a battle we can win." ■

“Global warming isn't a topic that should be relegated to a single week-long unit.”

CHEERS

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&

STUFF WE DON'T

JEERS

ARIZONA!	Mashed POTATOES	Apple Music REPLAY	20 DEGREE Weather
Getting TAYLOR SWIFT tickets	Spotify WRAPPED	Jack Harlow's GRAMMY NOMINATION	CHRISTMAS MUSIC
CHEAT CODES by Black Thought	Winter BREAK	Trying to get TAYLOR SWIFT tickets	PHS'S LUNCH line
UGLY SWEATER season	DOPAMINE		2022 SCI-FI movies

Why affirmative action will be missed



graphic: Caroline Gu

Sydney Raivetz, CONTRIBUTING WRITER
Tamar Assayag, STAFF WRITER

"Diversity is our power," read a sign held up by a protester outside the United States Supreme Court on October 31. They were protesting for one specific reason — the Supreme Court seems poised to scrap affirmative action, a series of policies passed by the government that mandates that colleges accept more diverse pools of students. Within a school as academically competitive as PHS, contention surrounding the subject is undeniable. Students and faculty at PHS and the Princeton community as a whole should refine our understanding of the topic and understand why it is such a shame that the Supreme Court will probably rule affirmative action as unconstitutional.

We need to find a way to reckon with the opportunities that such a decision would take away from minorities, because the loss of affirmative action would also result in a devastating loss of equality and diversity in America's elite colleges, and, by extension, its eventual leadership.

Many assume that the anti-discrimination laws the U.S. has, which protect people from explicit discrimination on the basis of race, gender, and sexuality, are enough, but that is far from the truth. Those who belong to underrepresented racial minorities still experience great inequality on college campuses and private workplaces. In order for this gap in enrollment and hiring to slowly close, affirmative action should not be struck down. A study by Georgetown University in 2021 found that 11 percent of Latinx people and 14 percent of Black people

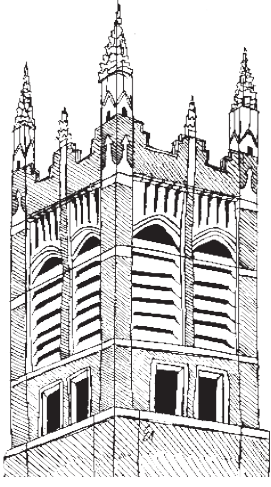
over the age of 25 have a bachelor's degree, compared to 21 percent of white people and 31 percent of Asian people. This discrepancy also resulted in lower average yearly salaries for Black and Latinx people. When college admission offices take affirmative action into consideration, they also help to decrease those problems. The wealth gap will only increase without affirmative action.

Already, affirmative action has been made illegal in public universities across several states. This has left some top universities from states like California and Michigan facing massive declines in student diversity. In 2021, reporters at The New York Times found that one such school, the University of California, Berkeley, had a freshman class of 6,931 students, and of those students, only 258 were Black and 27 were Native American. Clearly, without affirmative action, the diversity of student bodies at top colleges across the country would plummet.

In 2022, The Daily Princetonian found that most Princeton University students are in strong support of affirmative action. A group known as AASA (Asian American Students Association) that has led a petition to voice their support for affirmative action. PHS students should also make their voices heard about the subject, or at least find ways to help increase diversity wherever they go to college, which will likely be after affirmative action is ruled unconstitutional.

Proponents of what will likely be the Supreme Court's ruling on the subject claim that income-based affirmative action will do more good than race-based affirmative action. Unfortunately, there's no guarantee that such policies will be passed. But additionally, low income white students do much better on the SAT than their black counterparts, and also make up much more of the low income population (in sheer numbers), which is why the Journal of Blacks in Higher Education finds in 2014 that income based affirmative action would ensure that white students "continue to hold a huge admission advantage over Black students."

In reality, PHS students can't do much about the fact that the Supreme Court will likely rule affirmative action unconstitutional. They can, however, realize how the decision will be harmful, and strive to make sure their classes, extracurriculars, and jobs are accurately reflecting the diversity of our nation. ■



Editorial

How to make grades fairer

You see the first question on the math test and freeze. You try to recall anything — the notes, the review, the textbook problems — to help you solve the question, but your mind remains completely blank. Anxiety builds and when the bell rings, you shakily hand in your work, already certain that the test did not go well for you.

How much better would you feel if this one bad grade, wouldn't affect your quarter average? Or even better, what if you were able to drop your lowest grade in every class each quarter?

Everyone has bad days, and it is unfair to have one bad day affect your overall average. Occasionally, a wave of assignments and responsibilities all converge upon a single day, leaving a student with almost no time to study for that test tomorrow. If a student is consistently getting As on assignments, but one or two flunks are pulling their quarter average to a B, that is a skewed representation of their overall work that quarter. Dropping the lowest grade each quarter provides a more holistic representation of how each student is performing. Even mathematically speaking, outliers decrease the accuracy of the average.

In addition, dropping the lowest grade can encourage improvement. At the beginning of the year, students are just getting used to the demands of a course and it is normal for a student's first few grades to be below where they'd like it to be.

Of course it's true that grades aren't everything. Students should not be conflating their self-worth with the amount of As that they have or their ability to maintain that extolled 4.0. But for an undeniably academically motivated student body, it is still false to say that grades shouldn't be a student's focus or that they really don't matter. For the college admissions process, grades still count for a significant portion of a student's application—they affect our futures. Therefore, it's valid that grades are a primary stressor for PHS students and the school should take reasonable measures to relieve that stress.

More often than not, students' obsession with grades in a class surpasses their real interest in the subject, and this common mindset results in less enthusiasm in the classroom. A flunk on a large test or assignment can do serious damage to a student's motivation to keep trying. With the help of this policy, students who would otherwise shy away from the scarier classes would have the opportunity to challenge themselves intellectually and focus on learning.

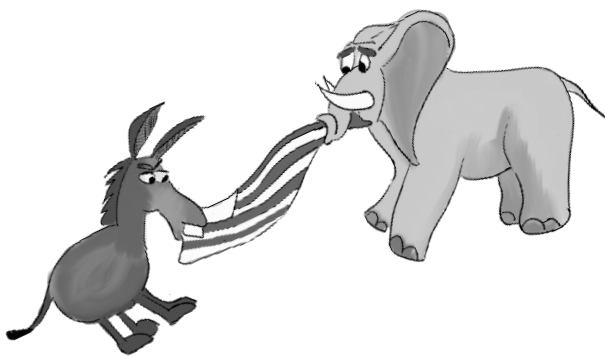
This is not to say that when students do poorly on an assignment, they should just be able to drop it and forget about it. On the contrary, it is crucial that they evaluate, correct, and reflect on their mistakes. Teachers should require that their students complete corrections for their assignments to ensure that they grow and improve. These policies have been effective in many English and history classes, where students are commonly required to reflect on their essays, setting them up for success on their next. This should be extended to all math and science classes. Instead of feeling the sense of panic that a singular grade can instill, students should instead feel motivated to push themselves when they don't initially succeed.

Universities have been successful in implementing similar grade-dropping policies. For example, Princeton University allows math students to drop two of their lowest homework grades. In fact, a 2013 study done by Raymond MacDermott demonstrated that when students were able to drop their lowest grade, their performance on final exams improved.

Instead of letting students sulk over their worst moments, PHS should teach students to learn and grow from them. Just like how one bad time, perhaps because of fatigue or an injury, doesn't define an athlete's abilities, one bad score, whether it be a test, essay or lab report, shouldn't define a student's overall grade. By letting students drop their lowest grade in each class, students are less fixated on perfecting every grade, and more focused on their learning. ■

A guide to the midterms at PHS

Thomas Zhang and Alex Margulis,
OPINIONS CO-EDITORS



graphic: Caroline Gu

By flipping a seat in Pennsylvania and beating Trump-backed candidates in four other swing states (a number that may rise to five if Raphael Warnock wins the Georgian runoff in early December), Democrats have managed to keep control of the Senate, despite both inflation and Biden's low approval rate being stacked against them, and the fact that the incumbent party historically fares terribly in these elections. The anticipated "red wave" didn't show up during this year's midterms — voters were wary of Republican candidates' lies about election fraud and the broadly unpopular reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, among other reasons. More interesting, however, are what the results of the election actually mean, especially in the context of our high school.

Although plenty of students at PHS were keeping an eye on the midterm results, or at least vaguely rooting for one party to win, this support is often purely based on disliking the political party they want to see lose, or "liking" the political party they want to see win, instead of focusing on the actual legislative and political implications of the midterm results. Still, the fact that

the Democrats won the Senate this year will affect every PHS student, no matter whether they consider themselves Republican, Democratic, or neither.

Let's start with the political implications of the midterms. For PHS students who consider themselves Republican, the clear shift in the electorate away from Trump-backed candidates (the majority of the candidates for the US Senate in swing states that he endorsed lost) and the massive, 20-point victory of Ron Desantis (who is considered a major rival to Trump for the 2024 candidacy) in the Florida gubernatorial race means that their party is on rocky footing. The night after the Senate went to the Democrats, Republican senators from many states that voted solidly for Trump in 2020 sought to distance their party from the former president.

The reason Trump-backed candidates lost in battleground states is the same reason that it's good for everyone at PHS that they did — they parroted the lie that the 2020 election was stolen and planned to restrict free elections in their own states. The Republican party has been spreading autocratic rhetoric since Trump lost in 2020, culminating in the insurrection on January 6 last year and the rise of political violence across the board, such as the brutal attack on Paul Pelosi, the husband of the Democratic Speaker of the House. In order for our democracy to function, which any student at PHS would agree is important (look to Russia for an example of what happens when it doesn't), Republicans needed a clear refutation of their election lies at the ballot box, and the midterms gave them just that.

From a policy standpoint too, the midterms are consequential at PHS. Even though the Republicans narrowly took the House, a Democratic majority in the Senate means three things for President Biden. First, he can block Republican legislation that could've been passed if the GOP took both the House and the Senate. That's important because Republicans would've tried to both overturn some of Biden's previous legislation.

This includes his groundbreaking climate legislation, which will help to ensure that everyone at PHS inherits a world that's not too hot to support life, as well as bills like the Inflation Reduction Act, which caps the price for medicines that many students need, and the biggest gun violence reduction act in 30 years, a topic that's unfortunately on many high schooler's minds. Additionally, Republicans could have passed their own legislation with control of both chambers of Congress, with potentially disastrous results for students at PHS. Republican states have passed policies that restricted rights for LGBT students, restricted voting access for eligible seniors, and, most importantly, censored teachers from talking about important issues like gender identity or race.

But perhaps the most important impact of Democrats winning the Senate is one that is lesser known. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell warned that if Republicans took the Senate, they would block Democratic judges from confirmation. Already, during Biden's first two years in office, Democrats confirmed 84 federal judges, and since they still control the Senate after the midterms, that momentum is unlikely to stop. Biden's judges are much more racially and ideologically diverse than Trump's, which is significant because they serve for life, ruling on our nation's laws for generations. That means that students at PHS will benefit from rulings favoring climate bills, social security nets, and the bodily autonomy of women.

Politics can be dismal and outright scary. However, the state of affairs in our country is something for PHS students to research and reckon with, not shy away from. Hopefully, this article has made the complicated world of politics a bit more digestible. But we should all put in the effort to learn about the implications that elections have on our everyday lives, because when people care about the politics that surround them, they are able to make decisions both at the ballot box and in their everyday lives that benefit those around them. ■

The Tower

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

Vanguard: Museums

The Guggenheim in Bilbao

Anika Hadap, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

I will admit, I've never really been a huge fan of museums. Whenever I'm dragged to one on a family vacation, I tend to walk glassy-eyed through the galleries until I hit the gift shop. That's why I was so surprised by the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao; I absolutely loved it. I visited Spain with my family this past summer, and Bilbao was one of our stops. The kicker was that we could only spend a total of 3 hours there. So we had to choose how to spend our time wisely.

Now, Bilbao isn't very big, only about sixteen square miles. It's known for its bustling art scene and picturesque views of the Basque country. So when visiting a city defined by its art, the obvious choice for us was to visit the Guggenheim. I was confused at first, as I'd never heard of there being a Guggenheim outside of New York. But once I saw the actual museum itself, I was shocked that it had bypassed my radar entirely. The actual building is absolutely massive, and the outside is completely covered by sheets of metal aligned in an eccentric shape that actually reminded me of a ship; certain parts jut out almost like a mast and sails. I've really never seen anything like it: The building is a piece of art in itself.

Hour 1: We started our gallery walk outside, strolling past an insane sculpture of a spider as well as a hedge trimmed to look like a dog. I was surprised when we entered the exhibit featuring Picasso's fascinating old sketches. They had an ethereal quality to them. Completely black and white, they had incredible shading that gave them dimension I hadn't seen in Picasso's other work, which usually appeared more square with clear shapes.

Hour 2: At the time, the featured exhibit was called "Motion. Autos, Art, Architecture." It first described the scientific reasoning behind designing automobiles, but as the exhibit went on, it showed how that science was incorporated into art. The exhibit contained several cars that spanned over various decades. I'd say my favorite was one that was made entirely out of wood; maybe not the safest ride, but it was striking to look at.

Hour 3: They also had one of the more strange museum exhibits I've encountered. There were no paintings or drawings. It was a combination of tall walls of metal that you could walk between. It didn't seem like anything special; it just seemed odd. But there was something so peaceful about walking through those walls. The room was lit up so brightly, but everything dimmed within those walls. You could whisper and hear the echo bounce off the walls until the words you'd spoken returned back to you.

The exhibits have wormed their way through my mind often, even though it's been months since I visited the museum. Maybe it was the wild creativity found around every corner, or maybe it was the otherworldly architecture in and out of the museum that gave Bilbao its claim to fame. No matter what it was, I found the Guggenheim to be a welcome surprise, and I walked out actually excited to explore other museums.

graphic: Wenya Huan

Three nearby museums to visit

Krisina Sarkisova, STAFF WRITER, and Katie Qin, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

NJ State Museum

Hosting a diverse set of exhibitions ranging from history to astronomy, the New Jersey State Museum has something for everyone, accessible with no entry fee. This museum in Trenton, New Jersey showcases the history of the state with an array of artifacts and art. Some of the exhibits include “New Jersey’s 9/11 Collection,” “The Civil War Flag Collection of New Jersey,” and “Archaeology & Ethnography,” the latter encompassing a multitude of dinosaur fossils and reconstructions from New Jersey. A frequently applauded feature of the museum is the planetarium. If visitors want to spend \$10, they can view a vast projection of the night sky in the planetarium.

graphic: Wenya Huan



photo courtesy: Susan Greitz



photo: Sophie Miller

Morven Museum

Located off Nassau Street with only an \$8 entry fee, the Morven Museum and Garden is one of Princeton’s prized historic landmarks. Located in the 18th-century mansion that housed Richard Stockton, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Morven Museum has been home to several generations of Stocktons and former New Jersey governors. The first floor holds the museum’s permanent exhibit, “Historic Morven: A Window Into America’s Past,” which includes five galleries that showcase the beginnings and formation of America. The exhibit also explores voices of past women, children, enslaved people, and servants of Morven. The second floor presents temporary exhibitions, as pictured in Morven’s annual Christmas Tree Exhibit.

graphic: Wenya Huan

Princeton Art Museum

The Princeton Art Museum first started collecting pieces in the 1750s and now holds over 112,000 works from around the world. With works ranging from Ancient Byzantine and Islamic vases and sculptures to European paintings, to contemporary art and photography, the museum’s collection is impressive. Curators showcase different exhibits every few months. A few examples of current exhibits are “Shipwrecks” by Alexis Rockman, which emphasizes the futility of human action against nature, and “Samuel Fosso: Affirmative Acts”, which portrays the artist as different characters and gender roles to highlight the relations between identity and the economy. The museum is currently under construction and will reopen in 2024 for free admission with about twice the space for exhibitions.

graphic: Wenya Huan

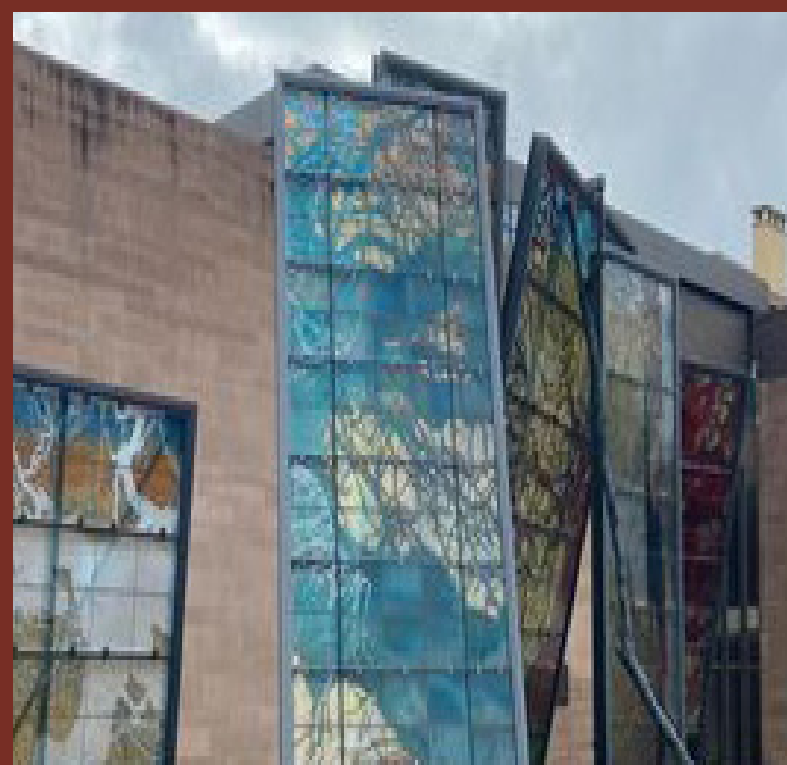
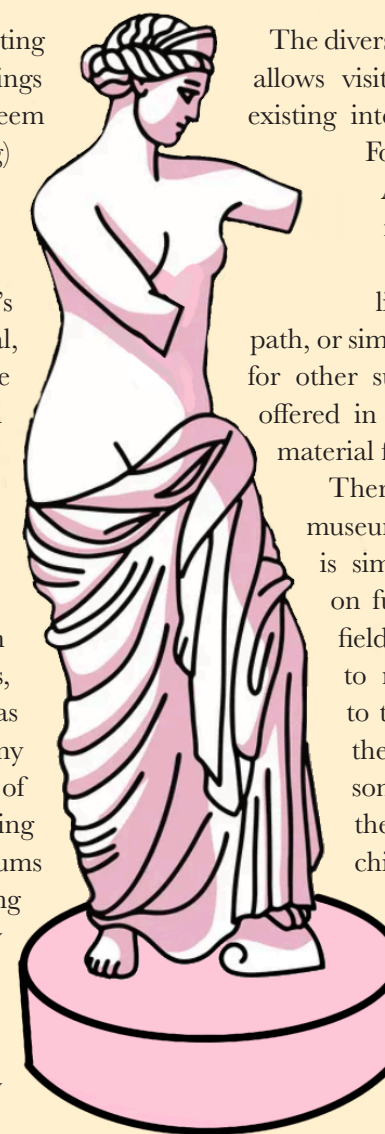


photo: Sophie Miller

When PHS students have free time, visiting a museum is perhaps one of the last things they’d consider doing. Although it may seem like a boring (and sometimes exhausting) activity at first, there are many benefits of museums that shouldn’t be overlooked.

Many students may be discouraged from visiting museums due to the school system’s emphasis on formal education over informal, experience-based learning. According to the Sociology Dictionary, formal education is defined as a “systematic learning of academic knowledge and skills.” By contrast, museums are a form of informal education, defined by Oxford Review in 2016 as “learning from experience that takes place outside formally structured classroom based activities.” In many American schools, and especially at PHS, formal education has become structured around grades. Many PHS students no longer have the privilege of informal or experiential learning: no learning for the sake of learning. In contrast, museums allow patrons to freely explore interesting exhibits, with experiences supplemented by audio tours or plaques below the pieces. In addition to rekindling the desire to learn, the University of Washington found in 2021 that visits to museums significantly reduce stress levels.



graphic: Wenya Huan

The diverse range of exhibits offered by museums allows visitors to not only expand upon their existing interests but also discover new subjects.

For example, seeing a sculpture from Ancient Rome could spark an interest in art history within a STEM-focused student, leading to significant changes like a switch in intended major or career path, or simple changes like a broader appreciation for other subjects. On top of that, the content offered in exhibits often goes beyond the stock material found in high school curricula.

There are many different reasons to go to museums, but the most compelling reason is simple: They’re fun. When reminiscing on fun elementary or middle school days, field trips to museums immediately come to mind. Having the opportunity to go to the Penn Museum in seventh grade or the Franklin Institute in fourth grade are some of what many people say changed their trajectory of interest. Marveling in childlike wonder at what historians and scientists uncovered was astounding, so if you ever are in need of a pleasant day or trip down memory lane, we encourage you to take the time to visit a museum with some friends and family for a fun and educational trip.

Sophie Miller, VANGUARD CO-EDITOR, and Will Pittman, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Why students should make time to visit museums

What is your favorite museum?

Compiled by Sophie Miller and Andrew Zhao, VANGUARD CO-EDITORS

“My favorite museum is the Smithsonian Natural History Museum because I really love the natural world and animals, as well as the wildlife that’s in there. I also really love to see the displays of all the prehistoric mammals that are in that museum, especially since I’m interested in the field of zoology.”

-Neha Viswanathan '23

“My favorite museum is the Guggenheim in New York, which is a contemporary art museum. The structure itself of the building is very interesting and like a piece of art itself. The pieces are unique and engaging; walking through the museum is a fun experience.”

-Rebecca Zou '24

“My favorite museum is the Musée de Louvre, an art museum with many world-renowned pieces such as the Mona Lisa. Visiting the Louvre was a unique experience because I was able to see all these pieces I’ve heard so much about in person. I enjoyed how the exhibits took viewers on a journey throughout various eras of art.”

-Carina He '26



photo: Sophie Miller

photo: Wenya Huan

photo: Wenya Huan

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



photos: Angela Wu

Left: (from left to right:) Andrew Ferrante '24, Sylven Walden '24, Sebastian Bongiovi '25, Valentina Jacobsen '23, Matty Baglio '23, Cassie Mitova '24, Carolina Kerteszkok '23, and Gillian Bannet '24 on stage reacting to the set walls coming down in the play. Right (from left to right:) Bongiovi, Ferrante, Isabel Carter '24 and Bannet act out a scene in which they discover Ferrante's character, Jonathan, has died.

PHS Spectacle Theatre presents "The Play That Goes Wrong"

Sara Shahab Diaz, STAFF WRITER
Dia Beri, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

As an annual tradition, the PHS Spectacle Theatre opens up the season of giving with a fall play. This year, from November 17-20, they presented "The Play That Goes Wrong." Unlike last year, when the Spectacle Theatre's performance of "Bethel Park Falls" was recorded and streamed due to COVID-19 restrictions, the play was performed in front of a live audience.

"The Play that Goes Wrong" follows the fictional Cornley Drama Society as they attempt to put on a show called "The Murder at Haversham Manor." This presents a challenge, as every thing seems to go wrong – to start with, they have no budget or good actors. As the show progresses, a series of unfortunate events unravels, turning the play into a complete and utter disaster that makes the audience burst out into laughter. With an unconscious lead, a moving corpse, a ruffled detective, and a butler that fumbles his words, this comedic murder mystery engaged the audience while the "actors" themselves tripped over their lines and props.

Sylven Waldman '25, who played the character Dennis, was absolutely ecstatic when he first heard about the show.

"The moment I heard about it, I immediately downloaded a copy of the script and read it through completely because I was so excited," Waldman said.

Though putting a production together is no easy feat (as demonstrated by the play itself), the cast worked hard to put on a good performance.

"We've been rehearsing since late September. Initially, they were two to three times a week and we only had to stay back until 5:30 p.m. As we got closer to show day, we started rehearsing more often, about five days a week and the occasional weekend rehearsal. The last few rehearsals ran longer until about 9:00 p.m.," said Elliott Becker Peeler '24, who played the character Chris in the show.

The play demanded a lot of physical labor on top of the long hours spent at rehearsals.

"It's a very physically demanding show. Because it relies so much on physical comedy, rehearsals have sometimes felt more like sports practice. The stunts are hard and the whole cast has had to build up a lot of strength and stamina. I find three new bruises

when I come home every day, but the brutal nature of the show makes it all the more rewarding when we get it right. The preparation has been hard work but it's work that all of us have put in and I know it's going to pay off when we have an audience," said Pippi White '23, who played the character Robert.

This play presented a unique challenge – it had to be intentionally bad. The cast had to perfect their comedic timing and chemistry to pull this off.

"The rehearsal process has been tough, but rewarding. There are so many bits in the show that the actors and crew need to do perfectly wrong, and they're very satisfying to pull off as a team. The easiest part has definitely been playing off the other actors on stage," Peeler said.

The production also gave the students involved a sense of community. After spending long hours together in rehearsals, the cast and crew members grew close.

"[The preparation] was very physically demanding but also rewarding at the same time. My favorite part about the play is the community and support system that goes along with it. The whole process of line memorization, blocking, and stunts is so much more enjoyable with friends," said Noa Zacks '25, who played the character Annie.

The play could not be done without the PHS Tech Crew, who works behind the scenes.

"The Tech Crew manages the props, lighting, sound, stage management, costumes, painting, carpentry, and set design for the play. During tech week, which is the week leading up to the performance, we stayed afterschool until 9:00 p.m. every day with the cast for run throughs," said Carolina Kerteszkok '23, props supervisor and Tech Crew co-leader.

The process presented some challenges to the crew members, though it all came together in the end.

"It was difficult figuring out what looks best on stage. We had to be able to differentiate between how it would look painted in a classroom and how it would look with all the lights. We did have to redo some parts, and some days we would stay after school until 10:00 p.m., but in the end it all got done. Overall, it was such a fun experience, and it looked amazing," said Tech Crew member Elizabeth Waldman '25. ■

JP Kinney '23 paints his future bright

Syra Bhatt, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Propped over his paint-splattered desk, a bright idea and a blank canvas are all it takes for JP Kinney '23 to create another masterpiece. From school work to personal projects, Kinney showcases his talent and creativity while doing what he loves: visual art. He is most confident while painting, but is also experienced in drawing, sculpting, and designing multimedia projects. Inspired by his family and motivated by self-mastery, he is eager to grow and excited to see where his journey leads in the future.

What piece are you most proud of?

I am most proud of a self portrait entitled "Tongue" [that] I painted with acrylics. I am proud of the way that I used color and a dynamic pose to express myself.

What kind of training or classes have you taken?

I've taken classes at the Paul Robeson Center for The Arts with the Arts Council of Princeton – [I do] mostly acrylic painting there. Right now I'm taking Studio Art 2-D III with Mr. Pembleton. For underclassmen, I definitely recommend looking into the [art] classes and teachers – they are all really nice and helpful. If you want to go to an arts school after [high school], they can help you with your portfolio and write [recommendation] letters.

Do you like digital or painting better?

Digital art is much easier to sit down and do, because there is much less set up and clean up, but I feel like that is part of the charm with painting. Mixing your paint, having to be more thoughtful because you don't have an [undo button], and just the physical feedback painting with a brush are all things I really enjoy when making art.

What goals do you have for yourself? Is there something you'd really like to paint or create but haven't done before?

I want to paint a mural somewhere – most of my art tends to be small and not take more than a few days to create. I want to work on a project that's way bigger in size than what I usually do, and I want to be able to spend a lot of time on it. Even if it's just a mural on my bedroom wall, it is something I want to accomplish and work on.

How did you begin your visual art journey?

I've been doing art my whole life. My mom is an artist, and I've just grown up surrounded by painting. [She] helps run the Cranbury Arts Council, and when she would go do the plays for the middle school, she would bring me to do the backdrops. I'd have my little paints on the stage and I'd paint [with her]. My mom is definitely my inspiration.

What are you working on right now?

I'm working on a lot of animation, which [I think] is really cool. I use Clip Studio Paint for animation and [digital] drawing. I also have a Huion Tablet for graphic-style drawing. Right now, I'm also working on oil painting. I think painting is my best work.

What technique do you find the most challenging?

Watercolor is the most challenging for me. It is hard to know where to start, how much water to use, and it's just really hard to make convincing shapes and colors. I can't wrap my head around artists who will start a watercolor piece with a bunch of random splotches of color and transform it into a cohesive picture.

How do you see art playing a role in your future?

I want to go to school for art – if I can be doing art full time and be self sustainable, that's my dream. I really want to do it for the rest of my life and it is my goal to make a living from it.

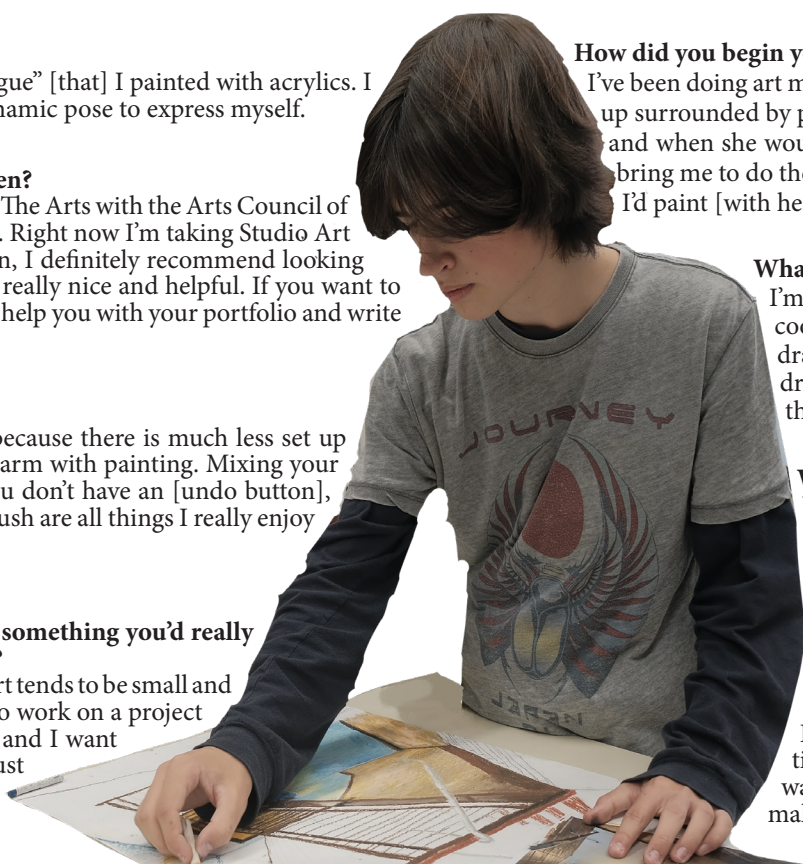


photo: Emily Qian

Seasonal sentiments: a collection of Thanksgiving traditions



Sky Jo, STAFF WRITER

Every year, when the leaves turn yellow and the air turns sweet, my family makes room in our trunk to start packing for our annual hike. While it may be common, going hiking during fall has been my family's Thanksgiving tradition ever since I can remember. Out of all the places we've set foot in, our favorite reserve is the Mohonk mountain, and the endless photos in our camera roll and albums on our walls prove its merit. Usually, the tradition will start a week before, with a family discussion in our group chat or at the dinner table. Because both my parents work and my brother and I are juniors, it has gotten a little harder over the past years to schedule a time that works for all of us, but we try our best to be considerate of each other. After deciding on the day we'll go, my dad will start going through each box in our garage and basement, trying to find the right hiking shoes for my mom, small bags we can carry, hiking sticks, etc. While the drive to the reserve is a bit painful, when you get on the mountain itself, your mind goes blank — almost like someone just emptied out all of your thoughts. The crisp fall air strikes your nose the more you hike and the heavier you breathe, and your feet start to latch onto the rocks and dirt on the ground. There are some routes on the hike that my family has found to be more interesting, so sometimes we change sides as we go. By the time we get to the top of the mountain, there is a sense of unity and bonding, even through the sweat and tiredness, and I always end up sitting on the ground, breathing in and out, trying to catch every glimpse of the fall scenery. The leaves are so small, yet they fill such a big portion of the sky, and every time the breeze shakes them, it looks as though they are dancing. It is not long from then that we start unpacking our bags and enjoying the food we packed that morning. Taking selfies and group photos, we talk about how we think this year went, and hope to come back next year. ■

Avery McDowell, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

If I am being completely honest, Thanksgiving has never been my preferred holiday. By this time of year my mind is already shifted to snow, gingerbread cookies, and listening to "Last Christmas" by Wham! on repeat. For me, it was a dinner in which all my aunts and uncles would barrage my brother and I with endless questions, and the only thing on the table I was interested in was the mashed potatoes.

Most years, my family alternates celebrating holidays between my mother and my father's side. This usually means Thanksgiving with my mother's family in New Jersey, and Christmas with my dad's family in Virginia. However, this year is a special case in which both groups will be gathered at my own house. People of different backgrounds and cultures will be in the same place at the same time. I couldn't be happier, and I have come to realize that my changed feelings surrounding this year's Thanksgiving are largely due to the fact that my appreciation for gathering with loved ones has grown. Although things have improved in the last two years, the pandemic put my extended family at a reach that is much greater than just the distance separating us, in that most of our interactions involved FaceTimes and six-feet-apart greetings outside. My brother left for college just this August, leaving me as an only child and the only teenager in the house.

So as I look forward to November 24, I visualize the warm lights in the living room, faint yet cheerful laughs over the jazz music, a smörgåsbord of pies and cookies spread out across the wooden table, and most importantly, the faces of both sides of my family bonding together when they would have otherwise been in two completely different states.

Something I will encourage my father to play again is my favorite piece of music traditionally used at fall gatherings: the Charlie Brown theme music by the Vince Guaraldi Trio. The subtle yet peppy piano layered into each song always puts me in a fall mood. In terms of dessert (my preferred part of the meal), my aunt always brings pies of scrumptious flavors to the table. The bakeries she gets them from are unfamiliar to me, yet deserving of a Michelin star. This year there will be flavors such as honey and chocolate chess, both of which already make my mouth water.

With all this to look forward to, I imagine myself in a painting that seems perfect, a glittering masterpiece that encapsulates the joy of getting to catch up with one another over a special meal. For that, I am lucky to recognize the art my family seems to create on Thanksgiving. ■

Marina Peres, STAFF WRITER

On most days, turkey would be near the bottom of my list of top choices of food to eat since I've always thought of it as one of the blandest proteins. However, Thanksgiving is not one of those days. My parents and I, having moved to the U.S. from Brazil in 2009, have no historical family tradition or connection to Thanksgiving, which allowed us to create our own reasons to celebrate this day. From the moment we moved here, we have met countless Brazilian families in the area, and though some have moved away and many new ones have arrived, we have always maintained a group that is our found family abroad, the people who we celebrate our "friendsgiving" with.

Unafraid to stray from classic American food traditions, my parents and the other adults have made many attempts at different Thanksgiving menus. However, after tantrums by five-year-olds over duck instead of turkey and ceviche instead of stuffing, and one year's somewhat underwhelming suckling pig (though nowadays I would love both options), the turkey somehow remained champion. However, by no means does this mean my dad makes your standard, basic, dry turkey. Every year he has always strived to do better than the last, putting all his energy into a five-day cooking preparation. And, without fail, whenever he pulls the 25-pound turkey out from his Green Egg Barbecue Grill, it comes out with a beautifully crisped, caramel-colored skin, and with the most tender meat that will melt off the bone. The turkey is always the star of the show at our dinner, and all 30+ guests marvel throughout the rest of the year, waiting for that Thursday in November when they actually feel like eating turkey. ■

Sophie Zhang, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Other than the anticipation of finally seeing old friends, eating delicious food, and getting a break, the most wonderful part of Thanksgiving is none other than the feeling of togetherness. It's the one day designated for us to take time off just to spend time with the people we love.

Unfortunately, my extended family lives across the world in China, so they don't get the pleasure of getting this day off. My parents, having no experience with preparing Thanksgiving dinner or the "conventional" traditions of this holiday, started their own by blending our two cultures: American and Chinese.

For starters, my parents would wake up early in the morning to prepare a meal for all of our family friends, and the aroma of green beans, bok choy, potatoes, beef, and lasagna — a strangely eccentric combo — would fill up our kitchen. In addition, instead of the classic turkey, my parents would boil a chicken and soak it in rice wine to bring out its tangy flavor. Friends would start coming by late afternoon, with the adults chattering and relaxing on the couch while children played ping pong and watched whatever was on the TV.

Aside from my favorite dish, tiramisu, we would end the night with a bit of karaoke. Mostly the adults would start playing around with the machine until they found a pop song or nursery rhymes — all in Chinese — and soon everyone else would be giggling and waiting for their turn to choose a "good" song. Although I am fluent in the language, reading Chinese characters is quite a struggle for me, so I just watch and lay on the couch, marveling at my parents' annual concert and laughing with everybody. ■

graphics: Emily Qian



graphics: Lydia Madamopolou

A&E
Presents...
FILM REVIEWS

graphic: Emily Qian

“Vivre Sa Vie”

Luca Balescu, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

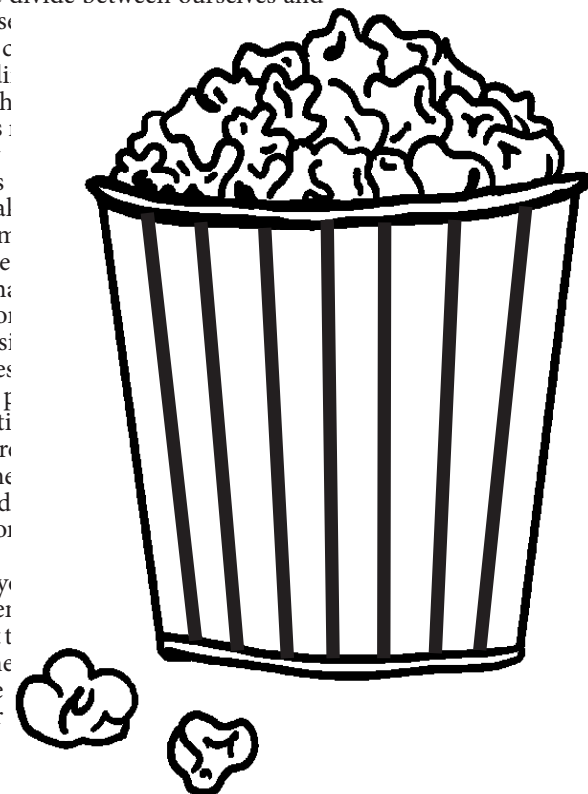
In 1968, film critic Richard Roud wrote that the art of cinema rests on three paradoxes: visual versus narrative, fiction versus documentary, and reality versus abstraction. Perhaps no director has better reconciled these in their work than the late Jean-Luc Godard, whose films never sought to resolve these paradoxes, but to exploit and display them. Godard, a French director, has said that his films are, in essence, self-directed works of film criticism. Few films better demonstrate Godard’s dualism of touching narrative and formalist experimentation than 1962’s “Vivre Sa Vie,” a true chef d’oeuvre of French cinema.

Comprising twelve clearly demarcated “tableaux,” or episodes, “Vivre Sa Vie” tells the story of Nana (Anna Karina), a young parisienne who leaves her husband and slowly descends into prostitution to make ends meet. The episodic structure of “Vivre Sa Vie” allows the movie to avoid a tightly-woven, continuous dramatic plot. Instead, we are given brief glimpses into Nana’s world, each centered around one location or action. One rather straightforwardly depicts Nana’s first experience with a client, others show us a joyous dance through a billiard hall, a letter written over the course of eight minutes, and a conversation with a philosopher about love and language (“the more one talks, the less words mean”). These chapters vary in mood, duration, and style, but what unites them is a sense of cold detachment that the world around Nana has towards her. The gray bareness of the city is so immediate that one feels as if Nana’s Paris would appear monochrome even if filmed in color. Her enduring liveliness seems nullified by her uncaring surroundings, manifested both in the blank dreariness of the film’s locations and the objectifying gaze of the film’s male characters. Although she encounters some moments of reciprocated humanity, Nana fails to make any impact on the world around her, almost as if she exists on a different, incompatible plane of existence.

Godard uses his formalist experimentation to accentuate a similar condition present between the viewer and Nana. By playing with the form of the motion picture in certain moments (such as intentionally positioning key action beyond the edge of the frame, alternating between sound and silence, or positioning actors in unrealistic statue-like positions), Godard draws our attention to film’s status as an art. This not only allows for some truly brilliant effects in certain scenes (which I will leave for the viewer to

experience), but makes us aware of the divide between ourselves and what is happening on screen. We are up in Nana’s life, but there is nothing we can do as Nana is isolated from her surroundings as a sex object, we are made aware of her from help from outside the screen. This is in those moments when Karina looks directly at the camera so striking: It almost seems as if she is pleading with us, but as Godard makes us aware by drawing our attention to the reality he is using, we are unable to help her or relate. We can only gaze and empathize, as Nana does in the film when she sees “The Passion of Joan of Arc” (1928) at the cinema. She cries at the tragedy on screen, and evidently sees herself in Joan of Arc, but ultimately is powerless to do anything about it. That same situation of what makes “Vivre Sa Vie” so heartbreaking: the isolation Nana feels from both her world, and our reality. Like many of Godard’s films, this is once again a commentary on the power of art.

“Vivre Sa Vie” is a must watch for anyone into the vast ocean that is French cinema. The stark and violent contrast of form and content makes the film, for me, not just one of the most beautiful films of all time, but one of the greatest works of art I have ever experienced. ■



“Another Round”

Todor Pophristic, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Thomas Vinterberg’s 2020 dramatic comedy “Another Round” follows a group of four high school teachers as they conduct an experiment where they live out their daily lives with a blood alcohol level of 0.05. Each participant has a different living situation, and navigates the temptation, pleasure, and downfall that come with alcohol abuse in varied ways. In doing so, the film provides a more nuanced depiction of alcoholism than has traditionally been presented in the media.

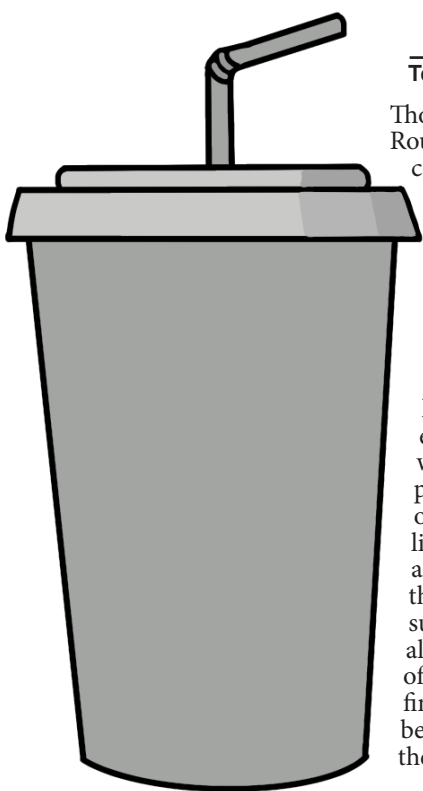
This is the film’s biggest strength: it doesn’t spoon feed the audience a black and white narrative. Their lives at the beginning are boring and dull, and by the end are shattered and lonely; they are left to decide whether the pleasure sandwiched between the two phases was worth the anguish of going too far. Where other movies about depression and alcoholism may feel like a PSA, “Another Round” approaches the subject of alcohol in a broader, social context, because ultimately the story isn’t about alcohol, it’s about loneliness. One such example of Vinterberg’s nuanced approach to alcohol is the inclusion of a small subplot near the end of the movie. A student is extremely nervous for their final exam and if they don’t pass the exam, they won’t be able to graduate. In order to calm the kids’ nerves, the teacher in charge of the exam, who is also part of the

experiment, gives him some alcohol... and it works. It’s not just a substance – it encompasses the person, the experience, and their situation.

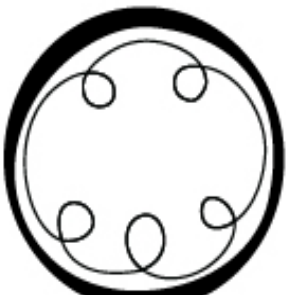
The setting of the high school is essential, as it juxtaposes the stagnant lives of the teachers with their students, who have their whole lives ahead of them. The mundane setting also makes the movie more relatable, making the film immersive. When the experiment is introduced, shifting the film from a melancholic drama to a comedy, you are more open to the idea because the film is finally allowing you to have fun, just as the characters are as well. Your viewing experience tempts you towards the vice of alcohol within the film, which in turn helps you understand how the characters are feeling. It masterfully shifts from tone to tone to create that ultimate mesmeric experience.

Aiding these tones with corresponding levels of energy with the score, cinematography and editing is what makes the film a technical marvel. It can be slow moving, featuring wide shots and infrequent cuts accompanied with gloomy jazz. But at other times it can be a handheld whip pans, fast cuts, and loud dance pop. Although these visual/audio changes may seem jarring on text, the film does a great job of transitioning between its various emotional phases. One of these ways is by making the characters interact with the motifs, such as bodies of water, in a way corresponding to the energy of the scene; providing thematic consistency.

Mad Mikkelsen, who plays the lead role of Martin, is the highlight of the movie. He brings everything to the table with an absolutely spectacular and moving performance of an entirely unspectacular and ordinary man. He does more unleashed, dramatic scenes, but the powerful moments are those where you see his discontent and loneliness come out in small ways. The way he moves, talks, and even stands still evokes a sadness that is hard to describe... a man who doesn’t see better days ahead of him or looks forward to things, he just exists. Equal parts a broad social commentary and a touching personal story, “Another Round” is a Danish blessing to the drama genre. ■



graphic: Emily Qian

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LEFT: Samuel Fosso, *Tati—Le Chef qui a vendu l'Afrique aux colons* (The Chief Who Sold Africa to the Colonists), 1997. The Walther Collection, New York / Neu-Ulm. © Samuel Fosso. Courtesy the artist; Jean Marc Patras, Paris; and The Walther Collection RIGHT: Dor Guez, *Lilies of the Field #1, Jerusalem, Mount Olives*, 2019–2020. Collection of the artist. © Dor Guez. Courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa; Dvir Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel; and Carlier Gebauer Gallery, Berlin, Germany

SPORTS



photo: Wenya Huan

In their game against Colts Neck High School, Captain Sarah Villamil '23 bumps the ball to teammate Kaelin Bobetich '26, who prepares for a spike. Teammates Macaela Wilton '23, Lois Matsukawa '25, and Pearl Agel '25 monitor the ball.

Girls volleyball team's unique lineup yields impressive season

Wenya Huan, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

From maintaining a 21-3 record this season, to winning the Burlington County Scholastic League Championship, to making history by advancing to the state finals for the first time, this year's PHS girls varsity volleyball team has been the most accomplished since varsity volleyball Head Coach Patricia Manhart initiated the program in 2014.

A significant part of the success this season was due to the amount of talented freshman and sophomore players.

"Compared to last season, there were a lot of freshmen players who were really good on the team. These gifted young players really leveled up our team," said team member Sophia Tsang '23.

Manhart enjoys having this group of upper and underclassmen players on the starting lineup for the varsity team. She believes that this setup allowed her to have the flexibility of trying out multiple playing strategies, such as faster sets, faster attacks, and spikes at different heights. These various moves were able to maximize the team's offense, which was crucial for the team's success.

"This year it was more elevated. They wanted to try new combos, so we had more in our pockets against tougher teams."

"This season, based on the players' self-developments, they continually asked to try out new techniques. Last year we were more concerned with just keeping everything consistent. This year it was more elevated. They wanted to try new combos, so we had more in our pockets against tougher teams," Manhart said.

The team was able to succeed in places they haven't in the past. For instance, the varsity team beat PHS' long-time rival, Notre Dame High School, by a clear-cut win of 2-0, even with half of the team out due to COVID-19. These victories were, in a large part, due to the strong bond the teammates had with each other.

"We had fun activities together and really bonded well. People liked to contribute their ideas. We have this dynamic team that the program has experienced for the first time," said Captain Sarah Villamil '23.

As the captain of the team, Villamil had an outstanding performance this year, with 177 kills, or spikes, that immediately ended a point. Her experience as a veteran player was crucial for holding the team together and maximizing everyone's potential.

"Sarah's very inclusive. She always works towards having everyone feel confident," said teammate Zoe Nuland '25. "She's more than an amazing volleyball player. She lifts up

people on the court by small encouragements like tapping them on the shoulder. She is crucial at helping us keep our mental game in the physical game."

If Villamil is the foundation that holds everyone together, Lois Matsukawa '25, who had 465 assists this season, is the force that urges the team forward.

As a setter on the team, she is the mastermind behind the team's offense during games and has orchestrated attacks with her sets.

"When I met Lois last year, she was the most confident freshman I've ever met. From the first day she knew what she was doing on the court. I've always admired her strong mentality," Villamil said.

The team's ability to carry out amazing attacks was established by the perfect passes made by the varsity team's defensive specialist Pearl Agel '25, who had 199 digs, or successful saves of the ball, this season.

"I'm very happy to see Pearl grow from a shy girl in her freshman year to becoming a role model for the team. Her skill was always there but she grew so much in her confidence. I know that she's going to be amazing next year," Villamil said.

With a team of mostly underclassmen, the players now have experience to hit the new level.

"I expect that we can do it next year, We'll get the number on the banner," Manhart said. ■

Annual Corner House Dodgeball Tournament promotes community spirit

Dester Selby-Salazar, STAFF WRITER

Energetic high school students around Princeton gathered at the PHS gymnasium for a chance to win the highly anticipated Corner House Dodgeball Tournament on November 4. 12 teams from PHS, Princeton Day School, The Hun School, and Stuart Country Day School all came together to compete for the trophy.

Dodgeball is a sport where a group of players compete to eliminate the opposing side by hitting them with nerf balls, while avoiding being hit themselves. It's a sport that requires team coordination and adaptability.

Started by the Corner House Student Board nearly a decade ago, the annual event aims to promote the message that Corner House stands for: fighting against substance abuse. Every year, the community comes together to enjoy this high energy tournament.

"People really want to just represent their schools," said Hadar Hazan '23, one of the lead organizers of the tournament. "You could come and watch, or you can come and play, or you can come on chat with your friends; there's a lot of stuff to do."

To prepare for the event, the members of Corner House Student Board had to coordinate various tasks, such as advertising the event, designing t-shirts, and hiring referees. This is one of the biggest events the Student Board puts on every year.

"I didn't realize the overwhelming amount of work there would be. We put quite some time into planning everything like we have. We meet every week and that's what we've been doing kind of since the beginning of the year," Hazan said.

The tournament is set up in a bracket format, where teams are pinned against each other, and the winning



photo: Wenya Huan

Two teams in the final round of the Corner House Dodgeball Tournament argue a play.

team progresses. The last two teams played in a coveted game against each other for the final trophy prize. This year, PDS clinched glory, defeating PHS in the final round.

Overall, the competition was a success. The tournament contributed to strengthening the community spirit by not only uniting students from PHS, but also students from different schools. Namrat Hundal, one of the players in the tournament, felt the passion from the fans.

"People were really excited and enthusiastic about it," said Hundal. "There was lots of yelling, but in a good way."

It may seem as though everyone in the tournament should have an athletic background, but the tournament is open to any student that wants to take their mind off school work and come together with the community to have fun. Members from all over the community participate in the tournament as well, like the police and fire department.

"I really try to encourage people to join," said Hazan. "People get so scared if they're not athletic, but it really does not matter. It was probably one of my favorite nights in the first semester last year. Sign up next year!" ■

Athletes of the Month

Daniel Baytin '23: swimming

Joshua Barzilai, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Daniel Baytin '23 hinged forward with his front foot and fingertips hanging off the diving block, waiting for the buzzer to go off. "On your mark, get set, go!" Daniel Baytin '23 dives in to start his best event, the 100-meter breaststroke.

Baytin started swimming at four years old. Originally, he wanted to play tennis, but he joined the X-Cel Swimming club team when he was six and has been swimming for them ever since.

When Baytin joined the PHS swim team his freshman year, it was easy for him to integrate with his teammates.

"When I joined I already knew a lot of the people because everyone there was in a club, and it just so happened that a lot of the people on the high school team were in my club. It was a lot of fun and really relaxing," Baytin said.

Over the course of his athletic career, Baytin has not only grown as a swimmer, but also a leader and role model of the team.

"He used to really want to focus on his [best] events that were the best and he's kind of transitioned into the 'I'll do what's best for the team' type of guy. He's always somebody who will swim anything that will benefit the team," Head Coach Carly Misiewicz said.

The most impactful moment of his swimming career was when he was trying to get a national record at twelve years old. Although he worked hard to surpass the record, unforeseeable circumstances caused him to miss the record by some tenths of a second.

"I had just been swimming for four weeks straight to get t his national record. But then New Jersey banned fast suits, so I had to swim the race in a bad suit and I just missed it. I'm still really glad that I tried to get the record," Baytin said.

In Baytin's freshman year, he set the school record for the 100-yard breaststroke. In the 2022 Speedo Summer Sectionals, he placed second in the finals in the 100-meter breaststroke with a time of 1:05.9. His best time in the 100-meter breaststroke is 1:04.17, which is 2.02 seconds off the 2024 Olympic trial cut.

Although he is very physically gifted with a large wingspan, which gives him the range of motion needed for efficient strokes in breaststroke, his height of 6'4" has caused him issues in the past.

"Last year I threw out my back, eventually I had to stop working out for a month and that really affected my swimming. This year I went to physical therapy right away, relaxed and it worked out," Baytin said.

Now that Baytin is a senior, he will step into a leadership role as captain for the high school team.

"Baytin's best qualities is that he serves as the team's rock, we can always rely on him to win an event. He serves as a good moral compass for the team, he is always focused on helping the team and being a good role model to underclassmen," said teammate Julian Velazquez '23.

Baytin plans to continue to swim in college at a Division I program. His main goal this year is to break the junior national record and he hopes to continue breaking records with his team as well.

For younger swimmers, Baytin has some words of encouragement.

"Comparisons are a goal killer. What matters most is yourself. I think that it's important for some people to realize that you need to focus on yourself and realize just how much improvement you've made, not compare yourself to others," Baytin said. ■



photo: Emily Qian

Ava Ramirez '23: diving

Jessica Chen, SPORTS CO-EDITOR

Ava Ramirez '23 steps onto the diving board. She takes a deep breath and visualizes her sequence step by step. Once she is ready, Ramirez strides to the front of the board, jumps three times, and propels herself into the air. The crowd cheers as she flips twice in the air and breaks the water in a perfect streamline.

Ramirez specializes in the one-meter and three-meter springboard. Four years ago, after doing gymnastics for six years, she fell out of love with the sport and transitioned into diving. The transition was not too difficult since diving has many of the same fundamental movements as gymnastics.

"A lot of ex-gymnasts transition into diving. It's similar to diving [since] you're training long hours and [doing the same] conditioning," Ramirez said.

When Ramirez first started diving at the Knights Diving Academy, Coach Kristopher Hoffman immediately noticed her motivation and efficiency while diving.

"At first she was really quiet, but she's very disciplined and hardworking. She doesn't dilly-dally and is usually the first one done with the things that are needed to be done for the day," Hoffman said.

Her strong qualities shown in her first impression still hold true and are exemplified any day at practice.

"Ava is a hard working and smart person. She is very athletic and has a driven mindset," said teammate Zein Mahana '23.

For training, Ramirez practices six days a week for three and a half hours each day. Each practice consists of an hour and a half of conditioning on dry land such as trampoline work, dry diving practice, and general strength training. Although practices may be long, the successes she achieves are rewarding.

"I like the physical part of it. It's rewarding when you do something that you never thought you could do," Ramirez said.

Her love for the sport and discipline while training has proved to be fruitful. Ramirez has qualified for various national and regional meets, the most significant being the USA Diving Zones in 2022, where she placed in the top 12 out of 40 competitors.

"My most memorable moment was [USA Diving] Zones 2022 because I just had a really good meet. I came back from not having the best meet at regionals and did a lot better than I expected," Ramirez said.

But, Ramirez's successes did not come without sacrifices. During the height of COVID-19 in 2020-2021, all the pools in New Jersey were closed, which halted her diving practice for the foreseeable future. However, Ramirez was not willing to regress in her diving skills, and moved to Florida with her grandparents to continue practicing.

"I never thought times would get so rough [...] during the pandemic. I basically had to decide if I wanted to keep on [diving] or not. But I'm glad that I made that sacrifice because now I am where I want to be," Ramirez said.

Her most important achievement in her academic and diving career is her commitment to Division I diving at West Point Military Academy. She knew she wanted to go to a military academy after going on an official visit, but fell in love with West Point after visiting it. Her brother, who is part of the ROTC at Princeton University, was a big influence on her dream of going to West Point. She had been in contact with the coach for a while and was very excited to receive the offer.

"I really like the structure of military life. And I feel like it's going to be a grind, but a really rewarding experience academically and athletically. I think it is amazing that I will be able to dive the whole time and graduate as an officer," Ramirez said.

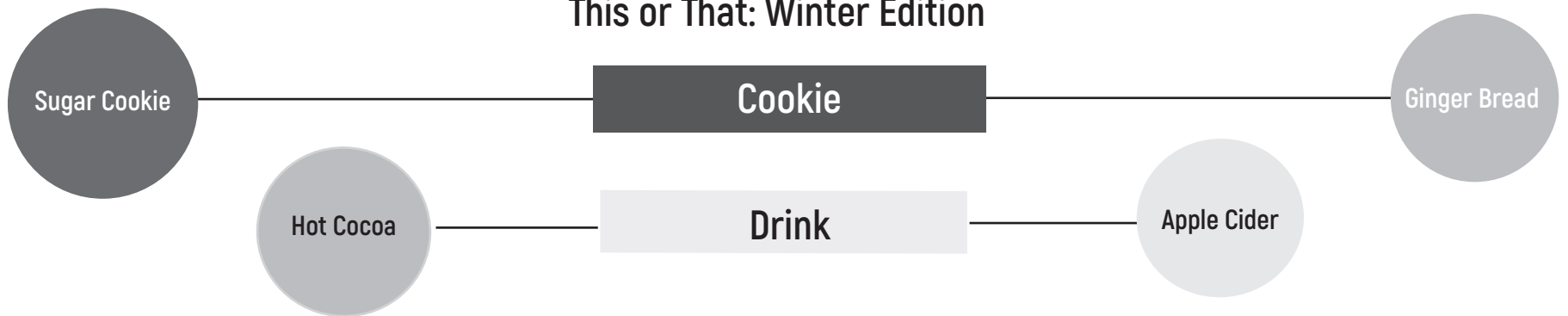
To those who are interested in diving, Ramirez has some words of advice.

"Diving is a very up and down sport: you have bad practices and a bad practice might turn into like a whole bad month for you," said Ramirez. "But just know that one bad practice, or a couple, or a month of bad practices is not a setback. You just have to be able to push through and look towards the future." ■



photo: Emily Qian

This or That: Winter Edition



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photo: Nicholas Niforatos

Boys soccer players Zhibo Huang '23, Matthew Chao '25, and Zachary Della Rocca '23 share a moment before their game.

BOYS SOCCER 8-6-1

"Our best game was probably our win against Hightstown."
- Nick Matese '24

"The best part of this season was being with the guys and making new memories."
- Brian Donis '25



photo: Emily Wu

GIRLS TENNIS 13-2

"It was exciting to meet a lot of new faves this year. Everyone worked well to support each other and boost morale throughout the season." - Scarlett Cai '24

"I have met some of my closest friends and was introduced to many other people!" - Lada Labas '25



photo: Wenya Huan

Volleyball players Pearl Agel '25, Ashley Chester '26, Sarah Villamil '23, Lois Matsukawa '25, Charlotte Woods '26, Rachel Hoffman '23, Emily Wu '23, and Zoe Nuland '25 cheer each other on during a game.

VOLLEYBALL 21-5

"This season we came in with a strong trust and team bond, helping us win our conference undefeated and make our record-breaking run to the state section finals." - Emily Wu '23

"I think all improved from the start of the season. My favorite part were the games because we all got to cheer each other on and have fun!" - Vivian Lee '26



photo: Nicholas Niforatos

Football players Jheki Gordan '26, Sean Wilton '25, Tyler Goldberg '24, Corey Woodson '25, and Jack Callahan '23 take a break in between quarters.

FOOTBALL 1-6

"My favorite part of the season were the moments I shared with teammates on the field, on the bus, and in the locker room."
- Elisio Moncada '25

"This year we laid the groundwork for the future, and will get bigger, faster, stronger, smarter, and come out firing next year."

fall sports recap

Jessica Chen, SPORTS CO-EDITOR



photo: Emily Wu

CROSS COUNTRY

"I really liked running with my friends this season because they motivate me everyday."
- Sam Lee '24

"As a freshman, it was pretty scary going into the season, but everyone was really nice and I improved a lot from their encouragement" - Emily Yun '26

GIRLS SOCCER 8-8-2

"We had a lot of fun this season connecting as a team and working together!" - Rowan Gilmore '23

"This season was full of fun memories as we welcomed new people and formed great connections. We worked so hard each game to make this season the best possible" - Lucia Salvato '23



photo: Emily Wu



photo: Alexandra Sandt

Field hockey players Reva Doshi '24, Mia Ramirez '26, and Kayla Christopher '23 congratulate Sophie Gono '25 on a successful play during their game against Allentown.

FIELD HOCKEY 14-3

"My favorite part was the people that I got to play with. We had so much fun together and it felt like we were best friends, which ultimately led to our success on the field." - Reva Doshi '24

"We had an amazing season and a big part of that was our bond. We are all so close and that definitely strengthened our connection on the field."
- Mia Ramirez '25



photo: Nicholas Niforatos

Cheerleaders Ashlynn Potter '24, Alyssa Moreno '26, Georgina Brandt '26, Avery Gallagher '24, Avery Madison '24, Suki McNulty '26, Emily Garcia '26, Alberte Ulbak '26, Logan Hollingsworth '24, Alex Woodbury '24, Miley Copeland '24, Arianna Malave '26, Nava Brito '26, Chiara Lavino '23, and Eileen Moyer '25 strikes an ending pose at their final competition on November 12.

CHEERLEADING

"This season we came in with a strong trust and team bond, helping us win our conference undefeated and make our record-breaking run to the state section finals." - Miley Copeland '24

"When I started cheer, I was scared and I thought it was a bad idea, but after I met all the people, it was the best three months I ever had." - Louise Demoncheaux '25