



# The Tower

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## Pride for PHS unites community leaders and students in support of LGBTQ+ students



photos: Katherine Chen

Top: Alena Ivanov '27, Sedona Arminio '27, Grace Walden '26, Adele Samsanova '28, Sophia Bruzos Shalamberidze '28, Chloe Wu '28, and Pearl Agel '25 gather around the tie-dye stand. Bottom left: Grace Waldman '25 manages PHS Pottery's stand. Bottom right: Alex Lux-Beteta paints henna.

**Avantika Palayekar**, STAFF WRITER  
**Sanya Bhatt**, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

On May 30, students, club leaders, a cappella groups, and local organizations gathered on the front lawn for the annual Pride for PHS day to support and celebrate the LGBTQ+ community. PHS clubs and outside organizations including Princeton Public Library (PPL) and HiTOPS led a variety of activities, including a pride-themed piñata and an LGBTQ+ history stand.

Pride for PHS was first organized in 2023 through the efforts of the Gender and Sexuality Alliance club (GSA), PHS art teacher Bridget Schmidt, and PHS special education teacher Torie Esposito. However, this year, the event had a special significance.

"In 2025, we're being told to be quiet — and not be so out, proud, and loud. We as adults need to encourage our youth that we're educating ... to be proud about who they are and speak about their experiences, which are very different [from] mine as a queer adult," said Schmidt.

Though Pride for PHS involved many teachers and outside organizations, PHS students played a significant role in managing the booths at the event. Sylvan Waldman '25, ran the make-up station; Pearl Agel '25 ran the pottery booth, a perennial favorite; and Lilly Tuliszewski '25, a leader

of the Gender and Sexuality Alliance club, led an trivia stand on LGBTQ+ history

"GSA provided a lot of educational resources for the community, and then we made trivia questions based on those resources. I think this event helps solidify that there is a place for [LGBTQ+ students] here in our community, and that GSA will advocate for them whenever they need," said Tuliszewski.

PHS students who simply participated, like Olivia Chen '27, also enjoyed the event.

"I think it's really nice to have events organized for you to feel accepted in. I don't necessarily need it because I don't live in a terribly homophobic community ... but I definitely feel a lot more accepted. [PHS takes] queer people seriously instead of ignoring the issue or outwardly opposing it," said Chen.

Osbaldo Morales '25, the president of Latinos Unidos, emphasized the supportive nature throughout event. Though not a club focused on pride-related themes, Latinos Unidos presented a pride-themed piñata.

"Pride Fest is an important event for the whole community because it just shows that there's inclusivity. In this climate ... I feel like everyone should know that they're supported. There's worries that they're trying to push down sexuality down people's throat, [but] we're just being supportive," said Morales.

## PILOT agreement passed amidst larger debates on housing developments in Princeton

**Aritra Ray**, MANAGING EDITOR  
**Harry Dweck**, NEWS & FEATURES CO-EDITOR  
**Daniel da Costa** and **Fangwu Yu**, STAFF WRITERS

Princeton's new housing projects have come with increasing debates about whether these developments adequately meet Princeton's affordable housing obligations while at the same time preserving the town's unique historic identity. These developments, most notably the Alice and Avalon Bay developments surrounding the Princeton Shopping Center and a proposed development near the Princeton Theological Seminary, generally include both market-priced and affordable housing units.

Princeton Council's strategy, as outlined in their master plan, is to promote developments that have both affordable units and market-priced units through PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) agreements. PILOTs are designed to make critical infrastructure developments, like affordable housing, more financially attractive to developers, while at the same time providing the town with extra revenue. On May 12, the Princeton Council approved a resolution to share surplus funds with PPS from a PILOT agreement between the 232-unit Avalon Bay development and the municipality; the additional funds for PPS are expected to amount to about \$300,000 to \$500,000 annually.

"[This agreement] comes at a critical time for the PPS," said Dafna Kendal, president of the Board of Education, at the May 12 Town Council meeting. "In April, we were notified that our state aid will be reduced by 3 percent. We are also at risk of losing more than a million dollars in federal funding because we do not want to compromise our educational programming to accommodate an agenda that does not reflect our community's values."

In New Jersey, housing is classified as "affordable" when the occupant's housing costs are no more than 30 percent of their gross income. Mia Sacks, President of the Princeton Council, noted that the town's primary approach to city development is one of "smart growth."

"We have a housing crisis and a climate crisis. How can you address both? Smart Growth: bikeable, walkable, transit-oriented development close to economically productive downtown centers where people can walk to work, bike to schools. The old model of building affordable housing ... was build it on the outskirts of town ... and you have to have a car to get anywhere. It's not genuinely integrated housing. This is genuinely integrated housing," said Mia Sacks, president of the Princeton Council.

However, there exists considerable opposition to these new developments, especially the proposed developments near the Princeton Theological Seminary, from the



photo: Emily Kim

Princeton Coalition for Responsible Development (PCRD), who question whether the district and the town can accommodate a larger population. On April 23, the Ad Hoc Committee of Historians in Defense of Historic Princeton, published a full page letter in the Town Topics which is now featured on the PCRD website.

The letter alleges that a rapidly expanding Princeton could threaten downtown Princeton's historic character. The proposed Seminary development in particular would sit a quarter of a mile from the Barracks, a 1684 house that was the temporary residence of James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, and the house of former Princeton resident Albert Einstein. In the past few weeks, a number of orange and black signs reading "Defend Historic Princeton," distributed by the PCRD have gone up around Princeton, particularly in the historic Mercer Hill neighborhood.

Sean Wilentz, professor of American history at Princeton University and signee of the letter, argues that the size and height of the proposed developments, which would be 50 feet— could damage Princeton's historical character.

"This kind of high density project is an assault on historical integrity. It's [important to] find ways to harmonize development and the preservation of what makes Princeton, Princeton," said Sean Wilentz, professor of American history at Princeton University. "It makes it



photo: Emily Kim

Top: The Ad Hoc Committee of Historians in Defense of Historic Princeton has recently distributed "Defend Historic Princeton" signs to houses around the Mercer Hill neighborhood, which is near the proposed developments. Bottom: The Avalon Bay development, near the Princeton Shopping Center, contains 232 units, 11 of which are affordable.

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# PHS Profile: Martha Hayden

Andrew Kuo, STAFF WRITER  
Alexander Gu, CONTRIBUTING WRITER



Hayden assists Vanessa He '27 with her project about animals in the Peruvian Amazon in Spanish IV Advanced.

Following 23 years of dedication to her students, colleagues, and community, veteran PHS teacher and Princeton-Cranbury community member Martha Hayden is preparing to retire from teaching. Throughout her career, Hayden preferred real-world learning over textbook instruction, developed Spanish exchange trips to Peru and Cuba, and founded the Cranbury Arts Council.

Hayden didn't originally intend to pursue teaching, but after her husband lost his job, she started working at PHS to support their family. For Hayden, teaching was a daunting task at first, especially given the difficult courses she was expected to teach.

"In the beginning, I really did not want to be here ... I [originally] wanted to go to

teach fourth grade and then I was told 'you belong in the high school' ... so the first year was really hard because I was really nervous ... and I [wasn't sure] if I could teach kids that were older," said Hayden.

However, a powerful personal experience completely changed her perspective on teaching. Hayden had a student who refused to engage in class or with classwork. But when he mentioned he wrote poetry, she gave him an alternative assignment and challenged him to write slam poetry instead. Hayden was moved by his poetry, and compiled it into a book for him.

"Five years later, I was in the library ... and he tapped me on the shoulder. I said, 'How are you?' and he said, 'I'm doing really well. I'm a DJ for a radio station ...

I just wanted to come by to tell you that you're the only person that believed in me ... every time I feel bad about myself, I read my book, and I know that I can make it," said Hayden. "I think that was the turning point for me to understand that the reason why I was here as a teacher was not [just] to teach Spanish, that there are other reasons ... bigger than ourselves."

Hayden also founded and organized of the foreign exchange trips between PHS students and schools in Peru and Cuba. Throughout the years, these trips began to incorporate community service along with cultural immersion.

"I honestly thought [the Cuba trip] was really nice [and] it was a really great experience. A lot of kids didn't have toys [and] we also brought supplies to the kids in the schools — I thought this was a really nice way to give back to the community, especially because they need it so much," said Valen Roden '26, Hayden's former student who attended the trip to Cuba.

Hayden emphasizes the fact that her classroom is "textbook-free" and focuses more on the applications of a language rather than technical aspects. Instead of relying on standardized lesson plans, she designed a unique curriculum exploring social issues and Latin American history.

"I don't want to teach something that they're not going to like. I always tell the kids you're not going to get off a plane and they're not going to ask you to conjugate the verb," said Hayden. "They're going to ask you, what's your country like? What do you know about my country?"

Hayden also uses the arts to supplement her teaching — for example, "Latinoamérica" by Calle 13 is used to help teach Spanish IV

Advanced students about environmental destruction in Latin America.

"Senora Hayden prompts us to connect with Latin American culture outside of class in various ways. The songs in particular get me thinking about their origins and Hispanic history when I'm listening to them outside of school," said Thomas Basso '27, a student in Hayden's Spanish IV Advanced class.

Outside of PHS, Hayden and a friend, Susan Leson, created the Cranbury Arts Council around 30 years ago — a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to enriching the cultural and artistic experiences of the community by providing arts programs, workshops, and performances.

"I took a pottery class, and I was so good at it, I couldn't believe it. And then I'm thinking, if I'm good, can you imagine how many people are good at different arts, but they don't know it," said Hayden. "So we started taking classes, and I said to [Susan], 'Imagine how many people don't know that they have a gift ... so why don't we start an Arts Council in Cranbury?'"

In retirement, she plans to spend time with her family and continue organizing exchange trips. Though Hayden is leaving PHS, her impact on the languages department and the whole community will not be forgotten.

"If I could say one thing to her, I would say 'Gracias por todo, Senora Hayden!'" said Basso. "Your dedication to teaching is something I will never forget, and I want to know that each and every one of your students are extremely fortunate to have you as their teacher whether they know it or not."

## PHS seniors not attending traditional academic institutions this fall

Joy Chen, MULTIMEDIA CO-EDITOR  
Simon Santamaria, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

### Dia Beri

On June 30, less than two weeks after PHS graduation, Dia Beri '25 will begin Cadet Basic Training at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, a six week long program known as "the beast," designed to ensure that cadets are prepared for their next 12 years in the army — four years at the academy, five years of required active-duty service, and three years in the reserves.

"I'm really excited, but at the same time, I'm terrified. For six weeks, they take away our phones, and we're going to be out in the field learning how to use rifles for the first time," said Beri. "We're going to be dirty. We're going to be stressed. We're going to be running on only four hours of sleep every night. And the upperclassmen are going to be yelling at us."

In her four years at West Point, Beri will train to be an officer in the U.S. military while earning a Bachelor of Science degree. Beri first developed an interest in West Point during freshman year, motivated by a desire to find satisfaction and fulfillment in life.

"I feel like everyone has their purpose on earth," said Beri. "For me, it's defending a nation that has given my family and so many other immigrant families so much to work with."

Beri's high school experience has, in her words, "revolved around" her goal



Dia Beri will join West Point as one of 4,500 cadets.

of getting into West Point. West Point requires applicants to not only submit their GPA, SAT, and essays, but also secure a recommendation from a U.S. Congress member (in Beri's case, Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman), and complete a six-part Candidate Fitness Assessment. For Beri, the intense preparation leading

up to it required not only physical, but also mental, growth.

"I've never [put] as [much] dedication in my life as [I did in] preparing for the West Point fitness test. Then mentally, my mindset about becoming better at things completely changed. I thought that there were some things that you really couldn't

change about yourself, and then I realized that if you worked hard enough ... you can change those things," said Beri.

West Point requires students to follow a rigid schedule throughout the school year: the day begins at 6:30 a.m., includes several classes, military training, mandatory athletic activity, and an 11:30 p.m. curfew.

"I don't really enjoy the athletic part as much as the academic part, but I know that there are certain things that I [will] enjoy, like teamwork with friends," said Beri. "And my favorite saying that I learned from this process is 'two is one and one is none.' Because when you have two people, you have someone that's always having your back, and if you have one, you're alone; there's no one that has your back, you're basically dead."

Following graduation, Beri will be a second lieutenant, leading a platoon of around 30 to 50 soldiers in operations concerning aspects such as cybersecurity, military intelligence, or infantry.

However, for now, Beri is focused on what lies just a few weeks ahead.

"I think one of my goals is to not give up when the going gets really tough. I feel like once I tackle that fear of not knowing how hard something is or what's lying at the end, I'll really be able to do things that I never thought I could do," said Beri.

### Yael Dveer

This past year, Yael Dveer '25 moved from Israel to Princeton with her family, following political instability in Israel. This coming year, Dveer plans on moving again — this time, taking a gap year for a backpacking and volunteering trip around the United States and South America instead of attending college.

"We moved here, [in] a very quick decision ... because of the war in Israel. And when we decided to move, I told my mom that I'm not going to be ready to go to college right [after] I finish high school ... [the gap year] will also [give] me more time to go volunteering ... in South America — which is something I wanted to do for a long time — and a few [more] months for me to live in the U.S. and get more used [to] American culture," said Dveer.

In Israel, it's mandatory for high school graduates to enlist in the Israeli army for several years. Following this, it's common for Israelis to go on a backpacking trip (literally, "the big hike") for several months. Though Dveer won't be in Israel, nor serving in the Israeli army, she still wanted to experience this Israeli rite of passage.

"For a person to develop and grow, they have to travel and explore the world not



Yael Dveer looks forward to interacting with locals while backpacking.

only in the U.S. or rich countries," said Dveer. "I've been wanting to travel for [as long as] I can remember, because in Israel, backpacking and camping is a really big part

of the culture there. I wanted to continue that tradition in my own way."

Though her plans aren't finalized yet, Dveer plans on participating in an

environmental volunteer program in the Amazon region in Peru and then go backpacking independently, all while practicing her Spanish.

"[There are] so many countries that I want to go to ... Chile and Argentina, to Bucha, to the Patagonia Mountain range, and to Brazil, because I love Bossa Nova music and Portuguese," said Dveer.

Dveer eventually plans on settling in the United States after a few months of backpacking, adjusting to American culture and preparing for her studies in higher education as a physics major at the University of Maryland in the fall of 2026. For now, though, she's focused on taking a step back before diving into academics again.

"There's no rush to get us a head start in your career — everything's going to be here in 10 years. I think taking some time after high school, especially [after] Princeton High School, where everything is so stressful and unnecessarily competitive ... is a good [way] to discover yourself — at the end of the day, that's what's important. You're living your life. You're learning the American dream. You're not living anything else," said Dveer.



# Euro Challenge wins fourth place at Nationals

Angela Chen, NEWS & FEATURES CO-EDITOR  
Emil Kapur, STAFF WRITER

In its first top-five finish since 2022, PHS's Euro Challenge team earned fourth place at the Euro Challenge national competition on May 7. Euro Challenge, a competition co-funded by the European Union (EU), encourages students in the United States to learn about European Union economic policies by proposing solutions to real-world economic issues faced by an EU nation of the team's choosing.

This year, the PHS team addressed issues in Lithuania regarding growth and competitiveness, such as wealth inequality, economic stagnation, and rural-urban disparities. Their solutions were evaluated on their creativity, effectiveness, and feasibility, criteria the team sought to meet with a particular solution which used AI to combat financial corruption.

"We [proposed] implementing ... an AI system that sifts through large amounts of data so [the system] can find suspicious tax filings. This is much faster and more efficient when it comes to identifying these false tax filings ... it decreases tax fraud, and the government is earning more," said Helen Yu '27, a member of the presentation panel at Nationals.

Euro Challenge consists of three rounds of competitions held in New York City: a preliminary round, then a semifinal and finals round. The team first presented a 15-minute slideshow on the country's economic problems and their proposed solutions to a panel of judges, followed by a 10-minute Q&A on the team's recommendations.

The judges of EuroChallenge are often leaders in finance and economics fields or are economic policy workers within the EU, which helped the team develop their solutions.

"They were the chief financial officers or advisors of major investment banks, so [there were] definitely a lot of people who were really specialized in this field," said Yu. "And it was really interesting to see what they had to say and what questions they had, because it's completely different from what high school students would tell you."

The preparation for the competition starts early in the year, after seven of the applicants are selected for the team following tryouts for interested underclassmen. The team first researched the economic state of their chosen nation, then categorized the economic issues in the country under root causes and proposed solutions for these issues. Finally, the team heavily practiced the Q&A portion of the presentation, one of the most important parts for the team's score.

"[The] captains would give me questions, and we'd have to come up with responses on the spot. Just having this as a routine really helped prepare us, because you could just take whatever question came at us, no matter if we really knew how to answer it or not. Having that practice also helped us be coherent as a group," said Yu.

The team also had to practice soft skills like public speaking and effective communication to help them communicate their policies to judges.



Sebastian Balestri '28, Joshua Huang '28, Jane Hu '27, Emma Liu '26, Aritra Ray '27, Elif Cam '26, and Helen Yu '27 met Jovita Neliupsien, Ambassador of the European Union to the United States.

"I think the most important skill is being able to speak in a conversational way because when the judges are asking you questions – you're trying to convince them out of their concerns about your solutions, but you're not debating people ... I had a bit of debate experience, but what Euro taught me was how to convince people instead of how to win an argument," said Sebastian Balestri '28, another member of the team.

Through the months that the team spent for preparation, Euro Challenge members built connections that will extend beyond the competition. They were able to capitalize on each other's strengths to create a strong team for the national competition.

"[Before] becoming a captain, I had a lot of meaningful experiences interacting with my captains at the time. I think they really gave me a lot of insight into not only econ[omics] and topics pertaining to Euro Challenge, but also bigger things pertaining to personal life, especially with school and future tracks that you could take beyond that," said Emma Liu '26, current co-captain of the Euro Challenge team.

# PHS Odyssey of the Mind team competes at Worlds

Rohan Srivastava and Eitan Daw-Niv, CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

"Charlie the Chocolate Factory" takes a twist at the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals, as Chef Oopsie Doopsie (an oompa loompa) overthrows Willy Wonka and decides to use the factory for a dinner party instead.

But things soon go awry for Chef Oopsie Doopsie as his guests begin reacting poorly to his concoctions (including hair toffee), and at the last moment Chef Oopsie Doopsie decides to pursue his true passion instead: becoming an opera singer.

Joy Chen '27, Claire Yang '27, Viola Que '27, and Julia Li '27 and Luna Xu '28 competed and performed this skit from May 21–24 at the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals in Michigan. Odyssey of the Mind is an international competition encouraging students to use creativity in a theatrical performance that responds to one of five prompts, while incorporating STEM or literature-related topics. This year, the PHS team chose the prompt "Classics...Cooking with Books," where they were challenged to create a skit based on "an original chef character inspired by classic literature."

In addition to creating the skit, the team also had to create props and costumes out of materials totalling no more than \$140, which led the team to use recycled materials — using cardboard and construction paper to make large green wigs for the Oompa Loompas and a mechanical lazy susan to present the dishes.



From left to right: Viola Que '27, Julia Li '27, Joy Chen '27, Luna Xu '28, and Claire Yang '27 after their performance of 'Chef Oopsie's Revelation' at World Finals.

The largest part of the judge's final score are the creative aspects of the skit, which encouraged the team to think in a different way than usual. Que noted that some of the most engaging presentations came from younger competitors in the elementary and middle school divisions.

"[In] Odyssey of the Mind, you think in a different way — like [someone] at a younger age. I think as you get older, in high school, [you're] afraid to be judged," said Que. "[But] when you do Odyssey of the Mind, anything goes. If you want to do something, you can do it, and nobody's going to judge you, even if it sounds silly."

The team began each session with a brain dump, coming up with ideas, trying out different possibilities, and dividing up the work according to the strengths of each member. Marcus Strum '27, a member of

a different team in the PHS Odyssey of the Mind club, noted the strong work ethic of the team that qualified for Worlds.

"Before the competition, there's typically several working sessions at people's houses and script writing sessions over FaceTime. The team that went to worlds this year worked all day going into a sleepover," said Strum.

Throughout the year, the team fundraised for their event and journey to Worlds through GoFundMe and chocolate bar sales, as the trip was not supported financially by the school.

"It was unfortunate that for all the hard work we [put in that] we [weren't] able to get funded by the school on our trip, even though we were also going to be representing Princeton High School at [an] international competition ... with thousands of people," said Que.

Although Que admits that the team was initially unfamiliar with Odyssey of the Mind, their experience at Worlds, where they ultimately placed 25th out of 38 teams in their category, has energized and motivated the team to perform even better next year.

"It's made me excited for next year, because I [realized that] if I put my mind to [something], I can make whatever I want, and it can be a fun experience. If you want to make something really cool, like, mechanical gadget, or a robot ... [I realized] you can do it," said Que.

# PILOT agreement passed amidst larger debates on housing developments in Princeton

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different from any other place, this history which is unique in all the world ... If you undo that, if you endanger that, then the entire town suffers. It's no longer Princeton."

In response to the Town Topics letter by the PCRD and the "Defend Historic Princeton" signs, the Princeton Town Council released a letter.

"These arguments about PILOT agreements, density, traffic, walkability, storm water management and architectural design are not arguments at all. The surface looks polite and technical, the core is about power, privilege and a refusal to share space," wrote the Council in the letter.



Wilentz argues that the PCRD is not anti-affordable housing, nor a not-in-my-back-yard group, but rather it opposes large developments with affordable and market-priced units. The town's current strategy is to support developments with 80 percent market-priced units and 20 percent affordable units, with the idea being that developers will use the revenue from the market-priced units to support affordable units.

"You end up ... justifying luxury housing developments on the basis of affordable housing ... but it's a bait and switch. [The developers] are basically gonna build four times as much luxury apartment stuff ... as affordable housing. That's not gonna help the social imbalance, it's only gonna make it worse," said Wilentz.

Wilentz instead supports developments with 100 percent affordable housing.

"We want affordable [housing]. We're not objecting to the historical integrity because they're gonna be low income people living here — some people accuse us of that. That's not a threat to the historical stuff ... quite

the opposite ... it's the luxury [development] that's going to present a problem to the historical integrity of the neighborhood — the height [and] sheer mass of the [luxury developments]," said Wilentz.

However, Princeton Council officials have pointed to the financial infeasibility of the housing projects PCRD proposes.

"The proposal, for 100 percent affordable (i.e., municipally-sponsored) housing, would require the financial backing of the municipality, including millions of taxpayer funds to purchase the property, to construct the housing, and to provide tax subsidies over time. Further, the low unit count would make it uncompetitive for state financing, causing Princeton residents to make up significant funding shortfalls," said a letter from Mayor Mark Freda and the Princeton Council in response to PCRD's letter.

The recent surge in housing developments throughout Princeton is primarily due to the Mount Laurel Doctrine, a judicial doctrine in the New Jersey Constitution that requires towns to use their zoning powers to provide its share of affordable

housing to those who have lower and moderate incomes. In 1996, Princeton fulfilled its affordable housing obligation by paying \$460,000 to build 23 affordable units in Trenton.

"The housing that's being built in Princeton is a result of municipal compliance with that very critical housing desegregation case," said Sacks. "Princeton [is] making up for 20 years of not fulfilling its obligation. That's why there is so much housing in such a short amount of time."

The array of proposed developments is slated to add over 800 units, and it remains to be seen how both sides of this debate work to balance the need for new housing and ensuring that the town and the school system can accommodate a growing population.

"You know, we are not the same small village we were in the 1700s and 1600s when Europeans began to settle in this area. However, we can't stop the growth, right? We can't just say no one else can move into Princeton," said PHS history teacher Rick Miller.



# OPINIONS

## All that glitters is not gold: the hidden cost of mica

Franciszka Czerniak, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In the pursuit of ethical consumerism, teens and adults are becoming increasingly aware of the impact their purchases can have on both people and the planet. One sector with critical social and environmental problems is the beauty industry, where products often contain ingredients that are sourced through exploitative practices.

Mica, a naturally occurring mineral, is commonly found in various products that teens use daily. It creates a shimmering effect in items such as eyeshadows, highlighters, shampoos, and even toothpaste in order to enhance their visual appeal.

However, it's important to note that the mining of mica has raised ethical concerns due to practices such as child labor and unsafe working conditions. In Jharkhand and Bihar, states in eastern India, illegal mica mining is rampant. Children as young as five work in hazardous conditions, extracting mica to support their families. These children face respiratory issues, physical injuries, and are deprived of an education. The meager wages earned — often less than \$1 per day — are insufficient to meet their basic needs, so they become trapped in a cycle of poverty.

In addition to severe impacts on worker education and health, illegal mica mining presents serious environmental consequences. The extraction process often involves

destructive methods, including unregulated digging and deforestation, leading to soil erosion and habitat loss. These unsustainable practices further perpetuate a cycle of environmental and economic instability, making it increasingly difficult for these regions to break free from the grip of illegal mining activities.

Many industries that rely heavily on mica for their products lack transparency, but there are a few systems in place to help consumers identify and address these unethical practices. Consumers can look for certifications indicating responsible production, such as COSMOS for cosmetics, Fair Trade Certified for packaged food, and the Forest Stewardship Council for product packaging.

Additionally, cosmetic brands such as Lush, Axiology, and Jane Iredale have taken significant steps to address the mica crisis. Instead of sourcing natural mica, the three companies use synthetic mica in their products, which is both free from child labor and offers superior texture and performance. Moreover, synthetic mica is environmentally friendly, as it does not contribute to the microplastic pollution that is associated with other natural mica alternatives.

As consumers, especially students, it is critical that we become more conscious of the ethical implications of our purchases. When making purchases or recommendations

for others, it's crucial to support brands that prioritize transparency, responsibility, and sustainability. By looking for products with recognized certifications and supporting companies that take proactive steps toward ethical sourcing, students can contribute to a more equitable and sustainable beauty industry.



photo: Charley Hu

Glossier's Cloud Paint blush, Kiss Me Heroine's mascara, and Romand's Glazing Water Gloss, among other popular teenage beauty products, contain mica.

## Ditch the DEET this summer

Rohan Srivastava and Eitan Daw-Niv, CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

The summer has nearly arrived, meaning it's also time for insects to rear their ugly heads once again. As we begin to spend more time outside, avoiding insects is not just important for general comfort but also for steering clear of diseases.

The most common type of insect repellent contains a chemical called N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide, or DEET for short. This chemical has proven to be very effective, being the strongest bug repellent option on the market and having saved millions of lives in disease-prone areas. However, in places with fewer mosquito-borne diseases, it's a good idea to move away from DEET as we consider a greener future.

A study by the National Institutes of Health in 2020 shows that DEET is an excellent bug repellent because it disrupts the olfactory system of insects, making it so that insects cannot detect humans. Unfortunately, pollinator insects also rely very heavily on these senses to support their survival

and their ecosystem. Compounded with DEET's long degradation time, this negative externality significantly harms biodiversity, food webs, farming, and many environmental aspects for long periods of time.

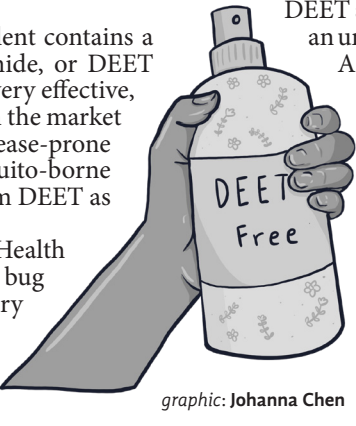
DEET also has a few other issues, such as having an unpleasant odor and causing skin irritation.

According to the National Pesticide Information Center, it can occasionally be harmful to pets that are nearby while applying the spray, potentially causing seizures if the animal is overexposed. These problems can be solved by switching to plant-based repellents — made from essential oils such as neem, clove, or eucalyptus. Additionally, plant-based repellents degrade much faster than DEET based repellants. Consumer Reports stated in 2023 that because of their fast evaporation time, however, plant-based botanical repellents usually

only provide around two hours of protection, requiring frequent reapplication. But given that crucial pollinators are affected far less by botanical sprays, the trade off is worth it to lessen environmental damage.

While alternative insect repellents may offer environmental and health benefits, DEET remains the most effective option in certain contexts. In regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, where mosquito-borne illnesses such as malaria claim hundreds of thousands of lives each year, DEET's potency makes it a preferred choice. Thus, if you're traveling to areas with a high risk of insect-borne diseases, using a DEET-based repellent is advisable.

However, even then, you still don't necessarily need a formula with 100 percent DEET; concentrations of 20 to 30 percent can still offer strong protection with reduced exposure. For those staying in lower-risk areas like Princeton, consider switching to repellents that are less harmful to both your health and the environment. Choosing safer alternatives can still provide adequate protection while minimizing negative impacts.



graphic: Johanna Chen

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# The benefits of having a job

Aryan Singla, ONLINE CO-EDITOR  
Andrew Kuo, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It is 6:40 p.m. on a Tuesday. One student is writing an English essay, and another is bagging groceries at McCaffrey’s. Both go to Princeton High School. Both have tests tomorrow. But only one is getting paid \$15.49 an hour and learning how to handle a line of 20 customers before the shift ends.

These scenes, playing out across America every weekday evening, expose a fundamental disconnect in how we think about teenage development. While education leaders debate apprenticeships and career pathways, they’ve largely ignored the millions of students already bridging the gap between classroom and workplace every day.

Statistics reveal a troubling trend: teen employment has plummeted from 60 percent of 16- to 19-year-olds in 1979 to just 36.9 percent today, with projections showing it could drop even further in the future. The U.S. Department of Labor attributes this decline partly to “increasing academic demands” and the fact that “high school coursework has become more strenuous.”

For high schoolers who work, school is just one part of the day — and sometimes the easier part. Time management is not just a bullet point on a resume anymore; it is a skill you sharpen at a cash register or in the back of a kitchen, while juggling shift changes and deadlines.

In fact, working during high school not only teaches you things that school doesn’t, but it also reinforces skills used in academic settings, such as responsibility, resilience, and problem solving. According to the Center for Law and Social Policy, “Youth — especially those who are black, Hispanic or economically disadvantaged — who have some employment experience while in school are less likely

to drop out than those who do not.” Critics worry that working students sacrifice their education, but this assumes that sitting in a classroom is always more valuable than learning through experience. However, the key isn’t whether students should work or not, but how they manage the balance.

“If I hear a student saying they’re not sleeping and look tired, I tell them to dial back. Your mental health isn’t worth it,” said PHS college counselor Nipurna Shah.

Matthew Ocampo ’27, a boys varsity wrestler, works at a local coding institute — the same place where he first learned programming. Ocampo has learned to navigate competing demands with strategic thinking and problem solving skills.

“I only go on weekends. If I have a sports meet, I let my boss know and shift things around,” said Ocampo. “I don’t really feel burnt out — I can usually feel good.”

The ability to coordinate work, athletics, and academics demonstrates exactly the kind of executive functioning skills that students should develop in their formative years. Yet, we often keep ourselves exclusively to the classroom; it’s important to also work on the concrete skills that will determine our successes later on.

High school students who work aren’t falling behind — they’re getting ahead. They’re learning time management not as a theoretical concept but as a daily necessity. They’re developing communication skills not through roleplaying exercises but through real interactions with real consequences. Yes, balance matters. But the idea that academic work is inherently more valuable than paid work is outdated thinking that doesn’t serve our students well.



Seraina Wickart ’26 works at Bagel Nook in the Princeton Shopping Center.

## PHS STUDENT TESTIMONIALS AND EXPERIENCES

“I work at Kumon... and I think I [now] have a better understanding of expectations for a job. A big drawback is... when I come back [from work], I feel extremely tired and don’t want to do any work. [But] I’m lucky that [my] work is pretty low commitment outside of the actual workplace.  
- Gavin Macatangay ’27

“I’d say most of my coworkers are older than me, so seniors but also college students ... being able to talk to people who’ve already gone through the stuff I’m going through right now, like high school, it’s really helpful.”  
- Cass Reynolds ’27

“I work at the YWCA. I learned how to be more responsible because I work with kids. You gotta learn how to control your attitude. For example, sometimes you don’t want to play with the kids, but you got to, you ain’t got no choice. You gotta control your patience.”  
- Ja’Den Colvin ’27

## Advice from PHS SENIORS

### WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR INCOMING FRESHMEN?

Fangwu Yu, STAFF WRITER  
Joshua Huang, CONTRIBUTING WRITER



“JOIN THE CLUBS YOU LOVE AND BUILD THEM INTO NOT JUST CLUBS BUT COMMUNITIES.”

- IVY HU ’25



“THE BEST WAY TO ENJOY HIGH SCHOOL IS TO DO WHAT YOU LIKE TO DO, TRY YOUR BEST, AND BE WITH THE PEOPLE THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY.”

- FELIX PATTEN ’25



“TAKE A STEP BACK, TAKE A BREATH, IT’S NOT THAT DEEP. HIGH SCHOOL IS FOUR YEARS OF YOUR LIFE, DON’T BE STRESSED OUT.”

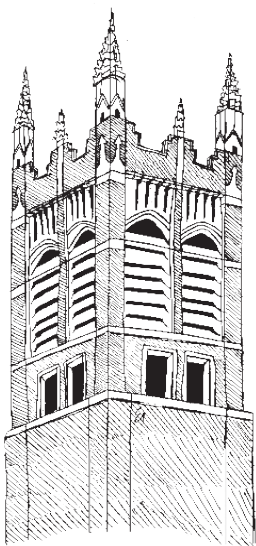
- SOPHIE GONO ’25



“I’M TOO BUSY WATERING MY OWN GRASS TO NOTICE YOURS IS GREENER. EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN PATH, DON’T COMPARE YOURSELF TO OTHERS. COMPARISON IS THE THIEF OF JOY.”

- LUNA BAR-COHEN ’25





# Exercise your right to bike

Editorial

Biking is one of the easiest and quickest ways to reduce your carbon footprint, and we live in a town uniquely suited to it: in 2025, Princeton was awarded a Silver-Level Bicycle Friendly Community award by the League of American Bicyclists for the 12th year in a row. And yet, many PHS students ignore this amazing part of life in Princeton.

In recent years, various local efforts have worked to promote this eco-friendly mode of transportation. Walk & Wheels Wednesdays, a community initiative, encourages walking and biking to school on a weekly basis. For many parts of the country, including areas just outside Princeton, car dependency makes this difficult or nearly impossible.

But in Princeton, the combination of quiet, suburban streets and bicycle-protecting measures on busy roads makes biking much easier and safer. The Municipality has taken measures to improve bike safety on traffic-heavy roads such as Witherspoon Street, Hodge Road, Valley Road, Hamilton Avenue, and Harrison Street by widening sidewalks, not allowing parking in certain areas, and adding bike lanes.

By biking to school, students not only help the environment by lowering their carbon emissions, but also

get to exercise in fresh air. Regularly cycling improves cardiovascular health, reduces stress, and boosts mental well-being — benefits especially important for PHS students managing busy academic schedules. According to a 2024 study by Hossain et al., biking leads to a release of endorphins and stimulates increased blood flow, resulting in more oxygen and nutrients reaching the brain to support cognitive function. These chemical boosts can cause people to feel more energized and happier.

Biking also offers the chance to connect with nature, naturally reducing screen time by acting as a positive distraction. In a 2022 study, Loebach et al. found that by spending more time outside, individuals can boost their productivity and strengthen their problem-solving skills. Additionally, choosing to bike instead of drive helps reduce traffic congestion around PHS, making drop-off and pick-up times safer and more efficient.

PHS students should take advantage of the unique opportunities that come with living in a bike-friendly community. Whether it's going to school, going to town, or just pedaling around the neighborhood, consider skipping the drive and going on a bike ride.

# The price of our memories

Asha Nag, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

As days get longer and brighter, our thoughts turn to summer time: ice cream after sunsets, afternoons lounging at the pool, and of course, days spent walking across the beach, playing in the sand, and tumbling through the waves of the ocean.

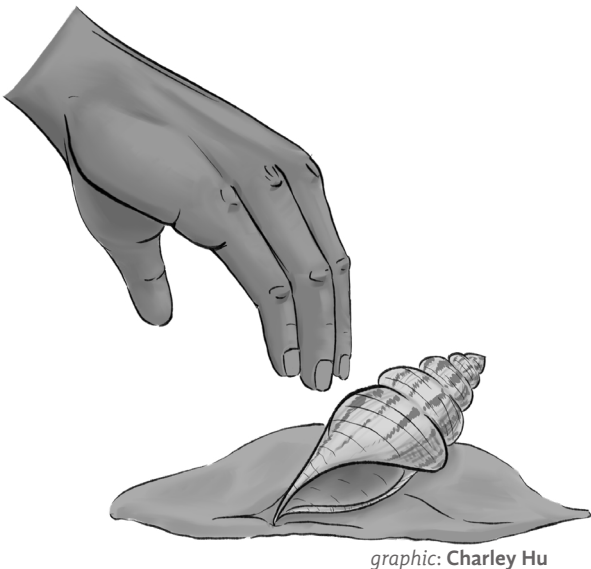
It's natural to want something material to remember our vibrant moments near the water. However, while seashells and sand seem like harmless and thoughtful mementos from the places we visit, there is a significant environmental impact to consider when we take parts of nature away from where they belong. A phrase popularized by the U.S. National Park Service in the 1950s is still relevant to today's best practices: "take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints."

In a 2014 article, Jason Goldman, a writer for the Washington Post, pointed out that a decrease in the abundance of seashells harms the local shoreline ecosystem. As shells provide anchors for various aquatic plants and serve as shelters for hermit crabs, taking them from beaches leaves wildlife without resources they need to survive. The

seemingly small act of collecting shells on the beach leads to a domino effect of adverse impacts on native coastal populations.

Besides taking photos, there are many objects students can collect on their travels that have the same or more sentimental value than seashells, such as traditional crafts. Taking a trip to Honolulu? Check out stores that sell traditional patterned quilts that carry the story of the island's long history. If you're going to Greece, a good option is Komboloi, or in English, "worry beads," an art that dates back long before the 20th century. By our very own Jersey Shore, you can create both a unique souvenir and lasting memories at Hot Sand, a public glassblowing studio in Asbury Park.

These souvenirs are much more personal than seashells, as they serve to not only educate us on vibrant cultures from the places we visit, but also support businesses keeping thousand-year-old art forms alive. It's a win-win. Instead of taking away important pieces of marine ecosystems just to have a memento, let's strive to take souvenirs that both enrich us and the beaches of the local people.



# PREX

## PRINCETON RECORD EXCHANGE

## The Tower

Princeton High School

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### Mission Statement

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

### Editorial Board

The Editorial Board of the Tower consists of a select group of 23 Tower 2025 staff members. The views of board members are accurately reflected in the editorial, which is co-written each month by the Board with primary authorship changing monthly.

### Letter and Submission Policy

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

### The Tower Online

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

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



# VANGUARD PRESENTS MYTHOLOGY

## Frozen in time: Roberto Lugo’s “Orange and Black” exhibit

Aritra Ray, MANAGING EDITOR  
Jaisel Iyer, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

What Had Happened Was:  
Ruby Bridges

Stepping into the Art@Bainbridge exhibit from the busy Nassau Street sidewalks, we are immediately hit with the quiet but profound intensity of the exhibit. Inside the historic Bainbridge building sits Princeton University Art Museum’s “Roberto Lugo / Orange and Black” exhibit, curated by the Associate Curator of Ancient Mediterranean Art Dr. Carolyn Laferrière.

While ancient Greek ceramics, originating from over two thousand years ago, and 21st-century social oppression may seem to have little in common, Lugo’s work finds a way to blend these motifs together into pieces of art.

Based in Philadelphia, Lugo is an artist, ceramicist, and social activist, striving to portray communal stories of oppression and social injustices. The ceramics portray the daily lives of contemporary individuals in an ancient medium, fusing together the past, present, and future. Lugo believes that just as the daily life of ancient Greek civilizations has been crystallized in these ceramics, stories of contemporary injustice also deserve to be preserved in pottery.

“He really sees himself as tasked with archiving the stories of underrepresented peoples and to show his own lived experience and the lived experience of his communities,” said Lafferriere. “To bring them into a museum ... and to [show] Roberto Clemente or Harriet Tubman or Ruby Bridges, is significant because it’s giving them a place within the history of American art.”

The contrast between modern challenges and the ancient medium of classical Greek pottery is reflected in the arrangement of the “Orange and Black” exhibit. Lugo’s piece “Same Boy, Different Breakfast” is placed adjacent to an ancient Greek column krater from the 5th century B.C., attributed to the Hephaistos Painter.

“That vase then asks you, as the viewer, to walk around it or to manipulate it, and to have this embodied experience of it, where your act of looking is then activating the story,” said Laferrière.

Circling “Same Boy, Different Breakfast,” we see a young man in two starkly different settings: on one side, he sits at a desk, writing; on the other, he sits in a jail cell. The jarring contrast reminds the viewer of the divergent shapes our lives may take. The depiction of a moment of celebration and ritual for a young Greek boy compared to his somber duties of the state highlight how the expression of life’s dualities has evolved across the centuries.

Every vase in this exhibit tells a story of a struggle: a struggle for equality, justice, or just the bare minimum of respect. A particularly resonant example is Lugo’s “What Had Happened Was: Ruby Bridges.” Ruby Bridges, at the age of six, became the first Black American schoolchild to integrate into an all-white elementary school in New Orleans, Louisiana. When her integration was met with violent backlash, she had to be escorted to school by U.S. Marshals. To be on the very same vessels as ancient Greek heroes — heroes revered to this day in grand myths — is to elevate her place in history.

“The visual arts can be such a powerful medium for telling stories and for reflecting on our lived experience, our communities, the issues that we are struggling with,” said Lafferiere. “And I think this show, [is] collapsing the temporal distance between the fifth century B.C.E. and 2025, to show that artists across time and in very different spaces and different contexts are still ... using this medium to tell these stories.”

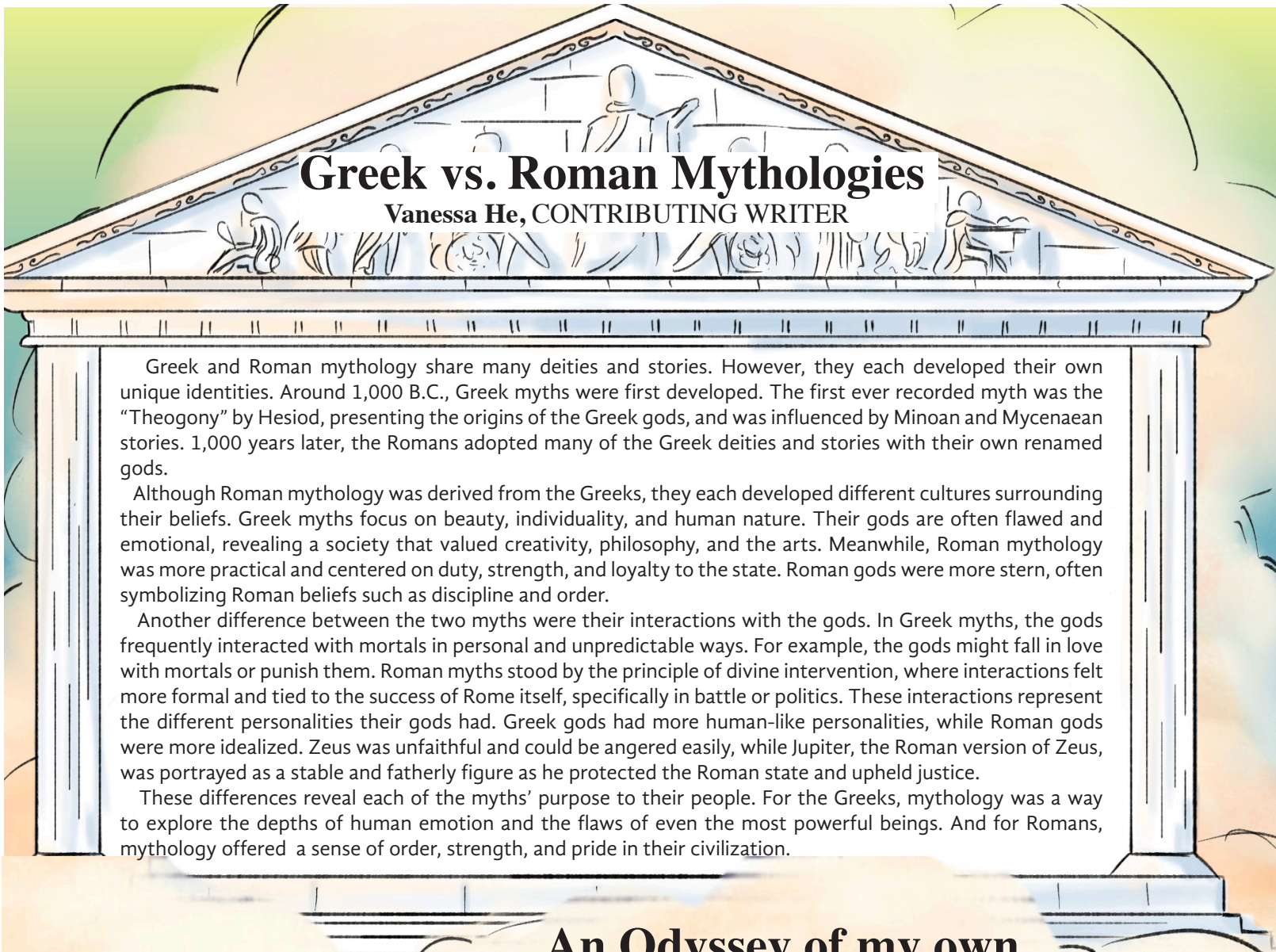
Lugo’s exhibit at Art@Bainbridge is a space that invites even the casual viewer to go beyond passive observation and reflect on the state of contemporary America.

Top: Same Boy, Different Breakfast

Bottom: Ancient Greek column krater

photos: Charley Hu  
graphics: Katherine Chen  
photo courtesy: Princeton University Art Museum





## Greek vs. Roman Mythologies

Vanessa He, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Greek and Roman mythology share many deities and stories. However, they each developed their own unique identities. Around 1,000 B.C., Greek myths were first developed. The first ever recorded myth was the “Theogony” by Hesiod, presenting the origins of the Greek gods, and was influenced by Minoan and Mycenaean stories. 1,000 years later, the Romans adopted many of the Greek deities and stories with their own renamed gods.

Although Roman mythology was derived from the Greeks, they each developed different cultures surrounding their beliefs. Greek myths focus on beauty, individuality, and human nature. Their gods are often flawed and emotional, revealing a society that valued creativity, philosophy, and the arts. Meanwhile, Roman mythology was more practical and centered on duty, strength, and loyalty to the state. Roman gods were more stern, often symbolizing Roman beliefs such as discipline and order.

Another difference between the two myths were their interactions with the gods. In Greek myths, the gods frequently interacted with mortals in personal and unpredictable ways. For example, the gods might fall in love with mortals or punish them. Roman myths stood by the principle of divine intervention, where interactions felt more formal and tied to the success of Rome itself, specifically in battle or politics. These interactions represent the different personalities their gods had. Greek gods had more human-like personalities, while Roman gods were more idealized. Zeus was unfaithful and could be angered easily, while Jupiter, the Roman version of Zeus, was portrayed as a stable and fatherly figure as he protected the Roman state and upheld justice.

These differences reveal each of the myths’ purpose to their people. For the Greeks, mythology was a way to explore the depths of human emotion and the flaws of even the most powerful beings. And for Romans, mythology offered a sense of order, strength, and pride in their civilization.

## An Odyssey of my own

Claire Yang, SPORTS CO-EDITOR

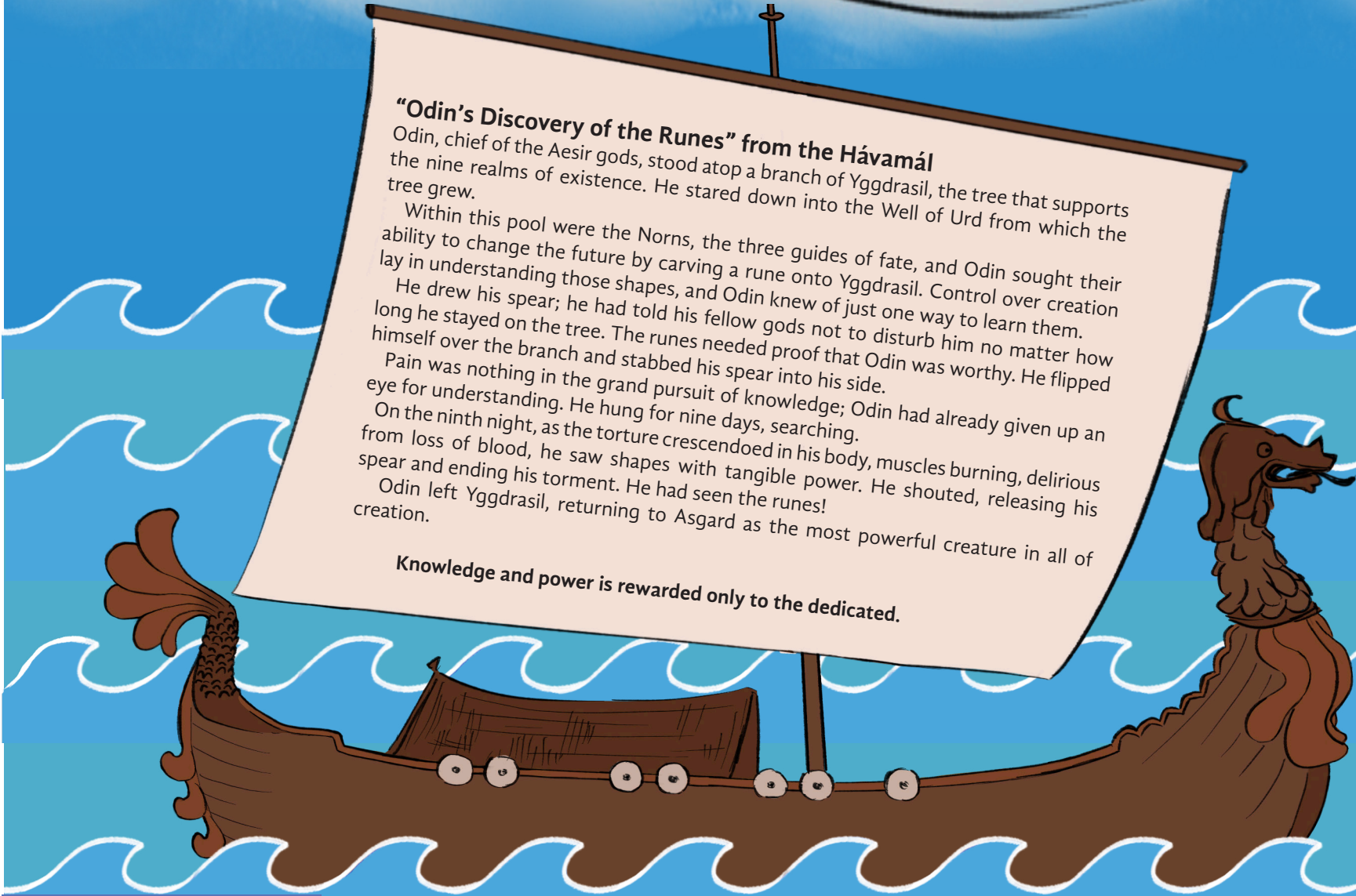
One drowsy afternoon, my eight-year-old self decided to browse the library shelves for a new exciting adventure to delve into. When I opened a simple children’s book on Egyptian myths out of sheer curiosity, my fascination with mythology had just begun.

Upon finishing the book, I immediately found myself scanning the shelves for more books and myths. The magical nature of the stories played a huge role in grabbing my attention as a young child, but over time, I grew to learn more about the lessons and themes the tales taught. It amazed me that another child who had lived thousands of years ago had listened to or read the same myths that I was reading in the present.

By third grade, I could name over 25 Egyptian gods and goddesses and their associated traits from memory. One unfortunate classmate made the mistake of asking me to explain the story of Osiris, the Egyptian god of the underworld, for a school project. Not only did I gleefully launch into a 30-minute lecture about his tragic demise, but I also proceeded to bore him to tears about the tragic love story between the goddess of magic, Isis, and Osiris. For me, mythology was my own little passion, something I took pride in and made me unique among my peers.

Most adults in my life found it funny when I went on my little rants about different myths, especially the more gruesome ones. It only fueled my thirst for more and eventually my knowledge grew to include Greek, Norse, Chinese and even Mayan mythology. When everyone started to read the Percy Jackson series, it made me so happy because I could finally apply my knowledge to the “trending” topics.

Mythology holds a special place in my heart because it sparked my creativity and drove me to always learn about new topics. Now that I’m older, I don’t have as much time to research, but sitting down with any myth in a quiet corner of the library takes me back to fond memories of my childhood. In hectic times, the myths are always there to help me escape from reality.



### “Odin’s Discovery of the Runes” from the Hávamál

Odin, chief of the Aesir gods, stood atop a branch of Yggdrasil, the tree that supports the nine realms of existence. He stared down into the Well of Urd from which the tree grew.

Within this pool were the Norns, the three guides of fate, and Odin sought their ability to change the future by carving a rune onto Yggdrasil. Control over creation lay in understanding those shapes, and Odin knew of just one way to learn them. He drew his spear; he had told his fellow gods not to disturb him no matter how long he stayed on the tree. The runes needed proof that Odin was worthy. He flipped himself over the branch and stabbed his spear into his side.

Pain was nothing in the grand pursuit of knowledge; Odin had already given up an eye for understanding. He hung for nine days, searching. On the ninth night, as the torture crescendoed in his body, muscles burning, delirious from loss of blood, he saw shapes with tangible power. He shouted, releasing his spear and ending his torment. He had seen the runes!

Odin left Yggdrasil, returning to Asgard as the most powerful creature in all of creation.

Knowledge and power is rewarded only to the dedicated.

## Short Mythological Stories

Rohan Srivastava, CONTRIBUTING WRITER



photo: Katherine Chen

Dr. Danvers introduces the Word of the Day: “lunatic”.

## Latin Studies: Mythology An Interview with Dr. Lynda Danvers ’03

Maxime DeVico, BUSINESS CO-EDITOR

Have you always loved mythology or is it a more recent interest?

I’ve kind of always loved mythology. I went to PHS and the Latin classes have always done some language, some history, and some myth as well. I was introduced to myth at 14 years old and also the “Odyssey,” of course, in freshman year English class. And it just sort of grew from there and I have always loved it.

What is your favorite branch of mythology personally and to teach?

I love Mesopotamian myths. So much of Greek myth is based on, or at least talking to, Mesopotamian myth, and there are some wild stories in it. The Greeks take Mesopotamian and sort of distill it a little bit more. [In Mesopotamian myth, there are] people in the underworld who are covered in feathers. That’s what happens when they go to the underworld: they kind of lose their bodies and they become more like birds. It’s a little crazy. You know, myths can range between the very fantastical to the very realistic. I sort of love the dichotomy of that, but also some of the fantastical ones are just so cool to read.

Why do you think mythology is important to teach?

There are so many references, especially to Greek mythology, but [also] lots of mythologies, like Egyptian mythology ... that come up in everyday life, from arts and statues to TV and movies that are not [necessarily even] about mythology. These things pop up in everyday life and everyday culture. It’s good to have that basis and the ability to recognize and talk about it because you never know. Sometimes it’s just things in passing, of course, but sometimes it will give you deeper meaning into what you’re reading, what you’re watching [and] what you’re doing.

Why is teaching Latin and vocabulary in your myth class important?

In my mythology class, one of the things we do is they have words or phrases of the day that connect to the myth in some way. It’s not directly the name like Achilles heel. Sometimes it’s things that are influenced by the myth phrases that we still use, like beware of Greeks bearing gifts is [a reference to] the Trojan horse. There is so much [mythology] that comes up that people don’t realize where [the stories] come from. It’s good to have that kind of common vocabulary and kind of common sense of knowledge because these myths have not gone away in the least.

What is your favorite myth to teach?

My favorite is the House of Atreus, which is where Agamemnon and Menelaus fit in as the leaders of the Trojan war. There’s so much cannibalism in that family ... There is cannibalism after cannibalism after cannibalism. So my favorite day to teach is like, I ... refer to it as cannibalism day because there’s a message. They’re crazy stories, but the message is: don’t transcend human boundaries because if you eat humans, you’re essentially becoming an animal. You’re transgressing these boundaries that have been put down for you. And if you do, your [humanity is] devolving in some way, that you’re kind of forced to do this.



### “Orpheus and Eurydice” from Ovid’s Metamorphoses

Orpheus wasn’t supposed to have seen hell yet. The exit to Hades’ palace was in front of him, his wife’s shadow beside him. He held under his arm the lyre he had just played to petition Hades for his wife’s life. He silently thanked Apollo for giving him the instrument before stepping out of the doors.

The conditions for reviving Eurydice were simple: walk out of the underworld without looking back at his wife. Upon seeing the sun, her life would be returned to her.

Orpheus mulled over the challenge, comforting in the sound of his treasured wife’s footsteps. He was excitedly waiting to exchange words with Eurydice once again.

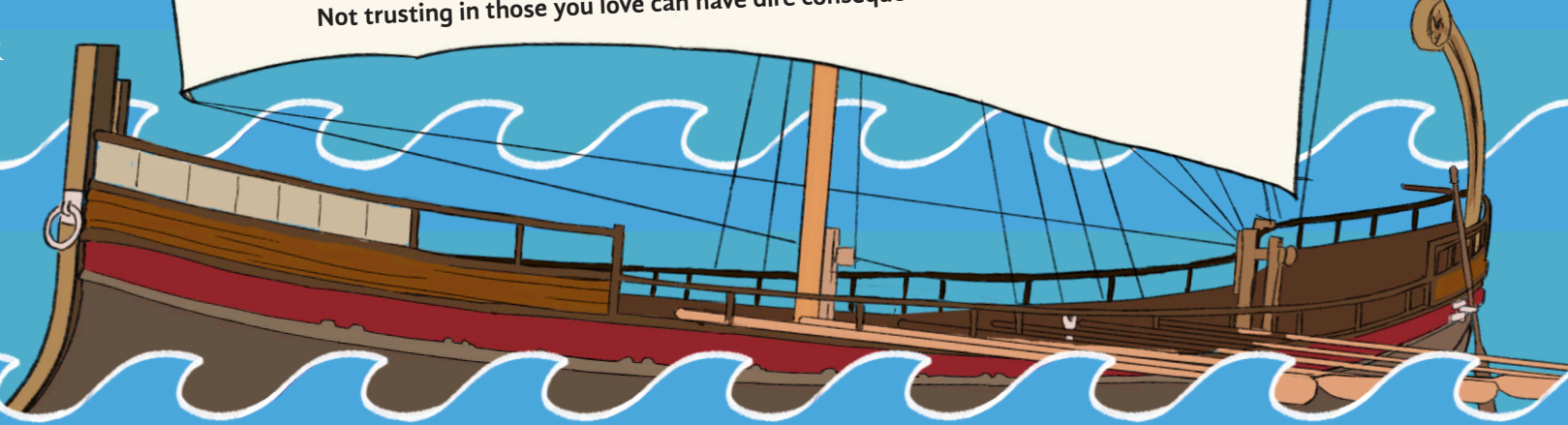
They continued travelling, protected by Hades, until the end was in sight. Orpheus walked through the border between Elysium and the surface.

Suddenly, Eurydice’s footsteps ceased.

Fear shot through Orpheus’ heart. He was so close. He kept his eyes forward, waiting. Her footsteps never returned. Maybe she had already crossed; maybe she was hurt, stuck, unable to leave the underworld. The thoughts chewed up his mind.

He turned around. Orpheus saw Eurydice, love of his life, one step away from escape, consumed in shadow, and dragged back to the Underworld.

Not trusting in those you love can have dire consequences.





# ART @ BAINBRIDGE

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Additional support for this exhibition is provided by the Curtis W. McGraw Foundation; the Edna W. Andrade Fund of the Philadelphia Foundation; and Princeton University's Humanities Council, Program in Latin American Studies, Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies (with the support of the Stanley J. Seeger Hellenic Fund), Department of African American Studies, Graduate School—Access, Diversity and Inclusion, Effron Center for the Study of America, and Program in Latino Studies.

Image: Roberto Lugo, *What Had Happened Was: The Path*, from the series *Orange and Black*, 2024. © Roberto Lugo. Courtesy of the artist and R & Company, New York. Photo: Joseph Hu



# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## PHS Choir wraps up an eventful year with Cabaret Night

Ivy Cordle and Maiya Qiu, CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

PHS Choir ended the year with a final performance: Cabaret Night. Both teachers and students dedicated hours of preparation in and out of school to make it a night to remember. Cabaret Night is the last performance for all of the seniors in PHS Choir, many of whom have been in the program for their entire high school careers. For many juniors and sophomores, it is an exciting opportunity to perform, with many people coming for the end of year music show.

PHS Choir started preparation after the spring concert in April, with music directors Sarah Pelletier and Vincent Metallo working with the students in school, as well as working with featured singers outside of class.

“I’m nervous for my solo ... because I’ve never soloed at PHS before, but I’m also really excited for that because it will be a fun opportunity. And I just really like all the music that they picked out, so that’ll be fun to sing together,” said Avery Bahr ’26, a member of PHS Choir.

Unlike other concerts, where the music is chosen by Pelletier and Metallo, choir students were able to shape the event’s program by giving input on songs they wanted to perform.

“The students can make suggestions on artists or bands or musical theater pieces ... we look at their suggestions, we look at what they auditioned with, and then we put together a program,” said Pelletier.

The many pieces being performed included selections from “La La Land,” like “City of Stars,” as well as songs by Noah Kahan, Fiona Apple, Annie Lennox and more.

Cabaret Night is unique for its emphasis on featuring as many individual singers as possible, in contrast to most of PHS Choir’s other concerts. This year, 54 students sang solos, duets, or in small groups, backed by the choir, with each chosen for their unique voices. There were five full choir numbers, including “Walking On Sunshine” by Katrina And The Waves and “Walking On Broken Glass” by Annie Lennox.



photo: Katherine Chen

Max Wang ’27 leads PHS Choir in practicing “Another Day of Sun” by Justin Hurwitz, Benj Pasek, and Justin Paul from the movie “La La Land” during an in-class rehearsal for Cabaret Night.

Choir students were given more freedom and responsibility in helping to bring the event together and make their performances something to be proud of compared to other concerts.

“There’s not a lot of structured preparation; it’s a lot of you putting in your own time and knowing your schedule. The students are really given agency within the guidelines,” said soloist Alexis Colvin ’25.

As the final show of the year, the evening offered a bittersweet goodbye for students and teachers.

“After the spring concert [the students] are usually sad, and I tell them we’re not done yet, but at this one we are done ... but the fun thing is usually a ton of alums come to Cabaret and it’s really great to see them,” said Pelletier.

For students, the concert also provided an opportunity reflect on the past year and celebrate talent in the group.

“[Cabaret Night] is a really cool way to end off choir for the year because there’s a big mix of different music and it’s really cool to hear all of my choir friends get to sing solos,” said Sylvia Schreiber ’26, a PHS choir member.

## PHS artists showcase their talents with end-of-year art show

Yunsheng Xu, STAFF WRITER

Aarna Dharmavarapu, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

On June 5, PHS hosted its annual End of Year Art Exhibition. This exhibition has been a tradition for 25 years, with every art student receiving the chance to display their best work. It is a large collaborative effort between art teachers, students, and art clubs, who work throughout the year to prepare pieces that showcase their artistry.

At the gallery, students showcased artwork media including watercolor paintings, ceramics, printmaking, installations, and sculptures. For students taking 2D art classes, they mostly worked on illustrations and paintings. Students on the 3D art track focused on artwork with ceramics, plaster, wood, and textiles.

One of the biggest sections in the Numina Gallery featured Studio Art 3D III students’ collection installations, which involve creating art from a collection of various items, such as aluminum cans and receipts. Another installation in the exhibition displayed books made by students taking the Art of Craft elective.

In recent years, the gallery has expanded to include not only the Numina Gallery, but the art classrooms as well. The 3D art program has expanded to triple its former size, so opening the gallery to include the art classrooms helped ensure that each student’s work was highlighted.

“Adding that extra room has helped house a lot of the sculptures. And that evolution of actually taking a gallery walk from one classroom to the next and then down to Numina or the other way ... transforms the whole scope of the exhibition,” said 3D art teacher Bridget Schmidt.

Aside from getting to see their work on display, participating in the exhibition teaches students the value in curating pieces for the collection, reflecting on the process, and critiquing their work.

“Being able to critique your own work and decide what’s most important to actually display and put out there to

a bigger audience is really an important life skill,” said Schmidt.

For some students, the process of creating these pieces of art for the exhibition was a way to express their emotions and past experiences, even delving into parts of themselves that they had previously forgotten.

“When it was COVID, I had a really bad depression. [My installation is] just a bunch of random things that I kind of fell in love with again [after the pandemic. But] then there’s still some black fragments throughout the piece. And to me, that kind of symbolizes [that] there’s always gonna be dark times in life, but it’s the rest of the things around it that really makes life worth living,” said Anya Haeberli ’25, an artist who worked on a personal installation.

Some students used the exhibition as a place to connect their favorite stories and hobbies, which helped to bring their passion to life.

“My installation was very much inspired by one of the classic science fiction movies. Sci-fi has meant a lot to me since I was very young; I think it represents this certain kind of optimism. So I wanted to sort of pay homage to this genre that has meant so much to me, and all these classics,” said Ann King ’25, an art student with an installation in the show. “I feel like I’ve uncovered something really wonderful from my childhood that I wouldn’t have otherwise without this installment.”

However, one of the main challenges that students faced was the time constraint. Though students may have had numerous ideas about what to include in their art pieces, there simply was not enough time to incorporate it all.

“I think, for all of us, the installations are something that we really want to put our everything into. So ... I want it to be fully realized in my vision. And I know I don’t have the time for that, especially with everything else going on

right now. So it’s like even though you present something, it’s not fully finished,” said Haeberli.

Through the exhibition, the teachers hoped to not only showcase their art students’ talent, but also to celebrate their hard work.

“The biggest part [of the exhibition] is that [the artists] get to see their work on display, which is a big part of the art process ... Having your art displayed and performed is kind of the end of the creative process. So it’s really good for them to celebrate their hard work,” said 2D art teacher Matthew Pembleton. “[The exhibition] is another example of the diversity of our school and [the different] ways of celebrating student achievement beyond academics, beyond athletics, beyond other clubs and accomplishments.”

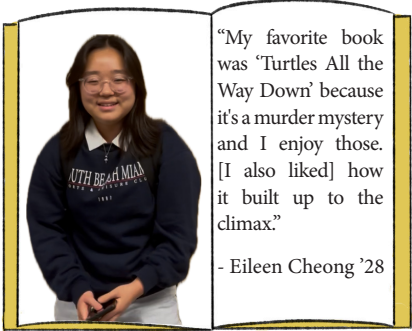


photo:

Charlotte Regnault ’27 looks at the Numina Gallery exhibit with her mom.

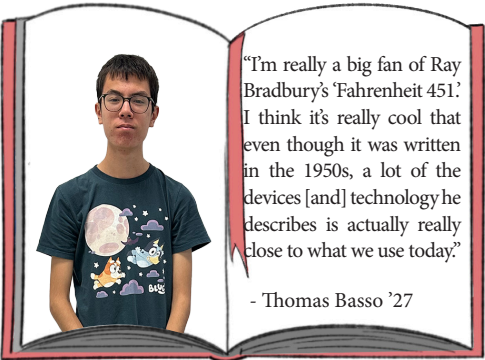
## Student takes: What book from the summer reading list do you recommend?

Aleena Zhang, CONTRIBUTING WRITER



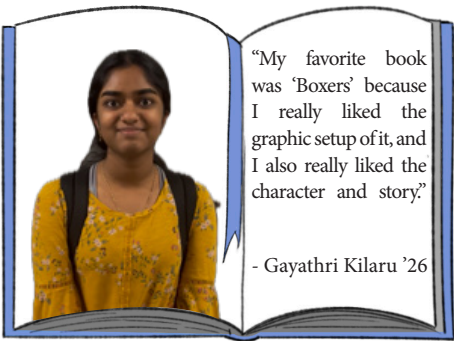
“My favorite book was ‘Turtles All the Way Down’ because it’s a murder mystery and I enjoy those. [I also liked] how it built up to the climax.”

- Eileen Cheong ’28



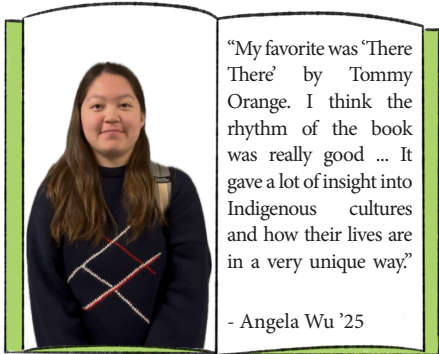
“I’m really a big fan of Ray Bradbury’s ‘Fahrenheit 451.’ I think it’s really cool that even though it was written in the 1950s, a lot of the devices [and] technology he describes is actually really close to what we use today.”

- Thomas Basso ’27



“My favorite book was ‘Boxers’ because I really liked the graphic setup of it, and I also really liked the character and story.”

- Gayathri Kilaru ’26



“My favorite was ‘There There’ by Tommy Orange. I think the rhythm of the book was really good ... It gave a lot of insight into Indigenous cultures and how their lives are in a very unique way.”

- Angela Wu ’25



## Student artist of the month: Will Ponder '25

Maeve Walsh, STAFF WRITER

William Ponder '25 has been involved in theater and the arts throughout his life. Starting at his church, then taking part in productions in middle school, Ponder has found community through his fellow cast members and an emotional outlet through his characters. In the future, Ponder will focus his studies on psychology at Howard University, but he hopes to continue performing every chance he can.

### What got you started in acting?

I always loved acting. I started acting in the church; we used to do these little musicals and stuff. When I got to middle school, I did every single play and musical before COVID happened. I got to high school and I was like “I would love to be in the play,” so I did all four plays and I really loved it. I got to meet a bunch of really cool people and I got to really lose myself in the character.

### What was it like to start participating in school productions?

It was a really fantastic experience. Ms. Cameron, the drama teacher [at Princeton Middle School], made sure that everyone, no matter how big or small your role, was having a lot of fun. It was such a diverse and fun experience.

### Your father is an artist — did he inspire you in any way?

Both my father and my mother are really creative. My mom creates these really elaborate quilts and my dad is a painter, so there were these days where my sister and I would sit down and they both would present their pieces. They were also really encouraging me and my sister’s creative sides.

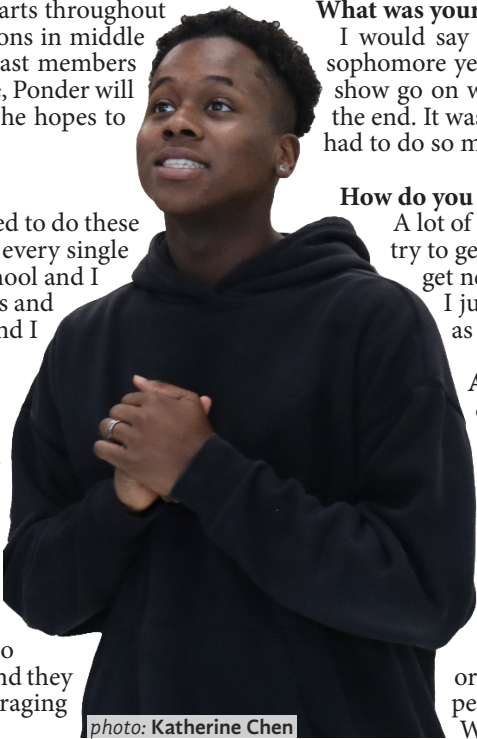


photo: Katherine Chen

### What was your favorite high school production?

I would say my favorite was definitely “The Play That Goes Wrong.” I did it my sophomore year and basically the premise of the play was we try to keep having the show go on when everything’s actually getting messed up. Our setlight collapsed at the end. It was very fun to be a part of. I was really close to my classmates because we had to do so many stunts and trust each other.

### How do you handle nerves on stage?

A lot of the time my classmates and I will do these special exercises where we all try to get the nerves out of our system. Another thing that really helps is when I get nervous I talk really fast, so when I’m on stage I try to calm myself down. I just remember to breathe and just talk slower because slower will not be as slow as it sounds.

### Are there any clubs at PHS that you joined that appeal to your creative side?

I’m in the Multicultural Student Achievement Network and something we did this year was the Black History Month Assembly. I really think we were able to show our true creative sides. There was a dancing club and a fashion show so we really were able to put our own creative sides into that.

### If you were to give advice to someone who wants to follow in your footsteps, what would you say?

I would say just march at the beat of your own drum. If it seems cringe or embarrassing, it’s totally okay. I’d rather come off as an embarrassing person but authentic than someone who’s trying to be someone they’re not. Whatever makes you happy, you have to do that.

## Student artist of the month: Sheena “Angel” Ash '25

Asma Frough, STAFF WRITER

Sheena Ash '25 conveys her emotions through singing and poetry. Being raised in the rich culture of church, Ash was surrounded by music and gospel throughout her childhood. Now as an artist, Ash channels her emotions into her art, hoping to inspire others through the power of words and melodies.

### When did you start singing and writing poems?

I guess when I was one [when] my mom told me [that] I love rhythm, beating, and patterns. But poetry, specifically, I think middle school, right before COVID started. I started exploring a lot with expressions in general and different ways beside storytelling.

### When did you realize that you were a talented poet?

I [realized] after my mom had read my poem [which] I had submitted to the Until Justice Just Is competition at the YWCA. That specific poem had been written in around 2024 and I modified it to fit more of the prompt [for the competition]. I asked my mom what she thought about this poem. She read it, broke down in tears, and said, “This is so raw, I can feel you through this.” Even after the poetry festival, people [told] me how much it moved them and how much it changed their perspective on the world.

### Do you see your poetry and singing as connected?

For sure, poetry gives me the language and the music gives me the feeling. When I couple those two concepts, it creates this powerful thing for me because I feel both of those like they pick back off of one another.

### How do you think your poetry and music reflect who you are as a person?

I think it’s real and it’s deep. It really articulates my heart. With singing and poetry, I feel like I’m able to truly convey a deeper version of myself and a more complex version of myself.

### What specific themes or topics do you usually perform?

When I sing, I sing a lot of contemporary songs. I like rhythm, blues, [and] jazz music. Especially within the Black community, jazz, gospel, and rhythm have been an integral part of [our] society. I appreciate the way it allows us to communicate with each other. We feel the music rather than just hear it.

### What is your creative process when writing poems or rehearsing for a song?

Sometimes I will ground myself, I’ll step outside barefoot in my front yard and [make] peace with the world. Other times I’ll wake up, get home, sit in bed and really think. [Then] I’ll pick up a pen or a notebook and start typing out words. I start with words.

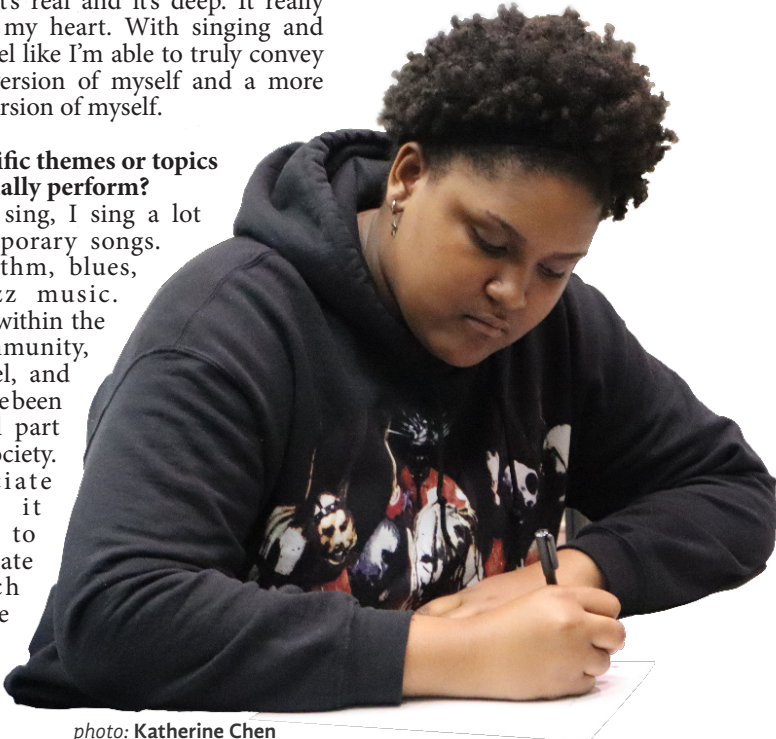


photo: Katherine Chen

## “Blobfish”

Sheena “Angel” Ash

To everyone you’re cute.  
No to everyone you’re ugly.  
To everyone you’re rare to see.  
But you always resonate with me.

You blob my way, a soggy curse,  
A pinkish weight, for better or worse.  
You cling beneath my collarbone  
A frown I never wear alone.

You’re cute, they say. A comic thing.  
But I just feel the ache you bring.  
A damp reminder, always near.  
You swim in doubt. You feed on fear.  
Still, I don’t fight. I let you stay.  
You’ve grown too soft to throw away.

Depress your gloom against my chest.  
My heavy friend, my quiet stress.  
Depress me little blobfish, I’m done  
being depressed.

## Graduation music around the world

Meiya Xiong, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

As graduating seniors decked out in their caps and gowns walk across the stage to receive diplomas, the moment calls for music matching the emotion of the occasion — something appropriately grand and celebratory, but also upbeat and hopeful.

### Pomp and Circumstance

The trio section from Edward Elgar’s Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1 is a very common graduation song in the United States. On June 18, the majestic melody will once again serve as the processional for PHS’s graduation, accompanying seniors as they file onto the front lawn to begin the ceremony. Originally composed as part of a series of marches celebrating British imperial power and glory, it was notably performed for the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902. The march was later played when Elgar was awarded an honorary doctorate from Yale University. It made such an impression that other universities also began playing it for graduation. Pomp and Circumstance subsequently spread to high schools as it became the tradition it is today.

### March from Verdi’s Aida

This bold and triumphant march from Giuseppe Verdi’s opera “Aida” sets the mood for a grand new chapter. In the opera, the piece is played as Egyptian military commander Radames leads the Egyptian army returning from a victorious battle against the Ethiopians. PHS Orchestra plays this piece for the recessional while graduates exit, but its energy has made it a favorite for ceremonies around the world. In the Philippines, it’s traditionally used as the graduation processional and is known as “Martsang Pandangal,” or “honors march.”

### Gaudeamus Igitur

Latin for “let us rejoice,” Gaudeamus Igitur is a beloved academic anthem often sung at university graduations in Europe. The lyrics and music for the version sung today date back to the late 18th century, but parts of the song can be traced as far back as the 14th century. Despite its age and Latin text, the song is far from solemn. Its cheery tune combines with light-hearted lyrics that celebrate youth and student life, while reminding graduates to seize the day.



graphic: Mason Charles

### Auld Lang Syne

Most commonly associated with New Year’s Eve, the timeless Scottish folk song never fails to evoke nostalgia and memories of friendship and shared experiences. In Japan, the familiar melody is adapted to different lyrics in “Hotaru no Hikari,” meaning “glow of a firefly,” and is played as a farewell to the graduating classes.

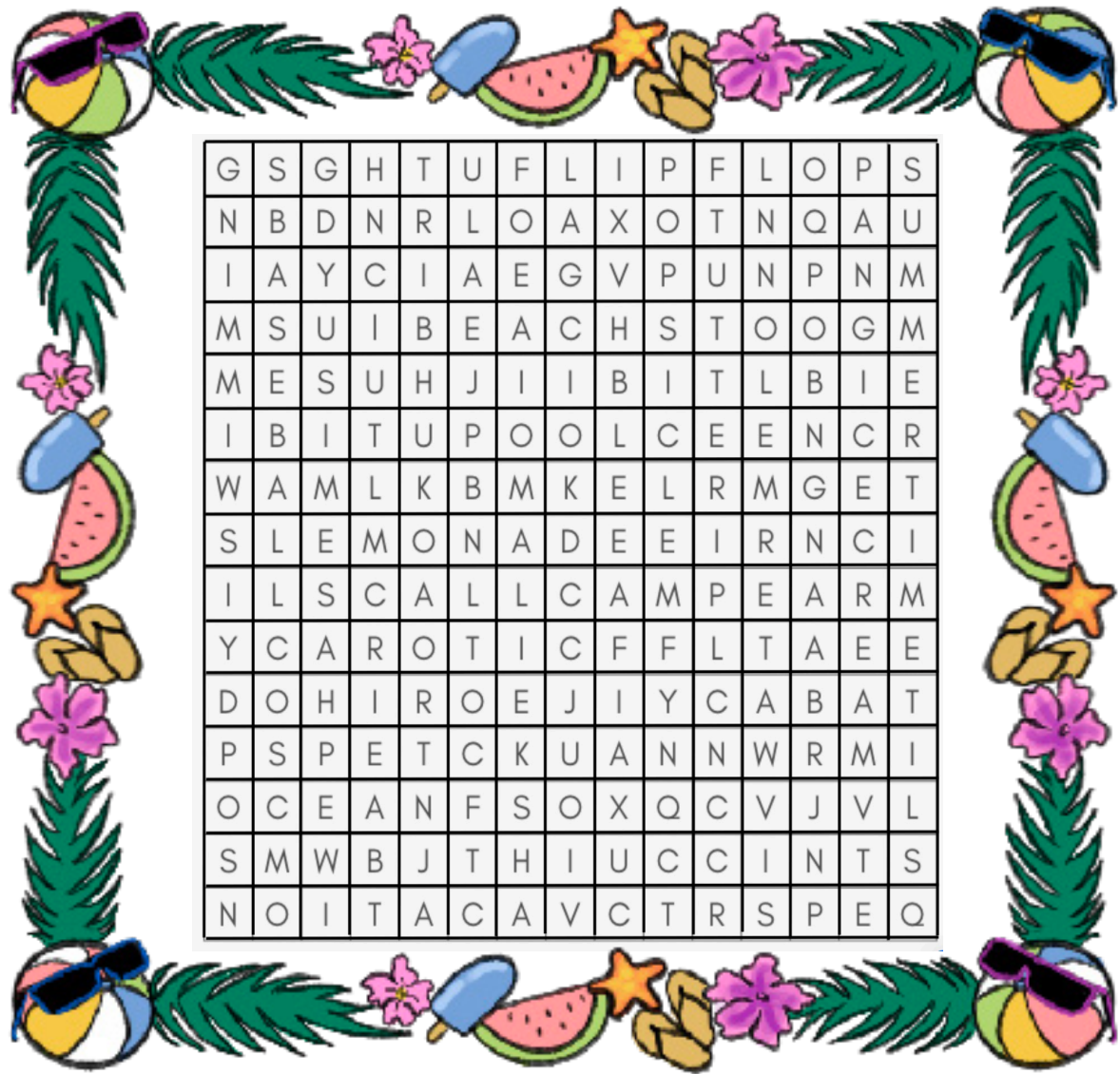
Come graduation day, these tunes will mark the closing of this chapter of this year’s seniors’ high school experience. Once the music fades, a new piece begins as seniors embark on the next stage of their lives.



# Word fun in the summer sun

Samantha Henderson, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

graphic: Charley Hu



Baseball  
Beach  
Camp  
Cookout  
Flip Flops

Ice Cream  
Lemonade  
Ocean  
Picnic  
Pool

Popsicle  
Summertime  
Swimming  
Vacation  
Watermelon

# Learning history through films

Jane Hu, STAFF WRITER

While most students are introduced to history through textbooks, few recognize the educational value that historical films can provide. Although these films are not always historically accurate, they offer a captivating way to introduce students to the complexities in the past. By recreating stories, movie directors are able to transform historical events into engaging and entertaining experiences, bringing life to events in ways textbooks cannot. While these films may include slight modifications to the original storyline, they provide a powerful passage for students to learn about history’s most fascinating people and events.

One of the most effective ways films can teach history to students is by humanizing real events by providing personal stories. “Black Hawk Down,” for instance — set during the Somali Civil War — follows the crew of a Black Hawk helicopter which was shot down in the Battle of Mogadishu in 1993. The movie plunges students into the chaos of warfare, with soldiers fighting for their lives and losing their loved ones, showing the dangers and troubles of a soldier at battle. This helps students understand the fear that the soldiers faced during the conflict.

Furthermore, in “Selena,” a movie directed by Gregory Nava about Selena Quintanilla-Perez, one of the most famous Mexican American singers in the 20th century, students are able to learn beyond her fame and into her personal struggles. While a famous singer like Selena may appear jubilant on stage, singing and laughing with a big smile, the film sheds light on the discrimination and challenges Selena faces growing up. For example, when

Selena and her sister are shopping to buy Selena a dress, they encounter an unpleasant interaction with the sales associate who discriminates against the two sisters because of their skin color. While issues with discrimination may be taught in classes, historical films like “Selena” provide firsthand experience for students to understand the troubles to a greater extent.

Similarly, “Hacksaw Ridge,” a film about Desmond Doss — a U.S. soldier who saved tens of lives during WWII without carrying a single weapon — also provides a powerful depiction of the war and prompts students to engage with the past. This movie not only teaches facts about the war, but also proposes themes like the complexity of heroism and moral conviction. By focusing on Doss, the film teaches students about conscience, faith, and perseverance.

Films also provide opportunities for students to discuss the complexities in history. Take “Schindler’s List,” for example — while it highlights the horrors of the Holocaust, it also raises important questions about morals, courage, and how power in the hands of one can influence the lives of others. The movie encourages students to consider the deeper implications behind the Holocaust, rather than observing from the surface. Teachers can use certain scenes, such as the burning of thousands of books, to spark conversations about broader historical themes such as propaganda, resistance, and consequences of discrimination. Additionally, students are also encouraged to identify what historical details are included — and left out — developing a stronger understanding of how the

media portrays history. This not only enhances students’ critical thinking skill, but also their ability to analyze media literature.

In the end, historical films — while not always 100 percent historically accurate — offer a meaningful and engaging way to revisit the past. Through powerful stories and deeper discussions, movies like “Black Hawk Down” and “Schindler’s List” make historical events more accessible and emotionally resonant. When used in educational settings, these films can spark curiosity and encourage critical thinking, turning entertainment into a valuable learning experience.




photo: Katherine Chen

After learning about the Holocaust and WWII, Mr. Campbell’s APUSH Period 2 class watches Schindler’s List.



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## Girls golf team wins state championship for the first time

Joshua Huang, STAFF WRITER  
Alexander Gu, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

On May 13, the PHS girls golf team made history by winning this year's NJSIAA Girls Golf State Championship. This is the team's first state title ever since its founding in 2023 by player Madeline Zang '23. Behind this success was a roster of veterans who managed to shine both as a team and individually, with each member hitting under 100 strokes, a display of their consistency.

"They stayed committed to the process, supported one another, and consistently held themselves to a higher standard," said Head Coach Jess Monzo. "That belief and mindset shift became a turning point that propelled them toward the state championship."

For the team, this title is more than a trophy; it is proof of the effort and endurance from the team throughout the grueling season. Kyuyoung Chung '26, one of the five players in the state-winning team, explains that this title was crucial for the team's confidence — serving as redemption for the team after not doing as well in previous years.

"[The title] definitely adds to our confidence and it's an accomplishment that we've worked towards collectively; so I think that really adds to the bonds between the girls as well," said Chung.

Monzo echoes this sentiment, emphasizing that the title means more to the players, who saw themselves overcome various obstacles to achieve this feat, than it might to a spectator.

"For the team, it's more than just a title — it's validation that every practice, every tough round, and every challenge they faced was worth it," said



Yasna Shahriarian '27 pauses after swinging to track her shot.

Monzo. "It's a shared achievement that reflects their growth not just as athletes, but as a unified group."

Despite facing numerous challenges, the team managed to not only pull through but also come out stronger than before. Throughout the season, Monzo has seen this team develop into the standout athletes they are now.

"This team has matured tremendously — not just in skill but in leadership, resilience, and their understanding of the game," said Monzo. "Over the year, they've learned how to handle pressure, support each other, and bounce back from setbacks."

Monzo cites consistency under pressure as one of the biggest challenges this team faced going into the state championship.

"High-stakes rounds can get into your head, especially at a state-level competition," said Monzo. "Learning how to play one shot at a time and not let a bad hole spiral was something we worked hard on. Staying mentally tough was key — and they rose to that challenge beautifully."

Individually, Yasna Shahriarian '27 faced challenges on her way to the title, such as her dissatisfaction with her own playing.

"In golf it is easy to get caught up on the bad shots that you have hit previously," said Shahriarian. "But the most important shot is always the next and I often find the need to remind myself of that."

According to Monzo, the team showed signs of their capability and skill even before their state championship triumph. Prior to their victory at the state competition, the team also won the Red Devil Invitational and the Colonial Valley Conference tournament.

"There was a defining moment mid-season during a tough invitational played in less-than-ideal weather

conditions," said Monzo. "Despite the challenges, the team rose to the occasion and played exceptionally well, taking home the team title against some of the top programs in the state. [Jacqueline Zang '25] won the tournament individually, and Kyuyoung finished fourth — both incredible performances. That day, the team realized what they were truly capable of."

Regardless of what happens next year, Monzo has an optimistic outlook for the team and the players individually.

"Every practice, every match, and every moment of support helped push this team forward," said Monzo. "Their sportsmanship, camaraderie, and relentless work ethic made this journey truly special. This championship is a milestone, but it's also just the beginning of what this program is capable of achieving."



Alice Ye '26, Jacqueline Zang '25, Kyuyoung Chung '26, Yasna Shahriarian '27, and Shreya Gaekwad '25 pose for the camera after their big win.

## Ways to stay active after school ends

Fangwu Yu and Rohan Srivastava, CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

As the school year comes to a close, it can be tempting to sit back and relax, letting the whole summer blur past while you stay indoors and retreat to the online world. While relaxing is crucial, staying physically fit can be just as important.

Exercise has numerous health benefits, but without school sports in the summer, it can be hard to find ways to stay healthy. Fortunately, staying active doesn't mean you have to do vigorous exercise every day. Even something as simple and small as going outside for a stroll can be beneficial.

Parks are a great place to spend time outside and enjoy the nice summer weather. Whether it's taking a walk or



Ivy Hu '25 approaches a creek at Mountain Lakes Nature Preserves Trail.

walking your dog, parks are there for you to get some fresh air. Smoyer Park is a classic, with open fields and ponds, which is a nice and peaceful environment to walk through. Marquand Park offers labelled trees and well-kept trails, perfect for those who love nature. For those sports and skateboard enthusiasts, Hilltop Park contains a soccer field, baseball/softball diamond,

basketball courts, and a whole skate park. These parks are perfect for sports lovers that play sports even outside of the school season, like Sebastian Balestri '28.

"I like playing tennis, so sometimes during the summer I like going to certain parks with tennis courts and just play tennis with my friends," said Balestri.

The Community Park Pool is also open during the summer, and swimming is a great way to stay active, with your body burning calories to stay warm and swimming itself being a strenuous activity. Pools are the place to go if you just want to spend time with your family, cool off, or just have fun and fool around with your friends.

There are a number of hiking trails in and around Princeton too. The Watershed Reserve, located in Hopewell Valley, has over 10 miles of trails and supports one of the largest nature centers in New Jersey. Within Princeton are the Herrontown Woods, which is open to the public everyday free of charge, and the 5.2 mile Stony Brook trail. For those who are willing to travel the distance, the Sourland



Marco Gonzalez '25 climbs at Gravity Vault.

Mountain Preserve is 30 minutes away with hiking trails that have amazing views and beautiful rock formations.

"Over the summer I like to hike at the Watershed Reserve because I really like the environment there. I like to go there when the sun is about to rise to get a good view," said Gavin Macatangay '27.

As for indoor activities, there are also many options nearby. Gyms such as Planet Fitness offer a traditional gym experience, while places like the Gravity Vault have other options, such as rock climbing.

The key to staying active is keeping consistent while making the most out of your summer, even if the things you do are small and simple. Staying active doesn't mean missing out on the summer fun, it means making the most out of the time that you have.



Lily Berkery '26, Kalina Tacheva '26, and Mercy Ebong '26 walk laps during gym.

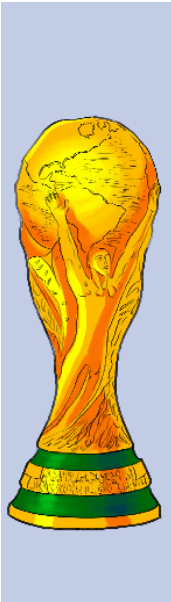
## Sports events to watch over the summer

Kaelan Patel, SPORTS CO-EDITOR

### 2025 FIFA Club World Cup

Millions of soccer fans across the globe look forward to the FIFA Club World Cup every four years. This year, the United States will be hosting the tournament, with the final taking place at the MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey. This tournament brings all the action of the well-known FIFA World Cup, which features national teams, but is played by 32 of the strongest club teams in the world; all 63 matches will be mainly broadcasted on DAZN. Follow along with the tournament this summer from June 14 to July 13.

"It provides all the fans in America a chance to see some of their favorite clubs," said Ryan Litvinsky '27.



### 2025 UEFA Women's Euro

Sixteen European nations will send out their women's soccer teams to compete in Switzerland this summer in hopes of winning the 2025 UEFA Women's Euro, a continent-wide soccer event that takes place every four years. The first tournament took place in 1983 and has continued up until present day, Germany winning the most with 8 trophies. The most recent winner in 2021 was England. The tournament will take place from July 2 to July 27, and will mainly be broadcasted on FOX Sports network.

"I thought the men's tournament last year was pretty great, so I'm excited to see the women's tournament this year," said Charissa Hu '28.



### 2025 Tennis US Open

A yearly tennis event taking place in New York City is an event many look forward to, especially for local fans. The U.S. Open is the fourth and final grand slam championship of the tennis season and it is not only known for its phenomenal tennis matches, but also is played at the largest tennis complex in the world, the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center. The area features the two largest tennis stadiums in the world: Arthur Ashe Stadium and Louis Armstrong Stadium.

The tournament is also known for its signature food and booths, as well as its family-friendly festivities. One example is Arthur Ashe Kids day, where younger fans can participate in and watch free practices held by tennis pros. Catch all the action this summer from August 24 to September 7.

"Tennis is a really cool sport and it's nice to see a big tournament that's fairly local," said Alex LeBouef '27.



graphics: Emily Kim



### BOYS LACROSSE



photo: Jasur Agzamov

left to right: Braden Barlag '25, Gavin Pomraning '27, and Matthew Thomson '25 celebrate a win against Montgomery.

"My favorite memory was beating Hun in overtime. They were a good team and it was a really great team win for us." - Ben Kahn '27

### SOFTBALL



photo: Charley Hu

left to right: Bella Brescia '27, Jadalynn Speed '26, and Vivian Lutkowski '28 attend an indoor practice.

"I liked our team bonding trips to Rita's and the shopping center." - Caroline Avalos '27

### BOYS TENNIS



photo: Jasur Agzamov

Garrett Mathewson '26 prepares to hit a forehand in a game against Ridge.

"Listening to our favorite childhood music on the bus rides back from away games because it brought back nostalgic memories." - Shaam Beri '27

### BOYS GOLF



photo courtesy: Eddie Chen

In a practice, Tyler Cassese '28 practices his swing before another win to add to the 11-0 team record.

"Winning [the Mercer County Tournament] was amazing. I also played well and my score counted for the team so that was a pretty big deal for me." - Owen Barry '25

### SPRING SPORTS RECAP

FAVORITE MEMORIES

Claire Yang, SPORTS CO-EDITOR

### GIRLS GOLF



photo courtesy: Jess Monzo

Shreya Gaekwad '26 and the rest of the team battle tough conditions to secure the state title.

"Winning sectionals was my favorite memory. The entire team played amazing to sweep the competition and we broke our team personal bests." - Alice Ye '26

### TRACK & FIELD



photo courtesy: Rohan Viswanathan

Andrew Foreman '26 runs the 200 m and 400 m in a match against West-Windsor North.

"The Freshman Sophomore counties meet and congratulating my teammates after they finished their race." - Henry Oster '28

### BASEBALL



photo: Jasur Agzamov

The team takes a knee while listening to Head Coach Capuano talk about strategy before the game.

"Pitching against Notre Dame because of all the energy from the fans and the big team win." - Eric Wheeler '25

### GIRLS LACROSSE



photo: Jasur Agzamov

Quinn Gallagher '26, a midfielder, runs for the ball in a game against Northern Burlington.

"Beating Hillsboro 8-7. It was a very back and forth game but we pulled through and won." - Leah Bornstein '26

# BLOOM LOCAL.



**Experience Princeton** is collaborating with the **Municipality of Princeton** and cultural and civic organizations to highlight the work done by businesses as they turn Princeton into a "bloom town" this spring! **Scan the QR code** to find out more about the special events, art installations, new plantings and volunteer opportunities that will make Princeton cleaner, more beautiful and fun all season long!





# Athletes of the Month

## Shaan Zaveri '25: tennis

Michael Yang, CONTRIBUTING WRITER



photo: Jasur Aqzamov

Zaveri finishes his high school tennis career with many accomplishments, including winning first place at the Mercer County tournament in doubles.

Bouncing the ball against the court, Shaan Zaveri '25 adjusts his feet as he prepares to serve. Taking a deep breath, he hits a fast flat serve out wide with his racket and rushes to the net as the opponent returns the ball. Angling his racket face, Zaveri hits a volley winner between the opposing players.

Zaveri was introduced to tennis when he was in fifth grade, inspired by his sister. Growing up, Zaveri also played table tennis and soccer, which caused him to take many breaks from tennis. He eventually decided to focus on tennis, choosing to do so because of how much he enjoyed watching his favorite players, especially his role model Novak Djokovic.

"[Djokovic is] a pretty famous tennis player, and I like how he's calm in tense moments," said Zaveri. "I really like his mental toughness, and that's something I put towards my game whenever I'm down a set, or I'm down a couple games, so I'm not [scared] to make a comeback or hit a shot."

Mental toughness is especially important in tennis, since while playing, players only have themselves or a partner. Zaveri tries to exemplify this ideal, especially in a tough match.

"I'm a risk taker ... I never back down from the big moments ... and I'm never giving up on a point. Even if the ball looks like it's going out, I'm still hustling towards the ball," said Zaveri.

Being strong mentally and emotionally has also helped Zaveri win important matches. One such example was the 2025 Colonial Valley Conference tournament first doubles final, where he and his doubles partner Tacto Yamada '27 were able to beat the same doubles team they had lost to previously, winning first place.



Zaveri begins his swing as he plays his match against Ridge High School.

having fun on the court, which stood out to PHS boys tennis Head Coach Sarah Hibbert. "He enjoys the lighter side of things as well. He enjoys having fun on court, and I think that it's important to be able to lighten up the intensity sometimes because it can be an intense sport," said Hibbert. "There can be a lot of pressure. So being able to find moments of comedy is important."

In tennis, players also need to be able to grow and adapt their game to play well against stronger opponents. Last year, in the doubles tournament, Zaveri and Yamada nearly beat the number two seeded pair in a close match.

"They really rose to the level [that was needed] and played a great match. [Zaveri]'s improved over the years and I think overall he has really stepped into the role as first doubles this year, and it's been a pleasure watching him grow as a player and as a person," said Hibbert.

Even with the amount of time and effort Zaveri puts into tennis, he has been able to find a balance between his academic and athletic lives.

"I used to schedule my tennis [according] to my school schedule, I would play right after school, and then I'd go home, and I would rest, like a nap or a snack, and then I'd do my homework, and then it's just a cycle," said Zaveri.

This season has been his second with Yamada as his partner. After working out the imperfections in their partnership, their chemistry has grown to be stronger, built on their trust and communication.

"Last year I was paired up with Shaan as well, and we were still figuring out what we should do as doubles [partners] but this year, we were able to figure out how to play doubles and talk to each other and stuff like that," said Yamada.

Zaveri's tennis journey has also been about personal growth as it is about getting better as a player and being a part of the team, learning lessons along the way that go beyond the court.

"I've made a lot of good buddies that I wouldn't think that I would make just regularly interacting with the high school and the community," said Zaveri. "[I've learned to] never give up and just try to have fun."



photo: Jasur Agzamov

Zaveri tosses the ball and prepares to complete his serve, starting a point in his match.

## Ellie Naggar '25: lacrosse

Jackson Zwick, STAFF WRITER



photo: Charley Hu

Naggar leads her last team practice as varsity captain, bringing an end to her 10 year lacrosse career.

Nerves settle in. A close game against a challenging opponent is coming down to the wire. With the difference only being a single goal, Ellie Naggar '25 sprints around the field, switches on to open players, and manages to hit a pivotal slide on the opposing team to prevent a goal. The Tigers are able to hold on for a close 8-7 victory, gaining a huge win backed by Naggar's stellar defense.

Naggar was first introduced to the sport in second grade by following her sister, Winnie Naggar '20 in her footsteps, leading her to join the Princeton Girls Lacrosse Club. Ever since then, she has loved lacrosse, a love that she still holds with her in what is now her 10th year in the sport. Additionally, Naggar's defensive style of play was inspired by players that came before her at PHS, such as Eva Petrone '21, who was also a defender and now plays lacrosse at Fairfield University.

"A lot of my sister's friends played, and [they were] pretty inspiring ... They looked like they had a lot of fun playing the sport. I did some summer camps and I really liked it," said Naggar.

As a defender, Naggar is responsible for being an effective communicator and executing key plays to prevent the opposing team from scoring goals, as one mistake can be the difference between a win or a loss.

"Ellie is one of the best communicators on the field. You can always hear her, no matter where she is on the field," said Head Coach Katherine Federico.

As team captain, Naggar leads the team with her aggressive defensive strategy and optimistic spirit. In a winning game against Hillsborough, Naggar played a key role in helping her team secure the win before going into the state tournament. As a fellow defender, Zoie Reynolds '26 has known Naggar since second grade and played club lacrosse with her from third to fifth grade.

"Ellie inspires me [to be] a leader and [to be] loud and vocal on defense. She's actually one of the people I depend on because she's very vocal," said Reynolds '26.

Throughout her time on the team, Naggar has shown tremendous growth from her earlier years to her current role as captain of the team. Despite not making varsity freshman year, Naggar worked hard to improve her game by playing at the Gym and Center Court, which is a winter lacrosse league played during the offseason.

During her career as captain, Naggar learned about the importance of a positive attitude and body language on her team's performance.

"I can see the [team's] body language change when we cheer them on versus when we don't. That's the part of being captain you enjoy most, empowering your teammates."

In addition to cheering on teammates, Naggar takes pride in continuing traditions that she took part in as an underclassman.

One of these involves surprising new members of the varsity team by going to their home or other places to let them know they have made the team. When she was a sophomore, Naggar remembers this as one of her most memorable moments on this team.

"It was just so much fun, and it was a great team bonding activity. It's a tradition," said Naggar. "I literally cried when I made varsity because I was so excited, so doing that for the other kids that made it this year was super fun."

The girls lacrosse team finished the season 12-9 before falling to Red Bank Regional High School in the first round of the state tournament. While Naggar currently has no official plan to play lacrosse at the next level, she acknowledges the impact it has made on her life.

"I'll definitely be friends with all of these girls forever, and I might play club and college. I just think it has taught me that sports are super important," said Naggar.

Outside of gaining lifelong friends because of lacrosse, Naggar also learned that success often comes from constant vigilance.

"You need to always be looking around. You need to watch both the girl and the ball at the same time, and you need to be able to multitask, which a lot of people say is impossible, but I think most defenders have it down pretty well."



photo: Charley Hu

Naggar calls for a pass holding up her stick at a practice, preparing for their next game.



photo: Katherine Chen

Naggar, in a game against Moorestown, attempts to stop the opponents from scoring.