

Tress to Impress!

Get wiggy with it



Vanessa He, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Under the bright stage lights, wigs are not just an accessory — they facilitate the transformation of actors into unforgettable characters. Behind these flawless hairstyles is Sylvan Waldman '25, who is in charge of designing, styling, and maintaining wigs for PHS productions. As both Secretary and Hair and Makeup Leader of Spectacle Theater, Waldman has been able to transform his hobby into a key role to help bring the worlds of “The Great Gatsby” and “The Little Prince” to life.

“We wanted each character to have a recognizable look,” said Waldman.

To achieve this, extensive planning and research was used to make sure each character embodied their characters’ appearance shows like “The Little Prince” or “The Great Gatsby”.

“There were over 20 wigs for all the female characters in [“The Great Gatsby”] and duplicates were needed for the double casting,” said Waldman.

Even with practice and skill, the time each hairstyle takes varies depending on the intricacies.

“The Daisy [hairstyle] was complicated because it was an updo ... It took [around] an hour and a half [to] two hours. But then a non-complicated [hairstyle] would take around 20 minutes,” said Waldman.

Despite the long hours and maintenance, Waldman takes pride in his backstage role.

“It’s definitely a hard job,” Waldman explained, “but it’s very rewarding ... I love what I do.”



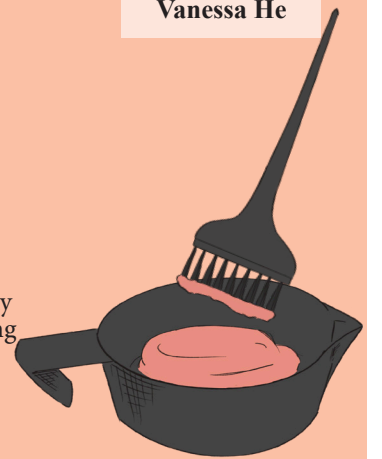
photo courtesy:
Vanessa He

Faculty hair icons

Zoe Nuland, VANGUARD CO-EDITOR

Maxime DeVico, STAFF WRITER

Hair is a reflection of an individual’s personality, style, and experience. For many people, maintaining healthy and vibrant hair takes much time and effort. However, the challenge is even bigger for the teachers, considering their busy schedules. Finding the time to style hair and to make it stand out is very challenging for most teachers. Those who manage to become “hair icons” demonstrate creativity and self-expression while dealing with a time-consuming profession.



Torie Esposito

PHS special education teacher Torie Esposito is known for her flashy and stylish hair, the color of which she regularly changes.

“I’ve [dyed my hair] the rainbow, but I like to stay within the blue, pinks, and purples,” said Esposito. “My favorite color has been blue.”

Her love for dyeing her hair comes from when she shaved her hair off for Saint Baldrick’s, a non-profit organization aimed at raising money for child cancer research, in 2020.

“I realized after working with [Saint Baldrick’s] that life is too short, and why not be creative, and I feel like hair is not just an expression, but a cool accessory,” said Esposito.

However, since she began regularly dyeing her hair, Esposito’s maintenance routine has changed.

“I wear a bonnet, I use a lot of dry shampoo, I take cold showers to keep the color [of my hair], and I try not to bleach,” said Esposito.

After dyeing her hair with a stylist since 2020 and recently transitioning to doing it herself, she knows the ins-and-outs of hair dye and hair care. Esposito said that she uses anything by Brad Mondo, specifically XMONDO, because they are vegan products. Additionally, she has many tips and tricks for beginners trying to dye their hair.

“Start with a semi- or demi-permanent hair color. For those who have recently dyed their hair, wash with cold water, [wear] hair wraps or bonnets to prevent breakage, and do not shy away from the occasional hair mask. Anything organic and paraffin free would be best,” said Esposito.



photo courtesy:
Maxime DeVico

Nicholas Heller

PPS computer artwork technician Nicholas Heller has always had a special relationship with his hair. Having had long hair, short hair, curls, locs, and even no hair at various points in his life, Heller knows the ins and outs of all things “hair care.”

“I went through so many hair care regimens over the years,” said Heller. “It’s gotten to a point now where I feel like I can really take care of it. [Instead of] straightening it, dyeing it ... now I just treat it as it naturally is.”

His biggest piece of advice for anyone struggling with a hair maintenance routine is to limit washing it.

“You can’t wash your hair every day. That’s the number one thing,” said Heller. “I figured that if I wasn’t washing it everyday that it would feel gross, but that’s not the case at all.”

Now, Heller considers his hair care routine to be rather simple.

“Shampoo and conditioner — [that’s it] And sometimes when it’s a rainy day or really humid out, my hair will frizz,” said Heller. “So I’ll put a product in called CurlFriend by Cake, which is relatively inexpensive.”

Beyond basic care, Heller also donates his hair to organizations, such as Locks of Love, to help people suffering from hair loss regain self-confidence by giving them free wigs. Heller’s passion for this cause stems close to home.

“My mom ... had cancer a couple of years ago [and] she lost all her hair ... She was fortunate enough to catch breast cancer early and have all her hair come back,” said Heller. “To look at someone who had [their] hair and then not have it anymore, whether it’s from chemo or not, just to be able to say ‘here’s what you so rightfully deserve’ [is so beautiful].” Heller hopes to donate again when his hair reaches the right length.

To Heller, hair is a privilege. It’s a way to express all facets of your individuality whether it be your cultural heritage, personality, or just for plain fun.

“We’re lucky to live in a time where it’s okay for guys to have longer hair and have painted nails, and that’s how it should be. People should be able to express themselves however they see fit,” said Heller.

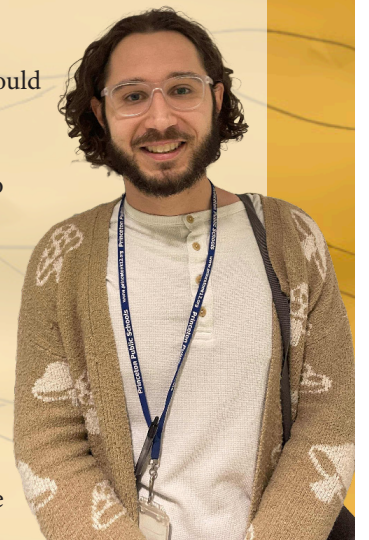
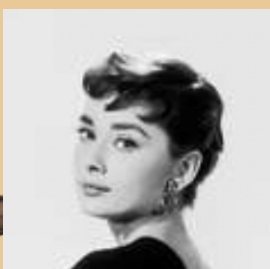


photo courtesy: Syra
Bhatt



Iconic hairstyles throughout history

Angela Chen and Kenzie Miller, CONTRIBUTING WRITERS



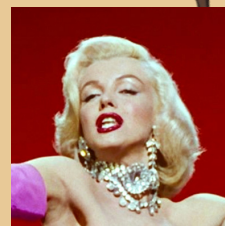
The pixie cut:
First made popular by 1920s flappers, and then Audrey Hepburn in the 1950s, this short hairstyle continues to serve as a symbol of change and individuality.



The Farrah Fawcett blowout:
Big, bouncy tresses with numerous layers and curls, this blowout exploded in popularity during the 1970s when Fawcett debuted in "Charlie's Angels."



The Rachel cut:
An icon of the 1990s, a short layered bob was made popular by Jennifer Aniston in Season 1 of the smash-hit show "Friends."



Short and blonde:
Marilyn Monroe's beach blonde curls became an icon during the 1950s. This classic bob is now synonymous with the old Hollywood style.



The Karen cut:
A short bob-like hairstyle, characterized by long side-swept bangs in the front and chunky blonde highlights, became associated with "Karens" (confrontational middle-aged white women) in 2020.



Slicked-back styles:
Space buns and other slicked-back hairstyles have made a reappearance through social media and television. These model-worthy looks — though requiring copious amounts of gel — last throughout the day, perfect for photos.

graphics: Charley Hu



Hanfu and headwraps

Anna Petrova, STAFF WRITER

Guan Li, a traditional coming-of-age ceremony for the Han Chinese people, marked the transition into adulthood, and into the age where they could no longer cut their hair. This is in accordance with the Confucian teaching that one should not damage their body, skin, or hair, because it is received from one's parents. Once a young man had reached adulthood, he was obligated to tie his hair into a bun and cover it with a headdress. Hanfu headdresses came in various styles and materials, such as jade, gold, and silk, among others. Different levels of detail could indicate the wearer's social status and wealth. While women did not have the same obligation to cover their hair, they commonly wore Hanfu hairpins which played an important role in Chinese marital customs. For instance, when a woman was engaged, she would provide her fiancé with her own hairpin, which he would return to her after marriage.

The origins of the African headwrap can be traced back to the early 1700s, when women in sub-Saharan Africa would wear them to protect their heads from sunlight. African women typically wrapped and tied a rectangular piece of cloth atop their head, tucking it in on the sides, resembling a turban. These headwraps served as a sign of respect. On the other side of the Atlantic however, headwraps took on a different connotation. As slavery became entrenched in the United States, various places passed Black Codes, some of which required Black women to wear headwraps as a symbol of subservience. Different styles of headwraps conveyed the relative social statuses of enslaved women.

Women working in fields wore different styles than those who worked as house servants. After slavery was abolished, headwraps were temporarily abandoned by Black women in the United States, as they came to be associated with the mammy stereotype, a caricature of Black women. Instead, many switched to European-style hats, especially on festive occasions. However, in the 1990s and 2000s, headwraps increased in popularity due to singers like Erykah Badu, who, during this time, celebrated Black womanhood by proudly wearing headwraps to pay homage to their cultural roots. Today, Black women in the United States wear headwraps to express pride in their heritage as well as a practical and are fashionable protective hairstyle.

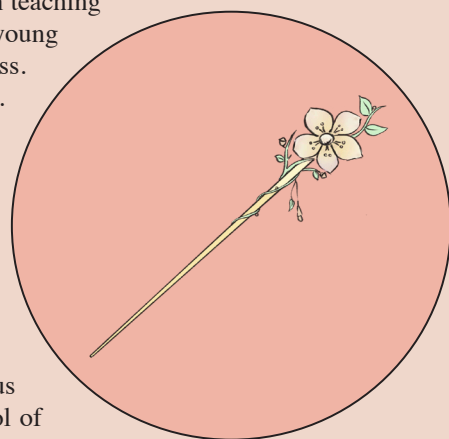


photo courtesy: ABC Signature, Columbia Pictures Television, Paramount Pictures, Lifetime, 20th Century Fox, Warner Bros. Television



Interview with Salon Pure Princeton

Aritra Ray, STAFF WRITER

Princeton is full of barbershops and salons, all offering their customers unique services. I visited Salon Pure, located in Palmer Square above the bustling Princeton streets, to talk with Samantha Kemler. Kemler is the salon's curly hair specialist, and she emphasized her value of protecting those luscious locks.

What are the best ways to take care of your hair at home?

Using the right products. Always ask your stylist what products are going to be best suited to answer some of your needs. For taking care of it at home, stay away from box dye. Box dye is going to be your number one worst enemy.

How does box dye treatment differ from getting it at the salon?

Box dye is just fabric dye and fabric softener. The salon's color [is made of] many different types of hair colors. Here, we're also able to customize colors. If you want a specific shade, [go] to a hair salon. Some people that even have some clients that come in and ask [to] use henna instead for hair color.

What is the healthiest color to dye hair? Are bright colors more harmful for your hair compared to toned down shades?

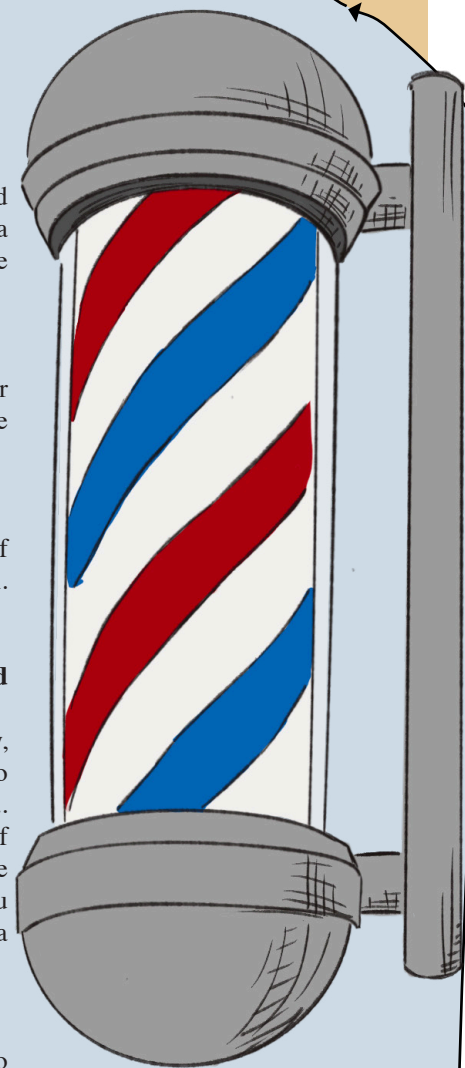
I wouldn't necessarily say that bright colors aren't good for your hair. It depends on hair history, what services you've had [done], as well as your goals. If you have jet black hair, and you want to go platinum blonde, you're not going to get that done in one session without your hair being damaged ... you have to do it gradually. You'll probably get your platinum blonde hair by like two years. And if somebody wants a certain color, like if they want blue, for example, [it's] going to wash out after some time. Blue [is] what we call [a] fantasy color ... anything that is not like a natural hair color. If you like your hot showers, don't get a fantasy color because the way to preserve them for longer is using a color safe shampoo and taking cold showers.

For people with different hair textures, what do they ask their stylists for specifically?

Well, I'm a natural ginger, and I have curls ... if somebody has curly hair, they're probably going to want a deep conditioning. They may want something that's going to help them with frizz. A lot of times that can also be addressed with a deep conditioning as frizz can result from weather.

What advice would you give to people to help them take care of their hair?

If you want to do highlights, [that's] perfectly fine, but don't go to the beach right after. Give your hair some time. If you're planning on going to the beach, get the highlights the week before. If you're gonna go to the pool ... [which has] chlorine, go to the pool all you want but just make sure you're protecting your hair.



The power of patterns

Aarna Dharmavarapu, STAFF WRITER

Cornrows are more than just a hairstyle. For centuries, they've been a powerful cultural symbol in African societies, holding value that goes far beyond appearance. The hairstyle initially started as a way to represent tribal identity and social status, but during times of enslavement, they transformed into a way of hidden communication and resistance. For enslaved African American women, cornrows became a tool of navigation, serving as a way to communicate escape routes and preserve heritage from the forces that strived to erase it.

The roots of cornrows can be traced back to about 3000 B.C. in Africa, where they were worn across the continent from West Africa to Sudan. Cornrows signified tribal affiliation, social rank, and one's role within their community. Warriors and kings, for example, wore intricate braids as a sign of their status and leadership.

In other African cultures, the way a person styled their hair could also indicate their age, marital status, and even their personality. The practice of wearing cornrows, aside from being a tradition, was a way of preserving identity and cultural practices, which became increasingly important in times where these ideas were threatened.

When Africans were enslaved and brought to the Americas, they were forced to abandon much of their culture, including their hairstyles. Enslavers cut the hair of the enslaved, in order to strip them of their traditions and heritage. The act of cutting was often a deliberate attempt to erase the enslaved individual's past and force them away from their cultural roots.

However, despite these efforts, cornrows remained a part of daily life for many African American women. These braids became more than just a way to preserve identity; they evolved into a silent act of resistance.

During the era of enslavement, the role of cornrows evolved. The hairstyle became a form of secret communication, like a special language that was used to communicate messages that could not be spoken aloud. This was especially important for enslaved people who were planning escapes or revolts, as they needed to communicate without running the risk of their plans being compromised.

Cornrows were then styled to represent roads, paths, and any geographical landmarks like mountains or rivers. For instance, women would create curved braids to indicate any roads or trails that escapees should follow to avoid being caught. The style of these escape maps was referred to as "departes," and consisted of thick, tightly braided sections of hair that were pulled into tight buns at the top of the head. The meticulous arrangement of these braids was a code for those who knew, indicating when it was time to leave.

Beyond maps, cornrows were a way to hide practical items to help those who escaped start a new life. Women would hide small valuables, like gold or seeds, to help them buy food or grow their own crops, giving them a better chance of survival after escaping.

Today, cornrows are worn by millions of Black people around the globe, where the style has evolved as a powerful symbol of pride and cultural identity. Though the braids may no longer serve as navigational maps or hide valuables, they are a reminder of the strength and resilience of those who wore them.

