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Empty Seats, Full Minds

Pine View's enrollment has decreased in the past few years, and the loss is felt across the community



The numbers now held by Pine View's Jazz Band are far from what formerly existed in the 2012 band pictured above. PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

by Jiayi Zhu & Robyn Schoenberg

Match Asst. Editor and Multimedia Manager

Sarasota is booming. With over 54,500 new residents moving in each year, its growth rate almost double that of the nation's. Comparably, the Sarasota County School District's enrollment has increased in the past 10 years. With such a climb in population, it raises the question: Why has Pine View lost nearly 700 students in 10 years?

Pine View caters towards gifted students and has top rankings at the county, state, and national levels. In the December of 2021, construction of a new three-story building, better known as "Building 17," was completed. By the end of winter break, Building 17 was able to provide brick-and-mortar classrooms to all teachers formerly in portables, as well as other buildings of the school. With the relocation, some areas of the school, such as the Orange Building, were left with empty classrooms.

Lower overall enrollment has affected course numbers,

especially for music and art electives. According to Pine View band teacher Victor Mongillo, enrollment numbers in the music programs have dropped drastically. While the band and orchestra programs were once consistently over 200 students, there are now around 140 and 100 students, respectively. Lower enrollment has led to an overall lower pool of students taking elective classes.

"And so everybody's clamoring for the same group of students, that same piece of pie. And it's just not enough to go around because there [is only one elective choice]," Mongillo said.

Besides impacting Pine View's music programs, lower enrollment has affected art classes as well. Pine View art teacher Haley Brown has felt the tension of lower enrollment in her classroom.

"Oh, it's stressful. It's stressful; you want to maintain a high level of involvement in your courses. And if there are less kids to pick from, even if you are maintaining statistically those same percentages, your classes are smaller... It's a bummer, and it's scary," Brown said. "We don't want to get to

the point where we are not with enough kids in the program, here at Pine View, to be able to maintain course loads. So you don't want to have a risk that something's no longer available."

Both Mongillo and Brown voiced their immense care for their programs, which intensified their concerns for decreased enrollment. For electives teachers, the risk of losing programs and teachers is taxing.

"[The numbers are] drastically lower and very concerning. They've been affecting our programs for years," Mongillo said. "...We have an expiration date if this keeps going. We do. We have an expiration date."

Addressing concerns about maintaining Pine View's arts and music electives, Principal Dr. Stephen Covert said that he has no intention of cutting classes, regardless of decreased enrollment. With respect to concerned electives teachers, Covert suggests they advertise and advocate for their classes to a greater extent.

"As a principal, I believe in every program that we have. I strongly encourage all teachers to recruit for their programs. Life is about choices," Covert

said.

Although enrollment has dropped significantly over the past ten years and has become a source of distress to some teachers, it may not necessarily be a bad thing in the long run. At Pine View's peak, the implementation of a lottery system, where acceptance would be based on chance, was considered. This would regulate enrollment numbers to ensure that Pine View would not exceed capacity.

"When you look at the number of roughly 1700, it's a good place for Pine View to be... When we were at 2266 [students], you could feel the stress... It was a little bit too big. We thought we were going to have to cap it right there," said the Secondary Schools Executive Director for Sarasota County, Steve Cantees.

According to Cantees, "It's all about providing choices for family. So, certainly we could take on more students at Pine View, but I wouldn't say it reflects a concern on our part."

With the district's execution of additional magnet programs (including IB, AICE, and MaST) in the past ten years, there are a significant number

of options for students across the district. In addition, the district's construction of Wellen Park High School and two new K-8 schools signals persistent growth.

Parents can apply for up to three schools outside of the one they are assigned. Controlled Open Enrollment gives families a variety of choices for where they can send their kids, and with more and more options, it's expected that Pine View won't be the place for everyone. This could explain decreasing enrollment at Pine View while enrollment in Sarasota County Schools increases.

"There are opportunities and programs to meet literally every single need or interest that a student or a family might have. And I'm a strong proponent of choice. As a principal of a gifted magnet school, no one has to be at Pine View. It is a choice," Covert said.

Covert emphasizes a focus on closing the opportunity gap within Pine View's unique environment through organizations such as Diversity in Gifted Schools (DiGS) and Pine View's Shared Decision Making Team (SDMT)

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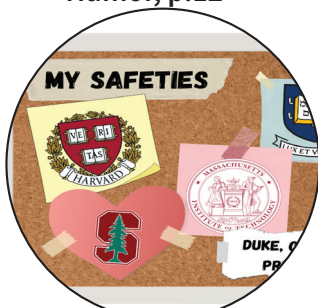
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Pine View alumni meet for 50th class reunion



With cups of coffee and toasted sandwiches, attendees reminisce about moments from the past as they enjoy one last day together at O'Leary's Tiki Bar for breakfast May 7. PHOTO BY KAI SPRUNGER

by Kai Sprunger
Match Editor-in-Chief

Upon entering the Pine View Archives room, alumni from all corners of the world were overcome by a surge of nostalgia, bringing them back to the days when portable classrooms were their sanctuaries. From the aged newspaper clippings from 1973 and dusty photographs of annual traditions, the archives breathed life into long-forgotten memories, serving as a testament to the legacies these alumni left behind.

"I was telling my wife that coming here, I am going to relive a golden part of my life, and it is like history alive. We are so old now, and there are the archivists, and we are the specimens, and we are what belongs in those cases. It is so fun to relive those days and those times," Marc Bostrom ('74) said.

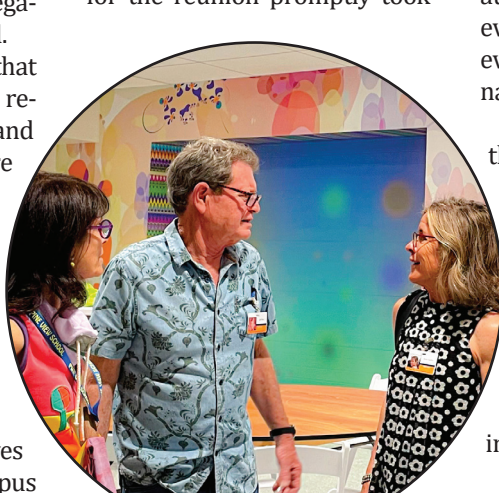
This visit to the archives alongside a tour of the campus marked only the beginning of a long weekend reuniting the past and the present. Between May 5 and May 7, alumni of the classes of 1973, 1974, and 1975 alongside Pine View students from more recent years embarked on a journey to the past for their 50th class reunion, exploring the Pine View Archives, gathering at the Osprey Yacht Club, reminiscing about Senior Skip Day at Lido Beach, visiting Sarasota High School turned art-museum, before bidding farewell at O'Leary's Tiki Bar.

At the head of the process was Alison Bishop ('74). She began by reaching out to others who lived in Sarasota to form a committee dedicated to organizing the reunion with her. Together, they settled on a tentative date and started to form a list of Pine View alumni to include.

"As you get older, the age difference between you matters less, so, you know, whether

you're 50, 51, or 52, you're still pretty much a cohort." Bishop said, "We really opened up the idea of this time, this reunion being open to anybody who ever attended Pine View in our years. So, there were people who had come for a couple of years and either moved away or went to a different high school to graduate, or there were people who just came for two years and graduated with us."

The notification process for the reunion promptly took



In front of an art piece, a group of attendees laugh while conversing. Attendees visited the Sarasota Art Museum May 6 to reminisce about their childhoods spent in town PHOTOS PROVIDED BY CHRIS JARMAL

place, evolving from an interest form to invitations sent out to approximately 50 Pine View students from the Alpha (Pine View Class of 1973), Beta (Pine View Class of 1974), and Gamma (Pine View Class of 1975) classes. Invitees were then asked to pitch in through donations as soon as the committee confirmed the events that were to take place Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

An hour after the Archive Dive May 5, the attendees gathered at Todd Logan's ('74) house, which the group refers to as the Osprey Yacht Club.

With tables set underneath the night sky, the barbecue kicked off. Music filled the air as the attendees shared their experiences of the past 50 years, toasting to their reunion dinner together.

"Being at Todd's house Friday night had a nice atmosphere and was kind of laid back," Jan Wilson ('75) said.

There were many new faces at the "Osprey Yacht Club" as some of the attendees did not attend the prior Archive Dive event. Hence, for the rest of the events, the attendees received name tags to wear.

"We all had name tags that had historical pictures on them, which for most people, I was able to pick out. But it's funny, some people I could immediately recognize who they were, but for others, if I didn't look at their name badge, I didn't know who they were — people change in 50 years," Logan said.

The following morning, attendees were greeted by the sun-soaked shore of Lido Beach and relived Senior Skip Day. Tents were set up over the array of beach towels while a cooler was filled to the brim with cool beverages. Attendees strolled across the shoreline together, reuniting while sharing snacks and drinks, before paddling in kayaks provided by Logan.

For the attendees, the reunion's Skip Day mirrored their own Senior Skip Day. Although it had been 50 years, the event's allusion to this annual tradition brought forth a treasure trove of memories from the parties that took place on this sand.

"We had Senior Skip Day here, and it was quite flawed. I built a little sailboat in white and I got some credit for it, building a sailboat at Pine View, I mean that was the kind of school it was back then. So my little sailboat was here on

the beach and a whole bunch of us came here," Logan said.

That afternoon, the class reunion brought the attendees from the beach to the old Sarasota High School building, now the Sarasota Art Museum.

"There was the old 1926 Sarasota High — many of us had classes there and I had German class there — so it was interesting seeing what the building became..." James Mackay ('74) said. "There was kind of a sense of astonishment for people who took classes there and — wow, it is now an upscale art museum with great exhibits."

Through the halls of the art museum, the attendees were transported to a time when they would walk across the street to take classes unavailable at Pine View with lockers covering the walls and desks filling the classrooms. After strolling through the art museum and reminiscing with each other, the attendees took group photos together before watching a montage of old photos created by Mackay.

"I certainly remember taking most of those pictures but back then, we didn't have smartphones. If you wanted to take a picture, it

was a specific

thing — you had to bring a camera and get the film developed. Some of the people were saying they didn't have many pictures of their childhood, so it really brought back memories for them in a positive way," Mackay said.

Dinner at the Cobalt Café brought an awakening of buried memories from long ago through speeches given by alumni and faculty as well as the montage of photos; it was bittersweet for many.

"It had been a very melancholy night — I sat out there, a grown man trying to stop crying..." Mike Pike ('73) said. "For such a small group... I think there were just 60 people in two classes and I think there were eight deaths... A couple of them were people I was looking for to show up, and now I know why they didn't show up."

The following morning was mixed with both happiness and sadness as everyone shared one final breakfast together at O'Leary's Tiki Bar before bidding farewell. For many attendees, they felt lucky to have been able to relive this period of their lives — as they shared the sentiment that Pine View was unforgettable, fostering their love for learning and cultivating incredible friendships.

"I would always have these great stories to talk about when I came home, either what we learned or what funny thing somebody did or what we're going to do next week. I just loved it — I just was always telling my brothers and sisters what we were doing and my youngest brother said, 'Well that is not fair — you go to school and you like it and you have a good time,' and he just couldn't understand the concept of going to school and loving being in school," Pine View Class of 1973 Class President Lisa Russo said.

Although the attendees were scattered across the globe and the past was far behind, each person carried a piece of their days from Pine View, uniting the classes of 1973, 1974, and 1975 in an unbreakable and timeless bond.



Perusing through the contents of the archives brings back long-forgotten memories from Senior Skip Day to Busch Gardens to impromptu picnics. From 4:30pm to 5:30pm Friday, May 5th, attendees got a glimpse of both past and present by visiting the Archives and Pine View's campus. PHOTOS BY KAI SPRUNGER

Max Hale to attend Naval Academy

by Alyson Mizanin
Torch Editor-in-Chief

In early March, twelfth-grader Max Hale received an urgent message during his sixth-period class: He needed to meet Principal Dr. Stephen Covert in his office immediately.

"I was like, 'Oh my god, what did I do?' I've never been called to the office in my life, and I was so confused and completely oblivious," Hale said.

Dr. Covert told Hale to expect a phone call at 2:30pm that afternoon. At home, Hale picked up at 2:30pm on the dot and was first asked to confirm his name and phone number.

"The whole time, I was freaking out," he said. "I thought I was going to get investigated by the police or something."

It wasn't long before the person on the other end of the phone introduced himself as Congressman Greg Steube, who broke the news that Hale had been accepted into the US Naval Academy — a moment Hale described as "extremely special."

Majoring in Aerospace Engineering, Hale will attend the academy in the fall; upon grad-

uating in 2027, he'll follow in the footsteps of countless family members before him — including his father, his uncle, and his great-uncle who fought in World War II



PHOTO BY ALYSON MIZANIN

on the "Mighty Mo" — who've served the United States themselves.

"My family, they all inspired me to go to the Navy. And I've always loved the water, so I've always been attracted to the Navy," he said.

To be considered for the academy located in Annapolis Maryland, Hale underwent a rigorous application process, which included being interviewed by Steube, receiving nominations from Steube and a

high-ranking blue and gold officer, and passing the Candidate Fitness Assessment (CFA), an exam measuring one's athletic abilities.

Coach Mark Thorpe procured Hale's CFA — including a basketball throw, pull-ups, shuttle runs, crunches, push-ups, and a one-mile run — right at Pine View.

"Max probably had the most pull-ups I've ever seen," Thorpe said. "He's one of the better ones we had come through...He's going to come out [of the academy] with discipline and a job. Maybe he'll become a senator or a CIA agent — 'Darwin Hale,' that's a CIA name."

Now, Hale looks forward to becoming a naval pilot and pursuing space-related careers in his future.

"It's such a huge honor to even be considered because of the process, and it means so much more because of the prior service in my family," Hale said. "The leadership skills I'll come out with at 30 [after serving] are going to be at the level that most people take until their 60s and 70s to find out. I want to lead and motivate people."

Shrinking enrollment

continued from page 1

by Jiayi Zhu & Robyn Schoenberg

Match Asst. Editor-in-chief & Multimedia Manager

"We do what we do really well. But we're not everything to everyone; we provide a very specific environment, a qualitatively different learning environment, like our mission statement says, where we nurture intellectual curiosity, and so forth. So that is a very specific niche. And I'm excited about the 1700+ students that we have," Covert said.

Covert anticipates that once a new superintendent is hired and district administrative positions are solidified, there will be more emphasis on recruiting and raising awareness to prospective students and families.

"I always want to increase enrollment for students for whom Pine View is a good choice... I would love to do more advertising... With House Bill (HB) 1, I think recruiting and advertising will need to be on ev-

eryone's mind," Covert said.

March 27, Governor Ron DeSantis signed House Bill (HB) 1, which uses public district funding to finance potential vouchers or education savings accounts for every K-12 student. This would make attending a private school more accessible; in turn, this broadens school choices for students across Florida and increases competition amongst schools.

"Pine View will need to look at how to [build awareness] and get information strategically," Covert said.

In the future, efforts will be made to promote Pine View enrollment. In the meantime, the focus is on finding a happy medium amongst electives classes and respective enrollments.

"There are no perfect solutions, only acceptable compromises; and this is a good compromise. Most importantly, students get a choice to decide. Along with choice comes everything that goes along with that choice. You can have anything, but not everything," Covert said.

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Twelfth-grader Aravind Rajeev will attend the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point starting this summer. Read more about Rajeev's journey by scanning the QR code.



Twelfth-Grader Nathan Widjaj was named the 2023 Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties' Youth of the Year. Scan the QR code for the full story.

Legislation impacting education in Florida

A number of bills were proposed during the latest legislative session that would impact Sarasota County Schools. Here's a closer look:

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 31

Requires the district school board to be elected in partisan elections; currently passed in both houses of the legislature; as of April 19, 2023, awaiting Governor Ron DeSantis' signature



HOUSE BILL 477

Revises term limits for district school board members from 12 years to eight years; has been signed by officers; awaiting signature from DeSantis as of May 8, 2023

HOUSE BILL 1467

Requires school districts to be transparent in the election of instruction and reading materials; school librarians, media specialists, and other involved in school district library material must complete online training; signed by DeSantis as of March 25, 2022



HOUSE BILL 733

Moves middle and high school start times to between 8am and 8:30am, respectively; currently passed in both houses of the legislature as of May 4, 2023; awaiting signature from DeSantis

HOUSE BILL 1557

Prohibits classroom discussion about sexual orientation or gender identity in certain grade levels; prohibits student support forms or procedures that allow school district personnel from notifying parents about specified information; signed by DeSantis as of March 28, 2022



Saying goodbye to guidance counselor Ashley Byington

by Kai Sprunger
Match Editor-in-Chief

Soft light filters in through slightly closed blinds, defining the delicate flowers sitting by a window and the countless photographs taped to a cabinet. For guidance counselor Ashley Byington, she has known this room for nearly six years, supporting students both academically and emotionally. Although this room remains constant year after year, the students Byington sees in her office grow up until eventually it is their turn to walk across the Van Wezel stage and bid farewell to Pine View.

However, this year, alongside the graduating Pine View Class of 2023, Byington is bidding farewell to Pine View, too. Her legacy as a guidance counselor at Pine View will remain for years to come.

Growing up, Byington lived in Florida and attended Port Charlotte High School. Through this time, she grew closer to her high school's guidance counselor and he soon became an inspiration for her pursuit of this career.

"It felt comforting that if I needed to go to him for questions or anything at all, I could always depend on him so that

was, I think, what kind of... guided me to guidance counseling," she said.

After graduating from Port Charlotte High, she attended the University of South Florida. Upon receiving her Bachelor's in Psychology, she started working at a homeless shelter supporting youth and their families there as they went through rough times. Byington filled in for any job the organization requested - including working at the after-care school program, subbing for classrooms, and helping in the nursery.

"I always had a really good relationship with the kids that were there, and that was my motivating factor - just going and helping them," she said. "I liked it, and I miss it."

She continued to work there for approximately two years before leaving to pursue her Master's in Counselor Education. Promptly after obtaining it, Byington fulfilled her dreams and began working as a guidance counselor at several schools across Florida - including Port Charlotte High and Manatee School for the Arts

- before she came to Pine View in 2017.

Being a guidance counselor, she holds a significant amount of knowledge on secondary education and careers,

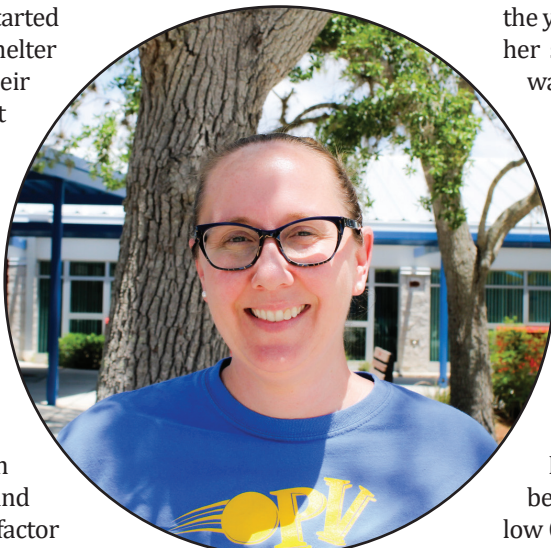


PHOTO BY KAI SPRUNGER

and with this, she is able to support her students through the journey that is high school and prepare them for what is to come.

Having had Byington as a guidance counselor, eleventh-grader Devin Gulliver finds this especially true.

"She has always been so hard at work behind the scenes

just to make sure everyone's set up working on the right paths to get further in [their] college careers," Gulliver said.

Her role, however, serves beyond just providing academic advice to students. Throughout the years, she has been there for her students every step of the way and has helped them in overcoming the challenges that they face.

For Byington, watching her students flourish despite dealing with these challenges is inspiring - she still remembers one such student that she worked with. Several years ago, a student who attended Pine View was at risk of being kicked out due to their low GPA.

"I was super proud of that kid, knowing the stuff that they had to deal with outside of school, and the fact that they really made the effort to not only stay at Pine View, but then they kept that momentum going the following year," Byington said.

Byington has also contributed to significant projects, leaving everlasting changes to Pine View's campus. This year, alongside Assistant Principal

Lana Marcotte, Byington attended several workshops involved with the Embracing Our Differences Ambassador Program, which called for attending administrators to find a way to change their school campus.

"We had to bring a unique project to our campus, so we worked together to bring Kindness Week to Pine View," Marcotte said.

Despite Byington leaving Pine View behind, she will be creating new memories at North Port High School, where she will be working with seniors as a guidance counselor. Living in Port Charlotte and commuting to Pine View every day, which unfortunately posed a challenge, led to her decision to work in North Port.

However, faculty and students alike will miss Byington and the joy that she brought to Pine View - Marcotte especially expressed this sentiment.

"I feel sad because I am going to miss working alongside her. I feel for our students because she was such a wonderful support here - a listening ear - and not only guided our students in their academics but socially and emotionally as well," Marcotte said.

Math and science teacher Roger Siegel retires

by Felicity Chang
Director of Digital Media

After flying across Lake Kivu to Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo in a small plane, he was tasked with running through the airport with cases of beer and Coca Cola purchased at a local market, ensuring that the newly arrived volunteers had enough to eat and drink. Fresh out of college with a Bachelor's of Science in Physics from Georgia Tech, Roger Siegel joined the Peace Corps and was assigned to the Central African region, teaching middle school science to Gabonese students using the French that he'd learned in 12 weeks of training.

Two years in the Peace Corps passed - Siegel's journey in education and aviation continued.

Upon returning to Atlanta, he taught high school physics and chemistry, received a Master's in Science Education from Georgia State University and started a family.

In 2005, when his two daughters were in second grade and preschool, Siegel deemed it a good time to return to Florida, as he'd grown up in Pinellas County. With most schools only having one to two physics teachers, there weren't many opportunities for Siegel to start teaching in Sarasota County. At first, he taught math at Riverview High School for a few years. In 2008, he started teaching

at Pine View, initially teaching only math and later taking on physics courses as well. This year, Siegel teaches AP Physics I and AP Calculus AB. He's also



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ROGER SIEGEL

the sponsor for the Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning Club.

"Pine View is very different than most schools. The students have, for the most part, a really unique drive and maturity to succeed, to work hard," he said.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Siegel led live reviews for AP Physics C as part of College Board's AP Daily series and was later hired to record on-demand AP Classroom videos.

"I feel like that's a big acknowledgment of my skills, and my mastery of the subject, and my ability to communicate the subject to other people," he said. "I got to give some of my physics to students all around the world, and I heard from some of them too, that was really cool."

In his time teaching physics, Siegel has held a variety of demonstrations for students, including a kinesthetic large-scale sound interference experiment on the Quad. Students walked around across a grid while two speakers produced a sound that was louder in some regions than others. Additionally, there was a year when Siegel rented a carnival ride and students measured how fast they went and whether someone could throw a ball across the equipment while someone was on the ride.

"It was a lot of fun and the kids had a good time," Siegel said.

According to physics teacher Malele Nzeza, Siegel always has a "great, positive energy." Nzeza has worked with Siegel for over five years and currently co-teaches one AP Physics class with him.

"He's all about making the best effort possible to make every student succeed. We learn a lot by watching him teach. He's very detailed, goes step by step, and physics is a difficult subject, so we always encourage everybody to do their best," Nzeza said.

In a tradition started last year - Dance Party Fridays - Nzeza and Siegel play a music video for their classes at the start of each period.

"You know when he's there because the first thing he does when he goes into his classroom is pump up the mu-

sic," Nzeza said.

Last summer, Siegel made the decision to retire from his teaching career.

"This is my 35th year teaching, and I feel like I'm done. I feel like I need to do something else," he said.

After retirement, Siegel plans to tutor and become more engaged in his hobbies, such as rowing, sailing, learning Spanish and engineering at the Fab Lab. During the summer of 2020, he built a pre-designed pointer that

"I think most people go into education because they want to make a difference,"
Roger Siegel,
math and science Teacher

could follow objects in space like the International Space Station in all directions, and he would like to improve on that design.

Additionally, for the past two years, Siegel has been studying aviation and recently obtained his pilot's license.

"When I fly, I'm the type of person - even though I'm a grown man - I really want to get the window seat so I can look out the window," he said.

"When you look down on the world and you see it from that new vantage point, it's just a magical experience. My whole life, I've wanted to fly, and now was the time when all the possibilities aligned and everything kind of came together."

Outside of the school day, Siegel volunteers as a mentor at the Teen Aircraft Factory of Manasota (TAFM). Over the course of two years, he helped local teens build an RV-12 two-seat aircraft, as well as offering free flights to kids under 18 through the Young Eagles Program.

"Just seeing him walking around really excited to talk to the families or trying to get them involved in the aviation community ... he makes me energetic about aviation, too," said twelfth-grader Lisa Zhang, a student who participated in the TAFM programs and intends to major in aerospace engineering. "Knowing the [activities] he's involved in, he definitely inspired people to be more interested in physics."

Siegel plans on continuing his pursuits in aviation and engineering after retirement.

"We'll miss him. It's going to be a big, big loss for the faculty and especially the students," Nzeza said.

"I think most people go into education because they want to make a difference. I feel like it's been an opportunity for me to hopefully make that difference," Siegel said.

Kenneth Bowermeister returns to Pine View



Kenneth Bowermeister stands in front of the Con Brio Orchestra introducing his Homecoming Concert at Pine View this March. Bowermeister built the foundation for the music department during his time as an orchestra director. PHOTO BY NATHAN DESOUSA

by Nathan DeSouza
Social Media Editor

Kenneth Bowermeister is a name remembered and esteemed around Pine View for the lasting impact he has left on our campus. Contributing to the establishment of the music program along with having a pivotal role in education, Bowermeister certainly leaves a legacy, which the entire Pine View campus benefits from.

Before becoming the Orchestra Director at Pine View School, had already proved to have great excellence in the musical field. At the age of 10, Bowermeister and his family had moved to Sarasota County. Living under the care of a highly musical father, in eighth grade, he had decided that he wanted to play the violin.

He learned the violin under the tutelage of skilled teachers, two of which were violinists in the faculty quartet at New College. After graduating from Sarasota High School, Bowermeister then went to New College where he played the viola in the faculty string quartet.

In 1978, Bowermeister was offered the opportunity to teach students at Pine View for a year. Without any experience or expectations of becoming a teacher, he applied and became Pine View's Orchestra Director.

One of the first things he did at Pine View was help in the construction of the music building on the old campus. In helping design the layout of the music building, he helped many teachers (including himself) make the transition from the portables. With this new building, he also established the band and choir programs.

It was in that first year that he found his passion for teaching others.

"I love working with the students... I mean, what's not to like about a gifted school, you're just so fortunate to have that caliber of students..." Bowermeister said.

Bowermeister also ex-

presses deep gratitude for the school faculty.

"I learned a lot from the interaction with the other teachers and I enjoyed that very much. I learned a lot about teaching techniques in education because I didn't have the education degree I had to go back to school," he said.

Amid his years at Pine View, he impacted many students and members of faculty bringing revolutionary contributions to the Pine View campus. Pine View alumna Kimberly Marchefe had Bowermeister as a middle schooler and learned how to play the violin with him. Marchefe stated that one of the biggest takeaways of being in Bowermeister's class branched beyond just playing an instrument.

He helped because he made me realize it wasn't just about academics and book smart and studying all the time; you had to take time for the arts, you have to take time to relax and just listen to music and be creative...He made me want to do well, he made me want to practice and want to just be a part [of the whole orchestra]. He made me understand that in being part of an orchestra, you're part of a team as opposed to competing in academic life," Marchefe said.

His teaching style was like no other, giving abundant amounts of attention to the students in the orchestra program. Marchefe explained that during class, Bowermeister would use the piano to assist the students in learning. She also mentioned that he was a very patient teacher, that made sure everyone knew what they were doing before they moved on.

Not only did he impact the students he taught, but he was also highly regarded by the school faculty.

"Bowermeister's student numbers, as I recall, were like 300. In every one of his classes he had, you know, 60, 70 kids in it of all different ability levels. And each one of them was just as important as the other. So, he was a role model in every sense of the word, for all of us, for the students, for our staff," Former Pine View Principal Steven Largo said.

Largo, among many others during the time of Bowermeister's tenure, describe him as smart, witty and patient. During his time at Pine View, he earned various awards such as County Middle School Teacher of the Year. In June of 2000, Bowermeister retired, and shortly after, the auditorium was named the Kenneth Bowermeister Auditorium.

After retirement, Bowermeister started a private studio teaching violin and viola. Within a matter of months, he was able to recruit 40 pupils. He continued this for a few years along with other personal hobbies like gardening.

Today, he is the Conductor and Artistic Director of Strings Con Brio, a community string orchestra whose goal is to provide a setting for musicians of varying ages and abilities to share their gifts and love of music with the community, thereby enhancing the quality of the lives of both performers and audience members.

March 30, Bowermeister held his homecoming concert in the auditorium. With the sound of the Strings Con Brio Orchestra filling the room, families, students, and Bowermeister's former students filled the seats and listened intently.

"It was, for me, it was very emotional. I was so gratified to see the number of alumni who had returned for the concert, and I think we had, we already had two or three alumni playing in the orchestra," Bowermeister reflected on the night of the concert.

Social studies teacher Jeff Gill retires

by Aashima Goswami
SciTech Editor

Students gather around as history teacher Jeff Gill pulls out a bunch of home-grown bananas from his bag. Whether it be starting a game of Silent Ball, or simply engaging in a conversation with students, Gill is known to be a down-to-earth, relatable, and educational teacher.

Gill, who was previously a stay-at-home dad for 10 years, started teaching as a way to match his children's school schedules.

"As my youngest child was ready for school, I needed something to do besides fish and golf," Gill said.

After teaching at Pine View for five years, Gill is remembered as patient, passionate, and independent, according to Robin Melton, head of the history department at Pine View.

"He does what he sees best for his students, and ultimately guides them the best way he sees fit," Melton said.

Jagdish recalls truly getting to know Gill after moving into Building 17.

"I was when we moved into the new building here, and he was across from me, that I found that he is very patient with his students, and I saw that they really respected him, and I also noticed that he had a wonderful rapport with his students," Jagdish said.

Not only did Gill build rapport with his students, he also had a reputation of enthralling classes that kept his student's attention.

"Mr. Gill came to us from Woodland Middle School, and he [was a] huge history buff... Coming in, he definitely knew his history and was very well known at Woodland for captivating and having some really great lessons, and I was excit-

ed for what he was going to be able to bring to the department," Melton said.

While Gill teaches history, he was Pine View's philosophy teacher for a year. He has passed on many valuable life lessons to his students, such as perseverance, hard work, and maintaining a commitment to excellence.

Pine View is very different from other high schools, and as such, it's students require a different teaching style to be successful. After many years of teaching at Pine View, Gill has discovered the key to successful learning strategies.

"Obviously, don't talk down on your students, but also, try to get your students to take ownership of their education. Be a facilitator more than just an instructor," he said.

While Pine View will miss Gill, no one can deny that his retirement is well-deserved.

"He will be able to enjoy that 'after-retirement' life that... Anybody who has been in education for years... when they reach that point of going into retirement, they have that opportunity to really relax,

enjoy getting up a little later, drinking their coffee, and reading the paper. He gets to have time to himself, which I think he really deserves," Melton said.

After a successful career Gill realized that he's reached that age, and had a lot to check off on his bucket list.

"I'm going to travel. I'm going to do a little writing and gardening, and visit my children," Gill said.

Admittedly, teaching is not an easy profession; it requires many skills in a variety of fields. But, out of the three jobs that Gill has had, he can confidently say that teaching is the most satisfying job of all.

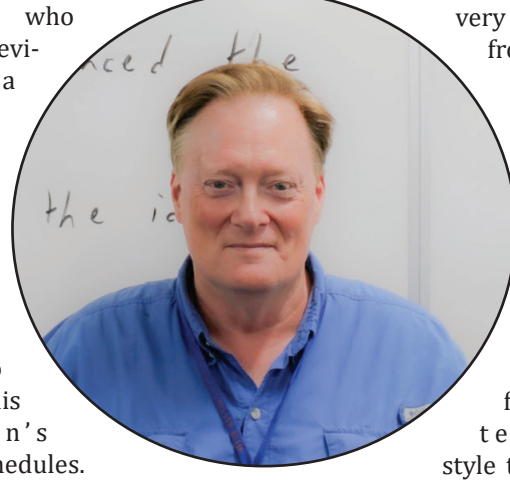


PHOTO BY AASHIMA GOSWAMI

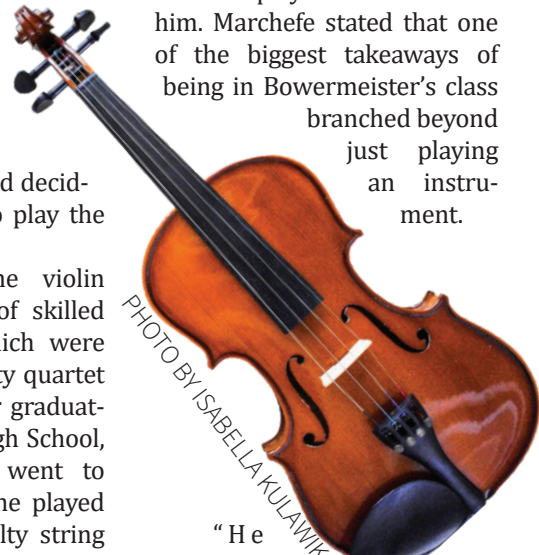


PHOTO BY ISABELLA KULAWIK

“He does what he sees best for his students, and ultimately guides them the best way he sees fit,”
Robin Melton,
head of the history department

'Don't Worry, Be Happy'

by Kai Sprunger & Rohan Dash
Match Editor-in-Chief & Assistant News Editor

As the year comes to an end, students begin to rest their minds and relax. The storm of AP exams and finals has finally slowed, and with grades being finalized, students start to look forward to summertime. Seniors are quite ready to finally finish school and head off to adulthood, ready to pursue their dreams. But, let's rewind a little bit, just a few months back.

At the beginning of the school year, while most are frustrated with the end of summer, seniors are in an even worse condition — around 78% of seniors report experiencing academic stress, according to a study done by Aurélie Simoës-Perlant. This stress comes directly from the process of applying to colleges, with seniors spending hours pouring over their college applications.

When talking to

twelfth-grader Arya Gupta about the college admissions process, she said, "I feel that definitely senior year was the hardest, mentally... Senior year was super stressful because everyone was at an uncertain point in their lives. Whenever you would be with other seniors, there would always be a sense of stress."

Under a strict deadline, seniors must research the colleges most well-suited for them while articulating their thoughts in dozens of essays. Beyond just the college admissions process, other factors, like grades for instance, continue to affect seniors' lives as well, only increasing stress.

"It's been a bit stressful, especially first semester trying to balance keeping my grades up and completing all my college applications," twelfth-grader Patrick Enright said, agreeing with Gupta.

However, beyond just seniors, freshmen, sophomores, and juniors take on a lot of stress, too. As juniors try to stack up on rigorous courses, they also apply to summer programs and fill up leadership roles. Sophomores start to decide on the clubs and activities they want to focus on, take on a tougher course load than freshman year, and prepare for the next two years while starting to take standardized exams. All the while, freshmen are thrust into the brand-new world of high school.

High school is unfortunately filled to the brim with stress; with this stress comes several negative side effects. Chronic stress, from an article written by Mayo Clinic,

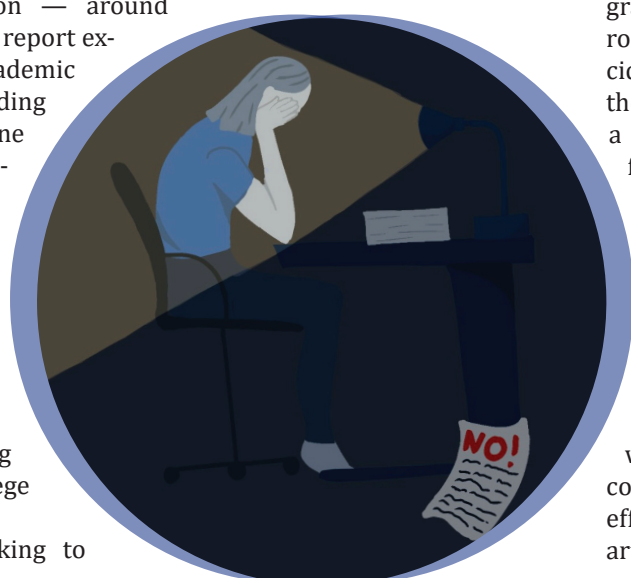
can lead to a variety of both physical and mental health issues, high-

healthy coping mechanisms in order to reduce the amount of stress they face. Staying healthy through well-balanced diets, exercising, and getting sleep are quite important as well, since physical health plays a role in mental health.

Cole Laudenslager, a senior who was accepted to Cornell University earlier this year, emphasized this: "Don't stress and go out of your way to do things. Do what you're truly passionate about and what feels natural to you, and that should reflect in your application."

Overall, while everyone describes high school as a difficult, competitive environment, especially at a gifted school like Pine View, it is important to realize that mental health matters. And yes, despite all the times we get bored hearing it's important to care for your mental health, take advice from the seniors above who've experienced the process firsthand and the advice from reputable sources. Although in every life we may have some trouble, according to McFerrin, it always important to find a way to stay happy.

GRAPHICS BY CAMILLE WRIGHT



Spilling the truth about oil

An Explanation About the Willow Project

by Jada Davidson
Entertainment Editor

The Willow Project, a massive \$8 billion oil-drilling endeavor in the National Petroleum Preserve of northern Alaska, was approved in 2020 by the Trump administration, and limited by the Biden administration. Instead of the original five drill pads, the Biden administration cut it down to three.

Proposed by and in the works under the Houston-based energy company ConocoPhillips (which is no stranger to drilling in and the landscape of Alaska), the project is set to produce as much as \$17 billion in new profit for federal, state, and local governments, 180,000 barrels of oil per day, 2,500 construction jobs, and 300 permanent jobs.

Despite the revenue and creation of jobs, the Willow Project has its downsides. The project will generate 278 million tons of greenhouse gases, equal to the

combined emissions of two million passenger cars in 30 years. It will also accelerate climate change, increase pollution, promote loss of diversity, and increase the potential for millions of barrels of oil to spill into the



ocean during transport. These concerns were recognized by the Biden administration, who felt that there was not much of a choice as

to whether they could not go through with the project and continue to rely on other countries for oil or whether they should let the project commence.

Marine Science and AP Environmental Science teacher Jason Miller breaks down the matter.

"If the Biden administration were to fight the big oil companies, it would've been a big court case, something like 'United States v. Oil Companies.' It all boils down to, 'Do we go all-out and fight this, or do we take the small victory since we won't limit it completely?'"

Running out of options, the Biden administration approved the enormous effort. Purportedly, it will greatly help the economy and decrease the United States' dependence on other countries for oil and imports. It may also lower gas prices, and ensure national security.

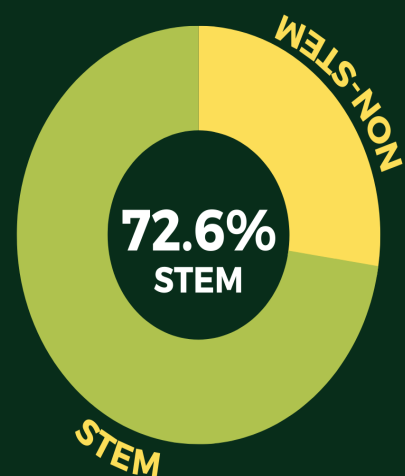
GRAPHICS BY JADA DAVIDSON

STEM MAJORS IN THE CLASS OF 2023

*Results from a student-organized college decisions survey (n = 84)

HOW MANY STEM MAJORS?

STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. Students who are double-majoring are counted as STEM majors if at least one of their intended fields of study falls under STEM.



WHAT ARE THE TOP 3 MOST POPULAR STEM MAJORS IN THE CLASS OF 2023?

- Biology/Biological Sciences
- Biomedical Sciences (Pre-Med)
- Computer Science/Engineering



GRAPHIC BY FELICITY CHANG

Getting to know Mr. and Miss Pine View

by **Isabella Kulawik**
News Editor

Each year, Pine View hosts the annual Mr. and Miss Pine View shows, where seniors showcase their talents and compete against each other with often humorous acts. The Torch (T) met with this year's winners, Lily Maglio (LM) and Cole Nebel (CN), to ask them about their experiences with the show.

T: Can you tell me what the inspirations were for your acts?

and I rehearsed my act once and then we did it for people the day before, and it was all over the place. Nathan had to improvise piano, Bella and I didn't know the words — I didn't know the words. And then literally in the dressing room before, [Bella and I] were doing the performance — we did it one time through and for some reason we got the words down, so yeah, I would be better prepared like what Lily said, so somehow it came together.

Niebuhr's house and we went there and we filmed the making of Mr. Pine View or whatever, and we did a dance in the backyard which was by the water and then we watched YouTube videos. We watched Lizzo and we were screaming like "Lizzo." It's just stuff like that.

T: What was your reaction to winning?

LM: It's hard to distinguish between the rush of the show

CN: For me, I don't know, it's funny, I enjoy it. Because the fact is like, it's weird to me. I was literally walking — I came in late to school one day, and Mrs. Marcotte and Mrs. Abela were giving a Pine View tour to a whole bunch of up and coming students... and I was walking by and I said, "Hey, good morning," and they were like, "Over here we have Mr. Pine View." And I was like, "Oh, stop!" It's just like, the most random things... It's a funny thing to have the name attached to it because I never saw it as a thing.

LM: It's kind of the same for me. It's such a random thing... I had Schweig for Gov. first semester this year. I don't think he ever learned my name — like from the beginning of the year I was never one of the people he called on, so he didn't know my name. And then after the show, he would say, "Okay, MPV, what do you like?" And he just kept

Third Grade Rocks. Nobody remembered which side of the stage we were on — so we're all standing on the wrong side of the stage... and we were all trying to put on the random costumes we had. And there was such a panic, a group panic... and also we thought that the act was going to start immediately and it started like five minutes later. But being really panicked together with that group of people is retrospectively really funny but also in the moment it was, other than stressful, really fun because again, you felt that bond with everyone. And then again, right before Arya's act, because we were all trying to learn the lyrics. We were all like desperately reading the lyrics that she had sent. We were like zoomed in on our phones and Arya was there panicking.

CN: For me... I mean, I would say not just "Man or Muppet"; it was the fact that "Man or Muppet" was stuck in every single person's head for prob-



LM: My inspiration was a joke with you [Isabella Kulawik, one of the Miss PV directors] and Grace [Chung, the other Miss PV director] from last year, and we were just saying random acts that we thought would be funny, but like funny bad. And that one seemed potentially good, but still funny. So then I just went with it.

CN: My inspiration was... I always do performances with [my sisters] Bella and Ava, and I was like, okay, in elementary school... We were like eight or nine years old, we did "Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better," and I was like, let's just do it again, senior twin-style — and that was basically why I chose to do that.

T: Was there anything you would like to have changed about your act?

LM: I probably should have rehearsed [my dance] more... I was going to choreograph something and then that didn't work out.

CN: Yeah, going into it, Bella

T: Do you have any memorable experiences from the rehearsal process?

LM: I think the classic answer for Miss Pine View this year is our worm sessions, which I had a bruise for like a month after that. And it was painful but worth it. I also had to go to dance and explain the fact that my arms were really sore and I wouldn't be able to dance to my full potential because of doing the worm for hours. And my dance teacher, she found it really funny, as I think we all did, and I'm now better at the worm — so there you go.

CN: As Lily would know, our dance rehearsals were something else. We always would do this stupid thing called log cabin, which was... all [of us] just right on top of each other for no apparent reason, and another one of my favorite memories was when we did a bonding night. It was at Chloe

and the camaraderie you felt with the cast. And like actually winning, I mean, obviously it was very fun to win and everything, but I feel like any one of us on that stage had such a good chance of it.

CN: It was funny... I was talking to my escort about it, Emma Coles... and she was like, "So you think you're gonna win?" and I went "No," I was like, "No, I'm not but any of these guys can win." I'm just like, we're all very talented, but I didn't expect it ... I thought that anyone deserved it like Lily said.

T: How does it feel to be Mr. and Miss Pine View?

calling me MPV, and I had no idea. Nobody knew what that meant. It wasn't like a direct switch after the show. It was like at some point he started calling me that. And eventually we figured out it was Miss Pine View, but no, it's just random. And then also the office, if they are trying to flag me down specifically, again, they don't know my name, but they can just use the Miss Pine View title.

T: Do you have any memorable moments from the event?

LM: I remember two things. One, right before Simona's act, which was Conjunction Junction or like the general

ably two or three weeks after the show, because it was so funny. I was literally walking and like I saw Mrs. White, and she was like, "Cole, I'm so mad at you and Simon because I have been singing 'Man or Muppet' in my house for no reason." And it's not even that, my parents do it too and then in ... the Mr. Pine View group chat, they'll always randomly send something about "Man or Muppet." It's just like the fact that it's become such a memorable thing, Simon and I sang it."

UPPER LEFT: PHOTO BY ALYSON MIZANIN
LOWER RIGHT: PHOTO BY FELICITY CHANG

Pythons pursue the arts

Cole Laudenslager

by Liam Dingman
Visual Design Manager

With 13 years of experience playing instruments, the Tri-M Music Honor Society presidency, and an award for the First Flautist in the Florida All-State Symphonic Band under his belt, music has played a vital role in twelfth-grader Cole Laudenslager's life. He is committed at Cornell University with a minor in music.

Laudenslager is most known for his ability on the flute, which he's played for five and a half years, but also played the piano for 13 years before quitting to fully focus on the flute. Over the course of his career playing the flute, Laudenslager received 11 Superior Medals for his skills among a lengthy list of accomplishments.

Laudenslager played flute for the first time while in seventh grade when his friend was allowing people to try playing her flute. After making a sound quickly, the friend, twelfth-grader Gabrielle Cannon, recommended talking to band director Vic-

tor Mongillo, and from there Laudenslager focused on developing his skills.

"I came in during my lunch period to learn it every day. Eventually I got good



PHOTO PROVIDED BY COLE LAUDENSLAGER

enough to where I could join the band," he said.

Laudenslager has faced plenty of adversity, making his flute accomplishments especially impressive.

"When I was young, I was diagnosed with severe speech apraxia, so the doctors didn't think I'd be able to talk, let alone play the flute."

Laudenslager believes the speech therapy as a re-

sult of the condition helped strengthen muscles necessary for flute. Moreover, his dedication played a major part in refining his flute skills.

"Ever since he started, he was always very motivated, and it was really great to see him grow... he would practice for hours every night and was able to make All-State, which is an incredible achievement," Cannon said.

In terms of inspirations, Laudenslager looks up to flautists Jasmine Choi and Emmanuel Pahud, who both have flute styles similar to his. This goes hand-in-hand with his flute, which is plated in gold with silver underneath.

"Gold produces a darker tone on the flute, and both of those players tend to have a darker tone as well," Laudenslager said.

From scholarships to the social impact, Laudenslager has been uplifted by the flute.

"It opened a lot of connections and friendships... I love playing the flute and I wouldn't change a thing," Laudenslager said.

Jacqueline Wasserman

by Ava Lenerz
Match Layout Artist

As the sweet smell of boba swirled through the air and customers came and went with smiles on their faces, twelfth-grader Jacqueline Wasserman diligently worked toward creating a wonderful work of color and design. Stroke after stroke, she continued until a beautiful mural of a tiger formed.

Wasserman is a talented senior who will be attending the rigorous Bachelor Fine Arts (BFA) program at Florida State University (FSU) this fall. This program is very exclusive with few people getting accepted each year.

"There was an absolutely massive essay that I had to write... it was told to be an artist statement...but this was my entire life according to my art, so that took a very long time, it was about seven pages..." Wasserman said.

There was also a portfolio she had to submit that encompassed her different types of work. Both of these were necessary aspects to apply for the BFA program.

According to Art teacher Louis Miller, Wasserman gets a lot of inspiration for her art from music.

"She likes to at the moment work off of music, song lyrics that she likes or identifies with or finds that are going to

be something that can be illustrated, you know. Not all lyrics can be done, she has a knack for picking out songs that can be translated to visual..."

In the future Wasserman wants "to make promotional art and album covers for rock bands because I have that whole music connection... But if that doesn't work out, I'm going to be a high school art teacher because I already love teaching art and I love the creativity of the youths because they always come up with the most fun stuff."



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JACQUELINE WASSERMAN

Currently, Wasserman teaches at Sarasota Art Center.

"I teach ages 6 to 14 like summer camps, little day camps, and it is usually like three to seven hours a day. It is awesome, I love it so much. I get to make my own projects, I get to do my own lesson plans, so it is really helping me in my journey to become a teacher," she said.

During her four years of

high school, Wasserman's art has been on shirts and posters.

"I have already made a couple covers for this band that I partnered up with in St. Louis called The Intrusion. I have made one T-shirt design that hasn't been released yet, a gig poster, and two covers for singles," Wasserman said. Her art has also been featured in multiple galleries.

"I actually had some friends who branched out from the Sarasota Art Center, started their own gallery, which now has two galleries called Creative Liberties," she said. "I was in their first exhibition that they ever had, I just got a wall of all my work... then I'm also showing my work at my friend's boba shop, and I've got six pieces up there right now and the seventh piece that I had actually sold, and it is the first piece of work I ever sold."

Wasserman said that many people have supported Wasserman throughout her journey as an artist. From Miller who has taught her so much, to her parents, who have taken her to art museums all around the world, and everyone in between.

"Art has been with me for every step of my entire, entire life..." Wasserman said, "...everywhere I go I get more inspiration and every single corner of humanity has something to make art about."

Aeryn Whittaker

by Allie Chung
Sports Editor

Twelfth-grader Aeryn Whittaker is not the kind of gifted kid you'd expect to find at a school like Pine View. Her true calling was not math or science, but art. During her time in middle school, she discovered that she didn't enjoy STEM subjects like most of her friends.

"[My love for art] kind of stemmed from the fact that I didn't really enjoy a lot of math and science classes and I just found myself drawing," said Whittaker.

She soon realized that this was her coping mechanism for the anxiety that school gave her.

According to Lisa Whittaker, Whittaker's mom, Whittaker went online and pursued virtual school after March of 2020.

"She didn't have the same COVID experience that every other kid had. She was in school doing her own thing from her bedroom. Like there was none of that missing class, missing coursework, getting behind; she actually went a year ahead," said Lisa Whittaker.

Because Aeryn Whittaker took advantage of her Covid year, she was able to dual enroll at the State College of Florida, which proved to be vital in her art career.

"A majority of [my art classes] were at SCF. They offer a lot more painting classes and drawing classes than Pine View... we just have very limited amount [sic] of art teachers [at Pine View], and they can't do everything," Whittaker said.

the art courses at SCF had a significant influence on her, it was the precollege program at the Ringling Museum that made her consider art, specifically video game digital art, as a career.

"For me, it was the first time that I actually had an experience at an art school. This was like a whole month of just pure art, and I loved it. I just loved

having the option to create something new every day and being surrounded by a bunch of other artists because I've never had that," said Whittaker.

With her dad and grandfather both being adept with charcoal and pencil, the Whittaker family has artistry running through their veins. However, video game art design is an unfamiliar field the

for family.

"When Aeryn first went into art [after first wanting to become a doctor], I kind of questioned her and said, 'is this going to feed you when you get older?' ... [Then] we just realized, if she loves it, she'll find a way," Lisa Whittaker said.

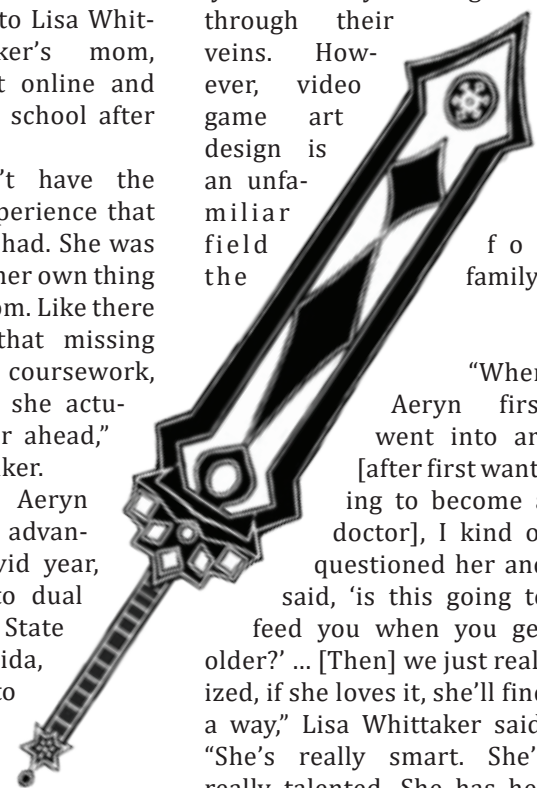
"She's really smart. She's really talented. She has her ideas. And there's so many opportunities for the kind of art that she wants to do."

Aeryn Whittaker will have a support system no matter where she ends up in the future, and she extends some of that assistance to students who will one day be in her position.

"...I would just tell the kids at Pine View that if you're stressed and feeling anxious, take a step back from your academics. I've come here since second grade, and I know it's hard because you grow up at Pine View really focused on your academics. Sometimes it's important to take a step back and realize there's more to life than school."



PHOTO PROVIDED BY AERYN WHITTAKER



While

GRAPHICS BY AERYN WHITTAKER

Seniors reflect on musical journeys

by **Tiffany Yu**
Copy Editor

Music is integral to both Pine View as an institution and its students. With award-winning and nationally recognized choirs, bands, and orchestras, Pine View has seen hundreds of students through their programs who have left with everlasting bonds with not only each other, but with music.

While students may have limited time in Pine View's music programs, the impact on them as individuals and their futures are permanent. Several seniors were asked to share how their experiences in music will stay with them after they graduate and how they plan to continue their musical journeys.

"I have loved participating in orchestra for the past seven years. I've seen myself develop as a musician, both technically and mentally. And of course, I love Mr. Mink, his jokes, and his willingness to share pepper plant seedlings with the class," twelfth-grader Nathan Widjaja said, "I plan to continue to study music, even if it's not in a formal academic setting. I want to play in an orchestra wherever I go, and find groups of new friends."

Cole Nebel, a fellow twelfth-grader and choir student, shared a similar sentiment.

"When I was put into Vocal Ensemble in eighth grade, I was put into a class where I was the youngest person in the choir. I would never change it because I made some really great friends that I would have never met without being in that choir. I can maybe see myself joining a choir [in the future],

but if I don't, I will definitely miss it."

Twelfth-grader Gabrielle Cannon, a student in Pine View's Wind Ensemble, shared her plans in continuing her participation in music in college.

"Playing in the Pine View band really helped me realize my love of music that I want to continue in college. I want to keep playing flute and piccolo in a college concert band, as well as take music classes next year," Cannon said.

Twelfth-grader Joshua Worthington, another member of Pine View's Band program, shared how his participation has become a key part of his life and identity.

"I've spent five years in the Wind Ensemble and two years in the Jazz Band, and it has truly changed my life. In band, we all try our hardest each day to create something together that will hopefully entertain our friends and family, but ultimately make ourselves proud," Worthington said, "I know some people view the bands as just their elective, but I also know for a fact that

most of us view it as a part of ourselves entirely. So every day we go home, and we practice and the next day we come back and we share what we've been working on with each other. To me, that makes every day in band extremely new and exciting."

Twelfth-grader Olivia Liu, another student in Vocal Ensemble, shared her experiences in performing.

"In Pine View's choral program, I can say that I've found best friends. The people have easily left the most impact on me, as it involves a lot of trust to be vulnerable and sing amongst each other. Performing on stage is the most incredible feeling, and the shared goal of moving the audience is one of a kind," Liu said.

Pine View's music programs have been formative to so many students in Pine View's history. Pine View's graduating Class of 2023 has felt an impact from these programs, one that will continue to change the lives of many for generations to come, whether it be in their futures in music or in their everyday.



Gabrielle Cannon performs with the Pine View Wind Ensemble. For this year's winter band concert, Cannon played the flute. PHOTO PROVIDED BY GABRIELE CANNON

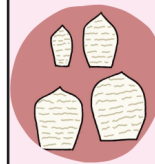


Gabrielle Cannon performs with other flautists at the Pine View Band's Encore fundraiser earlier this March. PHOTO PROVIDED BY GABRIELE CANNON

GRAPHIC BY CAMILLE WRIGHT

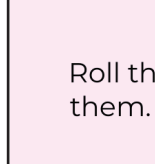
HOW TO MAKE A PAPER ROSE

AND REUSE OLD ASSIGNMENTS



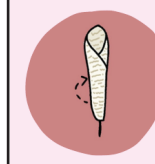
CUT THE PETALS

Cut out some petals of different sizes. You can use old homework assignments or classwork or any other old paper you have.



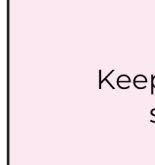
SHAPE THE PETALS

Roll the edges of the paper to shape them. This will make the pieces look more like petals.



BEGIN GLUING

Tightly roll and glue the smallest petal to a piece of wire or a different base.



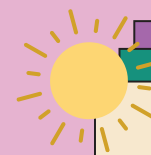
BUILD UP THE BLOSSOM

Keep adding more petals, from the smallest to largest. Continue to shape the petals as you go.



ALL DONE!

Now you have a completed rose that is great for decoration or for bribing your math teacher to raise your grade.



SENIOR SUMMER BUCKET LIST



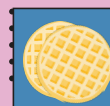
GRADUATION PARTY!

HANGING OUT WITH YOUR FRIENDS!



PACK UP YOUR BEDROOM!

ENJOY THE SUNSET AT THE BEACH ONE LAST TIME!



LATE NIGHT WAFFLE HOUSE TRIP!

GRAPHIC BY SANJA PATEL

Katharine Hoerle takes gap year for horseback riding

by Terry Shen
Asst. Match Editor-in-Chief

Spending six days a week on her horses, Cruz and Chuck, twelfth-grader Katharine Hoerle embodies the definition of dedication.

Hoerle's intention to take a gap year after graduating from Pine View exemplifies her devotion to her sport.

"I'm trying to get recruited to ride Division 1 in college," Hoerle said.

Hoerle competes in hunter jumpers, equitation, and show jumping. She plans to concentrate on equitation, as it's the main focus of collegiate horseback riding.

Some of Hoerle's achieve-

ments include placing sixth overall in Central Florida in her age group (15-17) in 2022 and being ranked second in her zone, which includes Florida, Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Mississippi, in 2023.

Hoerle's commitment has left an impact on her friends over the years, one being her friend and classmate, twelfth-grader Arya Gupta.

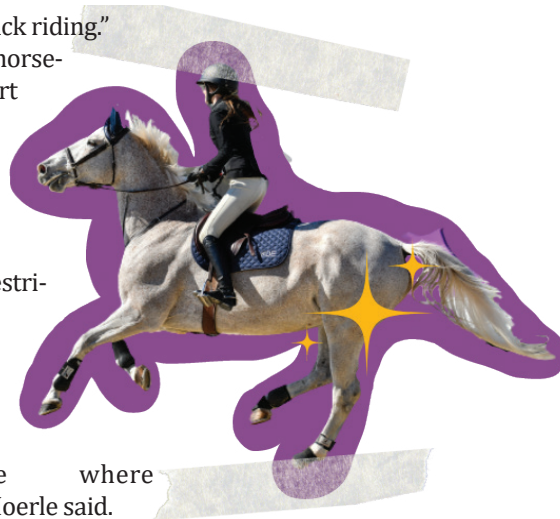
"When we were younger, she actually convinced me and a couple other friends in my friend group to do a horseback riding camp with her in the summer," Gupta said. "She's also really hardworking. I think it's really inspiring how much she's dedicated to

horses and horseback riding."

Describing horseback riding as a sport that "takes over your life," Hoerle's gap year will be filled with continuing her journey in the equestrian world.

"I would like to be involved in the equestrian industry after college and just see where that can take me," Hoerle said.

On her horse Cruz, Katharine Hoerle focuses on perfecting her skills under the category of equitation, where the rider is judged. Hoerle plans to take a gap year to work on her technique. PHOTO PROVIDED BY KATHARINE HOERLE



Noelle Winegar rows for Georgetown

by Lily Quartermaine
Asst. Editor-in-Chief

Smart, humorous, and most of all, athletic: twelfth-grader Noelle Winegar's absence from Pine View will be notable.

Winegar has been rowing for Sarasota Crew since freshman year. She used to play a variety of sports when she was younger but decided to try rowing.

"Once I started it, I just loved it," Winegar said. "A lot of people say



Twelfth-grader Noelle Winegar momentarily celebrates her boat's effort after a lull in a race. PHOTO PROVIDED BY NOELLE WINEGAR

that once you start rowing, you can't stop. It's really rewarding and more than any other sport I've played."

Winegar has remained humble about her commitment to Georgetown University.

"It's great to be proud of your accomplishments and you should [talk] about it, but personally, I feel kind of uncomfortable just being outward with it... I know people have had a hard time this year, I don't want to flaunt it," Winegar said.

Winegar first visited the Georgetown campus in the fall.

"At my visit, they offered me a spot [on the team] and they let me think about it, but I knew that I wanted to go there," she said.

The college culture at Crew may be competitive, but it's the kind that Pine View students are used to.

"Most of us just want what's best for each other, no matter where it is we're going," Winegar said. "And we're all looking for different things, like big city, small town, big school, small school. Some are shooting for better academics. Some people care about how fast the team is."

Despite her love for rowing, Winegar doesn't intend to continue the sport after college.

"I'm going focus on my academics. After college, I definitely want to stay in contact with the sport, but I'm not planning on rowing after college," she said.

Aidan Vigus heads to Roanoke for track

Visit PVTorch.com



Scan the QR code to read about twelfth-grader Aidan Vigus' commitment to Roanoke College to pursue track.



Colton Millar commits to Columbia

by Lora Rini
Asst. Editor-in-Chief

When twelfth-grader Colton Millar moved from New York to Sarasota at the start of freshman year, he had never rowed competitively. Four years later, rowing has become an integral component of Millar's life — he committed to Columbia University in the fall with four more years on the horizon.

Millar currently rows as a part of Sarasota Crew's varsity eight boat. Last summer, the varsity eight boat got third place at nationals. After this victory, Millar was invited to participate in the selection camp process for the World Championships.

Although he was not selected

to attend last year, Millar hopes to advance further this summer and compete in the World Championships in Paris. Being selected to attend the selec-

tion camp is a feat within itself, and Millar feels confident that he will be able to go again this summer.

Twelfth-grader

Christian Yu, who has coxained Millar's boat throughout the past two years, attests to Millar's potential as a student and as an athlete.

"Colton is one of the most hardworking people I've ever met. He's a very passionate person, and he puts a lot of hard work into rowing and school... I'm glad to be a part of his team," Yu said.

Millar's commitment to Columbia was almost a surprise. He took official visits to both Cornell University and Boston University before meeting a Columbia coach at a race and committing to Columbia on the spot. Millar looks forward to all that the next four years will hold.



Twelfth-grader Colton Millar poses with his teammates from Sarasota Crew. Millar committed to Columbia University after making an official visit in October. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY COLTON MILLAR

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2023

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SPORTS

Julia Halbreich to row for Northeastern

by Janice Chi
Humor Editor

Twelfth-grader Julia Halbreich has always been an athlete, but she found her true passion when she discovered rowing. Captain of the Sarasota Crew varsity team and four-time state champion, Halbreich proudly announced her com-

mitment to Northeastern University to further pursue her rowing career earlier this year.

Competing in the sport for nearly six years, Halbreich re-

lects on how she first got involved.

“My older brother joined rowing a year before me, and I did gymnastics, but I was getting injured, so my parents had me stop,” Halbreich said.



Twelfth-grader Julia Halbreich rows during her sophomore year, head of the Oklahoma regatta. PHOTO PROVIDED BY JULIA HALBREICH

“Then, I joined rowing.”

As Halbreich realized her potential, her schedule became more vigorous — training nearly 24 hours a week.

Her talent for the sport became quickly apparent, and her existence as an essential member of the varsity team was demonstrated by her selection as team captain.

Halbreich acknowledged that her accomplishment was not solely due to her hard work and dedication, as her teammates were a big part of her upswing.

“Rowing is such a team sport, and you can’t succeed without working with your teammates,” Halbreich said, “My favorite part is setting ambitious goals with my closest friends, then working every day towards those goals together as a team.”

Over the span of her rowing career, Halbreich and her team have competed in sever-

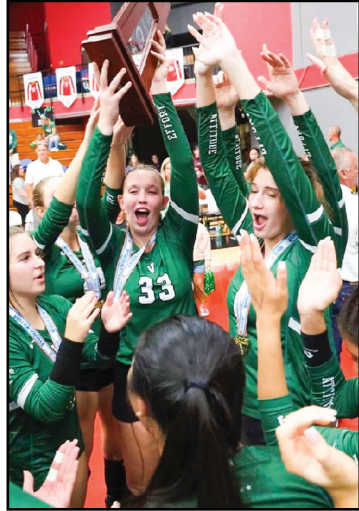
al notable regattas, placing third at the U.S. Rowing Youth Nationals, winning four state championships, and competing in the Head of the Charles at Harvard.

Halbreich continues to practice daily, pushing herself to reach new heights. Over the years, improvement has been seen by not only herself, but by the people around her also.

“She was able to move through the ranks and become a top player on the team, and we’re proud of her for that,” said Ethan Halbreich, Julia’s older brother. “She’s worked so insanely hard to get to this point over the past year and before then.”

As she finishes her final year of high school, Halbreich is filled with anticipation for a new segment in her career: meeting her new teammates, exploring different areas, and rowing in a fresh environment.

Ashley Reynolds serves to a spot at Florida State



Visit PVTorch.com



Scan the QR code to read about twelfth-grader Ashley Reynolds’ commitment to play volleyball at Florida State University (FSU).

Sofia Simone heads to Stanford for rowing

by Alyson Mizanin
Editor-in-Chief

The spring of her sophomore year, twelfth-grader Sofia Simone sought out a future 230 miles away from her home in Miami. Since age sixteen, she’s been living on her own in Sarasota, so she can row with Sarasota Crew.

Now, Simone will be embarking on another journey toward her future at Stanford University, where she’ll continue rowing.

Simone’s rowing career began in seventh grade. Her friends convinced her to join the sport; within a year, she moved up to the novice freshman boat. It was at a rowing camp the summer after eighth grade where Simone met twelfth-grader Julia Halbreich.

“There was a long-running joke where I told her she should move and join Sarasota Crew,” Halbreich said. “I was joking — I was thinking there was no way she would actually do it. But she

did.”

Simone finished her sophomore year online and came to Pine View as a junior. All the while, her transition to Sarasota Crew came effortlessly. She was placed in the top boat on her first day and was selected to try out for the United States’ national junior rowing team. After four weeks of demonstrating her talents, Simone made the team.

College offers came rolling in the day Simone was eligible to start speaking with coaches. Princeton and Stanford — her top two choices — both reached out to her, and after some deliberation, Simone committed to Stanford in February 2021.

“It was a moment in my life when I was in the driver’s seat, and I’m so grateful,” she said.

Simone competed in the World Rowing Junior Championships that summer, where she and her teammates won gold.

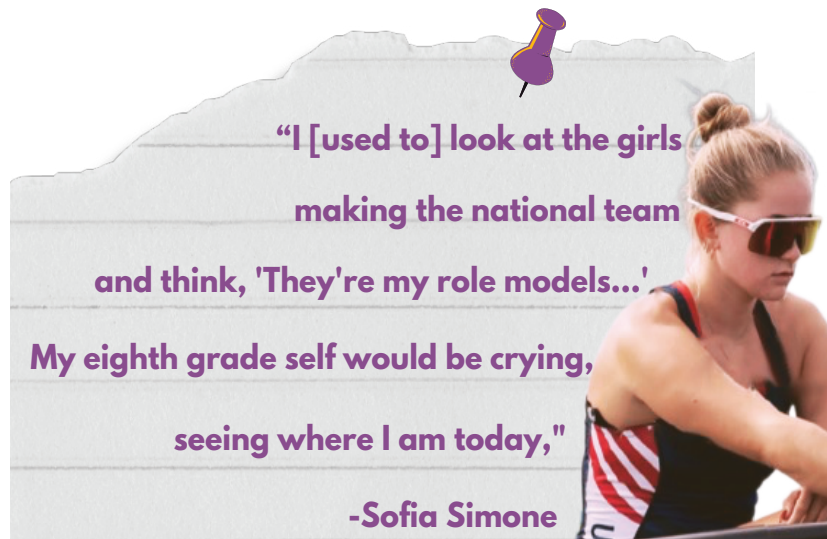
Despite a rib injury, Simone returned to the world stage for the 2022 World Rowing Under 19 Championships. Her team won gold and set a world record in the process.

In the coming months, Simone “is coming back to worlds, and I’m hoping for a three-peat,” she said.

Halbreich knows that it

won’t be long until Simone finds herself right at home at Stanford.

“Sofia’s not as successful as she is by luck of the draw; she works so hard... It’s inspiring for someone I know to be so successful,” Halbreich said. “She sets these very big goals for herself and never fails to achieve them. Anything she wants to achieve, I know she’ll do.”



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Thanking the true heroes of Pine View

by **Sanya Patel**
Managing Editor

Most of the time when you hear about heroes, you think of characters, like Spiderman or Batman. You may even think of our local heroes, like firefighters and first responders. But there are some smaller heroes in our everyday lives that never fail to make our days better. Here's to remembering the little things that helped make this campus what it always will be: a home.

To the class clowns

Thank you for helping to get the teacher off task. You know the type: goofing off in class, never getting their work done.



Many people wouldn't admit they like you, but you do make class a

lot less boring. Sometimes a question to the teacher about what high school was like "back in their day" is the perfect thing to get class laughing, and we appreciate you for it.



To Miss Jessica

Thank you for leaving the gate open even after the bell has rung. Those few minutes you've waited there have saved me the long walk to the office more times than I can count. Sure, my teacher still marked me absent for entering class thirty seconds after the bell rang, but at that moment, you were my personal hero.

To the lunch ladies



Thank you for starting to serve lunch at ten in the morning. No sane person would choose to eat lunch at that time of day, but Pine View kids run in between their classes to get some.

To the bright blue poles

Thank you for being right in my way just in time to smack me in the head. A wise student once told me that you aren't officially a Pine View student until you run into one of the many bright blue poles here on campus, and they were right. I have yet to meet a single person that has not and with the addition of the white poles as part of Building 17, this tradition will be long-standing for ages to come.

To the freshmen

Thank you for being as annoying as possible to remind me of myself at

that age. As cliché as it sounds, high school is a whole new territory, and you aren't expected to know how to navigate it your first year. But that's the beauty of it, getting a whole four years to try and figure out who you are and where you fit in this world. Making fun of you at every chance we get is really fun; it's the circle of life. You, too, will one day know the joy of making fun of a 14-year-old just because we can. Just remember that it's all out of love...most of the time.



Signed,
Sanya

GRAPHICS BY JANICE CHI

The College Admission Life-Style

by **Lindsay Luberecki**
Opinion Editor

Ah...I sit up in bed after having awoken to the sound of my alarm, which is, of course, guttural screaming that won't shut off until I hit the button across the room, to ensure that I get up promptly at 4:00 am.

I open the curtains, even though the sun isn't up yet, and I get ready to begin another day of my junior year. The topic of this year? College admissions.

The assignment? Build my resume. It's such a crazy world these days; there's so much that I have to do to get in. But I know I will — no one is doing it like I am.

Here's a day in my life in case you, trivial student, decide that you want to try to follow in my footsteps. Good luck.

4:00 AM: Morning workout. I do 500 pushups, 2000 sit-ups, and 1000 pull-ups on my bar in the doorway. Today was a lighter workout — there's too much to do, so I could only spend 15 minutes instead of my usual 30. I shove down a quick breakfast and move on with my day.

4:30 AM: Head to the lab. I've been working on the side to make some sort of groundbreaking scientific discovery, so every morning I clock in two hours splicing DNA and centrifuge-ing things and whatever else I feel like doing.

6:30 AM: Type up my report on the cure. Today was a special day, since I finally did it: I cured cancer! Colleges are bound to love this one.

8:00 AM: Economics. I put in some light work studying macro and micro and a new branch of economics that I created all on my own. Today's problem solving is determining a solution to inflation, and I definitely found the answer. Hint: print more money.

10:00 AM: Start a nonprofit. This is the 27th one I've created, all on my own. Except, of course, for the help of my uncle, who's on the board of a Fortune 500 company. Yesterday, someone

on the study of mid-1600s finance. I'm cheating my way through that one, but it'll look good on an application!

4:00 PM: Study some more. This time, it's for the SAT. I've already gotten a perfect 1600, but I want to take it again anyway. Is there a way to declare that you've gotten a perfect score more than once?

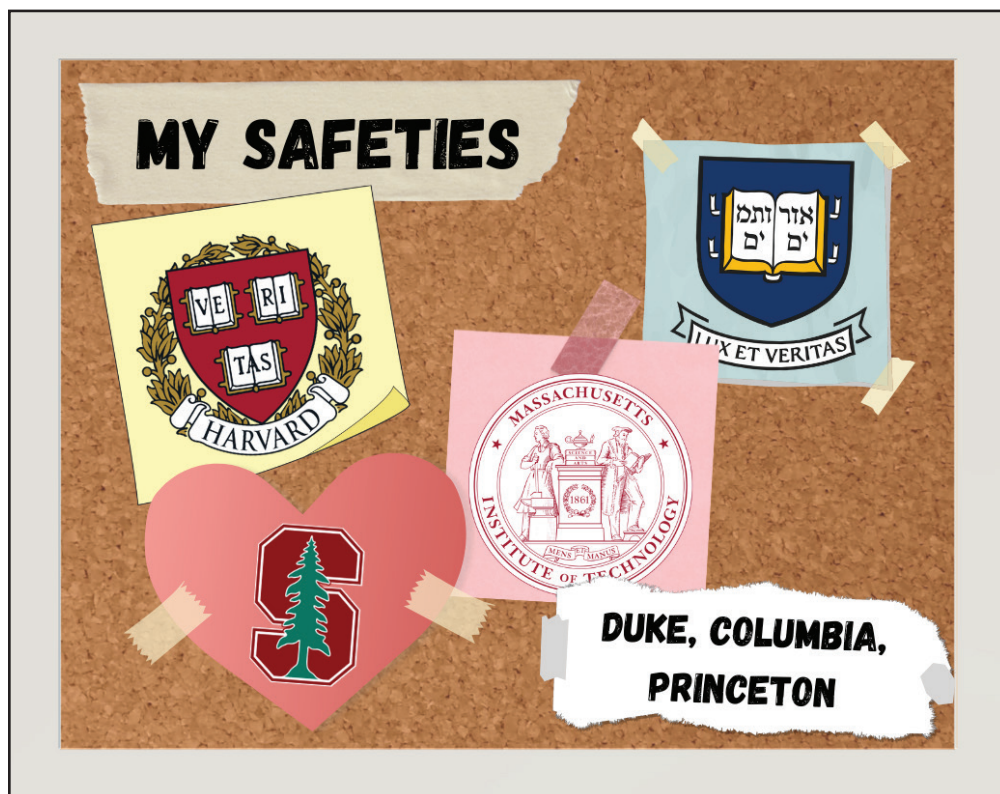
5:30 PM: Solve world hunger. I crunched the numbers, channeled my inner food scientist and human geographer and economist, and finally figured it out. I'll be emailing the United Nations promptly.

6:30 PM: Dinner. It's finally time to relax, so I boil some unseasoned chicken and sit down to binge the latest season of Breaking Bad. Of course, it's not actually the latest season, but who has time to stay up to date with television when they could be getting into college? Not me.

8:30 PM: Bedtime. I head to bed nice and early, because tomorrow, I'm going to try to get up at 3. That workout today was not up to my usual standards.

Update: It's officially decision day! Time to find out how much this hard work paid off. Ivy count will be going up on social media shortly. Expect 8 out of 8.

Second update: Officially committed to FSU. Go 'noles, I guess. Next on my list is to sue Harvard, because why wouldn't they let me in?



called me a nepotism baby, and I was so offended! I mean, so what if that's what my uncle does? And so what if six of my family members went to Harvard? I'm self made, baby.

12:00 PM: Lunch. I've been watching my macros, since a healthier body makes a healthier mind. I make a protein-packed smoothie bowl and finish it off with snorting pre-workout. It works wonders, man.

2:00 PM: Study. I do some quick review for my online courses. This year, I'm enrolled in quantum physics, calc 14, and this really niche history course

GRAPHIC BY JANICE CHI

PINE VIEW SCENARIOS

senior edition

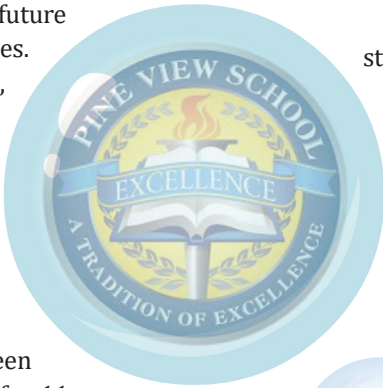
- "The dodgeball dance circle. If we were at another school, we would be bullied." - Krystal Tran
- "Cem drinking a whole gallon of milk in macro." - Nick Liberoni
- "Being voted as Barack Obama in third grade because I was the only one 'who looked like him.'" - Jacob Koshy
- "PV kids chanting math formulas at a middle school track meet to intimidate other teams." - Rose Calleja
- "I lost the game." - Alex Fernandez
- "We are biotechnology." - Kevin Lu
- "You're all great people." - Mr. Carney
- "Potsticker and orange chicken days are undefeated." - Alvaro Santoyo

GRAPHIC BY TERRY SHEN

Escaping the Pine View bubble

by Lily Quartermaine
Asst. Editor-in-Chief

The Pine View bubble is ruthless. Ever since second grade, I have been thinking about one of two things 1) my future or 2) my grades. Sometimes, there would be a third option, which was 3) is there an advisory period today? I had been at Pine View for 11 years, so you can imagine why I was so excited to move on and start a new chapter of my life, set in the one and only Tallynasty.



looming presence behind me. When I turned around, it was none other than Mr. Pine View himself, Cole Nebel, only now with a British accent. They were swarming!

That was scary enough for me to start running. I foolishly looked behind for a second, causing me to crash into Alyson Mizanin, Gainesville's second biggest regret — the first being Kevin Lovo. Listen, I know they decided to be picky eaters this year, but come on.

"Alyson Mizanin?! Editor-in-Chief of The Torch, Historian of the Class of 2023, Secretary of Key Club, active member of Speech and Debate and Drama Club, and voted Most Involved?!?! What on

EARTH are you doing in Tallahassee?"

Alyson explained to me that she had won the Presidential Scholarship, which leads me to believe she MUST be in kahoots with Lora's mother.

Anyways, I decided to retire to my dorm for the night. Walking home, I passed by Salley Hall, when I heard a familiar voice call my name. It was Kendal Delagrang. I felt insane — deranged, almost. It was like I couldn't escape. I saw David Bayer characteristically breaking his ankle on the Landis Green, Daria Tiubin and Ethan Messier staging an overnight protest outside of the Capitol building, and Jackson Gregory riding around in his 4Runner (which was now spray-painted maroon and gold) with Scott Conrad strapped to the roof.

I hurried into my dorm, only to bump into Tiffany Yu on the first floor. Confusedly, I confronted her.

"I thought you were going to UF?"

"I still haven't decided!" she said, "I'll figure it out soon."

I pushed her aside and ran to my dorm, the nicest one in all of Azalea Hall (manifesting) and immediately locked myself inside. At least I was sure my roommate would be someone new.

Lo and behold, there was Campbell William Whapshare sitting in a desk chair.

My unbiased opinion about Tallahassee is as follows: lit, crazy, movie. First of all, it's not a swamp, and it's not in the middle of nowhere, which is nice. It's wild here! The only problem is that my one wish, to escape Pine View, has not been granted, considering the majority of our class decided to anchor themselves at the third best party school in the nation.

Let's start from the beginning.

My first night out in Tallahassee, I was ambling to Potbelly's when I saw a familiar group of people. Before me was Shane Schwarzenbach, riding the shoulders of Simon Valek through the streets, which, trust me, is a far cry from the shoulders of giants. I thought I must've been hallucinating; I never thought I would see those guys again!

I immediately turned around and rushed in the opposite direction. I was shocked to see classmate Lora Rini perched on a bench on Tennessee Street — I thought she was moving to Columbia or something. Or, no, going to Columbia University. Her dad is the Dean of Admissions, and her mom is the President of the United States, which is why she got in. (I heard this from a very reliable source.)

Before I could ask what Lora was doing there, I felt a very ominous, tall,

FLORIDA COLLEGE RED FLAGS



- PARTY SCHOOL
- ANNOYING THEME SONG
- NO. 1 BEST GREEK LIFE
- "TALLANASTY"



- SWAMP.
- GATOR CHOMPS
- ANTI-PV ADMISSIONS
- MOLD.



- STARBUCKS COLORS
- 8 MILLION LOCATIONS
- SOUNDCLOUD RAPPERS
- TOO CLOSE TO HOME



- DISNEY ADULTS
- ENGINEERING (MEN)
- LITERALLY MASSIVE
- TOURIST TERROR

GRAPHIC BY NATHAN DESOUZA

"Hey, what's u-"

"NO! NO, NO, NO. This can't be happening!" I screamed, so loud that Ron DeSantis heard me from his palace. "The Pine View bubble — IT NEVER POPS!"

I writhed around on the floor, plagued with the horrible nightmare that FSU could be exactly like Pine View. I thought about the AP Style Guide, MyMathLab, advisory periods, Colombian Lora, British Cole, Gator Tiffany — what was going on?!?

All of the sudden I was jolted awake by a goofy voice- it was all a dream! I had simply fallen asleep during the AP Statistics exam! I wasn't at FSU yet! I looked

up and, for the first time in my life, I was glad to see Dr. Mattia.

In the next few months, I guess I'll just have to come to terms with the fact that Pine View, and all the people in it, will always be a part of me. In a way, it's a blessing in disguise. If you're reading this right now, chances are I grew up with you! I have to admit I am looking forward to still being around some familiar faces, and to those I won't see, I'm going to miss you (unless you're a Gator; in that case, eat my shirt.)

See you in Tally, Pine View!

GRAPHIC BY JANICE CHI

GRAPHIC BY LILY QUARTERMAINE

senior stereotypes every class has one.

guest star

- attends school once a week
- terminal senioritis
- "it's the fourth quarter of senior year."
- if they're not absent, then they're late



curve crusher

- ivy league superfan
- why do they still care??
- begrudgingly agrees to help you with work
- lowkey could teach the class
- still got rejected by UF



the backflip kid

- can do a backflip
- is going to do a backflip at graduation
- ???



sleeper build

- is always asleep
- incredibly loud music coming from AirPods
- somehow still gets A's
- suspicious smell...
- FSU bound



Honorable mention: Gym Bro

- eats raw meat
- feels the need to share controversial opinions

Can we Even Write This?

by Isabella Kulawik
News Editor

For the past three years I have been on the Torch, I have written stories about my experiences being a “Heterosexual in a Homosexual Family.” Unfortunately, this story may be my last, as the Florida Department of Education and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis have expanded the reach of the Parental Rights in Education Law (also known as the “Don’t Say Gay” law) to grades K-12 from the original K-3. This is all accompanied by HB 1069 and SB1320, which limit the discussion of gender and sexuality in sexual education and necessitate that all materials used to teach reproduction be approved by the Florida Department of Education.

The supposed reason behind these new bills is the quality of Florida’s education system. According to the Educational Opportunity Project by Stanford University, Florida has the lowest learning rate of all 50 states; compared to the United States average, the state learns 12.1% less per year. Some representatives believe that this issue is a result of teaching gender and sexuality in the classroom.

In an interview with Time magazine, Christian Ziegler, chairman of the Florida GOP, said that “he hopes schools will ‘focus on education rather than being indoctrinated.’”

To be entirely honest, I don’t understand this perspective. I have attended school in Florida for my entire acad-

emic career, and not once in elementary or middle school have I heard any teacher or book mention the word “gay.” These laws will not succeed in improving the Florida education system, but will instead limit the perspectives and voices learned about in schools. Looking back on it, I suppose that is the point.

With this expansion, one can also only wonder how it will impact the rate of suicide among LGBTQ+ teenagers. In The Trevor Project’s 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health, findings show that 45% of LGBTQ+ youth “seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year” and that “LGBTQ youth who live in a community that is accepting of LGBTQ people reported significantly lower rates of attempting suicide than those who do not.” While it’s too early to see the lasting impacts of this legislation, it’s clear that it will create an environment dangerous for LGBTQ youth in Florida schools.

By instituting these measures, the Florida Board of Education is limiting the amount of safe spaces for every student. I owe it to my teachers who have aided me in difficult times and the comfort that their confidentiality brought me. However, as the line blurs between what is actually harmful to a student and what is harmful to a political agenda, that solace may no longer be received.

In addition, legislators are pushing for alternatives to AP classes and stan-

dardized tests, such as the ACT and SAT. However, only time will tell how out-of-state colleges view these changes to curriculum. Currently, the new test being suggested is the Classical Learning Test, or CLT, which will provide a “classical and Christian” alternative, according to the Tampa Bay Times. While this test is optional, these developments are reflective of the future of Florida education.

As a member of the graduating class of 2024, the expansion does not directly impact me. However, I still grieve for the detrimental loss to the LGBTQ+ community. I grieve for my eight-year-old cousins who are unable to mention their aunts in the classroom; I grieve for my younger self who was able to express herself to the fullest; I grieve for the students who will have to deal with the repercussions of state-sponsored bigotry.

GRAPHIC BY LINDSAY LUBERECKI

What This Could Have Looked Like **all mentions of LGBTQ+, sexuality, etc. are blocked out**

For the past three years I have been on the Torch, I have written stories about my experiences being a “Heterosexual in a [redacted] Family.” Unfortunately, this story may be my last, as the Florida Department of Education and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis have expanded the reach of the Parental Rights in Education Law (also known as the [redacted] law) to grades K-12 from the original K-3.

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The Value of AP Human

by Liam Dingman
Visual Design Editor

From the Russia-Ukraine conflict to Chinese balloons and Israel-Palestine conflicts, it is clear that the concepts covered in AP Human Geography (APHG) are just about everywhere. In a world with an ever-increasing importance placed on globalism and interactions between countries, it doesn’t make any sense that the number of AP Human Geography students has plummeted, as seen in the decrease in the number of class periods set to be offered next year.

APHG teaches about global cultures, religions, and languages, which along with being fascinating, influence students to be more accepting and knowledgeable about people from all over the world. I even learned about and connected to some of my own culture, as someone who is half-Japanese, through World Day. This was a months-long project for which a group of three to four students was assigned a country and researched just about every APHG concept from demographics to economy, including cultural items and clothing to display diverse cultures from around the world.

Additionally, APHG teaches about so much that is not covered in many required social studies classes, such as modern borders of countries and geography of the world. It also educates students on many present-day topics, like the Rohingya genocide in Myanmar, the effects of social media on culture, and the

benefits and detriments of the use of technology like GMOs in foods (a topic that is also beneficial to know for biology, a class most freshmen will take).

Plus, APHG emphasizes not just knowledge about concepts, but application of these concepts (often including graphs and data) in order to solve problems, a crucial skill necessary from high school to college to a career. Even for people planning to major in a STEM field, this knowledge is invaluable.

More benefits also come in learning about interactions between people and our environments. From the effect of different transportation methods on cities to the impacts of varying agricultural methods, these all ultimately lead students to become better citizens, more aware of important issues in a world where the effects of climate change are becoming more and more apparent.

APHG is truly a class worth taking, and it is so disappointing to see the class fall out of favor in recent years. Taking the class has been so impactful on me that I went from thinking of almost not taking the class to adding courses covering countries around the world such as International Relations 2 Honors and AP Comparative Government to my four-year plan and subscribing to Geopolitics newsletters.

Despite the loss of an elective class, the fascinating knowledge gained from the course creates better, more aware citizens, and is an indispensable course to take.

GRAPHIC BY LIAM DINGMAN



The Risk of AP World

by Aashima Goswami
Sci & Tech Editor

Living in a post-coronavirus world has brought about a lot of implications for younger generations. As global economies change and health standards evolve, so do trends in local education. Students have started to rush their educations, changing their schedules to complete typical class progressions as soon as possible. At Pine View, many younger students have begun to take classes traditionally meant for higher grade levels.

One such class, Advanced Placement World History: Modern — AP World — has experienced the brunt of this change in grade dynamic. As AP World classes shift from having two to up to thirteen freshmen per class, teachers are spread thin and additional class periods are being added.

But, is taking AP World as a freshman worth it? As a freshman taking AP World, my answer is “no.”

While taking AP World means having an extra space in your schedule as a sophomore, it results in a lack of fundamental skills traditionally learned in AP Human Geography or even World History Honors, which are needed to be successful in AP World as well as other AP history courses.

Because of this increase in freshmen, the number of AP World class periods offered has spiked from five to eight for next year.

“I’m a little wary of the increase because I wonder if everyone who is signed up for the course is

ready to read that high-level material,” current AP World teacher John Schweig said.

AP World is by no means an easy course. Filled with high-level reading and difficult analysis, it requires a set of skills that the average freshman doesn’t have.

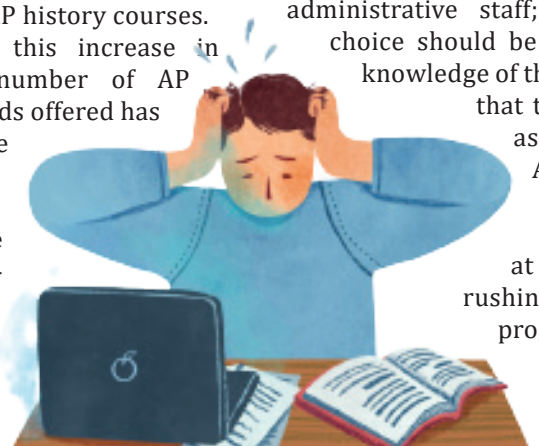
On the other hand, for many students, taking AP World means fulfilling the graduation requirement, while also possibly getting college credit. As a freshman, taking this class means achieving all the aforementioned while also having an empty spot in your schedule for next year. One such student is ninth-grader Zinnia Keipers.

“[With the empty spot] I’m taking AP Psychology next year,” Keipers said.

It’s not necessary to take AP World as a freshman. The honors version of the course fulfills the graduation requirement and removes the burden of taking a higher-level AP course during freshman year. It allows students to become acclimated with a high-school history class without the stress that an AP brings.

At the end of the day, the decision is up to the student and the administrative staff; however, this choice should be made with the knowledge of the consequences that taking AP World as a freshman has. A free space in your schedule shouldn’t come at the price of rushing a typical class progression.

GRAPHIC BY AASHIMA GOSWAMI

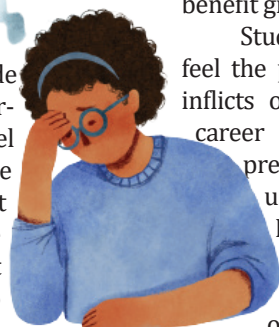


It's Okay to Not Know

by **Nathan DeSouza**
Social Media Editor

About a year or so ago, I found myself caught in a new reason to panic, among all the other stress that a graduating eighth-grader experiences: the idea of the future. What was even scarier was that my close friends and classmates had what they wanted to do in life set in stone, and I was under the impression that I had exactly four years to get my life straight.

However, talking about this dilemma with other classmates in my grade as well as upper-classmen who feel the same way made me realize that it isn't the end of the world if you don't know what to go into yet.



Entering freshman year is a big educational milestone. In starting high school, you are free from the set classes you must take in middle school and have the liberty to choose what courses you want to take.

In having this freedom, students are allowed to develop their senses of self that will further determine what they really want to go into in the future.

Although some might already have their paths chosen, it is still important to explore new topics and subjects to both reinforce and find new insight on paths you might not be familiar with or have set.

The underlying truth is that you don't need to have your whole career set up the moment you hit high school. Not only is it okay to not have everything figured out just yet, it is highly encouraged to explore other subjects and topics, and one could benefit greatly from it.

Students like me tend to feel the pressures that society inflicts on us concerning our career paths, whether this pressure is placed onto us directly or indirectly. However, the effect of peers having an expectation for one another only causes more worry and other stress-related conditions.

As it happens, college students get caught up in the same problem. Even in adulthood, many are still uncertain about what they want to do in life. This was the case for Pine View world language teacher Margaret Higgins.

"I had no idea when I was in high school. I figured I would

make a choice when I was in college. And then when I was in college, I alternated between a lot of different things like linguistics. I thought, 'Oh, maybe I'll do some sort of law or econ,'" Higgins said

Higgins had once been dead set on her career path not being education-related. However, today, she teaches world language and enjoys "spend[ing] time with all my kids that I love so dearly," she said.

"You don't have to know what you're doing. You just have to be happy," Higgins said, "and that's a lofty goal, but let me tell you what — I am."

In high school, in college, and throughout adulthood, there isn't ever a specific place you need to be in choosing your career. Finding out what you care about about takes time and is solely based on the individual, and creating that individuality is only natural throughout your high school journey.

So don't be stressed about what to do in the future, regardless of if you are a rising senior or even an eighth-grader making that scary transition into high school. Everything will play out in time, and it'll work out in your favor if you let it.

GRAPHIC BY NATHAN DESOUZA

From Lindsay, with Love

1st amendment wrongs

I remember learning about the Constitution in elementary school. I recall memorizing the Bill of Rights in Civics. In my life, though, no part of the Constitution has been mentioned so much as the First Amendment.

The First Amendment states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

I write about this today because, in our current age, it seems like these very freedoms, the freedoms our country was founded upon, the first freedoms mentioned in our Bill of Rights, are under attack.

We're supposed to separate church from state, yet we see quote after quote from our governor and representatives with underlying tones of Christianity. We feel religion seeping into our school day by day.

For example, the Florida government recently began considering a classical alternative to AP/SAT testing — a test emphasizing the "centrality of the Western tradition," according to test manufacturers and supporters. It's practically impossible to get any more obvious than this. Are we erasing every fragment of history from our schools and replacing them with Christian mantras and indoctrination? Our government proclaims being wholeheartedly against this concept, yet their actions come across as decidedly hypocritical.

We're supposed to have freedom of speech, but every day, people are being silenced. Hate speech and cruelty run rampant in today's society, yet we're not allowed to speak about our sexualities in school.

And then there's the free-



Lindsay Luberecki
Opinion Editor

dom of the press, something that I have a very personal connection with. Apart from this, though, seeing reputable news sources face constant backlash for simply reporting the facts worries me, as a reporter and citizen. What does our future look like if we can't find out what's happening on our streets? In our government?

Lastly, there's the right to assembly. I think this hits home recently after the attempted walkout in April, but in general, a fight against peaceful protest has been building.

All in all, it comes down to this: How can we express our feelings and show the people representing us what we need if we can't talk about it? If we can't write or read about it? If we can't show them in any way?

This is my last column as your Opinion editor, and I know I may have seemed like a broken record to many this year, talking about similar topics each issue. I think this points to the extent to which we need change in this society, and, as morbid as it may sound, the danger that we're in. I want to officially sign off by wishing my successor Allie Chung (your Opinion editor next year) the best of luck. Even in the face of everything, I know that she'll do a wonderful job.



Allie Chung

PHOTOS AND INTERVIEWS BY JIAYI ZHU AND SOFIA GIANNATTASIO



[student voices] Let's Talk College! Underclassmen ask and seniors answer: top college inquiries



How many extracurriculars do you need to help boost your chances of getting into a more prestigious college? (Siya Patel, 10)

I did have many, but I don't think it's the amount...if you have two or three that you're really invested in, then it's a lot better...They care more about substance. I had filled out all ten of mine, but there's only three of them that I was really focused in. I think three or four. Really work hard on them and do a passion project in one. **Chloe Ratner**

How early should we be sending our apps in? (Joe Calleja, 9)

The earlier the better. It allows you to pace yourself and gives you time to edit and change your essay the way that you like it. I started my college applications over the summer. The college specific questions come out mid-August so if you finish your personal statement over the summer, you're able to work after...they come out...doing little chunks at a time allows you to prepare yourself in the best way possible. **Jacob Koshy**



What are the best guides to writing your college essay? (Hana Mullen, 9)



Find something that's really unique and niche to you, especially if you're going for an Ivy League or a really good school. Every kid who's applying to those high level colleges have the grades...you really need to set yourself apart with something unique, whether it be leadership or reaching out to the community...if there's a topic on the Common App which you can really answer well and most people aren't doing it, I'd say go for that. **Marie Weber**

How many colleges should you apply to? (Sarah Gray, 9)

Not a ton, but definitely make it a little broad. Some people only did two schools, and they were on the opposite ends of the spectrum and then they would have to settle for schools. Have a few reach schools but also be realistic. **Ashley Reynolds**

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Editor wins big

Alyson Mizanin wins Writer of the Year Award



Alyson Mizanin poses for a photo with other journalism students before the FSPA convention this past April. She would go on to win the Writer of the Year Award for the stories she has written for The Torch these past few years. Left to right: Chris Lenerz, Ava Lenerz, Alyson Mizanin, and Sanya Patel. PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHRIS LENERZ

by Lindsay Luberecki
Opinion Editor

When she was in kindergarten, she was always buried in a book and was writing stories about her cats on the family desktop computer. Now, she's the Editor-in-Chief of the Torch, and the recipient of a highly competitive statewide award.

Last month, Alyson Mizanin was presented with the Florida Scholastic Press Association (FSPA) Writer of the Year Award — an award with applicants from all over the state, but only one winner — Mizanin herself.

"Once you read something from her it's almost like you can't stop reading it," Alyson's mother, Jennifer Mizanin, said. "She makes it seem so easy...it just comes naturally to her."

Jennifer recalls how early Alyson's love for writing began, and how she would stay up late into the night with a flashlight reading anything she could get her hands on. She joined journalism at Pine View in eighth grade, and right away, made an impact on adviser Chris Lenerz.

"It was clear she was a good writer," he said. "Over the course of these five years she's really refined her writing...When we've needed a good story over the last three years, she's one of the handful of people that I trust to cover the most difficult of assignments."

When it comes to difficult stories, Alyson has written with poise and poignancy, whether it was the life story of a Holocaust survivor or a memorial story for the passing of a beloved Pine View coach (for which she won a Best of the Best FSPA award). She has also been an inspiring mentor to those working with her.

"I think about Alyson sometimes when I'm writing a story," said Isabella Kulawik, current eleventh-grader and next year's Editor-in-Chief. "Her attitude is something I aspire to have...she's just an incredible person and an incredible writer."

Kulawik wrote a memorial story for the passing of a student with the mentorship of Alyson. This was a story that Alyson could have written herself.

"I thought Alyson would write it," Lenerz said, "but she wanted to give another student the opportunity...I thought that spoke volumes about her leadership."

Jennifer also recalled something Alyson's grandfather said when hearing that she won this award.

"He even said, 'She's going to fill a whole room with awards,'" Jennifer said.

Alyson's grandmother, who passed away last year, also knew that Alyson would go places even before kindergarten, when they would talk on the phone for hours.

Mizanin was also a recipient of the merit scholarship from the Presidential Scholars Program at FSU, where she will be going in the fall. Very few students that are considered for the award receive it, so this is another accolade for Mizanin.

All in all, Kulawik, Lenerz, and Jennifer are incredibly proud of Alyson for all her hard work, and they look forward to seeing where the future takes her.

"It's hard to put this into words," Kulawik said. "I know Alyson could if she were here, but you can't understand what it's like until you read one of her stories...you can just feel her style and her voice through every part of her writing, and that's something truly magical."



Mizanin stands with the award she received at the convention. PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHRIS LENERZ

Fireside Chats

Flying from the nest

I don't know how to say goodbye to this place.

I've had seven years to consider this moment, and maybe that's the reason for my troubles — there's no simple way to wrap one, four, seven, or 11 years into 400 words, but I'll give you my best.

I stepped foot onto the Pine View campus one day in August 2016, and I've never been the same since; today, May 19, I'm leaving it as a completely different person whose life trajectory has been almost entirely shaped by this school.

Every step in my personal evolution can be traced back here — to the pages of this newspaper, to rainy days in Alla Lazareva's portable, to Spirit Week festivities and the excitement that comes with every last day of school, including and most especially this one.

At my time of writing this, I'm sitting at one of the checkerboard tables outside the library — the same place I distinctly remember sitting almost exactly 365 days ago, adding a few finishing tweaks to a story I wrote about Jenny Reyka's retirement. 365 days from now, these tables will continue standing sentinel, and I'll be nowhere in sight. Maybe



by Alyson Mizanin
Editor-in-Chief

I'll look back on this column and laugh at my naivety. Maybe I'll cry. Perhaps it'll be best to do a bit of both.

Is it selfish to want to be remembered here? Maybe, but I think it's human, more than anything. I hope that the love and excitement I've brought with me every day finds a new home roaming these halls, running through long lunch lines, and dancing through every passing breeze. I hope that you — yes, you — know how much of a role you've played in my Pine View journey, whether we've only talked once or twice or even never at all.

My greatest hope, ultimately, rests in the people behind the ink painting this page. Every opportunity I've been afforded at Pine View has somehow connected back to Room 117 — and before that, Portable 3. I'm beyond excited for everything that next year's Editor-in-Chief Isabella Kulawik will bring to the table, and I'm envious of all of you who'll get to see it unfold firsthand.

I'll continue loving this place from afar. A part of me will always call Pine View home, and I'm endlessly grateful for every moment, every memory. Thank you, Pine View. Thank you.



Isabella Kulawik
Next year's Editor-in-Chief

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