



Homecoming Pride Culminates in a Dance to Remember

ZARA JACOB (V)

The high temperatures of the final days of September thankfully began to subside by Saturday, October 5 on this event-packed day. By 8:30 a.m., the Basking Ridge campus was swarming with parents of Middle and Upper school students for Pingry’s annual Back to School Day, where they sat for ten-minute versions of their children’s classes. There, parents could learn about the content of their children’s courses while also getting to know the teacher. Parents who were new to Pingry also had the opportunity to tour the campus.

Following their simulated school day, parents joined others in the Pingry community for a bountiful fall lunch. The spread included barbecue, Italian food, and cider, but the dessert was particularly exquisite. To gear up for the upcoming autumn season, guests dined on apple cobbler, pumpkin spice mousse, and apple cider doughnuts. Another tent offered spirited goodies, such as car stickers, t-shirts, and blue-beaded necklaces in preparation for the upcoming sports games. Visitors were able to participate in other activities as well, such as checking out the

Pingry Credit Union booth or having a chance to meet acclaimed world traveller Denis Belliveau.

Throughout the afternoon, Pingry’s sports teams competed against a slew of other New Jersey high school teams, with each game starting approximately half an hour after the last began. At 2 p.m., girls’ varsity soccer kicked off the sequence, defeating Livingston 5-1. The co-ed varsity water polo team, played next, winning their match against Saint Peter’s Prep 9-6. Varsity football was also victorious against Montclair Kimberley Academy. Girls’ varsity field hockey was unfortunately defeated by Bridgewater Raritan, losing 0-2. The second water polo game, this time with Pingry’s co-ed junior varsity team, also won 9-6. The last two matches by the boys’ soccer team ended in stunning victories; at about 4 p.m., the boys’ junior varsity soccer team prevented Princeton Day from scoring a single goal, winning 9-0. Boys’ varsity soccer did the same, beating Princeton Day with a score of 6-0.

“[The girls’ varsity soccer players] are a formidable team,” says Alison Lee (VI). “Their finesse and teamwork is absolutely astonishing,

so it is no wonder that they won the game.”

As the sun fell, Pingry students began to gear up for the Homecoming dance. The theme, “Storm Area 51”, had decisively won when proposed in a vote to the student body. It was based on a popular Internet meme: supposedly, if enough people raided the US Air Force facility, the government would not be able to stop all participants from freeing whatever secrets, particularly aliens, kept there. Student raiders were appropriately dressed in glamorous, alien-themed attire.

“I really liked the Area 51 theme because of how uniquely relevant it is to 2019,” says Anjali Kapoor (VI). She states that students would be able to look back at this particular dance and “remember how this was the year that millions of people signed up to storm Area 51 in search of aliens.” Alison Lee agrees: “yes, outer space has been done before, but I think what was unique about this year was that we took a current event as our theme... Honestly, I feel like it might even be the best theme that we’ve had so far because of its uniqueness to our time.”

Everything You Need to Know About the New Head of School

EVA SCHILLER (V), VICKY GU (VI), MEGHAN DURKIN (V)

Though the Pingry community has known his name for almost a year now, Mr. Matt Levinson has just begun his first academic year as our new Head of School. Following a five-month search and a unanimous vote from the Board of Trustees, Pingry officially welcomed its sixteenth Head of School on July 1, 2019, succeeding Mr. Nathaniel Conard’s 14-year tenure as Headmaster.

The role of the Head of School has long been ambiguous to many Pingry students. Mr. Levinson explains his job as keeping “everybody focused on the student experience... from myself, to all administration, staff, and teachers,” and that “every day is different. There are a lot of interesting challenges that cross my desk, problems to solve.” He remarked, “But also, being out in the community, being out in classes, being out at games, is really important.” When asked what drew him to Pingry, Mr. Levinson immediately responded, “the Honor Code was a first appeal... The trust that’s inherent in having an Honor Code is really meaningful to me.” Pingry’s inclusive atmosphere was also attractive. “Commitment to diversity and inclusion is really important to me, personally and professionally,” he says, adding, “I’ve been really struck and impressed by Pingry’s diversity and how it strengthens and enriches the community.”

Beginning his career teaching both middle and high school students, Mr. Levinson has stepped into many roles within school communities, whether that be coaching sports or serving as a dean of students. He believes that his experience allows him to “understand everything that goes into running a big organization like Pingry.”

Despite his extensive experience with education, he confessed that in high school, he was not always “as engaged as [he] should’ve or could have been, but something just kind of kicked in senior year and a couple teachers really inspired [him].” During his time at Pingry so far, he has noticed “how much [the teachers] are inspiring to you all.”

When asked about his vision for Pingry, Mr. Levinson left his response open-ended. Rather than only him deciding where Pingry should go in the upcoming years, he thinks that everyone should have input and “that the vision question is something we all need to invest in and work on together.” However, he does have a “strategic plan focusing on global education, student wellbeing, interdisciplinary learning... and also to promote teacher growth and development.”

His first step is to address student wellbeing with the hopes of helping the community “improve and be attentive.” So far, he has met with peer leaders and teachers, and plans to do some staff training in November.

Speaking on the Pingry community, Mr. Levinson noted that “everyone’s been incredibly welcoming, which has been wonderful.” He has visited classes on both campuses and gone to games in order “to get the chance to see the student experience.” What amazed him since his arrival was the “long history of people who invest their lives here. I think everyone here is trying to always get better, no one’s standing still, which I love about the community.”

Mr. Levinson also revealed that the process for getting “Shorts Days” begins with students. A student emailed him one evening asking to allow shorts the next day, and by the end of the night, Mr. Levinson had confirmed one. “I know,” he says, “on a hot day, when there’s no air conditioning, it’s nice to be able to wear shorts.”

Speaking of air conditioning, will Pingry ever get it? “That’s a big question I’m hearing; lots of people want to talk about that, but I don’t have an answer to that yet. It could happen. I don’t know when, but I know it’s something that people, especially in the 90-degree weather, are very interested in.” Perhaps someday.

Mr. Levinson concluded, “I would just like to say I’ve been so impressed with the students in this school. The engagement in the classes that I’ve seen, from kindergarten all the way through 12th grade, makes it clear that the kids here really like learning and want to learn, and the teachers are really invested in making that happen.”

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Comics, Crosswords, and a fresh new look!



Photo Credits: Pingry Communications

Merit Diplomacy and Pingry’s Economy of Accolades

NOAH BERGAM (V)

In the spring of last year, some friends and I became obsessed with an online game called Diplomacy. In this wonderfully irritating game, each player owns a certain pre-WWI European country, and, move by move, they try to maximize their territory.

Since each player starts out with roughly the same resources, the only way to succeed is to make alliances, to get people to trust you, and, of course, to silently betray that trust at some point to reach the top.

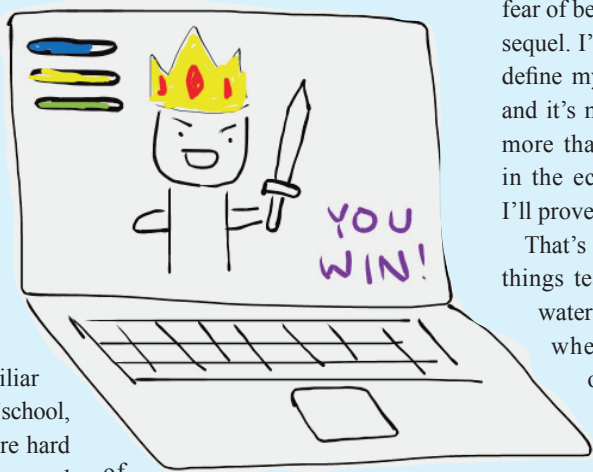
This was perhaps the first time I was introduced to the concept of a zero-sum game—a system where, in order to gain, someone else must lose. I was terrible at it. I didn’t have the confidence to really scare anyone. I couldn’t keep a secret for my life. And worst of all, I couldn’t get anyone to trust me.

The ‘game’ I was most familiar with up to that point was that of school, of direct merit. A system where hard work and quality results are supposed to pay off on an individual basis, and one person’s success doesn’t have to mean another’s failure.

I was especially entrenched in that mindset when my brother went to Pingry. I looked up to his leadership and social abilities, his diplomacy essentially, and realized I could never be like him in that realm—I didn’t have the same sort of outward confidence and social cunning. All I could do was look at his numbers and try my best to one-up them; in my mind, that was the only way for me to prove I wasn’t inferior.

But now that brotherly competition is gone. And I have the leadership I’ve been working toward. And now I’m realizing that, from my current perspective, Pingry’s system

of student leadership is not the game of direct merit I thought it was. I wouldn’t go so far to say it’s a bloodbath, zero sum-game, but there’s certainly an element of transaction, and therefore diplomacy, you have to master. Complex transactions of time and energy for club tenure and awards. It’s really an economy of accolades, where the currency is our effort as students outside the classroom. We involve ourselves in activities and invest our time, of course, to do things we love, but there’s no denying that there’s an incentive to earn a title, a position



of leadership that can be translated onto a resumé.

It’s an ugly mindset, but it unfortunately exists. And the ruling principle is merit diplomacy—for the underclassmen, a more merit-oriented rise through application processes and appointments, and for upperclassmen leaders, a need to balance the prerogatives and talents of constituent club members.

That diplomatic end for the student leader is taxing. You have to think in terms of your own defense when people doubt your abilities. You need to make sure people still invest time in what you run. You want respect. Friendship. But sometimes you can’t shake off the guilt of getting that position, because you know the

anxious feeling of watching and waiting for that reward.

Now your mistakes are visible. Now you have to know why you have the position you have, and why others should follow you. You need legitimacy to hold on to what you have.

I’m the first junior editor-in-chief of this paper in recent memory. And I know that raises eyebrows to my counterparts who know my brother was editor-in-chief last year. I acknowledge that publicly, because I’m putting the integrity and openness of my job here above my own personal fear of being seen as some privileged sequel. I’m not going to let whispers define my work. I know who I am, and it’s more than just this title. It’s more than a well-spent investment in the economy of accolades. And I’ll prove it.

That’s what the diplomacy side of things teaches you. You come to a watershed moment in high school where you pass the illusion of the merit machine and realize it’s all a matter of communication.

Merit diplomacy can be an ugly and nerve wracking concept; it’s damaging to take it so seriously. It distracts from true passion, and it reinforces the bubble of Pingry life, making us deify our in-school positions and the idea of the accolade rather than the identity of the students themselves.

There are communities and worlds beyond this school. And one might think of Pingry’s economy of accolades as the microcosm of the ‘real world.’ But I think even that gives it too much credit.

It’s practice. It should be a side thought to our passions, not the intense focus of student life. Merit diplomacy is a game—perhaps a high-stakes game—but a game nonetheless.

What I really think of the Honor Code at Pingry

ZARA JACOB (V)

There are issues that everyone agrees are violations of the Honor Code: bullying, vandalism, racism, sexism, and so on and so forth. If any such disrespectful actions are committed, we unanimously cite the perpetrator’s betrayal of the Honor Code. We have a general consensus in this respect. However, there are some topics of contention among the student body when it comes to breaking the Honor Code, including—but definitely not limited to— cheating, using Sparknotes, and breaking the dress code. Maybe when we students talk to teachers, administrators, or prospective parents, we have the facade of a united front, but I assure you, we have quite a spectrum of opinions ranging from very conservative to very rebellious.

Last year, I found out about someone cheating on a test. Now, when I say “cheating,” I do not mean “Sparknoting” Jane Eyre or telling someone that the test was easy or hard, but blatantly communicating the exact problems that would be on the test. I was shocked. I knew people looked at siblings’ tests or maybe knew the bonus question, but I was genuinely shocked by this incident. Sometimes we make fun of the Honor Code for being too idealistic or rigid, but was it really so naïve of me to believe that students would not actually cheat on a test? I will acknowledge that I am not a person who breaks a lot of rules, so maybe my shock is simply a consequence of my ignorance. However, I guess I expected that as a student body, we agreed upon, if nothing else, perhaps the most basic principle of the Honor Code: integrity. Then again, I did not report that person, so who am I to talk?

Let’s be completely candid about how many times we break the Honor Code each day, in our personal

lives, in our academic lives, and in our extracurriculars. Are we all impeccable Pingry students that have upheld the contract we so earnestly signed on the first Friday of the school year?

No, we are not. I know that I am not. So how can I judge? How can I be so shocked? How can I write this 650-word rant about the Honor Code simply because someone cheated?

I can do this because I cannot pretend to be okay with people cheating. I got some of my lowest grades on the very tests the aforementioned person cheated on. I would study for hours, days before the test, dreading what types of questions were going to be asked. Meanwhile, that student was cruising, already having known the exact questions on the test. I wasn’t just appalled; I was infuriated. The message I’d been left with was this: “Life’s not fair. Get used to it.”

It is unfortunate, but it could not be more true. Not everyone is going to follow the Honor Code; not in Pingry, not in college, and not in the real world.

I do not have a magical solution. I could end this opinion piece by saying that everyone should try to be good, and that we should try to make life fair by following the Honor Code to the best of our ability, but that would just further breach my integrity. The person who cheated will probably cheat again and get away with it. Pingry can make us sign all of the contracts in the world, have us write the Honor Pledge thousands of times, and have brilliant speakers for the Honor Board’s Speaker series, but the Honor Code at Pingry is, at its root, a suggestion—a highly recommended suggestion—but a suggestion nevertheless.

Follow the Honor Code, or don’t follow the Honor Code; the one truth I can tell you is that it comes down to you and the values you choose to have faith in.

Shed Unhealthy Competition and Bloom

EVA SCHILLER (V)

“And the award goes to……?”

I hear a number of students inhale with suspense. I inhale, too. They announce the winner. The students exhale. I exhale, too. One student stands up. I stay seated.

A few weeks ago, clad in dresses, heels, suits, and ties, we sat in Hauser Auditorium and cheered as the best and brightest of Pingry stood proudly on stage and received various awards. From earning the highest grade point averages to being the best at giving back to the larger community, each and every person standing in the spotlight, smiling radiantly down on me, had achieved something important. They had also, evidently, achieved something I had not, and as they basked in the moment, I could do nothing but look up to them, both literally and figuratively.

After the assembly, I couldn’t help but marvel at how strongly the Fall Awards Assembly affected how I view my peers. Those who had won

an award were elevated in my eyes; they had joined the ranks of the legendary Pingry students who had been called to the stage before them, or been inducted into Cum Laude, or been accepted into the best colleges. How could I possibly compete?

As I contemplated their successes, I began to wonder exactly why I cared so much. Why should I feel the need to compete at all?

If I am honest with myself, I know the answer to the aforementioned question. I had begun to believe that in order to succeed, I had to beat others. I had to be the best, and one way I could feel that validation was to hear my name in the microphone, and to be the student that stood up and stepped proudly into the spotlight.

I don’t know when I developed this mindset, but I do know two things: first, that I am not the only person at Pingry who holds this mindset. Second, it is a position that is fundamentally flawed; there are millions of successful people in the world today, so success is not

mutually exclusive. That fact had not escaped me; I had simply entered a competitive environment and found myself playing along.

In a world fighting valiantly against participation trophy culture, giving plenty of awards to those who deserve them and motivating others to up their game is what every good school should be doing. Right? Yes, to some extent. However, I would like to offer an alternative perspective: overly competitive environments shift our goals; rather than simply seeking personal growth, we determine our worth based on the number of people we are better than.

There are countless pedestals on which Pingry students stand: team captain, club leader, or LeBow winner, for example. These pedestals exist in the public eye because they are relevant to our community; teams and clubs exist in the Pingry’s public sphere, a part of many students’ lives, and LeBow speakers compete in Hauser Auditorium as the student body looks on. These awards are

part of a greater pattern of elevating certain “high achieving” students who have been selected as the face of the Pingry establishment. They are essential to the reputation of a school such as Pingry as well as students in the college application process.

However, in schools like ours, where good-natured competition has become a large part of our culture, Fall Awards seem excessive. They push too far in the opposite direction of participation trophy culture.

Achievements such as good grades or good deeds are commendable, but they cannot exist on pedestals without the risk of adding a competitive aspect to something that should be a purely individual endeavor. Doing well in class, being nice to others, and heavily investing oneself in subjects such as science or history should be for the sake of a student’s personal growth and not for any other public incentive. The Fall Awards detract from the personal accomplishments of each student by publicizing them and undermine the pride and self-

fulfillment that doing one’s best should induce.

Abolishing Fall Awards is one plausible way to reduce Pingry’s needlessly competitive atmosphere. Whether or not the awards stick around for the next few years, however, we can take it upon ourselves to avoid falling into the trap of comparing ourselves to others. To quote Zen Shin Talks, by Sensei Ogui, “A flower does not think of competing with the flowers next to it. It just blooms.”

Next fall, when we sit in Hauser Auditorium once more, clad in dresses, heels, suits, and ties, make sure to know this distinction. Whether you are standing on stage smiling radiantly down or in the crowd cheering for your peers, take a moment to appreciate your own achievements. Recognize that the real focus of the ceremony is not to beat other people, but to embody the awards on a personal level.

Allow yourself to bloom.

Photo Credits (Left to Right): Noah Bergam (V)

The World We Live In

MIRIKA JAMBUDI (III)

The world I’m growing up in scares me to death. It seems like everywhere I look there is something to be afraid of. In fact, I’m almost fifteen and I just got permission this summer to ride my bike to my friend’s house. It’s only two blocks away, but I understand why. The world I’m growing up in is scary because it’s dangerous. I can’t tell you that it’s more dangerous than any other period in human history, but I can tell you this: we’re certainly more aware of it. The news flashes every day with new stories of gunmen, arson, murder, and scandal in our very own White House. That shadow in the corner of my eye, that’s danger. The creak on the stairs when I’m home alone, that’s danger. This constant fear bleeds into every single aspect of my life.

In school, we’ve had lockdown drills for as long as I can remember. An announcement is made, so we lock the doors, draw the blinds, huddle in the corner, and stay as silent as possible. For those 4-7 minutes, I examine my best friend’s shoelaces intently. I imagine what I would do, if at that very moment, the drill was real and a shooter barged into the classroom. I count the bricks on the wall. I wonder if this is what it felt like to live during the Cold War, diving under desks to take cover at the prospect of nuclear war. Then, I wonder why people believed that a wooden desk could stop an atomic bomb. Probably, I think, for the same reasons we draw the blinds and lock the doors. Ever since the shooting in Parkland, Florida, though, something has changed. Everything feels more real. The idea of a school shooting used to be almost nonexistent. Something that happened to those poor kids in Sandy Hook, but could never happen to us.

But the national uproar 5,000 miles away brought about changes reaching all the way to Pingry. Now, we have more detailed lockdown procedures. Recently, we had an assembly describing safety procedures, and our newly installed lockdown buttons in case of an emergency. We know what to do during lunch, during time between classes. We know that if there’s an emergency, we are to go into the nearest open classroom, let as

many kids in as possible, lock all the doors, and hide. The threat has become omnipresent. It’s not far away and vague anymore, but something that could actually happen to us. Even in the bathroom stalls, the inner doors are plastered with laminated posters explaining what to do if someone is in the bathroom while a lockdown is in progress. It tells me what keywords to listen for to make sure the all-clear is legitimate. The danger of a school shooting stares me in the face while I use the bathroom. It’s an unfading feeling of unease, present even when I’m walking down the hall with a friend, goofing off like an average pair of freshmen. I see the security guards on duty keeping an eye on everything, watching for any signs of suspicious activity. I understand why they are there, of course, but it reminds me that nowhere is safe.

I live in the epitome of suburbia, so it’s strange to have this fear everywhere I go. We have become desensitized to shootings and gun violence, and barely react to the now daily reports of shootings. Everywhere is unsafe: first movie theaters, coffee shops, and retail stores, and now schools. For me, school is a place I look forward to going everyday; however, some days, when I step off of that yellow Kensington bus, I feel afraid of the unknown, and I concoct imaginary emergency scenarios in my head. I have my parents on speed dial, as a “just-in-case.” I have a message in the notes section of my phone for my loved ones, should something actually happen to me, though the chances are slim. I really shouldn’t have to worry about this; I’m just your average high school freshman trying not to fail Spanish and science, binging rom-coms and Disney movies in her free time. We shouldn’t have to worry that when we leave our houses in the morning for school, it might be the last time our parents see us alive.

Our government should have stepped up on gun policies and implemented stricter gun laws years ago, right after the incident at Sandy Hook. How many more lives must be lost until our government takes charge? Our nation needs action, and it is long overdue.

A New Kind of Nostalgia

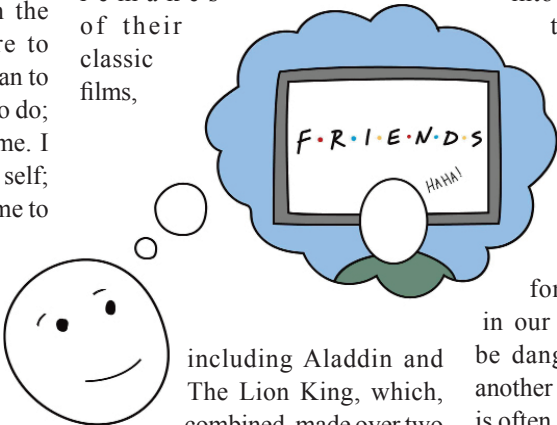
MEGAN DURKIN (V)

My brother joined me outside, football in hand. The fall wind brushed past our faces as it carried the ball from his hands to mine and back. Our hands grew colder with each toss until we ran inside for warmth. It was the first time we had thrown the football together in years. When we were younger, it was a weekly ritual, and one that brought us sweet memories. Five years later, standing in my backyard as the football flew through the chilling air, I felt the desire to reverse time. I wanted more than to be reminded of what we used to do; I wanted to be back in that time. I wished for my carefree, strong self; I needed my brother to have time to spend with me again.

I felt nostalgic. The feeling was overwhelmingly bittersweet. I envied my former self. The nostalgia consumed me. But I know I’m surely not alone in this feeling. Society has come to seek nostalgia more frequently. The feeling has shaped our media, trends, and fashion. Nostalgia, often a relatively personal feeling, has become global. The connectivity of our world, which has only recently expanded, forces commonalities in experiences that trigger nostalgia. With the rise of technology and social media, we have a greater access to shared thoughts and events, which ultimately allows nostalgia to shape our world as an image of the past.

This newfound sense of global

nostalgia is evident in recent fashion trends: platform shoes from the seventies, scrunchies from the eighties, and the denim-on-denim look from the nineties. The popularity of these trends has resurfaced decades later to blend into today’s fashion. While acting as reminders of the past, they serve as evidence of the desire to return to and pull from what was. Nostalgia is also fueling the entertainment industry. In the last six months, Disney has released three live action r e m a k e s of their classic films,



including Aladdin and The Lion King, which, combined, made over two billion dollars at the box office. These movies attracted people who had watched them as kids, capitalizing on the need for nostalgia. The films allow them to relive a simpler, often more desirable, time in their lives. Furthermore, both the resurfacing of fashion trends and classic movies stress the worldwide nature of nostalgia. It is felt universally by a generation. As distant places and people are connected through technology, that shared nostalgia is more accessible and society is reaching for it.

The accessibility of nostalgia is present in the popularity of Netflix. With the click of a button, people can watch shows and movies from decades ago. These shows, including Friends and The Office, are not only watched by original fans, but by a new generation who wishes to be included in the shows and the collective experience they create. Along with this, the Netflix revivals of shows such as Gilmore Girls and Arrested Development give viewers a greater entrance into the past as it seemingly takes them, in a new way, back to the first time they saw the show. For original viewers, this type of access to their favorite show has only been made possible recently.

While nostalgia allows fond times and experiences in our lives to resurface, it can be dangerous. Nostalgia acts as another form of regret, a form that is often sheltered from the negative connotations. The feeling stops us from letting go; it stops us from being satisfied. With expanding technology and connection, nostalgia is no longer as simple as reminiscing over tossing the football in the backyard; it is a way to expose the discontent with society in the present. People wish to go back to a time in which they believe the world was better off. The rise of global nostalgia signifies a collective need to remove ourselves from the present, and reminisce about the simpler times of our past.

Dress Code in the Sky

BRYNN WEISHOLTZ (VI)

As I boarded the plane and walked to my seat, I paid little attention to the people surrounding me—I was unaware of who they were, how they looked, and where they were going. I placed my carry-on bag in the compartment above my head, took my seat, secured my seatbelt, inserted my airpods and chose my favorite playlist; I was settled in and ready for a relaxing flight. It’s odd—every individual has their own life, in which they make their own choices, have their own opinions, and live with their own consequences. As such, we rarely think about strangers because we are so consumed with our own existences.

But on this flight, I thought about the person three rows ahead of me en route to our sunny destination.

Listening to my downloaded Spotify playlist, my song was interrupted by a loud disturbance, an escalating conversation between a passenger and a United Airlines representative. I wasn’t sure what the argument was about. Was it a seating issue? Was the passenger on the wrong plane? Did she possess a liquid more than the permitted 1.7 ounces? All I could deduce was that something very serious was going on.

The stranger in row 7 became a topic for most of the passengers on the plane. People were suddenly interested in something other than their magazines and music. What we came to learn is that this woman entered the aircraft as every other paying passenger did, and was asked to leave the plane because of her clothing. Her crime was wearing a tube top. Apparently, exposing one’s midriff on a United Airlines flight is against the company’s dress code and results in removal from the aircraft. How could this be? She wasn’t unclothed. I didn’t find her outfit tasteless, especially since I had, on multiple occasions, boarded a United Airlines flight wearing some variation of that outfit; actually, on that very flight, I, too, donned leggings and a tube top; however my stomach was covered by a zippered sweatshirt, for the sole purpose of staying warm in flight. I was actually shocked that this was an issue, as I had never even heard about a dress code for a flight. After some research, I located the United Airlines Dress Code, which bans attire like swimwear and mini skirts. While, I understand the necessity for some of these restrictions, whether it be to safeguard people from derogatory words or protect passengers from clothing deemed hazardous by the airline (i.e.,

open toes shoes or barefoot), I do question the implementation of the airline’s dress code when deciding what makes an outfit fit for travel. This passenger was not offered a complimentary shirt or article of clothing, nor was she provided with a blanket to wrap around her exposed area. Rather, she was forced to forgo her seat and return to the terminal. United Airlines did not care that she would be missing out on her vacation or that she paid for this flight and hotel accommodations. All that seemed to be of importance was that her clothing was out of dress code for the flight.

This inherently begs the question: how can our society, which preaches freedom of expression, dictate what we as people wear when it is not offensive nor harmful? Limiting a person’s clothing choices in a public arena is in opposition to a freedom we hold in high regard in America. And the lack of compassion expressed by the employees for the passenger and the situation was equally as shameful in my opinion. I am confident that the woman did not choose to wear a tube top to blatantly defy the airline’s policy. On the contrary, she likely chose her outfit for the same reasons I chose my outfit that morning....it was comfortable.



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Teacher-Student Communication: A Divided Exchange

JUSTIN LI (V)

Traditionally, the process of education has been regarded as the unreciprocated transfer of information to a student, who is treated as an empty container to be filled. Paulo Freire, a 20th-century philosopher on pedagogy, refers to this antiquated model as “banking education,” which he demonstrates as discouraging to critical thinking and creativity.

In recent years, society has begun to progress from its sole reliance on memorization and one-sided lecturing towards what Freire calls a “problem-posing model,” which characterizes education as a mutually beneficial barter of knowledge between teacher and student. Through conversations with students attending high school in different parts of the world, I’ve realized that Pingry is on the cutting edge of this evolution.

In other words, at least at Pingry, students should no longer view their teachers as distant faucets of

information. More and more, the student’s relationship with their teachers is becoming an exchange in which both sides participate equally. In the same way that a teacher confers their own knowledge, they encourage the expression of the student’s own ideas, even when they counter their own. However, this model — one in which it is possible for the student to teach the teacher—inherently blurs the roles that their very titles suggest; an effective problem-posing teacher invites this lack of distinction in the classroom.

Any school which uses the problem posing model must also face the practical implications of a more egalitarian relationship between the teacher and student. Though in abstract, such a relationship should promote an education based on critical thinking, a lack of boundaries can create a potential for abuse of power, conflicts of interest, and other forms of misconduct.

Beyond the relative security that watchful students and teachers provide within the peripheries of the Pingry campus, these issues are

compounded. For instance, what can we categorize as appropriate mediums of external communication? Pingry students reach out to faculty through their Pingry email addresses. The formality of typical email conventions, as well as the fact that all correspondence occurs under a “pingry.org” domain, makes this choice the standard. The nature of an alternate method of communication, such as text messaging, is more of a grey area; it elicits the use of abbreviations, emojis, and a relatively informal tone. Text messaging is the primary means of communication for most of the students I know, and likely the same for many teachers. Thus, texting seems more natural a medium of communication for almost all of us, as it feels more like a conversation than a series of inquiries. The topic and frequency of external communication is also important to consider. When a teacher and a student share an interest in the same NBA team, or both enjoy biking as a hobby, is it inappropriate for them to speak about it outside of school occasionally?

How about every week? If both teacher and student feel entirely comfortable during the interaction, has a boundary been crossed?

In many cases, I don’t believe so. Whether it be through the tone of the conversation or a common hobby, a certain kind of respect accompanies a student’s ability to relate with his teacher. For example, I don’t believe that the sole act of texting a student is necessarily inappropriate, even about nonacademic subjects. However, it is essential to understand that harmless familiarity can quickly lead to being uncomfortable. Pingry’s administrators should make an effort to more clearly establish the details of this boundary to both faculty and students, and ensure that violations are identifiable, without question. In practice, a good start to this goal might look like a formal

assembly outlining these boundaries, accompanied by an accessible email or document.

In short, I believe that in order to create an environment that is both conducive to learning and comfortable for students, it is the administration’s paramount duty to draw and enforce teacher-student boundaries. At Pingry, violations of these boundaries have been treated with gravity and resolved with exemplary speed. Simultaneously, though at a lesser degree, we must value the educational benefits of an empathetic relationship. We should recognize that students and teachers should not be as detached from each other as they traditionally were. In fact, with strict barriers, we should embrace the fact that teachers and students are more alike than we think.

The Magic Number

ANEESH KARUPPUR(V)

9, 13, 15,16,19.

A math problem? Of sorts, yes. Except it extends beyond the scope of a simple one-period, ten-problem math test—it is something we deal with at Pingry daily.

Class sizes are one of the most important parts of an educational experience, but we talk about it the least. In fact, I have never heard anybody talk about class size during my two-and-a-half years at Pingry.

Of course, this is mostly justified. Pingry’s class sizes are significantly smaller than those in other schools, both public and private. Our student to faculty ratio is half of what it is in surrounding public schools and one third of the national average.

Smaller class sizes have long been linked to better academic performance and learning capabilities. For the same reason a private tutor is more helpful than a large group lesson, smaller class sizes allow for more individual attention. Pingry bills its class sizes as small enough to foster this connection between the faculty and other students, but not too small as to discourage collaboration and teamwork. Our school prides itself on these class size caps, which are featured prominently in multiple places on pingry.org. They are all centered around the same line: “keeping class sizes to 16 at the Lower School, 14 in the Middle School, and 13 in the Upper School.” Earlier this year, I noticed that my science class seemed unusually large. This made me realize that not every class is as small as Pingry’s website claims. My science class, for example, has 16 students, which isn’t massive, but the lab always feels full. With more students, it is more difficult to provide attention to each

Class Size Per Subject (Students)					
	> 15	15	14	Maximum	Average
English	29.41%	5.88%	29.41%	18	13.94
Math	35.29%	5.88%	35.29%	18	14.47
History	11.76%	23.53%	35.29%	19	14
Science	70.59%	5.88%	5.88%	18	15.88
Language	6.667%	6.667%	6.667%	19	10.13

individual student, regardless of how good a teacher is. When 65 minutes have to be divided up among more students than normal, the time per student ostensibly decreases.

I wanted to make sure I wasn’t the only one noticing that class sizes are inching further away from that magic number 13. So, I created a survey that asked for the class size (including the teacher) of English, math, history, science, and language classes. I sent out the survey to various juniors and the entire Record staff.

Based on this data, class size doesn’t really seem to be much of a problem. The averages are slightly higher than 13, with the exception of science classes, which are fairly higher. On the other hand, language classes seem particularly small.

Clearly, a pattern has emerged. Language classes are mostly reasonably sized, besides one large class. History is the next best, with once again one very large class. English classes are in the middle of the pack, but the class size keeps increasing. Math classes are a little bit higher, but one class has a surprisingly large 20 students. Science classes exhibit the largest class sizes.

It’s understandable that not every class can be exactly 13 students, but to have almost three-quarters of

science classes have more than 15 students is quite a stretch. In fact, not a single one of the science classes is less than 13 students; Pingry’s Science Department prides itself on its thorough explanation of concepts, but this disproportionate class size distribution hampers that proposition. Now, I am in no way criticizing the faculty, staff, or administration. My point isn’t to criticize everyone except the students, but rather to note a trend that hurts our collective education.

Another important thing to note is that this is in no way a perfectly scientific survey—my sample size was small, and I relied heavily on convenience sampling for simplicity’s sake. In this survey, I also asked for an ideal class size. The minimum was 7, and the maximum was 15 students. The average was 10.82 students per class. Obviously, classrooms and teachers don’t appear out of thin air, but some future thought needs to be given to what class size the average student might find beneficial.

Overall, there isn’t really much to panic about—just some intriguing numbers that show class sizes, especially in science, aren’t as low as they should be and that maybe the number 13 isn’t as magical as we might have thought.

Word in the Halls:

Is climate change the most important problem facing America? Why or why not?



“It’s a global issue. It’s the most vital issue that we need to solve because if we don’t have the earth, then every other issue is pretty trivial” - Sanjana Biswas (V)



“Yes, because we might die.” - Franklin Zhu (IV)



“ It could impact our future. I think that’s really important, so that future generations could enjoy the outdoors and everything that we enjoy.” - Alexis Matthews (III)



“Yes, because all of our societal issues are based around having actual ground to walk on. You know, you gotta have actual earth to build cities and roads and start working on other things.” - Thomas Beacham (VI)



“It’s not the most important issue facing America, but it’s the product of a trend of lacking education, lacking ability to research it, and lacking awareness of our earth and our surroundings.” - Jamie Wang (VI)

“I think that climate change is one of the most important issues facing us as inhabitants of this planet. I don’t think it is just an American issue. The actions we take as individuals and as a nation have environmental repercussions that resonate far beyond our borders and potentially longer than our lifetimes” - Ms. Huang-Hobbs



Kaplan Reviews “Far From Home”

ALEX KAPLAN (V)

Is it fair to put the weight of the world on Peter Parker like Tony Stark does?

WARNING: This article contains spoilers for *Avengers: Endgame* and *Spider-Man: Far From Home*. If you don’t want to read spoilers, don’t read on.

This past July, I saw the release of the second Spider-Man film from the Marvel Cinematic Universe—*Spider-Man: Far From Home*. The film was a continuation of where the universe left off after *Avengers: Endgame*. The world is clearly still reeling from the loss of Iron Man in the battle against Thanos at the Avengers Headquarters, and the people are looking for a new symbol of peace. Nobody feels this pressure more than Peter Parker (played by Tom Holland), Tony Stark’s protege and high-school spider-teenager. He is hounded by the press and Nick Fury, and to top it all off, Stark left Peter unfettered access to his military-grade weapons system, EDITH (“Even Dead I’m The Hero”). The story follows Parker as he deals with this pressure and interacts with Mysterio, a walking fake-news metaphor. The circumstances around the film raise a lot of interesting moral questions, including whether or not it is acceptable to deceive people for their own comfort, and if it is fair to interrupt a hero’s daily life to recruit them for a mission. Chief among these questions is this: is it fair to lay the hopes of the world on a teenage hero? Throughout the film, Peter Parker

struggles to balance his life as a normal teenager with his superhero persona, which leads to some perilous situations. Peter spends the majority of the film on a field trip across Europe, where he tries to ask out his crush, MJ. While on a bus through the countryside, Peter realizes that the glasses Tony Stark left for him house EDITH, and he attempts to use it to remove an embarrassing photo from another student’s phone. Instead, he fails to exercise proper precaution and nearly kills a member of his class with a drone strike. Needless to say, Peter does not have the proper experience necessary to operate military-grade artificial intelligence technology. He is too concerned with the issues surrounding his high-school life to to focus on properly utilizing weapons technology.

Unfortunately for Peter, he has to focus on being a hero, for wherever the trip goes, massive elemental monsters follow. This seems to take a toll on him, as throughout the film

Peter laments not being able to spend time with the people in his class. Speaking directly to Mysterio, he says, “I didn’t think I was going to have to save the world this summer. I know that makes me sound like such a jerk. I just, I had this plan with this girl that I really like, and now it’s all ruined.” Peter is unable to commit his time to heroism, and, in my opinion, the Avengers should not expect him to. He deserves to have a high school experience like anyone else’s.

Overall, I thought that *Spider-Man: Far From Home* was a well put-together and enjoyable film. I encourage anyone who likes both high school dramas and superhero/military shenanigans to watch it. It also serves as an effective reminder, and a cautionary tale to people like Pingry students, that teenagers should not be trusted with the fate of the entire world. Much like Peter Parker, we must be wary of overextending ourselves.



On Abbey Road and Elton John

RHEA KAPUR (V)

Even though I dislike the mainstream, formulaic pop that constantly fills Spotify’s “Today’s Top Hits” Playlist, I keep an eye on the charts. Billboard Hot 100? The top 200 albums? Rolling Stone’s Top 100? iTunes Top 100? You name it. Imagine my surprise when, just a few days into October, I saw not Taylor Swift’s Lover at the top of the Billboard 200, but The Beatles’ Abbey Road, as it was just past the album’s 50th anniversary (Sept. 26th).

I went through a brief Beatles phase this summer, after rediscovering Ferris Bueller’s Day Off and the “Twist and Shout” cameo - the song was on repeat for weeks, so much so that Spotify would start recommending it in every single one of my personalized playlists. I mainly listened to their popular works - “Twist and Shout,” of course, “Hey Jude” (the beautiful lyrics of which, by the way, were written by Paul McCartney to comfort John Lennon’s son Julian during his parents’ divorce), “Here Comes The Sun,” and “Blackbird.” But, last week, after noticing the Beatles’ unusual appearance in the Billboard 200, and reminiscing about my summer obsession, I was intrigued. So I put in headphones, closed my doors, and blasted Abbey Road, Remastered 2009. The Beatles’ swan song. The famous last album. The goodbye. And I have to say - it was an experience.

My favorite song by far was “Carry That Weight,” one of the only songs on the album recorded with all four members. It’s dark, it’s deep, it’s striking. A bit of history: recorded as one with “Golden Slumbers,” an eerily reassuring, hopeful, and

vulnerable track in and of itself, the song was written by Paul McCartney but it interestingly featured vocals from all four Beatles. The sheer pressure the song conveys (heavy trumpets, “weight” being repeated, etc. - and that abrupt ending) mirrors the Beatles’ own struggles at the time: inter-group rifts and management troubles with Apple plagued them. Fellow juniors, I bet you can relate to this pressure - I know I’m already feeling it. Take comfort in knowing that the Beatles, too, went through seemingly hopeless times - but of course, theirs was probably much more significant, as the band ended up breaking up at the end. However, those times overall turned out to be great and remembered from today’s perspective, and ours will too - have faith. The weight, in fact, will be “carried a long time.”

A couple more gems from Abbey Road - “You Never Give Me Your Money,” featuring a beautiful, poignant piano base, “Oh! Darling” with McCartney’s wrought, almost painful, but undeniably powerful vocals, and of course, “Come Together” with its unique instrumental backbone - quiet, but with all the more noticeable guitar and beats in the back. I highly recommend those. And check out the 2019 mix of Abbey Road - it has come out in honor of the 50th Anniversary!

To continue my “classics~vibes” music pattern, I was reminded of Elton John - another great artist I constantly listened to this summer after watching the movie in his honor, Rocketman, with some friends. And what a movie that was. It was the first time I really listened to and recognized Elton John, and in theaters, too - the music was just

all-encompassing and consuming in conjunction with the story of his eventful, bright-as-a-supernova life. Hearing the song “Rocketman” blasted, I could sense the mixed feelings and, of course, the Ray Bradbury influence - he wrote a short story in the 1950s entitled “The Rocket Man” upon which the song lyrics are heavily based.

Elton John wrote about the most obscure things - the “blue jean baby” in his hands in “Tiny Dancer” (a classic, by the way - simply a beautiful song), or “Spanish Harlem” in “Mona Lisas and Mad Hatters” (one of my favorite songs of all time, and one of Elton’s own favorites, too. I mean, the emotion in it is unparalleled). Honky Chateau is definitely a must-check-out album. But, I digress. Overall, Elton manages to make each and every one of his songs striking and beautiful. He’s simply a genius - not only with the jazz piano, which backs almost all of his songs, but with the lyrics and the voice, too. I’m eternally envious of those fortunate enough to have witnessed his genius in person, in his prime (Mr. Keating, looking at you!).

So I highly, highly recommend checking out Elton John and Abbey Road. Listen to them alone, in a quiet space, or even on a rainy morning bus ride, but with the music blasting as loud as you can bear - and really feel the music. Let it transport you away from the generic pop for a minute and take you back to the roaring 60s and 70s, when people, places, and music had unique character. Anyway, I’ve been listening to these two as I write this column, and it’s been the perfect vibe. I guarantee you, you’ll be hooked.

Karuppur Tackles Technology Tea



ANEESH KARUPPUR (V)

Some interesting things transpired in the tech world over the summer, and even more during the start of the school year.

Perhaps the most talked-about issue was the release of Apple’s new products in September, the most buzzy of which is the new set of iPhones. These include the iPhone 11, the iPhone 11 Pro, and the iPhone 11 Pro Max. The feature everyone seems to be talking about are the new cameras; on the iPhone 11, there is now a second camera for enhanced zoom. On the iPhone 11 Pros, there are now three cameras: one for normal shots, one for closer ones, and one for an ultra-wide picture. The cameras also feature a new Night Mode, a concept likely pilfered from the previous “camera phone,” the Google Pixel. Night Mode uses software tools to brighten your image without making it grainy. It draws out details from all the black spots of your picture. Portrait mode has been updated, as has the camera app itself. It is now easier to look at and use. iPhones have long had 4K video (ultra-high-definition) abilities, and Apple is now advertising enhanced editing tools to go along with it. Finally, Apple is also selling “slofies” with the new batch of iPhones, which are essentially slow-mo selfie videos. I would consider the camera upgrades a reasonable selling point, but the “slofie” aspect is frankly not very compelling.

Other upgrades from last year’s phones include the improved glass casing and a faster chip that features more machine-learning capabilities. This means that the phone can better optimize various tasks and generally run faster during demanding tasks such as games and Schoology uploads. The new iPhones also come in some nice new colors, and have improved screens for quality and color accuracy.

All of this is well and good, but for me, it does not really add up to a compelling proposition. In fact, these last two years of iPhones have been fairly underwhelming. My recommendation is that, unless you have an iPhone 7 or older, or you really want the cool new camera features, this absurdly expensive update is not worth your money. Next year’s iPhones are rumored to have new designs and potentially 5G, the faster mobile data standard that some Android phones already have. For now, just upload the new iOS 13 on your existing phone and

sit this update out.

Apple also announced some incremental upgrades in the Apple Watch Series 5, but I still recommend a Series 3 or a Series 4 if you can find one, as they have better value. Additionally, iPadOS on iPads can now better mimic a laptop operating system. To get a maximum bang for your buck, I recommend the regular iPad (or iPad Pro for artists) with a Logitech Crayon stylus (or an Apple Pencil for artists). These tablets should serve as good note-taking and art tools. Finally, Apple mildly updated their MacBook Pros by adding the TouchBar mini-touch screen, as well as some processor bumps. This last one gets a lukewarm recommendation from me—I am hoping that Apple will respond to recent leaps made by other manufacturers in the laptop industry and further improve their product.

Now that I have Apple’s news out of the way, let’s talk about Microsoft’s new line of Surface products. The Surface Laptop 3 is more of an incremental upgrade, but there is finally USB-C in the laptop. This port can connect to multiple displays, drives, or any other device through the use of a dongle instead of one individual port.

Microsoft also updated the Surface Pro 7 tablet with similar upgrades as the laptop. The new device here is the Surface Pro X, which is a clear iPad Pro copycat. It is more of a laptop than the Surface Pro 7 is, and comes with a harder keyboard. I still believe that a Dell XPS 2-in-1 would meet the needs of just about every Windows user except the extremely involved artist, so I don’t have a whole lot to recommend from Microsoft; they are charging Apple-level prices while Dell’s XPS’s are offering similar quality for significantly less money. Finally, Samsung has announced its Galaxy Note 10 phones, which offer the best performance an Android phone can offer while still remaining svelte and making good use of the built in stylus (S-Pen). Personally, I am not a fan of Samsung devices, and the camera hole in the display is, in my opinion, a worse design than Apple’s notch. Regardless, the Note 10 is an impressive phone, and if you are willing to pay over a thousand dollars, it’s a solid buy.

That just about wraps it up for this issue’s tech column. I hope it helped you make more informed tech-buying decisions. Stay tuned for the next issue!

Wong Supports Hong Kong Protesters

ANDREW WONG (IV)

As my freshman year approached its finale of final exams, I looked forward to a summer of rest and relaxation.

Half a world away in Hong Kong, students were also busy preparing for their exams and their summer. Unlike me, though, they were ready to forsake their fun summer activities and travel plans this year for something they all knew was more important than a trip abroad. On June 9, 2019, a few days after the school year ended at Pingry, hundreds of thousands of students took to the streets of Hong Kong, on a hot, humid afternoon.

Why?

Hong Kong, formerly a British colony, was handed back to China in 1997. As part of the handover, Hong Kong was allowed to have “a high degree of autonomy,” with the ability to “enjoy executive, legislative, and independent judicial power” until 2047, when it would become fully integrated into China.

However, since the handover, this autonomy has steadily eroded. As seen in the last five years, with the barring of six pro-democracy lawmakers from local elections, the kidnapping of local booksellers by the Chinese government, and the arrests of prominent student activists, it has become all too clear that mainland China had been encroaching on Hong Kong’s sovereignty.

In March 2019, Carrie Lam, Hong Kong’s Chief Executive, proposed a bill that would allow fugitives in Hong Kong to be extradited back to mainland China to stand trial in the Chinese judicial system, an opaque legal system with a conviction rate



of 99.99%. Many Hongkongers were outraged by this extradition bill. They could no longer afford to sit and watch their government appease Beijing’s hunger for power.

In early June, a summer of revolution began. One million Hongkongers swarmed the streets, followed by two million the next week, all demanding that the extradition bill be withdrawn. Despite this, Carrie Lam refused to withdraw the bill.

After a long July of violence, which saw protestors storm the Legislative Council, innocent students viciously attacked by triads in a suburban train station, and a young nurse providing first aid to protestors have her eye shot out by the police, I arrived in Hong Kong. Arriving at the airport,

I saw young student protestors, not much older than myself, handing out flyers detailing the various instances of police brutality and the corruption of the Hong Kong government. Later that night, I watched on the news as riot police stormed into the airport, firing tear gas and rubber bullets into large crowds of those students.

I was shocked. Why must these students spend their valuable summer risking their lives, while we get to spend our summer lounging on the beach or at home in peace? What is it that prompts an entire generation to rise up in open revolution?

The day school started, on September 4th, I heard the news that everyone in Hong Kong had longed to hear for the last three months.

The extradition bill would finally be withdrawn. It was too little, too late. Since the start of the protests, 2,000 people had been injured, 1,500 people from ages 12 to 75 had been arrested, and there are rumors that nearly 30 protestors had died as a result of police brutality.

Returning to Pingry, I found peace on campus. I saw students going about their day without the burden of anxiety that comes from tyranny and oppression. In comparing the settings of my summer and my normal life, I realize just how valuable freedom is.

I am proud of the fact that I stood with Hong Kong in the fight for liberty this summer. In August, I was part of the “Peaceful, Rational, and Nonviolent” march, organized

by the Civil Human Rights Front in response to weeks of constant police brutality against civilians. I saw the full unity of Hong Kong on display that day, where 1.7 million people of all ages, from little babies in strollers to the elderly, came out despite torrential rain. With chants of “Fight for freedom! Stand with Hong Kong!” and “Hongkongers! Keep going!” our march pushed forward while a heavy monsoon poured. The scenes that played out that day deeply moved me. It was a powerful display of resistance and perseverance from ordinary Hongkongers against the abusive power of mainland China.

For many Honglongers, what they hope can be achieved as a result of months of struggle can be perfectly summed up in the lyrics of “Glory to Hong Kong,” which has become the anthem of the Hong Kong protests. The song grants hope: “We pledge, no more tears on our land. In wrath doubts dispelled we make our stand. Arise! All ye who would not be slaves again: For Hong Kong, may Freedom reign!”

There is still a long road ahead and more months of struggle for the protestors. However, I, along with many other Hongkongers, hope that in the end, the struggle for freedom will triumph.

光復香港！
時代革命！
香港人加油！

Liu On Looking Past the Surface

HELEN LIU (V)

The speaker at the podium—let’s call him A—gave his speech, charged with emotion. I never knew he could write like this, I thought, as I clapped along with my friends at the particularly touching parts. I didn’t know A that well—he was in a separate friend circle at that point—but the works he shared in our summer writing class had always been deeply personal. They were sharp and honest declarations of his cultural identity and body image, but they had never been as carefully planned and brilliantly executed as this one.

Later that night, after everyone finished presenting, my entire friend group crowded into one room and started discussing all the orations we’d heard. We loved Elijah’s speech, Annie’s story was beautiful, and A did so well; did you know he could write like that? Those that had presented were congratulated, and those that hadn’t yet were encouraged to do so next week. This was a writer’s workshop after all. Nobody would judge us, as long as we did our best.

There was a knock on the door and a classmate stepped in, looking frazzled. “Uh, hey, sorry, I didn’t want to bother you guys, but my friends

are getting all caught up in drama right now, and I don’t really want to get involved.” She shut the door behind her, looked around, and continued in a hushed voice. “Did you know that A plagiarized his entire speech off Youtube?”

It was true. The word choice, the inflection in tone, the pauses every few sentences. A had copied almost every single thing. He didn’t own up to it fully; when the truth caught up to him, he claimed that he found the speech online in his native language and had translated it. He apologized for plagiarizing and promised that he wouldn’t do it again. Yet a week later, when we were sharing pieces for our class anthology, he read a piece that one of my friends had previously shown me online. After finishing, he looked at me with a smile and said, “I spent a lot of time on this, taking inspiration from all different parts of my life. Did you like it?”

I smiled back, genuinely, but a little sad. “Of course. It’s beautiful.”

I should’ve been angry. He was lying straight to my face; he broke his promise and my already-wavering trust in him as a friend. Though, with A, I realized I couldn’t even be annoyed.

One of the first pieces he had shared in class was one he had written during a free-writing session. He talked about his childhood as an immigrant and the self-hatred that developed because of it. He wished he had blonde hair and blue eyes when he

was young, and later he despised his body altogether. He was insecure about his English and had always felt out of place. It wasn’t until high school, he said, that he began to understand that he should love himself for who he was; in his words, he was “a star that shone and could help other people shine too.”

He would randomly compliment people in class and was always the first to declare with a grin that our writing was beautiful or that we were the nicest people he’d ever met. The last night at the workshop, he hugged me, urged me to stay in touch, and

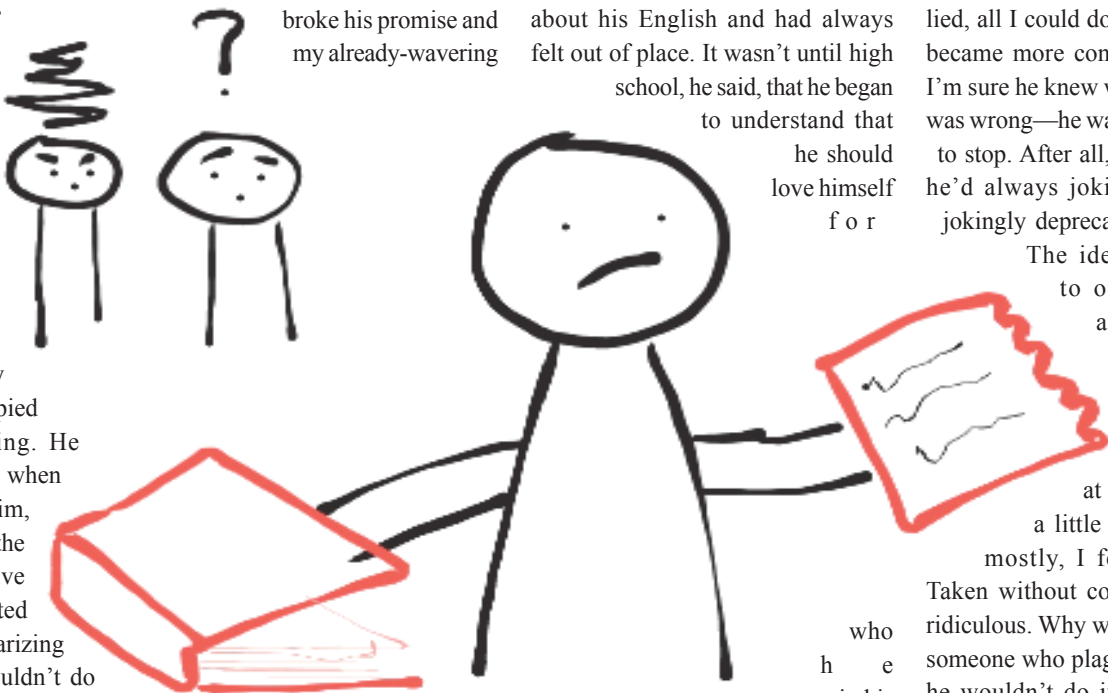
thanked me for being his friend.

So, even though A plagiarized and lied, all I could do was hope that he became more confident in himself. I’m sure he knew what he was doing was wrong—he was just too insecure to stop. After all, in class, he’d always jokingly-but-not-so-jokingly deprecate his own work.

The idea of showing it to other people, let alone presenting it to an entire camp, must have been terrifying. I couldn’t be angry at him. Sure, I was a little disappointed, but mostly, I felt bad for him.

Taken without context, this seems ridiculous. Why would I feel bad for someone who plagiarized, promised he wouldn’t do it again, and then broke that promise?

I felt bad because that’s not all who A was. I barely knew him, yet I could tell he was optimistic, cheerful, and the type of person who wanted to make those around him happy, even while struggling with his own happiness. To reduce him to a plagiarizer—that would be ridiculous.



Winterbottom Reaches New Heights in Iceland

MAILE WINTERBOTTOM (V)

In the midst of some last-minute scrambling to put my summer plans together last April, I quickly scrolled through possible programs and trips I could attend. I came across a two week trip to Iceland held by Overland Summers, a program that takes kids on trips led by college students. It was a backpacking trip, something I was interested in undertaking, and I was up for the challenge. So I clicked “register” and embarked on the journey.

When the day came for me to leave, I was a nervous wreck. I wondered what I got myself into. I thought my two years as an avid Pingry Outing Club participant would prepare me for this, but as the trip grew closer, the thought of strapping my belongings to my back for two weeks in a foreign country felt like something I could never do. Nevertheless, I hopped on the plane to Reykjavik (Iceland’s capital) with my half broken-in hiking boots and didn’t look back.

As soon as I met my group of nine other high school students and two college students (who led the trip), my anxiety that had built up over the weeks prior seemed to dissipate. We settled down at a campsite in Reykjavik on our first night and prepared for the next week, which we would spend backpacking. We

would through-hike the Laugavegur trek, a fifty-mile trail popular among tourists in Iceland. I had never done anything like it before.

Although the nerves were sinking in, the girls that I had met just a day

ago were already turning out to be my close friends. We talked about our lives back home, our concerns for the trip, how much we missed home, and so much more. There were four girls including me on the

trip, and every night we would go into a tent and talk for at least an hour about everything that happened that day, and any other things that were on our mind.

When we arrived at the start of

difficult uphill. My pack was heavy with food for the group, my clothes for the next week, my tent, and my sleeping bag (weighing forty pounds altogether!). As it turned out, the forty pounds on my back didn’t

had pad thai for dinner and played cards, as we continued to bond with our group.

The rest of the trip proved to be one of the most breathtaking and formative experiences I’ve ever had. I met so many different people from different backgrounds and hearing their stories brought me to tears on several occasions. The trail was tough, but it brought us together as a group. Sometimes, completing even the smallest obstacles, like crossing a river or making it to the top of a steep hill, was so gratifying for me. At the end of every day, when I would take off my pack and look back on the miles I just hiked, I thought of the songs I sang, the stories I told and heard, and even the lunch I had, all the while thinking of how grateful I was to be in such a beautiful place.

My trip to Iceland left me feeling humbled by the outdoors and even more appreciative of our environment. In addition, I made some great bonds with the people on my trip who I’m still in contact with. The raw beauty of everything I saw along the way was incomparable to anything I’ve ever seen and taught me more than I have ever learned in the classroom, with concrete walls and fluorescent lighting. It made me realize the importance of embracing nature and taking that leap into the unknown.



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the Laugavegur trek, my anxiety for backpacking had returned, especially after our leaders told us that the first day would be the hardest day of the trip, with ten miles of ground to cover and many

hold me back from having a great first day on the trail. The ten miles, although difficult, left me feeling accomplished, and the views added to my sense of achievement. When we got to the second campsite, we

E-ddicted: Using Tech Innovation to Combat Our Public Health

EMMA HUANG (V)

For six weeks this summer, I had the opportunity to work in Cooper Union’s Summer STEM Makerspace Program. Filled with 3-D printers, plasma laser cutters, and soldering and circuit stations, the Makerspace was an innovator’s dream – a place where I could turn an idea into a reality. Each day, I designed, coded, and prototyped. In addition to working in the Makerspace, we participated in business and entrepreneurship workshops, which included public speaking, a STEM career advice panel, and a Computer Science and Ethics discussion group. We also received lessons on how to build circuits using Arduinos (a platform for building prototypes) and how to use OnShape (a CAD, or computer aided design, software) to create 3-D models. We were tasked to identify a real-world problem, devise an invention which would address it and then pitch our ideas. I set on developing a prototype to help solve a public health crisis we face.

It was during my daily commute on the train into New York City where I saw a recurring theme. While exiting Penn Station each day, clouds of vape aerosol and cigarette smoke filled my line of sight. One morning, I even saw a mother hurriedly swerve her stroller away from the fumes and turn her children’s heads away from the smoke. As I continued to navigate

my way down to lower Manhattan on the subway, I witnessed similar situations occur. In each instance, the second-hand smoke affected everyone. This made me think about that infant in the stroller, the elderly man next to me, and all the

When heated, the base degrades to chemicals such as formaldehyde and benzene gas. These carcinogens are released into the air when exhaled, thereby making the effects of second-hand smoke toxic to surrounding people. More recent data indicates

knowing it? Alternatively, how many people would avoid heavily concentrated vape areas if they had the information accessible to them? After a quick search, I was surprised to find that in our home state of New Jersey, only two towns have

This prompted me to conceptualize VapeEscape, a fixed air pollution sensor that works with a notification system and interactive map that allows users to detect vape aerosol and cigarette smoke via a mobile app that is iOS and Android compatible. I pitched VapeEscape as my individual project proposal and formed a team of four to help make my idea a possible reality. For the next four weeks, my teammates and I spent countless hours troubleshooting code (in Arduino based C, Java, and Python languages), wiring our sensors to Arduino and Raspberry Pi circuits, and designing a sleek model of VapeEscape in CAD. Though there were some hurdles to overcome– for example, a key sensor we ordered did not arrive until a few days before our final presentation– the hard-working spirit of my team resulted in the creation of a product we envisioned as being instrumental in regulating air safety in workplaces, hospitals, airports, schools, and restaurants, to name a few.

The insight I gained from this summer has been invaluable. From working with the Cooper Union faculty to collaborating with peers of different backgrounds, I was excited to learn from and share ideas with a diverse group of innovators. I’ve also realized how much I value the role of technology as a springboard to benefit the greater society, especially in tackling solutions to problems that plague our communities.



people around who are susceptible to the effects of second-hand vape aerosol and cigarette smoke. Even more, what about those who are more vulnerable, like those with pulmonary and respiratory issues as common as asthma?

Vape juice contains a glycerin base.

that there have been over a dozen vaping-linked deaths and more than 800 vaping-related lung illnesses across the country. Knowing the vast epidemic of vaping and realizing its negative health effects, I wondered: how many people are inhaling vape aerosol second-hand without

specific laws regulating the use of e-cigarettes in public areas (as of July 2019), and vapes and e-cigarettes do not fall under cigarette regulations. With a vaping epidemic on the rise, I wondered why a device or system which regulates vaping in public areas doesn’t already exist.

Photo Credits (Left to Right): Maile Winterbottom (V), Emma Huang (V)

English: Mrs. Kelly Ross

BRIAN LI (IV)

Mrs. Kelly Ross will be welcomed by the Pingry community this fall as she joins the Upper School English Department. She will teach English 9, Creative Writing, and Shakespeare.

Mrs. Ross received her Arts in English bachelor’s degree from Bucknell University. During her time at Bucknell, she also completed the degree requirements for a Bachelor of Science in Education and minored in Italian. After she graduated, Mrs. Ross received her Master of Arts in English from Middlebury College.

Before arriving at Pingry, Mrs. Ross taught at a couple of other schools, including Oak Knoll. She held a variety of roles in her previous positions: she served as a lacrosse, cross-country, and track coach. She was the moderator for the school newspaper, the director for a program similar to the seniors’ ISP, and contributed to the diversity team. She also worked as a tutor for students taking standardized tests and assisted in general academic assignments. When asked what else she had done before coming to Pingry, Mrs. Ross said that she has been teaching for most of her career. “I’ve pretty much been a teacher since I graduated from college, but I love teaching and I’m happy to be here,” she said.

Inspired by her high school English teacher to pursue a career in education, Mrs. Ross said that her combination of being an “engaging teacher,” yet also “having very high standards” motivated and allowed her to become a better reader and writer. In her senior year of college, she became a student-teacher and quickly realized that she loved teaching. She said, “If I could teach for free, I would. For me, it’s more than just a job; it’s a vocation.”

Mrs. Ross was drawn to Pingry by the school’s commitment to intellectual engagement. She remarked, after working with students from other schools, she was impressed by the students’ passion for learning. “I really see that in the students. They’re spending their free time doing research and I see them going above and beyond what’s expected to engage intellectually and that is a teacher’s dream come true.” As for her time here so far, Mrs. Ross noted that she has already noticed the school’s mission of honor and integrity in the students and staff. “I feel that those are principles that the school takes to heart ... as a whole, the community is really engaged and that makes me feel like it’s a great place to be.”

When asked about her goals for the school year, Mrs. Ross said that she wants to encourage her students to see how the



skills they learn in English apply outside of the classroom. She also hopes to become more involved in the school community in the near future.

Mrs. Ross is excited to join the community and meet everybody on campus. “I feel the school is committed to the right values; I really enjoy my students so far, and I’m looking forward to seeing how the rest of the year goes.”

History: Mr. Saad Toor

ANDREW WONG (IV)

This year, the Upper School History Department welcomes Mr. Saad Toor, who will be teaching three sections of World History 9 and one section of World History 10.

Mr. Toor recently completed his second M.A. in South Asian Studies at Oxford University in the United Kingdom, where he was fortunate enough to be taught by important world leaders such as Hillary Clinton, the Prime Ministers of Kosovo and Kenya, and many British ambassadors. In addition, he was a classmate to politicians and important figures in the world, such as Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai, and former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

At Oxford, Mr. Toor studied the history of Pakistan and India under British colonization, as well as the geopolitical aftermath of decolonization that continues to affect the region to this day. Outside of class, Mr. Toor played cricket for the Oxford Pakistan XI club team and Merton College club teams, and trained with the Wolfson-Saint Cricket Club and Oxenford Cricket Club. Mr. Toor was also active in debate at Oxford, and was fortunate enough to debate Gandhi’s grandson on the Indian Partition.

Alongside his M.A. in South Asian Studies, Mr. Toor holds

an M.A. in curriculum and instruction from the University of Connecticut and a B.A. in Political Science with a minor in History and Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Connecticut.

Mr. Toor taught college students at the University of Connecticut’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and Stanford Unviersity’s Bing Overseas Program. He also taught history to high school students for two years in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia at an international school, and taught for two years in the Connecticut public school system.

Mr. Toor brings a unique global perspective from his studies in the UK and two years teaching in Saudi Arabia, and he hopes that his “extensive global experience will inspire Pingry students to reach out of their comfort zone and go abroad to have life-changing experiences similar to what I did.” Having lived in three different countries and two different states in the last four years, Mr. Toor hopes that New Jersey will be a new and welcoming home for him. He is especially interested in Pingry’s Honor Code, and how it “inspires students to hold themselves to the standards of ‘Excellence and Honor’ and try new things in school.” He plans to try new things as well, and intends to “learn all sorts of life lessons from [his] own students” as they grow throughout the year. He is thrilled to



bring expertise on the histories and politics of the Middle East, Pakistan, and India to the classroom, and hopes that his students will be just as interested in history as he is.

In his free time, Mr. Toor loves playing and watching cricket, and has written several commentaries on the sport. He is an avid Dallas sports fan, and loves watching UConn college basketball during March Madness.

World Languages (French & Spanish): Mr. Kevin Schroedter

JOSIE ALSTON (V)

This fall, Pingry welcomes Mr. Kevin Schroedter to the Middle and Upper School Language Departments. Mr. Schroedter will teach French 2 in the Middle and Upper School, along with Spanish 2 and French 5 in the Upper School. He will also be the assistant coach for the high school water polo and swim teams.

Born in Bogota, Colombia, Mr. Schroedter grew up immersed in the Spanish language and continued to speak it throughout his childhood after he relocated to Miami. However, Mr. Schroedter fell in love with French, a language held in high esteem by his family, especially his grandfather, who served as a French professor for the Colombian military and as a military attaché in Paris.

Mr. Schroedter continued to pursue his passion at Duke University where he earned his B.A. in Political Science and French, and Middlebury College where he earned his M.A. in French.

Mr. Schroedter is no stranger to teaching, as this year marks his 28th year teaching French and Spanish at a day or boarding

school. He has taught at a “long list” of schools all over the world, including London, Paris, Zermatt, California, Delaware, Texas, and North Carolina. He describes teaching as a way to “stay immersed in the French world and earn a living” while using professional development opportunities to “become a better teacher” and “connect with young people to make a difference.”

Although it has only been a few months, Mr. Schroedter really enjoys Pingry, describing it as a “convivial environment” where he can enjoy the support of his colleagues and get to know his students better. He acknowledges that Pingry can be a “high-pressure environment” at times; however, the school exudes an air of “humanity”, with enough “down moments in the day to form human connections, which makes it motivating and both physically and emotionally possible to invest so much in the academic part of things.”

Mr. Schroedter has experience working at similar schools and has set “finding [his] way, getting used to how things are done, adapting to expectations, and transitioning to the department” as his goals for his first year.

In his free time, Mr. Schroedter likes to stay active and



exercise with his wife and Carolina dog/Australian cattle dog mix, Tasha. He spends a lot of time on a bike as a way to “decompress”, and he enjoys going on walks in the park and on the beach with his family. A self-proclaimed foodie, Mr. Schroedter loves finding new places to eat, citing “sitting down with a book and cappuccino and watching the world go by” as one of his favorite things to do.

Mr. Schroedter is looking forward to his first year at Pingry and he is ready to weather the challenges that come with being a new teacher.

History: Dr. Zachary Wakefield

EVA SCHILLER (V)

As the new school year begins, Pingry is extremely fortunate to welcome Dr. Zachary Wakefield to the History Department. He attended Juniata College, where he earned a Bachelor’s Degree in history. He then went on to earn his M.A. and Ph.D at Auburn University, both in history as well. Prior to joining the Pingry community, he spent four years working as a history teacher and coach at a boarding school.

At Pingry, Dr. Wakefield is teaching three World History 9 classes and one AP US History Class, where he has already spearheaded some of his unique classroom practices. These include placing phones in a basket at the start of class, as well as taking paper notes instead of electronic notes.

When asked how these tactics benefitted the classroom environment, it all came down to keeping students focused: “People have been conditioned to pick up their cell phones or check social media as soon as they get a notification,” he explained. “I get that, so rather than me getting upset and disrupting class, I like to just take it out of the equation.”

In addition to the techniques he has brought with him, Dr.

Wakefield wants to try new methods and expand his horizons. “My goal for the school year is just to get out of my comfort zone, teaching-wise, and maybe try more student-driven activities,” he said. He would also like to attend a number of academic conferences. After his first month at Pingry, he is optimistic: “The students are smart, and they keep me on my toes,” he said laughing. “They’re pushing me, which makes for a really good classroom environment.” He also enjoys the vibrant atmosphere, as well as the rural setting. “I love the area; it reminds me of where I grew up,” he remarked.

In keeping with his passion for history, Dr. Wakefield’s hobbies are quite worldly. When he’s not teaching, Dr. Wakefield loves being outdoors, whether that be hiking or going to the beach. He is also an avid reader and traveller.

Being a new teacher can be intimidating, but Dr. Wakefield is ready to rise to the occasion. “Even though I’m starting at a new school, which is challenging, I’m going to try my best to grow as a teacher and achieve my goals,” he stated. Good luck, Dr. Wakefield!



World Languages (Mandarin): Mr. Michael Wang

ZOE WANG (V)

This fall, the Pingry community welcomed Mr. Michael Wang, who teaches Chinese 1, two sections of Chinese 3, and Chinese 6. In addition to teaching, Mr. Wang chaperones the Middle School Homework Club.

Mr. Wang graduated with a bachelor’s degree from the Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics. Before coming to Pingry, he was a teacher at St. George’s School in Newport, RI. He has taught Chinese for 18 years at all levels, including AP. Besides teaching Chinese, Mr. Wang coached soccer and was a dorm advisor.

So far, Mr. Wang really enjoys Pingry. “Pingry is a very

friendly environment; it is like a home and like a family,” he said. His goal this year at Pingry is to get to know his students well in order to better serve and adapt to their needs.

The one aspect of Pingry which really sticks out to Mr. Wang is the teacher-student relations. In his interview he pointed out the constructive familiarity between teachers and students. This was a large factor in his decision to work at Pingry. The small greetings and interactions he saw were something he hadn’t seen in other schools.

Outside of school, Mr. Wang likes to exercise. He enjoys running, playing basketball with his youngest son, and exploring new local areas.



Mathematics: Mr. Zhaojun Yong

BROOKE PAN (V)

The Upper School Mathematics Department welcomes Mr. Zhaojun Yong, who will be teaching both Honors Geometry and Advanced Algebra and Geometry. Besides teaching, he will also be coaching the boys’ freshman basketball team and advising a club in the middle school.

Mr. Yong is no stranger to New Jersey. Having grown up near Rutgers, he is familiar with the Basking Ridge area. In his free time, he enjoys playing sports, mainly tennis and basketball. “Sports, as well as running in general, are great ways to get my mind off of school and academics,” he said. Mr. Yong is especially drawn to playing basketball, having been a member of his high school basketball team. This experience played a large role in his inclination to coach basketball at Pingry. “I’ve always loved playing basketball,” Mr. Yong said. “Especially now that some of my students are also involved with the team, it creates another dimension towards them in terms of understanding who they are.” Mr. Yong praises basketball for its ability to “allow kids to interact in a manner different from class settings.” With the season approaching, he is looking forward to coaching the team.

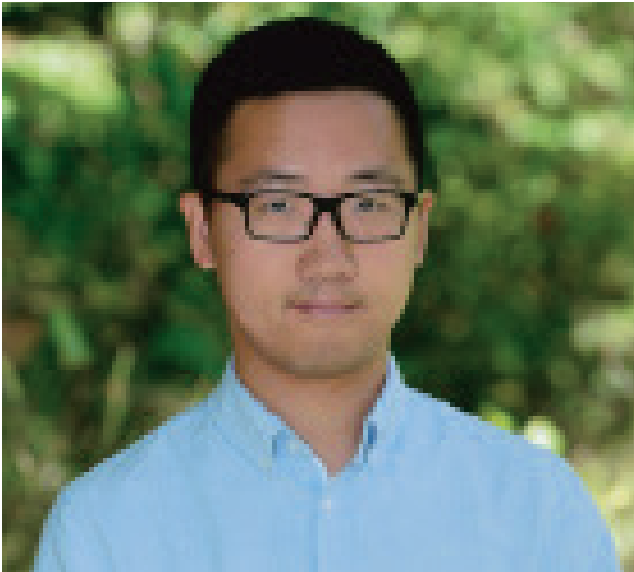
Prior to coming to Pingry, Mr. Yong attended college at NYU, where he majored in mathematics. He recently finished graduate school at Columbia University. There, he furthered his schooling in mathematics, earning his master’s degree in Mathematics Education.

During his time at college, he often served as an informal tutor for his fellow peers; he helped them whenever they had

difficulty with math-related problems. This informal service soon unveiled Mr. Yong’s passion for teaching and paved the way for his future career.

Mr. Yong started his educational career by working as a substitute teacher. “The desire to want to help students and help others” was his main motivation for teaching. In the past, he knew that many of his peers saw math as too difficult, and they would, therefore, shy away from the subject. In hopes of changing these perceptions, Mr. Yong strives to create an atmosphere in his classes where “students do not feel discouraged,” and rather feel open and “accepting towards new challenges.”

At Pingry, Mr. Yong aspires to “help more high schoolers to not feel so intimidated by math.” He plans to achieve this by “helping prepare [students] as best as I can, in terms of what I know and what I can do.” Good luck, Mr. Yong!



The Middle School: New Faculty

Matthew (Matt) Composto ‘13,
English Department

Lisa Hartmann, Math Department

Haley Host, History Department

Julia Martinez, History Department

Cecily Moyer, Science Department

Guadalupe Núñez, Language
Department

Anupama Menon P ‘26, Computer
Science

World Languages (Chinese): Ms. Yifan Xu

MAILE WINTERBOTTOM (V)

The Pingry community welcomes Ms. Yifan Xu this fall as a teacher of Middle and Upper School Chinese. She will be teaching levels 1A, 1B, and Chinese 2 in the Upper School. She has two years of prior teaching experience before coming to Pingry, having taught Chinese at an all-girls boarding school in Virginia. Ms. Xu received her B.A from Beijing Language and Culture University, majoring in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. She went on to study at SUNY Binghamton where she received her M.A in Asian Studies.

Ms. Xu loves the Pingry community so far, explaining how other teachers have welcomed her with open arms. “The faculty here are all very dedicated to their work and have a passion for teaching.” She said, “They are all very supportive of me as a young teacher.”

Her inspiration for teaching comes from a passion for spreading knowledge. “Every time I can see the excitement and curiosity in the students’ eyes, that motivates me to be a teacher.”

Ms. Xu is a dedicated teacher with many objectives for her students. She has been impressed and is excited by her students thus far, saying that, “They are very creative and engaged in learning.” Her main goals at Pingry this year are to develop a positive environment in her classroom and make sure her students progress as Chinese speakers. “I want to build positive student-teacher relationships,” she remarked.

Outside of Pingry, Ms. Xu currently lives in New Brunswick and enjoys hiking, as well as cooking and K-Pop. On the weekends, she is always up for viewing a good horror movie. We wish Ms. Xu good luck on achieving her goals!



Mathematics: Ms. Alexandra Lasevich

RHEA KAPUR (V)

Ms. Alexandra Lasevich joins Pingry this fall as the new Math Department Chair. She also teaches Advanced Algebra and Trigonometry, both regular and honors, as well as Precalculus.

After earning a B.A. in Mathematics from the University of Rochester, Ms. Lasevich went on to receive an M.S. in Educational Leadership at Delaware Valley University. She is currently working on her dissertation for an EdD from Delaware Valley University and aims to defend it this summer. Her research focuses on international faculty teaching in independent schools and examines how they are adjusting to teaching in schools they never attended. Ms. Lasevich herself was born and raised in Russia, and she notes how interesting it has been for her to come to America and experience a different style of education.

Prior to coming to Pingry, Ms. Lasevich taught math at Princeton Day School and was a part of the Community and Multicultural Development Team. She also led a number of student organizations: two affinity groups (the LGBTQ affinity group and the Jewish affinity group), GLOW (similar to Pingry’s GSA), SAFE (a diversity group), and a Russian Club.

When asked to detail her path to teaching, Ms. Lasevich said “When I came to this country, I was studying to be a computer engineer. And when I arrived

at my first school, I didn’t speak English. They realized very quickly that my math was more advanced than that of the average American student, so they asked me to tutor.”

“At first, I looked at it more as a source of income, but people were coming in, and all of a sudden there were lines and lines of people,” she said. “They kept saying, ‘You should teach, you should teach, you’re good at it!’ So I switched to pure mathematics—I hadn’t yet decided to teach, though—and pursued theoretical mathematics for some time, until the end of my senior year, when I decided to get my certification.”

In addition to teaching mathematics, Ms. Lasevich also advises Middle School Homework Club and plans to help out the Russian Literature Humanities Independent Research Team with understanding the meanings and cultural context behind the various Russian names.

“I want to not get lost this year. It’s confusing, but I think I’m OK now with the corridors,” Ms. Lasevich joked. But, in all seriousness, she hopes to get to know the school, the school culture, and the Math Department better, and just observe and learn.

“I love it here,” she said. “I think it is an amazing place to work. And from what I see, it seems to be an amazing place to be a student.”

Ms. Lasevich spends quite a bit of her free time

working on her dissertation. But she also loves to garden; it’s one of her favorite things to do. Currently, she’s experimenting with new plants, growing from seeds and learning how to care for her newly fruiting fruit trees.



Drama (Production Designer): Mr. Joseph Napolitano

ASHLEIGH PROVOOST (IV)

Mr. Joseph Napolitano is thrilled to join the Pingry faculty as a teacher as well as a set designer. He will be co-teaching sections of the Scenic Costume and Design course this year, and has already been named Head Set Designer for all of Pingry’s drama productions. In addition to designing, he plans to assist in set construction, as well as tackle various other aspects of Pingry Drama, ranging from ticketing services to environmental graphic upgrades and marketing initiatives.

Before joining Pingry, Mr. Napolitano attended Rowan University. After graduating, he worked on design. “[I] collaborated with a variety of organizations and universities on creative placemaking, experience design projects, large-scale public art, and production design for theatre and television,” he mentioned. He’s also taught design workshops and classes and really enjoyed the experience, which is one of the reasons he wanted to teach at Pingry. “[They] inspired me to seek out further opportunities for sharing my knowledge of process,” he recalled.

So far, Mr. Napolitano enjoys being a part of the Pingry community. “My experiences thus far at Pingry

have been wonderful!” he remarks. “I’m extremely grateful for the drama department faculty and staff. I could not have asked for a better team to be a part of.” Mr. Napolitano is currently working with part of the Student Tech and Design Crew for this year’s fall play, *Our Town*. He has really enjoyed working with these students so far, stating, “I’m most grateful to have witnessed moments of brilliance amongst our theatre design/tech crew students in the shop.”

One goal he has for this year is to educate his students about the different areas of production design and hopefully spread his passion to aspiring designers. Another goal is to “draw parallels to adjacent areas of study [e.g., architecture, thematic design, technology, etc.] and identify specific skills that are used not only in theatre-making, but in many other disciplines as well.”

Outside of Pingry, Mr. Napolitano designs professional productions, including *Into the Woods*, *Urinetown*, and other productions both on and off Broadway,f and has won multiple awards for his designs.

He also is passionate about sustainability in his profession, and enjoys working with the charitable organization Broadway Green Alliance. With this organization, he works “on multiple sustainable

initiatives industry-wide,” which promote recycling and sustainability in the Broadway community.

He is incredibly excited to getting to know the community in the upcoming year! Welcome, Mr. Napolitano!



World Languages (German): Dr. Igor Jasinski

CALLIE MAHONEY (V)

Herr Igor Jasinski is back! This year, he will be teaching a variety of both Upper and Middle School courses: German I, German III and IV for high schoolers, and German IA for the sixth graders. He is also a faculty advisor of the *Polyglot* magazine, and a Middle School Homework Club proctor.

Herr Jasinski grew up in a small town in Germany outside of Düsseldorf, and later went to the University of Düsseldorf, earning his Grundstudium (bachelor’s) degree in Philosophy and German Literature and Linguistics. From there, he received his Hauptstudium (graduate) degree from the University of Tubingham in Philosophy and Modern German Literature. He then participated in graduate studies, including a Ph.D. program in Philosophy at Stony Brook University in New York, earning an MA in the subject.

Herr Jasinski’s teaching career began at Bergen County Academies, shortly after finishing his Ph.D program. He had never taught before, but he says that even during his interview for the position, he could tell that teaching was



something he really loved: “It’s hard to quantify it, but it was interacting with the students that felt great... How you create a community, and the feeling you get when it works and you’ve created a curiosity and openness in a student, I feel like I connected with that.” After Bergen County, Jasinski taught at a variety of schools, both

private and public, including William-Cullen Bryant High School and Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School for German and/or Philosophy.

Herr Jasinski began at Pingry in 2009 and taught classes here for five years before deciding to take a sabbatical in 2014; he enrolled in a Montclair-based EdD, or Doctorate of Education, program in Pedagogy and Philosophy. To write his dissertation, he moved to a city on the coast of Mexico, Puerto Escondido. While he was there, he received and accepted his first book offer. Giorgio Agamben: Education without Ends was published at the end of 2018.

After publishing his book, Herr Jasinski decided that it was time to get back to teaching, scouring the U.S. for available jobs. Luckily for us, he was able to come back and teach at Pingry. Though he admits he does not have a lot of free time, Herr Jasinski loves to run, Salsa dance, and do yoga. He is also hoping to start a Philosophy Club here at Pingry this year, and maybe even propose a course on the subject. “Teaching philosophy to young people is a real passion of mine,” he says. We wish him the best of luck this year, and are excited to have him back!

School News:

Pingry Installs Second Gender Neutral Bathroom on Campus

ASHLEIGHT PROVOOST (IV)

Over the summer, Pingry installed a gender neutral restroom in the athletics wing. This was a big step forward for Pingry and its continued advocacy for a more inclusive school community; this engagement has provided a bathroom that allows privacy for all who choose to use it. It ensures a safe space for people who may not feel comfortable using cisgender bathrooms and upholds Pingry’s values of acceptance and inclusion.

“The GSA was heavily involved in the planning process,” said Sarah Gagliardi (IV), one of the student leaders of GSA. “They talked to the Head of School and collaborated with [faculty and staff].” The GSA, or Gender Sexuality Alliance, is a club at Pingry that promotes acceptance of all people regardless of their identifiers. The goal of GSA is to create a welcoming community at Pingry in which members and allies of the LGBTQ+ community can feel safe. Members of GSA brainstormed ideas to make the community more inclusive, and having the new bathroom available for the entire community is a true testament to the commitment of past and present GSA members and leaders.

The new bathroom aligns both Pingry and GSA values. “By expanding the amount of inclusive bathrooms, it creates a safer and more welcoming environment for students and faculty, where they feel that they’re accepted,” noted Gagliardi (IV).

Prior to this school year, there were no bathrooms on campus specifically labelled as gender neutral. With the help of faculty and staff, GSA worked to make this bathroom a reality. Now, it is available to students who feel more comfortable using a bathroom facility that ensures privacy and security, as well as the entire community. Implementing the bathroom is an important step towards Pingry’s continued commitment to diversity and acceptance of all.

Gender neutral bathrooms are extremely important to the community at large, and Pingry’s accommodation of people of all identifiers allows for a safer environment that embraces all people.



Friday Night Lights Wows the Community



ZOE WANG (IV)

This year’s annual PSPA Friday Night Lights took place on September 27, as hundreds of students, families, and faculty from the Lower, Middle, and Upper Schools came together to support the Big Blue’s football team.

The evening began with the community gathered around the tent to enjoy pizza, pasta, and mozzarella sticks while keeping warm with hot chocolate and apple cider. Along with the food and drinks, teddy bears of a variety of colors were handed out to everyone. Although the team lost 34-0 to Long Island Lutheran, the energy from the stands was unbeatable. “Despite the loss, I really enjoyed FNL, and the enthusiasm of the crowd was great,” Katherine Xie (IV) said. Form VI students were especially energized, cheering on their fellow seniors with large cardboard cutouts of the players. They also started chants for the crowd to follow.

Big Blue may have lost this game, but the spirit from the community was never diminished.



CARTOONS BY MIA SHUM (V)



2019 Fall Awards Assembly Celebrates Last Year’s Accomplishments

LAUREN TAYLOR (VI)

On Friday, September 20, the Upper School gathered in Hauser Auditorium to celebrate students who displayed exceptional academic effort and achievement in the 2018-2019 school year.

The ceremony began by recognizing the Form VI students who were honored by the National Merit Scholarship Program for their scores on last year’s PSAT/NMSQT exam. This year, twenty-two Pingry students were named National Merit Commended Students, while an additional three students were honored by the National Hispanic Recognition Program. Seniors Stuart Clark, Anjali Kapoor, Ashna Kumar, Brian Li, Ashley Lu, Collin Wen, and Robert Yu were recognized as National Merit Semifinalists and given the chance to advance and potentially become finalists in the spring.

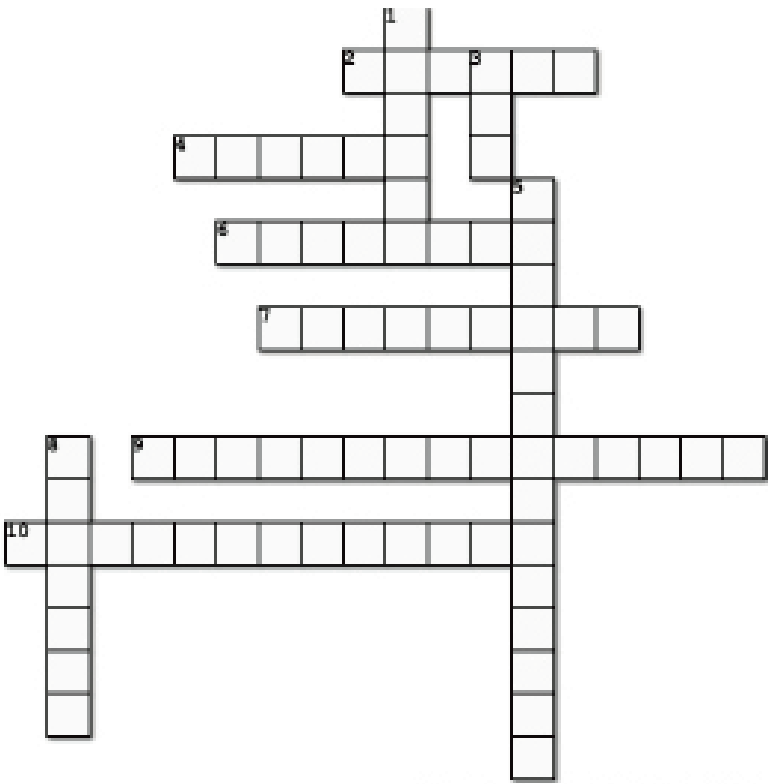
Following these recognitions, Upper School Director Ms. Chatterji presented the Citizenship Prize, which is given to one student in each grade who best embodies the spirit of the Honor Code. Next, the Faculty Prize was awarded to students who showed commendable effort and commitment during the past academic year. Finally, Ms. Chatterji presented the Scholarship Prize to the student(s) in each grade with the highest academic GPA. Notably, seven current freshmen

On behalf of The Justin Society, Ms. Taylor of the English Department announced the winners of the annual writing competition. Writers submitted their entries last spring, which were then reviewed by the English Department. During the assembly, writers and poets from every grade received awards and honorable mentions for their works of creative writing, poetry, historical fiction, and more.

The assembly is a celebration of student achievement, effort, and dedication. It serves as a reminder of the effort that each Pingry student and faculty member puts into school every day. The Pingry community congratulates all of the students honored at the ceremony, and looks forward to another year of inspiring achievement.



Crossword: Places in Pingry



Across

2. Turf field
4. Where US meetings are held.
6. Pool
7. Soccer field.
9. Where the lost and found is found.
10. Gremlin Quarantine

Down

1. Smaller theater. Theater kids are found here.
3. Why are there so many squash courts?
5. Varsity Baseball field
8. Many students play basketball here.

BY CALEB PARK (III)

Taiko Drumming: An Interview with Mr. Leone

MARTINE BIGOS (IV)

During morning meeting on September 23rd, Pingry’s Taiko Drumming Club performed “Dokokara,” a composition written by the principal of the LA Taiko Institute in the 2010s.

Three years ago, Pingry’s former headmaster suggested that Mr. Leone should host a workshop about taiko drumming. Twelve students and faculty attended. A few months later, Pingry’s newly established taiko group put on their first performance at the Taste of Pingry event, and Pingry Taiko Drumming became an official club. Since then, Taiko has performed at several school-wide events, including: A Taste of Pingry, the Lunar New Year Assembly, Night of Noise, and more.

Mr. Leone was interviewed after the morning meeting performance on September 23rd, and below are excerpts of that conversation.

How long have you been involved with Taiko?

“I have been playing for about ten years. I got introduced to Taiko through a global music class. I

was a music minor so one of the requirements was to take some music electives. Because we had to do a field study, the professor told us about a Japanese Taiko drumming group in Philadelphia. I was blown away. About a week later, I saw them again and someone at TCNJ told me that they were thinking of starting a Taiko group. I never thought I’d hear from them again, but I did! At the first practice, I was terrible! Three sessions turned into five, which turned into eight, and we had our first performance. I wrote a piece for the group because the Asian American Association had a cultural show in the spring where we debuted. From there TCNJ Taiko was born and is still going today. They’re on their twelfth year there!”

How do you select a piece for the club to perform?

“I try and find things that are open source or pieces that are copyleft. Copyleft means that it’s open to use, but whatever you produce has to be released copyleft. This is a little tricky for us because there’s a lot of

disclosure and consent. I also try and find pieces that are fun to play and watch! ‘Dokokara’ is a challenging piece, but some of our members need a good challenge. The piece should be accessible for any Taiko members that are relatively new.”

What is the process for preparing a Taiko performance?

“Learning the piece and getting everyone comfortable is important. I believe very strongly in making sure that everyone is confident with what they’re doing before they go on stage. I try to fit in as much practice time as possible and encourage students to practice on their own. Members have asked to rehearse outside of regular practice, which is easy since we can set up a drum in a practice room. We have to make sure that practices are low pressure. Some of the performances can feel high pressure, but only if you let it. Performing in front of the whole school is one of the bigger audiences I’ve performed for. The Pingry community is supportive and energetic, so I feel zero pressure.”



Convocation Focuses on Slowing Down

CAMILLE COLLINS (III)

For Pingry, convocation welcomes a new student body and ushers in a new year of thought, achievement, and education, along with the celebration of the Honor Code that is held in such high esteem.

Convocation opened with the signing of the Honor Code, written by Pingry students in 1926. The signing of the Honor Code reminds the community about the promises they made to be honorable and contribute “to the larger community of the world,” as the Honor Code says. When all members of the Pingry community sign the Honor Code, the school becomes a more tightly-knit community that is bound by a single contract.

During Convocation, a number of speeches were given to formally begin the 2019-2020 school year. Mr. Miller Bugliari ‘52, Head Coach of the Boys’ Varsity Soccer Team and Special Assistant to the Headmaster,

is distinguished for 60 years as a faculty member. He began his time at Pingry as a biology teacher in 1959. Student Body President, Brian Li (VI); Board of Trustees Chair, Mr. Jeffrey Edwards ‘78, P ‘12, P ‘14, P ‘18; and Head of School, Mr. Matt Levinson were among the speakers at Convocation. Emily Sanchez (VI), Honor Board Chair, spoke of the Honor Code’s use as an identifier for every student and faculty member in Pingry. “Everybody is able to grow into themselves and not be afraid to take the necessary risks,” she says. Similar messages of acceptance and growing from failure were shared by speakers throughout the ceremony.

Hopefully, as the year gets underway, Convocation will remind students, faculty, and staff to always fulfill the Honor Code and simply slow down. In the words of Mr. Levinson, “Take a moment to hit the brakes on whatever you are doing... [and] think about your classmates and your role in the community.”

New Transitions: Drzala Begins her Year in Jordan

EMMA DRZALA (IV)

On the 21st of August, I started a journey that would leave a lasting impact for the rest of my life. As I crossed the threshold to enter the plane, I felt panic and reluctance coursing through my body. I found my seat and felt my eyes getting heavier. The next thing I remember was looking out the window and seeing desert stretch for miles; after a summer of anticipation and an 11-hour flight, I finally landed in Amman, Jordan.

The first days felt relaxed; my mother was there to comfort me and I knew that the rest of my family and friends were only a phone call away. After the third day, I finally walked into King’s Academy with a clear head and an excitement that had never been matched in my life.

The first week felt like I had already been there for a year, and I was convinced that I needed to

catch the next flight home. I always managed to find myself alone in my room, wishing I could be in a comfortable environment with a school I knew, friends I knew, and a life I knew.

As the days went on, however, I found myself growing into a routine, and my life seemed more manageable. Nevertheless, I still longed for my own bed and my dogs running up to me as I got home.

After the second week ended, I felt something new brewing inside me. It was the same excitement I felt when I first saw the campus and I finally started to feel as though I belonged. More kids took an interest in me and teachers were commending my bravery for leaving home and moving somewhere new—the school didn’t seem as daunting anymore.

I was reminded of why I came to the Middle East and I began to revert back to my outgoing, happy

self. I had moments where I closed my eyes, and when I opened them, I was hit with the reality that I was in Jordan. My life was a dream that most people think about, but never get the opportunity to do. Even on weekend trips to the mall, I looked outside and savored every view that ran along as the bus was zooming. My friends were pointing out camels and sand dunes, and I was finally beginning to process not being in New Jersey.

Even after a month of being here, I still think about my home and what would be happening if I were in the comforts of Pingry. Though, whenever I find myself drawing closer to that thought, I am always reminded of the golden opportunity I have been given and am reassured that I made the best decision by coming here. The transition was difficult, but already the trips to the Dead Sea, Petra, and Wadi Rum have made all my sacrifices in coming here worth it.



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Seniors Relax at Pocono Valley Resort

MARTHA LEWAND (VI)

A week before school began, on September 3rd and 4th, Form VI students traveled to the Pocono Valley Resort in Reeders, Pennsylvania, for their senior retreat.

The seniors spent the trip participating in several activities, including a Western-themed dance, and working on their college applications. The goal of the trip was for the seniors to enjoy themselves while making progress on their applications.

Once the seniors arrived to the campsite via bus, they went to their assigned cabins to unpack. Shortly after, the activities commenced. Students went to relax by one of the two pools or to play sports, ranging from basketball to mini-golf. Students also had the choice to participate in watersports on the lake, climb a rock climbing wall, partake in a ropes course, ride a zipline, and more.

"I went on the ropes course, rode the zipline, and competed with my friends in the 'human hamster balls'," said Jessica Hutt (VI). "I really enjoyed these activities, and had a great time experiencing the outdoors with my classmates before heading into our final year together."

After lunch and activities, the seniors began to prepare for the dance. The theme for the dance was "western." Students dressed up as cowboys and cowgirls, with a majority of the costumes including



flannels, cowboy boots and hats, and bandanas.

"The dance was a fun way to jumpstart senior year," Nicole Gilbert (VI) said. "It was a great opportunity to reconnect with my friends and strengthen relationships with other people. Dressing up also added to the fun."

After the dance, seniors enjoyed pizza and a campfire with s'mores. They also had time to socialize with friends in their cabins before the night ended.

"I felt that being able to spend the night with my friends was great, in

that it helped me forget about all the college apps and let me focus on just hanging out and talking to my friends," Thomas Wolf (VI) said. "I appreciated that, even though I didn't request some of the people in my cabin, they were great company and I enjoyed the night."

The next morning, the academic work began. After breakfast, the senior class was divided into two groups to partake in "breakout sessions" or workshops. Ms. Finegan and Ms. Reynolds each ran one of the two workshops. They used a descriptive writing

exercise to help students with their personal statement essay. In the second workshop, Mr. Lear, Mr. Garrow and Ms. Cooperman split the group into smaller sections to converse about the application process and colleges that are typically undervalued by Pingry students.

Josh Thau (VI) found the workshops helpful, as the sessions increased his confidence in the college process. He said, "Before I went in, I was nervous about everything because I didn't really know what I was doing," he said.

"But after I talked to both my college counselor and others about my issues pertaining to the process, I felt a lot more comfortable."

After working on their applications, seniors had lunch, packed their bags, and made their way back to Pingry on buses.

Hannah Guglin (VI) thought the trip was an overall success. "I honestly felt like it was a really good way to start the year, spend some time and have some fun with people that I care about in our last year together," she said.

Freshmen Kick Off High School at Peer Leadership Retreat

MIRIKA JAMBUDI (III)

Bright and early on August 28th, just a few days before the start of the school year, Pingry welcomed its newest class of freshmen on campus for the longstanding tradition of the peer leadership retreat. Alongside their senior peer group leaders, nervous but excited freshmen crammed into four buses for the long two-hour drive to Bryn Mawr Mountain Retreat, in the scenic mountains of Pennsylvania. There, they undertook team-bonding exercises and activities to help them get acquainted with their peers.

When the buses arrived at Bryn Mawr, the freshmen were led to their cabins to unpack and get ready for the activities awaiting them. The first challenge was the egg drop, where peer groups of six to eight students and two seniors worked together to create a structure that would be able to protect the egg when dropped from above. Each group then made a banner representing their peer group pride. The students also worked with each other and their



peer leaders to create a chariot from cardboard and PVC pipes to carry one freshman through an obstacle course the next day.

The next challenge was an obstacle course in the woods nicknamed "The Gauntlet"; it featured a series of obstacles that involved physical act-ivity, logical thinking, and teamwork.

"The Gauntlet really challenged us to work-to-gether, and after the

first activity, it was really fun to do, and our group definitely grew closer," said Max Watzky (III). Everyone aimed to complete the course in the lowest amount of time, and the competitive nature of the challenge fostered a sense of camaraderie in each peer group. The most memorable part of the night was during the impromptu dance in the dining hall when all the peer leaders surprised the

freshman by running out onto the dance floor in costumes. "Everyone being together on the dance floor and having fun right before school started was definitely a great way to kick off the school year!" Milenka Men (III) recalled.

At the end of the day, groups came up with skits using silly objects chosen from a bag. Watching the skits and seeing classmates take the stage in

silly outfits definitely left everyone in a great mood for the rest of the evening.

The next morning, everyone woke up to pack and wrap up the peer leadership retreat. Finally, the most awaited event occurred—testing out our chariots on the obstacle course. Our group took an unforgettable, unconventional route, which the other students found hilarious. The fun-filled day-and-a-half at Brynn Mawr had flown by, and it was time to leave, but not before discussing the students' favorite parts of the trip. For my group, our unconventional attempt at the chariot race obstacle course was definitely one of the best parts about the retreat, alongside all the friends we made. "It was a great experience, and I'm glad I got to meet tons of people right before school started! Now I'm more confident about starting at a new school," said Katie Lin (III). All in all, the freshmen had a blast at the peer leadership retreat, found some new friends, and are ready to take on the upcoming school year!

Form V Floats Into School Year

DEAN KOENIG (V)

The Form V class spent their opening to the school year at the Lehigh River to go whitewater rafting. Since the junior class travelled to Philadelphia in previous years for their back-to-school trips, this trip was a surprise to students.

The grade was reunited from summer break at 8:30 a.m. in the dining center. From there, the students split into their advisory groups and boarded coach buses. When the buses arrived at the site, students got off and ate their packaged lunches on picnic tables, already surrounded by nature. As they ate, the juniors shared stories of their summers and discussed the upcoming school year.

After lunch, students and faculty listened in on a brief presentation given by the Pocono Whitewater Company. The presentation laid down guidelines for the experience to come, such as safety regulations and paddling recommendations. During the lecture, students and

faculty were fitted for lifejackets. Once everyone was ready to raft, students boarded buses once again and were driven to the river. Although the original plan was for advisory groups to raft together, students were able to join the raft they wished to be in as long as there were no more than seven people in it. Each raft was provided with a bucket, which was supposed to be used to remove water from the raft.

Aided by river guides, students and faculty began to make their way down the river. Soon enough, the rafts encountered the first wave of class II rapids. Students and faculty soon got splashed, or even submerged.

Along the way down the river, the river guides offered the rafters three opportunities to exit their rafts and swim in shallow water. During this time, students had fun in the water, splashing each other and climbing into other boats with their friends. “The battles between the raft crews on the river were epic,” Dr. James Murray said. Even some river guides got in on the action. Ethan Mannello (V) said,

“The most fun part of the rafting was probably splashing people with buckets of water.”

Though the students enjoyed themselves, paddling took a great deal of energy and most were ready to head home by the time

the rafting was over. Students and faculty were bussed back to the lunch location to retrieve their belongings before the coach busses took them back to school. The buses arrived at Pingry at around 7:00 P.M.

Sandy Friedman (V) remarked, “The retreat made me feel closer to a lot of my classmates.”

Overall, it was an exciting way for students to reconvene before classes began.



Camp Mason, Philly, D.C.: The Middle School Trips



ALEX WONG (I)

From September 25th to 27th, Middle School students embarked on trips to destinations ranging from the nation’s capital to right here in New Jersey. In the process, students were able to get a glimpse into what they will learn this year

Grade six traveled to Camp Mason, a campsite in northern New Jersey, for three days. There, they engaged in team building activities, including hiking, swinging on giant swings, looking at nature art, and completing an obstacle course. These activities allowed the sixth graders to get to know each other better. Mrs. Nicole Cabral recalled, “We had a great time even though it rained. Even when it rained everyone participated in the activities. We made great memories during the trip.” The trip was an exciting and memorable start to

their middle school experience.

Form I went to Philadelphia from September 26th to 27th. They visited many sites and interactive centers, including Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, the Constitution Center, the Philadelphia Zoo, the U.S. Mint, and The Franklin Institute. Students saw a wide variety of exhibits relating to topics ranging from the United States government to the human heart. Ben Chung (I) said, “The Brain Exhibit in the Franklin Institute was fun. My advisory played tag in the brain model.” Ms. Cecily Moyer noted, “I really enjoyed the Constitution Center. My advisory was very into the exhibits there. We played trivia and shook hands with the statues in Signers’ Hall.” The Philadelphia trip was an enjoyable, informative experience for the seventh grade.

For three days, Form II stayed

in Washington, D.C., where they saw the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument, the Arlington National Cemetery, and the National Mall. Visiting the sites helped students gain a better understanding of their historical significance. Along with learning about the various monuments and memorials, Charlotte Diemar (II) said, “I enjoyed the trip because we got to connect more with our advisory via multiple activities, such as the advisory dinner.” On the trip, students bonded with both old and new friends, while learning about the rich history of Washington, D.C.

The Middle Schoolers enjoyed their trips, as they made new friends, learned about historical sites and figures, or simply had fun with their classmates and teachers. In other words, the trips certainly set a positive tone for the year.

The Sophomores Visit NYC

KATHERINE XIE (IV)

On Wednesday, September 4, the class of 2022 explored the exhibits of New York City’s Museum of Natural History and went to see the award-winning “To Kill a Mockingbird” on Broadway.

The day began in the school cafeteria where students caught up with friends after a fleeting three months of summer break. The sophomores then crowded onto three buses to make the trip to the city. After an hour-and-a-half bus ride, everyone divided into their advisories and entered the Museum of Natural History.

Upon entering the museum, advisory groups went their separate ways to tour the various exhibits and displays. Since there was no specific activity planned for the museum, each advisory had the liberty to choose the exhibits they wanted to see. The Museum of Natural History had everything from displays of prehistoric animals to diagrams of the early universe to exhibits on early civilizations. Although students only spent a little over an hour at the museum, Anika Govil (IV) says, “Visiting the museum was a really fun experience. I got to spend time with my advisory and learn about animals that I didn’t even know existed.” Students were able to learn about all things history as well as enjoy time with their advisories.

After a quick lunch outside the museum, the buses started up once more and took the sophomores to see “To Kill a Mockingbird.” Students were given tickets as

they entered the packed theater and sat with their advisories as they awaited the start.

“To Kill a Mockingbird,” based on the eponymous 1960 novel by Harper Lee, deals with racial issues prevalent in Alabama during the 1930s. The story’s main focus is the trial of Tom Robinson, a black man who is falsely accused of raping Mayella Ewell, a white woman. While the book begins by depicting the idyllic childhood of characters Jem, Scout, and Dill, the play, narrated by the children, immediately jumps into the trial of Tom Robinson. Atticus Finch (played by Jeff Daniels), Tom Robinson’s lawyer, must stand up to the racial prejudices of that time to do what is right. Through the trial, Scout learns about what it means to become an adult—she observes her father doing the right thing by defending Tom Robinson, despite the sacrifice he makes to do so.

The students enjoyed the play, which provided a different and new portrayal of this well-known classic. Many students had never seen a Broadway show before and appreciated the opportunity. Zoe Wang (IV) said, “Going to see ‘To Kill a Mockingbird’ was truly memorable. The actor for Atticus Finch was just amazing.” Remarking on the interesting style of the play, Olivia Hung (IV) noted, “I truly enjoyed the show...It was an interesting way to tell the story.”

After the performance and an amazing day spent in the city, the sophomores boarded the buses to head back to Pingry.

By Matt Lee (VI), Dean Koenig (V), Carolyn Coyne (V), Ashana Makhija (VI), Brian Li (IV), Brooke Pan (V), Burke Pagano (VI), Justin Li (V)

BOYS' SOCCER 10-3

The boys' soccer team started the first month of their season strong. Ranked as the third-best team in the state, their expectations are sky-high. With goals to win Somerset County and Non-Public "A" state titles, the team's mentality this year has been "championship or bust" since the first day of preseason.

"The Pingry soccer program has the goal of winning County's and State's every year," captain John Robertson (VI) said.

Although these are high standards, he knows that "if we can go five or six games in a row without conceding a goal, and the offense can do its job, the wins will come."

Pingry currently has a 10-3 record and looks to build upon the success they've had so far. Unlike last year, the team has been finding ways to win close games. Two weeks ago, they won a two-overtime thriller against a top-twenty Hunterdon Central team. During Homecoming, they defeated Princeton Day School 6-0. Robertson attributes their success to "the depth we have at many different positions."

Heading into the home stretch of the season, the team will lean on its senior leadership.

"The soccer team has a huge group of seniors with a lot of talent who lead by their play on the field," Robertson said. "Four captains are super helpful because we can pick each other up, and there are also multiple seniors on the bench who have amazing energy and who support the team in any circumstances."

The boys look to continue their great season against Gill St. Bernard next week and into the county tournament.

GIRLS' SOCCER 11-3

The girls' varsity soccer team has had a successful season thus far, winning nine of the team's first twelve games. The team, led by captains Emma Capanna (VI), Sofia Lombardo (VI), and Leah Mangold (VI), has been dominant in their wins; the goal differential for all nine wins has been greater than one, while only one of the team's losses has been decided by more than one goal. The offense has managed to score forty-six goals so far, achieving an average of almost four goals per game. This powerful offense is complemented by an unwavering defense that has allowed only twelve total goals this season.

Head Coach Lauren Molinaro says, "We are in control of our own destiny... if we focus and put in the work, we will see results." The players have a reputation to uphold their great

work this season, as they won the sectional title last year. With great confidence in her team, Olivia Volpe (V) says, "We are beginning to hit our stride and we all know this year is going to be special."

FIELD HOCKEY 8-8-1

Big Blue field hockey is off to a strong start this year, with senior captains Hannah Dillon (VI), Liv Nugent (VI), and Caroline Dannenbaum (VI) leading the team to unprecedented victories in a difficult division. Dillon believes that the team is "looking really strong going into tournament season," especially in terms of passing. Nugent agrees, claiming that the "team culture is better than ever." Senior player Lizzie Gilfillan (VI) adds that being this "tight-knit family off the field translates onto the field with our passing connection." This strength in passing has been developed by the new varsity head coach, Mr. Izaak Pels. Coach Pels believes that the team is receptive to the ideas and culture he is instilling. He says that the team's "ability to adapt and change culture has been a remarkable aspect of our versatility." He thinks that what has happened this year will change team culture for years to come. Head JV coach Margi Dillon agrees, believing that the huge group of dedicated freshmen on JV will help build the program. Indeed, as Coach Decatur says, the future is bright for Pingry field hockey.

GIRLS' TENNIS 17-1

This year, the varsity girls' tennis team has maintained a strong performance throughout the season. After losing only one match, they are ranked fifth in the state, up from tenth at the beginning of the season. At the end of September, the team won the county tournament, while third singles, Gabrielle Billington, first doubles, Lily Schiffman

and Lynn Robinson, and second doubles, Sabrina Schneider and Olivia Gallucci, went on to individually win their county matches.

Although the team works hard, Lily Schiffman (VI) described the positive atmosphere on the team: "Even though girls tennis can get very competitive, we've been able to come together as a team and support each other throughout the season."

The girls' team has a few weeks left in their season, as they hope to continue their success in the state tournament.

GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

The girls' cross country team is looking forward to a promising season. Led by captains Nicole Vanasse (VI) and Alina Irvine (V), the team is off to a great start with the varsity team placing third overall in the Ocean State Invitational.

The team's main goal for this season is to qualify for the Meet of Champions—a highly competitive meet which admits only the top two teams from each division.

To achieve this goal, Coach Grant's priority is for the team to stay healthy.

"If everybody's healthy at the end of the season, I think we've got a very good opportunity to win," he said.

Reflecting on last year's season, Coach Grant is thrilled by the addition of five new freshmen, a refreshing increase from last year. With a bigger team, Coach Grant is excited for the possibilities that new freshmen will present for the team.

Irvine (V) expanded on this idea, emphasizing the role of individual and team improvement: "It is the most rewarding thing for a runner to see that all of their hardwork and dedication paid off when they run a personal record."

Irvine hopes that "consistent, hard-effort training," while still "giving



William Bugliarli (VI), Pranav Jha (VI)

Photo by Bruce Morrison

each girl a chance to recover," will enable each runner to achieve her goals.

The boys' cross country team is hoping to repeat their successes from last year.

BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY

Despite losing four seniors, two of whom were exceptional runners, captains Roger Matthews (VI) and Henry Wood (V), along with Coaches Matt Horesta and Tim Lear are leading a team ready to embrace new responsibilities.

With eight new freshmen joining the team this year, Coach Horesta remarked that the team has "a younger feel" to it. "They've been a great addition to

reaching the top five teams of the Skyland Conference.

FOOTBALL 2-4

The boys' varsity football team has started off their season with a relatively strong record. The team has been working hard since the start of preseason in early August under the leadership of Head Coach Chris Shilts.

Captains James Wang (VI), Lance Perlow (VI), Patrick Birotte (VI), and Sam Williams (VI) have tremendous faith that their team will further its success as the season progresses. Senior Ryan Smith (VI) said, "It's a close-knit team with a lot of great chemistry and that's a recipe for

In spite of these obstacles, the water polo team, now co-coached by Jeffrey Jenkins, Steve Droste, and Kevin Schroedter, has maintained a 5-2 record and, more importantly, has shown tremendous resilience. The captains, goalies Mason Stahl (VI) and Dilan Bhat (VI), have stepped up to play key roles in leading practices and facilitating gameplay. Returning players have cultivated their skills to fill the gaps that have formed with the departure of last year's seniors. The team has also gained a group of promising freshmen.

The Big Blue team competed in the Beast of the East tournament in late September, where it faced



Niles Luke (IV)

Photo by Bruce Morrison

the team," Horesta said, in regards to its future.

When asked about the season so far, Coach Horesta said that the team has already improved but is "only halfway to where we need to be to compete at our best in late October through the middle of November. We've just been getting ready more than anything else so far."

After the season's first meet against Bernards on September 12th, which Coach Horesta described as a "starting point which gave us a sense of where we were at and how much we need to do to keep going," the team ran its second meet in Morristown with "important improvement."

The team, aiming to win the Prep "A" Championship for the fourth consecutive time, will have its work cut out against Lawrenceville and Oratory Prep. The team also hopes to match last year's achievements, including placing third in Somerset County and

success." Teammate and captain Birotte added that "they have high expectations for the end of the season."

The team has shown resilience throughout this season which has, unfortunately, been riddled with injuries. Despite these setbacks, the team still has much potential for greatness. The highlight of the season so far was when Williams was awarded the Jersey Sports Belt of the week for pulling off a cheeky hook and ladder play. The boys are looking forward to finishing the season strong.

WATER POLO 5-2

The day preseason began, Head Coach Aleksandar Breznikar stepped down from his position. The team received this news only one year after losing its previous Head Coach, Misha Klochkov, to the Lawrenceville School.

more established water polo tournaments in the region. Though the players did not meet their goal of winning their division, sharpshooter Noah Bergam (V) saw a net positive from the team's participation: "Playing against teams we'd never competed against forced us to adapt our strategy to unfamiliar game styles. We were able to learn a lot from the more experienced teams at the tournament." So far, the water polo season has forced the team to adapt in the face of unforeseeable difficulties. Regardless, they hope to challenge their rival, The Lawrenceville School, for the state championship and secure a place in the Easterns Prep tournament at the end of the season.

All scores are current as of

October 22nd.

Go Big Blue!



Caeley Feeney (IV)

Photo by Bruce Morrison