

Sickness Spreads Through Pingry Like Never Before

SAM WEXLER (IV)

On Friday, November 8, students at the Basking Ridge campus refreshed their emails to find that the school day was cut short due to a stomach bug spreading throughout the school community. After being dismissed from their classes, confused students and faculty wandered around the school, some waiting for parents or buses to pick them up. All after-school activities were cancelled to allow the cleaning staff time to perform a “deep clean and disinfect the building,” according to an email sent by Associate Director of Operations, Safety, and Strategic Initiatives, Mr. David Fahey. Perhaps the most shocking result of this announcement was the rescheduling of the Friday night performance of the Fall play, “Our Town,” to Saturday afternoon. To boost attendance, students who bought tickets for the Friday show were given free Saturday matinee tickets. Students could also use the discount code “PLAGUE” to gain free admission to the show. In the aftermath of the incident, the

community began to wonder what caused this local epidemic, dubbed “The Pingry Plague.” Some students theorized that the virus originated among the play cast and then spread throughout the rest of the school. Others assumed that the boys’ and girls’ soccer championship games led students to come to school even if they were sick. School nurses Mrs. Joyce Livak and Ms. Jennifer DiBiasi provided their insight on the epidemic. According to them, the potent stomach virus was likely spread by someone who had come to school with the virus already in their system; they also theorized the students had contaminated communal surfaces, such as a lunch table, with the virus. The rest is history. To stop the further spread of the virus, the nurses recommended washing your hands and staying home for at least 24 hours after symptoms have ended. With the cold and flu season upon us, it is vital that Pingry students follow these directions, so that this “Pingry Plague” is the last one.

Triumphing over Tribulation

MARTINE BIGOS (IV)

On October 21st, Pingry’s Middle and Upper School students attended an assembly where guest speaker Sean Swarmer shared his inspiring life journey. Sean has survived cancer twice and is the first cancer survivor to climb the highest mountain on each continent (with only one fully-functional lung). In addition, he has completed the Hawaii Ironman Triathlon. Sean’s battle with cancer began when he was just thirteen years old. Diagnosed with stage 4 Hodgkin’s Lymphoma, Sean was told that he only had three months to live.

Intense chemotherapy resulted in weight gain and hair loss. Life seemed grim, but Sean had two choices: he could either give up, or choose to fight for his life. He chose the latter. “I could either fight for my life or give up and die,” he says. “I wasn’t focused on ‘not dying.’ I focused on living.” Keeping a positive mindset during his battle, he survived. However, the fight was not over. Three years later, doctors discovered a second cancer known as an Askin’s tumor and informed Sean that he had only fourteen days to live.

See **SCHOOL NEWS**, Page 8

Buttondowns Return to their Roots

BRIAN LI (IV)

On November 22nd, the Buttondowns raced down from the top of Hauser Auditorium to begin their annual Buttondowns assembly. This year, the all-boys a capella group is headed by president James Wang (VI), vice-

president Charlie Malone (VI), and secretary John Roberston (VI). As is tradition, the assembly began with the highly anticipated Buttondowns movie. Directed by Wang, this year’s movie was largely influenced by the 2010-2011 movie. He described it as a movie that was “so low budget and horrible production-wise, but very



Andrew Goldstein ‘92 speaks to students in Hauser Auditorium

Lead Prosecutor in Mueller Investigation Andrew Goldstein ‘92 Emphasizes Personal Integrity

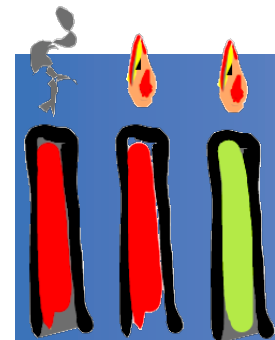
RHEA KAPUR (V)

On Friday, November 8, at the annual John Hanly Lecture on Ethics and Morality, Mr. Andrew Goldstein ‘92 discussed the influence of the Honor Code in his career at Pingry and beyond, and shared some ethical dilemmas he faced where the Honor Code’s principles guided him. Established in 1999, the John Hanly Lecture Series on Ethics and Morality honors former Headmaster John Hanly’s personal commitment to instilling honorable and ethical values in students at Pingry. A diverse set of speakers have visited campus each year since the series’ inception, each of them having a unique viewpoint on ethics and moral dilemmas in the 21st century. Mr. Goldstein is no exception. After graduating from Princeton University in 1996, Mr. Goldstein returned to Pingry to teach AP Government and World Cultures, filling the role of his former teacher Mr. Joe LaValley (whom Mr. Goldstein greatly admired). Later, Mr. Goldstein joined TIME Magazine as an investigative reporter. After graduating from Yale Law School, he eventually served as Chief of the Public Corruption Unit at the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York. Recently, he was Senior Assistant Special Counsel

in the Department of Justice’s Russia investigation, led by Robert S. Mueller III. In his remarks, Mr. Goldstein shared two stories, one of which centered around his experience as an investigative reporter at TIME. While covering the Columbine High School shooting, Mr. Goldstein discovered that members of the school’s community were distraught from TIME’s recent cover photo, in which the main focus was on the shooters, not the students who were killed. They wanted reassurance that this would not happen again. Mr. Goldstein retained a neutral position, noting his lack of control over the matter, but also stated how he could not believe they would repeat such a thing. When another cover story that focused solely on new video footage of the killers ran, Mr. Goldstein had to come to terms with the betrayal the members of the community would feel and the role he played in that betrayal. To alleviate some of the pain, Mr. Goldstein personally reached out to each person he talked to, warning them ahead of time of the cover story. He also contemplated whether he “could have pushed harder [than he did] to keep that photo off the cover,” acknowledging his personal responsibility. Mr.

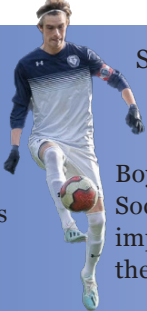
Goldstein’s main takeaway from this was to figure out one’s motivations – the principles upon which one bases their decisions. Getting those right, he noted, is the first step towards acting with integrity. This was a key theme of his overall talk. In his conclusion, he reminded students and faculty to “step back and look at our public discourse today... the importance of telling the truth has dropped off the list of what people think matters. As Pingry students, that should not be acceptable to you.” He encouraged the community to always “remember the values [that] were taught here” to guide their decisions in life. The talk was well received throughout the community. Meghan Durkin (V), Secretary of the Honor Board, said that “his take on the Honor Code was very insightful, especially his remark that while it may allow for more violations, it provides students with the chance to make realistic, tough decisions.” Samantha Burak (VI) also noted how “we hear about honorable behavior in our daily lives, but this was an important reminder that the lessons of the Honor Code apply well beyond just high school. The stories that Mr. Goldstein shared with us revealed that real situations in life are not always black or white, but that we should be striving to act with personal integrity regardless.”

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OPINIONS, Page 2-4 On Peace Candles and Being Ignored

Monica Chan (V) analyzes the fallacy of Pingry’s political correctness.



SPORTS, Page 11-12 Boys’ and Girls’ Soccer

Boys’ and girls’ Varsity Soccer both have impressive showings in their State tournaments.



NEWS, Page 6-10 Fall Play: Our Town

Pingry drama presented Thornton Wilder’s award-winning play.

New Staff

The Pingry Record is looking for freshman/sophomore illustrators, photo editors, & layout editors!

Email:
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Never Doing Enough: Stress as a Measure of Success

HELEN LIU (V)

I have a very close relationship with my parents. I’m open to them about almost everything, and they encourage and support me. Ever since I can remember, they’ve been drilling the importance of hard work, compassion, and virtue into my head to make me the person I am today. However, almost every month, we get into the same argument. Tired from a long week of school, I decide to destress a bit over the weekend by taking a couple of extra hours of free time. My parents will notice, and tell me, “You never have time to finish your extracurriculars during the weekdays. Why not catch up now?” They inevitably bring up how friends from other schools are spending six hours a day on homework. “Don’t you think you’re too relaxed?” they ask. “You’re in junior year. You should be working harder than this.”

It’s not just my parents that have this mentality. Sometimes, when I go to bed, I’m tempted to bring my laptop with me and outline that essay due in a couple of weeks. When we get school days off, I finish all my work by mid-afternoon, but end up spending the rest of the day strangely tense. Why do I have so much free time? Was there something assigned in class when I wasn’t paying attention? Is there a project I can plan out? Am I too relaxed?

The thing is, I’m fairly happy with

put a little more time into clubs, or study a bit harder in a class or two, but overall, I’m satisfied.

Why, then, is being “too relaxed” a bad thing? Is it lazy or irresponsible to take extra time to unwind and just mindlessly lose myself in a movie for a few hours if I’ve finished all my work for the day? I could use that time to start future assignments, but am I obligated to? It’s like there’s a set bar of stress that I must be above; if I’m not stressed enough, no matter how well I’m doing in school, I must work harder.

This mindset is far from uncommon. At Pingry there’s a constant pressure to get ahead. Some of us jokingly compete over who got the least amount of sleep the past night. Some of us take the hardest classes we can, even if we’re not actually interested in them because we’re warned of the drop in rigor on our transcripts. Since when has stress become the determining factor for success? Theoretically, there isn’t really a limit to how much effort I could put into studying. I could stay up a few hours later into the night reviewing for a test in order to get that perfect score. I could decide to go over my essay a couple more times over the weekend instead of spending time with a friend.

If I did, though, what would be the point? Neglecting my happiness in order to better my chances of getting into a good university might be more “productive,” but personal experience has taught me that I’d end up regretting it. A few years ago, I prioritized school over my happiness and my best friends. During that time, I lost sight of why I was studying in the first place, and I don’t intend on making the same mistake again.

This isn’t to say that we should all stop studying hard. We should, however, be able to set achievable standards for ourselves—somewhere we can stop and say, “good enough.” If we’re all just trying to live a happy and fulfilling life, is throwing away all of our current happiness really worth it? At what point do we stop sacrificing our present for a so-called “better future?”

Why, then, is being “too relaxed” a bad thing?

how my junior year is going. When I was little, I was always told to “work hard and play hard,” and I think I’ve found a good balance of both working and playing. I’m managing my time a lot better than I have in the past, and I’m finding it easier to maintain decent grades while keeping up with other parts of my life. Maybe I could

On Peace Candles and Being Ignored

MONICA CHAN (V)

When people found out about our plans to start the Asian Student Union, some had asked me why I cared so much or wondered if I only started the group to boost my college application. The truth is, I was upset that the issues I cared about were considered “unimportant.” There was one instance when I reported a student in class who was repeating random offensive syllables and asking me if they meant anything in Mandarin despite me telling them to stop. After my talk with the administration, I never even received an apology from the student.

Another time I felt that issues were cast aside was when the Asian parents at this school felt upset and met with the administration about an inappropriate book that was added to the English curriculum; their concern was mitigated and turned into a social media ploy, an Instagram post showing rows of upset parents on the official school page, captioned happily about how the diversity staff was meeting with the parents of the Chinese-American community. The post was promptly deleted when met with backlash.

Overall, I felt upset with how these issues had been ignored, and no one had tried to reach a true solution. Unfortunately, ignorance from the administration has been a common theme in Pingry’s history, not with just Asian-American issues, but with issues regarding multiple communities. Instead of working to a solution, I have noticed that Pingry tries to reach “the most politically safe” answer instead. I recently found this trend has been happening for a long time. About a month ago I stumbled upon a 1990 New York Times article, titled “Private Schools Wrestling With Diversity and Identities,” in which the author talked about diversity-based issues

at a number of institutions in our area. A large portion of these issues were about Pingry. The article mentions one instance where the Jewish community at Pingry had wanted to light a menorah next to the yule candle at the annual Winter Festival, and how their request had been met with a “peace candle,” which was supposed to represent the yule candle and the menorah.

Lighting a peace candle didn’t really solve the issue, which was about truly representing the Jewish community at the school during the festival. Instead, this was the most “politically safe” response to the issue. People may ask, why would a politically safe response be bad?

If there’s no framework here, build it. If it’s never been done before here, do it.

It doesn’t hurt anyone and nobody can be offended. While this may be partly true, the most politically safe response doesn’t solve the issue. Instead of figuring out how to make sure that the various groups will feel represented at the school, a politically neutral solution almost seems insulting. It is as if the problem is too insignificant to handle head-on. A neutral solution says, “we aren’t offending anyone, so will everyone get off our case?”

At a school that is as diverse as ours, it is very possible for a student to feel ignored, and their issues can slip through the cracks. Our school is proud that we have the GSA, the Black Student Union, and as of this year, the Asian Student Union. But what about all the identifiers in between? How will a student know where to turn

to when they have an issue they want to share with the school that doesn’t fall within these groups? I realize that only a few months ago, this is how I felt at the school. Affinity groups keep the issue within the community, but those topics never get shared outside. Most groups are never covered by the various “diversity workshops” advisories must complete. There is no framework at this school to discuss many important issues that don’t fall within these pre-existing groups.

My co-founders and I started the Asian Student Union because we didn’t want future Asian-American students feeling that there was nothing to support them, as that is how we have previously felt. If Pingry wants to be a genuinely inclusive place, it needs to take its various communities’ issues to heart. For instance, when I reported a very direct act of prejudice, the school should have done its best to appropriately handle the situation instead of letting it go with no consequences. Pingry needs to fully address issues like these—otherwise, the school would not be supporting its students. Additionally, I implore this institution to genuinely solve problems, rather than finding a political “peace candle” solution that, in the end, makes nobody happy. Speak to students who have been affected one-on-one, reach out to the parents to gauge their opinions more often, and act on their feedback. Most importantly, though, encourage dialogue regarding all groups—not just a select few.

And to you, reader, who potentially has something to say buried within the depths of your silence, my advice is to say it loud and clear. If there’s no framework here, build it. If it’s never been done here before, do it. Make it known that you will not be ignored and that you are the change we need at this school to truly make this community one that you are a part of.



Editorial



NOAH BERGAM (V)

When I was a little kid, I got angry when I heard my name. Noah. I heard the word ‘No.’ Somehow that just pushed me over the edge. My older siblings, realizing my dislike, would further taunt me by calling ShopRite ShopWrong. I would cry. Now it’s more sophisticated. I cry a little inside when I see political arguments and platforms supported fervently in the negative.

Ralph Ellison’s anonymous namesake Invisible Man asked a simple question. “Could politics ever be an expression of love?” The

ShopWrong: The Folly of Arguing in the Negative

quote reads quickly in the context of the chaotic unfolding of the novel. But when I read it, I stopped and realized this combination of words is powerful.

It comes back to me every month for the Democratic debates. As I’ve watched these candidates give their heartfelt pleas for their causes, I’ve gone through my own little evolution as a viewer.

When I first watched in June, I was amazed by how eloquently they all could speak, swinging from topic to topic with such ease and intensity. Each candidate presented their own style, playing different gambits and spinning sophisticated responses, tying it back to their audience. All on the spot. It blows me away. But ... but what? The charm blurred with repetition? The candidates are all a bunch of phonies? Emails!? Perhaps. But the fundamental issue I see is not with any of the specific values they hold or policies they endorse. It’s about

a frame of reference. Their tendency to express their stances in terms of the partisan negative rather than the general positive. The tendency is captured by the standby:

“I’m the candidate that can beat Donald Trump.”

There’s a use for this phrase in moderation. But it ought not to become a cornerstone argument of the party—2016 is proof that doesn’t work.

When this mindset of opposition takes over for a few questions, the stage curls into an echo chamber, where counterpoints that lean to the center are labelled as enemy territory.

This was especially evident in the July debate; when Warren and Sanders kept recycling a certain phrase, they were met with opposition.

John Delaney warned against taking away private health insurance. John Hickenlooper objected to the Green New Deal’s

broad promises of government-funded jobs. Jake Tapper asked Bernie how much taxes will rise for his healthcare bill.

The same response kept ringing up: “stop using Republican talking points.”

The intent of this phrase, as I see it, is to paint criticism as illegitimate partisan attacks. It’s defense built from offense—take the hard questions, that many voters are interested in getting direct answers to, and mark it as Republican, Trumpian spam.

This attitude has continued monthly. Of course, it doesn’t ruin the entire debate—most major candidates have their shining moments of clarity—but it confuses the very intent of these debates, which is to give the candidates a chance to explain their policies and disagree, so that we viewers can determine their differences and make the most educated vote we can. What is not needed is

a constant, propaganda-esque reminder of our unity against those dreaded Republicans!

At the 2016 Democratic National Convention, Michelle Obama famously said, “When they go low, we go high.” Democrats—do not weaken the potential of your vote by thinking only in terms of who you are beating out. Vote for a positive, progressive vision of the future, not simply an anti-Trump candidate.

But everyone—this is a lesson that transcends party lines. I don’t know if politics could be an expression of love, but I like to believe that the heavy focus on partisan differences and identity could be relieved. That politics can be less an expression of electability and more an expression of a concrete stance, a vision. In short, ShopRite instead of ShopWrong.

× *Noah Bergam*

The Value of the Humanities in the 21st Century

ANDREW WONG (IV)

Last year, my history teacher started the year with a thought experiment. He told our class, “History is irrelevant. If the only reason why we learn history is not to repeat the mistakes of the past, then in today’s world, it is useless and everything you learn in this class is irrelevant. You’re much better off taking useful subjects like science and math.”

I was taken aback by this statement. History has always been one of my favorite subjects, and I have always enjoyed learning about various civilizations and how past events have shaped the world today.

Now, I was told, by a history teacher, that the subject I loved the most was useless. It was being slowly replaced by new cutting edge STEM subjects. In a similar vein, at the beginning of my English class this year, we discussed the waning role of English and other humanities subjects in our modern world, especially as STEM subjects take center stage in schools.

STEM is incredibly important in our world today, and it is crucial

that students learn these types of skills in order to have success in our modern world. Pingry has recognized the importance of STEM subjects and has successfully created a comprehensive science curriculum, which teaches students everything from the mechanisms of cancer to advanced physics.

biology research class, or the many IRT projects offered. Pingry’s technology labs are also similarly well equipped, with brand new laser cutters, 3D printers, and VR tech.

Needless to say, Pingry’s investment in STEM has paid off. Pingry was ranked by Newsweek as 150th out of

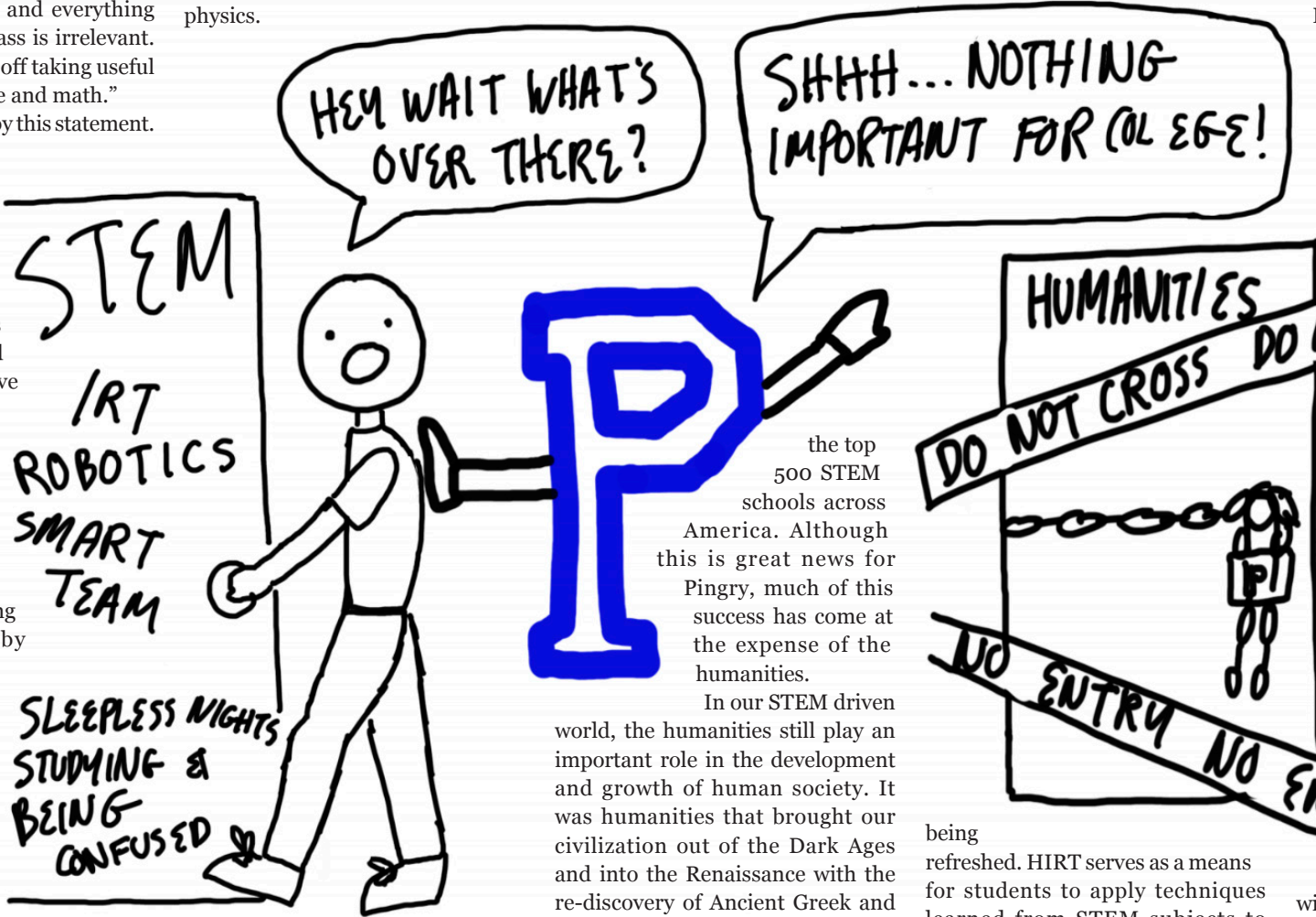
condition. That is something STEM cannot do.

Pingry’s efforts to make sure humanities are just as important as STEM subjects have been successful this year. With the expansion of HIRT, humanities at Pingry are

exciting projects. As a member of the Children’s Literature HIRT, I have so far enjoyed this new approach to humanities, and together with my group, I have conducted intensive research into altruism in young children using stories collected from lower schoolers at Short Hills.

This new fusion of STEM and Humanities is an excellent model of how humanities can be taught to students effectively in the 21st century. By combining both techniques learned from STEM fields and applying them to humanities, this can be an effective way of teaching students the value of humanities through a new lens.

At the end of my freshman year, we did an exercise in my history class where we again discussed the purpose of studying history and other humanities subjects. My class decided that humanities are important because they enable us to understand other people and cultures through learning about the human condition and people’s experiences. Whether it is reading stories or poems, learning about history, or making art, the humanities allow us to learn about what makes us human, and helps us discover the accomplishments of the past, understand the world we live in, and arms us with the tools to build the future. The importance of humanities cannot be forgotten as we move deeper into this century, and I applaud Pingry’s steps to teach humanities to students in a cutting edge and modern way.



the top 500 STEM schools across America. Although this is great news for Pingry, much of this success has come at the expense of the humanities.

In our STEM driven world, the humanities still play an important role in the development and growth of human society. It was humanities that brought our civilization out of the Dark Ages and into the Renaissance with the re-discovery of Ancient Greek and Roman teachings. Humanities allow us to understand ourselves better and teach individuals how to think creatively and critically. Whether it is poetry or the arts, humanities allow us to learn more about the human

Research opportunities also offer Pingry students access to cutting edge science, whether it be through their science classes, the molecular

A New Version of History

BRIAN LI (IV)

“What’s even the point of history class? Nothing actually matters now.” Last year, I took the World History 9 course, a survey of “history from the emergence of civilization in ancient Mesopotamia to the Age of Exploration.” I thought it was a fascinating class, but evidently, at least one other student didn’t share my sentiments. I’ve heard people call it “boring” or “not important” due to the “ancient” part of this ancient history class. Could a change of the time period remedy this issue? The history curriculum at our school

is now undergoing a complete overhaul, which began this school year. The first remake has been for World History 9, which now covers the years 1200-1914. Next year, World History 10 will pick up from the year 1900 and end in 2001. When asked about the reason behind removing ancient history from the curriculum, History Department Chair Dr. Jones said, “more modern history seems to resonate with students more, and we wanted to get students interested in the study of history, while ancient history, especially philosophy, doesn’t have as much resonance with students.” Ancient history can seem boring

or unimportant to some people, as what happened so long ago seems too far away to affect our lives. Written history was scant, leaving historians to search in vain for the next clue to unlock the secrets of an ancient empire. Modern history is much more recent and relevant to the present day because its revolutions and wars have shaped our lives. We can see the effects that specific events have caused, which can cause students to feel that modern history is much more important and pertinent. Students then may be more interested in modern history, increasing the amount of engagement and activity in class.

However, the revised World History 9 and previous World History 10 curriculums overlap significantly this year, with both courses essentially offering the same material as implementing two new courses within the same year is nigh impossible. Ancient history has been removed from the high school history curriculum, leaving students without the foundational knowledge of civilization and how the Western world rose to power.

Modern history is extremely relevant and is crucial to learn, but I believe that we cannot simply push ancient history to the side. The complexity of modern European history is extremely challenging and demands a thorough understanding. Without a foundational knowledge of how the West became the dominant power, students may not fully comprehend

Europe’s reign of dominance and the events that occurred during this time.

Another key issue to consider is Eurocentrism, which is a major concern facing both teachers and students. From my experience in the now-defunct World History 9, the class did not overly focus on one specific country or continent; instead, it provided a broad but thorough explanation of early history. Indeed, according to its class description, the course focused on “developments in the Middle East, the ancient Mediterranean, Asia, Africa, pre-Columbian America, and medieval Europe, culminating with the European Renaissance and Reformation and the beginnings of the modern world.” In contrast, my experience in World History 10 so far is one that is primarily centered around Europe or the Western world. The revised World History 9 course now begins with the Mongol civilization, the bridge between the East and West, so freshmen will not be exposed to the many non-European civilizations, such as Mesopotamia, that preceded this era. Therefore, this Eurocentrism, or absence of the history of certain key regions and civilizations, may lead students to believe that Europe was always the dominant continent throughout history.

Fortunately, the History Department is working towards preventing the freshman history course from being too Eurocentric, with an explicit focus on the global aspect of World

History.

The revised history curriculum is also beneficial in allowing students to pursue a more specialized education. Speaking on why the ancient history sections were removed, Dr. Jones said, “it’s always a struggle between depth versus breadth; if you cover a ton, can you study anything in-depth? It’s a constant struggle.” By removing ancient history, students will most likely have one more year or semester to take focused courses on specific topics, such as Asian History. This is a tremendous opportunity to learn something in-depth, once again going back to the depth versus breadth conflict. For those of us that truly are passionate about ancient history, an elective course on the topic can be created. This elective would cover the same time period as the old World History 9 course but in much greater detail. Therefore, students that are enthusiastic about this subject will have the chance to learn what they love, further increasing the engagement and involvement in history.

History is a subject that requires active student engagement. Despite my captivation with ancient history, I understand that many other students simply weren’t interested in the old World History 9 course.

Is ancient history necessary? I’m not sure, but I’m willing to put it aside for the benefit of all. Maybe it’s time we focus on the future instead of the past.



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Editorial



BRYNN WEISHOLTZ (VI)

At Pingry, a student’s academic coursework is primarily determined by the administration and follows a fairly regimented path. There is limited flexibility for a student to “choose” any portion of his or her schedule in the early years of high school. This rigidity is seen mostly during the freshman and sophomore years

when students are expected to take core classes to meet Pingry’s requirements for graduation. With the exception of a few electives,

Every class I am participating in this year is a class I chose to be in, with subject matter I wanted to explore

such as Art Fundamentals or a second language, ninth and tenth grade schedules are overflowing with mandatory classes in math,

English, history, science, and foreign language requirements. These packed schedules do not leave much room for signing up for more specialized classes.

While junior year allows for some wiggle room with course selection, there are still mandatory classes, like American Literature and the next math and language classes on a student’s respective track, that eleventh graders must take. The real change occurs senior year when no mandatory classes are required, and the course choices become abundant. For the first time as a Pingry student, I had the ability to select courses I truly wanted to take. AP Gov or AP Euro, Science in the 21st Century or Anatomy and Physiology, Greek Epic or Shakesphere, Spanish 6 or French 1. This was empowering.

Every class I am participating in this year is a class I chose to be in, with subject matter I wanted to explore. While I have always been happy to come to school, eager to share my insight in class, it wasn’t until this year that I felt everything align, allowing my innate curiosity to soar beyond my own expectations. This heightened sense of fulfillment can only be attributed to the personal interest I have in each class I selected. Sitting side-by-side with peers with similar interests, we seem more motivated to engage deeply in the subject matter.

Having the opportunity to finally spend my days studying material that sparks the most interest in me leaves me asking the question: why did it take so long to arrive at this point? Could I have benefited

from having more choices earlier in my academic career? What experiences could have further shaped me into me? Rather than lament what could have been, I choose to look ahead and embrace what is and what will be.

That said, I believe it would be beneficial to explore offering additional electives to students starting freshman year as a way to broaden horizons and spark intellectual curiosity, which is inherently one of Pingry’s pillars. Who knows what class will inspire a young mind to thrive intellectually?

Brynn Weisholtz

Solving the Issue of Poorly Timed Assessments at Pingry

MAILE WINTERBOTTOM (V)

As a Pingry student, I experience a lot of stress. From essays to tests to presentations to quizzes, the work never seems to stop piling on. However, there is a common theme in the stress that my peers and I experience: poor timing.

Over the past few years, I’ve started to notice that assessments come in big stressful waves, usually lasting a week or so. One week might be pretty uneventful, with a lull in big assessments and stress levels on the decline. Then, before you know it, you have six tests in one week, not to mention a paper due for English class. Looking at my planner, plenty of weeks are completely covered in the red ink

that signifies a large test or essay, while others are almost empty of it. This led me to ask myself: why can’t all of this work be divided up evenly between the weeks?

Students at Pingry are constantly caught between two extremes—weeks packed with work followed by others with almost none – at the expense of their mental health, free time, and success in school. During busier weeks, the challenge for dividing one’s time among different assignments becomes greater than ever. Instead of being able to focus on one thing and achieve success in that area, students are forced to ask themselves: “Should I study for my math test or should I finish my English paper?” This conflict can cause students to do poorly on some assignments when in reality, they just didn’t have enough time. Some may argue that time management

isn’t all that hard, and that students should just buck up and bear the weight of these stressful weeks. However, we are often given short notice about assignments, and even with proper notice, too many tests can still leave students in sticky situations.

If more consideration was put into the timing of tests, there would be numerous benefits for students and teachers alike. Students could put more attention into individual assignments and perform better, rather than just throwing as much time as possible into a heaping pile of essays and tests. Teachers would then see a more realistic evaluation of a student’s knowledge. Most of all, students’ stress would decrease if their large assessments were divided up more evenly.

To improve assessment timing, I suggest creating new rules similar

to the Three-Assessment Rule (if you have three major assessments in one day, you can opt to move

If more consideration was put into the timing of tests, there would be numerous benefits for students and teachers alike

one of them). One possible rule could be: if students have more than five assessments in a week,

they can opt to move one of them to the next week. Especially leading up to breaks, where students are faced with six or seven assessments in a week, this rule could benefit the community greatly. Another possible addition could be a universal day each week where assessments are prohibited. This would give students a “day off”, allowing them to study up on assessments they have in following days.

With the faculty’s goal for this year being student wellness, poorly timed assessments is a problem that needs to be solved. However, if given enough attention, addressing this issue has the potential to benefit Pingry as a whole. It would certainly be a big step towards improving the mental health and wellness of students.

Maybe It’s Time to Phase Out the In-Class Test

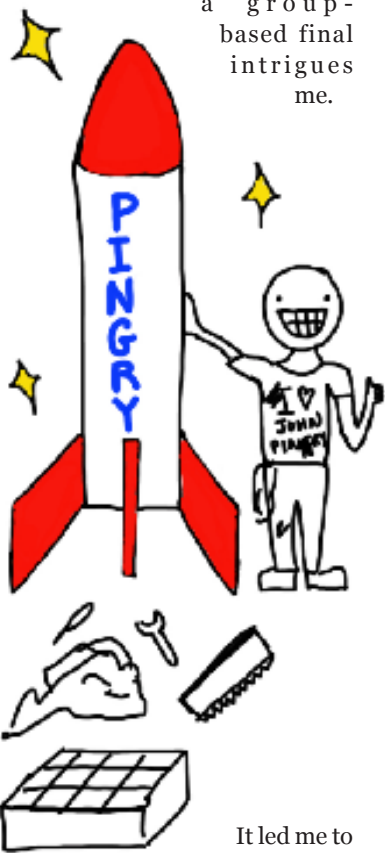
ANEESH KARUPPUR (V)

When I entered Pingry as a Form III student, I was excited to engage in the team-based, critical-thinking-style learning that Pingry has splashed all over its marketing materials. I bought into the idea of building my foundational knowledge of science and humanities in discussion-based classes. These visions were mostly fulfilled, and I distinctly remember bragging to one of my eighth grade buddies about how different the intellectual discourse was at Pingry.

Experiential learning manifests itself in different ways. From the classroom to research opportunities to global field studies, Pingry has put considerable effort into providing a different type of high school education. However, there is one factor that noticeably lags behind these advancements: tests and assessments. In freshman year, most students had seven final exams. In sophomore year, that number decreased, but remained relatively high (around four to six). Meanwhile, the Pingry Middle School has eliminated finals in favor of Project Week.

Of course, Middle School Project Week isn’t comparable to the

capstone assessments needed in the Upper School. However, the concept of a group-based final intrigues me.



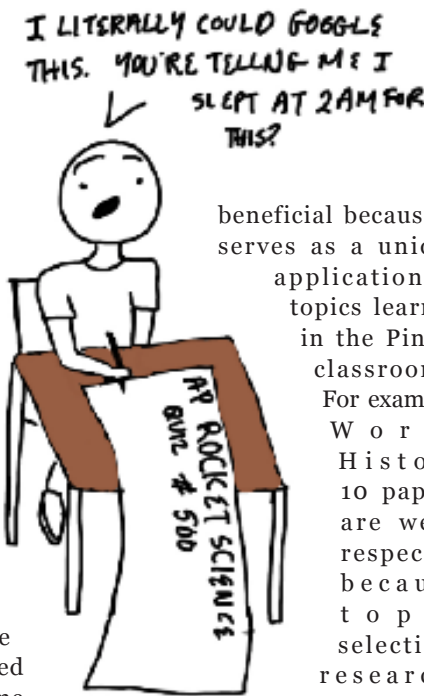
It led me to think about the nature of tests we have currently at Pingry. While tests may vary by teacher and subject, most contain at least some amount of memorization-based

questions. I find these questions, although easier, to be less beneficial to my overall understanding of material than a project or essay. In the internet age, memorization and the ability to recall facts are quickly losing their value. The internet can offer more information at a faster rate than any human can, and with fewer errors.

Because the College Board has completely missed the boat on understanding-based learning, drilling has become necessary in preparation for an AP course or an SAT Subject Test. Nevertheless, Pingry is supposed to be helming that boat, and I wonder what percentage of Pingry tests can be completed with a few Google searches. To better prepare students for the real world, research papers

and presentations should replace at least a few tests in each subject.

My first suggestion, the research paper or critical essay, would be



beneficial because it serves as a unique application of topics learned in the Pingry classrooms. For example, World History 10 papers are well-respected because topic selection, research, outlining, and writing is done entirely by the student. This allows the teacher to measure a student’s mastery, rather than their ability to regurgitate information. I also believe that the in-class essay ought to be phased out to some extent.

Given the tight time constraints, a significant portion of an in-class essay is spent on collating the background facts, leaving much too little time to develop a complex and multifaceted argument. The in-class essay is further hurt by the prohibition of outside research. This forces the entire class to draw from the same bank of information, thus limiting the scope of their arguments.

My second suggestion, the presentation, is a useful tool because it requires brevity and strong communication skills. For example, a teacher could assign groups of students to different days in the homework syllabus, and that group would present the material. This would both demonstrate the students’ understanding and function as a transition into classroom material.

While these changes may seem too drastic to be implemented immediately, I think they should be kept in mind if Pingry wants to keep up its experiential and intellectual style of education. I don’t believe that Pingry’s current assessment system is problematic by any stretch; I simply believe that it is time for the traditional test to step back and let project-based learning have some time in the spotlight.

Finding Your Existential Music

RHEA KAPUR (V)

Existentialism has dominated my last few weeks. What does that mean, exactly? What even is existentialism? That question in and of itself, my friends, presents its own existential crisis—and that should tell you something about just how much it has been on my mind lately. According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, existentialism is the pursuit of what “further set of categories... [are] necessary to grasp human existence.” Let that sink in. Deep, I know. And, of course, we teenagers should all be familiar with the “existential crisis,” a term that is now so ingrained in American culture that it is considered colloquial, dare I say the content of memes. Just to be clear, though, an existential crisis is a moment where we question the meaning of life—or, conversely, contemplate how life has no meaning.

I love to explore different aspects of the Slavic cultures and Russian language. Russian literature offers nothing if not some of the best reading, and many great Russian writers were existentialists. A couple of weeks ago, I was reading Uncle Vanya, one of Anton Chekhov’s plays. There’s a line in there that immediately stopped me in my tracks. Helena remarks, “What a fine day! Not too hot.” And Voitski (Vanya) responds, “A fine day to hang oneself.” If that’s not existentialist, I don’t know what is. Yes, Vanya perhaps takes it too far, but the sentiment is there. In my Russian Literature HIRT, we’re reading Anna Karenina, a great novel by Leo Tolstoy, and a friend of mine recently gave a presentation on Tolstoy’s spiritual crisis. You guessed it: by the end of his life, he

was a die-hard existentialist. And, in my American Literature course right now, we’re reading “Bartleby the Scrivener”—perhaps one of the strangest short stories of all time—which presents a perfect case study in absurdism, existentialism, and even nihilism.

For me, all of this inspired a Spotify playlist, which I have lovingly entitled “sediment of existentialism.” In curating this playlist, I had to think about what has had me feeling so existentialist (the literature, obviously, and maybe the crushing amount of work). How could I elicit those same feelings again at a random 2:00 AM, when I really need them?

I came up with two answers. One is slow, melancholy music: “Apocalypse,” “Nothing’s Gonna Hurt You Baby,” “Affection,” and “K.” These are slow-burning gems from the band Cigarettes After Sex, perfect for those late nights after you return from a memorable night out, or even while you type out one last essay before our upcoming break. Lana Del Ray, with her unique voice and powerful lyrics, has some stars too: “Love,” “Brooklyn Baby,” “Off to the Races,” and “Born to Die” (that title has me convinced that she, too, is an existentialist) are some of my favorites. All of these songs showcase raspy, unique, and contemplative voices, and they really get my existentialist gears turning, transporting me to entirely new worlds.

The other mini-genre in my existentialist music consists of songs that I’ve associated with a memory. Now, hang with me, folks, we’re getting deep here. What are those sentimental songs for me? “Supermarket Flowers” by Ed Sheeran is one that immediately

comes to mind. I know I may have denounced pop in my last column, and Ed Sheeran would definitely qualify as a pop artist, but this song is exceptional; it’s poignant, and above all it’s beautifully sung. Sheeran wrote it to cope with losing his grandmother, and that loss is simultaneously raw and crystal clear in his voice. As someone who recently lost mine, I can really connect to it. Listening, I remember my dadi, yes, but I also think about death, the meaning of death, and where we go afterwards. Where is the “home” that Sheeran refers to? What quantifies “a life that’s been loved” and lived, as Sheeran sings? How can we measure that?

I have lighter songs, too: the last songs of the night that I’ve danced to (“I Lived” by OneRepublic), a Beatles piece a faraway friend of mine used to play me on his guitar (“Blackbird”), or the favorite song of a sister I never had (“The Monster” by Rihanna). All of these songs—the happy, sad, and in-between—make me contemplate life and its meaning. You could say they elicit those existential crises.

My advice for creating your own existentialist playlist? Find those songs that matter to you – the ones that make you reason, reflect, and reminisce. Find those melancholy songs to which you wallow, or the upbeat songs to which you sing along at the top of your lungs, shaking out your hair and smiling ear to ear (“Story of my Life” by One Direction, anyone?). If you need inspiration, give “sediment of existentialism” a listen. Maybe while reading Dostoevsky (another Russian existentialist—sigh) over break, as I will be. You never know what kinds of existential moments you might find yourself in.



CIGARETTES AFTER SEX



Karuppur Provides the Technology Download

ANEESH KARUPPUR (V)

As the holiday season quickly approaches, the technology world continues to develop and grow. In this issue, let’s take a look at some good gifts and some not-so-good ones.

First off, the topic most relevant to the average Pingry student is Apple’s new 16-inch MacBook Pro. They come with a scissor keyboard that feels deeper than the previous generation’s (2016-2019) butterfly keys. This new model also features a new TouchBar that has a physical Escape key and a fingerprint sensor/power button. The laptop comes with some incremental processor improvements, an (absolutely necessary) 8 terabyte solid-state drive, and a beefier battery. But the main selling point is the larger screen, which one-ups that of the previous 15-inch MacBook Pro. The screen is of a sufficiently high resolution, and the area surrounding the screen (the bezels) has been shrunk so a bigger screen can fit in about the same footprint as the outgoing 15-inch model. As is the case with Apple displays, the color accuracy is objectively unmatched among other laptops. The laptop still sticks with four USB-C/Thunderbolt 3 ports, which means that this can connect to a variety of devices (displays, external storage drives, GPUs, and other equipment) with a single cable. Pingry still recommends a dongle to go along with these relatively new ports, so I will recommend anything other than Apple’s overpriced USB-C dongles. Overall, the laptop is a nice upgrade

and starts at the same \$2,399 starting price as the old 15-inch model. If you are in the market for a new laptop for photo and video editing or coding and prefer a larger screen and more power options, this laptop is worth a look. An interesting note is that the upgrades for this machine will not be carried over to the 13-inch just yet, which will retain its issue-prone butterfly keyboard and large bezels. If you can hold out a few years for a 13-inch model, it may be worth it.

Another cool piece of tech that warrants discussion is Tesla’s Cybertruck pickup truck. This vehicle is boxy, sharp, and angular, and Tesla is billing it as an all-electric off-roading truck combination. Tesla also highlights features like “unbreakable” windows and a hefty steel structure. Surprisingly, it is not priced outlandishly: it starts at less than \$40,000 and goes up from there. I can’t really make a recommendation, but if you want your utilitarian vehicle to stand out from the crowd, this is it.

Going back to Apple for a bit, let’s discuss Apple’s AirPods Pro. The new Pro label here doesn’t signify anything “professional” about these wireless earbuds, but Apple has made some meaningful changes. There are now swappable rubber tips to block noise more effectively, which perfectly ties in with Apple’s active noise cancelling feature. This means that repetitive, droning noises, like those in a subway ride or an airplane cabin, will be filtered out while the user is listening. The new AirPods Pro have some smaller touches, like vents to equalize the air pressure in

the listener’s ears, and more actions that can be performed without taking out your phone (play, pause, skip track, etc.). They do come with Apple’s wireless charging case, albeit in a different shape. I think the AirPods Pro is cool, but more of a generous gift rather than a necessity. If you have the AirPods Gen 1 or Gen 2, I wouldn’t really recommend upgrading to these unless you really need noise cancelling in your life. Of course, the price is also higher than regular AirPods, so that is something to consider as well.

And, finally, a little holiday shopping advice—keep an eye out for any potential scams or fraudulent websites. Criminals have been using more sophisticated methods of phishing, like pretending to be the email address of a friend or family member, and it is often very difficult to detect this fraud at a glance. If an email asks you to enter your credit card information, Social Security number, or anything of the like, hover over the email address and search it up to make sure it is a legitimate email address from a major company or service. If a friend seems to be emailing you for money or a suspicious request, call or text the friend before you enter your information. Once the money is sent, it can be difficult to trace, and this is especially true with the advent of digital credit cards and financial services (Apple Card, Venmo, etc.).

If you’re careful and conscious, though, your holiday tech experience should be fun and rewarding. Happy shopping, and stay tuned for the next issue!

Photo Credits (Left to Right): Google Images, Google Images

Club Spotlight: Quiz Bowl Team

CALEB PARK (III)

As I walked into the room, pencil in hand, I felt a rush of adrenaline and perhaps a bit of anxiety. It might have been the moderator’s intense stare, or the energy of my teammates, but pure excitement coursed through my veins. I knew that nothing but mental contest awaited me. This is what it feels like to be part of the Pingry Quiz Bowl Team.

Although some might view Quiz Bowl as glorified “trivia night” or a pastime for “nerds,” both of these labels could not be farther from the truth. The art of Quiz Bowl is one of dedication and camaraderie, where each player’s mental acuity and collaboration skills are put to the test. When asked if she considered Quiz Bowl a sport, Classics teacher and club Advisor Ms. Smith responded with an enthusiastic, “Hell, yeah.” So what is it about Quiz Bowl that gets players so excited? Quiz Bowl consists of multiple rounds of trivia relating to anything from chemistry to history to modern rap. These complex and specific questions test the depth and breadth of knowledge of the contestants, who are usually grouped into teams of 4-8 people. There are many different types of tournaments as well, including Jeopardy! and buzzer-based style.



The Quiz Bowl Team after they hosted Pingry’s first ever tournament.

The team, composed of Pingry students from all grades, has competed in tournaments at various schools, and has reached the playoffs multiple times. Pingry’s Quiz Bowl team has also been dominant in QuizNet, an online Quiz Bowl competition. Every Thursday afternoon at 3:30, students of all grades gather in Room 243 to compete against schools from across the country. Pingry has been particularly strong over the years in QuizNet, qualifying for nationals almost every single year. This season is no exception. Out of the eight weekly games in the preliminary round, Pingry has won four (in a field of

thirteen teams). The team will compete in the finals on December 5th, and has already qualified for the national competition in May 2020. When asked if the team was ready for such a challenge, captain Aneesh Karuppur (V) responded: “We have won Nationals many times previously, and we expect this year to be no different. Our team is putting in a lot of effort and we think we will definitely shine.” With confidence from leaders Brian Li (VI), Aneesh Kadali (VI), and Karuppur, as well as Club Advisors Ms. Smith and Mr. Richardson, there is no doubt that the Pingry Quiz Bowl team will succeed.

Students Succeed At Princeton Model Congress

BROOKE PAN (V)

The weekend before Thanksgiving Break, Pingry students embarked on a trip to the nation’s capital to participate in the Princeton Model Congress. At ten o’clock, the bus left the Pingry campus to start its journey to the prestigious conference. There, in order to simulate the dynamics of a Congress, students prepared bills and presented them to a group of students, engaging in discussions and working on amendments until it came time to put each bill to a vote. If the bill passed within its committees, students then had a chance to present their bill in front of a larger group of students, known as a full committee. The club’s leaders, Lily Schiffman (VI) and Thomas Beacham (VI), were interviewed and asked what attracted them to Model Congress in the first place. Schiffman answered, “Model Congress is and always has been another way for my voice to be heard on issues that I’m really passionate about.” Beacham added, “In my freshman year, [Model Congress] seemed like some vague interesting field about the government ... However, Model Congress really stuck to me and that’s why I’ve been really steady with it.” When the bus arrived at the Washington Hilton Hotel, Pingry students, along with advisors Dr. Jones and Dr. Johnson, made their way to their assigned rooms to relax before the opening ceremony. After resting, the students and faculty gathered in a ballroom with students from schools all over the country. The opening ceremony started off with introductory speeches, though the primary goal of the ceremony was

to elect a president to represent the entire body. Three candidates made speeches stating why they would be the best fit for office, and later, answered questions on their opinions and plans regarding certain subjects. When reflecting on her experience at the opening ceremony, Zara Jacob (V) stated that “it was both very exciting and inspiring to be modeling a version of what it could be like to take part in the government today.” Over the course of the next few days, students mirrored practices of delegates in the legislative branch by debating and amending bills until an agreement was reached. Beacham noted, “I personally really love being in small committee and getting to know people’s ideas and debating them and trying to figure out how things work and the best way to

make things work.” On Sunday, the students participated in their last full committees, where they wrapped up voting on the remaining bills. After the closing ceremony, Pingry students got back on the bus to return to campus. In reflecting on her first experience at a Model Congress conference, newcomer Sophie Pollard (V) stated, “At such an important point in our government’s history right now, it’s cool to be participating in something like Model Congress where you understand the process of what’s going on and the role that the government’s playing ... When the events that are taking place are so significant, modeling congress just feels like a really cool and great thing to do.”



Brandon Lane (VI), Thomas Beacham (VI), and Cole Morriello (IV) after each winning an award at the Princeton Model Congress.

Club Advertisements

MEGHAN DURKIN (V)

German Club

Led by Cal Mahoney (V) and Lauren Drzala (V), German Club allows its members to explore German culture through food, activities, and more. This December, the group takes a trip to the Lake Mohawk German Christmas Market in Sparta, New Jersey. There, over 100 vendors sell everything from jewelry to bratwurst.

Why should you join?
“German culture is fun to learn about and experience. The club helps people understand German culture better as a whole and we do it in a fun way. Everyone would enjoy it.” - Lauren Drzala (V)

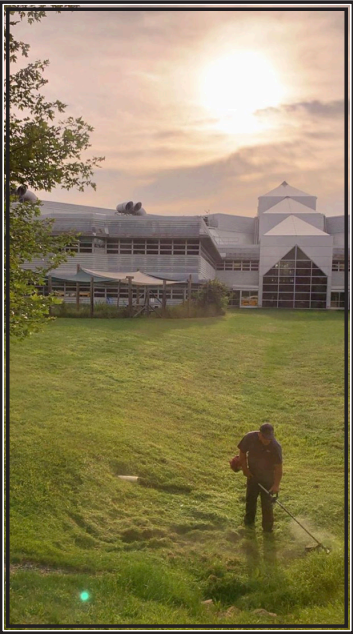
Pingry For Girls Empowerment (P4GE)

Hoping to create an empowering environment for girls, P4GE provides a space for all students to take action on issues that affect women. At meetings, members discuss feminism, help fundraise for womens’ causes, and learn to promote women’s rights. Last year, leaders Emma Huang (V), Eva Schiller (V), and Sydney Stovall (V) organized a trip to the annual Women’s March in New York City.

Why should you join?
“It doesn’t only apply to people who identify as female. There’s still a lot of improvement that can be made [for women’s rights] and P4GE serves as an outlet to inform people of these issues.” - Sydney Stovall (V)

Photo of the Month

Calligraphy by Kyra Li (III)



SEPTEMBER
Taken by Marcus Brotman (V)



OCTOBER
Taken by Amir Arnold (VI)



NOVEMBER
Taken by Olivia Hung (IV)

Cast and Crew Present Fall Play *Our Town*

ASHLEIGH PROVOOST (IV)

This year, the Pingry Drama Department performed the play *Our Town* for its annual fall production, holding performances on November 7th and 9th. Written by Thornton Wilder and directed by Mrs. Stephanie Romankow, the play follows the life of Emily Webb and George Gibbs. These two neighbors experience everything together: growing up, falling in love, and eventually dying. The play is set in a small town called Grover’s Corners in New Hampshire. It explores the seemingly mundane activities in life, and how the small details of the world are what make it worth living. A play within a play, this show is narrated by eight stage managers: Corbey Ellison (VI), Nina Srikanth (VI), Lily Arrom (V), Alex Kaplan (V), Adelaide Lance (V), Sydney Stovall (V), Natalie DeVito (IV), and Ram Doraswamy (VI). As these narrators open and close the show, they leave the audience with a warm feeling of nostalgia, as well as the realization that each moment is instrumental making one’s life unique and beautiful.

Act I begins in Grover’s Corners, as the audience observes a typical morning for the Gibbs’ and Webbs’ families. Mrs. Gibbs (Cal Mahoney, V) tries to stop her children, George (Stuart Clark, VI) and Rebecca

(Charlotte Schneider, IV), from fighting. Her husband, Dr. Gibbs (Josh Thau, VI), returns from an early morning call. Meanwhile, Mrs. Webb (Sonia Talarek, VI) makes sure her children, Emily (Helen Baeck-Hubloux, VI) and Wally (Ronan McGurn, III), exhibit good table manners. Their father, Mr. Webb (Jonathan Marsico, V), is at work. Act I allows the audience a glimpse into the daily life of a Grover’s Corners resident.

Act II is centered around George and Emily’s wedding. This includes a flashback of when both characters realized they were meant to be with one another; after a long talk over ice cream sodas in Mr. Morgan’s (Lily Arrom, V) drugstore, they admitted their feelings for one another and decided to get married soon after their high school graduation. The act ends with a captivating wedding celebration.

The play transitions into Act III, which takes the audience through Emily’s sudden death during childbirth. As she joins the world of the dead, she realizes just how much she loved being alive and spending time with family and friends. The audience joins her as she revisits her 12th birthday and reflects on how fast life truly goes by.

The performances were the culmination of two strenuous months

of rehearsals and set building, and they showcased the efforts of over 50 students. Along with Mrs. Romankow and head stage manager Lindsay Cheng (VI), new faculty members Mr. Joseph Napolitano and Ms. Emma Barakat were heavily involved in the production. Ms. Barakat played the crucial role of head carpenter. Mr. Napolitano, who was the lead set designer, greatly enjoyed his first Pingry production. He described *Our Town* as “a true example of collaboration, and the perfect first project for [him] to work on at Pingry.” Reflecting on the past few months, he adds: “Working with the design & tech crew, Mr. Van Antwerp, and Mrs. Romankow was a joy. I believe all of our work blended together in a delightful way.”

Mr. Napolitano was not the only one to note the production crew’s strong sense of community. Adelaide Lance remarked that “[The show] was amazing! We’re truly all one big family.” For some, however, the fall play marked the beginning of the end. Stuart Clark, having completed his final fall play, reminisces about acting at Pingry: “It was all so special. The Drama Department has given me a lot over my four years at Pingry. I’m really grateful that I had the opportunity to act alongside people that mean a lot to me.”



Cal Mahoney (V) and Josh Thau (VI) taking their final bow.

Winter Concert Wows Community

KYRA LI (III) & ANJOLA OLAWOYE (III)

On December 12, Pingry students performed for their family and friends at the annual Winter Festival.

The day before, many ensembles, including chorus, band, orchestra, and handbells, performed various selections of winter and holiday-themed music for the all-school concert. It is a decades-long tradition, and for some, it is the most memorable event of the school year. It is also the only time of the year when both the Short Hills and Basking Ridge campus come together in one space to celebrate the winter festivities and indicate the beginning of the holiday season.

Last year, the program began with former Headmaster Nat Conrad’s remarks about the holiday season and the importance of giving and sharing commonalities. “It is wonderful and important to share what we have in common and make a good effort to share the gift of friendship,” he said.

As usual, many traditions, like the Presentation of Gifts and the Candle Lighting Ceremony, took place last year and also appeared in this year’s concert. Last year, Student Body President, Andrew Cowen ‘19, assisted Kindergarteners Charles Brunhouse and Riya Mirchandani in lighting the festival candle at the concerts. This year, Student Body President Brian Li (VI), assisted two new kindergarteners in lighting the candle.

This year’s program started with Deck the Halls. As always, it included classic songs, such as Al Hanissim and Maoz Tzur, and ended with the all-school sing-a-long of the Twelve Days of Christmas.

Every year, the Winter Festival serves as a celebration of the community and the holiday season. Mr. Sean McAnally, one of the music teachers, said that this is his “favorite concert of the year, and it is a wonderful experience where the entire school comes together to celebrate the beginning of holiday festivities.”

MARTINE BIGOS (IV)

On Sunday, November 10, Pingry Taiko Drumming attended Columbia University’s Fall Taiko Festival in Manhattan. The drummers performed “Dokokara” and “Matsuri” and they enjoyed the performances of many talented groups, including Swarthmore, Cornell, and Stony Brook Taiko. Noah Bergam (V) represented Pingry in the group performance of “Tonbane” at the end of the festival. Noah said that the performance “made me realize that our Taiko group doesn’t exist in a vacuum. There are so many nuanced styles and group dynamics—it was awesome to see it all coalesce on stage and form a community of drummers.” Belinda

Pingry Performs at Columbia Fall Taiko Festival!

Poh (IV), another member of the club, added, “It was a really cool experience to see how many different people played and the different ways to play. I think it was worth it and all in all a really interesting and fun thing to do. Performing was fun, but watching the other groups I think was the best part.”

Mr. Leone, Pingry’s Taiko Club leader, was interviewed shortly after the festival, and below are excerpts of that conversation:

How did you learn about the festival?

I performed at the Columbia Fall Taiko Festival last year as a member of New York Taiko Aiko Kai (NYTAK).

One of NYTAK’s performing members and Columbia Taiko’s president, Koh Yamakawa, was in charge of running the festival last year, and after learning that I advised a taiko group at Pingry, he was eager to have us perform at this year’s festival.

What was your favorite performance to watch?

I’m always in awe of any performance of Jack Bazaar (performed by Swarthmore Taiko at the festival). Kris Bergstrom, the composer of the piece and lead instructor at the Los Angeles Taiko Institute, is a pioneer of naname (slant drum) style choreography, and looks for ways to

push and challenge the boundaries of how to play taiko. He ran a workshop at the East Coast Taiko Conference a few years back, and we spent the full two-and-a-half hour workshop just learning the first six measures of the piece (a section titled “Cronkite”). While the rhythms aren’t necessarily difficult, the movement is incredibly challenging, so it’s something special to see the piece be performed.

Are there any pieces that you would like to bring to Pingry that you saw at the festival?

I’m thinking of bringing in Omiyage (performed by Taiko Tides at the festival, composed by Shoji Kameda) as

one of next year’s performance pieces. The rhythms and choreography are a little tricky, but it is a fun and satisfying piece to play. It’s also one of the pieces that inspired me when I first started playing taiko, so it would be special for me to get to teach and have our students perform it. I’m hoping to get a couple of student-written pieces worked in to our repertoire. Getting to see other groups play, each with their different styles, opens the door for what is possible rhythmically and choreographically, so I’d like to channel that into helping our group write a few pieces of our own to help us define our own Pingry Taiko style.

Buttondowns Return to their Roots (cont.)

BRIAN LI (IV)

Directly following “On And On,” Nolan Baynes (V) and Justin Li (V) paired up as soloists for “Slide” by Calvin Harris, Frank Ocean, and Migos. Shmuler added to the performance by singing the high-pitched verses at the beginning of the song, receiving great appreciation from the audience. Once again, the group deviated from their traditional semicircle formation in favor of having the members sit down on the floor to give off a more candid and relaxed demeanor.

Ram Doraswamy (IV), John Robertson, and Alex Kaplan starred in the Guardians of the Galaxy medley, a combination of three songs from the Guardians of the Galaxy movies. Comprised of Blue Swede’s “Hooked on a Feeling,” The Five Stairsteps’ “O-o-h Child,” and Redbone’s “Come and Get Your Love,” the medley not only transitioned between the three songs throughout, but included physical transitions with the Buttondowns. Each song featured different configurations and actions,

providing viewers with a clear sense of when the songs switched between each other.

The next song was “Slow Dancing In a Burning Room” by John Mayer and was sung by soloists Henry Wood (V), Ore Shote (V), and Charlie Malone with the Buttondowns in a straight line facing the audience.

Lastly, Baynes and Wang capped off an unforgettable performance with Post Malone and Swae Lee’s “Sunflower.” As his final solo and song in front of the entire high school, Wang remarked positively on his experience with “Sunflower.” “I loved [Spider-Man: Into the Spideverse] so Sunflower was a great song to end on... I really enjoyed singing something that puts me in a different mood and takes me to different places.”

What was unique about this year’s assembly was the presence of choreography. Compared to previous years where the group stood in a static semicircle, the Buttondowns enthralled the crowd with their movement, adding another dimension to the performance. When asked

about his overall experience in the Buttondowns, Wang said that, “It’s been interesting. Freshmen year was amazing but for the last two years, we got lost in the movie so much that we kind of forgot about the singing. After last year, I decided that we’re going to focus on the singing because it’s a Buttondowns assembly and that’s the core of the group.” Wang was thankful for Dr. Moore for his unwavering support and advice and also thanked the rest of the seniors, Malone, Robertson, Yu, Dispenza, and Bugliari. He was especially grateful for Malone who arranged all of the songs and did “so much work behind the scenes. He deserves as much credit as me and without him, I don’t think the concert would even be close to how it sounds right now.”

The assembly was hugely appreciated by the Upper School as evidenced by the thunderous applause and cheering throughout the entire event. Wang ended by saying, “I’ve tried to bring the Buttondowns back to their roots and I sincerely appreciate everybody that’s been there for me.”



The Buttondowns get into formation for their Guardians of the Galaxy Medley



Nolan Baynes (V) serenades Lance Perlow (VI)

Triumphing over Tribulation (cont.)

MARTINE BIGOS (IV)

The thought of having a two weeks’ notice on your life sounded like too much to bear, but Sean knew that once again he had the choice to keep moving with a positive mindset or to give in to cancer. Though one of his lungs lost its function due to radiation treatment, Sean survived. Sean then set out on a new adventure. He wanted to become the first cancer survivor to summit Mt. Everest. Through intense training, Sean prepared himself for the climb and succeeded. Carrying a flag signed by cancer patients up to the summit, he climbed the mountain for them.



Sean Swarner telling his inspirational story.

While in Nepal, Sean visited a cancer hospital where, on average, ninety-five percent of the patients pass away. Sean gave one patient his lucky green t-shirt that had carried him through countless treatments and told the patient to pass it on to another patient once they recover. According to Sean, all patients in the hospital who have worn the t-shirt have survived, a miracle ostensibly caused by the boost in confidence it inspires.

In addition to climbing Mt. Everest, Sean has summited Mt. Aconcagua, Kilimanjaro, Denali, Elbrus, Vinson, and Puncak Jaya.

Mrs. Marotto, the chair of the

Health Department, coordinated the assembly along with Dr. Rosen and said that “the theme for this year’s strategic plan is student wellness. Dr. Rosen and I thought Sean’s inspirational message of resilience and accomplishment in the face of a life-threatening cancer diagnosis was valuable for our community to hear. There are so many life lessons to be learned from someone like Sean, and we hope our community was inspired by his story and his courage.”

Sean taught the Pingry community a lot of lessons, the most important of which was to choose to fight rather than to give up.

Students Serve Community on Annual Rufus Gunther Day

ZOE WANG (IV)

This year’s annual Rufus Gunther Day, held on October 25, was a resounding success. Following the annual tradition, more than a thousand members of the Pingry community, including 600 Upper School students, 270 middle schoolers, and 100 faculty members, participated in this day of community service.

Ms. Shelley Hartz, Director of Community Service, has been directing Rufus Gunther Day for fifteen years. Before her arrival to Pingry, Rufus Gunther Day was neither a full-day event nor a diversified community service operation; the whole school simply volunteered at a food bank. Now, Rufus Gunther Day is a whole day of community service that has expanded to include dozens of organizations. Ms. Hartz said, “Rufus Gunther Day is one of my favorite days on campus; it feels like I am planning a wedding or a huge party. Planning it involves a lot of huge moving parts at once, but it feels great while it’s happening. When it’s over, I’m a little sad.”

Pingry partnered with thirty-eight organizations this year. Middle schoolers traveled to five organizations off-campus and five on-campus, two of which involved working outdoors. Upper School students attended thirty-six off-campus activities, in addition to six on-campus ones.

As always, students worked with a wide range of organizations. Grade 6 and Form I students went to the Community Food Bank in Hillside, while Middle School glee students sang at Centerbridge, a senior citizen



Students working outside on Rufus Gunther Day.

residence. Other middle schoolers volunteered at the Great Swamp or helped with remaining on-campus projects.

At the Upper School, Drama students went to three special needs schools that Pingry has built a long-standing relationship with. Peer Leaders went to the Christopher and Dana Reeves Foundation, while Honor Board members helped prepare Wick Gardens for the winter. Form IV lifers were given the chance to return to the Lower School to work with Ms. Smith on the garden they originally helped build.

This year, Mr. Steve Frantz, a technology specialist at Pingry, started a new and innovative project. Working with Princeton Academy of the Sacred Heart, he helped students create prosthetic hands for kids that need

them. This also gave students the chance to use the school’s 3D printer.

Some projects students participated in were started by alumni, including A Birthday Wish, which is run by a Pingry alum and development employee. Potters for Peace, which uses their profits to donate to a cancer support community, was also founded by a Pingry alum.

Rufus Gunther Day has been a tradition at Pingry that continues to bring a smile to everyone’s face. Ms. Hartz noted, “Rufus Gunther Day is one of the best things that we do as a community. It demonstrates the commitment from the administration to ensure that the Pingry community has the opportunity to live our mission statement.”

Word in the Halls

What made you smile today?

Rosemary Collins (V)



“My coffee.”

Jonathan Marsico (V)



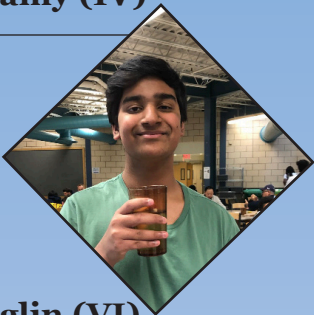
“I haven’t smiled today.”

Josh Thau (VI)



“My friends made me smile today.”

Ram Doraswamy (IV)



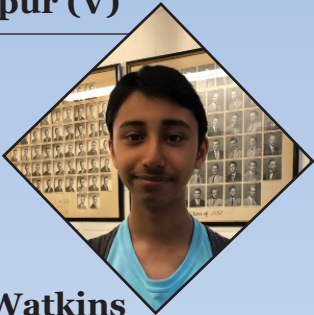
“I talked to Mr. Van Antwerp and he said that he hadn’t reassigned my part [in the musical] to anyone. So, I’m still the sergeant and I’m back in the musical.”

Hannah Guglin (VI)



“Balladeers made me smile. It made me happy.”

Aneesh Karuppur (V)



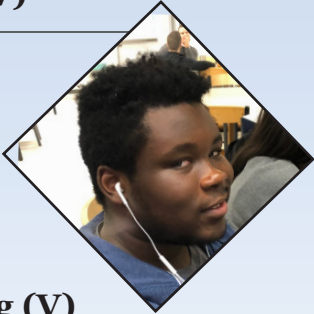
“Mr. McAnally helped me play a jazz piece this morning before class. We had a nice practice session.”

Mrs. Mack-Watkins



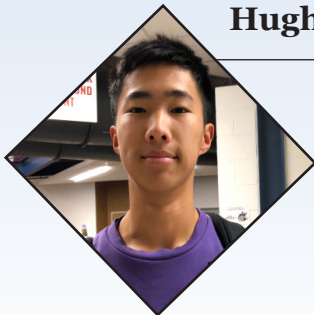
“Thinking about my daughter.”

Ore Shote (V)

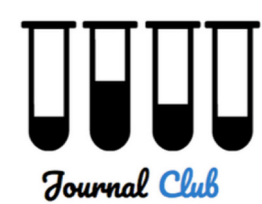


“Eating bagels in the morning during Buttondowns.”

Hugh Zhang (V)



“Mr. Keating’s English class.”



Journal Club Recap

Journal Club provides students the opportunity to present on cutting edge scientific findings completed by researchers around the world. Student leaders Nina Srinkanth (VI) and Garielle Billington (VI), along with faculty advisor Ms. Mygas, welcome all to enjoy the presentations, which occur weekly on Thursday mornings in the faculty room. Many presentations are also available on YouTube. The following presentations from this fall demonstrate the wide range of incredible topics covered!

Nina Srinkanth’s (VI) presentation analyzed a new technique for photothermal removal of prostate tumors using gold nanoshells.

Gabrielle Billington (VI) presented on the psychology behind false confessions. She also discussed an experiment in which an incredible 70% of participants in the study signed a false confession.

Hugh Zhang (V) made a presentation about how various patterns of snakeskin impact our perceived fear of snakes. The study was done based on analysis of electrical energy in the human brain.

Teodora Kolarov (V) presented on the impact a certain gene network has on the development and symptom severity of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Noah Bergam (V) presented on Latent Dirichlet Allocation. Unlike humans, computers have a hard time detecting context, emotion, similarities and extracting meaning from specific sets of documents and the words within those documents. This fascinating type of topic modeling serves to solve this issue.



STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT
BRIAN LI (VI) SAYS:

Please scan the QR Code to read Student Government’s Q1 Report!



Pingry Discusses Socioeconomic Diversity at Widening the Lens Conference

ZARA JACOB (V)

Each year, The Far Brook SFIchool hosted the Widening the Lens Conference, a space for independent schools in New Jersey to come together and discuss diversity and inclusion. Each school is expected to send one or two representatives from different constituencies of the school, including administrators, trustees, parents, students, diversity and inclusion practitioners, faculty, and alumni.

This year the conference was titled “Class in the Classroom: Exploring Socioeconomic Diversity in Our Schools,” with key speaker Anthony Jack, a junior fellow at the Harvard Society of Fellows and assistant professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The conference started with a speech by Dr. Jack, author of Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges are Failing Disadvantaged Students, who discussed how, despite the fact that many elite colleges and private schools are making an effort to provide access to students with varying socioeconomic statuses, there is little to no action to cultivate a sense of inclusion. “Access and Inclusion,” he repeats; that is what elite colleges and independent high schools must aspire to reach in regards to the maintenance of socioeconomic

diversity.

The second part of the conference saw the group split into “pods”: students met with students, teachers met with teachers, so on and so forth. In the discussion among students, topics ranged from stories of being bullied for relying on financial aid, to the impending burden of college tuition, to not being able to afford class symbols like AirPods or a Canada Goose jacket. However, one student from an all-boys school in Jersey City opted out of speaking on the panel, saying that he did not have anything to talk about: “My school actually does a pretty good job.” He went on to talk about the incorporation of legitimate diversity-building implementations at this school, and how it fostered an environment for socioeconomic diversity to be candidly discussed and subsequently addressed. The student panel was arguably the prevailing aspect of the conference, as Mr. Levinson notes “I think it made an impact on everybody, but in particular the adults at Pingry; it got everyone thinking. Those personal stories are what people remember. When you hear actual voices of students, you think about what we can do or continue to do to improve the student experience, while also considering all the different layers involved.”

The conference concluded with

each pod of students, faculty, and administrators coming together to talk about takeaways from the conference and how this discussion could be brought back to their respective schools. Pingry’s pod included Mrs. Ostrowsky, Ms. López, Mr. Levinson, myself, and other board members, alumni, faculty, and parents. The primary focus of the meeting was to brainstorm a tangible, realistic plan to engage discussions about socioeconomic diversity and possible solutions to further facilitate the aspect of “inclusion” at Pingry.

For tuition-based schools like Pingry, socioeconomic diversity can be a tricky subject. No one wants to talk about money, which in and of itself is a luxury and an indication of how we deal with socioeconomic diversity at independent schools. Pingry’s attendance at the Widening the Lens Conference was undoubtedly a necessary and powerful stepping stone for the cultivation of a community that is aware and active in regards to socioeconomic diversity. But this should not be all that is done. If you, or anyone you know, wants to help create a plan that enables the growth of socioeconomic diversity at Pingry, please talk to Mrs. Ostrowsky, Ms. Lopez, or myself. It is our responsibility to do more than just talk about socioeconomic diversity; action is pressing and necessary.

HiRT Group Explores Art and Afrofuturism: An Intrinsic Duo

SYDNEY STOVALL (V)

On November 5th, a handful of students and faculty embarked on a trip to New York City to observe and discuss art exhibits that explored themes relating to Afrofuturism as part of their Humanities Independent Research Team (HIRT). The term “Afrofuturism” is fluid; it is completely personalized. There is no singular definition of Afrofuturism, but Ingrid LaFleur, a curator and self-proclaimed Afrofuturist, defines it as “a way of imagining possible futures through a black cultural lens.” Afrofuturism explores the intersection of black oppression and black empowerment through different mediums, including visual art, music, podcasts, and literature. The members of this HIRT have been working on creating their own definition of Afrofuturism through the exploration of these mediums. A field trip to New York City, a center for diverse art and thought, provided members the opportunity to do so.

After an hour long car ride filled with music like Janelle Monae’s Afrofuturistic ArchAndroid and Dirty Computer, the

group arrived at its first exhibit: Kenyan artist Wangechi Mutu’s collection the NewOnes, will free Us. Located on the facade of The Met, Mutu’s installation encapsulates the essence of Afrofuturism by incorporating traditional African cultural symbols with elements that highlight an oppressive past and an empowering future. Mutu plays on the historical significance of caryatids, a style often used in Greek architecture that utilizes the female body as pillars to support the building. Rather than objectify her women to fulfill the sole purpose of supporting some greater entity, Mutu has her women placed on a pedestal in powerful poses, indicating a newfound superiority.

The final stop on the agenda was the “Utopian Imagination” exhibit located in the Ford Center for Social Justice. Works titled Cloud 9, Android Girl, Sky Lark, and Nubian Return intrigued the students as they walked in. Each work depicted a unique interpretation of a hopeful future. Gabrielle Billington (VI) was specifically moved by Lola Flash’s SYZYGY, which showed a queer black woman in an orange prison jumpsuit with unlocked handcuffs

and an astronaut’s helmet. “With mass incarceration being an enormous issue within the black community, particularly in America,” Billington notes, “the photo was clear in breaking the stereotypes with a woman, uncuffed looking towards space and inferably, the future.”

Sydney Tindall (VI) was struck by how pieces “not only exhibited works that portrayed African Americans as powerful images, but [also how] they incorporated religions and other minority groups that have been discriminated against in the past and placed them in these futuristic settings as if to say ‘here we are, not only present, but thriving and saving the world.’” Although Afrofuturism focuses on the African diasporic identity, the themes of hope for the future, despite an oppressive history, applies to all systematically marginalized voices, regardless of race.

This trip truly exemplifies the power art has to convey a message without an explanation. Perhaps this is why artwork and Afrofuturism coalesce so seamlessly together. They both serve as platforms to allow individuals to share their ideas, their criticisms, and their hopes.



Photo Credits (Left to Right): Noah Bergam (V), Sydney Stovall (V)

Freshman Art Classes Take on the MoMA

MIRIKA JAMBUDI (III)

On Thursday, November 14th, ninth-graders in Art Fundamentals and various other classes visited the Museum of Modern Art for their annual art trip into New York City. They visited many of the museum’s new exhibitions, including, but not limited to, “Transfigurations,” “Inner and Outerspace,” and “Hardware and Software.” The trip featured many different types of galleries, including ones specializing in photography, digital media, and 3D artwork; each elicited many different reactions from the students. Victoria Ramos (III) said that she “was surprised to see how much art had changed throughout the centuries as [she] walked from gallery to gallery.”

One of the collections that many students seemed to enjoy was Gretchen Bender’s “Dumping Core” exhibit. It featured 13 video monitors in a dark room set to techno music

that displayed many intercut logos, graphics, and clips from TV and movies. These images were all pieced together to create an eye-catching visual display. After further research, students later found that the meaning behind this exhibit was to subvert corporate agendas and combat the use of technology for commercial gain.

Another collection was entirely dedicated to the Tiananmen Square student protests in the 1980s. The artists featured in this collection used very abstract methods and techniques to convey their anger at the government, such as lathering a chicken with soap, firing a gun at their artwork, or photographing protestors lighting fireworks in Tiananmen Square. These artworks challenged the overwhelming censorship of the Chinese government and were seen as forms of protest and rebellion. They were also viewed as individualist responses towards reforming socio-economic shifts and urbanization

at the time. “It was exciting to learn and research the backstories behind these works of art, because it is more complex than what you see on the surface,” says Caleb Park (III). Zala Bhan (III) also agreed that the trip was a success and a great learning experience because she was “exposed to many different forms of artwork ...which really broadened my perspective on what one can define as art.”

After coming back from the art trip, the students were asked to curate their own “gallery” of ten paintings that they found interesting and had a common principle or element of art. They were also asked to analyze different techniques that the artists used in their artwork, such as emphasis through color or movement through shapes, lines, and value. Students had fun selecting and organizing these works of art in their own mini-gallery project; overall, the trip was a fantastic experience.

Broadening Young Artistic Perspectives at the Chelsea Galleries

CARSON SHILTS (V)

On October 18, over one hundred students filed into buses and rode to Chelsea, New York. There, with bagels in their hands and earbuds in their ears, students in photography, drawing and painting, and portfolio classes discovered the awe-inspiring artworks exhibited in the Chelsea art galleries.

Chelsea’s galleries display a variety of different types of art. One well-known artist whose work was exhibited is Christian Marclay, who creates abstract art inspired by anime. Marclay is known to embody sound and music in his paintings and videos. Another featured artist was Ed Clark, a highly respected painter who is known for his striking abstract impressionism paintings. The students who went to his gallery were able to appreciate his talent and acknowledge the imprint he has left on the art community. The galleries also displayed works from up and coming artists, achieving a balanced variety of well-known and newer work. From political pieces to vibrant monster sculptures, there was an exhibition for everyone.

Once they arrived, the students were split up based on the classes they are in so they could see all the artwork that was most connected to what they were currently learning. Though this trip was meant to break the boundaries of the types of art that students were accustomed to seeing, an emphasis was placed on art that correlates with their medium.

Students were also asked to take nine separate photos: three artworks that inspired them, three artworks they did not understand, and three artworks that they would give to their friend as a gift. This allowed students to analyze the art from different perspectives.

The photography teacher, Mr. Boyd, said that he “wanted students to get a new range of ideas of what kind of art is out there.” He hoped that this would then “create another layer of ideas” that students could bring back to the classroom and incorporate into their own work. Fortunately, his hopes came true. When asked what she learned, Abby Parrish (V), a photography student, said, “Going into the trip I had a closed view of what art is and what art should be.

When visiting the galleries, I realized there were many more different types and perspectives of art that I hadn’t even known existed. For example, there was this one gallery that had a kitchen in the back and it was using space as art and I had never thought that art could be portrayed in that way, which I thought was really cool.”

After viewing the galleries, students visited Chelsea Market, escaping the cold to eat lunch and shop for souvenirs. Upon returning to Pingry, participants headed to their classrooms to reflect on what they found most interesting. They also shared the photos they were asked to take. Overall, the trip to the Chelsea Galleries was incredibly successful, and the art students and faculty are excited to go again next year!

Art History Students Connect the Classroom to Real-Life at the Met Museum

VICKY GU (VI)

On Monday, November 18, the AP Art History class, along with Mr. Nigel Paton and Ms. Paula Fisher, took their annual trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

Before the trip, students studied the art of people from Africa, Oceania, western North America, and classical antiquity. They saw many works in real-life that they had previously seen only on computer screens.

The field trip started in the Greek and Roman art wing. Students viewed Mediterranean art from various different ancient eras and were able to compare what they had learned in class to the actual sculpture. The Greek, Archaic Marble statue of a kouros, for example, was slightly disproportionate and much more stiff-limbed than the Hellenistic, Roman Marble sarcophagus with the Triumph of Dionysos and the Seasons that was sculpted almost three hundred years later.

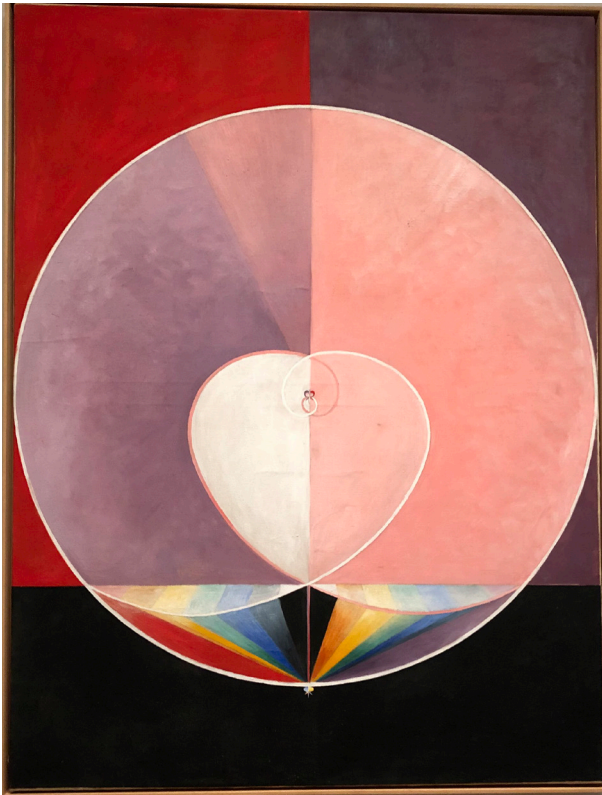
The students examined other works that hadn’t been studied in class, such as various Greek vases, Roman bronze sculptures (which often copied or were inspired by Greek sculptures), and frescoes. The Met even had a reconstruction of a room—the fresco walls of Cubiculum (bedroom) from the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale. These walls were painted with perspective, vivid colors, ornamental details, and give

a relatively small area a greater sense of space.

The students had previously been assigned to present various pieces of artwork from Africa and America. A particularly striking artwork was the Nkisi n’kondi, or Power Figure, created by the Kongo people in the late 19th century. Many students were amazed by the intimidating atmosphere and size of the wood sculpture as it stood on its raised pedestal. Carson Shilts (V) and Sandra Adablah (V) presented the work and explained that every time a villager committed a crime or a sin, the citizens would hold a meeting for the sinner to apologize. Nails, shards of glass, and other sharp objects were driven into different parts of the figure’s body depending on the severity and nature of the crime.

Other works presented include bronze plaques of African royalty and Native American elk hides and masks. Students, who had already learned about the ceramic processes of Maria Martínez of the San Ildefonso Pueblo, were able to view her Black-on-Black Jar, which was particularly unique given the use of glossy and matte black surfaces in her designs.

The field trip concluded with an hour of free time to explore the rest of the museum. While some students wandered around to see what other works might interest them, others had already planned to search for specific artists and movements.



Sculptures and paintings from the various galleries visited by Pingry art students

Varsity Soccer Teams Close Out Successful Seasons

DEAN KOENIG (V)

The boys' and girls' varsity soccer teams both had unforgettable seasons this fall, adding to the historical success of both programs.

The girls, coached by Head Coach Lauren Molinaro, topped off their great season by clinching the NJSIAA Non-Public "A" State Tournament trophy.

The girls had a week to recover from a disappointing loss against Ridge High School in the Somerset County Tournament before their

first state tournament game against Bishop Eustace. Team captain Leah Mangold (VI) described the state tournament as, "a clean slate, a chance to prove ourselves and make something special of our season."

Since Pingry girls' soccer also claimed the state title last season, the players were committed to upholding their reputation.

Mangold said that the team found its rhythm when the girls "started to find that perfect balance between having fun and also staying focused." Proving Mangold's words to be

true, Pingry put on two dominant performances in the first two rounds of the tournament. Madi Pilla's (VI) four goals in the sectional semifinal game gave her the record for most goals scored in a single season by a Pingry Girls' Soccer player.

The closest of Pingry's state tournament games came against Red Bank Catholic in the South Jersey sectional final. Behind two goals from Pilla and one from Mangold, Pingry won the match 3-1 and took home the NJSIAA Non-Public "A" South Jersey title.

The South Jersey final win matched up Big Blue with DePaul, the winner of the North Jersey section, for the state group final at Kean University. With goals from five different players, Big Blue proved to be the best team in the NJSIAA Non-Public A group, defeating DePaul by a score of 6-0.

Reflecting on the season, Liv Volpe (V) said, "It was almost like déjà vu of last year. We had high expectations going in, some of which were disappointed, but we peaked at the right time and were able to finish on the highest note possible."

Complementing the girls' incredible season, the boys' team made a run of its own in the NJSIAA North Jersey Non-Public "A" Tournament under



Girls' soccer celebrates winning their second consecutive state title

Head Coach Miller Bugliari. Just as the girls did, the boys started the tournament strong, defeating Bergen Catholic 4-2 with two goals from captain Will Bugliari (VI). The boys were then faced with perhaps the toughest challenge of their season: Delbarton. Big Blue was able to hold Delbarton, one of the nation's top high school teams, scoreless the entire game, winning 1-0 off of Aidan Gaynor's (V) goal late in the game.

Speaking on this triumph, Gaynor said, "It was hands down one of the

best moments in my Pingry career ... so many people came out to watch, which was awesome for an away game, and it definitely won't be forgotten by any of the players."

The team went on to lose 5-3 in the final round to Seton Hall Prep, a team that had previously only let up three total goals the entire season.

Both the boys' and girls' seasons were nothing short of amazing, and neither the players nor the fans will forget the excitement and thrill of each game.

Winter Sports 2019-20 Season Update



Jake Shannon (V) wrestles opponent from North Plainfield HS

By BEN GOTTESMAN (IV), BROOKE PAN (V), CALEB PARK (III), ANJOLA OLAWOYE (III)

Boys' Basketball

After a spectacular showing in both the county and state tournaments last year, the senior-heavy boys' basketball team is looking to make an even deeper run into this season's tournaments. Coach Jason Murdock said, "Knowing that we have six returning seniors from last year's team, experience is key and we always want to win our conference, advance in our county tournament, and show well in the state tournament." The team has been preparing offseason, Coach Murdock explains. "[The guys] have been in the gym working with Coach Scott, so they are very motivated." It is clear that team culture is very crucial to the success

of the program, Coach Murdock explains. Incoming freshmen should expect "a team that cares about each other, a team that works hard and is competitive, and a team that's going to do their best to represent Pingry." The team officially kicks off the year with a difficult game at Immaculata on December 23rd.

Girls' Basketball

The girls' basketball team is looking strong this winter, with high hopes to build on their performance from last year. Captains Jennifer Ryan (VI), Aly Feeley (VI), and Olivia Volpe (V) will be leading this year's team as they approach the upcoming season with a new and improved mentality.

"It was kind of hard last season because we lost a lot of our best players," Volpe recalled. "Because of that, we went into last season with low expectations and ... we lost a lot of morale." Working from the lessons

they learned from last year, the girls' basketball team has made it their mission to "work harder on [their] team chemistry."

Feeley is confident in the team's ability to achieve this goal. "We all have a strong work ethic and a desire to get better every day, which is critical to the success and improvement of a team." She adds, "this team has a really special environment and culture that differentiates it from other sports teams on campus ... I can't wait to see how the season goes!"

Boys' Fencing

This year, boys fencing is ready for anything. Although the team is still in the middle of preseason, they are confident of success in the upcoming season. Several new fencers have arrived from the middle school, including Charles Jiang (III), Andy Overdeck (III), Vared Schmuler (III), and Max Watzkey (III).

Last year, the team fenced valiantly throughout the season, and this year's captains, Corbey Ellison (VI) and Derek Huffman (VI), are excited to build on that success this year through strict preseason practices, which they believe will help to organize the team. Watzkey says, "My fellow fencers are extremely friendly, and I think we are ready for the season ahead." With just a bit of practice, boys fencing is sure to come out on top this year!

Girls' Fencing

The girls' fencing team anticipates a promising season this year. Led by captains Allision Lee (VI) and Jamie Wang (VI), the team is hoping to build upon its past success. Last year, the team ended their season with a

6-7 record and had success in many major tournaments. Despite being a small team, the team believes the small group allows for a closer bond between the fencers. Zala Bhan (III) noted that the preseason workouts can be difficult. "The workouts can be hard sometimes, but they have taught me resilience," she said. The team has been working hard during preseason to ensure a strong performance at upcoming meets, especially at the District tournament, where their individual, squad, and team performances all count toward their standing in the State tournament. The first meet of the season is on December 20 against Montgomery High School. Go Big Blue fencing!

Ski Team

This season, the Pingry ski team is looking to continue their positive momentum by improving upon last season's success. Led by captains Matt Dispenza (VI), Natalie Ladino

(VI), Peter McClearn (VI), and Rosemary Collins (V), the team hopes to build on last year's performances while also fostering a strong rapport between each member of the team.

The ski team's main priority this year is "to qualify for team states and get more individual skiers into the Race of Champions," Collins said. To do this, the captains have implemented additional on-snow training sessions at the National Winter Activity Center. "This mountain has a steeper trail than we usually train on [...] By training more on a steeper pitch, we will be better prepared to race," Collins added.

Aside from individual improvement, the captains also hope to further the camaraderie on the team. Ladino notes, "One of our goals is to foster a stronger team environment so that we can encourage a more positive and supportive atmosphere for everyone." Overall, the Big Blue ski team is looking forward to a promising season.



Rosemary Collins (V) races down the ski slope.

Photo Credits (Left to Right): Bruce Morrison, Brewster's Photos

Winter Sports Season Update *Continued*

By **MARC BLIEMEL (IV), EMILY SHEN (IV), BRIAN LI (IV), CHRISTINE GUO (IV), JUSTIN LI (V), KYRA LI (III), SARAH KLOSS (IV), WALKER JOHNSON (V), BEN GOTTESMAN(IV),**

Boys’ Ice Hockey
1-1

Coming off a great season last year, the boys’ ice hockey team is hoping for another strong season. Last year, the team finished 19-3-1 overall, and 13-1 in their conference. With returning scorers and play-makers, including Eric Bush (V) and Jared Kordonsky (V), the team is hungry for another conference victory. Captains Ryan Bush (VI), Joe Faccone (VI), and James Cummings (VI), look to star incoming freshmen Henry Pyne (III), Nick Faccone (III), and Bennett Crosby (III). “We got a few new freshmen who look pretty good . . . I think the new guys will fit right in,” said Bush.

The team looks to avenge their one loss from last year against division rival Ridge and repeat their perfect 3-0 record against other conference rival Hillsborough. “We got a couple big games this season [against] Pope John and the Hun School,” Bush noted. Hoping for another great season, players and coaches are getting ready for their regular season opener against Pope John on December 3.

Girls’ Ice Hockey
1-0

With Mrs. Whitman Annis as Head Coach, the Girls’ Ice Hockey team is ready to continue their last year’s legacy. This year, with many new players joining the team, Head Captain Lizzie Gilfillan (VI) and Assistant Captains Allie Moss (VI) and Annie Oatman (VI) are excited for the team to kick off the season with a smashing start.

The addition of new players to the team means working with girls of different skill levels. Gilfillan, discussing challenges that she is determined to overcome, says, “As a team, we definitely have a lot of strong and experienced players, but with many new girls joining this year, there will be a gap between the older and the younger players. As the captain, it is important to bridge the gap between the two groups and work together toward the championship.” Gilfillan also plans to make her last high school season a memorable one. When asked about her experience with Pingry Ice Hockey, she mentioned, “Last year was one of the most fun seasons I’ve had. We weren’t the

strongest, but it was a lot of fun. This year, we are trying to foster a fun and enjoyable environment, but we also look forward to playing strong in the tournament season in February!”

With a large team this year, the girls’ ice hockey team is looking forward to a successful season. In one of their first meets, they will be playing against Kent Place School, another very competitive team.

Boys’ Squash

Looking to build off last year’s success, the boys’ varsity squash team is ready for another busy and focused season. The team, led by Chris Zachary ‘19 and Jeffrey Xiao ‘19, finished with a record of 15-2 and capped off a dominant season as Division II National Champions.

The coaching staff has seen a major overhaul from last season with the departure of Mrs. Tina Rix-Stout and the addition of two new coaches, Mr. Francis Odeh, Assistant Director of Squash, and Mr. Chad Smith, Director of Squash. Mr. Odeh will bring more than 30 years of squash expertise, including a #1 national ranking, and will mainly run the girls’ varsity team. With past coaching experience at The Lawrenceville School and a successful junior career, Mr. Smith will oversee and direct the auxiliary squash program and “build the brand,” according to Coach Ramsay Vehslage. Coach Vehslage will remain as the Head Coach of the boys’ varsity team while Coach Olivia Tandon continues her role as the primary JV squash coach.

When asked about the goals for this season, Coach Vehslage stated, “Get seeded in Division I ... In order to get there, we need to focus on winning five-game matches and in order to do that, we need to focus on fitness.” Mr. Vehslage also remarked that, “We have a lot of guys who are very passionate about the sport and are willing to put in the work individually so that they can contribute to the success of the whole team.” With captains Collin Wen (VI), Alex Chiang (VI), Waleed Nisar (VI), and Charlie Malone (VI), the boys’ varsity squash season is bound to have a triumphant season.

Girls Squash
1-0

After their excellent season last year, the girls’ varsity squash team has high hopes for the upcoming season. Led by Captains Renée Chan (VI) and Jessica Hutt (VI), they hope to further improve on their record from the previous year. Coach Francis Odeh, who is new to Pingry, hopes to “bring excitement, hard work, and improvement to the team” as their

preseason begins, and is already amazed by the determination and enthusiasm of his players.

Despite the graduation of their number two player, Alisa Chokshi ‘19, the captains are optimistic about their team’s lineup. “Our main goal is to beat our toughest competitors, which are Hackley, Poly Prep, and Lawrenceville,” said Chan. In addition to hard work, the captains prioritize the importance of team bonding since many new freshmen are joining the team. “We want to build on our team culture and cultivate positivity,” said Hutt, who hopes to have a successful season.

Boys’ Swimming
1-1

The Pingry boys’ swim team, led by captains Reid McBoyle (VI) and Will Stearns (VI), is looking forward to what they hope will be another dominant season. Following an undefeated 2018-2019 season, training for the upcoming season is in full swing. After the academic day ends, the pool is filled with Pingry swimmers undertaking sets of various pace, distance, and stroke, which usually total about 3000 meters. The intervals Head Coach Steve Droste and Coach Kevin Schroedter set ensure that every swimmer is consistently pushed to their limit. McBoyle, who says that he’s “really excited for this season,” believes that this year’s squad is “a strong team with a lot of depth and the potential for another very successful season.” Their goals are the same as last year: win the Skyland Conference Championship, Prep Championships, and Meet of Champions against other strong teams, including Delbarton and Pennington. In addition to their success at meets, the swimmers want to continue filling the record board with new names and maintain Big Blue’s status as one of the best teams in the state.

Girls’ Swimming
1-1

Led by co-captains Emily Sanchez (VI), Martha Lewand (VI), Madeline Skapper (VI), and Coach Deirdre O’Mara, the girls’ swim team has started off strong with early morning and weight room practices. Coming off of a stunning season last year, the girls are working hard to prepare for the upcoming season. They will attend events like the Skyland Conference and Somerset County Championships, and, of course, the Prep “A” Championship at Lawrenceville. Last year, they were second in the Skyland Conference, the highest they’ve placed in recent years. The team also won the Prep A Championship for the third year in a row. Despite the loss of several seniors, including Darlene Fung ‘19, many freshmen have joined the team this year, constituting almost half of the team. Sanchez sees this year as “a new wave of the swim team.” Her goals for the team this year are to have fun, work on team spirit, and help the freshmen adapt to the community. With all the new blood, the girls’ swim team is aiming for a successful and fun season, as they hope to win the Prep “A” Championship for the fourth year in a row.

Boys’ Winter Track



Matt Fallon (V) swims breaststroke fast!

The boys’ winter track team is returning with a strong lineup this year. Despite losing a handful of senior players, the team still has fifteen boys, including five new freshmen. With both new and returning runners, Head Coach Chris Shilts says, “We have some strong individual talent, and we hope to put these pieces together with some with lesser experience for some relay experimenting.”

The boys will be pushing through rigorous training in the winter weather. Henry Wood (V), a runner for the boys’ winter track team, said, “There are a lot of different elements that go into our training. The team lifts in the weight room four days a week. It is important for us to practice even if conditions are harsh so we don’t fall behind on our training.” After finishing fifth last year, the team hopes to crack into the top three in the NJSIAA Prep “A” Meet. The team is also hoping to place high in the Skyland Conference.

With a lot of strong runners, the boys’ winter track team is ready to perform to the best of their ability. They are excited to succeed and show that their training has paid off!

Girls’ Winter Track

The girls’ winter track team, led by captains Dylan Anidjar (VI) and Kier Brown (VI), is looking to carry their great successes from last spring into the winter season. Last spring, two relay squads made it to nationals. This year, the team is looking to build on this achievement. Coach Christopher Shilts’s main goals this season are to

“make a run at the Group A title and place high at Nationals in both relay and individual events.”

The team is made up of both experienced upperclassmen and newcomers to the sport. Anidjar believes that with the team’s “supportive and knowledgeable coaching staff” as well as its “hard work, [it] will definitely lead to a successful season.” With the season right around the corner, girls’ winter track is ready to achieve their goals and have a great season.

Wrestling

The very underclassmen-heavy wrestling team is excited to see what achievements lie ahead in the next few years. Captain Mason Stahl (VI) says about this year’s team: “We have a very young team this year; over half the players are freshmen. Our goal is to have every player improve and to create a strong footing so that Pingry wrestling will continue to grow and evolve in the future.” Along with the infusion of freshmen this year, there is a whole new three-team coaching staff being implemented, including the head coach. “We want them to be a part of the wrestling family, and hopefully this new insight will accelerate our program even more,” says Stahl. With a whole new team and culture, the next few years could be very successful for Pingry wrestling. The season officially begins for the team on December 11 against The Peddie School. We wish the team the best of luck!



Reese Swittenberg (V) tips off against Ridge



Girls’ hockey celebrates Allie Moss (VI) reaching 100 points