

PANTHERETTE

- SCHUYLKILL VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL -

MAY 2022

Volume63, IssueIV

Florida's "Don't Say Gay Bill"

by Isabella Burch '25

As of earlier this month, over a dozen states have proposed their own version of what is being dubbed the "Don't Say Gay Bill". These pieces of legislation are the newest in discriminatory legislation against LGBTQ+ Americans, but this time, it is being implemented in the most fundamental part of early childhood social development- Elementary school.

The "Don't Say Gay Bill", or the "Parental Rights in Education" bill was first drafted in states such as Florida and Alabama, and it actively forbids schools educators of students in grades kindergarten through three from conducting any classes or conversations regarding gender identity or sexual orientation. Additionally, parents will be required to give legal consent to their children receiving health education or support programs. The exact legislation reads "Classroom instruction by school personnel or third parties on sexual orientation or gender identity may not occur in kindergarten through grade 3 or in a manner that is not age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students in accordance with state standards."

This has sparked many teachers, private companies, politicians, and celebrities to speak out against this strain of legislation. The Trevor Project, an organization dedicated to protecting

Inside This Issue:

p.4- Will Smith and Chris Rock at the Oscars

p. 7- Advice Column

p.3- Song Suggestions

the rights of gay and transgender youth, is resisting the law and advising citizens and members of government against it. A spokesperson from their company released a statement saying the new law strikes "LGBTQ identity, history, and culture — as well as LGBTQ students themselves," from schools and social groups. In addition to this, Amit Paley, Executive director and CEO of the Trevor project, was quoted stating "While I am saddened to see this harmful bill signed into law, I am inspired by the outpouring of support for LGBTQ students we have seen from parents, teachers, celebrities, and their

peers. Social support is vital for suicide prevention, and I want to remind LGBTQ youth in Florida and across the country that you are not alone."

However, this seems to only have encouraged government officials to pass the bill faster. Ron DeSantis, governor of Florida and main advocate for passing the bill in the state, is quoted saying "We will make sure that parents can send their kids to school to get an education, not an indoctrination," and that teaching kindergarten-aged children that "they can be whatever they want to be," was "inappropriate," for children. "It's not something that's appropriate for any place, but especially not in Florida," he continued. Other states to draft similar legislation Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, South Carolina, Missouri, Indiana, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Ohio, among others. Florida was the first state to pass this bill into law through their legislative branch, and many of the other states listed are expected to follow in the coming weeks.



*The **Pantherette*** is published by students of Schuylkill Valley High School, Leesport, Pennsylvania, 19533.

Advisor: Paige Figueroa

Editor-in-Chief: Anna Kate Gwiazdowski
Emily

Communications Ambassador: Lily Crowell
Erianne Fox

Special Events Coordinator: Jess Hummel
Eisenhofer

Junior Editor-in-Chief: Charlotte Baumgard

Contributing Pantherette staff: Jesutomiwo Adejo, Alyssa Armpreister, Hailey Barlet, Miah Delinko, Jayden Dennis, Evan Duda, Emma Ertel, Sarah Gilbert, Morgan Greiser, Madsion Hess, Amanda Hoover, Jessica Hummel, Nicole Kalash, Ella Klinikowski, Madison Kubacki, Erin Livinghouse, Rayven Muller, Mara Nagle, Megan Raifsnider, Delenny Rosario, Astou Sarr, Alexis Smeck, Cassidy Smith, Madison Steingraber, Jenna Strausser, Abigail Tenney, Emma Walsh, Noah Wamsher, Helene Yerger.

Secretary: Fayth Dalton

Copy Editors: Isabella Burch,

Gao, Alexis Smeck

Manager of Photography:

Sports Editor: Katie

Song Suggestions

by Jayden Dennis '22

Whether you're feeling blue or need some motivation, these songs are a *must*. Then again, it is just my opinion on these songs, so it's up to you if you enjoy them or not.

Top pick for sad: *I Want You - Mitski*

This song describes the heartbreak of a one-sided relationship. The melancholic lyrics give a desperate plea to a significant other.

Top pick for overjoyed: *Levitating - Dua Lipa*

This upbeat pop song quite literally describes the feeling you will get- levitating. The playful feeling of letting go on the dance floor and locking eyes with someone at the same time will have you feeling light as a feather.

Top pick for having a concert in your room: *Death of a bachelor - Panic! At The Disco*

This 2016 hit is sure to have you screaming at the top of your lungs. Brendon Urie hits all the right notes in this pop song, accompanied with background jazz.

Metaphorically the song expresses the bittersweet end of an era, and an appreciation for the present.

Top pick to rock out to: *S&M - Rhianna*

Of course this classic Rhianna song had to be included. Listen to this in the car, windows down and blasting! Even better when you're with your friends!

Top pick for working out: *DNA - Kendrick Lamar*

Turn this song all the way up at the gym, it's sure gonna motivate you. Its lyrics will push you, and its beat will pump you up.





Will Smith and Chris Rock at the Oscars

by Abigail Tenney '24

The Oscars, a.k.a. the Academy Awards, are a night of celebrating movie magic. From sound to acting to makeup, the Oscars acknowledge it all and normally bring together the film industry. As you probably already know, this year there was an “incident.” To sum it up briefly, Will Smith slapped Chris Rock across the face on live television.

So why did he do this? Chris Rock had been presenting the Academy Awards when he made a joke about Jada Pinkett Smith, Will Smith’s wife. The joke was said to be about Jada Pinkett Smith’s bald head due to her alopecia. This prompted Will Smith to rush onstage and slap Chris Rock across the face, then return to his seat and yell, “Keep my wife’s name out of your f***** mouth!” Later that night, Will Smith won the Best Actor award for King Richard. After the event, Smith resigned from the organization, and shortly after, The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences banned Will Smith from coming to any events for 10 years. Chris Rock did not press charges and Will Smith accepted the consequences from the Academy.

This situation has prompted many debates, with people bringing up many different arguments: “Violence is never okay” vs “Will Smith was just defending his wife”, “Will Smith’s behavior is toxic masculinity” vs “Chris Rock’s behavior is toxic masculinity too,” and other points like: “Consequences are for noncelebrities,” and “The Slap is a teachable moment for mental health and conflict resolution.” Overall, it was quite a shocking event and I encourage you to look into current events that can allow us as a society to constructively resolve issues and talk about them in a safe manner.

Tips for Spring Gardening

by Sara Pyne '25

Before spring comes around can't you imagine what it would feel and smell like and how pretty it would look outside? Well, that time has finally come! I know just as I do others may love to garden as well. First, make sure that you do gardening safely. Also, be aware of animals that may want to eat your plants and vegetables. I would suggest putting up a fence or wiring or wood around your crops to protect them from animals and insects especially. Also, agriculture has a big role in gardening and spring because of thinking about growing things. Then after you have grown them you can make things and creations whatever you can imagine and make your own and however, you want your flowers to be arranged. Or you can make your crops into art by using your imagination as well. Although gardening may be a lot of work trust me it is worth trying something new you might like it or enjoy it but trying never hurts. In addition, I love to plant strawberries and other foods as well.

A little tip of encouragement from me to all who are reading; whatever you put your mind to you can do it if you try. Trying is better than doing nothing, trust me. So go out there, shine, and show yourself you can do anything that you put your mind to.



What's happening in Ukraine?

by Hailey Barlet '24

We all know some details about what's happening in Ukraine. Well, there is more going on that most of us might not know about. War between Ukraine and Russia has been going on for over 8 years. Putin wants to overrun Ukraine and get rid of its government so it doesn't join NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization). On February 24th, the invasion in Ukraine started. Putin's goal was to "demilitarize and de-Nazify Ukraine."

What happened in the last two months? Millions of civilians have left Ukraine for safer areas, and hundreds of them have been killed before being able to leave. 90% of civilians killed were killed from gunshots. Most Ukraine cities have been severely damaged and bombing will continue to escalate. The U.S. has sent troops to Poland and Romania, and we have also provided weapons and other military gear to Ukraine. The United Nations has suspended Russia's membership from the Human Rights Council. Areas of Kyiv were bombed. Russian missiles hit Lviv on Monday, April 18th.

Anatoly Chubais, an architect of Russia's post Soviet economic reforms, quit his post due to the war in Ukraine. Renault suspended its operations in Moscow. There has been massive destruction in Mariupol. Troops use long ranged bombers to attack Mariupol. The Russian convoy continues to move south toward Izium. Ukraine arrested fugitive oligarch and pro-Russian politician Victor Medvedchuk. Russian forces withdrew from northern Ukraine.

So what can we do to help? We can donate to the Ukrainian Red Cross which does loads of humanitarian work. The International Medical Corps is prepared to help citizens with health care services. CARE provides Ukraine with essentials such as food and hygiene kits. Staying informed is another great way to help. To do so you can use sites such as *The Kyiv Independent* and *The New Voice of Ukraine*.

Ask Elliot Advice Column

by Pantherette Staff

Dear Elliot,

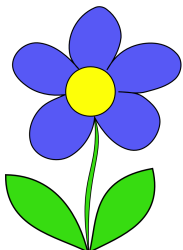
Prom is coming up and I don't have a date. It seems like all anyone is talking about is prom and I am embarrassed about going alone. I know I should be looking forward to this memorable experience, but I'm not. Honestly, I'm dreading it since all my friends have dates. I feel so left out of the whole process, I am questioning if I want to attend at all. What should I do?

Sincerely,

Somber Soloist

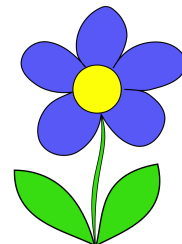
Dear Somber Soloist,

There is so much pressure on prom to be perfect. Movies and TV love to portray prom as an extraordinary, magical night. Some even call it the highlight of the year. However, that is not always the case. Sure, prom can be a blast, but at the end of the day it is a formal high school dance. It will be as fun as you make it regardless of what you look like or who you go with. Also, going solo is not embarrassing at all! Lots of people go to prom alone every year and many end up having even more fun than they would have with a date. Going with a date could be a great experience but it is also stressful to coordinate plans and be forced to spend the night together. My advice is to take time to do what you want for prom. Go get your nails done or go out to your favorite restaurant on the day of prom. You can go with a family member or go with a friend. Make it about you, because you can! Then, during prom, don't be embarrassed, just try to have a good time. Even if your friends have dates, you guys can still dance together and make memories. In ten years, I promise you won't even remember not going with anyone. Remember that prom is only one night - it doesn't have to be perfect, but that doesn't mean it won't be special.



Yours Truly,

Elliot



The Top 10 Things I've Learned in High School

by Emma Ertel '22

1. Stop following other people to try to fit in. You will never find happiness trying to live someone else's life. You will know when you find the right friends.
2. Stop trying to wish time away. I know it feels long in the moment, but the moments you wish away are ones you will never get back. Don't miss out on high school because you were too preoccupied with watching the clock. Time won't move faster or slower for anyone, so you might as well try to enjoy every day.
3. You will never die from embarrassment. Surprisingly, it's more than likely that you are the only one who finds your actions embarrassing. If you're not feeling confident about a situation, fake it. No one can tell the difference unless you let them.
4. Accomplishment comes from taking risks. The worst that can happen is your plan fails, however, not letting yourself take risks is more harmful. More often than not things will turn out better than expected.
5. It really does not matter what other people think of you. There will always be someone who has a problem with your life. As long as your actions aren't harmful and you're happy, those judgments shouldn't matter to you. They are a reflection of someone else's insecurities.
6. High school will probably not go smoothly, but that is okay. Expecting everything to work out perfectly is setting your expectations too high. There will be rough moments, so embrace them. They will only make you stronger.
7. Losing friends is not always a bad thing, and you don't have to have a ton of friends to be happy. In many cases, sometimes it takes a falling out for people to show you their true colors. You can be grateful that you don't have to spend time with someone who doesn't value your friendship.
8. Stop being afraid of things that haven't happened yet. Although this is one that I haven't mastered yet, almost always, your fear of the future is hurting you more than the actual future. There is no sense in worrying about something you can't control, and 9 times out of 10 your worry was for nothing.
9. If you get one bad grade, you will be okay. Your life is not ruined. In a couple of weeks that grade will be forgotten and you will find new opportunities to excel. As long as you're trying your best in school, you will be okay.
10. Make connections with the people who are good for you: teachers, coaches, friends, etc. It will make school so much more enjoyable. The support system you have at Schuylkill Valley is very large, so pay attention to who you're with when you feel your best. Those are the people you should form connections with. You do not have to navigate high school alone.

Girls' Lacrosse

by Reagan Rittenhouse '22, Julissa Sonon '22, Asher Fogelman '22

Coached by Kristen and Robby Newpher, the girls' lacrosse team is working to top their 1-8 league record from last year. Led by 12 seniors: Victoria Barrell, Nevaeh Blevins, Anna Kate Gwiazdowski, Gabrielle Henry-Werley, Cheyanne Hix, Emily Kline, Megan Miley, Marissa Perfetto, Emma Rapposelli, Elyse Schwenig, Lily Thomas, Marissa Zocco, this hard-working team leans on its leaders for support and positivity. Captain Anna Gwiazdowski said girls' lacrosse at the high school is a newer program, but they are working hard to build the foundation for current and future success throughout this season. Captain Megan Miley said her favorite thing about being on the team is everyone's drive to improve and the funny nicknames they made for each other. Marissa Perfetto described the team's strengths this year as their individual shining moments, like going after the ground balls, stopping the ball at mid-field for turnovers, and finding and picking up the open girl, which all come together for game time. Despite these tremendous strengths, Lily Thomas stated that a possible weakness for their team is staying confident on the field when playing tough games. Gabby Henry-Werley's goals, for the team and individually, include scoring more goals than last year and causing more turnovers on defense. The girls' lacrosse team has the drive to top their performance from last year and create a stable and fun foundation for the years to come. Good luck this season!

Underclassman Spotlight: Jill Boyer

How many years have you been playing lacrosse?

5 years

What position do you play and what is your number?

Attack; 18

What is your favorite thing about playing lacrosse?

Team culture in general and the atmosphere after a win

What is your favorite memory from lacrosse?

Lacrosse camp trip from the beginning of the season

What is your favorite thing about being on the team?

How the team can come together and work well



Softball Preview

by Kelsey Busch '24 and Hannah Schweitzer '24

The Schuylkill Valley High School softball team is coached by Rich Sensenig. The seniors for the 2022 season are Reagan Rittenhouse, Lekaiah Solomon, Rylee Mann, Haley Sutton, and Abigail Sisco. Reagan believes that the team's biggest goals for the 2022 season are, "to work together and keep our season going for as long as we can into county and district games." Lekaiah said her favorite part of the bus rides is "Listening to music, it keeps me tranquil before a game and relaxes me after a loss or hypes me up after a win," No team is perfect and Rylee thinks the team can improve their confidence: "At the beginning of the year we had struggled with confidence at the plate. After just a few games we all found our groove as a team. We stay loose, joke, and laugh through the whole game." With weakness comes strength, so Haley answered what the strengths are and said, "I would say one of our strengths so far this season would be offense, I feel like we have all improved our batting from last season when it comes to hitting gaps and where it is harder for the other team to field the ball." We all wish our softball team the best of luck this season!

Underclassman Spotlight: Jordan Shekalus

What's your position?

I typically play left field, but in my high school career I have been centerfield as well.

What's your favorite part about playing softball?

My team is probably my favorite part about playing softball. We go out to breakfast together, carpool to other sports, and have annual Sheetz runs.

What's your favorite high school softball memory

My favorite high school softball memory would have to be when the girls found Alfred. He is a toy crocodile and was Ms. Deibler's dog's toy. We had indoor practice last season and found him in the auxiliary gym. He comes with us to every practice, game, and team bonding event. We always squeak to him for good luck and still laugh every time.

What are you looking forward to seeing next season?

I am looking forward to seeing the underclassmen improve and thrive. This year will probably be my favorite season no doubt but without the seniors next year I know the other girls will step it up next year.



Boys Volleyball

by Bailey Unterkofler '23 and Nia Wagner '23

The boys' volleyball team, coached by head coach Mr. Heffner, and assistant coaches Mr. Emerson, and Mr. Drake, is looking to make a name for themselves this season. The team is led by seniors Landen Jamison, Eli Hoffman, and Aidan Moyer. They are all hoping to lead their team to a first place in their division and hopefully even playoffs. The team has big shoes to fill after the loss of some key seniors who made a large impact on the team. With only one freshman this year, the team is closing ranks and hoping their brotherhood will be enough to carry them through the season. If you ask any of the boys, they will tell you that their bond is one of the team's biggest strengths. When it comes to team strengths, senior Aidan Moyer states, "Definitely our bond, I feel like I have a good connection with everybody that's on the court as well as the coaches who constantly support us no matter the score." Communication on and off the court is something that plays a huge role in sports. This team is lucky enough to have great communication and connection with their teammates and coaches. The drive and dedication of the players have helped the team soar. The team is looking to improve their mentality this season, to be able to keep playing no matter what the score may be. This change in mentality could be what the boys need to make their season a successful one. Best of luck this season!

Underclassman spotlight: Mason Bagenstose

What is your position?

I play middle blocker on varsity.

How long have you been playing volleyball?

I have been playing for technically 3 years but lost my freshman season because of Covid.

What is your favorite memory?

My favorite memory is from the Cocalico tournament when I blocked someone's ball with my face and got the kill.

What are you most excited about this year?

I would say I am most excited to see how far this team can go this season and to push our energy as a team past the limits.



Any personal goals for this season?

As far as personal goals go, I would like to improve on hitting 10 balls and get as many blocks as humanly possible.

What made you want to join volleyball?

As a freshman, I was sort of leaning away from basketball and no longer wanted to play A.A.U. in the spring, but I still wanted to play a sport. I figured volleyball was a good choice because I got along well with the coaches prior to playing and I could use a lot of the skills I learned throughout my entire life playing basketball to help me excel in a new sport.

Tennis Preview

by Dylan Slusser '22, Logan Kraus '23, Keegan Weeks '23

The Schuylkill Valley boys tennis team, coached by Bryan Miller, is heading into their 2022 season and are looking to improve upon last year's 4-10 record. This year's seniors consist of Andrew Rider and Evan Duda who have been practicing throughout the offseason. Andrew and Evan are looking forward to proving themselves through a winning season. In his last season, Andrew looks forward to playing Hamburg and securing the win for the team. With most of last year's team having graduated, the Panthers need their most experienced players to step up and have their young stars shine. The team has a bright future and it starts this season. The team looks ready to hit the courts and start off the promising season strong. Good luck, boys, and have a fantastic season!

Underclassman Spotlight: Calub Moore

How long have you been playing?

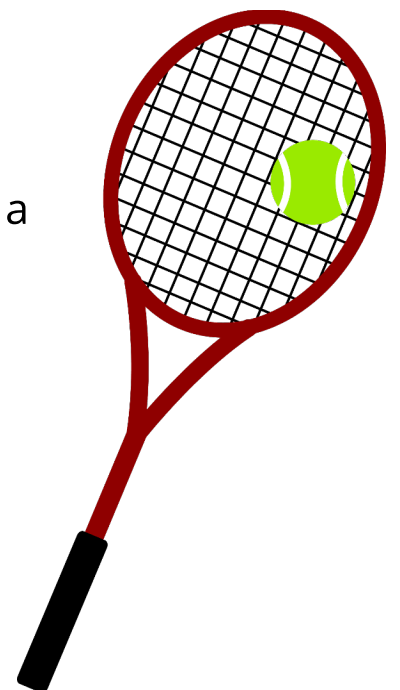
I am playing for the first time this year.

What are your hopes for the season?

I hope to win a few singles matches and never lose a doubles match.

What is your biggest strength?

My physical strength and speed.



Boys' Baseball

by Lily Thomas 22' and Jillian Boyer 24'

The boys' baseball team, coached by Mark Dietrich, is looking forward to a strong season. The team is led by nine seniors this year; Brenden Bernhart, Drew Campbell, Ethan Goetz, Aiden Gehret, Bryce Hill, Brayden Himmelberger, Zach Rickert, Kyle Spotts, and Connor Staub. Last season the boys finished 8-10. They were one game out of districts in the 2021 season and are looking to make the mark this year. The team has not had a winning record since 2007, but they have high hopes to beat that this year with a strong lineup loaded with upperclassmen. Senior outfielder Bryce Hill talked about wanting to have a positive team atmosphere this season while still pulling off a winning record. The boys agreed that their biggest rivals are Hamburg, Fleetwood, and Wyomissing. Another senior, outfielder Aiden Gehret, is striving to make the district playoffs this year. Senior 2nd baseman Kyle Spotts is eager to help his team win games and continue winning big games after beating the state semifinalists twice last year. Overall, the boys look to continue their momentum from last season and turn that into a winning season for the Panthers for the first time in 15 years. Good luck boys baseball!

Underclassmen Spotlight: Colin Stoudt



How many years have you been playing baseball?

11 years

What is your favorite thing about the sport?

Being with the team.

What is your position?

First base

What is your best baseball memory?

When I had the game winning hit to win against Oley.

What are you excited for this season?

To win games with my team!



Girls' Track

by Mason Shelak '23, Ethan Swoyer '23, Julian Kemmerer '24

The girls' track team is coached by Terry Mckechnie and Allyson Mckechnie. This year the girls' track team has 6 seniors: Ni' yonna Delacruz, Sarah Gilbert, Jady Heck-Hoppes, Madison Fisher, Averi Hidalgo, and Madison Ziska. Maddy Ziska stated, "I am using my senior season as a preparation for further, bigger goals. I am going to go from this season, into my freshman season as a college track athlete. I am using this year to prepare myself for the collegiate competitions." Maddy stated what inspired her to do track, "I kind of just fell in love with the feeling of the adrenaline I got when I competed. Track is different from other sports - it's more of an individual sport than a team sport and your improvements stick out much more than in a team sport." Averi Hidalgo is looking forward to making memories in her last year of track, "I look forward to making many more ridiculous memories with the distance team." Averi talked about what she thinks the team can improve on, "I think the team needs to work on positivity, negativity only decreases one's performance as an athlete."

Finally Sarah Gilbert was inspired to do track because, "Track just seemed like a logical progression from cross country. I needed to stay in shape for the spring season, and track made sense. My 4x8 team is looking to go to states this year. Personally, I'm also looking to beat my PRs in both the 800 and high jump." The girls' team hopes to accomplish goals by possibly making states, breaking records, and making high school memories.

Underclassmen spotlight:

Nia Wagner

What are your goals for this year?

I would like to reach high 16s for long jump, along with placing at counties and districts for it. Then I hope to run with my girls for 4x1 at counties, districts, and states and place in top spots.

What are you most looking forward to?

I am most looking forward to crushing my goals and having fun at big meets.

How long have you done track?

I have been doing track for 7 years. I did track and field camp 5th and 6th grade, then joined the junior high track team as soon as I could in 7th grade. I fell in love with sprinting and jumping when I was introduced to it in early middle school -- I have done it ever since.

