



PINE-RICHLAND RAMPAGE



THURSDAY APRIL 18TH, 2024 No 17

"DELIVERING HIGH SCHOOL NEWS.. ONE PAGE AT A TIME."

Sophomore Takes Center Stage as Sophie

Elise Duckworth takes the lead in PR's Musical Mamma Mia

ADDISON BARNES DESIGN EDITOR

"I have a dream. A song to sing..."

Elise Duckworth captured the crowd and transformed Pine-Richland's auditorium into the beautiful island of Kalokairi. After 4 months of nonstop practicing, Pine-Richland opened its doors to perform Mamma Mia on March 15. The musical was 2 hours long with a 15-minute intermission. There are not enough words to describe the amount of emotion each actor puts into their role.

As lights dimmed, the pit orchestra started to play snippets of each song audiences would hear throughout the night; then twinkle lights appeared all around to transition into the beautiful world known as Kalokairi. Then Sophie (Elise Duckworth) appeared in the middle of the audience, singing *I Have a Dream*; audiences no doubt walked away that night sporadically singing that song through the rest of their week. During the song the big scene happened: letters were dropped into a mailbox that was positioned off to the side of the stage in order to



Sophie (Elise Duckworth) & Donna (Lauren King)



Bill (Nicolai Ezolt) & Sophie (Elise Duckworth)

be shipped to three

men: Harry, Bill, and Sam, one of whom is her real father. Then we met Sophie's friends which transitioned to *Honey, Honey*. The curtain slowly raised and beholds The Villa Donna. Gasps were heard all around and rightfully so, as the set was magnificent.

Thank You For the Music is when the audience first met all of Sophie's dads. With a sweet duo between Harry (Owen Russell) who did a terrific job nailing Harry's British accent in the movie, and Sophie. As the two harmonize Bill (Nicolai Ezolt) joined in, right as you think Sam (Conor Barcasky) told Sophie how he could not stay because Donna (Lauren King) "banished" him from the Villa. He

then joined in and the four sounded beautiful.

Under Attack unraveled Sophie's inner monologue about her "complex" dad situation. Black shadowy figures appeared all around her, spooking her until she couldn't take it any more. Elise's vocals perfectly vocalized the stress in a beautiful harmony. Sophie's bloody scream woke her up from her nightmare, and out came Donna to check on her. The two got into an acute argument about the whole dad situation. Right as you thought the relationship might be estranged, *Slipping Through My Fingers* gave us the hope we needed. Lauren and Elise did a wonderful job convincing the audience that we were in the room as they got ready for Sophie's wedding. Elise looked gorgeous in her mother's wedding dress. There was no way to express the emotions expressed when Elise performed: she was made for the stage.



WEEKLY WEATHER REPORT
APR. 18- APR. 24



THURSDAY
APR. 18

FRIDAY
APR. 19

SATURDAY
APR. 20

SUNDAY
APR. 21

MONDAY
APR. 22

TUESDAY
APR. 23

WEDNESDAY
APR. 24

HIGH: 70
LOW: 53

HIGH: 65
LOW: 44

HIGH: 56
LOW: 35

HIGH: 56
LOW: 34

HIGH: 63
LOW: 41

HIGH: 65
LOW: 46

HIGH: 59
LOW: 42



CONCERTS PAGE 2



Pittsburgh Concerts: *Memories Of A Lifetime*

ELLA DAVIS STAFF WRITER

My favorite memories from Pittsburgh are the concerts that I have gone to. As someone who adores listening to music, going to concerts is my favorite event to look forward to. Here are some of the concerts that I attended in Pittsburgh!

I had the opportunity to see Taylor Swift's Eras Tour in June 2023 and it was one of the best experiences of my entire life. Nothing will ever compare to the feeling of pure excitement getting to trade friendship bracelets and waiting in line for concert merchandise outside of Acrisure Stadium. As soon as they opened the doors I felt such joy. I remember waiting in anticipation in my seat, viewing the gorgeous city and rivers outside the stadium. As soon as Taylor took the stage I was in awe. Her performance and flashing lights, paired with the beautiful city skyline was the greatest experience of my life. She even played two of my favorite songs, The Story Of Us and Seven, as surprise songs. My favorite songs that she performed were Miss Americana & The Heartbreak Prince, The Archer, Tolerate It, Ready For It?, Betty, My Tears Ricochet, and 22.



Left to right Freshmen Annabelle Burk & Ella Davis

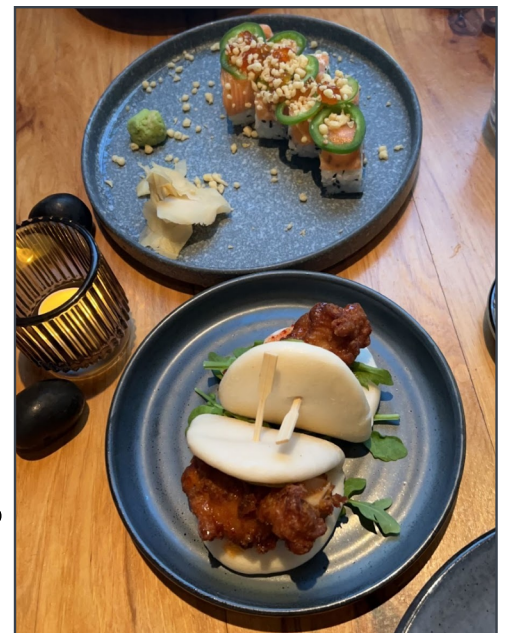
I went to P!NK's Summer Carnival and it was such a blast. This concert took place in PNC Park. The lights in the buildings in the city were all colored pink in anticipation of her performance. I went with my mom and a friend. The concert was so fun and the performance was so perfect. Of course, P!NK put on a fantastic show, flying around the stadium on cables and creating a dazzling experience. It was a great way to end the summer.

Steel City Foods: *The Ultimate Pittsburgh Restaurants*

BROOKE DEEGAN STAFF WRITER

Pittsburgh has never been widely renowned for containing a food scene as enriching and diverse as cities such as New York or Chicago, but that is simply because most avid restaurant "fans" tend to overlook this bustling area. As someone who has lived in Pittsburgh for the entirety of my life thus far, and has been thoroughly into every aspect of food since before I was able to speak, I know all about the most delicious and impressive restaurants that our city has to offer-- From the Strip District to the outskirts of the downtown area, Pittsburgh's food scene is brimful with a multitude of incredibly scrumptious restaurants which are most definitely worth trying soon.

Soba: Soba is one of my absolute favorite restaurants in the world. I have only eaten there twice, but it has been exceedingly remarkable on both occasions. Located in a quaint portion of Shadyside, its menu is composed of rich Asian-fusion cuisine-- Warm noodles, fresh sushi, tender bao buns, and even delectable desserts. You sit among the black-stone waterfall, jade leaves, intricate murals, and crystalline staircase as you consume some of the most refined dishes in the area, and it is nothing short of an enchanting experience. My perfect meal at Soba includes crisply steaming Chicken Bao Buns as an appetizer, followed by an order of the heart-warming Drunken Noodles (consisting of filet, rice noodles, bamboo shoots, mung bean sprouts, basil, and Thai chilis), and finishing the night off with their Chocolate Maki, which is essentially presented as if it is the dessert version of sushi. I also highly recommend their Dolsot Bi Bim Bap, Spicy Tuna Roll, and Short Rib Bao Buns. Honestly, though, it is impossible to go wrong at Soba. Everything there is beyond delicious.



Soba Sushi and Chicken Bao Buns

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Kaya Mahi Mahi Tacos

Kaya: Kaya is a restaurant that I've always held near and dear to my heart. Growing up, my parents endlessly raved about it, and ever since the first time I tried it, I have completely understood why they felt so passionately in regards to this small Caribbean joint in the Strip District. Vibrant and eclectic colors adorn the walls and tables both inside and outside of this restaurant and create an atmosphere that is sincerely one of the most joyfully enthusiastic places I have ever been to. Seriously, my spirits are always lifted when I step inside Kaya. "Although every aspect of their menu is crafted to perfection, I'd have to say that my favorites include the Black Bean Dip (which is actually sold at Mad Mex because they are owned by the same company) and the Grilled Mahi Mahi tacos." They have a wide range of tacos, sandwiches, traditional main courses, and soups and salads-- The best arrangement of food you could ask for. The next time you are enjoying a day at the Strip District, be sure to stop by Kaya! You won't regret it.

Penn Brewery: An absolute classic in my book. Penn Brewery is a German restaurant on Vinial Street that possesses an incredibly cheerful and comfortable environment, as well as some beyond-delicious meals. This wonderful restaurant sells, in my opinion, one of the best sandwiches in the whole world: The Wienerschnitzel Sandwich. Golden schnitzel topped with ripe lettuce and a tangy Dijon aioli rests between two warm, buttered buns, and illuminates my life each time I bite into it. And coupled with their flavorful German Hot Potato Salad as a side? Perfection. Penn Brewery offers numerous scrumptious starters, from their Bavarian-style pretzel Sticks to their Poutine. I know that I have



Penn Brewery Schnitzel Sandwich and Hot German Potato Salad



Monterey Bay Crab Cakes

always adored this place... Ever since I was a little girl stopping here to eat dinner with my parents after a Pirate's game or walk around Oakland, I have been in love with it, so I'm sure at least some of you will be, too.

Monterey Bay Fish Grotto: The final and fanciest Pittsburgh restaurant on this list is Monterey Bay, which resides on top of the beautiful Mount Washington. This is a stellar place to go to for a special occasion or celebration, as it has some immensely high-quality dishes and an irresistible view of the city. Their natural array of seafood is plentiful and delectable-- I'm particularly fond of their hearty Clam Chowder and renowned Crab Cakes. The most extraordinary dessert that I have ever tasted is made at Monterey Bay and known as the Grilled Cheese, which is caramelized angel food cake, cream cheese filling, berry compote, vanilla bean ice cream, and thin bits of chocolate and almond. Sincerely, this restaurant is stunning in every possible manner... Whether it be the composition of the food itself or the simplistic modern interior, it is all exemplary and definitely worth trying.

Senior Dinner Dance

Tickets \$40

MAY 31, 2024

GATEWAY CLIPPER FLEET

6:30 PM BOARDING

10:00 PM RETURN TO DOCK

Permission slips available in the library and outside room 210

Tickets available for purchase (exact change or check made payable to PRHS Class of 2024) during the week of May 6-10 in the library before school and during HR.

*Additional \$\$\$ needed to park in Station Square



Passionate Pittsburgh Penguins Playoffs

An Unforgettable Experience

ELLA BARKLEY STAFF WRITER

It was Thursday, May 25th, 2017. I had just gotten off the bus from Mr. Speakman's 4th grade class. I set my Vera Bradley backpack down and ran straight to the pantry to get my after-school snack of Goldfish. I then sat down and got ready to start my homework. As I was getting out my green homework folder, my dad called my mom and asked to talk to me on the phone. As a 10-year-old, I didn't know what I was going to hear. Next thing I knew my dad had told me he had gotten two tickets from work for the Pittsburgh Penguins playoff game for that night in the suite seats. I wasn't the biggest Pens fan, but who wouldn't want to go to a hockey game on a school night, so of course I said yes. Who would have thought that this one game would change my whole perspective on Penguins hockey.

As my dad raced home from work, I put on my Sidney Crosby jersey. It was way too big for me, but it didn't matter. I knew from what my dad had told me, that I was going to have the time of my life. I had been to games before, but this was my first-ever playoff game. The excitement of a Game 7 playoff hockey game is unlike any other I soon found out.

When we arrived downtown at PPG Paints Arena an hour before the game started, you could tell that the city of Pittsburgh was ready. Pittsburgh is the city of champions and the Penguins were looking to become back-to-back Stanley Cup champions this year. The whole city was behind them on this one and ready to support them on the road to the finals. All they needed was one more win and they would head to the finals.

As soon as we walked into the suite seating area, the arena was so loud. Everywhere you looked, there were fans dressed head to toe in Pittsburgh Penguins attire. Pittsburgh

doesn't back down when it comes to their sports, that's for sure. When we reached my dad's work suite, I was quick to grab some chicken tenders and fries and find a comfy seat. It wasn't too much later when the Penguin players came out to start warmups and that's when I knew I was in for a treat. I was just a 10-year-old little girl



Ella Barkley and her dad at the Penguins game in 2017

who earlier in the day thought that she was going to have to go home and do homework, eat a boring dinner, and go to bed early. But that was not the case. As the players left the ice, the arena slowly dimmed the lights and the jumbotron lit up in black and gold. Looking around at the entire arena with their eyes fixed up on the jumbotron that highlighted the Pens' season so far. It was so loud, you couldn't even hear yourself talk.

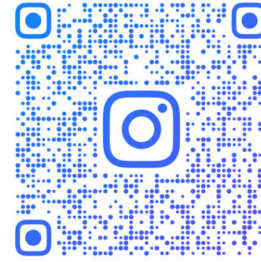
As soon as the game started, the arena got very tense and you could tell just by the looks in peoples' eyes that

this game was going to be very stressful. It was either win and go onto the finals or they were done for the season. After the first period was scoreless, you could tell that both teams' fans were getting anxious by the minute. All fans wanted was for their team to score a goal, so that some pressure was let off. That's when Chris Kunitz, Pittsburgh Penguins left winger, scored a goal halfway through the second period to allow the Penguins to go up 1-0. The arena exploded with excitement. Not a single Pens fan was sitting. All I remember thinking was seeing how my dad's face lit up with excitement over this and from then on out, a huge smile appeared on my face. Unfortunately, the lead didn't last long, when the Ottawa Senators tied the game 20 seconds later. As you can imagine, the Pens fans got fearful once again as the game was now back and even between the two teams. Entering the third period might have been one of the most stressful times I had ever experienced as a 10-year-old. I so badly wanted them to win and knew that it was going to be a depressing drive home if they didn't win. After a penalty was called against the Senators, the Penguins had a chance to

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retake the lead with a power play. Luckily for defenseman, Justin Schultz, he got his shot off from the blue line and it flew right past the goalie. The Pens were up 2-1 with 8 minutes left to go in the game. Once I heard that goal siren go off, I was out of my seat, cheering as loud as I possibly could. But once again, the Penguins only kept the lead for 3 minutes, when the Senators scored to tie it up 2-2 with 5 minutes left in the game. That's when we knew the game was headed to overtime.

Now overtime is a whole different level of stress. You either score and win it all or let a goal in and it's over. No second chances. Another 20 minutes was added to the jumbotron and the game started back up. By this time it was 10 at night and for my fourth-grade self, I was slowly becoming extremely tired. I was so anxious but excited for the game, but I knew that I was going to be so tired in the morning. I was just hoping that all of this was worth it in the end and the Penguins would come out of this game with a win. Overtime went by and neither team had scored a goal. Everybody's heart was racing out of their chest and all we could hope for was a Penguins goal. It was now 11 at night and all I can remember thinking about was if this game was ever going to end. I was having the time of my life, but knew that all of this excitement could quickly change in a second.

The second overtime period began and the stress levels started back up for every fan. The Penguins had so many chances to score which meant so many fans were up and out of their seats in disbelief of how the Senators goalie could stop each shot.

The time finally came. The Penguins broke through. Five minutes into the overtime period, Penguins captain Sidney Crosby laid a puck off for forward Chris Kunitz, who took a one-timer that fluttered by the goalie. It was almost like it was in slow motion. Everyone's hands went up and that's when we knew the Penguins were headed to the Stanley Cup final. Penguins players leaped from the bench into a huge mob on the ice and started hugging each other. I had the biggest smile on my face and I couldn't believe that this was real life. The arena was filled with gold terrible towels waving around like crazy. What a day to be a Penguins fan.

I remember falling asleep on the way home from all of the rush and excitement of the game. It was 1 in the morning when I finally got into my bed that night. Never did I think that I would have been at the game that night, but things always work out for a reason. From then on out, I have become a huge Pittsburgh Penguins fan. My dad and I always attend games regularly during each season and all because of one game seven years ago. This team is special and although they aren't as good as they used to be, coming to these games will always be something special to do with my dad.

The Rampage is a student-created publication of Pine-Richland High School, 700 Warrendale Road, Gibsonia, PA 15044. The newsroom is room 221.

The RAMPAGE is available online every Thursday under the High School Resources Tab. It is written by students, for students, and will make every attempt to report all school-related news. We welcome freelance submissions, suggestions, comments, and story ideas from students and staff. Since this is a student publication, we realize we make mistakes. We encourage readers to report mistakes to the staff writers, and you may win a prize if you locate any/all mistakes.

Teacher: Mrs. Harshman



Pittsburgh Pictures: See the City Through a Lens

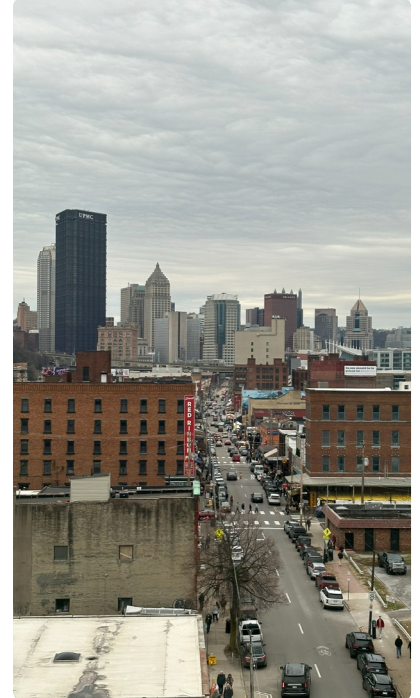
ELISE DUCKWORTH STAFF WRITER



Fort Pitt Bridge



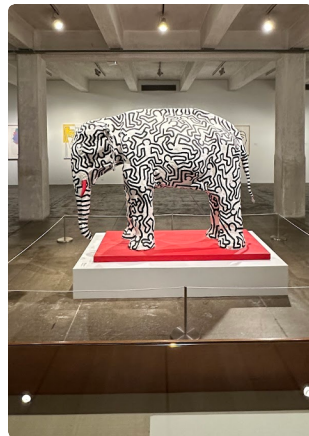
PNC Park



Overview of the City



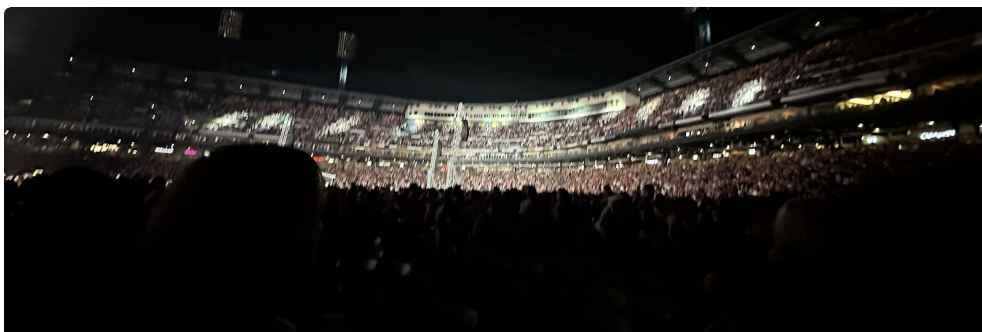
Pittsburgh's UPMC Healthcare Building



Pittsburgh's Museum of Art



Pittsburgh's PPG Paints Arena



PNC Park at Night



More at PNC Park



Pittsburgh Pirates Start to the 2024 Season

Will *the Pirates Make the Playoffs for the First Time Since 2015?*

TRISTAN FARRAR STAFF WRITER

The Pittsburgh Pirates have started off their 2024 season already. Spring training has begun and is coming to an end very soon with regular season on the way. The Pirates have signed some decent players during the off season that they will be looking to contribute to the overall performance of the team. Hopefully these players will allow them to have a better record than 76-86 and help them finish higher 4th in the National League Central.

Adoris Chapman was one of the big signings for the Pirates this off season. He is a closer who pitched for the Yankees, Cubs, and Reds in his previous years. He has also done very well in postseason games as well. During his prime years he could get up to 105 mph off the mound.

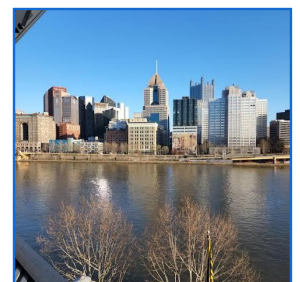
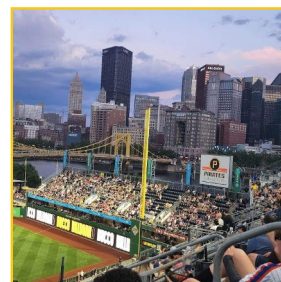
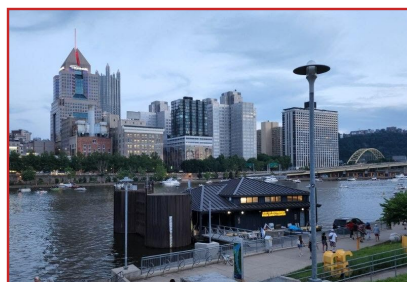
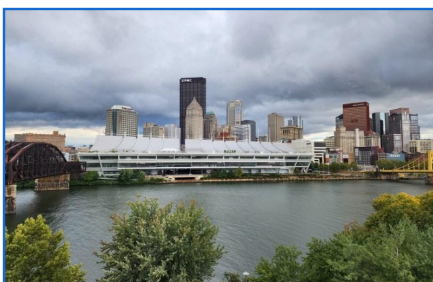
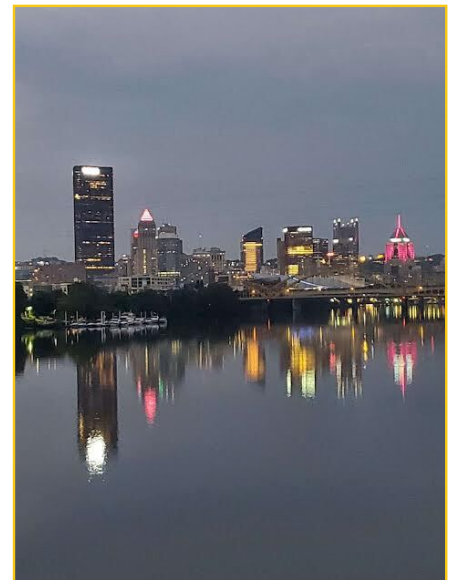
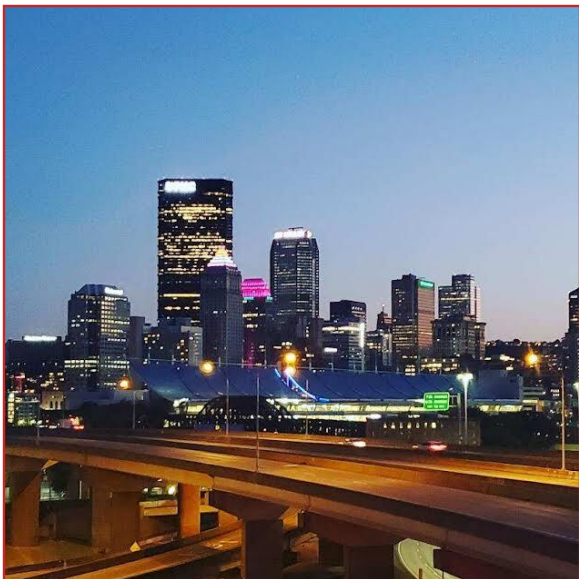
Chapman is still throwing very hard, but it will be interesting to see if he can hit those numbers for the Bucs.

Another big signing is another pitcher Domingo German. German is another pitcher the Pirates have acquired from the Yankees. German is a lights out pitcher and actually threw a no hitter last year for the Yankees. German is currently in his prime, but the Yankees had to let him go due to his off the field issues. German will be a great addition to the Pirates rotation.

Overall these two signings for the Pirates will help the Bucs win more games and hopefully finally make the playoffs for the first time since 2015. The Pirates have been iffy through spring training so far, so fans are hoping players are just dusting off the cob webs. Time will tell how the Pirates will truly be this year.

Downtown Pittsburgh: Steel City Beauty

JOSEPH DELIE STAFF WRITER





The Benedum Center

Learn about the history behind this beautiful theater

MADDY HOMER STAFF WRITER



The Grand Lobby of the Benedum Center

The Benedum Center is a gorgeous theater located in downtown Pittsburgh. The theater was built in 1928 by James Bly Clark, an early theater tycoon who assisted in the founding of the Benedum. Regular admission cost sixty-five cents- twenty-five cents if you came before noon- and performances provided a welcome lift of spirits during the Great Depression.

Did you know that the Benedum has over 90 crystal chandeliers, torchieres, and sconces in the theater? All but one are original. The Grand Lobby mirrors, marble, and woodwork are all original. At the landing on each staircase in the Grand Lobby are eighteen-foot-high original mirrors meant to be reminiscent of the Hall of Mirrors at the Palace of Versailles.

The signature piece of the Benedum Center is the original main

chandelier which weighs 4,700 pounds, is twenty feet high and twelve feet wide. It was restored in honor of the late H.J. Heinz II. Approximately 95% of the interior of the building is plaster. It took a fifteen-person crew almost a full year to complete the plaster renovations.

There are 1,500 feet of brass rail in the theater, most of which is original. On St. Patrick's Day in 1936, the theater flooded within two feet of the balcony. Several men were trapped for three days until police arrived in a motorboat and rescued them.

The Benedum Center for the Performing Arts was named in honor of the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, which made the largest contribution toward the restoration of the theater. The Benedum Center opened on Friday, September 25, 1987, with a show called *Purely Pittsburgh*. It was written by Dan Langen and produced by Mandy Levine. The show featured composers from Pittsburgh and performers with a Pittsburgh connection.

Here are some of the upcoming shows playing at the Benedum and the dates they are playing if you would like to go watch them. *The Kite Runner*. Wed, May 8, 2024 7:30 PM, Thu, May 9, 2024 7:30 PM, Fri, May 10, 2024 8:00 PM, Sat, May 11, 2024 2:00 PM, Sat, May 11, 2024 8:00 PM, Sun, May 12, 2024 1:00 PM, Sun, May 12, 2024 6:30 PM



The Benedum Center's original main chandelier

**YEARBOOKS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED DURING
ALL LUNCHEES ON MAY 21.**



Bleeding Black and Gold: *Pittsburgh* is Home

CALLE HENNE STAFF WRITER



Calle Henne and her dad at a Pittsburgh Steelers game

fries on our sandwiches and salads. Pittsburgh is the only city that is home to us yinzers. Pittsburgh is the only city that will ever feel like home.

For my sweet sixteenth birthday, I wanted one thing and one thing only: Steelers tickets. I have been raised a die hard Steelers fan since birth, so there was no other place I would want to celebrate my special day. Pittsburgh sports holds a special place in my heart because supporting them has always been a constant in my family's life. During baseball season, the Pirate's game is always on our TV if we aren't at the game in person. We have spent Easter, 4th of July, birthdays, and other special days at Pirate games rooting for our Buccos. Nothing beats sweating in the hot sun with nachos on my lap and my eyes on the field.

Every Sunday during football season we will carve out 3 hours of our day to sit and watch the Steelers game. If we are busy, we record the game and turn off our notifications so we don't get any spoilers of the game. If the Steelers win, it is a good day. If the Steelers lose, our moods are ruined and no one is interested in doing anything the rest of the day. Nothing compares to Pittsburgh sports.

Pittsburgh is also an extremely well fed city. Famous

The tradition and culture that is within the city of Pittsburgh is something like no other. Pittsburgh is the only city in which the same colors represent the MLB, NHL, and NFL teams. Black and gold. Pittsburgh is the only city in which we put

meat, coleslaw, tomatoes, and of course, french fries. They never disappoint. Another traditional Pittsburgh food is pierogies, special to the city with the pierogi race at every Pirate home game. Pamela's Diner in the Strip and in Oakland is always a favorite of mine, but still nothing beats Primanti's.

I was raised here. I grew up here. There is no other city that could feel like home like here. That's why when it came time for me to pick a college, **Pitt was it.**

Earlier this year in January, I gave my verbal commitment to play softball for the University of Pittsburgh. Being allowed to pursue the sport I love in the city I love is a dream come true. While on my official visit, I felt right at home; Forbes Avenue, the Cathedral of Learning, the Pittsburgh jerseys on the street, everything just felt right. Pittsburgh is my city, and getting to go to college in my home near the people I love feels like I need to wake up from a dream.

People talk about wanting to live near the beach and go to college in a warm southern town, but there's no place I would rather be than in my city of black and **gold.**



L-R: Calle Henne and her friend Natalia Rushak at a Pirates vs Yankees game



Calle Henne at her official visit at Pitt

Primanti's sandwiches are a delicious stack piled high with

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The RAMPAGE is published every week. Be sure to look for new issues online every week!

<https://www.pinerichland.org...>



Card Reader Error

By: Izzy Banjak, Andie Bowser, Sophia Gierl, and Siena Ward

“While we’re in D.C. we can go to the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History! I’ve always wanted to go there and heard it is super poppin’ there!” Hudson announces.

“How much do the tickets cost?” said Rory.

“They’re free!” Ivy stated. She knew because she had researched Washington D.C. ahead of time and taken notes in her pink leather notebook.

“I’m stoked! This is gonna be so sick!” Hudson cheers.

“That sounds extremely boring,” Tony whined, “can we do something fun?”

“Chillax, Tony. We all have to stick together,” Ivy explained, “we’ve already gotten in enough trouble, we don’t need to split up. Plus you shop all the time.”

They all looked for Sebastian but he was not standing with them anymore. They all stood on the sidewalk until Rory noticed the cop shoving his face into a hot dog.

“Peeps, what should we do about Sebastian?” asked Rory.

“Let’s just leave him there, he’s just going to hold us back,” said Hudson.

They all headed towards the metro station before Sebastian noticed. Hudson, Ivy, and Rory start making their way to the train. Tony stood in his tracks as he didn’t get his way. Rory turns around and notices when the strong odor of Tony’s pungent cologne fades. She walked back to where Tony stood as he yanked his arm to get him to walk with the group again.

“Tony stop acting like a baby, we can go shopping after or something,” Rory says.

“Ror I’m just kidding, but still, I’ve heard the limited edition Dior pinky ring with sapphires on it is here at the D.C. location. You know I have to get it.” Tony begged.

Hudson put his hand on the subway door to ensure the girls got on first. Tony seemed rather uncomfortable as he wouldn’t get on the subway.

“This seems sketchy guys,” Tony worried.

“Dude let’s go, you’ll be fine, take a chill pill,” Hudson says.

“C’mon dawg, before the doors close,” Ivy shouts.

Tony hops on right before the doors close with a sly grimace covering his face.

“I’m not fit for the D.C. subway lifestyle,” Tony mumbles under his breath, “it’s hideous on the metro station.”

The train starts up before Tony can grab onto something. The abrupt start causes him to fly back and land on his back. His Chanel sunglasses land on the floor, breaking, but none of them notice. As he sits on the grimy floor the group laughs because this would be the first time Tony has ever stepped foot on the subway.

“Guys this isn’t funny,” Tony says while sighing. Roughly 8 minutes later, the subway comes to a screeching halt. The group stands up while walking to the steep stairs, leaving the Chanel glasses behind on the train.

“Guys look!” Rory points her finger in the direction of the museum. The big pillars shine in the sunlight. Hudson stands still in his tracks baffled because his inner geek is being fulfilled. Nothing could possibly be more beautiful than the museum. The squad headed to the front desk inside.

“Wassup,” Tony says to the museum employee.

“How many people?” a museum worker at the seat asked.

“Four peeps,” Rory responded.

The worker handed over four wristbands for admission. They all turned around. The African Bush Elephant exhibit in the middle of the museum looked like the most breathtaking statue that Hudson has ever laid his eyes on. Ancient-looking pillars surrounded the museum, forming a circle. Paintings cover the high ceiling.

“I’m so glad the entrance fee was free, this place looks beautiful,” Ivy says with passion.

“Thank you, guys, for helping turn this trip around for me, I appreciate it,” Hudson says.

The group walks around the museum a little longer as Ivy, Rory, and Hudson all take loads of pictures on their flip phones. Tony seems content but skips out on all the pictures.

“Guys I have to go to the lavatory,” Tony announces to the squad.

“Okay, we’re gonna hang upstairs, so meet us there in like ten minutes,” Rory responds.

Tony nods as he heads to the bathroom, he spots the exit door. He looked back to make sure the group was not looking. The coast appeared to look clear so he bolted out the doors. The sun shined down as he went to put on his sunglasses but realized they were not on his head anymore. *Crap! I broke my favorite pair of sunnies on the metro. I need a new pair.* Tony thought to himself.

Tony heads to the nearest Chanel store, which is located two blocks away. *Boo-yah* he thinks to himself because he doesn’t have to walk far because his legs growing tired by the minute. Tony with his mischievous grin struts into Chanel as he heads right back to the sunglasses section. Tony tries on multiple pairs before finding *the one*. He walks up to the checkout as he sets them on the table.

“Will this be all for you?” the clerk says, “they’re so fetch.”

“Yes just this please,” Tony mutters.

“Do you plan on paying cash or card today sir?” says the cashier.

CONTINUED....



CHAPTER ELEVEN PAGE 11



“Card please,” Tony says as he unbuckles his leather satchel to grab his wallet.

“Alright when the green arrows appear, please go ahead and swipe your card.”

The green arrows appear as Tony goes to swipe his card. He looks back up at the clerk waiting for her to hand him the bag.

Moments go by as the clerk stays holding onto the bag.

“It says there was a card reader error, would you like to try again?” The cashier asks.

“What!?! Uhm sure I guess,” Tony says flustered.

The green arrows appear for the second time followed by Tony swiping his card one more time.

In big red letters, the reader displays the words, “CARD READER ERROR...”

“I’m sorry sir but your card keeps declining, do you have another card?” the cashier asks.

“WHAT? No, I don’t have another card. My card would never decline. Can I try it again?” Tony demands.

“Is there any way you can look up the funds left on this card?” Asks the clerk.

Tony whips out his flip phone from his leather satchel and starts dialing. *This can’t be right. I always have money in my bank account.* He thinks to himself. Tony tries for roughly 5 minutes to get past all the automated lines before getting connected to a consultant.

“Hello this is Tony Russo, I’d like to check the funds in my account,” Tony mutters to the bank teller.

“The card ending in 6912 shows up declined.” The bank line goes flat.

Ugh, I hate this trip. Tony thinks to himself.

DECLINED

By: Ella Barkley, Kate Iams, Aurelia Landis, and Lauren Marsilio

Tony sighs and opens his wallet up again.

“Sorry, I think my card expired or something. I promise I have money, see these shoes?” Tony says to the clerk, pointing down at his Burberrys.

The clerk shakes her head and places the shoes behind the counter.

“I’m sure you’ll see me again,” Tony nods.

Hopelessly, he wanders around the Chanel store, eyes focused on the items he could have purchased. Across the street, he notices a Gucci store adjacent to a Starbucks cafe.

“Sweet!” he exclaims as he begins to cross the street. As he speeds across, his eyes catch a green \$10 bill laying beside a drain in lonesome. *Is this theft?* Tony thinks. *They would want a kind child like myself to have this.* He picks it up and opens the large Gucci doors, ready to spend the money.

A pit in his stomach formed when he realized \$10 couldn’t get him anything designer.

“How could I live this peasant life?” Tony whispers to himself.

The Gucci clerk walks up to him with a gigantic smile on her face. “Is there anything I can help you with today? Our beautiful new belts just came in this morning, would you like to see them?”

“Unfortunately today is literally the only day I have to say no. But I bet she’s gorgeous!”

The clerk gives him an awkward glare, then softly smiles and turns around. With a sigh of defeat, he walks back out the doors and decides to head to Starbucks.

“Ugh, such a hard day. My feet are killing me, and I’m broke now,” he says to himself.

Tony finds an empty high top and sits down, holding his head in his hand. *Where’s the rest of them?* He thinks. Meanwhile, the group went around glancing at the wondrous exhibits. Waiting for Tony had taken a long time, so they figured he already started walking around to try and find their group. Much to Ivy’s dismay, they left the African Bush Elephant to explore.

However, Hudson stopped them all when they reached the fossil section. He dragged them over to view at two fossils poised so that a tyrannosaurus rex stood triumphantly over -as Hudson pointed out- a brontosaurus. With some badgering, he convinced Rory to take his photo with him posing looking like the brontosaurus hunted by the T-rex.

“You learn all of this from Jurassic Park?” Rory teased as she took out her phone, a cheerful smile plastered on her face.

“Shut up and take my photo,” Hudson bickered back, “please!” Ivy took a look around and took a quick headcount, “we should’ve at least seen Tony by now. Do you think he’s okay?” Hudson flicked through the photos Rory took of him, “he probably stopped at a Starbucks cause he got tired or whatever.” Rory went over to comfort her worrying friend, though she clearly was concerned as well.

CONTINUED...



CHAPTER TWELVE PAGE 12



“Yeah, he’s probably sipping that convoluted order he has that makes every employee question their job choice.”

“Plus we all know *that* order-”

“Do you think we should go find him?” Ivy says.

“My boy Tony is alone. We gotta stop him before he spends all of his money. He’s dangerous when all by himself,” Hudson says.

They leave through an exit door, starting towards the other side of the road.

“Wait guys! My man’s over there!” Rory says, pointing at Sebastian standing by a corner, with his phone to his ear. Hudson begins to run over to Sebastian. “Seb my man! Look what we saw at the museum,” he yells, shoving his phone into Sebastian’s face.

Sebastian then puts his finger to his lips and shushes the kids.

“Thank you sir. I will arrive there soon.” he says into the phone, then hangs up.

Ivy questions, “Who are you chatting with? Do you have a girlfriend?”

Sebastian looks at her with a confused expression. “Guys, I have something to tell you. And I need to tell you all,” he looks around at their faces. “Wait, where’s Tony?”

“Probably at the Starbucks right over there,” Ivy says, pointing to the store.

The four walk across the crosswalk and open the large doors. Before they even take three steps into the coffee shop, they find their missing companion there by the mere sound of his voice pestering the employees.

q“I’ll have a venti iced mocha please. But with an extra shot, two pumps white chocolate, then a pump of caramel, can you stir it please? Then add about 7 ice cubes if possible, and a centimeter of chocolate cold foam on the top,” Tony says.

The employee looks at Tony like she’s just seen a ghost. She hesitantly asks, “Anything else for today sir?”

“About that! I’ll take an egg bite, but please only cook it for about 45 seconds. I have sensitive teeth.”

“Sure, sir. That totals up to \$15.02.”

Tony grabs the \$10 bill in his wallet and realizes he’s short.

“Could you make an exception for me?”

“No sir, I cannot.”

“UGH! Nevermind.” Tony says, storming away. His eyes catch the group.

Sebastian puts his arm on Tony’s shoulder.

“Guys, I am leaving to go on business,” Sebastian says.

Rory grumbles. “Why? What’s more important than us?”

“I’ve gotta go now. The President has called me and it needs my full attention.”

Tony gasped, “The President? Like the President of the United States? Like Bush?”

“Yes, we are good pals,” Sebastian nods, then heads out the door.

“Sebastain may be gone but I still need my coffee. Anyone wanna help?” Tony pleads.

Ivy huffs, then walks up to the register, fumbling her pockets. “You owe me for this one, Tony. Hi ma’am, I’ll pay for his drink”

Her expression changes when she realizes her card is also repeatedly declining. In a rapid exchange of words and pushes, each friend swipes their cards. The red blinking DECLINED plagues the screen with each teenager.

Hudson grabs each of their arms and yanks them closer. “Are they onto us? Do you think our parents are tracking our cards?”

ATTENTION SENIORS: Each year the Senior Class selects a faculty member to speak at graduation. Voting will open on Monday, April 29th at 7:00am. You can access the ballot through your school email. Voting will close Thursday, May 2nd at noon.