



PINE-RICHLAND RAMPAGE

THURSDAY MAY 30TH, 2024 NO 23

"DELIVERING HIGH SCHOOL NEWS...ONE LAST TIME."



Senior Sunrise



**PHOTOS ARE FROM PINE-RICHLAND
INSTAGRAM AND RANDSCAM**





Senior Spotlight:



IZZY BANJAK STAFF WRITER



Where are you going to College?

27ebanjak64@prrams.org

Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC)

What is your favorite Class and Why?

Chorus; it's a period filled with personality and talent; I laugh more in that class than I do anywhere else. I can be myself and create special bonds with others; I love it!

What is your favorite part about being a Senior?

Senior flex: I am able to work 6am-11am three days a week making ice cream at Bruster's and the other two days I spend taking college classes at CCAC getting my prerequisites out of the way so after graduation I can go straight into nursing school. And I would totally be a zombie if I didn't get to sleep in at least once a week.

Who is your biggest inspiration and why?

Jim Wolford, the retired school janitor. Jim was someone who everyone knew: he saw you in the hall and he wouldn't hesitate to say hi. If you needed something the first guy you would think to call was Jim; he was always there to help.

Late at night after cheer practice, football games, track meets, concerts, you name it, Jim was always there. He took his time to do things the right way and to go the extra mile just because. He taught me to always keep working until the day runs out. A phrase that Jim often told me when I was upset over someone being mean or being singled out was to keep smiling. I am extremely grateful to be one of the few students who knows Jim personally.



Senior Quote:
"Befriend
Security and
maintenance; they
have all the keys."



What lasting Impression do you want to leave behind at PRHS?

I want to leave the impression of always being the cheerleader, but not in the way you think. The idea of cheering others on, always thinking ahead and helping others so they never have to feel the way others have made me feel before. No matter the person, everyone needs a cheerleader in their life.

What Sports and Clubs do you participate in?

Throughout my time at the high school I have participated in the Varsity Sideline Cheer Team, Varsity Competitive Spirit Team, Varsity Track and Field Team, and the Softball Team. I am an active member of Peer2Peer, Best Buddies, Key Club, Student Government, Mini Thon/FTK, Student Safety Council, Choir, and the Marching Band.

What's your advice for Underclassmen?

Talk to people! Out of 1,500 students I stand out to certain staff members that are not teachers just because I took the time out of my day to say "hey, how are you" or "have a good night" High school is a whole bunch of growing, emotions, stress and cliques, don't let the world around you stop you from being nice to strangers.

What's your favorite memory of High School?

Running with the flags on Friday nights. Leading the 'RAMS' flags in front of the entire football team then turning and running the length of the home bleachers with thousands of people watching and cheering is such an amazing feeling and one that will never be beat.

What are you most looking forward to after Graduating?

Life. I am so excited to experience the world, to work as a technician in a hospital right out of high school. To make my own schedule and learn how to live without school. I am ready to see the world, to meet people and learn their stories and tell them mine.

What was your favorite year of High School and why?

Definitely sophomore year; it was my last year ever going to the same school as my older sister. She would leave Art class with Mr. Riley and I would leave chemistry with Mrs. Bartoszewicz; we would meet in the hallway by the elevator; she would give me her graphing calculator and usually a piece of gum and I would tell her as many stories as I could before we finished the 2 minute walk to Mrs. Fink's room then we wouldn't see each other until we got home at night. Being a part of each other's day made high school a little cozier.



All About Paige Baratka

What are you most nervous about after Graduation?

Losing my close connections with my underclassmen friends, I know at some point we have to go our separate ways but not seeing them in person everyday and being on completely different schedules will cause us to drift apart.

What is your least favorite part of being a Senior?

The pressure you feel when it comes to attending things. Like prom, winter formal, games, musicals, school trips and so on. I understand it is the last chance but it's okay not to do everything that everyone else does. Go out and get dinner with your best friends instead of going to prom, go to a concert instead of the football game, it's okay to do different things. Be a leader not a follower.

What will you miss most about High School?

The staff. If there is one place I would go if I needed a pep talk or to tell someone my feelings or about my day it would be the high school. The coaches, front desk workers, old teachers, security guards, maintenance workers, guidance counselors, trainers all absolutely love to tell you about their day if you just ask. These people have my back, in a sea of 1,500 students they know my name and my story and I will always search for that kindness in the people I meet beyond high school.

What is your Biggest accomplishment?

My biggest accomplishment is definitely my reputation. I am Javelin Captain and Co-captain of Sprints for the Varsity track and field team. I was one of many cheerleading captains my senior and sophomore year. I drop everything and help when I can with the other cheerleading teams. I am the trumpet section leader, and always ready to step up and help in clubs. Kids that I've never met know my name and trust me to help them no matter what they need. I never wanted to be popular or liked. I just wanted to be known and I definitely accomplished that without even trying.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

In 10 years I see myself buying my first house, slowing down, getting out of travel nursing and into local trauma or flight nursing. I pray I am closer to God and using him to touch others. Hopefully I have a husband, I don't know about kids just yet but I hope to one day find my person and still love my job as a nurse.

What is your Dream Job?

A Flight Nurse (A nurse that provides care in a helicopter on the way to the hospital.)

What are you majoring and minoring in and why did you choose those?

Nursing, I always had an interest in all things medical and my mom is a nurse so I look up to her.

What Teacher has left the biggest impression on you and why?

Mrs. Walker. She encourages me to always be the best version of myself. When I stop believing in myself she is always there to pick up the slack and help me believe again. She is raw and honest and

I love that about her. She will tell you how it is and use it to

help you. She has helped me with my friend problems, cheer problems, letters of recommendation, essays and so much more. If I need to talk I know which room to go to...107

What's your biggest regret?

My biggest regret is not joining clubs my freshman year. I never went to the activity fair nights but I totally wish I did. I eventually found my way into clubs through friends and teachers but it would have helped to start from the beginning.

How do you think you've changed throughout High School?

Before high school I was so wrapped up in the opinions of everyone around me, who liked me and who didn't and why.

Now I couldn't care less what the kid next to me thinks of me. Once you learn how to go through life just focusing on yourself and not searching for validation through others you will see that not everything is that serious.



Senior Spotlight: *Meet Lauren King*

MADDY HOMER STAFF WRITER

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Lauren King is one of the seniors here at Pine-Richland High School. She is attending Duquesne University and majoring in occupational therapy. Lauren said, "Some parts of my senior year were difficult, some were easy but at the point of the 4th quarter it's pretty much smooth sailing." When it comes to this next step in her life, Lauren says, "I am excited to learn about myself even more and be out in the real world."

She said, "My senior year has been so special, I have made new friends, I got to be in my favorite musical, and I got to take a lot of classes that relate to my interests." The highlights of her year were when she performed in the fall play and the musical. She portrayed the role of Donna in this year's musical *Mamma Mia*. Growing up she participated in local theater productions and performed quite a lot with Jeter Backyard Theater. She has traveled with Jeter on "team" and competed at the Junior Theater Festivals at various locations like Atlanta and Texas.

Lauren is very thankful for her amazingly supportive parents, teachers, and directors that she has had these past couple of years. She said, "They have always pushed me to be my best self."

Some of her favorite things to do outside of school include shopping, thrifting, hanging out with her friends, participating in musicals, and traveling. She mainly enjoys listening to 70's and 80's music, but she also loves to listen to country and musical theater songs because they all make her feel happy.

"That wasn't like High School Musical at all!"

Lauren's senior quote



Senior Lauren King as Donna



Senior Lauren King



All About Chris Bowser: *Learn about this PR Senior*

ANDIE BOWSER STAFF WRITER

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What is one thing that you enjoy about being a senior and why?

“I like being able to leave early because of Senior Flex.”

What is one thing that you do not like about being a senior and why?

“I don’t like that this is the last year I will be in school with my friends because I’ve had a lot of fun with them over the years.”

Do you find senior year difficult? If so, why?

“I don’t really find senior year very difficult because I’m taking less classes and have a lot less work than other years.”

What is one thing you will miss about PR when you graduate?

“I will miss my teacher Mrs. Shinke because she has been super helpful to me throughout all of high school.”

Who has been the most influential/ most helpful to you through your high school years?

“My teacher Mrs. Shinke has been the most influential to me because of how much she has helped me over the years with my school work and she has always been there for me.”

Where do you plan to attend college and why?

“I’m going to PIA (Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics) because I want to work with planes for my career.”

What are you most nervous for when you go to college?

“I am most nervous about the workload and if I’ll be able to keep up with everything.”

As a senior, what advice would you give your freshman self?

“I would say to get involved in more school activities because I never did that kind of stuff and probably should have.”





ALL ABOUT HUNTER PETZUK

JACK HADLEY STAFF WRITER

Hunter Petzuk will be graduating this year and when looking back at his time at Pine-Richland it's full of making memories with his friends, finding what makes him truly happy, and his goals moving forward in life.

While not 100% decided on what his next steps are, one thing that is for sure: like all seniors he will lose some things that come with his current stage in life. When looking back he said what he will miss the most is the people who were there with him along the way. Family and friends have played an important role in his high school life and he knows he'll miss them after high school. Throughout high school he said he's had a lot of people he was close with at first but grew apart as he got older and in contrast there's been a lot of people who he's become better friends with. In retrospect Hunter is thankful for all these relationships. He says you remember the people who you are with not what it is you're doing.

In high school you spend a lot of time stressing about staying on top of school and your priorities. And while Hunter sees the values in school you also have to be a kid and make memories. Making memories like going fishing with friends and hanging out with Nick everyday are more important than tangible things.

Hunter values individuality and says people should value what makes them truly happy instead of what they think they should do. Hunter is a different type of person and he likes that because he truly gets to be himself.



Hunter Petzuk

He said he is very excited to meet new people and make new memories, he wants to try new things and live a life full of experiences. He wants to continue one of his biggest passions which is music, more specifically rap. Hunter is planning on attending a college for a music degree. He is greatly inspired by Tyler the Creator: he loves his style and how he is true to himself. Hunter says so much rap pushes negative topics and he wants to be included just for being a good person.

Hunter will always stay true to himself and treat others how you want to be treated. Spreading good energy is a principle for Hunter, as he brings up you don't know how other people are doing and you should try to make everyone feel better. Trying to help others, leaving an impact on this world, and not wasting your time are Hunter's biggest goals for his next steps in life.



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SENIOR SPOTLIGHT PAGE 7



Senior Spotlight: *Meet Eunice Son*

SKYLAR WARREN DESIGN EDITOR

A large number of high school seniors checked out their senior year. Easier classes, senior flex, and low stress. Other high school seniors use their year as a preparation year for colleges and universities. Eunice falls into this category.

Instead of taking an easier set of classes, Eunice went the challenging route and enlisted in all AP courses: AP Bio, AP Physics, AP Psych, AP CS, AP Spanish, and AP Lit. This seems like a difficult schedule; the senior year is difficult to manage considering college preparation and the mental strength to finish off your last year of high school strong. Even with challenging courses, Eunice makes her senior year look easy with a 4.5 GPA.

Looking ahead to Eunice's future, her next four years will be spent at Cornell University studying Operations Research and Engineering to get her undergraduate degree. Her plans after college are undecided as of right now, but she knows she wants to go into the engineering field.

Eunice's hobbies include watching movies, reading, shopping, and going to museums.

visit is

Chicago.

always

visit

since

She

have

since

so it's

favorite

six years.

her senior

laid back

reality, it's

She says she had to

school as well as dealing with college applications. She feels as if her first semester was more difficult than her second semester, but she explains that she still has a big load of work to do.

However, there's a few excuses to push off that work.

Her favorite museum to

The Art Institute of

For six years, she's

loved going to

different museums

middle school

claims to

been visiting

sixth grade,

been her

for a total of

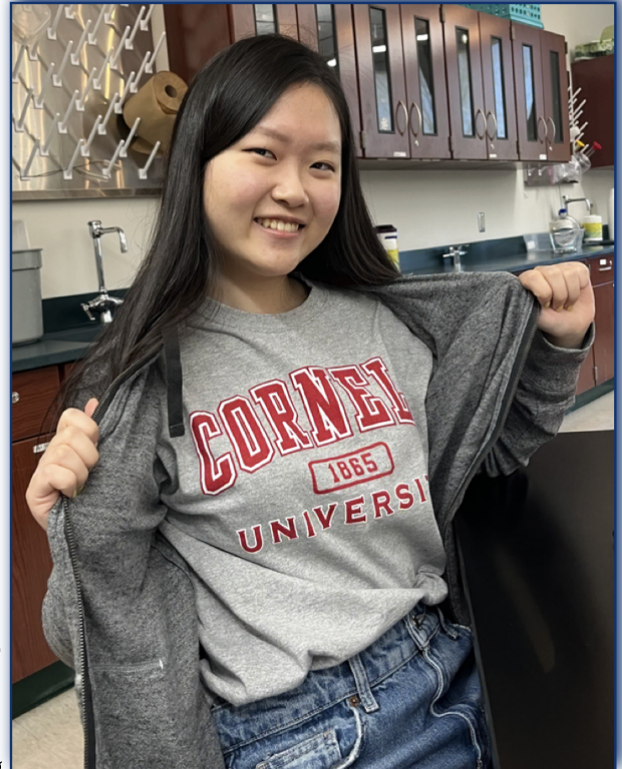
Eunice expected

year to be more

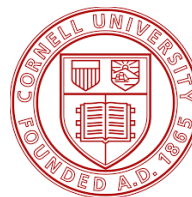
and relaxed, but in

busier than she thought.

manage all of her work for



Eunice Representing Cornell University



Ivy

This was Eunice's last opportunity to experience a high school prom. She went last year, but wanted to make this year's the best.

Overall, Eunice enjoyed her senior year. She worked hard, effectively, and diligently, all while keeping up with her job and her friends. As much of a talented, driven person as she is, who wouldn't look up to her?



The Hardest Good-Bye: *Saying Farewell to Mantavya*

ADDISON BARNES DESIGN EDITOR



As the school year comes to an end, so does my least favorite part of the school year: Saying goodbye to the seniors. However, this year is a little different; I am saying goodbye to the grade that has always been ahead for as long as I can remember. As soon as I knew I needed to pick a senior to interview, without hesitation I knew I needed to write about one of my favorite seniors: Mantavya, whom I met during my freshman year, when I joined the mock trial team. I am truly happy to have known Mantavya for the past three years and will cherish our memories forever.

What are you doing after you graduate?

Attending Purdue University for Mechanical Engineering

What are a few achievements that you have accomplished during your time at Pine-Richland?

I won the state championship for Extemporaneous Debate this year.

Became a merit scholarship student.

Won third of Saddies court.

Survived AP Calculus BC (The class is extremely fast-paced and complex so you have to keep up with your homework in order to keep up with the hard class.)

How do you like to spend your free time outside of school?

I like going to the gym with friends and shopping at the mall.

What is a day in your life?

I start my day with black coffee and toast that is slightly brown and buttered (It's perfect that way.) I go to school and depending on the day after school I will attend forensics, mock trial, or programming club. I then might work out and to end my day I read a book and plan my outfit for the next day.

Is there anyone you would have wanted to give an acceptance speech to?

Mr. Byko. He pushed me to be in forensics and made me the public speaker I am today. He gave me a positive environment where I could learn to be better. I also really liked his class overall.

Last but not least, what is some advice you would like to give to the students of Pine-Richland?

Try to have as much fun as possible, it'll be over before you know it.



“Believe you can and you’re halfway there”- Theodore Roosevelt



Senior Spotlight

Meet Dante Pittorino

JOEY DELIE STAFF WRITER

When I found out that we had to interview a senior for a senior spotlight I knew right away that it had to be Dante. Why is that? He is one of the kindest people I know. We met on the first day of 4th grade in gym class. Over the years, I have gotten to know him by riding the bus and being on the crew team together over the last 5 years. I respect how hard he works in school and all of his activities.

What school are you going to and what are you majoring in?

"I'm going to attend the University of Michigan to study electrical engineering."

Favorite memory in high school?

"My favorite memory was last year when school got canceled for the day. I had never seen so many students united and screaming out in joy simultaneously. Afterwards, I went to Totin's Diner to catch brunch with my friends."

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

"I see myself hopefully moving to California to start my new job. I'll need a warmer climate after living in Michigan for 4 years."

What do you want to be when you grow up?

"I'm not completely decided on what I want to do yet but I've always been interested in the aerospace industry. I would like to start as an engineer developing new satellites and space crafts to explore outer space. I then hope to move up to a higher managerial role."

Who inspires you as a person?

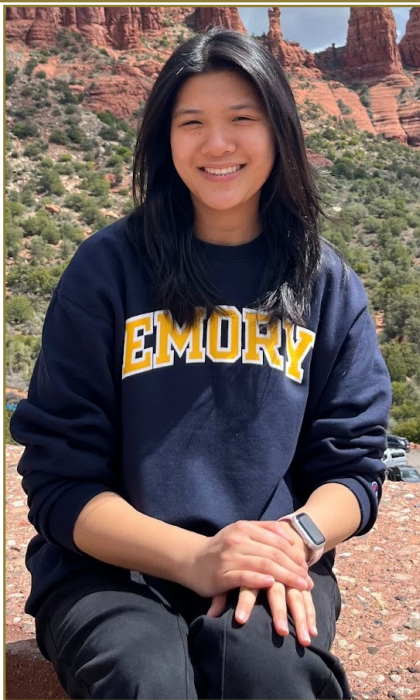
"My parents are definitely my number one source of inspiration. My mom inspires me to always be compassionate and act with my heart. She is my rock and never fails to support me. My dad inspires me to always work hard and strive to be the best version of myself. He always believes in me to do the impossible and succeed."

What advice would you give to the underclassmen?

"Take advantage of all the opportunities available to you. We're fortunate enough to live in an affluent area with incredible opportunities and resources. Explore several different clubs, teams, and other extracurriculars to find something that you enjoy. This will help you to discover your interest and make new friends."

M UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN





Senior Spotlight: *Meet Chloe Chiang*

BROOKE DEEGAN STAFF WRITER

For the four years in which senior Chloe Chiang has been attending high school here at PR, she has gracefully navigated through her life and discovered a beacon of who she is meant to be in the future-- all whilst perpetually wearing a bright smile on her face, and even through challenging times, treating everyone who surrounds her with the utmost kindness. In the fall, she plans to begin to attend Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia for Finance/Business. There is simply no doubt that she will excel beyond belief. After all, she is a wonderful person with immense intelligence and talents which are sure to take her far in life, no matter where it is that she may go.

Chloe is a brilliant student who works diligently both inside and outside of class, as well as in her lengthy list of extracurricular activities. She is a member of the PR Chamber Singers, a choral audition group, and has been a Choir Representative for all four years of her high school career. Additionally, she is a 3rd-degree black belt and has been avidly partaking in taekwondo for 8 years now. She and her close friend, senior Jocelyn Curreri, founded the Asian Culture Club and both serve as co-presidents with one another. Chloe is, furthermore, the secretary

of the National Honors Society, and also leads a church worship team and teaches kindergarteners outside of school. All of these activities have greatly prepared her for the rigors of college, particularly at Emory, and set her up for guaranteed success.

She said, **"I plan to continue most of my extracurriculars at Emory. They have a really great choir which I hope to be a part of, and I want to continue taekwondo as well."**

Out of all of the teachers whom Chloe has interacted with thus far, she believes that Mrs. O'Leary, physics teacher and sponsor of the Asian Cultures Club, has inspired her the most and best propelled her towards achievement.

"I'm inspired by how open she is. She's so willing to learn things about cultures that she may not know about, and I just really love that. She is positive, patient, and kind. Plus, she is always so engaged in all of the theme days!"

It is strong women such as Mrs. O'Leary who have encouraged Chloe to uncover her passions and follow wherever her loving heart leads throughout her high school career. Chloe's mother, an abundantly skilled businesswoman herself, has partially driven her towards an interest in the business/finance field. That, coupled with a prior job experience allowed her to fully see the importance and creativity within that sort of major.

"My mom is a business woman. She's in finance, so I've always been really interested in her job. I also used to work at Dunkin and realized food was being wasted-- there were so many leftover donuts, and so I realized how applicable economics and finance are to help companies like Dunkin reduce their waste through business tactics," she said.

Although Emory has almost been a lifelong dream for Chloe, there will naturally be a bit of a struggle in shifting from living in Pittsburgh her whole life to relocating to Atlanta for the next four years.

"I'm both nervous and excited to start this chapter of my life. I was born here, so I don't know anything else besides Pittsburgh. I'm really excited to meet new people with different backgrounds," she said. "I also think I'm going to miss my parents a lot."

Throughout Chloe's time at PR, if there is one thing that she learned and wishes to pass on, it would be the prominence of resilience in everyday life.

"I believe in resilience, and to never give up. Even when life gets tough, you always put your best effort in, and keep going to the end. Take bonus opportunities, and keep working to the end, because the little things are what get you far."

She made sure to make it clear that she wishes to be remembered as somebody who has done her best after everything she has done. While she may not know precisely where the tides of life will take her after she graduates from college, she certainly knows who she wants to be throughout it all.

"I hope to be a light to all the people I encounter in life," she said.



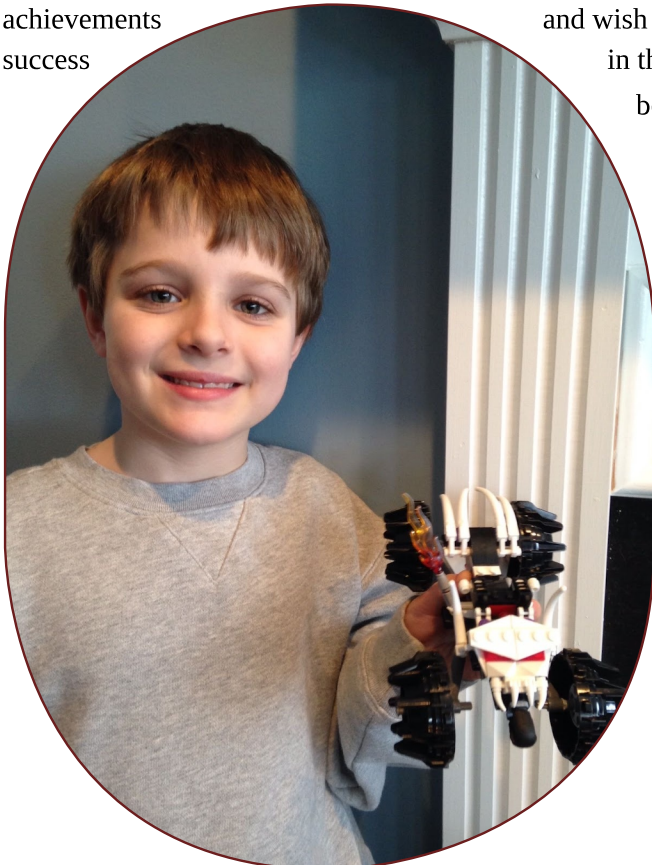
Senior Spotlight: *Alexander Wesolosky*

BY ANARELLA PENA STAFF WRITER

As the curtain falls on his high school journey, Alexander Wesolosky stands poised at the threshold of a new chapter. With Duquesne University beckoning and a passion for numbers guiding his path, Alex prepares to embark on a journey of studying Accounting. He knew that Duquesne was the perfect college for him, this is seen by him only applying and setting his eyes on it. "I want to follow a similar path as my dad, I remember when I was younger seeing how my dad would always hire people specifically from Duquesne. I think that grew my attention to it."

With a penchant for philosophy and a love for the silver screen, Alex leaves behind a legacy of intellectual curiosity and youthful existence. Reflecting on his favorite class, he shares, "Honors Philosophy of social media opened my mind to new perspectives and taught me to question the world around me." Alex shares his passion for this by always talking about it with his friends in the joyful hallways of PR.

As he bids farewell to familiar faces and cherished memories, Alex looks ahead with excitement and optimism. Though the halls may soon grow quiet, Alex's spirit and enthusiasm will forever echo in the hearts of those he leaves behind. As he sets his sights on new horizons, we celebrate his achievements and wish him every success in the adventures that lie ahead. Congratulations, Alex, and may your journey be as bright as your dreams.



Fun facts:

- 1.His favorite animal are sharks
- 2.He has three dogs: Dexter, Delilah, and Lucy
- 3.His favorite movie is Ferris Bueller's day off
- 4.He hates rice
- 5.He's from Kentucky

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.



Senior Spotlight: *Meet Macey Hayes*

CALLE HENNE STAFF WRITER

Q&A

What are your future plans?

I am going to the University of Kentucky to study business!

What will you miss most about high school?

I will miss spending time and seeing my close friends and teachers I have formed relationships with.

What is some advice you have for underclassmen?

I know it sounds so cliché but 4 years goes by so fast, so although there are

lots of times that may be rough, try to enjoy it because it ends so fast. Also, do senior flex, it will make life SO MUCH more enjoyable, and not doing it is my biggest regret this year.

What was your favorite year of high school and why?

Senior year was my favorite year because I had more time to spend with my friends and family, and got to enjoy my last year with friends.

Who was your biggest inspiration through high school?

Ms. Blaze is my biggest inspiration because she always pushed me to be my best and strive for things that could seem out of reach.

What sports and clubs did you participate in?

I played on the volleyball team, am a member of the student government, and am the social media officer for FBLA.

As you leave high school, what do you want to be remembered as?

I would want to be remembered as someone who is kind and loving and treats people well.

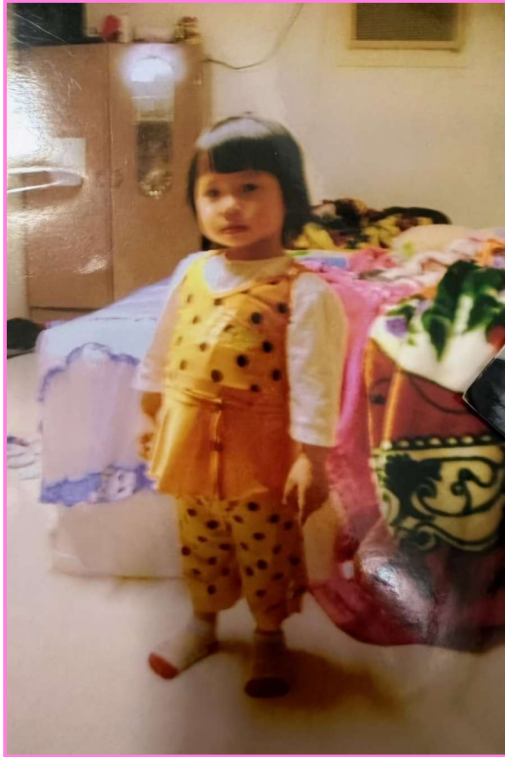
What are you looking forward to most about graduating?

I am looking forward to meeting new people and experiencing new things and living in a new place!

Who were your favorite teachers in high school?

Mr. Gaetano, Ms. Blaze, and Mrs. Krebs were some of my favorite teachers who have had the greatest impact on my time at Pine-Richland.





Erica Bui: *The End of Her High School Journey*

ELISE DUCKWORTH STAFF WRITER

What will you miss most about high school?

A.) "I will miss the wonderful people I have met and befriended throughout the years! They made it all worth it. "

Is there a teacher/class you want to "shout out" and why?

A.) "APUSH MRS. OWENS!!!! APUSH really reframed my perspective on America's history, culture, and its global impact across different societies-the good and bad. Mrs. Owens does a phenomenal job on deconstructing existing beliefs and notions. She's not afraid to shed light on the difficult topics in America's history that needs to be discussed, which is extremely crucial in developing our critical thinking when it comes to making rational, smart, and empathetic decisions as active individuals in society."

What's your favorite memory from your high school years?

A.) "I have a collection of favorite memories and no singular memory I can currently

recall that triumphs the others. If I had to choose one, it'd be the time I was apart of the musical."

What did you take part in inside and outside of school?

A.) "I've been in the orchestra for all four years of my high school career and I've been in the chamber orchestra for about two or three years. I'm also apart of the French club (everyone should join and take French) and I joined the musical for the first time this year. It was awesome. 10/10 experience."

Who has inspire you in the school and why?

A.) "My friends have always been a strong force for motivation and inspiration when I need it the most!"

What do you intend on doing with your future tomorrow?

A.) "I intend to dedicate my future towards giving back to the people who supported me throughout my entire life, especially my parents."

Where are you furthering your education?

A.) "I plan on attending the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) to study advertising and marketing. I've always LOVED fashion and although the business isn't very lucrative, I wanted to somehow incorporate my passions into my studies and this is the route that i am taking. I think it'll be fun."





Senior Spotlight: *Meet Angelina Hunkele*



ELLA DAVIS STAFF WRITER



Where do you plan to go after high school?

I plan on going to Penn State where I will major in kinesiology/ physical therapy.

What are some of your hobbies/interests?

I like running, biking, shopping, and going to the beach!

If you could go back and say one thing to your freshman/younger self, what would you say?

It is so important to focus on the little things rather than the larger outcome.

What are some of your biggest accomplishments?

Medaling at states for cross country, getting third at WPIALS for the 3200, and winning WPIALS in the 4x800 relay.

"If you never bleed, you're never gonna grow"
-Taylor Swift

What are your favorite parts about track and cross country?

I love the team atmosphere and getting to run with such great people everyday! One of my favorite parts are van rides to races with the team. I also like to compete and push myself to become a better runner and person.

What advice would you give to upcoming freshman?

Enjoy every second because it really does go by so fast! Don't stress about when you feel like you've failed because you will always have more opportunities.

What is your favorite subject?

I like science-related subjects, especially anatomy.

Who is your biggest inspiration?

My biggest inspiration is my mom because she works so hard and is the only reason why I'm here today. She motivates me to become a better version of myself.

Who are your favorite music artists?

Taylor Swift and Gracie Abrams



Senior Angelina Hunkele with the rest of the 2024 cross country seniors



Senior Spotlight: *Meet Sophia De Jesus*

ELLA BARKLEY STAFF WRITER

For senior Sophia De Jesus, Pine-Richland wasn't just her high school where she went for the past 4 years of her life everyday, it was where she created memories she will remember for the rest of her life. She is leaving PRHS a whole lot differently than when she first got here on the first day of freshman year and for that she couldn't be more grateful to have had the opportunity to meet so many new people and the community she has built around them.

Sophia is a current senior and is graduating from Pine-Richland this upcoming spring. Although she hasn't decided on a college quite yet, she does plan on majoring in English with a minor in business. She first found her love for writing through Mrs. Harshman when she took her journalism class for two years. Throughout her entire time in her class, she always felt completely supported and appreciated by her and knew that because of her class, she had found this passion for writing. If it weren't for her decision to take journalism in high school, she never would have realized what to do with her life. Journalism allowed her to express herself in ways she never thought was possible.

Throughout Sophia's senior year she has had some memorable moments and accomplishments. She has been part of Pine Richland's girls soccer team all four years as well as part of the school's newspaper for two years. Senior year has been her most favorable year not only because it was her last year of high school, but also since how much it has helped her grow as a person. High school is definitely a difficult experience for everyone, but senior year she has met so many new people, learned some very valuable lessons, and helped her figure out what she wants to do in the future with her life.

Although Sophia is excited to grow as a student as well as a writer when in college, she is definitely going to miss her friends and family the most. Her parents have been her biggest inspirations for her entire life and have helped her in so many ways possible. Her mom keeps her honest by instilling hard working values while her dad encourages her to be imaginative and think outside of the box.

If Sophia had one thing to let the future and current underclassman know, it would be to just enjoy your high school experience. Don't be afraid to make mistakes because you'll only have this experience once. You'll soon realize that you'll miss the simple aspects that made your high school career so unforgettable.



SOPHIA'S SENIOR QUOTE: "Not all treasure is silver and gold, mate." - Captain Jack Sparrow



A Grand Farewell to a Beloved Senior

Introducing **Michael Lattari**

ANASTASIA PUNOSEVAC DESIGN EDITOR



1. What's one thing about high school you will miss/something you realize you have taken for granted?

A. I think I will most miss our teachers. It is very easy to take for granted

how amazing of teachers we have at Pine-Richland, even if they can cause exasperation at times, they are still amazing educators who have helped us all to succeed.

2. If you could change one thing about your high school experience, what would you change/do you have any regrets?

A. I wouldn't change anything about my high school experience. I have truly done everything I wanted to do and then some. I just wish that I had more time to experience them again.

3. What class or after-school activity do you think prepared you the most for college applications or life after high school?

A. I think that Scouting prepared me the most for life because it has taught me

how to live as a good person, prepared me to be a leader, and given me the opportunity to experience amazing things.

4. What was the scariest moment of high school, or a moment you felt totally unprepared?

A. The scariest moment was probably right before I took my first AP exam. While I wasn't terrified, I definitely had some fear and feelings of unpreparedness while I was waiting for the test to begin.

5. What's something you're glad to leave behind in high school?

A. I am glad to leave behind 8 hours of classes every day. I am looking forward to having fewer classes each day, and more time to spend on the things I want to spend it on.

6. How did you prepare for high-stakes exams such as your AP exams or the SAT (or ACT if you did it)?

A. I did a little bit of review for each, but not too much beyond something that my teachers assigned to me. I think the most

important thing is to know what the test is like so that there are no surprises thrown at you. By knowing what's coming next, you can adequately prepare and pace yourself.

7. Do you have any pre-test rituals or advice you would like to share on how to perform your best on an important test or on any high-stakes event?

A. I think the best advice I could give is to not get in your own head. While it can be extremely stressful in the moment, it is also important to remember that you have learned this



PA State Odyssey of the Mind Finals at Pocono Mountain East High
Back row: Michael Lattari (PR 12), Jilleen Uzelac (PR 11), Nicolai Ezolt (PR 12), Mia Tucciarone (PR 12), Mrs. Sarah Ezolt (Coach), and David Mao (NA 9)
Front row: Connor Foote (PR 12), and Helen Mao (NA 12), all photos provided by Michael Lattari

material and do actually know it. In most cases, you have spent a long time learning this material and even if you think you do not know it, you actually do. The other important thing to do before any high-stakes event is to be well rested as that allows you to function and think clearly at your best.

8. What colleges did you apply to/get accepted to?

A. I applied to several colleges, across the spectrum of difficulty to get into. I was accepted to some, waitlisted at a few, and rejected at some others. I was accepted to Penn State, Chatham, Ohio State, and Case Western Reserve University.



CONTINUED...



9. What were you looking for when you applied to your colleges?

A. I wanted somewhere that felt like it had a campus, was not super far from home but still left me on my own, and was big enough to give me lots of opportunities. I also wanted somewhere that had all 4 seasons and a good environment around it.

10. Where are you going to school?

I will be attending Case

Western Reserve University next fall.

11. What made you choose this University?

A. I chose Case Western because it felt like the best match for me. I liked the feel of campus and the opportunities it afforded me. I was also particularly drawn to the variety of experiences on Campus, especially a 7-story maker space, filled with all the tools needed to create any project, completely open to the public and students.

12. What do you plan to major in?

A. I don't yet have a set major but right now it will probably be either be Political Science or Engineering of Some Type.

13. What attracted you to this major (if you have a decided major)?

A. Both of the majors I am considering are things that I am interested in and have lots of experience with. These things, while difficult, also give me the greatest sense of joy when a problem with them is solved.

14. What are you looking forward to most in College?

A. I am looking forward to the freedom to study more deeply the things that interest me, as well as getting to have exciting experiences in these fields.

15. What's something about the future that scares you?

A. I am most scared of landing on a path that does not make me happy. I want to do something that fulfills me and keeps me engaged, and I worry that I will not be able to accomplish this.

16. What/who has helped you the most in terms of getting through high school and going to college?

A. My own drive and ambition has helped me the most in getting through high school. This is because by always pushing myself to succeed, I have been able to accomplish everything that high school has required of me. However, with getting into college, Mrs. Whalen has been instrumental in guiding that journey. Everyone should listen to her advice, especially to not wait till the last minute to apply to schools, especially Pitt and Penn State.

17. What class was most valuable for you in high school/which teacher was your favorite/most helpful?

A. I think that AP Euro and AP Calculus BC were my most valuable and favorite classes because Doc and Mr. Slimm made these challenging classes fun, and they prepared me for more challenging classes by instilling in me the skills and ideas needed to succeed in that class and others.

18. What advice do you have for people going through high school who feel unsure about the future?

A. It is perfectly okay to not know what you are going to do in the future. However, make sure that you take the necessary steps to allow for you to continue to have the flexibility to decide what is best for you.

19. What are you most proud of in terms of your achievements in high school?

A. I am most proud of earning my Eagle Scout Award by putting in tables in the courtyard and putting on one of the best Musicals PRHS has ever seen, Mamma Mia! I am also proud of myself for taking advantage of everything that I have and leaving my impact on the school.



Pine-Richland junior Wesley Wright, and seniors Isabella Bissel, Mike Lattari, Samantha Katruska and Marissa Zirckel on the set of Mamma Mia!

Senior Spotlight: Colden Searles

BLAKE FUCHS ASSOCIATE EDITOR

“We can’t just give up because things aren’t the way we want them to be.”

This quote comes from a seemingly unexpected place-Japanese anime *Dragon Ball Z*. But to Colden Searles, it resonates with him.

“It’s a good mentality to have,” Searles says.

Searles is one of the many seniors graduating from PRHS in a short time from now, but chances are you’ve seen his face at least once this year. For starters, he has been one of the perennial main anchors on the morning announcements, which Searles says he enjoys, whether it’s in front of or behind the camera. He’s also been on the stage. Starting out his freshman year he took Principles of Directing with Mrs. Green then took Principles of Acting with Mrs. Bruno because he liked what he did the previous year. Skip to this year, and he directed a scene from *The Great Gatsby* as part of his Advanced Acting presentation. He’s also done three separate theatrical works over the past two years, starting out with *Elf: The Musical* in the spring of 2023, *The Man Who Came To Dinner* this past fall, and *Mamma Mia!* in spring.

“The people and everyone in the cast and crew is what made them super fun. Being able to do those shows with my best friends was some of the most fun I’ve ever had,” reflected Searles.

And if it wasn’t clear that Searles enjoys theater, well, that’s what he’s going to college for. After looking at a couple other schools in the immediate area, he chose Slippery Rock.

“I chose it because I already knew some people there, it’s close but not too close from here, and most importantly, its [theater] program best fit me,” justified Searles.

Outside of school, Searles is an avid gamer. He is a massive fan of the Mario, Sonic, and Kingdom Hearts franchises, among many others. One of his favorite games to play is a Sonic game, the popular *Sonic Adventure 2*. While the 2006 *Sonic the Hedgehog* game is significantly less popular with fans, Searles still enjoys it.

“While it’s one of the buggiest games ever made, those bugs make it really fun to play because of how funny it is,” says Searles.

Searles is also an avid movie and television fan. His Letterboxd bio reads as “Letterboxd’s resident *Teen Beach Movie* expert and superfan,” and some of his favorite movies include the Sonic movies, *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, and *Spider-Man: No Way Home*. He also enjoys the *Pokemon*, *Dragon Ball*, and animated Sonic show *Sonic Boom*, as well the newer live-action Sonic series *Knuckles*. And of course, who couldn’t forget the Marvel and Star Wars movies and TV shows, like the aforementioned *Rogue One* and *No Way Home*, *Logan*, *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* and *Rebels*, *The Spectacular Spider-Man*, and more recently, *X-Men ‘97*.

Looking back, Searles regrets not doing the fall plays and musicals in his freshman and sophomore years, as they looked fun to him from the outside. He also wishes during that same time he would’ve been better at spacing work out, as he got burnt out easily.

“When it comes to homework, always give yourself time to breathe,” asserted Searles.

But it’s evident that Searles will be just fine at Slippery Rock. Like mentioned previously, he’s off to study theater there, but his passion is still just as strong as it was four years ago. And best of all, he’s ready to learn new things. When asked how he felt about graduating and leaving for college, he had just one word to say: “Curious.”



Colden Searles



Meet Senior Elise Miller: *Future Biomed Engineer*

MARIANNA ZAHORCHAK STAFF WRITER

Earlier this school year, I had the pleasure of meeting Senior Elise Miller during seventh period lunch. She's a friendly face to appear when you're stuck dreading the wait at the end of the lunch line. Read on to find out what makes her so awesome.

What activities are you involved in at PR?

"At the start of freshman year, I tried out a bunch of different things and eventually stuck with Peer to Peer," Miller said. Miller became an officer in the PRHS Peer to Peer club at the start of her senior year. She says she was more active at the beginning of the year, but still considers herself a committed member.

What hobbies do you have outside of school?

Miller worked to become a martial arts master taking jujitsu at Junqueira BJJ. She also took guitar lessons for several years.

What classes do you feel have benefited you most throughout your years at PR?

Someday, Miller hopes to go into the biomedical engineering field, so having the opportunity to take engineering classes at PR was highly beneficial to her. "Taking Intro to Engineering made me continue to take more engineering classes like CAD and engineering design," Miller said.

What are your plans for after high school?

Miller has an interest in entering biomedical engineering because she feels it would allow her to "work closely with medical professionals through the creation of prosthetics" and "work with technology on the front lines." Miller also enjoys studying science, so a career that involves both chemistry and neuroscience would be perfect for her.

Miller has committed to Washington and Jefferson College in Washington, PA and plans to study there for three years before transferring to a different school to earn her Bachelor's degree in engineering. One day, she hopes to achieve a doctorate in her field. Miller said she was inspired to pursue biomedical engineering in order to help others because of her own use of a diabetic insulin pump. She wants to assist in designing additional, helpful medical technology that will have a positive impact on people's lives.

What's your favorite memory from this year?

"Prom was really fun. I went for the first time this year. It was fun getting to hang out with my friends, get dressed up, and get balloon animals. It took the whole day to prepare mentally and physically, but it was fun to get ready with my friends and fix our hair, makeup, and dresses together," Miller said.

How was senior year different from previous years?

"By senior year, you know the way of the land," Miller said, "but it was definitely harder than freshman and sophomore year. Luckily, junior year prepared me well because it has the same amount of course load as senior year, so by the time I got to senior year, I was used to it, so it wasn't as bad. I also figured out what specific classes I wanted to take based on what I was interested in during previous years."

How do you feel about your senior year coming to an end? What's your mindset looking forward to the end of the year?

Although Miller feels "really excited to graduate," she's experiencing some sadness as well. Despite its "cliche" nature, high school truly does go by fast.

"It's just like 'how did I come to this point?' you know?" Miller said.

All in all, Miller feels excited to see what life has in store for her, but still struggles with some trepidation about going from the top of the food chain back to the bottom. She wonders if she'll see her friends again after high school, but says she's otherwise "so done with high school classes" and feels ready to move on to bigger places in life.

What advice do you have for underclassman?

As her final, parting words, Miller would like to say: "Enjoy high school as much as you can. It goes by pretty quickly, and though getting good grades is important, the higher grade you strive for, the more easily you can get burnt out, so make sure to enjoy the time while you can."



Senior Elise Miller holding her NAGA grappling competition medal from her time with Junqueira BJJ.



Senior Spotlight - Nathan Kush

Learn More About Departing Senior Nathan Kush

TRISTAN FARRAR STAFF WRITER

Question: What do you plan on doing after graduating from Pine-Richland?

Answer: "I am going to continue my athletic and academic career at Denison University, majoring in Biology on a Pre-Med track, while also playing on the baseball team."

Question: What made you decide to attend Denison over another school?

Answer: "Denison gave me the best opportunity to get the best education, while also playing baseball for a great college."

Question: What was your favorite memory at Pine-Richland?

Answer: "My favorite memory is meeting new people, playing on the baseball team, and just enjoying my time during high school."

Question: Who do you look up to the most?

Answer: "I look up to my parents because they have made me who I am."

Question: What was your favorite class at Pine-Richland?

Answer: "Astronomy"

Question: Who was your favorite teacher at Pine-Richland?

Answer: "Mr. McCurdy"

Question: What was your favorite thing about playing baseball at Pine-Richland?

Answer: "My favorite memory is the Eat N Park table with Payton Ford, Tristan Farrar, Jake Waddell, and Anthony Annichine."



How to Face the Ups and Downs of Growing Up

Dipper and Mabel have the Inside Scoop

MARIANNA ZAHORCHAK STAFF WRITER

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As teenagers, many of us may see the road to adulthood as one that slowly fades from a rainbow bridge into faded asphalt. And while the struggle through teenagehood presents many challenges, there are positives that come with growing up as well. No show presents such a notion better than *Gravity Falls*. Premiering in June 2012 and concluding in February 2016, *Gravity Falls* is a show about 12-year-old twins named Dipper Pines and Mabel Pines who stay with their foxy great uncle (“grunkle”) Stan for the summer in a tourist trap called the Mystery Shack located in a paranormal town called Gravity Falls, Oregon. I first watched this show back in first grade, and it remains one of my favorites to this day. If you haven’t gotten the chance to watch the show for yourself and are interested, I HIGHLY recommend watching it before reading this analytical review.

Although *Gravity Falls* tends to focus on the strange happenings of the town and the lore-filled stories (and backstories) of its characters, the show ultimately leads up to Dipper and Mabel’s 13th birthday. As we move towards this end point throughout the show, an underlying message develops about experiencing the excitement of maturity along with coming to terms with its downsides. As a kid, my mind quickly glossed over this concept, but looking back on the show now as a teenager, I have never related more to something in my life.

The Good Parts of Teenagehood – Relationships & the Evolution of Self

I think most people like to believe that 20 years down the road, they’ll still be able to call up their kindergarten playmates to grab a cup of coffee together and catch up on the latest gossip about that hallway crush of theirs. While I do fully agree that this *is* possible, it’s not all that common, unfortunately. Luckily, teenagehood offers the perfect time to find out who your real friends are, and maybe make some new, lifelong ones along the way.

For Mabel, finding “her people” proves slightly difficult.

Mabel enjoys cute, slightly childish activities that often



Sophomore Marianna Zahorchak with all of her Gravity Falls Merch.

involve glitter, adorable animals, much creativity, sensitivity, and a strong sense of self. Some of these activities include knitting sweaters (and wearing them in the hot summer heat), designing the coolest crafts, reading pre-teen magazines, messing around with makeup, obsessing obsessively over boys using much obsession, and annoying her brother with obnoxious screaming. Simply put, Mabel stands out, and for the most part, she’s proud of her wackiness and happy-go-lucky attitude.

Pacifica Northwest feels otherwise. As the town's trademark spoiled, rich girl, Pacifica immediately targets...

...Mabel viewing her as some kind of weirdo outcast, insisting that “Mabel” is a “fat old lady’s” name. Mabel feels upset, but she doesn’t let it get under her skin all that much. In fact, she ends up meeting her two best friends because of it.

Mabel befriends local misfits Candy and Grenda at a dance party hosted at the Mystery Shack. Pacifica also finds herself at the same party (despite obviously disliking the Shack and its residents??) and gives the girls a hard time. Candy and Grenda feel defeated, but Mabel decides she won’t stand for such mistreatment and challenges Pacifica for the Party Crown. Pacifica cheats her way into winning by the end, but Candy and Grenda don’t care – they’re so grateful for what Mabel did that they want to sleep over.

From this point on, Candy, Grenda, and Mabel remain friends and several episodes showcase them hanging out and celebrating their close-to-teenagehood with activities similar to those listed previously.

In this way, Mabel has conquered not one but two of the most challenging parts of becoming a teenager – fighting back against adversity and forming new friendships. That’s two less problems she’ll have to worry about once her 13th birthday passes and summer break comes to an end.

Friendships aren’t the only issue Mabel’s already got covered – she’s also learned how to pull hot mermen from public pools, and boy, am I jealous. After many failed attempts at love (which I will be discussing in further detail later on) Mabel finally seems to have found The One.

~Mermando~ is a merman trapped in a pool, yearning to find his way back to his ocean home and

family but falling short time and time again. Mabel notices Mermando and instantly finds him attractive, painting him as a mysterious loner of sorts. Acting as the outgoing, flamboyant person she is, she approaches him and awkwardly begins a conversation. Mermando enjoys Mabel’s jokes and lighthearted nature, as well as her “forward” personality. Despite this, he hesitates to tell Mabel his “terrible secret,” but she wins him over with a soggy sandwich and a pressing yet gentle “share your secret, beautiful stranger.”

After learning about Mermando’s misfortune, Mabel chooses to help set him free. She breaks into the pool after-hours and manages to transport Mermando to the local lake. Mermando feels immense gratitude for Mabel’s kindness and they share a first kiss!

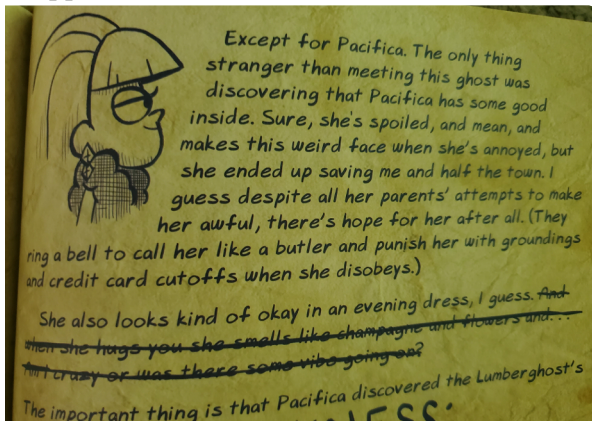
At first glance, one may see this only as a mere, silly, little filler episode in the grand scheme of the show. However, when you take the time to think about it, it actually shows a good deal of maturity on Mabel’s part. Prior to meeting Mermando, the guys Mabel liked all ended up being obsessive and insane (Gideon and Norman [aka the gnomes]) or unrealistic (Several Timez members), or they didn’t like her for her crazy, friendly, real self (Mr. Yes, Definitely, Absolutely and puppet boy Gabe Bensen). Mabel finally found someone normal (in the important ways, at least) and kind who likes her for who she is –that’s evident from the moment they meet. When transitioning into teenagehood, many people may feel pressure to date somebody just for the sake of having someone to call their partner. This can sometimes lead to unhealthy relationships where the participants spend all of their time trying to mold the other person into who they want them to be instead of searching and waiting for an already-qualified person to fill that role. Now that Mabel has experienced a healthy relationship, she’ll know how to better avoid cuckoo romance options in the future.

Dipper has his share of successful romance, too. He’d also been hopelessly obsessing over an unattainable relationship that goes nowhere in the end. Near the series’ conclusion, however, a romance sparks between...



Drawing of Mermando fby Mabel Pines in Journal 3, photo by Marianna Zahorchak

...him and... Pacifica? Wait, what?? Yeah, it beat me too at first, but these two actually have so much chemistry. Neither one of them has unrealistic expectations for the other –that’s for sure, as both verbally express their distaste for the other multiple times throughout the series. So how exactly do they fall for each other? Well, Pacifica’s parents hire vicariously hire Dipper through Pacifica, desperately requesting he’d exorcize a ghost for them during a big party they’re hosting. Dipper and Pacifica end up fighting for their lives together, and after receiving an unexpected hug from her, Dipper starts to wonder if perhaps Pacifica isn’t as bad as he originally thought –that is, until he discovers the real reason the ghost is after the Northwests. As it turns out, years ago, the Northwests invited the common folk to come party with them, but when the “riffraff” arrived, the Northwests broke their promise and locked them out. Dipper realizes that Pacifica is too afraid to stand up to her parents about this injustice and brutally accuses her of being just “another link in the world’s worst chain.” Although Dipper speaks cruelly and without a filter, by doing so, Pacifica realizes just how terribly she and her parents have treated others and finally feels guilty. She then proceeds to have a redemption arc by standing up to her parents and letting in the public, thus fixing one of her family’s greatest mistakes and earning Dipper’s admiration.



Drawing of Pacifica fby Dipper Pines in Journal 3, photo by Marianna Zahorchak

and appreciation for one another and who they are, all traits good and bad considered. They also bring out new sides in one another. Dipper has a greater sense of empathy, and Pacifica has more consideration towards others. A deep, fruitful relationship like this is difficult for adults to find, let

A mature, healthy relationship has the potential to develop between these two as a result of their newfound understanding

alone 12-year-olds. Because of this experience, Dipper has grown and has become less critical of others for their mistakes, establishing new values for himself within his complex, ever-changing, almost-teenage mind.

Speaking of values –Mabel’s got a ton of them, mostly revolving around fair treatment of others, kindness, and courtesy. In the episode “Boss Mabel,” Mabel makes a bet with Grunkle Stan, claiming that she can run the Shack better with her polite approach than Stan can with his barking orders and greedy con-artistry.

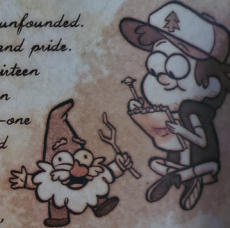
Throughout the episode, Mabel learns that sometimes saying “no” and utilizing tough love is necessary for manifesting hardworking employees and reasonable customers. Meanwhile, Stan finds himself close to winning big on a game show, but ultimately loses everything because he couldn’t guess the Magic Word. Both characters recognize the worth in each other’s ways of living. Stan no longer looks down on Mabel for her “naive” beliefs and sees her in a slightly more mature light. In a similar manner, Mabel has a newfound regard for the difficult ways Stan has to go about in order to keep the Shack running smoothly. Mabel has therefore grown as a person and has proven her ideas aren’t childish but rather deserve respect, a construct that many teens are deprived of solely under the assumption that because they’re young they must know nothing about the world. Mabel disproves this theory by successfully convincing Stan of a new manner of thinking.

Dipper gets his own dose of self-advocating, but rather than trying to earn Stan’s appraisal, he goes after Stan(ly)’s twin brother, (Stan)Ford instead. Dipper discovers that Ford is the author of the journals that he’s been freaking out over the whole summer and turns into a total fangirl whenever he’s around him. Dipper insists that he’d be a valuable asset to Ford during supernatural missions and battles, but Ford struggles to see Dipper as anything more than a sweaty, paranoid, pre-pubescent boy. However, after reading Dipper’s additions to Ford’s journal, witnessing Dipper win the IRL boss-battle against Probabilitor the Annoying from “Dungeons, Dungeons, and more Dungeons,” and seeing Dipper defend himself against...



Initial drawing of Dipper (above) VS revised drawing of Dipper (right) by Ford Pines, in Journal 3, photo by Marianna Zahorchak

My grandnephew's fears are unfounded. All I feel toward him is love and pride. He is a wiser man at twelve thirteen than I was at thirty. He has an incredible future ahead of him—one in which he will hopefully avoid repeating my terrible errors. Looking back on my lifetime of catastrophic mistakes,



...what he thought was a demon-possessed Ford, Ford deduces Dipper is more than qualified to become his apprentice. He reveals his past missteps to Dipper and brings him along for a mission. Dipper further exemplifies the point that just because someone's young does NOT mean they have nothing to offer that's worth paying attention to.

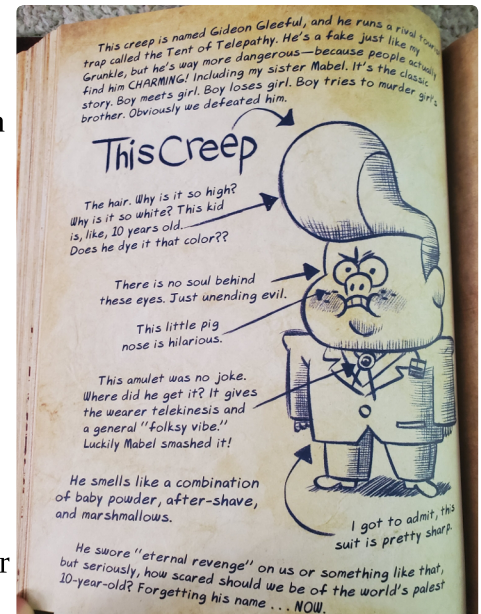
The Bad Parts of Teenagehood – Insecurity and Coping with Changes

As love exists, so too does rejection, unfortunately. And both of our main characters sure do deal with it often. Gravity Falls only ran for two seasons, yet somehow Mabel cycled through at least five failed attempts at romance over the course of the show. However, as briefly discussed already, these failures merely pushed her closer to success as each taught her lessons about what not to look for in a boyfriend. For the sake of time, I'll only focus on the most influential of the five: Gideon.

Ugh, even the name gives me the hiebie-jibbies. This creep-o is easily the worst as he casually tried to kill Mabel and her family on multiple occasions. Initially, Gideon and Mabel bonded over their love for fashion and the more whimsical aspects of life. Gideon obviously has feelings for Mabel from the get-go, but Mabel just sees him as a friend,

which seems shocking at first, until you find out Gideon's nine years old. To put this even further into perspective, Gideon's going into fourth grade while Mabel's entering seventh. Yikes. No wonder romance had never crossed her mind. Regardless, Gideon asks Mabel out. She tells him they'd be better off as friends, but Gideon insists on taking her out for just one date. Mabel gives in, not wanting to hurt his feelings, and of course, one date turns into two which almost turns into three, and meanwhile Mabel is absolutely dreading her life and hiding in Sweater-town. Dipper eventually offers to turn Gideon down for her, and Mabel accepts. Gideon goes ballistic when Dipper delivers the bad news, believing that Dipper somehow turned Mabel against him. Gideon tricks Dipper into meeting him at an abandoned warehouse where he tries to kill Dipper with a magic amulet. While this is going down, Mabel realizes that if she ever wants this torment to properly end, she'll have to reject Gideon directly herself with full brutality and honesty. She tracks down Gideon and Dipper and catches Gideon right as he's about to snip Dipper in half with some lamb shears. After almost witnessing her brother's death by a nine-year-old, Mabel shatters Gideon's amulet and tells him she will never date him and that they can no longer be friends after what he's done. Dipper and Mabel make it out alive, but not before Gideon swears to seek vengeance for himself against the entire Pines family (and in later episodes, he achieves it).

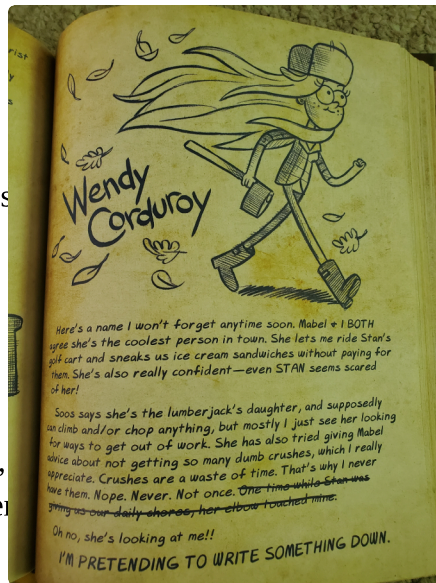
So what did Mabel learn from this experience? For starters, don't trust creepy nine-year-olds with hair twice the size of their head. Secondly, you can't always please everyone –sometimes you have to say no, especially...



Drawing of Gideon by Dipper Pines in Journal 3, photo by Mrianna Zahorchak

...when it comes to your long-term happiness and safety. This is an important lesson to understand in any relationship –romantic or otherwise, particularly when you’re entering high school and pressure to start dating emerges alongside peer pressure in general. Rejecting someone can be hard, but it’s better to do it the moment they ask rather than waiting and allowing the situation to escalate to the point where you feel chronically uncomfortable.

Dipper, on the other hand, receives the role of rejectee within his pathetic love life. Fifteen-year-old Wendy Corduroy is Dipper’s dream girl. Many episodes feature moments of him stuttering endlessly around her and sweating like a can of Pitt Cola in the 110 degree Oregon heat. Wendy, of course, only views Dipper as a friend, and in the episode titled “Into the Bunker,” Dipper is finally forced to come to terms with this fact.



Drawing of Wendy by Dipper Pines in Journal 3, Photo by Marianna Zahorchak



Drawing of Wendy by Dipper Pines in Journal 3, Photo by Marianna Zahorchak

she’s always “kinda” known. I could paraphrase the dialogue here, but I think the real deal is most effective:

“Listen Dipper, I’m like, super flattered, but... I’m too old for you. I mean, you know that, right?”

“Mabel said confessing would make me feel better.”

“Well, how do you feel?”

“Anxious. Scared. Kinda itchy.”

“Dude, don’t be itchy, man. Let me tell you something. This summer was super boring until you showed up. I have more fun with you than, like, practically anybody else. And if you ever stopped being my friend... I would, like, throw myself into the Bottomless Pit!”

“So things won’t be too awkward, now?”

“I just wrestled myself, dude. That was awkward. If you can handle that monster, you can handle a little awkwardness.”

“Friends?”

“Yeah, dude! Friends!”

Even though Wendy turns Dipper down, the two remain friends for the remainder of the series as Wendy had desired. It does take Dipper some time to fully get over Wendy because –unhelpfully so– feelings don’t just poof into thin air the second one gets rejected. Facing rejection of any sort sucks and can be hard to move on from, but there’s still some value to gain even in the midst of the pain it may bring. From this experience, Dipper now understands that getting rejected isn’t the end of the world; life goes on, and after some time has passed, something/someone even better comes along and lights up your world more than you ever could’ve imagined (*cough* Pacifica *cough*). Dipper now has a greater grasp of how to deal with sophisticated emotions such as these, and since he didn’t let this one upsetting moment destroy his life and rather did move on, he has likely become a stronger person because of it.

Now, Dipper does have some other failed romances I could get into, but I think it’s time we dive into a different aspect of teenagehood –one that I, personally, feel is much deeper-rooted within oneself: insecurity. Dipper has wrestled with this self-doubt and lack of confidence in several episodes, including “Dipper VS Manliness” and “Little Dipper.” **CONTINUED...**

Let's start with "Dipper VS Manliness." This episode is the first of many examples where rather than supporting Dipper and providing him with reassurance, Dipper's family chooses instead to fuel his insecurities by making a joke out of Dipper's interests, physical appearance, and his existence in general.

Grunkle Stan, Mabel, and Dipper visit a diner together where Dipper sets out to win his family free pancakes by beating a "manliness tester." Dipper feels fairly confident in his abilities, but before he even gives the machine a whirl, Grunkle Stan and Mabel have already begun dragging on him. Stan even has the audacity to tell Dipper, "Look, face the music, kid. You got no muscles, you smell like baby wipes, and let's not forget last Tuesday's... 'incident.'" (For reference, the the "incident" Stan refers to here has to do with Dipper loudly singing along to the song "Disco Girl" – a parody of ABBA's "Dancing Queen.") It's one thing for random strangers or bullies to say something like that, but for Dipper's great uncle to say it with the intent of making a mockery out of him is beyond wrong, especially considering Dipper is trying to do something kind for Stan and Mabel while they're turning around and talking crap about him to his face!

Feeling emasculated and inadequate, Dipper runs off to the woods where he meets a "manotaur" –a half-man, half-bull-like creature that offers to teach Dipper how to be a "real" man. The manotaur introduces Dipper to his fellow manotaur brethren who put Dipper through 49 masculine-coded challenges that he successfully undergoes and completes (mostly) off-screen. Dipper's final task is to slay the "multi-bear" (a bear with six(ish) heads). Dipper hunts down the creature and is about to spear it when it requests to hear its favorite song one last time. Dipper accommodates the bear's request and learns that it, too, has a love for Icelandic pop sensation "BABBA" and their hit song "Disco Girl."

Hearing the song hits home for Dipper and softens his heart. He realizes that killing something just for the heck of it isn't right and is not what a real man would do.

After turning down the manotaurs, he returns to Grunkle Stan and Mabel to announce all he endured in the

past few hours, including how he didn't kill the multi-bear because it just didn't feel morally sound. Grunkle Stan tells Dipper "You were your own man and you stood up for yourself" ... "you did what was right even though no one agreed with ya. Sounds pretty manly to me, but what do I know?"

I have mixed feelings about this resolution. While I think it's great that Grunkle Stan supported Dipper in his decision and somewhat asserted the fact that Dipper is a man after all, Dipper still hasn't regained the self-confidence he had at the start of the episode. He only feels better now because he received validation from somebody else. The consequences of Stan and Mabel's original treatment of Dipper thus persist into further episodes as Dipper continues to deal with self-doubt.

I wish I could say that after "Dipper VS Manliness," the Pines family learned their lesson about making fun of others –specifically their own relative– but alas, they did not, leading Dipper to yet another round of ridicule in "Little Dipper."

Soos –an employee at the Mystery Shack– officially determines that for the first time in their lives, Mabel is taller than Dipper by a whole millimeter. Dipper argues, rightfully so, that a millimeter of difference in height is entirely insignificant, but Mabel continues to badger him about her becoming the "alpha twin." Following this, Mabel and Grunkle Stan literally ADMIT to ridiculing Dipper and making a mockery out of him. Seriously. They use those exact words and put said words into action for almost a solid minute of dialogue.

Feeling inferior to and developmentally behind Mabel, Dipper consults his journal for a quick-fix to his problem and discovers a magical crystal that contains height-altering properties. Dipper and Mabel fight over the crystal for around half the episode until finally Mabel asks Dipper why he cares so much that she's taller. Dipper hits her back by asking why she kept teasing him over it. Mabel reveals that she felt just as insecure as Dipper all along and shows him a tally score of every time he beat her at something and rubbed it in her face. Finally understanding one another, the twins make up and use the crystal to...

...grow themselves back to normal height.

While it's cliché, this episode truly proves the notion that teasing derives itself from jealousy and that choosing kindness over hatred fixes most problems. Both of these lessons are important to acquire before high school because oftentimes during the high school years, school culture informs the opposite view—that intimidation equates to power and should be viciously sought out. But if Dipper and Mabel remain as close as they are now, their future peers will be drawn to them. Their kindness and acceptance of others will provide them with true power: the power to overcome judgement through self-assurance.

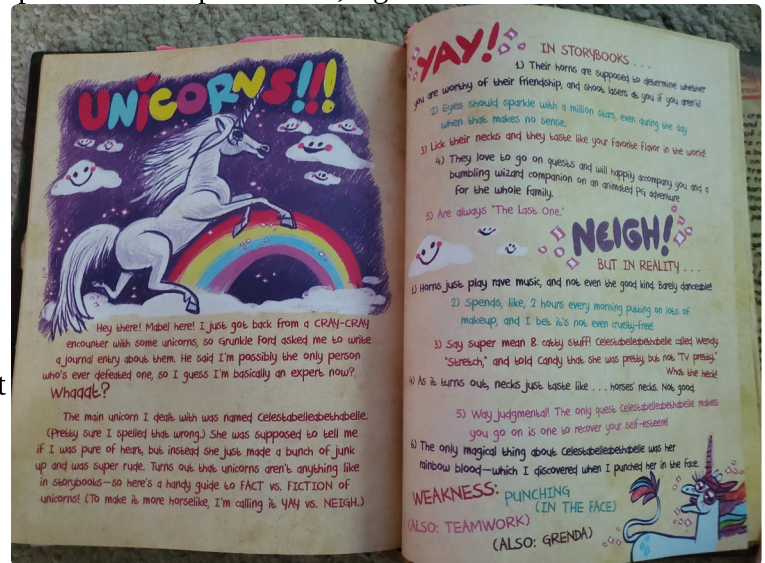
Flipping over to Mabel's side of the issue, her insecurity may seem harder to pick out. Mabel withholds a persona that accentuates flamboyance and practically bleeds sparkles. As previously discussed, many episodes demonstrate Mabel's capability to stand up for herself and the people she loves. The episode titled, "The Last Mabelcorn" is no exception.

However, Mabel's assurance in herself is shaken temporarily by some snooty unicorn named Celestabellebethabelle (and no, I don't know how to pronounce that either, but if I had to take a shot at it, I'd say Sell-est-uh-bell-beth-uh-bell).

Ford wants to conjure up a spell to protect the Mystery Shack, but annoyingly, he must obtain the hair of a unicorn in order to do it. Long-Time Unicorn Enthusiast Mabel Pines overhears Ford's dilemma and volunteers herself for the task. Ford informs Mabel that only a good, pure-hearted person can earn the hair of a unicorn. Mabel feels quite certain she's got this in the bag as she's practically the CEO of the Goodness Department and sets off with Candy, Grenda, and Wendy in hunt of the magical, mythological wonders.

Mabel hunts down the mystical creature's lair and offers herself up for judgement. Celestabellebethabelle gawks at Mabel, insisting she's done wrong and that her bad deeds make Celestabellebethabelle cry. Celestabelle says to return only when Mabel is truly "pure of heart." Mabel considers what Celestabelle said and realizes that she does tease Dipper often, and she did just smash a window earlier in the episode, so her sweet nature must be fading away. To make

up for her transgressions, Mabel decides she's going to do a thousand good deeds in order to set herself back on the path of purity and she does it. In like, less than a day. Surely she must be the kindest, most perfectly wonderful person on the planet now, right?



Drawing of a Unicorn by Mabel Pines in Journal 3, Photo by Marianna Zahorchak

Nope. Celestabelle once again dubs Mabel "not pUrE oF hEaRt," and rudely calls her a bad person to her face, claiming that performing random acts of kindness just to "make herself look better" isn't truly good at all. Mabel runs off crying, questioning her entire identity and feeling horrible about herself.

Wendy's had enough of this unattainable, messed-up ideal of perfection and tells Candy and Grenda that it's time to do this the Wendy Way –the Wendy Way being an epic black market exchange, first with gnomes and then with the gnome cops, in order to gain pixie dust to knock Celestabelle out cold and take her hair for themselves. Everything goes according to plan and Wendy is about to cut Celestabelle's hair when Mabel catches her in the act and snatches the scissors off of her, begging her to stop. Celestabelle awakens and misunderstands, accusing Mabel of being the perpetrator. Another unicorn catches wind of this and reveals that unicorns have no magical soul-judging powers and that the whole concept is nothing more than a scheme to get humans to leave them alone.

Mabel is furious and screams at Celestabelle. She...

...then says to Mabel, “Okay, fine. So you learned our secret. We’re jerks, okay? We have more hair than we know what to do with, and we keep it to ourselves just to tick humans off. What are you gonna do about it, huh, huh? What are ya gonna DO?”

I’ll tell you what Mabel’s gonna do.

She punches the scumbag in the face.

Returning to Ford with the hair she promised him, Ford praises Mabel for protecting her family and calls her a good person. Mabel thanks him, but says that she now knows “morality is relative.”

From this experience, Mabel has learned to trust her own judgment and the judgment of those close to her rather than caring about the opinions of strangers who know nothing about her. This episode also explored the dangers of perfectionism and idolization. Mabel has learned to not compare herself to others because nobody is perfect, no matter how much she may want to believe they are. She knows not to let anyone else determine her worth but herself.

This episode contains such a powerful message and means a lot to me. As a teenager, I can confirm I have dealt with every realm of life this episode has entered into, and I find its portrayal of such heavy topics extremely comforting and reassuring.

While we’re on the topic of heavy, relatable topics, I would like to address Dipper’s battle against overthinking and anxious thoughts. In “Double Dipper,” Grunkle Stan wants to host a party and asks Mabel and Dipper to copy some flyers using his musty, sketchy, old copying machine. Dipper doubts the functionality of the machine and tests it by copying his arm. Surprise, surprise – the copying machine is cursed. Dipper’s copy-arm comes to life. Later, during the party, Dipper agrees to work the counter with Wendy (who is an employee at the Shack), but Wendy tells Dipper to cover for him so she can sneak into the party. Dipper agrees, but feels bummed out that he can’t go with Wendy– that is, until he remembers the copying machine and starts cooking up a scheme. Dipper uses the copying machine to make a clone of himself –which he names Tyrone– to take his place at the counter so he can ask Wendy to dance. Dipper and Tyrone promise not to turn on each other and mutually agree that they both support Dipper dancing with Wendy. Problem is, Dipper has an excessively-elaborate 11-step checklist on how to do this. (Note that “talk to her like a normal person” doesn’t come into play until step nine.)

Rather than just going with the flow, Dipper convince himself that everything must go exactly according to plan or

else his “chances” with Wendy will go down in flames. He desires control because he’s afraid of what might happen without it. What if something goes wrong and he makes a fool out of himself? He’s only willing to take that risk if he can plan to avoid it. Unfortunately, life has its own plans.

Dipper attempts to start a conversation with Wendy, “casually” asking what her favorite snack food is. Wendy says she can’t pick just one, and Dipper, not actually paying attention to the real conversation and instead following the script in his head, says “me too!” without thinking. Wendy feels apparently confused by this and Dipper panics, muttering under his breath while scanning list trying to find a new topic.

Later, Dipper meets up with Wendy again, but this time she’s hanging out with Robbie, the town’s local jerk of an emo boy. Wendy invites Dipper to join them, but Dipper’s too caught up in his jealousy and wants no part in having to ‘share’ Wendy. Dipper conspires with Tyrone about how to get Robbie away from Wendy, and the two decide that creating two more clones to steal Robbie’s bike is the way to go. Surprisingly, the plan works, and conveniently, Wendy’s favorite slow song comes on. Dipper realizes this is his moment, but he doesn’t feel confident taking the dive. He runs back to ask for Tyrone’s opinion, and he agrees it would be absolutely ludicrous to just walk up and ask Wendy to dance without considering all the variables first. In order to account for all these variables, Dipper determines they’re going to need more help and prints six more clones. Together, they create yet another ridiculously complicated plan to ensure that nothing goes sideways. But of course it does anyway; Wendy’s waiting for the bathroom when she’s supposed to be on the dance floor. Dipper outwardly freaks out, mumbling while trying to come up with a small talk topic. Wendy likely hears this and creates a topic for him, forcing Dipper to put down his list and actually focus on the present moment. The two end up laughing together and sharing embarrassing stories from their childhood. Dipper forgets all about the plan which is great for him, but the clones aren’t happy. Lo and behold, they end up fighting each other. Dipper defeats all the clones but Tyrone. They’re about to begin battling it out when they overhear Wendy laughing with Robbie (who had apparently returned at some point during the Clone Revolution) and realize they’ve blown it. **CONTINUED...**

This episode demonstrates the stress that can form resulting from a combination of insecurity and a need for control. All of the newfound change teenagehood presents can be extremely overwhelming for someone who's dealing with it for the first time. Illuminating the situation with this light evokes the realization that prior to meeting Wendy, Dipper may have never had a full-fledged crush on anyone before. Crushes are stressful. They make you sweaty, as Dipper knows all too well. He doesn't know how to handle these irrational emotions, but he knows that if he lets them run wild, they may lead him to heartbreak. Therefore, he acts cautiously, allowing his logic to guide him towards the safest option that will still, in theory, achieve what he desires. An analytical, rational thought process like his has proven to be a literal lifesaver in the past when it came to surviving in the wild. But teens undergoing this thought process in today's modern world are often led astray, as excessive apprehension can lead one to missing out on exciting opportunities. Dipper suffered through this endless cycle of self-sabotaging anxious thoughts first-hand inside his mind, and his real life suffered because of it. At least now, he'll hopefully know to shoot his shot in the future— to live in the moment and just go for it instead of worrying unnecessarily about what may come and getting in his own way. After all, you'll never know how something will go unless you try it, right? Succumbing to the “what if”s of today only creates regretful, pondering “what if I had”s tomorrow. This episode proves this message beautifully.

Mabel shares in her brother's desire for control as represented in “Weirdmageddon 2: Escape from Reality” by Mabel's Bubble, a giant floating fantasy world which Mabel

is contently trapped in for some time. Within Mabel's Bubble exists an entire alternate universe where Dipper gets rebranded as a 90's hipster called Dippy-Fresh, 80's music blasts on every street corner, and everything sparkles with the blinding power of colors “only art students can see.” Basically, it's the physical manifestation of smiles, rainbows, and a childlike sense of wonder and joy.

Besides its use as manipulative tactic to prevent Mabel from saving the world against Bill Cipher, a demonic space Dorito that's harassed Dipper and Mabel the whole series, Mabel's Bubble emerges due to her newfound dread of the future which she feels she has no control over. Two episodes prior, in “Dipper and Mabel VS the Future,” Mabel spends the episode planning for her and Dipper's 13th birthday party. Mabel feels absolutely stoked to officially become a teenager and perform as the star of her own high school musical until Wendy bursts her bubble (heh, pun). Wendy tells Mabel that “High school is the worst. Classes get super hard, your body just flat out turns against you, and worst of all, everybody hates you.” Then, after hearing this, Mabel finds out that neither Candy nor Grenda will be in town at the end of the summer to celebrate Mabel's birthday or even say goodbye to her as she leaves for her home in California. (This, however, produces a continuity error later on, but that's beside the point.)

Mabel is totally down in the dumps as she recognizes summer's end rapidly approaching and now believes that high school will be a total train wreck. Grunkle Stan comforts Mabel in the midst of this, reminding her that at the very least, she'll always have Dipper by her side. Mabel finds comfort in this notion, but it doesn't last for long, as she overhears Dipper agreeing to stay in Oregon to become Ford's apprentice. Mabel confronts Dipper about the offer and says she wishes summer could last forever. Dipper responds by saying, “But it can't, Mabel. Look, things aren't gonna stay frozen this way. It's part of growing up. Things change. Summer ends.” Following this interaction, Mabel runs off crying and takes another trip to Sweartown. Soon after, Bill Cipher takes over the Falls, trapping Mabel in her Bubble which she gladly stays in as it serves as a coping mechanism and a source of denial for the hopelessness feels.

Dipper, Wendy, and Soos, unaware of the fact that Mabel views this Bubble as her own personal paradise, stage a rescue mission in order to return her to her...



Drawing of Mabel by Ford Pines in Journal 3, Photo by Marianna Zahorchak

...rightful place in reality. When Mabel explains she doesn't want to go back to the real world, Dipper gets put on trial by Xyler and Craz, Mabel's "dream boys," who recall several bad memories shared by the twins that prove reality is worse than fantasy. They bring up picture day in second grade when a mean girl put gum in Mabel's hair. They mention Valentine's Day in fourth grade when Dipper didn't receive any Valentine cards. Mabel and Dipper share dialogue after watching these memories where Dipper states, "I know that although you might act like it, you don't wanna be in this fantasy world.... You're scared. Of growing up. And who could blame you; I'm scared, too.... Look, real life stinks sometimes, okay, I'm not gonna lie. But there's a better way to get through it than denial, and that's with help from people who care about you. It's how we've gotten through our whole lives. Just look." The memories priorly presented appear again, flashback-style, and we see Dipper shaving part of his head to match Mabel's shaved head after removing the gum from her hair. Then, we watch Mabel glue together all of her Valentines to create a giant Valentine card for Dipper that brightens his mood.

Remembering every up and down of childhood spent they together, Dipper resolves that he no longer wants to take on Ford's apprenticeship –no way he's gonna miss out on his and Mabel's awkward teen years. He wants to go through them side-by-side, supporting each other every step of the way.

I don't think I could pick a better episode to wrap up this article. Out of everything I've discussed teenagers (or kids becoming teenagers, or teenagers becoming adults) could worry about, they all stem back to the same basic fear: growing up. Personally, the concept of time moving faster than I can keep up with is something I've always feared. I've worried about every issue this show addressed, and it's comforting to know I'm not the only one. But Gravity Falls provides its adolescent viewers with more than comfort alone; it ascertains a valuable take-away that everyone should carry with them: life is going to throw changes your way. You might lose some friends. You might get rejected by someone you thought was The One. You might lose yourself. But the beauty of life is that we decide what we're going to make out of these changes. We can make new friends. We can keep striving to find love. We can rediscover a new version of ourselves who is far stronger and happier than our old self ever could've imagined. But we'd never find out if time stopped moving. So as scary as it may be to leave behind what you once knew, or what you thought you'd

always have, remember that you get to decide what happens next. After falling down, you have the choice to get back up and climb even higher –and that's a beautiful gift.



Dipper's end-of-the-summer farewell letter, photo by Marianna Zahorchak

AP LANGUAGE & COMPOSITION: Attention all current sophomores registered to take AP Language and Composition next year. There will be meetings on Monday June 3rd and Tuesday June 4th immediately after school in room 106 with Mr. Gaetano and Mrs. Mitchell. It is necessary that you attend one of these meetings to receive course information and summer assignments. Any questions, see Mr. Gaetano in room 106.

GUIDANCE NEWS:

Allegheny College and PRHS Director of College and Career Counseling, Mrs. Whalen, are offering a virtual webinar on the College Search Process just for parents on Tuesday, June 18, 2024, from 9:00 am to 10:00 am. Registration is required. Interested parents and students should check their email for the registration link and additional information.

-The following scholarships, contests and workshops are now available, stop in the guidance office or check on Naviance under Colleges tab, scholarship list:

The 2024 Zoo Teen Program: **Dates**-June 18, 2024 – July 27, 2024

The University of Pittsburgh Institute for Cyber Law, Policy, and Security annual Air Force Association CyberCamp for high school students: **Dates**- June 24-28

Three Rivers Desk and Derrick Club scholarship: **Deadline**- June 30, 2024

The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy virtual admissions Q&A sessions for the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy: **Check student e-mail**

TRACK & FIELD: Congratulations to our track and field athletes who competed at the PIAA Track and Field State Championships in Shippensburg! All 5 of them had great performances and finished in the top 12 in the state. 2 earned medals and 3 were close to medals. Congratulations on placing so well in the very competitive state meet: Nadia Constantakis - Pole Vault, 2nd Place (tie) - Silver Medal, 12'6", broke her school record

Emery Moye - High Jump, 8th Place (tie) - Medal Winner, 6'4", already #2 on our all time list

Ryan Beam - Javelin, Made Finals, 9th Place, 178'7", already #4 on our all time list

Ben McLean - 800 Meters, 12th Place, (2nd in heat), 1:55.40, already has our school record

Abby Satina - 300 Hurdles, 12th Place, 1:45.38, personal record and 4th on our all time list

YEARBOOKS: If you did not pick up your pre ordered yearbook, you can get your book during all class periods in rooms 221 or 217, before school, or after school. If you want to purchase a book the price is 80 dollars cash, first come, first served. Email Mrs Harshman with questions.

ART NEWS: Attention Mr. Riley's Painting students! Your paintings are in the hall outside room 427 for pick up. Please take your work home for your family to cherish for years to come. If you have trouble finding any of your work, see Mr. Riley.

LIBRARY NEWS: The library is now closed after school during the Northern Tier Pine Center hours for the year. Materials may be returned to the main branch on Dickey Road.



SENIOR SUNRISE

CONGRATULATIONS,
SENIORS!
-RAMPAGE STAFF