



The Talon

Gripping News



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Onteora High School

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An All Time First: OHS Fields All Girls Wrestling Team!

By Lily Brosnan and Veronica Flores, Seniors

Onteora High School sports history was made on January 4, 2025 when the Girls' Wrestling team competed in their first competition, an away match at Edgemont High School in Westchester County. Previously, Onteora has only had a boys wrestling team, but presently we have an all-girls team competing against girls teams within, and beyond, Section 9. This is an all-time first, and Coach Pezzello reports they had surprisingly strong showing at their first match.

Practices began in mid-November, five to six days per week. What did founding members of the team say when asked why they joined and helped start up this team? Miley Gaddis replied, "I joined wrestling because I watched my brother—and I wanted to try it. I've been thinking about it since last year, and I really like it."

Sophia Spada chimed in, "People doing wrestling, they truly enjoy it, and it's more than just a sport." Veronica Flores added, "I joined wrestling because I saw a video in 7th grade and right then I realized this was a sport I wanted to be a part of." Sophia Citron said, "The reason I joined wrestling is that I've always had built-up anger and I thought this was a way to get it out. I also knew that I was going to get in shape. It helps me mentally and physically."

The formation of something as big as a whole new team generally means there are a few leaders working really hard to make it happen. For Onteora, those leaders are team members Jillian Tyler, Veronica Flores, and team Captain, Lily Brosnan.

When asked about her wrestling journey at Onteora, Veronica said, "Wrestling is not an easy sport mentally or physically, and I'm so proud of all the girls who have joined. Lily and I have wrestled previously on the boys' team, and that had difficulties, but when I heard about the girls' team starting, I saw the potential, and knew this is where I belong."

When asked about her efforts toward team building she said, "As a senior, I am able to help the younger girls with moves and I have gained new friendships. Being able to help

the team gain confidence makes me so proud. Seeing the new team members overcome a lot of struggles makes me think back to when I was a freshman girl joining a male-dominated sport, with no confidence in herself, constantly unsure of what I was doing or if I was making improvements."

Team Captain Lily Brosnan started wrestling during her freshman year, in 2021, and is now a senior. When asked about her wrestling journey and how she helped to ignite Onteora's newest sport, she reported



program and finally, I was able to put together a team. And not just any team. I put together a big team. The Onteora Girls Varsity Wrestling Team consists of twelve girls. I am so grateful for all of these girls and for their hard work.

I am proud to say that I'm the captain of Onteora High School's first ever Girls Varsity Wrestling Team. I hope that this team continues to thrive even after I've graduated because I have worked so hard and put so much into making this happen and my hope is

for it to grow bigger each and every year. I am so grateful that I have the opportunity to pass my knowledge of the sport to these girls and teach them everything that has been taught to me. I hope to be a role model and someone that they can look up to.

Mr. Pezzello's the one who has pushed me and continues to push me to be the best I can, even when I don't think I can. I have learned so much, not just with wrestling, but also just how to be tougher

and how to get through something, even when it's difficult."

and how to get through something, even when it's difficult."

Girls Wrestling Founding Members:

- Lily Brosnan (Captain)
- Sophia Citron
- Sarah Craig
- Veronica Flores
- Miley Gaddis
- Rose Gordon
- Josie Longyear
- Aylie Longyear
- Sunari Mcnabb-Perri
- Heather Scism
- Sophia Spada
- Jillian Tyler

the following: When I was a freshman I was reluctant, but Mr. Pezzello told me to just go to the first week of practice and see if I like it. I agreed to try it for a week, but I had no idea how much it was going to impact me.

It has been four years; I've had lots of injuries, but I'm still doing the sport I love and my parents are my biggest supporters. When I first joined the team I went through struggles, ranging from the difficulty of the workouts, to the mental battle that wrestling is, to the battle of trying to get the guys to accept me. I probably lost 20 matches before I won my first match, but I stuck with it and by the end of the season, I placed second in the Girls Section 9 Tournament.

By the time my sophomore year rolled around, a lot of the struggles that I had went away. The workouts became easier because I was in better shape and the guys had accepted me onto the team. I still had struggles, like when my opponents were disrespectful towards me, just because I'm a girl, but things got easier.

This was around the time I started to think about the idea of starting a girls wrestling team.

Over the last three years I've tried so hard to build a girls wrestling



Letter From the President

Hello Eagles!

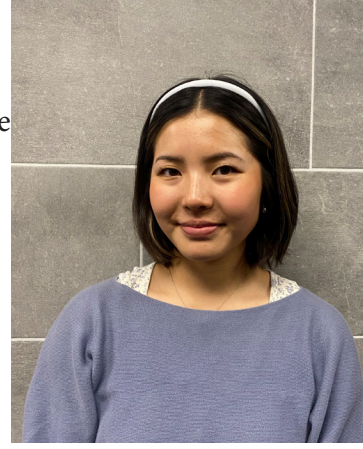
As you walk to your classes, you will notice the new clocks that line the Onteora halls, courtesy of Student Government's advocacy. Senior Class Vice President, Yogi Johansen, worked tirelessly over winter break to complete the "Welcome to the Nest" mural above the gym entrance. Make sure to check it out!

Seniors, please visit the "Senior Class" page of the Onteora High School website regularly for announcements and deadlines.

The National Honor Society had a very successful Coat Drive and we hope our upcoming Canuary Drive will be a hit too! Please donate if you are able.

Only half of the school year left to go! Let's make it a good one.

Yours truly,
Coco Asada



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DECA Organizes OCS Thrift Store!

Compiled by Talon Staff



Sophia Citron browses dresses during lunch.

On Monday, February 10 DECA re-opened the Onteora School store in its newest manifestation: As a thrift store! Who doesn't love to thrift? Business teacher Ms. Weidner says "We're giving clothes a 2nd chance t life and helping to keep material out of landfills." Business teacher Ms. Goho says, "We have a focus on sustainabilty."

Profits from the school store will be used for DECA Scholarhips, Onteora merch and swag, and, fingers crossed, high hopes abound for a slushie machine!



Riley Peer- "I'm helping out at the store as part of my intro to business class."



Ms. Weidner (left), **Ms. Goho** (right)



Dylan Pace (right) says "All our inventory is donated by faculty, staff and students."

Anthony Christofora (left), Co-President of DECA, spent his free-time sorting through donation bags and organizing the store.

Throw It Out

By Val Albright, Junior

With holiday decorations discounted to extremely low prices and the pinks of Valentine's Day beginning to creep into stores, don't you ever stop and think, why do we have all this stuff? Millions of shelves are stocked so full there's a shortage of room across America, and yet, when you visit friends and family over the holidays, do you ever see anyone using these dinky items they purchased? Most likely, the answer is a fat no. Nobody displays the new-age, plastic-infested material goods sold by big-name stores. It all sits and collects dust.

We have a problem lurking in our closets, our basements, and anywhere else you can squeeze in just one more item. We have too much junk, and we need to cut the imaginary strings of attachment that we have linked to it. As a society, we have to stop buying it in the first place.

Companies get the green light to just keep going ahead when they receive money from the purchase of a product: this is obvious; a baby knows this. So, to tell companies and mega-cor-

porations that we want them to stop, we just have to stop buying their goods. It sounds simple, but in practice, it isn't. We all fall victim to advertising sometimes, as well as dopamine hits from purchasing these goods. Sometimes that birthday just sneaks up on you with no warning; none of us are the perfect model of our beliefs. However, as with any belief, there are alternatives to it that still don't involve 'giving in' to what they serve to defy. There are gifts other than ten-dollar knick-knacks that are also apart from the newest, hottest goods on the market. We can give gifts that go beyond that brief hit of joy.

We are not servants to CEOs or brands; we can create; we can find workarounds. We are a species of innovation. Art, food, even just hanging out—all three can supplement what happiness a crappy plastic thing gives tenfold, and it even benefits you. Anything but buying is a win-win for both the giver and the receiver when it comes to holidays and birthdays.

But what if you want to treat yourself to some-

thing? Maybe some new clothes or some updated tech? Small businesses exist for a reason. And, affordable small businesses exist. Of course, there's always the joint that sells what they make for an insane price, but for every one of those, there are about ten places that you could support without breaking the bank. Local thrift shops, bookstores, even shops that sell candles or clothes; these essentially exist in your backyard. If you can't make it, someone else can. Again, we are a creative species.

What I'm trying to say is that you do not need what you are buying 90% of the time. You can live without it, with an alternative, or you can get the same thing from someone else who'd benefit from the purchase a lot more. Do not give these companies the green light to keep producing endlessly: not only is it the last thing we need, but to be a treehugger, it's not what our planet needs either. You can live without your Starbucks, your Levi's jeans, and the newest holiday decor from Target; you can't live without the Earth.

Los Angeles Wildfires: The Heroes Behind Bars

By Foster Knoche, Sophomore

I'm sure all of you have heard about the tragic Greater Los Angeles Wildfires by now. Almost 100 thousand were under evacuation orders, 40 thousand acres of land were burned, and AccuWeather estimates the fires cost up to 275 billion dollars in damages. A natural disaster of this scale is quite rare, with the urbanized location being a large factor in its devastating reach.

California has suffered from disastrous wildfires for many years—an issue greatly exacerbated by climate change. This recent summer was the hottest in Los Angeles County since 130 years ago. All wildfires cause damage—but not usually to this extent. The two specific fires that are currently rampaging the county are Eaton and Palisades, ranking two and three, respectively, for the most destructive wildfires in California history. As the fires rage on, the situation will continue to worsen.

The sheer level of ruin caused by the fires is hard to quantify, and without firefighters, the horrific annihilation would be even worse. Unbeknownst to most, during wildfire season, up to 30% of the firefighting force within California is drawn from people who are incarcerated. There's a program that encourages prisoners to join firefighting crews in exchange for various benefits. These benefits include sentencing reductions, record expungement for the purpose of receiving EMT certification eligibility, and far kinder conditions. This slew of benefits, as well as a sense of purpose, attracts many incarcerated people to the program.

The incarcerated force is set up into separate crews, which stay at various camps during the time not actively working. The camps still have many of the same restrictions prisons do, but they're much more lenient overall. There are fewer racial tensions, fewer incidents of violent behavior, and more options for leisure. Groups like the Anti-Recidivism Coalition help provide both necessities and amenities to these camps, further improving the conditions. The quality of life is heavily dependent on donations, including both basic goods—such as shower units—and less essential items—such as TVs and PlayStations. This is true for standard prisons as well, but there seems to be more flexibility with what's allowed to be donated to the fire camps.

Prior to September 11, 2020, many of those involved in the program were not allowed to use their learned skills once released.

People who had committed two or more felonies, a felony in the past ten years, or two or more specific misdemeanors within the past five years were barred from receiving EMT certification—a necessary requirement to become a full-time firefighter. There were other inclusions as well, but those three were the main groups prevented from certification. A major change, being



Courtesy of Creative Commons

put in place on the aforementioned date through Assembly Bill No. 2147, allows most people within those three categories to have their records expunged for the purpose of receiving EMT certification. Those formerly incarcerated have to apply for this; it isn't automatic, and there are also certain exceptions for the most severe of crimes.

This change provides a pathway for reintegration into society. For those with lengthy sentences, institutionalization is all too common. Institutionalization is what happens when incarcerated people adapt too heavily to prison life and, once released, can no longer function in normal society. Major contributors to this phenomenon include being cut off from social networks and the news cycles, and missing technological advancements. Another factor preventing people released from prison from integrating back into society is employers refusal to hire felons, or a legal obligation to not hire felons. Although the program also somewhat helps to keep those incarcerated up to date with outside society (in comparison to standard prison), its largest advantage—when it comes to preventing institutionalization—is certainly the pathway to a job it provides once the incarcerated people are released.

Working to prevent the spread of wildfires is extremely strenuous, involving hours upon hours of cutting and long, difficult hikes. The sleeping gear is also extremely minimal, so the work certainly ends

up being exhausting. Additionally, many camps lack proper amenities such as boots in good condition, showers, and goods related to leisure.

Communities surrounding the affected areas show their appreciation for the incarcerated firefighters' intensive work through donations, including handmade goods, food, and more. This is a nice way

and the current wildfire program—minus a few glaring issues—is already a glimpse into what they could look like. Similar reintegration programs should be implemented within the U.S., as besides helping incarcerated people, they also reduce the rate of repeat offenders, a benefit for everyone. Even if you don't have much sympathy for people who've committed felonies, reducing crime after their release should still convince you to support reintegration programs. According to one study, reintegration programs could decrease recidivism rates by up to sixty-two percent, a massive change. Even so, you should probably support these programs for reasons beyond just a reduction in crime.

Incarceration occurs for people who've made severe mistakes, sure, but their humanity still exists. I'd highly recommend watching interviews with those involved in the firefighting program. They're normal people the vast majority of the time, ones who care about their family, enjoy the same hobbies you do, and are concerned about the people whom they help. Felons and other criminals usually regret their actions, which weren't decided upon out of a deep-seated evil but rather a matter of poor circumstance. People who end up dealing with incarceration often lack well-developed social support systems, which are basic necessities of life for most people.

The incarcerated wildfire fighting program should be talked about more often, both for its advantage of showing what a more just prison system could look like and for its negative qualities, such as the abysmal pay. Despite the LA Wildfires being at the top of national concerns, many Americans are unaware of the program—in large part due to negative attitudes towards the incarcerated. We should re-evaluate our perceptions of prisoners who, as exemplified by their service fighting against such a national tragedy, maintain the essence of what makes us human: empathy for others.

to give meaning to the incarcerated firefighter's work, which can go a long way for those in prison.

In contrast to the surrounding community's sentiment, the pay certainly doesn't show appreciation. Up until now, I've primarily mentioned the positives within the program—which are numerous—but there are also glaring negatives. 24-hour emergency shifts, which are absurdly taxing endeavors, only have to pay \$29.80. This is the total pay for these full-day shifts. Not per hour, but per day. Just \$1.24 per hour isn't just low; it's nothing.

Another concerning fact is that \$1.24 per hour is still better than the maximum amount that's earned by those working in Federal Prison Industries factories. Workers in these factories earn between 23¢ and \$1.15 dollars per hour, which they are obligated—by law—to work in. There are other job options as well, but it's not like they pay better.

You may think this is justified, that obviously prisoners shouldn't get paid as much as other people. However, forcing people into grueling labor for practically no pay isn't right, even if they committed mistakes in life. Forced prison labor doesn't reduce recidivism rates; it enables profit to be made off of the prison system, and many consider it to be modern-day slavery. Despite this, the organization of the prison system within our country is rarely questioned; it's a fact of life.

There are alternatives, though,

Alive and Thriving on The Onteora Stage

By Isabelle Wentland, Sophomore

Each spring, the Onteora theatre department shows that magic isn't confined to the bright lights of Broadway—it's alive and thriving right here on our stage. This year, Onteora's theatre department is doing something completely different by putting the spotlight on individual talent, with solos and dynamic performances that will leave you in awe. On April 4, 5, and 6 we will perform 100 Years on Broadway, a musical revue of "songs that tell a story" curated from iconic Broadway musicals.

"I am excited for the students to perform in an intimate "cabaret" setting this year and explore many musicals and not just one. I

am thrilled to support the entire project by handling the production part of the musical," says Mrs. Wentland, an art teacher here at Onteora.

With new director Ken Skrzysz stepping up to guide the program, and returning musical director Brittany Carroll, there is an exciting shift in direction that brings new ideas, perspectives, and energy to the stage. This year's cast, made up of passionate and talented students, is eager to collaborate and bring another outstanding production to the stage. They're focused on supporting creativity, teamwork, and their shared love for the arts. This change marks

the beginning of an exciting new era, one that is full of promise and growth. The department is ready to continue building its legacy and create a memorable experience for all involved.

Theatre at Onteora has a history of talented students, stunning productions, and committed story telling, but theater is more than just a show put on by students; the stage begins to feel like a home and fellow theatre club members become family.

For decades the Onteora theatre department has been the heartbeat of creativity and passion, bringing students and audiences together for unforgettable performances.

With a new show coming to Onteora's stage, we need the support of everyone—students, staff, and the community. By attending the performance, you'll help keep the arts alive in our school and encourage students to continue their creative work. Theatre brings us together, and your presence at the show will show how much you support the hard work and dedication of the students involved. It's important that we all advocate for the arts to ensure the theatre program continues to grow and inspire future generations. Let's come together and make this show a success!



Ms. Carroll



Ken Skrzysz

Getting To Know Our Theatre Leaders

By Abigail Elliott, Junior

I got the chance to sit down with and get to know the staff who makes the Onteora theatre department come to life: Director **Ken Skrzysz** and musical producer **Brittany Carroll**, who happily shared their theatrical knowledge with me.

What stemmed the idea of this unique musical rather than a traditional one?

Mr. Skrzysz: This approach allows Ms. Carroll and I the time to work one-on-one with students to help develop their talents in a way that sometimes gets lost when trying to mount a full-scale show.

Can you provide a brief summary of the work you've done as a director in the past?

Mr. Skrzysz: My former students have appeared on Broadway (*Mamma Mia!*, *Chicago*, *The Wild Party*, *South Pacific*, *The Lion King*, *Hairspray*, *The Book of Mormon*), and in numerous professional regional theatre and dance companies, movies, and national tours.

I was the Director of Student Life for the School of American Ballet in New York City. I have choreographed and/or directed more than 200 works for the concert, opera and theatre stage. My training in acting and dance allows for a seamless approach to all staging while emphasizing honest communication through dialogue, song and movement.

I received the National Dance Education Association's Outstanding Advocate and Champion of Dance Education award and the Performing Arts Advocate of the Year award from the Scarborough Foundation.

What made you interested in directing this school district's spring musical?

Mr. Skrzysz: I moved to Shokan 14 months ago after working with students in performing

arts settings for more than 40 years. I was hoping for an opportunity to work in a school in this area, so I jumped at the chance!

As you've played a large role in the musical theatre department before, what are your thoughts on this totally new idea for a musical?

Ms. Carroll: I am so excited to be doing this musical theatre revue show this year. While we have become accustomed to putting on a full-length musical, the idea of a revue is not a new concept. In a way, this brings us back to the origins of the art form of musical theatre. This revue additionally gives us the unique opportunity to allow students to perform music from various shows throughout history.

I think this show is wonderful in its simplicity. We are able to focus on the music, and connecting with an audience through the medium of song. I'm excited to bring this show to the school community and tell the stories of many beloved characters throughout history.

What drives your passion for the Onteora theatre department?

Ms. Carroll: My passion for the Onteora theatre department comes from my own musical theatre background. I grew up doing musical theatre in my own school programs and from the very beginning I loved theatre.

From playing a yellow crayon in my 4th grade production of "Colors, We're Better Together" to playing Mrs. Potts in my senior year production of "Beauty and the Beast", theatre was always my home. It didn't matter if I was part of the ensemble or singing a solo on stage, being a part of a community of people who bring a show to life is truly a wonderful thing.

The feeling a performer gets as the curtain closes at the end of a successful show is inde-

scribable. I've seen students who don't speak to others during the day find their home in the theatre community and move on to become performers themselves. I've watched students become leaders through theatre. I've watched kids find themselves on the theater stage.

Theatre at Onteora has gone through turmoil over the past few years from the struggles to rebuild after Covid, to then losing our beloved director Tori McCarthy in 2021. We have been so lucky to have various supporters of the arts step up to make sure that the student experience in theatre remained strong here on the Onteora stage.

Now, as a teacher, that indescribable feeling that I used to get as a performer comes back as pride when I see my students experience the applause at the close of a successful show.

What has it been like working with somebody as driven and experienced as Ken Skrzysz?

Ms. Carroll: Working with Ken has been an absolutely wonderful experience. From the very first meeting we had, I knew that he was the real deal. He has taught me so much in such a short time about directing and how we can strive to be better. His experience is clear and has been a welcome addition to our program. He truly believes in every single student involved in the show; he cares about their success and he brings out the very best in all of us.

I can't wait to see this production come together on the Onteora stage. I hope that Ken will continue to work with us in the future here at Onteora. I feel like I am a better director this year because of him. Thank you Ken.

The Race to Class

An Editorial By Fiona Green, Junior

Sometimes when I'm on my way to class in the mornings, I get flashbacks to track season. In the past year, change has become the norm for the Onteora Middle/High School. The addition of the sixth graders has led to later bus arrivals, a longer and more than chaotic breakfast line, and hallways that feel comparable to a maze. One would suspect that perhaps more time would be given to students because of these challenges. Instead, five minutes were omitted from students' morning routines. Hardly anyone has enough time to eat their breakfast or put away their coats during frigid Onteora mornings. Due to the onslaught of changes, the leisurely walk to class has transformed into an all-out sprint.

Minute by minute, this is what the average student's morning routine looks like with the new schedule: Students are released from the morning busses at 7:25 (not counting rainy/snowy days when they may arrive two minutes later). Students who play sports put away their bags in the locker rooms by 7:32, and race to get in the breakfast line at 7:34 after a good deal of pushing and shoving to get the ever-coveted breakfast muffin. Then, if all goes well, the student sits down in the cafeteria by 7:35, giving them only one minute to eat their breakfast before the bell rings at 7:36. The student leaves the cafeteria by 7:37, puts away their coat by 7:39, and runs to class at about the speed of Usain Bolt to prevent being marked late, seconds before 7:40.

Mornings at Onteora used to look much different. Previously, when homeroom was from 7:40 to 7:45 students could finish their breakfast with five minutes more time. I have a language class first period, which

essentially means I'm fighting a battle between eating and participating in speaking Spanish (I lose points on a grade if I don't). Precious minutes in the morning for Onteora students have been cast to the wayside.

Removing first period homeroom was not without reason. Many seniors relish in the privilege of late arrival, rolling into class at 8:26. In order for each and every student to be kept in the loop, announcements (and thus the five minutes of homeroom) have been moved to third period. While it is important for all students to have access to the same information provided by the morning announcements, there are other possibilities for communication in the digital age. A solution to this madness I'd suggest is having the announcements posted on a Google Classroom page accessible to all. This way, students trying to eat breakfast in the morning would be at ease, and seniors with late arrival could still be kept informed.

Though the matter of a rushed morning can seem a small one, it does make a significant difference in the way students start their day. By giving back a few minutes, I'm sure students would feel more prepared, relaxed, and eager to learn.



Onteora Boys Varsity Basketball: A Stunning Season

By Evan Pizer, Sophomore

"During a crucial huddle before the fourth quarter, Coach Wilens passionately reminded us about our established standards—specifically resilience. He emphasized that if we wanted to win, we had to believe we could."

In October, if you asked someone how the boys' varsity basketball team would do this season, you might have heard a comical response like "We still have a basketball team?" Over the last four years, Onteora has not accumulated more than a few wins in a single season. However, to the astonishment of many, Onteora Boys Varsity is 13-4 (home 8-2) (away 5-2).

For those present on the first day of practice, the team's outstanding performance doesn't come as a surprise.

New head coach Mark Wilens had scheduled a two-hour meeting. The players were buzzing with excitement, ready for the season. Coach Wilens had the team create our own on-and-off the court standards, and he introduced us to his principles and non-negotiables we would have to follow for the rest of the season. He told us, straight up, that if we wanted success this year, we would have to put the team first. What was built in the classroom on that first day is more important than anything that could be accomplished on the court during practice. What was established was a culture, a family.

This culture has been the driving force behind the team's success this season. Down

eleven at the end of the third quarter against the tough Mount Academy team, Onteora needed to make something happen. During a crucial huddle before the fourth quarter, Coach Wilens passionately reminded us about our established standards—specifically resilience. He emphasized that if we wanted to win, we had to believe we could. The now pumped-up starting five marched Onteora back into the game.

Brenden Thompson, known for his fearless

defender to the basket. Jameer pivoted and delivered a sweet bounce pass to Ryan Burgher, who elevated to the rim, laying it up for the game winner.

The crowd erupted, its roar causing the gym to shake. That play represents the underlying principle that Onteora's basketball team emphasizes: teamwork. A less disciplined team might have fired up a shot, unlike Onteora's selfless ball movement. That layup was more than just a game winner: it was a statement—Onteora is different this year.

The Eagles are still pushing their momentum forward. More recently, in a packed Friday night house divisional game against Highland, Onteora turned heads once again. We thrashed Highland, 59 to 38, and took the gym by storm. The Splash Brothers — Ryder and Emerson — combined for 5 three-pointers and 32 points, and Ryan threw down two dunks that electrified the crowd. That game represents the energy the team is striving for this season. The team lives off energy and needs it from the crowd.

This is exactly why we need more students to come to the games. And trust me, whether it's Ryan posterizing an opponent or Emerson knocking down a deep three-pointer, you don't want to miss it. Be a part of a winning culture and come see us dominate!

"What was built in the classroom on that first day is more important than anything that could be accomplished on the court during practice. What was established was a culture, a family."



drives, scored an acrobatic layup—his feet nearly rising above his head—which tied the game 54 to 54 and commanded the crowd to life. With twenty-three seconds left, just enough time for one good shot, the players entered the court to a loud and supportive crowd.

As the ball was inbounded to Emerson Ingalsbe, the crowd fell to a hush. Senior captains Emerson and Brenden swung the ball around the three-point arc before Brenden threaded a pass to freshman Jameer Maize—the young powerhouse whose physicality makes him a force on the court—in the high post. Next, Ryan Burgher cut behind his

Deep Cuts

By Val Albright, Junior

Do you ever feel like you're the only person around who knows what real metal is? Are you tired of listening to all this pop bull*%@#? Have you been banned from playing music in your friend's car? Quit being so pretentious, plug in those earbuds, and tune into this:

What Do You Know, Deutschland? by KMFDM

KMFDM, forty-one years of German ingenuity and hard, loud, industrial metal. *What Do You Know?* technically wasn't their debut, but it was the album that defined the sound of the band. With vocals from Sascha Konietzko, En Esch, and Raymond Watts, the grit and gruel infect the mind of the listener. It's their darkest release

through the tone alone; it sounds like it was recorded in some dingy old basement without any light. Don't let that spoil your palate, though; the audio quality is actually half-decent, if not even a little smooth.

In an act of absolute travesty, this album didn't hit American soil until 1991 despite its 1986 release, nor did it have its full track list until 2006. That's five years without the album and twenty whole years

without "Zip," the neglected track. No other album of theirs had the same issues, and it's not exactly like "Zip" was a controversial track. Along with defining their sound, it also defined their look. BRUTE!, the artist for their album covers, dressed this album up with an equally harsh art piece. The reds, blacks, and whites mimic their eastern neighbor's propaganda (considering Germany was still split), while also having the indus-

trial element put on full display with their robot drummer front and square. The simplicity is what sparks your curiosity, and the sound is what keeps you hanging around.

What Do You Know, Deutschland? isn't KMFDM's most popular album, nor is it even their best (that title goes to *Hau Ruck*, easily), but it's a solid jumping-off point.

The Light in Hidden Places- a Review

By Gabrielle Alterio, Sophomore

The *Light in Hidden Places* by Sharon Cameron is a fascinating story based on the real life of a young woman and her sister in Nazi occupied Przemysl, Poland. Stefania and six year-old Helena are Catholic girls who house thirteen people of Jewish faith in their attic, while also quartering actual Nazi soldiers.

The story truly begins when Stefania meets the Diamant family in Poland. This endangered Jewish family is composed of a mother and father as well as five children: Izydor, Max, Henek, Chaim and Ernestya, the only daughter. Stefania meets the Diamants while employed in their shop prior to the occupation. As the conditions of WWII consume Poland, the tumultuous plotline in the life in hiding but also the love interests and complicated relationships in the context of persecution, again all based in the true relationships between Stefania and the Diamant family.

Even though this novel is classified as historical fiction, the author Sharon Cameron researched the real life of Stefania Podgórska using the help of Stefania's son, Edward Burzaminski. Also available to Sharon Cameron were television interviews with the real life Stefania, one even with Oprah Winfrey.

This book is an absolute work of art. The fact that this is a true story is not only mind-boggling but also heart-wrenching. The storyline itself has thrilling and also depressive moments so that the reader experiences a roller coaster of emotions. The writing style and plot of the story is very direct and easy to follow. If you have any interest in history, non-fiction, or even historical-fiction, I would highly recommend not only this book but also other books by the author Sharon Cameron, including *Bluebird* and *Artifice*.

The Sweet Spot: Chocolate Chip Cookies For One

By Talula Kirschner, Junior

Say it's late at night, you've been studying hard, and all you want is a fresh, home-made cookie, but making a whole batch is too much work and unnecessary to satisfy this one craving.

Situations like this have led me to seek a smaller-yield cookie recipe that requires fewer ingredients, time, and energy. This is probably as small as it gets, making four to six decently sized cookies. All you need is a medium-sized bowl, a whisk, and a baking spatula/spoon. It takes less than twenty minutes, and they're just as delicious as regular cookies.

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. To start, melt your butter and then let it cool. In a bowl, whisk together the sugars and the butter.

Using two bowls, carefully separate the egg yolk from the whites. Add that to the mixture, as

well as your vanilla.

Then add the dry ingredients, and here is when I would transition from using a whisk to using a spatula or spoon of some sort.

Lastly, mix in your preferred amount of chocolate chips.

On a parchment-lined baking sheet, scoop the dough into whatever size cookies you'd like and space them out. Bake them for around ten minutes until they're golden around the edges. To get that perfect chewiness, you can take them out a few minutes early. They shouldn't be raw, but just a little underdone. These are served best still slightly warm and with a cup of milk. Enjoy!

Ingredients:

3 tbsp melted butter
4 tbsp light brown sugar
1 tbsp granulated sugar
1 egg yolk
1 tsp vanilla extract
6 tbsp all-purpose flour
1/4 tsp salt
1/8 tsp baking soda
chocolate chips



Ingredients:

1/4 cup peanut butter
1 tbsp rice vinegar
2-3 tsp sesame oil
2-3 tsp sugar
2 tsp oyster sauce
1 1/2 tsp soy sauce
water or coconut milk

Takeout-Style Peanut Sauce

By Foster Knoche, Sophomore

This recipe is perfect for throwing together late at night, or whenever else the craving for peanut sauce occurs. The sauce is salty, savory, toasty, and slightly sweet, with its rich texture being cut by a hint of acidity.

All these factors result in a delicious product with minimal work required. The directions couldn't get any simpler; all you have to do is combine the ingredients, adding water/coconut milk as needed to adjust the consistency at the end.

Peanut sauce is widely loved by a variety of peo-

ple. Many different variations exist, including satay sauce paired with pork, a Vietnamese kind eaten with spring rolls—and this one—reminiscent of something you'd order from a Chinese place.

Small changes in the ingredient composition can substantially impact the flavor profile. Fish sauce, sambal oelek, and sriracha will lead a sauce to taste more Southeast Asian, whereas the oyster sauce in this recipe makes it taste more Chinese.

This sauce can be served with noodles, spring rolls, or leftovers for any occasion.

Wicked- I Have Been Changed for Good

A reflective editorial after viewing the film *Wicked*
By Ashley Campbell, Sophomore

The famous Broadway musical, *Wicked*, hit theaters recently, becoming a box office success. The movie explores the untold stories of both the Wicked Witch of the West and the Good Witch of the North. At the time of this writing, the film has grossed an earning of \$635 million, making it the highest-grossing film based on a musical. The *Wicked* film has surpassed *Mamma Mia!*'s box office sales, and is now the most successful Broadway musical adaptation of all time. The numbers continue to rise, knocking down other musicals to lower ranks while breaking Hollywood records.

In December, I went to see *Wicked* in theaters for the first time, and it quickly became clear to me that there was a deeper meaning behind *Wicked*. The musical is a commentary on society, and I wondered why more people weren't talking about the clear parallels between discrimination in our own society and the discrimination portrayed in the film. Racism is not always bright and doesn't come in highly saturated colors. It isn't always blatantly obvious, coming in muted tones, similar to how the racism discussed in the movie has been muted by its viewers.

I doubt that when Frank Baum's wrote *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* he could have foreseen all the hype generated by the blockbuster movie *Wicked*, but, as his original novel was an allegory, I bet he could have foreseen how a storyline centered around fairytale clichés could parallel the roles that society casts upon us. Yes, *Wicked* is more than just a children's story.

Elphaba is portrayed as "wicked" and for that, she is outcast by a society that just cannot accept the color of her skin, but what original-



ly made people make fun of Elphaba, and how does this parallel real life? She was born green, making her "othered" from her peers. Even her own father considered her a disgrace and an embarrassment to their family and in the opening scene, we see propaganda depicting Elphaba as angry and evil. The villagers of Munchkin Land burn a scarecrow resembling Elphaba, and then she endures abuse as she begins her education at Shiz University, all because people cannot accept the color of her skin. Unfortunately, racism is not only in this musical— but in real life as well and the casting choice for Elphaba seems a conscious choice to emphasize African-Americans' challenges of present-day racism.

Cynthia Erivo, the Black woman cast as Elphaba, was a phenomenally executed choice for the role. A Black woman playing Elphaba in today's political landscape is significant. When asked about the casting choice Erivo stated "I just know what it's like to feel like you don't fit. Like you're just outside of the ordinary, like there's no room for you." She added "I think the wonderful thing about that is that I know there are so many people

Courtesy of Creative Commons
watching who feel the same, so I feel like it's a bit of a hug for anyone who feels that way."

Conversely, the film depicts Glinda, played by Ariana Grande, perhaps the standard for caucasian beauty, as the character who is treated like a saint for simply breathing and flaunting her hair. Glinda, the perfect one, is given many privileges that Elphaba would never receive. In addition, Glinda doesn't even possess *real* sorcery powers, unlike Elphaba, who has a natural gift for magic.

Additionally, it seems noteworthy to remember that in the original Broadway production of *Wicked* Elphaba was played by the Jewish actor Irina Menzel. Stephen Schwartz, creator of the Broadway musical, explained that Idina's casting was intentional, as *Wicked* resonates with Jewish people and their experience of being outsiders throughout history.

The animals in the musical, who can talk, represent how marginalized groups are scapegoated within society. Dr. Dillamond, being an actual goat, is the most direct example. Within *Wick-*

ed, animals are used to occupy several of the professor positions at Shiz University but are slowly being forced out, as the University doesn't trust their kind. These animals once existed peacefully with humans, getting along well. However, they were later faced with discrimination and captivity by the Wizard in an attempt to control the animal population after The Great Drought. Dr. Dillamond is one of the last remaining animal professors and is forced to leave his position as a professor at the university as animal oppression escalates. In one scene, we can see the remaining animals, including Dr. Dillamond, confidentially talking in a secluded area.

These professors were coming up with ideas on whether or not to retaliate against the Wizard or to hide to prevent being taken as well. This event parallels anti-Jewish policy implemented by Nazi Germany prior to the Holocaust. Jewish professors were slowly banned from academia, just as animal professors were in *Wicked*.

Jewish people were also blamed for causing the Great Depression, just like the animals were blamed for causing the Great Drought. The musical *Wicked* explores the ideas and untold stories of the Wicked Witch of the West, but it also reflects deep societal issues that have existed for centuries.

What we see while watching the musical is limited to what we are open to seeing. Parallels shouldn't be covered, preventing their light shine from shining through. They should instead be embraced, lighting up their direct commentaries on society. Let them shine, and let people feel uncomfortable. If society never learns to reflect on its flaws, then we will never be able to change it for the better.

Saturated with Social Media

By Riley Peer, Sophomore

As a student, the restrictive phone policy implemented this year has helped me decompress from all things "phone." Sometimes I even forget I have one. This has led me to wonder: What would life be like without social media?

I think about how my parents grew up. They still knew how to spend their days in a social manner despite the absence of social media. I fear that they have more memories to share with me than I ever will with my future kids.

Personally, I'll admit I'm on my phone too much. I spend hours just scrolling the depths of the internet to cure my boredom and afterward I feel empty, as if I should have been riding my bike, hanging out with friends, or throwing a party and getting away with it, just like my

parents did.

With a whopping 5.22 billion people on social media, it has seemingly taken over our entire lives. Social media has many negatives, including being linked with depression and other mental health issues. So why not just delete it? To me, deleting Snapchat is deleting memories and Snapscores, and deleting TikTok is deleting connections with the world. Despite these worries, the truth is we can live without Snapchat, and we can live without TikTok.

Some researchers say 50% of U.S. teenagers are on their phones four or more hours daily. For those of us for whom this is true, doesn't this prevent us from making the most out of our days? Spending this much time on our screens leaves less time for sleeping, face to face interac-

tions... or things like riding bikes, hanging out with friends, and throwing a party and getting away with it, like your parents did.

Time on social media promotes the production of a "feel-good chemical" that makes us want to keep scrolling. It's a hormone and neurotransmitter called dopamine.

This chemical is an important part of the reward system in the brain, and it affects the amount of pleasure we receive.

So, when we're on our daily scroll, this chemical gets released, which leads to a greater desire to continue scrolling.



Horoscopes

By Delilah Lieberman, Junior



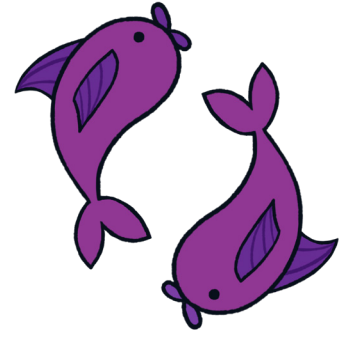
Capricorn (Dec. 22- Jan. 19)

Capricorns, put on your best grin
And face the competition, I know you'll win
You've come this far, don't give up now
And shock the audience, make 'em go "wow!"



Aquarius (Jan. 20- Feb. 18)

Aquarius, you're hilarious
Your sense of humor is far from precarious
Your jokes are thought out and executed well
So pop out a joke before the next bell.



Pisces (Feb. 19- Mar. 20)

Pisces, you've been kind and caring
Keep it up! But remember, be daring
It's time to think outside of the box
And experiment. No plain bagel, get it with lox.



Aries (Mar. 21- Apr. 19)

Aries, Aries your aura is glowing
You walk the streets without even knowing
So keep your head up nice and tall
And smile big in those crowded halls.



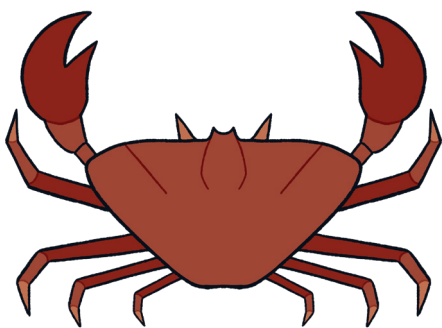
Taurus (Apr. 20- May 20)

Roses are red, violets are blue
You better learn to tie your shoes
You keep on tripping left and right
Without a worry in your sight.



Gemini (May 21- Jun. 20)

Geminis, your time to shine is now
Fight your demons with a pow
And listen to your heart and soul
And follow your dreams and your goals.



Cancer (Jun. 21- Jul. 22)

Cancers, You gotta be cautious
Your careless demeanor makes me nauseous
If you don't start thinking two steps ahead
You surely will fall and bump your head.



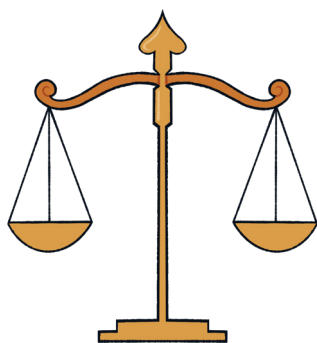
Leo (Jul. 23- Aug. 22)

Leos, stop hating on others' beliefs
Your arguments and reasons are painfully weak
You should take a look at your actions
And those around you's annoyed reactions.



Virgo (Aug. 23- Sep. 22)

Virgos, I know you hate the cold
But your outfits are still popping and bold
Even in the frigid winter season
Keep being you, confidence is the reason.



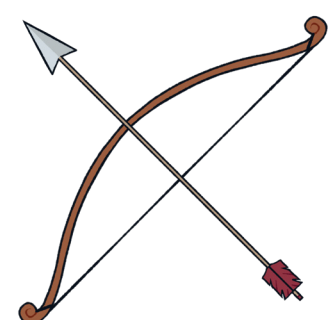
Libra Sep. (23- Oct. 22)

Libras, learn how to take a step back
No, there's nothing that you lack
But it's important to let the spot light transfer
Even if you do know the answer.



Scorpio (Oct. 23- Nov. 21)

Scorpios, learn to take your own advice
Sometimes others opinions don't suffice
If you know what you want, and how to do it
Then put on a brave face and just stick to it!



Sagittarius (Nov. 22- Dec. 21)

Sagittarius, a five syllable sign
Stop beating yourself up, you're doing just fine
Stay away from spicy food though,
We all know that spice tolerance is low.

The Fault With Our Stars

One student's sassy criticisms of horoscope readers and believers

By Azarax Tehrani, Sophomore

Why are we so stupid? Most people denounce mass cultural delusions. For example, we all know that the Earth is an oblate spheroid and that vaccines do not cause autism. You're probably thinking, "Well, yeah, I would never be dumb enough to believe in something like that." Then why is the practice of astrology taken seriously anywhere in our society? We meet people all the time who believe that the alignment of the planets affects them personally. Why, when we read astrological predictions, don't we react to them like the nonsense that they are?

When we meet somebody who is a flat-Earther, we tell our friends and laugh because this idea is completely nonsensical. The idea would never be taken seriously enough to be widely believed, unlike with astrology. And if you don't think that astrology is commonly accepted in the cultural zeitgeist, then just look through this school publication. There are horoscopes in this SCHOOL NEWSPAPER. Imagine if somebody wrote a recurring segment: How the Flat Earth will affect you for this next month and what you can do to get the information out. Uproar would ensue from students, parents, and teachers alike—and this would be for good reason; we don't need conspiracy theories spread around, especially in places of education.

What is so wrong about star signs?

The fault with following star signs is plain and simple: There is no empirical evidence to prove

that the alignment of stars and planets, even when in retrograde, predicts our future. And I say, time and time again, they are poppycock! If star signs were true, then wouldn't every career path be filled with people with similar birthdays? The only partially valid point I have ever heard defending Zodiac signs came from a teacher at Onteora. "Don't you think that the season in which one is born could affect their personality because of the weather?" However, even if a somewhat reasonable defense of Zodiac signs, this is incorrect. If this were true, the summer signs would all have highly similar traits, and the astrological sign's traits would be flipped for anybody in the Southern Hemisphere. (They are not.) Zodiac signs are a disprovable conspiracy, and we should try to educate those who believe them.

Why do star signs seem so realistic?

There are two main reasons why star signs seem to be accurate:

1: Confirmation bias.

This is a cognitive bias in which individuals interpret and seek information that confirms existing beliefs. For example, when one's horoscope provides vague predictions, one is seeking for the prediction to materialize. When something vaguely similar to the prediction occurs, it is taken as concrete evidence.

2. The Barnum Effect.

This is a psychological phenomenon in which people believe vague and general statements (like horoscopes) are uniquely applicable to

them. When one reads a description of a zodiac sign that says, "You are strong," some will interpret it to mean physical strength, while others will interpret it to mean mental strength, but we all will think, "Huh, this IS me!" Or if your horoscope says you will get very lucky in the following week, throughout the week when one good thing happens to you, you will think, "Wow, my horoscope was right!" In reality, isn't it likely that something good will happen to you at some point in the next week?

What should you do?




There are many things that we can do to stop the spreading of this misinformation. Firstly, we can make everyone aware that star signs are complete hogwash and should be paid little to no attention to. Secondly, we should stop the proprietors of this misinformation (such as anyone who would write it in a newspaper). A final thing that we can do is start treating Zodiac signs like what they are: a disproven conspiracy theory.

All that I have stated here is a simple testament to the fact that no man, woman, or child should. Come anywhere close to accepting this conspiracy theory as a natural part of life. We have enough uncertainty in our lives today, and we need to come together to quash this misinformation so that we can try to live in a world based on facts and logic.

Know Your Teachers?

Match the description with the correct staff member!

By Jasmine Barker, Sophomore

Staff	Clues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Mr. Prutzman — Mr. Connolly — Mr. Grady — Mr. DeRuvo — Mrs. VanEtten 	<p style="text-align: center;">A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Huge Nickelback fan, even saw Nickelback in concert! -Has been to over 30 concerts. -Played the saxophone and sang in high school -Broke their collarbone after falling off a hammock and landing on a rock 	<p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Played Lacrosse in high school and partially in college. -Chose to teach at Onteora because they thought the name sounded funny -Went up against Mr. Castle while interviewing for their job and they beat him
 	<p style="text-align: center;">B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Went on a Native American quest to a remote mountain in Honduras when in their 30's -Trip included a four day fast -described the trip using the words, "no problem, then it really sucked, then awesome." -This Quest was led by a Native Medicine Man, who encouraged members to not sleep or meditate. 	<p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lived with his wife in Jerry Seinfeld's former-building! <p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Has seven grandchildren -Coached two football teams to States! -Was a teacher for 38 years and even taught Officer Sharon, our SRO -Worked in corrections for 33 years -No longer teaches, but you might see this person in the corner of your eye

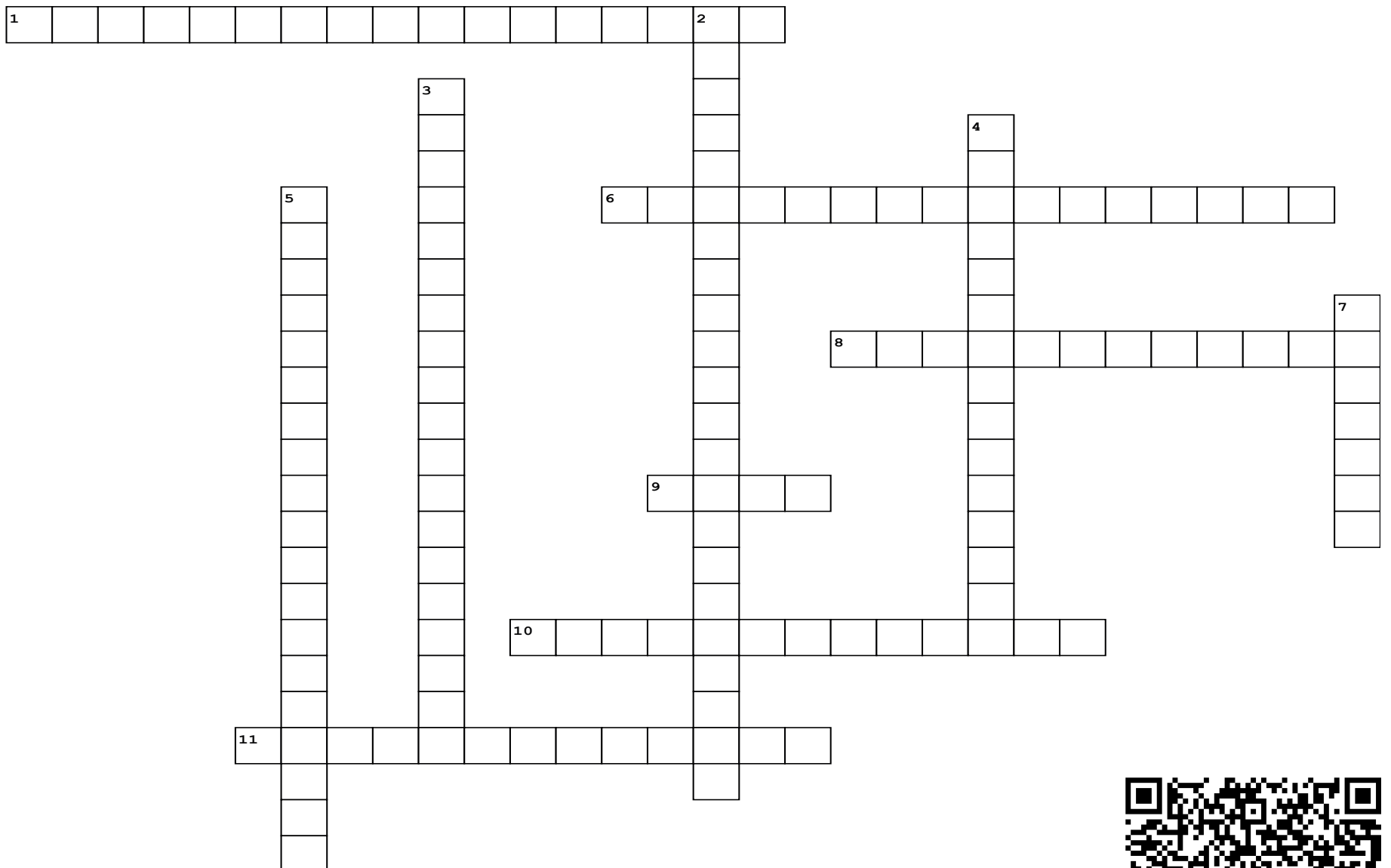
Playlists

By Shelby Buryk and Lucia McDonagh, Juniors



Iconic Onteora Lunches

By Talula Kirschner and Melanie Milla



- 7. What's for dessert?
- 2. One of many chickens
- 8. Onteora's savior
- 5. Meat in an odd geometric shape
- 9. Every Friday!
- 11. Misadvertised cooking style

- 1. Students' favorite pasta
- 3. Comes in an edible bowl
- 10. Vegetarian chicken nuggets option
- 4. With whipped cream and syrup
- 6. Affectionately referred to as "The Boat"



Scan for Answers!