



PERKIOMEN VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL'S

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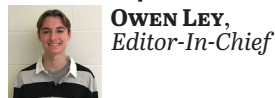
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## MINI-THON IS COMING

PV Prepares to Tackle Childhood Cancer One Dance Move At a Time



**OWEN LEY,**  
Editor-In-Chief

Mini-THON, a fun and exciting way to raise money for childhood cancer, is coming to Perkiomen Valley High School. Mini-THONs are nationwide miniature versions of Penn State's THON event, a night filled with dancing, activities and a common goal of ending pediatric cancer through fundraising.

In partnership with Four Diamonds, an organization that covers the cost of cancer treatment for 100% of the patients at Penn State Children's Hospital, Mini-THONs are held at over 265 schools and run by over 90,000 student volunteers. Senior Victoria Beard and Spanish teacher Señora Dotterer are running the event at PV as well as the club's fundraising efforts throughout the year.

"I actually first found out about Mini-THON through my friends at Phoenixville, who are leaders there. Once I realized what the cause was, I couldn't believe that we didn't have it at PV. It was a cause we needed to be a part of," Beard explained.

The Mini-THON club at the high school first met on April 12, 2019 and currently meets every other Friday after school. The club has around 50 active members, with new members joining each meeting.



The Commissioners of PV's Mini-THON efforts are making the "Four Diamonds" hand symbol, frequently used by event attendees and coordinators.  
Photo: Isabella Ewing

Perkiomen Valley Mini-THON has already held two fundraisers: a car wash over the summer which raised \$700 and a California Tortilla dinner this past fall which raised \$200. The club also held a Babysitting Night in December a spin class at TORQUE this past month.

The actual Mini-THON event is scheduled for Friday, February 28, 2020. The student leaders and club members have been hard at work planning the

night's events to fill all four hours with nonstop activities. Lawn games, team competitions, raffles, dancing and a male "Mr. Mini-THON" pageant will all be held during the event. A grand reveal of all the money raised throughout the year will finish off the fundraiser.

"Mini-THON is a really important club. It's a really good opportunity for students to feel empowered - it's easy to feel powerless in the school but when you're using your leadership skills for

a good cause you have a higher sense of purpose," Commissioner of Finance VJ Taverna said.

Most of the fundraising work is being done by the students of the club. Dotterer moderates, but finds herself not having to do much planning.

"These kids are amazing. They sacrifice their personal time and they have creative ideas. Literally it's all them. I am so impressed - they're killing it!" Dotterer said.

A struggle for the

Cont. on Page 3

## Pajama Day Raises Money for CHOP



**NICHOLAS YOUNG,**  
Staff Writer

The Key Club, an international organization that promotes building character and developing leadership, hosted a fundraiser for CHOP and raised nearly \$2,000 through a class wars fundraiser to motivate students to donate to this cause during the week of December 16 through 20.

Key Club member, Meghana Sahasrabudde, stated that the Key Club was approached by Principal Moss about the fundraiser and that the fundraiser was brand new. Key Club decided to host the fundraiser in a class wars format to motivate students to donate and compete for pride and supremacy after the juniors upset the seniors twice.

The results speak for themselves as Perkiomen Valley raised \$1834.70 with the juniors and seniors raising the most amounts over the freshmen and sophomores. The race for the top was close for the juniors and seniors as they raised \$697.70 and \$671 respectively with juniors holding a steady lead after the second day.

The first day was not as promising as one might hope as only \$24 total was raised with the seniors leading with \$16.

After the first day, the adviser of the Key Club, Mr. Lyons, said, "We would have been surprised to break \$100."

Luckily the juniors made a surprise attack of some kind the next day raising their total to \$196 while the seniors only raised their total to \$28, an unforgiving mistake when the fundraiser ended. Even the freshmen gained a lead over the seniors by getting to \$106.

Despite a valiant effort, the seniors never got their lead back, always seeming \$20 to \$15 behind. The freshmen increased \$100 each day ending up with \$371 donated with the sophomores having a pedestrian \$95 donated.

Key club members were surprised to have raised this much money as well.

"We just thought it would be a small Key Club thing, but it became so much more... every dollar counts and much is appreciated," member Samantha Turley said.

The fundraiser was a massive success for Key Club, shattering their goal and getting large amounts of participation through the class wars format. All \$1843.70 can now be contributed to the CHOP goal of \$400 million in donations for cancer research. □

## Teachers Go Wild for Animal Rights



**MAGGIE KNEE,**  
Opinions Editor

Every year at Perkiomen Valley, five lucky teachers are selected to wear an assortment of animal costumes: a frog, pig, turkey, flamingo, or penguin. Throughout the week before Thanksgiving break, students donate money in exchange for a number of votes towards a teacher of their choosing, and the five teachers with the most votes win. This event is a fundraiser started by the club Take Action, and all proceeds go to the Humane Society.

This year, the winning teachers were: Mr. Nawrocki, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Hunsicker, Mr. Petsko, and Mr. Schumacher. Mr. Nawrocki said

he would participate again, since "it wouldn't be so bad if [the costume] didn't smell like Hinkle."

Mr. Petsko, however, had a different story. "Going after Storm next year," he said. He did admit that knowing the money went to a good cause helped alleviate any silliness.

The process for this event is easy: students visit the Take Action table during their lunch periods. For 25 cents, they can purchase one vote for a teacher of their choosing, and for one dollar they can purchase four votes. By the end of the day Thursday, the votes are tallied and the top five teachers are selected. This unique and fun fundraiser gets students and teachers involved.

This fundraiser has taken place for seven years. On average, the club raises around \$700. Mr. Craven, the founder and advisor of Take Action, started this group after a suggestion from students.

"It started out as an environmental club, but I found that students who joined, the biggest common interest was wanting to do good for animals," Craven said.

Jack Letterio, co-president, has been in the club for two years now. He wanted to learn about ecological issues and what he and others could do to help the planet.

"Out of all of the things I've involved myself in," Letterio said, "I can say the most differ-

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From left: Mr. Mitchell (turkey), Mr. Schumacher (flamingo), Mr. Nawrocki (penguin), Mr. Petsko (frog), and Mr. Hunsicker (pig).  
Photo: Joshua Craven, Riley McColgan



# Shrek: The Musical Cast Revealed



AMELIA HARRIS,  
Staff Writer

That time of year is coming up again; that's right, musical season is rapidly approaching and preparations for Perkiomen Valley High School's annual spring show, performed at Middle School East, have begun.

Long time director and chorus teacher at PV, Mr. Griffie, has decided on Shrek, The Musical, a more contemporary Broadway show based off of the Dreamworks animated film, for this year's show. This will be Perkiomen Valley's 43rd musical and Mr. Griffie's 18th year directing.

"We thought that the cast and audience would enjoy it. We also thought we had the talent to do this show," Griffie said, when asked why he chose this year's musical.

This lively and upbeat show has lots of laughs and jokes, and the musical is just as entertaining as it's movie counterpart.

"Shrek is a movie that a lot of kids grew up watching and it's actually really funny," Isabella Yackanicz, who will

be playing the show's very own leading lady, Fiona, commented. Fiona's character is best described as a quirky yet feisty princess who longs to be rescued by her Prince Charming.

Since the story is popular and well-known, the theater department is hoping for bigger crowds on show nights.

"A lot of the time, attendance for the musical depends on what show we are doing. I am hoping that since the show is Shrek, a good amount of kids will want to go see the show," Yackanicz, who has been performing at the high school and Middle School West for the past five years, said.

Meanwhile, Shrek's comedic sidekick, Donkey, will be played by junior John Baranowski, who starred as the Cat in last year's show, Honk!

"I was so excited to see that I got cast as Donkey!" Baranowski said. "It's been a dream role for quite a few years now and finally getting the chance to explore the character is really exciting," he adds.

Donkey's character

tags along throughout the story with a unique liveliness to contrast Shrek's grumpy mood.

Senior Martin Sorenson has been cast in the role of Shrek, an unlikely hero and the show's protagonist.

"I was fairly surprised when I got the news," Sorenson said. "Doing scenes with the other leads is what I'm looking forward to most, I've known them for years and it's going to be really fun to act with them on stage."

The villain of this story, Lord Farquaad, will be played by newcomer Jake Taylor, a freshman at PV.

"I felt surprised, excited, and super happy to have gotten such a big role as a freshman," Taylor said. Farquaad's theatrical and larger than life personality (in stark contrast to the characters height, which is so short that the actor playing him must stand on their knees the entire performance) is a highlight of the show.

Be sure to come attend one of the three shows of Shrek: The Musical during the first weekend in April. □



The bushfires in 2019 are the largest and worst this continent has seen yet.

Source: aljazeera.com



## Burning Up Down Under



OWEN LEY,  
Editor-in-Chief

With the effects of climate change becoming ever more present as the earth continues to heat up, global warming is quite literally burning the planet all around the globe.

The deadly California fires that raged early this year, followed by the Amazon Rainforest blazing up this past summer left the earth in a state of crisis. Now, temperatures are rising down under in Australia as the current bushfire season is the deadliest this continent has ever seen.

The Australian states getting hit the hardest are Queensland and New South Wales (NSW). Over 1,300 firefighters are battling the bushfires, often spending 15 to 16 hours a day doing so.

"It's the worst I've ever seen in the 20-odd years I've been doing this," Rural Fire Service captain Mick Munns told *The Guardian*.

The fires ravaging NSW as of November 2019 already cover four times the area of the fires burned in the whole of 2018, and the official summer season in Australia hasn't started yet.

In 2019 alone, more than 250 homes were destroyed and four people perished in bushfires in NSW. In this state, 70 fires are raging, with over 40 of those out of control.

"It hasn't stopped, and we don't know when it will," Australian teacher Barb

Cameron told *The Guardian*.

All these intense bushfires, combined with the severe drought hitting Australia, are urgent symptoms of the deadly climate crisis taking a toll on the country. In November 2018, the country's dams were 64.4% full, but as of November 2019, they're only 46.6% filled.

The drought has led to Level 1 water restrictions being implemented in the greater Sydney area of NSW, and if the dam sinks to 40% capacity, these restrictions will be heightened to Level 2, with strict precautions and regulations for water usage applicable to all citizens of the area.

More than 85% of Sydney's water supply depends on rainfall, and as the drought continues, the future of the city's water supply hangs in the balance.

Fearing for the future of their country's climate, Australians are taking action by walking out of class, stopping coal trains, and blocking roadways.

While Australia promised to reduce its carbon footprint in 2015 at the Paris Climate Agreement, many citizens are criticizing Prime Minister Scott Morrison for not doing enough to lessen climate change's effects. Morrison did not answer questions about climate change when interviewed in early November 2019.

As the rampant bushfires continue to burn across the continent, global warming doesn't show signs of stopping any time soon. □



From left: John Baranowski (Donkey), Isabella Yackanicz (Fiona), Martin Sorenson (Shrek) at rehearsal  
Photo: Sarah Strausberg

## MLK Day of Service Honors His Legacy



MAGGIE MCGOVERN,  
News Editor

Every year, on the third Monday of January, thousands of people and organizations come together to create what the Corporation for National and Community Service calls "a day on, not a day off" in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil rights achievements.

This year, the MLK Day of Service will take place on January 20 and include hundreds of students from the Perkiomen Valley School District. The MLK Day of Service at PV is organized by a group of volunteers and administrators, namely parent Amy Ramsey and manager of school and community engagement Ms. Jessica Lester.

"Our plans this year [include] opportunities for children, teenagers, and parents to engage in service

to our community as well as become educated about Martin Luther King and his ideas of finding peaceful solutions to problems," Ramsey said.

At the high school, older students will have the opportunity to volunteer at different stations, each surrounding a different project, which includes helping the elementary schoolers learn and serve in honor of MLK Jr.

"This has been our tradition for at least the last several years - when Mrs. Colucci and I began this activity in 2013, it was much smaller and limited to high school students serving outside organizations," Lester said.

Today, students can participate at the high school or with organizations in the community.

"My friend and I started our freshman year volunteering at the Variety Club so we have continued to do that up until now," junior

Isabella Ewing said.

Perk Valley's own clubs participate in making a difference on their "day on" too.

"This year, Take Action will be hosting volunteers to do political work at the KOP mall in order to make political change about essential environmental issues," junior Jack Letterio said.

As January 20 approaches, be sure to pay attention to your student email, announcements, and the school website for a SignUp Genius that allows you to choose what places to volunteer with.

As Ms. Lester puts it, "It's a day where we set our differences aside and come together for something bigger and better than ourselves. It ends with the feeling of being grateful to live in a community where people value service and want to help others." □



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# The Stage is Set For New Theater Curtains

**AMELIA HARRIS,**  
Staff Writer

Last winter, the PV school board approved a proposal that would gladly thrill any music student or teacher in the district: the replacement of stage curtains in the high school's auditorium. Although some have probably noticed already, these replacements were installed in December of 2019.

According to the head of maintenance, Mr. Clemmer, this is the first time the school has had new curtains since the originals were installed.

"The curtains and the stage rigging supports are going to be replaced," Mr. Clemmer said, when asked exactly what repairs would be made.

Pittsburgh Stage Inc, a company located in Sewickley PA, installed the replacements, and the overall cost was \$19,339.00. The install-

ment of the curtains took only two days to complete once construction was underway.

While the topic of possible renovations was brought up during a school board meeting last winter, it took until the end of spring to be confirmed. These proposals are discussed by the board under "capital projects," which are intended to improve the districts overall infrastructure.

"The curtains at all our schools must be certified on a regular basis," superintendent Dr. Russell said. She explained that although the high school has not had any new curtains in quite some time, there are still regulations for every school that equipment must pass in order to be useable.

Many students and faculty who use the stage frequently are excited to get new and updated equipment. Lindsay Aleece, a senior at PV,

who has been the stage manager for musicals and plays at both the high school and middle school, is especially looking forward to these replacements.

"I'm really glad it's happening," Lindsay said. "Our auditorium desperately needs an upgrade. Our previous curtains were falling apart and I think the new curtains will help make our auditorium look more professional."

In the future, there will be other updates in addition to the stage curtains at the high school. New curtains for Middle School East are in the works, as well as new soundboards and lightboards for both middle schools and the high school. Those in the music programs throughout the district have much to look forward to, with the promise of more additions in the coming months and years. □



The new curtains are the first of many more improvements to come to the music department.  
Photo: Imani Simpson

## CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

# Mini-THON Take Action Animal Dress Up

club is getting underclassmen to join. The majority of the club is composed of seniors, and in order to keep a strong program running at PV, underclassmen will need to step up.

"I'm involved with Mini-THON just to help the kids. I also like the community we have and the feeling that I am contributing to something larger than myself and making a difference in people's lives," senior Ryann Piperno said.

Beard and the club are looking forward to a successful first Mini-THON, and hope to establish it as a popular school-wide event for years to come. Interested students are welcome to join their efforts at any time, and all members of the school community are encouraged to attend the main event on February 28. □

Source: fourdiamonds.org

ence I've made has been through Take Action."

While this is the largest fundraiser for the group, they have others in the works, including a baked goods sale.

All the proceeds go to The Humane Society, which advocates for the welfare of animals. They are a no-kill shelter. According to their website, the U.S. has 3,500 shelters. There are approximately 6-8 million cats and dogs entering shelters each

year. Every bit of support helps, and this fundraiser is Perkiomen Valley's way of showing they care.

Students who wish to get involved more can contact their local shelter to ask about volunteering. Students can also join the Take Action club to tackle other major ecological problems. Thanks to kind-hearted PV students, many cats and dogs will not go hungry this holiday season. □



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY**  
OF THE UNITED STATES

All proceeds benefit the Humane Society.  
Source: The Humane Society

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# Bands of Our Past: Class Rings Delivered

**INES ALTEMOSE,**  
Staff Writer

Purchasing class rings has been, and is to this day, a time held tradition of commemorating the ending of a high school or college experience. Class rings still to this day are a symbol of achievement, memories, and, along with many peoples' youths, are often passed down through generations as heirlooms.

Most people want to keep their rings forever such as Veronica Gdowik, a recently graduated PV student, class of 2019.

"I think I will keep my ring forever. Graduating from high school is one of the few major accomplishments in a person's life and I'm glad I can show off the time I put in to be able to wear a class ring."

While the tradition began in 1835, many schools still sell class rings that numerous students purchase every year and cherish today. At West Point Military Academy, the school which began the idea of wearing class rings, someone had the idea that everyone in the class should wear a ring with a similar design to visually display the unity among their group of peers.

According to Joseph Denaburg from Levy's jewelry website, a family owned jewelry store since 1922 that has a wide selection of vintage, antique jewelry, "Each one of the students wanted to showcase something which would remain as a remembrance of the time they have spent at West Point."

From there on out, every graduating class of West Point created a class ring.

In the early 20th century, class rings of hallowed institutions like Harvard, Princeton, Yale, UCLA and MIT were created. Over time, this practice has become common at all major high schools and universities.

Traditionally, the wearer is supposed to wear the ring with the insignia or emblem facing them while still attending school. However, upon graduation, the ring is supposed to be turned so the insignia faces outward. A class ring is usually worn on the ring finger of the right hand, which counters the common tradition of wearing wedding rings on the left ring finger, but can ultimately be worn on any finger, even on a chain around your neck. As far as shape goes, class rings are typically round, oval, or square with men's rings being larger than those designed for women.

Most people buy class rings as a way to remember their time in school. Sierra Novabilski, a

current senior at Perkiomen Valley, said "I think class rings show pride in your school and in yourself, as well as traditional values that you will carry with you for the rest of your life."

For several years, class rings were created with uniform design and shaped for a particular school, but as time passed, some institutions provided the students with the option of customization, allowing the option of adding the student's name and other details that identify with the wearer.

Many people also believe that this option creates creativity and personality throughout students.

"For example, you can personalize your own ring to have the sports you play or the hobbies that one is into, engraved into the ring," adds Novabilski.

However, one of the reasons class rings are decreasing in popularity is because of cost. The average ring is around \$300 without real metal and or stone.

A major part that steers students away from purchasing class rings are the high prices. Gdowik says, "I do think the rings are too expensive for what they are but then again, I love my ring and I think paying for one in the moment is hard but looking at it as an achievement everyday is the payoff. It would be nice though for prices to decrease some so more people have the opportunity to get one."

Traditional class rings were made in gold but can now be ordered in various metals including silver, gold, or platinum. The stone used on the ring will typically be the same color for all the students of a particular school. However, the cut and the size of the stone can be ordered as per each person's liking.

Yet all in all, class rings are special to every person who has one whether the reason behind its significance being a memento of the twelve years of hard work invested into graduating like Gdowik, instantly bringing someone back to their alma mater, or simply just remembering the people, relationships, and work of those primitive and often most influential years of people's lives.

The class ring is an ultimate memento of many people's alma mater, where most took their first big steps in life. There are graduations, diplomas, and even a record on a resume, but the ring reminds us of memories and can be kept twenty-four seven. Class rings symbolize the beginning and end of an era, and for that they will always hold significance. □

Source: city-data.com



# PV Junior "81Melo" Pursues Soundcloud Rap Career



**AIDEN DONOVAN,**  
Staff Writer

Have you ever heard the name 81Melo? If you're a student at Perkiomen Valley High School, you probably have. You can find stickers around the school with his branding, but recently they have become increasingly hard to find. 81Melo is an up-and-coming artist on Soundcloud, which is a platform that allows anyone to make and upload music or other audio clips independently.

81Melo, also known as junior Jimmy Staiber, is a very controversial figure in the PV community. Some people support him and respect what he is doing while others think he has a cult following and that he should stop what he is doing. Those who are opposed to 81Melo are mainly against his influence at the school and his musical style.

"It's sad really. There's a rap culture that has been cultivated by lyricists trying to change America and it's tainted by meaningless rappers talking about money, women and situations they know nothing about," says one anonymous senior, an open 81Melo dissenter.

81melo, however, has commented on what he has to say to those that aren't his fans.

"Nothing. Literally nothing, and they just watch, like I don't care," 81melo said.

81melo tends to veer towards more lyrical artists for inspiration.

"It has to be J. Cole because he's always had a strong influence and the way he tells his stories...He can word lyrics like no one else can," 81melo said.

81Melo has been influenced by other artists and people around him in such a way that he wishes the best for everyone and has a positive outlook on his musical career.



**Rapper 81Melo (center in white) on set of a new music video**  
Photo: Jimmy Staiber

"Pretty much, you can just do whatever you want, you don't have to listen to people, you don't have to live by society's standards, you can just go out and do whatever you want because this is America; we're not letting other people tell us what to do. And have a good time, you gotta be happy," 81melo said.

Despite facing some opposition, 81melo doesn't seem to mind the divisive re-

sponse from the student body.

"Bout half of the school supports me and half of the school hates me. [It's] 50/50... I feel like Trump," 81melo said.

However, 81melo is grateful for those who have remained close to him through it all.

"There's too many people to name [them] all. Who's in Staiber Gang? Anyone who is real enough,

anyone who has that special mindset...What is it? It's just our close friend group," 81melo stated.

As a current junior, 81melo has been producing music since his freshman year, and doesn't plan on stopping.

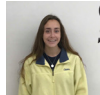
"I started making music in January freshman year, but I did not start recording music until January of my sophomore year. My first song

was made at Rotation Records; actually, my first song was made myself but I didn't release it," 81Melo said.

81Melo continues to create and release new music, despite the amount of backlash he receives.

"Find me on soundcloud at 81Melo and my next song, it's not even advertised, will be on other platforms. Coming Soon." □

## Catch A Loaf From Seniors Starting a School Trend



**CORINNE KERWIN,**  
Staff Writer

At Perkiomen Valley High School, it's not as rare as some may think to walk past someone in the hallway with a full-sized baguette sticking out of their backpack. This school year, students have become very familiar with seeing sights similar to this due to junior Lauren Singer and senior VJ Taverna.

Both work at Corropolese Italian Bakery & Deli, which is located in Limerick. After their shifts, they collect the bread that didn't sell that day and pack it up into their cars. Lauren brings the bread to school with her and gives it out to people in her classes. Meanwhile, VJ sets aside some of the bread for the Daily Bread Food Pantry, and gives the rest to some of his old teachers' classes.

VJ stated "People get really excited about the bread. I'm not sure why. Grain has never really seemed like something worthy of shouting, but I'm happy to bring that joy to others. Random people have started recognizing me and asking me about it, which is pretty cool, I guess."

As for Lauren, she has received similar responses and said that, "people get really excited for bread days."

The bread has become so popular and well known that it was even fea-



**The bread is often thrown into giant black garbage bags that both VJ and Lauren carry around with them throughout the day.**

Photo: Genevieve Giammarco

tured in the student section at our football game against Spring-Ford. Both VJ and Lauren went to the game after work and passed out some of their bread. Unfortunately, things went bad fast, as stale rolls were being thrown at

student's heads, and the principals had to take it all away.

While giving out bread to your peers may seem strange and somewhat pointless, VJ and Lauren are doing it to make a point.

"The whole thing,

started by VJ, is to raise awareness about food waste and responsible consumption. We want people to pay it forward and find a way to give back no matter how small, and encourage saving food from their places of work if

possible!" Lauren said.

PV is grateful for VJ and Lauren not only feeding The Valley with their delicious bread, but also with some helpful tips on how to prevent food waste and become mindful consumers. □



# Key Club Brings Cheer to the Elderly

**NICK YOUNG,**  
Staff Writer

The PVHS Key Club went to Greenfield Senior living on December 19 for its annual visit to a nursing home to create decorative garland and brighten the day for the inhabitants. In previous visits, Key Club created Christmas ornaments and other decorative items with inexpensive materials, and for the garland, cupcake cups were used.

Madison Reehl, co-president of the club, explained that the cupcakes

were to be folded and stacked on top of each other to form small Christmas trees. The conversations between the seniors and students was the most important aspect of the visit.

The depressed state some can reach while in assisted living is well documented and having younger faces to talk with can, as Mr. Lyons said, “break up the monotony of it all,” especially as family visits can be scarce.

Conversations ranged from the living conditions, tennis, and even the bingo game the

senior citizens played before assisting with the garland. Jodi, activity assistant, was an optimistic member of the staff, bringing the most discussed topic of the day forward: Christmas spirit.

Chet, a former draftsman, spoke about his experience with drawing buildings and spending time with his daughter. A former teacher who preferred to be called Milly spoke about her Catholic faith and recommended visiting St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City.

By the time enough Christmas trees were crafted and placed on string, the next thing to decide was where the garland would be placed. The ultimate choice was the old blackboard from the building’s schooling days and around the counter where it was out of the way and clearly visible.

The day ended with a satisfactory feeling of accomplishment and lifted spirits for Key Club and the senior citizens. The event was a success for Key Club that created memories that the senior citizens won’t forget. □



Students in Key Club make festive decorations with seniors.  
Photo: Nick Young



Sam Donnelly, Emily Shoemaker, and Olivia Newman pose outside of Greenfield Senior Living.  
Photos: Nick Young

# Winter Concert: A Festive Performance

**AMELIA HARRIS & SOPHIA SOLEAU**  
Staff Writers

Perkiomen Valley High School’s annual winter concert, including chorus, orchestra, and band, performed a concert filled with holiday classics and even some contemporary pieces on Wednesday, December 11 at Middle School East.

Students in the music department spend time preparing for the concert as early as the beginning of September. After practicing many of these pieces for months on end, many students begin to favor certain ones over others.

Sophomore William Hoffman, who plays the trumpet in marching band and jazz band, says that his favorite piece to play is Christmas Festival.

“I love all of the stories that come with it from past years before I was here,

also it always seems to be a favorite for people I talk to after we play it,” he explains.

Some of the most exciting and memorable experiences come from moments like these and become a special part of a student’s life that is carried with them far into their future.

Junior Sarah Calsam, an alto in the PVHS choir, expressed her excitement about the show.

“Towards the end of the concert, when the choir, band, and orchestra all [played] together for the finale and O Holy Night, I saw a little old woman in the fourth row sing along... as soon as the chorus began ‘Christ is the lord’ and it melted my heart. It feels great to know how much the audience appreciates the music that we perform and work hard on,” Calsam said.

As exciting as these concerts can be, performing

live for an audience presents its challenges, which every student must adapt to.

“Since the stage doesn’t allow the sound to travel back to you as well as it does in the music rooms, I find it a bit harder to zone in and listen to the other people around me,” Hailey Bricker, a senior in orchestra, and top of third chair for second violins, said.

However, every year without fail, a large crowd of families, staff, and community members show their support for the PV music department.

The effort from each student and faculty members combined has not gone unnoticed as each song is practiced and rehearsed tirelessly over the course of months. The concert is an annual occasion, so be sure to look out for another performance from PV’s music department next winter. □



The choir accompanied the orchestra and band for a finale performance causing a standing ovation.  
Photo: Max Krantz

# Unlikely Club Weaves Way into the Future Readiness Fair

**MAGNUS STENDER,**  
Staff Writer

This year, PVHS decided to combine the Volunteer and Career Fair, so things looked quite different for the array of students that participated. One thing that really stood out was a table that appeared to be run by students, the only one of its kind, entitled “Underwater Basket Weaving.”

This table quickly drew a crowd, due to its strange subject matter and the unique fact that it was student-run. The Underwater Basket Weaving table, while not even an official table, was able to stay open throughout the event.

The history of Underwater Basket Weaving started last year with current senior VJ Taverna. This year, the table was run by junior Jack Letterio, a link leader and friend of Taverna.

The Underwater Basket Weaving table has proved to be something that a large number of students have found both funny and very interesting. To those who know about it, talking about Underwater Basket Weaving usually brings a smile to their face, while those who don’t know what it is display a look of great confusion at the absurd thought of weaving baskets underwater.

At the Future Readiness event, people flocked to the table and signed the paper to “volunteer for the event” as Letterio said, creating a larger turnout than expected.

“I honestly expected like ten people. I really did not expect a massive crowd and the amount of outreach that we had, I’m honestly really proud of it,” Letterio said. It can be speculated

that the popularity came from those who had signed up and spread the word like wildfire as they wandered around the event.

As the students who managed to get to the table, talk to Jack, or talk to another participating student know, the baskets are being woven are for the dolphins and other sea life that may need them, but as you can probably guess, they aren’t really.

If this table wasn’t actually for weaving baskets underwater, what was it for? With audible pride in his voice, Letterio said, “the purpose of the table is and always was to have fun. It allowed a group of people to have a fun opportunity to participate in something.”

With no real purpose other than to have fun, it is hard not to be captivated by the amount of student support that was garnered around the Underwater Basket Weaving table.

“It’s good to see students passionate about something and having a little fun. Bottom line is that if you are going to do something, go all in! Personally, I have no interest in underwater basket weaving, but that doesn’t mean it’s not important to others,” math teacher and former head soccer coach Mr. McCabe said, as he was seen earlier enjoying the sight of the table.

While certainly a strange sight to behold, Underwater Basket Weaving was just that - something made by students so that all students could have fun, be a part of something, and be passionate about it. As strange a thing that Underwater Basket Weaving is too many, it cannot be denied that it has brought pride and joy to its participants. □



# Behind The Curtain: The Diary of Anne Frank Production



AMELIA HARRIS,  
Staff Writer

The Diary of Anne Frank has been a world renowned piece of literature, cherished by many over the decades. The touching story of a young girl and her family struggling against oppression during World War II was first introduced to the stage as a two-act play in 1955. Nearly 65 years later, the Spring-Ford High School drama department brought the show to its own theater and touched the hearts of everyone who came to see it.

It may seem to some that a play with such a heavy topic and dark themes would be too much for a high school to take on. However, senior Olivia Hungate, who played the lead role of Anne Frank, believed otherwise.

"I was super honored to be able to play such an important character in history, and to have my directors trust me with that was amazing," Hungate said.

Hungate's portrayal of Anne was fascinating, as we watch her adapt to life inside of the annex and change from a young and playful girl to a more mature woman. She goes on to describe her unique experiences as a senior at Spring-Ford, and how she felt performing her last show.

"You find yourself spending more time lingering

after rehearsals to talk to everyone, working harder to get all the meaning out of a character that you can, for one last performance. It's an incredible experience; every show builds its own little family," Hungate said.

Many of Hungate's fellow castmates could not help but agree with her.

"The other people I work with are amazing, they're all so talented," Caleb Dean, a junior who played the role of Mr. Van Daan, said.

The camaraderie between each castmate was evident to anyone watching the actors on stage together; they all seemed comfortable interacting with one another, even

in tense or difficult scenes.

This small and intimate cast of only ten actors meant more work for each individual person. Nathaniel Warren, a junior who played the role of Mr. Frank, Anne's father, tells about the preparation that went into his role.

"I watched a lot of productions to help get an idea of the character, followed by a lot of research on who he (Otto Frank) was as a person," Warren said.

Otto Frank's character struggles throughout the show with trying to parent his daughter and allowing her to be herself in such a restrictive environment.

Those who watched

the show could easily see that the actors had put this type of dedication into it.

"Each actor portrayed their characters in a great way and really respected the history of their roles," said Kyle Marino, a Perkiomen Valley senior who went to see the closing night Saturday show.

As someone who went to see the play as well, there was no doubt that the show was well worth the watch. Yes, it was a heart-wrenching tale, and some in the audience were close to tears, but it just went to prove how wonderfully the actors played their roles. If you have the time, be sure to attend Springford's fall play next year. □



The cast of *The Diary of Anne Frank* pictured after a fantastic performance at Spring-Ford HS.  
Source: Olivia Hungate

# Grammy Noms Cause Controversy Among Fans



STEPH COLEMAN,  
Entertainment Editor

On Wednesday, November 20th, Variety released the nominations for the 2020 Grammy Awards, which will be airing on January 26th. Though there are dozens of categories, one that sticks out the most is the Best Rap Album of the Year.

The five competitors (21 Savage, YBN Cordae, Meek Mill, Dreamville and Tyler, the Creator) immediately sparked controversy regarding what it means to have the "best rap album of the year." Areas of tension rose when Tyler, the Creator had been thrown into the sub-category, given his album hasn't been referred to as rap, especially not the same type of rap when compared to Meek Mill's Championships.

When reviewing the nominations, I also went into Pitchfork's album reviews for all five of the artists, and compared the good versus the bad. Beginning with Tyler, the Creator, reviewer Matthew Strauss hailed the album to be an 8.0 even. The album is surrounded by the concept of loving someone to the point of losing someone. Are We Still Friends?, the album's rough and honeyed send-off, is Tyler's final attempt at salvaging his relationship. He's finally without his beau and asks for the compromise of friendship. The track, as with many on Igor, ends sharply with a synth never resolving its buzz.

"There's nothing left to say when you've given all of yourself away," Strauss said.

The album received praise after the long two year wait from his previous album, Flower Boy, which was a tell-tale of discovering one's own sexuality.

Pitchfork rated Meek Mill's, Championships, as a 7.7.

"Despite being born of injustice, an air of victory hangs over Meek's first full-length since he was released from prison. It captures an intensity that the Philadelphia rapper is known for and best at," Editor Evan Rytlewski said.

After the nominations came out early Wednesday morning, discussions and debates quickly followed. Areas of agitation centered within the main category of the award ceremony, "Album of the Year," Tyler, the Creator fans expressed on Twitter. They insisted that he should have been nominated in that category as well, and were outraged at the list of nominees.

In my opinion, I believe that Tyler, the Creator will win the Grammy solely because of the effort and time he put into Igor, given he wrote and produced the entire album himself. I think that with this year's release, Tyler was able to grow exponentially with finally putting a label on his sexuality, being mature enough in finding comfort with rejection, and moving on from a messy or toxic relationship.

Two other popular people in the "Album of the Year" category are Lil Nas X and Billie Eilish, whose work this year included albums that truly define who they are as artists. Lil Nas X originally released "Old Town Road"

mostly for satire, but the catchy song soon blew up and quickly became the defining song for 2019 after Billy Ray Cyrus and Mason Ramsey, the Walmart yodeling child star, jumped on as features.

Eilish was known prior to her early 2019 release of "When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?," but her hit track from that album, "Bad Guy," boosted her recognition and tossed her into the limelight.

In both categories exist some of the most recognized artists and many of them I love. Yet, in "Best Rap Album," I do hope that Tyler wins, and in "Album of the Year," I anticipate Billie to take the title. □



Tyler, the Creator, Best Rap Album nominee, performs at Randall's Island in New York City.  
Source: @sdotbalaban on Instagram

# READ IT AND WEEP



JENNAMARIE GASKO,  
Layout Manager

*The Silent Patient* is a novel broken up into five parts that depicts the marriage of psychotherapist Theo Faber with an American actress and the life of his new patient, Alicia Berenson, who is married to renowned fashion photographer, Gabriel Berenson, up until she shoots him in the face three times.

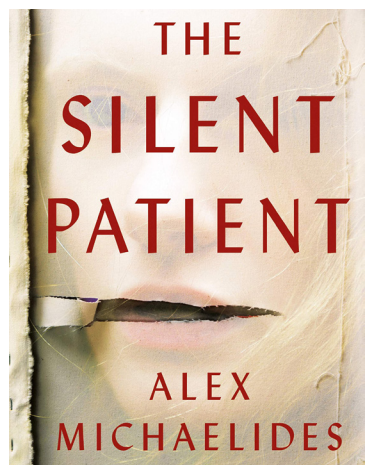
The book, as written by Alex Michaelides, is a masterpiece with a plot twist that you won't see coming until the very end, and when you realize it, it all makes perfect sense. Authors have tried and tried again to create mystery novels that come off as far from the genre as possible, but *The Silent Patient* is one of the first novels I've read that has truly come off as such.

Dr. Faber is trying to get the silent patient, convicted murderer Alicia, to speak for the first time to finally tell her account of the night she became one of London's most famous killers, untangling her life of trauma, paranoia, mental illness and art. Meanwhile, unbeknownst until the last chapters, Dr. Faber is trying to keep a dark secret that could not only get his license revoked, but ruin his marriage.

While Alicia fails to speak for the majority of the book, her story is told largely through the retelling of news stories and the mouth of her wicked aunt, who drove her from her hometown, her slightly dimwitted cousin with a gambling problem, her "best friend" co-worker with ulterior motives, her husband's brother who has always been taken (and rejected) by her, and most importantly, from the journal entries she's written up until her husband's death.

Aside from the astonishing plot, the writing style makes the unworldly circumstances of both main characters feel incredibly real and ties in common themes and deep connections to the greek tragedy Alectis. Each paragraph is eloquently written and not a word is without precision or thought, which in the end makes the true connection between Alicia and Faber seem feasible and incredibly obvious. I'm almost mad I didn't see it sooner.

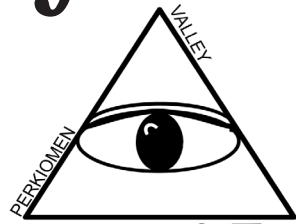
*The Silent Patient* is one of those books that you can't quite put down, and will not only make you mourn, but keeps your adrenaline pumping so much so that this review doesn't do it justice. In short: Read it. □



This mystery novel has a shocking ending.  
Source: amazon.com



# Eye of The Viking Secret Rooms Exposed



**MAGGIE MCGOVERN,**  
News Editor

Secrets, secrets are no fun unless you share with everyone, right? So why are so many students unaware of the secret rooms, hallways, and structures that exist in this very high school? PV's The Voice took to the hallways to find out.

The Valley's very own newspaper staff gained access, legally, to some of the most exclusive parts of PV.

First, we traveled the catwalk above the auditorium, a wide and intricate walkway that trails across the ceiling of the auditorium, where we could spy on Ms. Sorber's extremely small study hall (who better be grateful because their size is nothing compared to our ninth period study hall which seems to include a school and a half worth of people). The entrance to the catwalk is found in the hidden classroom of PV: 260, Señor Ciccarone's room.

The catwalk is mainly used for the musical and fall play, as it stores the costumes, props, and provides an area to fix lights, hang props, etc. So while the talented Radium Girl cast and crew are aware of this gem, many of the regular students are not.

Unfortunately, a key is required to enter and only rests in the powerful hands of our helpful custodians. The Breakfast Club screenwriters weren't wrong when they had the head custodian, and Brian's dad (SPOILER ALERT!),

say "I am the eyes and ears of this institution, my friends." Truly, the power to go anywhere and everywhere in PV is all captured on a simple string of keys that only the custodians own.

Though we couldn't access all the secret rooms and tunnels that PVTV began to reveal a few years back, we did discover more than just the catwalk.

There is also a basement under the pool, secret rooms on the second floor, and of course, the infamous fourth floor. The fourth floor, a sight no student has ever seen, is said to contain Batcave-like teacher lounges, another pool, a hot tub, you name it; maybe that is even where teachers conspire to plan tests on the same day (see Eye of the Viking in the last issue of the newspaper).

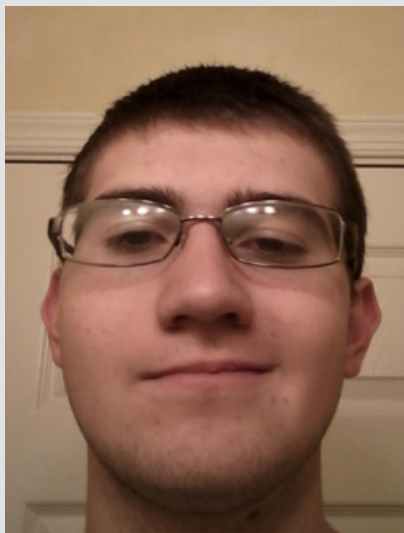
And yet, PV students are left in the dark, keyless and blind to the gems that exist in this school. The current high school we stand in was built in 1976, a glorious time in which architects were highly creative in the sense of secret structures, meant to assist the staff and administration, but really creating a quest for students to embark upon.

We, the students of PV, must rise together to shine light on the architectural secrets of Perk Valley because secrets are really not so fun unless they are shared with everyone. Plus, we may not have a key, but the gate that blocks the stairs to the fourth floor can't hold us all back. □

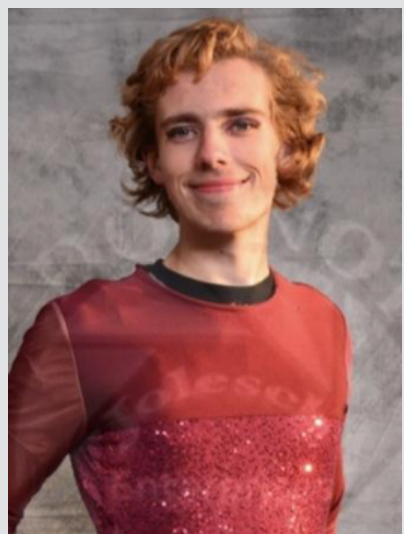


Junior Ryan Lanza and Senior Evan Rieser investigate the Catwalk.  
Photo: Maggie McGovern

## RESOLUTIONS FOR A NEW DECADE



"MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION IS TO GET IN SHAPE FOR FOOTBALL THIS COMING FALL." - J.C. DUGERY, FRESHMAN



"MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION IS TO LIVE EVERY DAY LIKE IT'S YOUR LAST SO YOU MAKE THE MOST OF IT." - LINCOLN MARTINDELL, JUNIOR



"MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION IS TO STAY ON TOP OF MY SCHOOLWORK AND EAT HEALTHIER." - ERIN BUTCHER, SOPHOMORE



"MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION IS TO BE SURROUNDED BY GOOD PEOPLE AND GOOD TIMES." - AVA TOSCO, SENIOR

## "Little Women" Remake Film Review

**AMELIA HARRIS,**  
Staff Writer

Louisa May Alcott's timeless story, "Little Women", written and published in 1868, has no doubt been an iconic piece of literature for many years. Countless films, television series, cartoons, plays, and musicals have recounted the story of the March sisters: Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy, who come of age in the heartfelt and charming novel.

Evidently there has been a long string of movies that came before director Greta Gerwig's 2019 version, so how does her take on this classic movie differ from the rest?

Before I even begin to analyze, and break down the film itself, this star-studded cast needs recognition of its own. Both Saoirse Ronan (Jo) and Timothee Chalamet (Laurie) worked with Gerwig in her phenomenal 2017 coming of age film, "Lady Bird." Gerwig's decision to cast Ronan and Chalamet makes sense, as their on-screen chemistry, platonic or romantic, is undeniable.

The other March sisters include Emma Watson as Meg, Eliza Scanlen as Beth, and rising actress Florence Pugh as Amy. Not to mention, Laura Dern as Marmee, and the iconic Meryl Streep as Aunt March.

Now that the cast has been given its due praise, let's get down to what you really want to be reading. Here are my personal thoughts on Greta Gerwig's, "Little Women".

The first thing to stand out as the opening scene played was how Gerwig changed the timeline of the story. Rather than following

a chronological timeline, she cuts back and forth between the sisters lives as adults and children.

This incorporates one of the main themes of the movie, the stark contrast between the dullness of adulthood, and the joy of childhood.

When we see each sister on their own, there is a sense of struggle and a melancholy feeling that something is missing. Once we cut back to their childhood life, the audience can immediately see what had been absent; the sisters constant chattering and laughter fills that empty space. The dreary and muted scenes of adult life are replaced by a warm and almost golden filter, that creates the feeling of nostalgia, or an old memory.

Another fantastic aspect of the film was the script. The dialogue and flow of each scene seemed to have a rhythm within its chaos. Gerwig was able to capture the realistic interactions of a household with four sisters; including all the overlapping and interrupted conversations, the wrestling and running around, and even the inevitable fighting.

This adaptation also highlighted something new about each sister. Each actress seemed to be invested in giving their character a new layer of depth.

Meg is shown later in life struggling with poverty as she tries to support her family. Beth is given a sort of younger portrayal, she's almost quite funny at times; ignoring the drama and loud conversations of her siblings in favor of playing with her doll. Even Jo, a seemingly already well-fleshed out character, describes her

painful loneliness as she tries to make a life of her own in New York.

Amy, in particular, was made less of a bratty, younger sibling as portrayed in other movies. In this version, she is made out to be a more whole rounded person with a dynamic personality; Florence Pugh even delivers a strong monologue towards the end of the film, which represents this change perfectly.

All in all, this definitely has been one of the best films I have seen in 2019. The stylistic and directional liberties Greta Gerwig took were risks on many parts, but she managed to pull it off. The cast's energy and personal connections shined through on screen, helping portray Gerwig's vision masterfully. Despite its many predecessors, the 2019 version of "Little Women" has its own uniqueness to it that makes it stand out from the rest. □

SAOIRSE RONAN EMMA WATSON FLORENCE PUGH ELIZA SCANLEN LAURA DERN TIMOTHEE CHALAMET MERYL STREEP

**LITTLE WOMEN**  
Greta Gerwig  
The Screenplay by Greta Gerwig  
The Story by Louisa May Alcott



Little Women was recently nominated for Best Picture at the 2020 Academy Awards.  
Source: beautifulballad.org



# SIERRA VS. GENDER STEREOTYPES

**ISABELLA EWING,**  
Photography Editor

Football fans of The Valley, ever heard of Sierra Andrew? Sierra is a Freshman at Perkiomen Valley and this year she joined the freshman football team as a defensive line-man and offensive tackle. As a young athlete in high school, you have to start somewhere and she chose to start on the football field.

Sierra did not partake in football until this year. She tried it out for her first time and found that she enjoyed it. "Football was always on the TV in my house and I had wanted to get involved with the school and a sport so I chose to try football," Sierra said.

After interviewing her fellow teammates Stephen Ci- audelli and Brad Curci, there were quite a few similarities about what they had to say on her personality and what she brings to the team. They both highlighted "her positive attitude and [how she is] pushing

everyone to be better."

"She does not care what people think as long as she is happy and makes other people around her happy. That's all she needs," Ci- audelli said.

"She is comfortable doing what she loves and is not afraid to step outside of what most people would consider ordinary. She deserves a lot of credit for competing," Curci also commented.

Not only has Sierra's positive spirit been recognized by the team, but also by the coaching staff.

"The players respected her as an athlete and not as a girl trying to play football. She has impacted the team by showing kids that they can do whatever they desire so long as they are dedicated," Coach Yan- ulyevich said.

Coming into a new team, a new school, and a new sport is a scary endeavor but Sierra was able to do it by having a supportive family behind her. Not only her actual family, but



# KAM VS. HEART CONDITION

**MAGGIE MCGOVERN,**  
News Editor

Kameron Parks, a junior at Perkiomen Valley High School, exemplifies all the great characteristics of an inspirational athlete as the small and power forward for PV's basketball team whose slam dunk victories are outweighed by his success in athletics despite having an enlarged heart.

Kam, who has been playing basketball since the third grade, plays for the high school team and Amsteur Athletic Union basketball for Philly Supreme in the spring and summer.

"As a freshman, he was a varsity guy. As a sophomore, he was a starter. Looking for great things from him over the next two years," says Kam's basketball Coach, Mr. Poysden.

Kam is a phenomenal basketball player, but he teaches us more than just how to shoot a lay-up by demonstrating the strength and courage of an athlete facing adversity, in his case with a heart condition.

"I was playing in a summer basketball league and I felt nauseous and felt I may faint. I went to the hospital after the game and they ran a series of

tests on me to find out that my heart was enlarged," explains Kam.

Kam has an abnormal- ly large heart and was given an inconclusive diagnosis as to whether or not he has Hyper- trophic Cardiomyopathy, a condition which occurs when the heart muscle cells enlarge and cause the walls of the ventricles to thicken. This condition is the most common identifiable cause of sudden death in athletes under the age of thirty.

"I have been in and out of CHOP for years getting tested on whether I may have a disease and honestly it's upsetting. The doctors do their best job in finding out what's going on but the atmosphere of CHOP and seeing kids hooked up to mobile heart monitors in the Cardiologist department is a sight I wish I could unsee," says Kam.

Despite having to visit CHOP regularly to ensure his health and proper playing condition, Kam has reflected on his experiences positively.

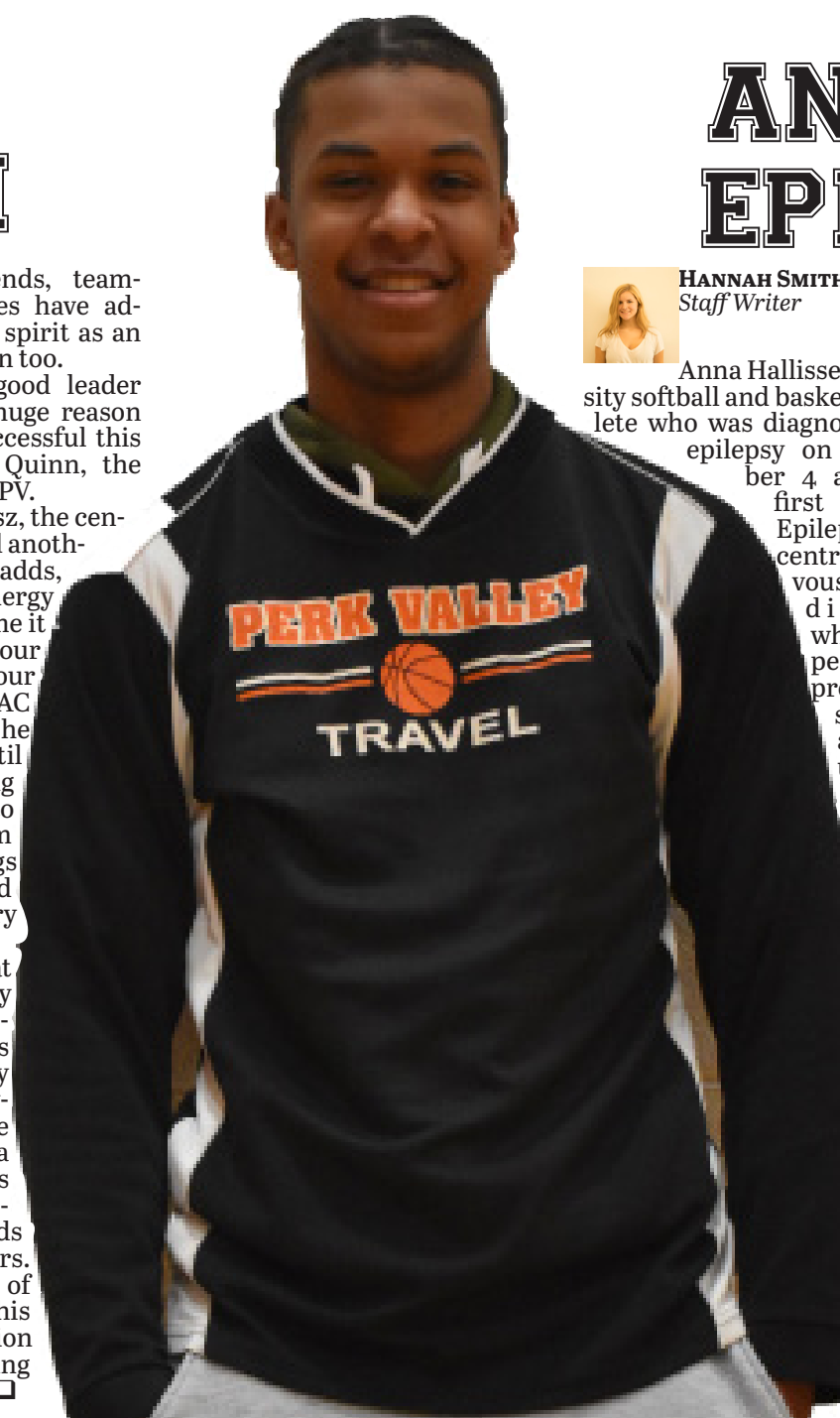
"Ever since I started going to CHOP for my heart, I had a greater appreciation for basketball because I get to play the sport I love and my condition could be way worse than it is. I saw what other conditions people had at a young age and I believe many of us are lucky that we don't have to go through things like that," he adds.

Kam's friends, team- mates, and coaches have admired his brilliant spirit as an athlete and a person too.

"He is a good leader and he will be a huge reason why we will be successful this year," says Aidan Quinn, the shooting guard for PV.

Aidan Gansz, the center on the team and another friend of Kam, adds, "Kam gives that energy no matter what game it is, whether it is at our courts with all of our friends or the PAC championship, he will be fighting until the end and doing everything he can to make sure his team wins. He brings that intensity and motivation to every game."

Everyone at Perkiomen Valley can see the determination Kam brings to not only every game, but his every- day life. He has the heart and grit of a true athlete, but is also a local inspi- ration whose words move others to tears. We wish the best of luck to Kam with his ongoing condition and in the upcoming basketball season. □



# ANNA VS. EPILEPSY

**HANNAH SMITH,**  
Staff Writer

Anna Hallissey is a varsity softball and basketball athlete who was diagnosed with epilepsy on Septem- ber 4 after her first seizure.

Epilepsy is a central nervous system disorder where a person is prone to seizures and unusual behavior.

Anna's daily routine has a

changed since the diagnosis as she is more aware of the things around her.

"I have to take medication twice a day and my parents are more strict in the things I do," she said.

Contact sports are a challenge for Anna because hitting her head is more dangerous now, but that does not stop her from playing softball and basketball. She has made the varsity basketball team this season and is continuing to fulfill her role on the team.

"Anna is a player who is very dedicated to the team, she knows her role on the team. She works hard to not only make herself better but her teammates better," Ms. Sorber, Head Varsity coach, said.

Anna has many friends who know about her condition but also know that she hasn't changed at all.

"I feel as though Anna has not changed at all, she is still super relaxed and her usual funny self," Brianna Reim, friend of Anna's and softball teammate, said.

Anna's condition does not stop her from pursuing what she loves, such as her sports and activities with her friends. Spectators can see her at the girls basketball games this upcoming season. □

# ATHLETES VS. ADVERSITY

## ALLY VS. MILITARY LIFE

**OWEN LEY,**  
Editor-in-Chief

Being a military brat, the child of a parent serving full time in the military, can be hard. Moving around constantly, switching schools, adjusting to new cultures, and undergoing long periods of time without seeing your parent. Now pair that with the struggles of being a student athlete: balancing homework and practice, missing class for games, and surviving long and arduous workouts.

This is what life is like for senior Allyson Loveless. Ally's mother has been actively serving in the United States Air Force for 18 years. In that time, she and her mother have moved a total of six times. Before moving to Perkiomen Valley, she lived across the globe in Australia.

"This was the hardest move for me personally because all of my friends were halfway across the world and the size of PV compared to the [school] I had left was an abrupt change," Ally said.

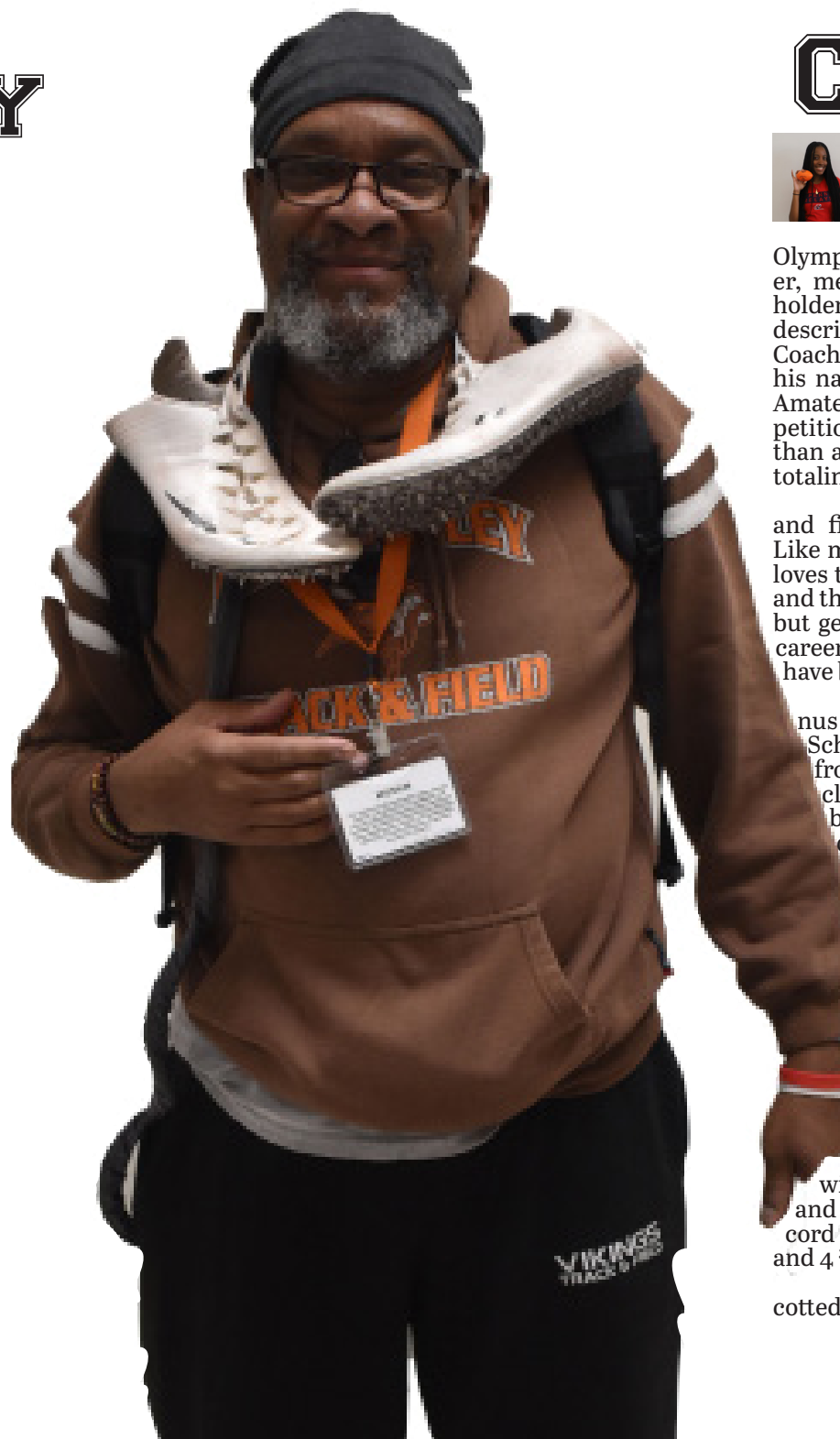
Ally began playing basketball when she was only four years old, and has been playing for 13 consecutive years. She is a power forward and center on PV's Girls Basketball team. Not only does she play basketball, but she rows crew as a coxswain as well.

"My best friend, who was on the rowing team, had told me I should attend a 'girls try rowing' camp over the weekend to see if I liked the sport. After the camp I was basically sold. I loved that it was something completely different from basketball and the emphasis that the sport had on teamwork," Ally explained on how she got started with rowing at her school in Australia.

She spends the fall rowing in Conshohocken, and has to balance rowing practices with preseason open gyms, lifting, and tournaments for basketball. When it comes to being the child of an active military member, moving around can affect her athletics as well.

"The main impact being a military brat has had on my athletics is that I don't have the opportunity to play on the same team and with the same people for a long period of time. Occasionally, when we move, it can be difficult to find a rowing and basketball program that I am able to join so abruptly."

Ally has clearly been able to juggle quite a hectic life, so much so that she has verbally committed to rowing for the University of Michigan after graduating. □



## COACH VS. CANCER

**IMANI SIMPSON,**  
Sports Editor

World-class jumper, Olympic gold medal contender, mentor, and world record holder, are just a few titles that describe Coach Ron Livers. Coach Ron has 3 NCAA titles to his name and during the 1979 Amateur Athletic Union competition, he jumped farther than any other ever American, totaling 57 feet and 7 1/2 inches.

Livers coaches track and field here in the Valley. Like many of the staff here, he loves the sport that he coaches and the athletes he gets to help, but getting to this point in his career was not easy as there have been high and low points.

Coach Ron is an alumnus of the Norristown Area School District and comes from a long line of world-class athletes. His older brother, Larry, was a hurdler in the sixties and his twin brother, Don, was a national class sprinter.

In 1977, Coach Ron traveled to Russia to compete in a friendly meet. The gold medal winner (Jaak Uudmäe) and the silver medal winner (Viktor Saneyev) of the 1980 Olympics competed against Coach Ron in this meet. He was the first American to win triple jump in Russia and he set the collegiate record with his jump of 56 feet and 4 3/4 inches.

In 1980, the U.S. boycotted the Olympics that Liv-

ers qualified for. So Coach Ron never got to test his ability on the Olympic world stage at his peak.

However, this does not stop Coach Ron from doing what he loves: coaching the young athletes that the Valley has to offer. He has been coaching at Perkiomen Valley since the spring of 2010.

"The experience of being a coach so far has been wonderful. I could not ask for [any] more from the kids and fellow coaches," Coach Ron said.

Sadly, Livers had recently received unfortunate medical news. In July, Coach Ron went to a track symposium at Saint John's University, trying to gain his level 2 certification, and he fainted. He was taken to the emergency room and they found a mass on the back left side of his brain. They removed it, but when the pathology report came back, it was deemed cancerous. Coach Ron and his wife took steps to overcome that hurdle with radiation and chemotherapy.

"Everybody has been very welcoming and treated me like a friend and coach. I could not ask for anything better than to coach at Perkiomen Valley."

This season, Coach Ron is taking a break from coaching to focus on his health. He will try to be at all the meets.

"[I will miss] the athletes, the generosity of the school and fellow coaches," Livers said. The athletes see Coach Ron as a father figure.

Senior sprinter, Gar-

rett Kline says, "Coach Ron is dedicated to bringing out the best of our potential as athletes. He's focused on our work and growth above all else, and is very knowledgeable about our sport and health."

Coach Ron's colleagues were just as supportive as his athletes. Head Coach Petsko said, "It's been wonderful that he's been able to be around. I think people are taking what they've learned from him over the years and even if he's here or not here, everyone is still going about their business as if he was here."

Coach Ron reassures PV, saying "I plan on sticking around for a while so do not count me out no time too soon." □





## The Voice 2019 - 2020

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Letters to the editor may be submitted to the newspaper advisor or any member of The Voice Editorial Board. Letters must be original, signed and their authorship must be verified. If the writer would like to remain anonymous, the writer must contact an editor of the newspaper and present his or her case. The Voice has the right to any edit any letter for reasons of length, grammar or spelling. Writers cannot target specific writers or any other person in a derogatory manner without justification, which will be left up to the discretion of the staff.

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# Find Your Validation Somewhere Else

## THE EDITORS OF THE VOICE

Social media has been an integral part of our generation's lives. Most of us grew up in parallel with the rise of technology; when we were entering middle school, the newest version of the iPhone was entering the markets. It has become somewhat of a christening moment to receive your first smartphone, something seemingly necessary to fully live out the 21st century adolescent experience.

We all remember downloading that little yellow ghost app, some without our parent's permission, and adding all our friends to start streaks and "snap" away our days. We've seen apps come and go, whether that includes Kik, Vine, or Musical.ly, our generation has always quickly adopted the latest social app to utilize even more ways to communicate with our friends besides talking in person.

One app that has stood the test of time is Instagram. This photo-sharing app has become many teens' online home. Even PV's The Voice itself has an Instagram account - communication online these days requires one. Yet a vital change hit the app during the week of November 11, 2019; the official rollout of the removal of the "likes" count from the app.

For many years now,

the amount of likes one receives on Instagram has been ruling the social hierarchy the app created. Users are sad, disappointed, and may even delete posts when they don't receive the amount of likes they had hoped for. Users who get a lot of likes are seemingly happier, have bigger egos, and flourish on the social network. But these days are now gone, and with them fades away this toxic environment.

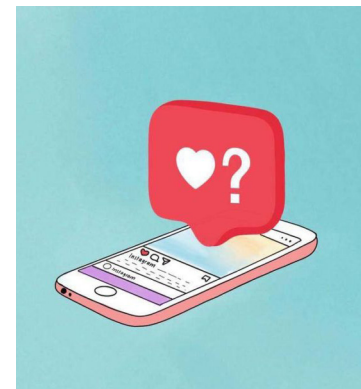
Without likes, every post is now equal. We, as editors of a written publication, believe all art should be valued by the beauty held within it, not the amount of visible recognition it receives. We stand with Instagram's decision to remove likes, and applaud them for this bold and game-changing move.

You are worth more than a number next to a heart below your Instagram posts. Likes are the result of a simple double tap on an image you post, and whether or not someone double taps a post should not define your self-worth or popularity. The validation people have received from likes has created a social landscape where each post is a competitor in a race to get the most likes. This environment has contributed to the immense pressures social media, like Instagram, have put on young people to quite literally filter themselves and

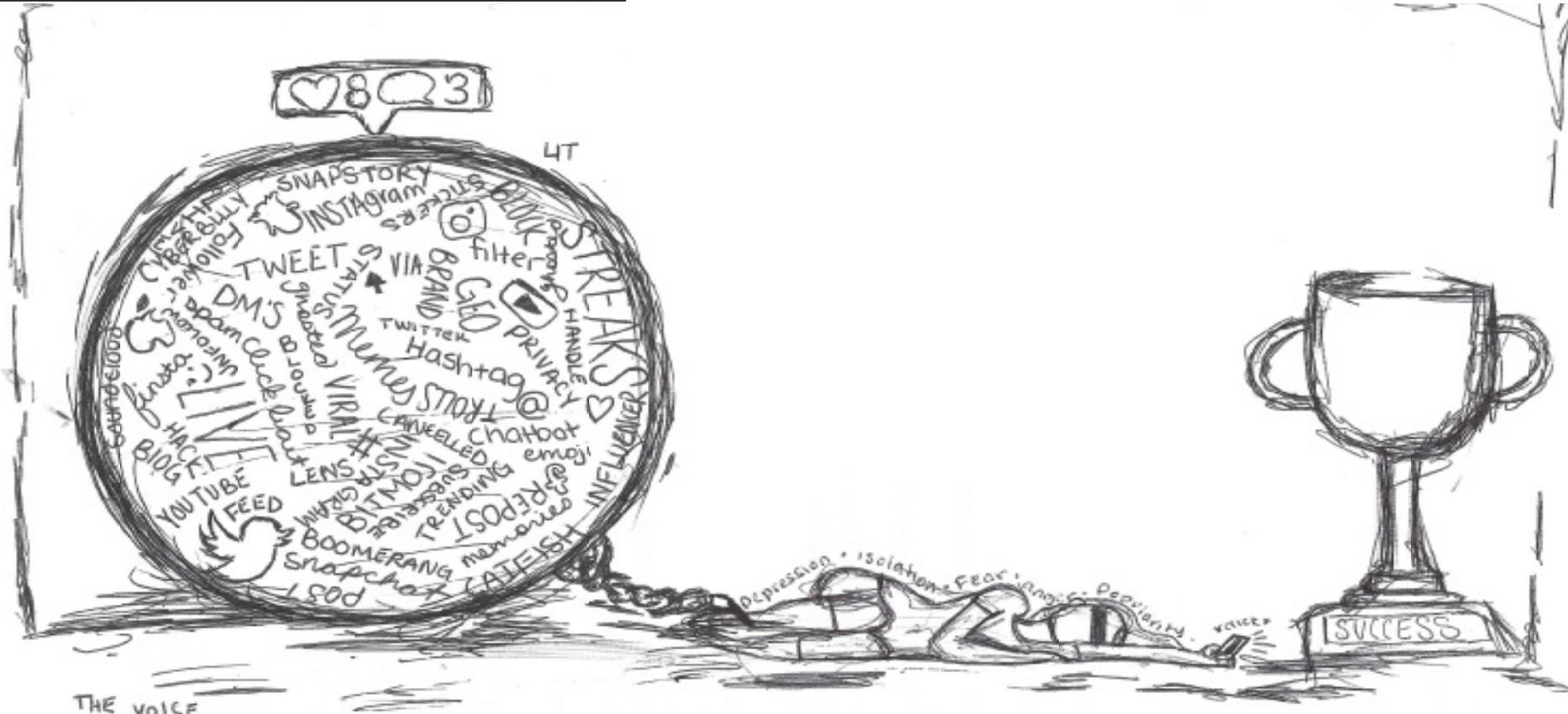
achieve unattainable standards of beauty.

Too many people care too much about their like count. "Like my post" (LMP for short) has become a standard method of promotion for teens to encourage people to like their posts so they can watch their likes increase in number. This is a worthless waste of time and energy, only encouraging people to compete and virtually beg for more likes online.

Without likes, all these toxic mentalities will diminish, creating a safe and encouraging online space to share pictures without fearing they won't perform well. Instagram users and teens like us can now focus on sharing meaningful pictures that we care about instead of curating our content to satisfy our peers and rack up meaningless double taps. □



Instagram no longer shows like count.  
Source: pittnews.com



# Run, Hide, Fight: How Prepared Can We Really Be?



ARDEN WEIDNER,  
Staff Writer

A growing uneasiness has fallen upon the American society regarding when the next mass school shooting will be. School administrators all around the country are wondering what the best way is to protect schools from an active shooter.

The fatal school shooting at Columbine High School in April of 1999 has changed how law enforcement has handled these shootings and these changes have saved lives. However, questions continue to arise as to how schools can prepare and protect themselves while waiting for the police to arrive.

A new technique recently introduced is the "run, hide, fight" drill which was first introduced in Houston, Texas. The drill is meant to prepare students, in the case

that an active shooter was to enter the building, by giving them different options to get to safety as fast as possible. The drill has drawn critics who say that the drills are not realistic enough and do not accurately represent a real situation.

Some staff members at Perkiomen Valley High School believe that the school's drill is effective and necessary in order to give students decision making skills if a situation like this were to occur.

Mr. Stipa, who has been in charge of Perkiomen Valley High School's school safety for the past 25 years, gave his input on the school's current drills.

"It's always going to be difficult to prepare for a difficult situation...but at the same time you got to do the best to prepare..." he said.

Stipa believes that the "run, hide, fight" drill is

not only useful in schools but anywhere where a shooting can occur because the drills allow students to have background knowledge in real-life situations.

"What we want to see [is] people improve on their decision making the more we do this. I think it's not just effective in schools but it could be used anywhere. It's important for people to have the theory 'run, hide, fight' and understand what they can do because a lot of people freeze up if they don't at least have an idea of what they can do," Mr. Stipa said.

Mike Horan (known as "Big Mike") is the head of security at the high school and had similar thoughts as Mr. Stipa.

"It has been proven that if you drill for something and you have a pre conditioned response [it's] very effective; they work very well." Horan also said the

most recent shooting drill that occurred at the high school in November was more realistic than the other ones before, but he would still like them to become even more realistic.

However, the students at Perkiomen Valley High School are more skeptical about the effectiveness of the drills. Many believe the drills do not give an accurate representation of an active shooter and would not help them in a real situation.

"I wouldn't necessarily say they're effective, but it's better than doing nothing. There's nothing you can really do to prepare for it," junior Colleen O' Reilly said.

Junior Carter Young does not believe that the drills are effective.

"The drills are too planned. The staff shouldn't announce the location of the 'shooter' because you wouldn't know in a real situa-

tion," Young said.

There will always be arguments over the best way to accurately prepare students and faculty members for a real-life shooting and there is only one answer: there is no right way. It is impossible to plan out every single scenario of a school shooting. There are too many variables to consider in order to find the right way for individuals to protect themselves.

The only thing the school can do is give people options on what to do based on where they are in the situation and improve the way they think in difficult, threatening circumstances.

This is what the "run, hide, fight" drill is providing for individuals all across the country. So far, this drill is the most effective way to prepare students and will be until a new, better method is introduced. □



# Tattoos Should Not Be Stigmatized

**MAGGIE KNEE,**  
Opinions Editor

Tattoos: artwork etched on to the human body to display one's unique personality and taste. But can these ink creations also hinder one's ability to get a job? A common deterrent from getting a tattoo is hearing "Your employer won't like that" or "That won't look nice when you're older." Tattoos and piercings are popular amongst teenagers and young adults. They are a fun and simple way to express personality and should not be a source of embarrassment or shame.

Those who find tattoos distasteful seem to forget that many tattoos are a symbol of remembrance and a way to honor someone. Rebekah Mullens, a senior at Perkiomen Valley, has a small tattoo commemorating her friend who passed away, Jazlynn. So far, all she has received is positive feedback. She picked a concealable area, but she does

"worry that that day will come when someone does make a sly comment," Mullens said.

Some tattoos are completely personal and meaningful. Another senior, Jon Moccia, got a long-awaited tattoo as soon as he turned 18.

"I never worried about my tattoo being viewed negatively," Jon said, "It says family in Italian which hopefully wouldn't be seen negatively." Jon plans on getting another tattoo. This one would also be meaningful to him: a cross with a bible verse.

According to should-itattoo.com, 47% of millennials had at least one tattoo. This number is much higher than it's ever been. Millennial acceptance of tattoos is a new occurrence, but many older people feel aversion towards visible tattoos, especially for adults in the workforce. This is partly because being tattooed belonged to a certain class that people didn't want to be involved with. Nowadays, many older tattooed millennials and Gen Xers work re-

spectable jobs.

Tonya Bechtel works as an auditor at Pfizer, a biopharmaceutical company. Bechtel has four tattoos, each with a special connection to something in her life, and she believes young people should do what they please with their bodies. Due to disapproval from her family, she did not get tattoos until she was older. "I wanted to find the 'new me' and did not care what people thought of me," Bechtel said. Her first tattoo was two butterflies, representative of her daughters and their strength and freedom. Having tattoos is significant to Tonya; representative of a changing life and exciting future full of her passions.

Having tattoos needs to be destigmatized. Many tattoos are small and meaningful, and even if they have no secret story, they are a choice made by someone who wanted them. Having tattoos should not be a roadblock to finding work, especially not in this changing world. □



Eligible seniors register to vote with help of the Make It 100 volunteers.  
Photo: Isabella Ewing

## American Weakness: The Two Party System

**RYAN LANZA,**  
Staff Writer

In America, it is either Republican or Democrat, left or right, red or blue, conservative or liberal. However, there is a large portion of the United States that does not entirely believe in their party's guidelines, leading to many people feeling misrepresented. Despite this, United States citizens stick to these parties because they believe if they vote for how they feel in their heart, their vote will not matter.

The ideals of these two parties, Democrat and Republican, are the only ones that remain prevalent in American politics. However, if third party candidates, who introduce new solutions and allow the legislative process to flow more smoothly, become increasingly influential, the actual change which would occur in America would be insurmountable.

The moderates of these two parties are left in the dark as the politicians they elect adhere to the extremist values of their party exclusively. The two-party system continues to cause division between Americans because it has turned into a sports-like rivalry as the ha-

tried between both sides continues to increase.

People may argue that having a two party system in America is essential due to the fact that it can allow voters to have an easier ability to make decisions. While for some this may be true, the majority of Americans believe the two options they have to choose from is all there is, which is false. While no one candidate fits the exact wants and needs of every individual American citizen, many think they do not have the ability to vote for what they believe in and are instead forced to pick from the pool of candidates that only cling to the general ideals of their party.

Others claim that America was made for a two party system where ideas can run freely and the people have a party to fall back on should they want to. Although America was made for a two party system, it has turned into nothing but hate-mongering division where nothing can be passed or changed due to the strong loyalty people have to their party.

Our politicians are failing to work together and pass legislation as there are no more bipartisan talks anymore. If a politician does not

adhere to every single one of their party's policies, they are seen as a traitor to the party and will most likely not be re-elected in their next run for the office they hold.

Despite the current two-party system, the number of Libertarians is increasing. In fact, according to the party's website, it has increased by 92% in the past decade. Once the newer generations of America become involved in politics and bright, innovative people with bipartisan ideas become the majority versus the minority, the cooperative, clear-minded Americans will welcome them with open arms.

More and more young people in America do not agree with every policy their party stands for and have started to become more moderate over the years, as proven by staggering numbers The Pew Research Center found when they conducted studies on the average Gen-Z political view, roughly 62% of the Gen Z population believe increasing racial and ethnic diversity in society is a positive thing.

It is a new era in America and once the hatred and division caused by the two-party system is gone, the real change can occur. □

# Keeping Up With The Capital

## Young Adults Need To Become More Politically Active

**MAGGIE KNEE,**  
Opinions Editor

In less than a year, the most anticipated election of our lifetime will occur. Politicians from both parties are relying on a large turnout. The Republicans hope their steady base of older voters stays strong, while Democrats have to hope that the younger generations are getting involved. While The Washington Post reports young voter turnout skyrocketed during the 2018 midterms, is it enough? Are young adults actually fired up for this presidential election? They should be.

A group of students at PV high school are saying it's their time to rock the voting booth. Riley Berrodin, a senior at PV, is part of a student organization called Make It 100, whose main goal is to get all eligible voters registered and informed. "I got involved with Make It 100 because voting is our right and our school does not do enough to prepare students to participate," Berrodin said. Around 300 students will be eligible to vote by the primaries. With generation Z making up 1 in 10 voters, getting them registered and ready to vote is of the utmost importance.

However, many young people are choosing to stay home on election day, or just aren't passionate or sure enough about the election. Despite record turnout amongst young voters in 2018, many can't find time to engage themselves in the messy conversation of politics. Mackenzie Overholser is also a senior, and is eligible to vote in 2020, but she is less enthusiastic overall. "It will all depend on how the rest of the campaign goes," she said, "I want to wait to make a decision until I know what they want to do with their presidency."

Lawmakers understand the importance of the young vote. Congresswoman Madeleine Dean represents the district Perkiomen Valley is in. "I worry about those who say 'oh my vote doesn't count, my voice doesn't count,'"

Dean said. "We have to do everything we can...to make sure that everybody does participate, that you're registered to vote, and that your voice is heard, and know who you're voting for!" This next election is about young people's future. This next election helps decide the way it'll go. "I hope young people recognize the precious nature of our constitution... and support people who want to uphold the rule of law," stressed Dean.

The congresswoman also expressed worry about the anxiety surrounding the election. In a world where politics is talked about 24 hours a day, escaping the drama can be near impossible. For those who wish to stay out of the fray, they have to go deeper and deeper into isolation from the issues. This is a dangerous mindset. Choosing not to vote is choosing to not change anything. If there is an issue someone feels passionate about, they need to vote for a candidate who backs them. This is not a partisan issue; it does not matter what party a voter registers for. Getting involved in any way is better than standing on the side doing nothing.

Early in November, 115.1 million votes were cast for House of Representative elections, an increase of 45% from the last midterm election cycle. A large part of that was young voters. There is viable proof that every vote matters, and it only takes a couple to swing a result. There is no shame in standing up for important topics and trying to make any change at all.

Students who wish to learn more can visit Make It 100's Instagram page (@makeit100). They can also get involved at the local level by volunteering on elections days to hand out pamphlets and help set up voting locations. Young people have the lowest voter turnout rate, but with everyone's vote, no matter who it's for, Perkiomen Valley can help change the statistics. □

Sources: theatlantic.com, washingtonpost.com, brookings.edu

## Woodstock and Punk Rock: Boy Bands

**GENEVIEVE GIAMMARCO,**  
Copy Editor

Whether they're on the radio, sung in the hallway, or used in an impromptu comic scene, boy bands have managed to remain relevant in pop culture through the years, developing with the times and adapting to new trends. Characterized as a group of young men whose pop sound is targeted to young females, boy bands were mainstream in the 1990s and early 2000s, like the Backstreet Boys, who have been recently utilized for moments of comic relief in movies and TV shows.

The reason for their recurrence is all due to the image of the bands rather than the music. "The label becomes the niche." Dr. Gelman, music expert, says.

"Boy bands," he explains, have a strength in marketing that sells well to the younger audiences purely from the 'cuteness factor' of their appearance. Take

Britney Spears, for example, [who had] no talent but made into a sensation as a pop star through Hollywood. It's the same for boy bands." Gelman claims.

Despite their appearance for the stage, boy bands have not ceased to be present in music. More modern bands have even found international success with K-Pop bands like BTS keeping the sound alive through the introduction of new cultural influences, unlike the British and American bands of the previous decades. Still, the "cuteness factor" applies to contemporary boy bands, including BTS, by keeping to a specific and simple look that attracts audiences based on the appearance of each member.

Of course, some boy bands cannot say the same, rather working with nostalgia from years of high fame, like NSYNC and the Backstreet Boys, now consisting of adult men. The reunion of the Jonas Brothers, though, occurred at

such a time where they kept the same look and even innovated their sound to fit modern trends of pop, capturing fans both old and new.

Though revival and innovation may be the new trend of boy bands, it won't stop any given person from singing along to the boy bands of the past. □

Sources: Billboard.com, Cheatsheet.com, Nypost.com



K-pop band BTS is leading the reinvigoration of boy bands.  
Source: BigHit Entertainment



# THE LAST WORD

## Should Student Athletes Be Given Leeway in Academics?

**IMANI SIMPSON,**  
Sports Editor

**YES,** Student athletes should be given leeway.

Time: some waste it and some spend it wisely. As a student-athlete, I feel we do not have all the time in the world. Between academics and the field, it's hard to balance our life and everything that comes with it.

Every day, players face difficult situations in order to entertain their audience. To fulfill everyone's needs, we athletes have to work 24/7. Whether it's with our team on the field or by ourselves in our home, we put our bodies through the extreme for an ideal outcome.

I participate in track & field from November to May. That is about 135 hours for both winter and spring seasons combined. I am only a high school student. What about the average college athlete? A college athlete works at their sport about 40 hours a week, which is comparable to a full-time job. Having privilege as an athlete shouldn't be seen as a "cheat code" in school. No one is taking our exams for us and no one is doing the actual application on the work for us.

So what if someone takes the notes for us or if we get an extended time? We are putting in our time regardless at some point in the classroom. Besides, most stu-

dent-athletes' goal in college is to make it into the professional league. Though the chances are slim, they have to put the effort in to even get close to that point. It's not likely for you to become a professional straight out of high school.

No matter what sport one commits to, the passion for it has to be unequalled. That passion has to be recognizable to the audience.

entertainment and the fans. This might be hard to take in, but about 64% of Americans watch NFL Football compared to other entertainment. America broadcasts a national event in a select city where athletes' talents are presented and judged.

Not to belittle musicians and others, but those are statistics. It's that pressure that makes the athlete want to put their sport above anything else. The pressure of knowing that everyone is watching and the institution is pouring all their money and time to host games and practices gives you that "die-hard" mentality.

The idea of tutors helping athletes shouldn't be bothersome. Their job is to help students that need it. Athletes play an average of 4 games a month. That is not

a lot of time being taken out of the tutor's schedule. They signed up knowing what they were getting into. Having a couple of days to turn in work shouldn't be seen as absurd. These tutors are not going to waste.

If a professional opportunity is not achieved by the end of their college career, at least an opportunity in the workforce will be. In college, students are offered a degree-completion program from the NCAA. The rates of student-athletes graduating is higher compared

to the student body. Nine out of ten Division I athletes graduate with a bachelor's degree. We are putting all of our energy physically and mentally into our workouts and games. If we are given an extra day, why not take it?

"I need extended deadlines - especially when we participate in [advanced] sports after school," Lorenzo Delacruz, a Track runner, said.

"I don't get home until after nine o'clock pm and [I] have to shower and get myself together and still have a remaining three to four hours of homework to do," he adds. It's not that athletes

don't care about school. The fact that they're using the privileges as a resource shows that school is not just a gateway to their future dreams of competing professionally. Let us not forget, in order to continue playing our beloved sport, we must maintain a certain grade average.

A true athlete is not going to let their dreams be blown away just because they did not have the mental stamina to complete a six page essay overnight.

Being a student-athlete means commitment. Though it might seem as though we are babied by society, what we go through can't be matched. Even if we do not make it Pro or to the big leagues, training your mind and body to juggle school, life, and sports is truly an admirable accomplishment. We obtain time management and emotional management skills, perseverance, and so much more. Not having a stable foundation to rely on only sets us up for mental and physical disaster. □

Source: ncaa.org



**MAGGIE KNEE,**  
Opinions Editor

**NO,** Student athletes should not be given leeway.

The title "student athlete" is a misnomer. An NCAA study showed at least 60% of students identified more as athletes than as students. With only a 1 in 25 chance of making it to the big leagues, perhaps students should focus more on their studies and not rely on athletic skill getting them through college. Student athletes should not be given academic leeway, not because it is unfair to the student who has to take their notes and tutors them, but because it creates a false sense of security and doesn't prepare them for the working world.

The graduation rates of student athletes are worryingly low. While the NCAA reports that 80% of athletes are graduating, that's not the whole story. What they don't report is the difference between part-time and full-time students. When that difference is considered, there is a gap of 20.6% in male basketball players alone. Also, graduating doesn't mean "graduated in good standing". Many athletic graduates finish school with much lower

grades than their peers.

The main source of this problem is the benefits players receive. Many athletic centers employ student or professional tutors to catch athletes up. These tutors have to work around busy sports schedules. Most of these tutors are other students, who already have their own workload and schedule.

The fairness of this issue is not up for debate, however having an on-call tutor that comes to you and teaches you all that you have missed is somewhat harmful. Athletes will become accustomed to having their

missed work completed and ready for them when they find time to collect it. Since the chance of going pro is only 2%, many athletes have to enter the workforce. This tutor/athlete relationship is unlike any workplace dynamic they will ever encounter and

hinders them from developing a good work ethic.

This isn't the students fault. From a young age, they were probably told how gifted they were and how they don't need to worry about college because they will receive a full ride. In reality, around 2% of high schoolers are offered full rides to division I or II schools. This means the students who perhaps slacked off and didn't achieve what they could now struggle to compete with other college applicants.

This contributes to why athletes feel more stressed out than others. An Athletic Insight study found that student athletes reported higher than average stress levels on certain factors, not including bodily appearance or social isolation. Athletes are aware they are physically fit and can make friends through the team, but those two attributes won't carry them through life.

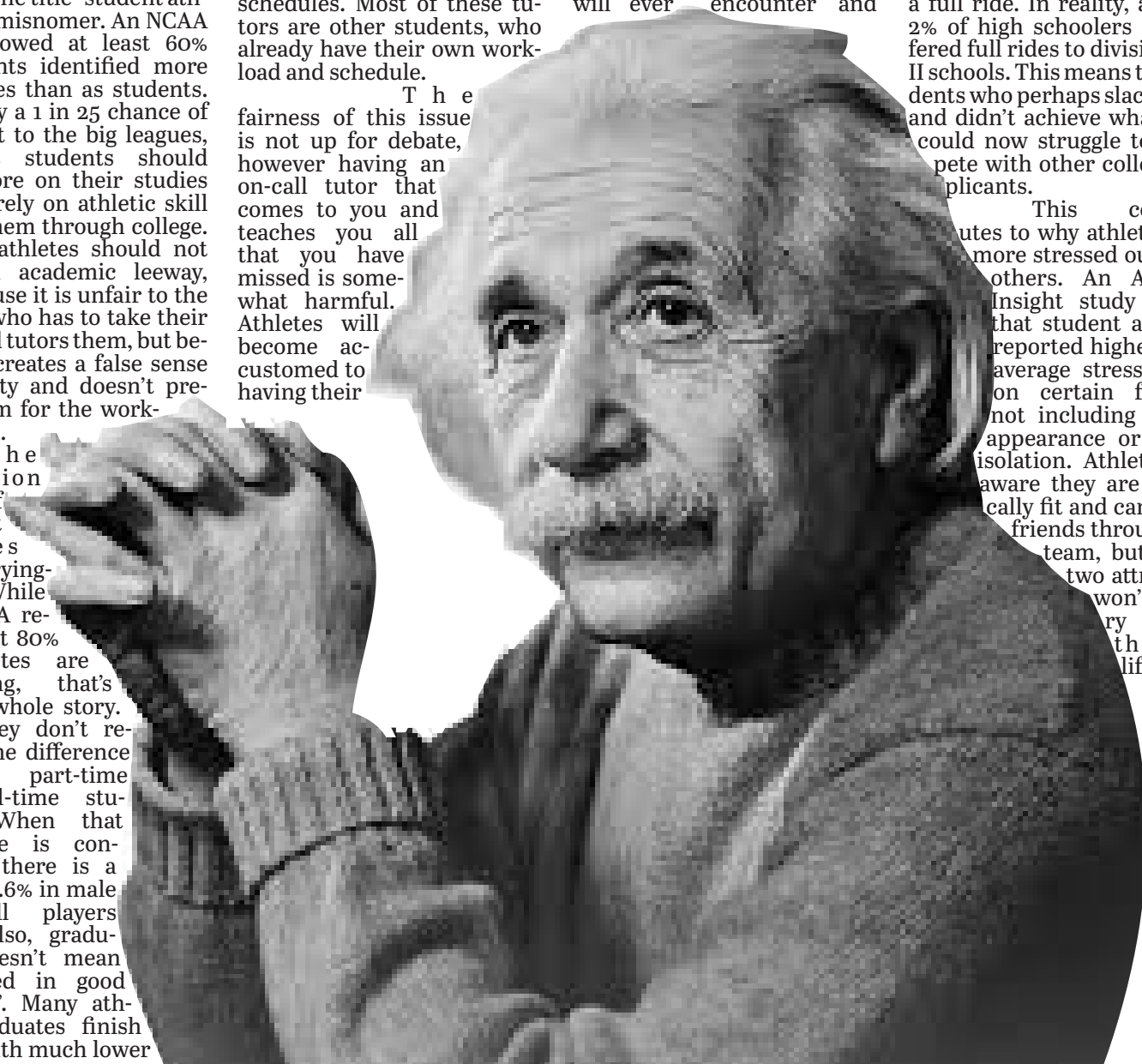
It's mentally healthy to have strong body positivity, but having high stress levels for any reason is detrimental to mental health.

Additionally, getting a job after college can be difficult, whether the student graduated or not. The good news is playing sports teaches people to be competitive and good team-players. Unfortunately, young athletes lack the ability to focus on one subject for very long. Athletes are made to move around and interact during high speed, high intensity situations. Sitting at a desk all day is naturally harder for them.

Also, as part of their scholarship, many athletes can't participate in internships while at college, which help young adults acclimate to a work environment and get resume experience. Combined with their part-time education, the majority of ex-college athletes entering the workforce have less experience and in-school time than their competition.

One way to fix this problem is to fix the mindset. Athletes need to be reminded that they may end up working the rest of their lives. Advisors need to push students to consider backup plans and explore their interests outside of sports. Offering leeway and excuses only worsens the situation. Athletes should continue to dream about playing for their favorite team, but they should also work hard to maintain a good reputation on and off the court. □

Source:  
bestcollegesonline.org  
athleticbusiness.com  
ncaa.org  
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# Snow on the Track

**GENEVIEVE GIAMMARCO,**  
Senior Copy Editor

Though the weather may be blistering cold, the athletes of winter track and field will still be outside preparing for the spring season by building strength, habits, and techniques in order to qualify for PACs. Since winter is preseason, training and improving for the competition is the main focus of practice, and weather cannot be an obstacle for the team; motivation must be high and work must get done regardless of the temperature or impending storm.

Luckily, the team had a good attitude right from the start.

"Everyone seems pretty positive, at least, and everyone wants to work hard and they're determined to do better and do what needs to be done in order to be successful." Melicka Jean-Noel, a senior sprinter, remarked during the first week of the season. Melicka was also excited for the team when she saw new faces that could lead to a successful season. As one of the few female sprinters, she was also glad to see more female runners that hopefully stick to the team.

The team is very big as it has with numerous athletes in each event, whether running, jumping, throwing, or pole vaulting. But the teamwork and support really keep the team focused on working hard.

"Our teammates are really positive and we help each other out with runs," Daniel Hayman, a junior long-distance runner, commented. Being part of long-distance, Daniel and his teammates run outside every practice together, always encouraging and supporting one another both on and off the track.

A notable trait of the

track and field team is how hard they work, and having an open, supportive community aids this strong work ethic.

"We give it our best and are really committed to our workouts... we try our hardest," senior Megan Raab said on the work ethic of the sprinters.

Considering the dedication of the team, all the athletes have prospects for the outcomes of the spring season where the weekly meets will give a chance for PACs.

"The season is off to a good start, but we definitely have a lot of work to do if we want to accomplish all the things we accomplished last season," Isabelle Rumberger, a junior thrower said, in reference to the beginning of the season where routines and goals are set before improvement can be achieved.

Despite the future of the team, there are still obstacles in the way for success. Though Coach Petsko noticed the great turnout of new and old athletes as well the work of the team establishing a very good foundation and outlook, he also acknowledged the problems that may come later in the season.

"[A way to improve for Spring] would be grinding through the winter season... it is really long and we need to make sure we don't lose faces by the end," Petsko said. In addition to the long process of the preseason, he also noted that there was a loss of highly skilled athletes and the obvious difference in the number of girls running compared to that of boys. While lots of improvements are needed, Petsko did believe in the success of the team and had the same aspirations as the athletes.

Overall, the winter track season is helping the track and field team prepare for another successful spring season, and they look forward to warmer days ahead. □



Mike Dougherty stands alone as the only senior on the basketball court.  
Photo: Isabella Ewing

## Team of Underclassmen

### Mike Dougherty stands alone as the only senior on the basketball court

**CHRISTIAN SUAREZ,**  
Sports Editor

Mike Dougherty is the typical high school kid at Perkiomen Valley High school. But there is one thing that makes him stand out on the basketball court: Mike is the only senior basketball player.

"I have been playing ball for as long as I can remember. I started at about 5 years old," Dougherty said.

Dougherty was not always the only player in his class. There was a freshman team for the class of '20 and Dougherty and Jon Moccia were on the JV teams during their freshman year. However, for the past two years, no other players have been part of the school basketball team except for Mike Dougherty.

Being the only senior can place a lot of pressure on the shoulders of an athlete, even more so when one is the

only player of their age; there are more expectations from coaches and more guidance needed for fellow teammates.

"It is a different experience for sure but it is definitely something that I can handle. Because I'm the only senior I'd say it is definitely important for me serve as a role model and lead the younger guys to the best of my ability," Dougherty explained.

Despite all of the pressure, Dougherty has been a true leader and key component of the team. He brings a real sense of leadership and determination to every game and practice.

"Mike is the type of player that every coach loves to work with. He comes into practice and competition with the constant mindset of improvement and hard work," Coach Poysden said.

However, when it comes to any sport, the chem-

istry and understanding teammates have with one another can be just as important, if not more than, individual skill or talent.

"I have known Mike since my freshman year. He is a great guy and is always great for myself and my other teammates to be around," his teammate Kam Parks said.

Dougherty has also made a great bond with the team managers Abby Cooper and Morgan Pierce.

"Mike has always been a really great player for the team and an amazing teammate. He is a really fun and friendly guy to manage," Abby Cooper said.

Dougherty plans to go out with a bang this year for his senior season. One thing is for sure: he has a lot of people around him supporting him and he will continue to be a leader and role model player. □



Student-Athletes prep during the Winter season meets for the chance at PACs in the Spring season.  
Photo: Max Krantz



The boys basketball team works hard with Mike Dougherty leading as the only senior player.  
Photos: Isabella Ewing



The winter track team strengthens their athletics and team bond during the winter season.  
Photo: Isabella Ewing



# Swim Coaches Help Improve Team



**INES ALTEMOSE,**  
Staff Writer

The swimming and diving teams for Perkiomen Valley are active parts of the school's athletic community. The coaches of these teams are equally as vital to the sport as the members involved in the activities.

Mitchell Zackowski, more commonly known as Coach Mitch by those on his team, is the head coach of the swimming team at Perkiomen Valley. Coach Mitch has been coaching PV swim for three years now. In 2003, before coming to PV, he started his own USA swimming team called the Tiger Sharks in Pottstown.

Coach Mitch began to swim his junior year in high school and then went on to get a full ride scholarship to La Salle University and swam throughout college.

"My favorite parts of coaching is seeing my kids become successful," Mitch said. He also likes to see his athletes continue swimming after they graduate from PV and eventually coming back to help him coach later.

Coach Mitch believes he has a few swimmers with the potential of making it to states and even more swimmers with the potential of making it to districts this year. Across the board, Coach Mitch is very well liked by his swimmers.

Olivia Palubinski, an 8th year swimmer and sophomore at PV, says "I think he's a hardworking coach who cares a lot about his athletes. He

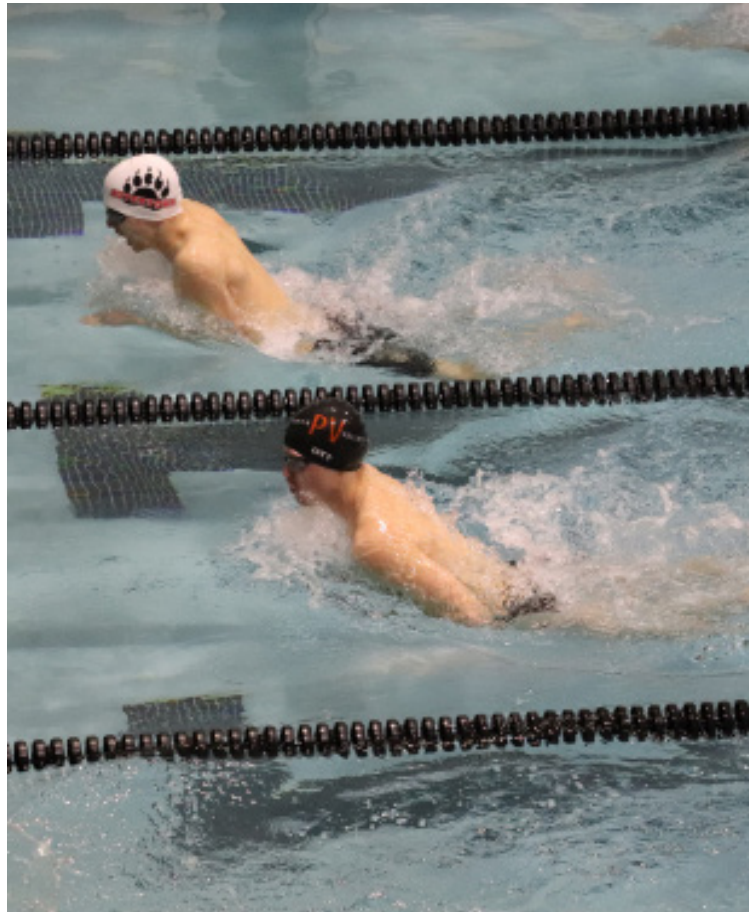
puts a lot of thought and time into our practices so we can get the most out of our time in the pool."

Mary Rubino, a second year swimmer and sophomore at PV, has similar beliefs. "He is a very good coach and a really nice person. He definitely tries to make everyone a better person and swimmer."

Ben Incolingo, a cur-

rent swimmer and sophomore, says "He's a good coach and always makes us work hard to become the best we can be."

The swimmers of PV's appreciation of their engaged and hardworking coaches shows in their efforts and goals. Students can support the swimmers at their next meet on the 23rd of January at the high school! □



Swimmer Devon Ott faces off against a Boyertown swimmer in a breaststroke.  
Photo: Max Krantz

# Girls Basketball Broken Down



**EVAN REISER**  
Sports Editor

In the last few years there is no doubt that we have seen some of the best years from PV girls basketball in history, that included two deep district runs and a state playoff appearance. Last year's team could not repeat that success and fell short of a 2018-2019 playoff spot. Despite last year's miss of the postseason Coach Sorber is excited for this season, she feels they have a good squad that will find themselves making a playoff run like the ones we saw two and three years ago.

The players feel the

same, with a strong starting five consisting of Gabby Marinacci, Naiya Daisy, Emma Miley, Kylie Monoco and Lily Sherman.

Forward Kylie Monaco said, "Most of the PAC teams lost a lot of the starting 5, this will definitely be an interesting and good year for us with the PAC championship really up for grabs."

With the other teams in the PAC losing key seniors to graduation the four PAC playoff spots remain as huge question marks. There is no doubt to the PV girls as well as the rest of the PAC knows openings and will provide a dawg fight for those spots and than the Championship.

As the girls look for a championship they can't help to find fun. The PV girls basketball team is one of the goofiest on campus. Coach Sorber talked about how the fun environment, although leading to distractions sometimes, causes the team to practice with an energy that as Coach Sorber says "Prepares them for when things go poorly in the game."

The girls basketball team remains in the playoff hunt as we enter the back half of the season. With a big win over Upper Merion on senior night it will be fun to see what the girls can do down the stretch to make a run for a PAC championship. □



The PV girls basketball team is optimistic for a great 2019-2020 season, and stay in the playoff hunt  
Photo: Lily Ternak



Perkiomen Valley wrestler grapples for control over Bishop McDevitt High wrestler.  
Photo: Isabella Ewing

## Mythbusters: Wrestling Edition



**ISABELLA EWING,**  
Photography Editor

Tables being smashed, WWE Smackdown, and masks: everything high school wrestling is not. High school wrestling, compared to this, is very tame. The type of wrestling that schools and the Olympics partake in is thought to be the oldest sport dating fifteen to twenty thousand years old.

Wrestling is a delicate sport. Athletes try to overpower each other, but there is a delicate balance between overdoing it and doing enough. In a sport like wrestling, where it is very physically and mentally challenging, these athletes are in a position where if they push themselves too much, it could result in serious side effects.

Such can be said for any sport because all sports can go to the extremes and end in serious problems. When wrestling comes up in conversation most think about the unhealthy weight loss, the mats, bloody noses, and concussions.

Before 1997, there were no set standards for weight loss. Teams could do what they thought was necessary. The NCAA changed this rule after three healthy wrestlers died due to multi-organ failure. All wrestling programs are now required to follow these standards and track everything.

The new rules prohibit the usage of "vapor-impermeable suits and similar devices, saunas, hot boxes, steam rooms, laxatives, emetics, excessive food and fluid restriction, self-induced vomiting, diuretics, use of any artificial means of rehydration, and wrestling room temperatures higher than 80°."

At Perkiomen Valley, coaches and trainers alike take care to keep the athletes healthy. The most expected injuries from wrestlers at PV are mat burns and bloody noses. Head trainer Ms. Kori Wilson says to resolve these issues, the injured athlete is given a nose plug for their nose and for a mat burn apply cool water on it, antibiotic cream, and then a bandage.

Head Coach Mr. Dubbs adds that all athletes undergo a hydration test, which is basically a urine sample. The test results reveal many health components such as potassium levels, red and white blood cells, nitrogen, ketone bodies, and sugars.

Coaches suggest that a wrestler drinks 16-24 ounce

es of water extra for every pound lost, which is why the wrestlers walk around with a lot of water. Also, the initial weight of each wrestler is what determines each weight loss plan. Which stated before is a safer and nationally acknowledged program with the main goal of a safe way for the wrestlers to lose, gain, or maintain their weight.

A hydration test takes place a couple of weeks before the start of wrestling and a weigh-in takes place before every meet about an hour to forty-five minutes before the start. The weigh-ins are just too make sure that the athlete is still in the weight class they entered as and that they are not too heavy.

Wrestling takes a lot mentally and physically from an athlete. Coach Dubbs says, "For the newer guys it is definitely more of a physical game. They have to adapt, they have to teach their bodies to know how to appropriately react. When you get to a higher level it is definitely more mentally difficult because it is more of a grind, more grueling. You already know the technique but you have to go through it again and again and again, which can be very wearing mentally."

Mr. Walsh who was a wrestler years ago claims that the sport is different from when he was an athlete. The sport has changed in a much healthier way. "Like many sports there is a bigger emphasis on concussion prevention and being safe. Wrestling popularity is decreasing because it is hard, mentally and physically, and not many are exposed to it on TV."

Senior wrestler Jake Sterling says that the sport is "More mental because you are always going to want to eat but your body does not need the food because according to biology and chemistry your body will make sugars out of its own fat helping you lose the weight itself."

At the end of the day wrestling is not a well known sport but the athletes put so much of themselves into the sport. Creating a love-hate relationship in order to grow as a person and athlete. No matter what is said about the sport these athletes should be acknowledged for their dedication to continue in a sport that is both mentally and physically challenging. □

Sources: Sports Health, IHSA Statistics



# TREADING ON THIN ICE INSIDE SPORTS

**AMELIA HARRIS,**  
Staff Writer

The PV Puck Hockey team is just one of many youth hockey leagues in the area. Districts like Perkiomen Valley, Spring-Ford and Boyertown have teams formed independently from their schools' funded activities.

The reason these sports don't get the same recognition from their schools is because of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA), which doesn't allow for schools to have sports teams like ice hockey.

But a problem has arisen at these hockey games, often played on Friday nights at Oaks Center Ice. As tensions rise between opposing teams, it's not uncommon for a fight to break out; whether on the ice between players, or post-game between students in the parking lots. Objects varying from water bottles to shoes have been thrown between

students in the stands.

This chaos has become a common occurrence at the games, so often that the team's official twitter account (@PVPuck) released a statement warning their players and fans to control their behavior, saying, "If things DO NOT CHANGE students will no longer be allowed at games."

Brennon McCourt, the varsity head coach for three years now, has also expressed his concern for the issue.

"I love the crowd sizes and the intensity that the hockey games draw. I think we have the best student section in the PAC, but the antics that occur during and after the games take away from what the student athletes are accomplishing on the ice."

"You can be loud and crazy but there is a line you don't cross and unfortunately we have crossed that line a couple times," he said.

Since the team has no affiliation to the school, there is nothing the school can do to

step in and put a stop to any of this.

"Since we have no connection to the ice hockey team, I couldn't speak to what happens... unfortunately it is what it is," Larry Glanski, director of sports at PV, said.

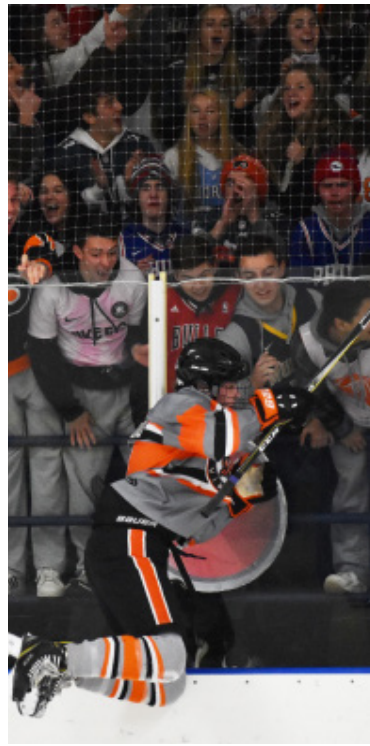
However, varsity player Hunter Ringwood believes that there are not as many fights as people say.

"Of our 18 games during the year, there are at most 3 fights after the games in the parking lot."

But Ringwood also explains that the crowd excitement is a vital part of the game.

"The energy is awesome during the games and that's what gets us going," he says.

Only time will tell whether or not the students learn to control themselves or further precautions need to be taken. Until then, it is uncertain how many more fights will occur and how bad the situation could get. □



Senior Hunter Ringwood slams into the glass exciting the crowd.  
Photo: Isabella Ewing

**Basketball | Page 14**  
**MIKE DOUGHERTY LEADS BOYS TEAM AS ONLY SENIOR**



**Swimming | Page 15**  
**COACH AND SWIMMER BONDS HOLD TEAM TOGETHER**



**Wrestling | Page 15**  
**IS THIS NOTORIOUSLY DANGEROUS SPORT THAT BAD?**



If fights in the student section and after the games continue, students may no longer be allowed to attend.  
Photo: Max Krantz

## SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

### Elizabeth Glazman

**What Sport do you play?**  
Water Polo

**What is your favorite thing about water polo?**  
Having a team that will always support me in and out of the pool.

**What is your favorite memory from Water Polo?**  
Dancing in the locker room on senior night before our game.

**What colleges are you looking at?**  
University of South Carolina, Washington and Jefferson, Drexel

**If you could attend a sporting event you were not able to, what event would it be?**  
2016 Olympics when the women's water polo team won Gold.



### Jake Sturm

**What Sport do you play?**  
Wrestling

**What is your favorite thing about Wrestling?**  
Spending time grinding and hanging with my teammates.

**What is your favorite memory from Wrestling?**  
Coming back from a 20-3 lead against Spring-Ford and winning the PAC

**What colleges are you looking at?**  
Kutztown, Bentley, Misericordia, Dickinson

**If you could attend a sporting event you were not able to, what event would it be?**  
Super Bowl because it is the biggest football game of the year.

