



PERKIOMEN VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL'S



THE VOICE



November 2022 VOLUME XXXIV, No. 2 COLLEGEVILLE, PA 19426 PVVOICE.COM

Equity policy here to stay

Renewed focus on equity leads to forming task force

EVAN KENNY
STAFF WRITER

On Oct. 11, Policy 832 was reaffirmed in a five to three vote. The policy covers educational equity which is meant to provide students of Perkiomen Valley the opportunity to achieve their full educational and social potential now and in the future.

Over the summer, a task force worked on updating the policy to better fit the current school district. Certain parts of the policy such as the definitions of implicit and explicit bias were removed upon the revisions. However, when the updated policy was presented, the majority of the community did not agree with the revisions.

"Initially, the task force that met this summer focused on policy language," said Dr. Russell, the superintendent of the Perkiomen Valley School District. "We learned from our community that the language should remain exactly as is, and the focus of any task force should shift to one that develops an action plan. As

a result of the discussions in public and at the board level, the administration recommended the shift in the work from a focus on policy language to developing an action plan and the majority of the school board agreed."

Along with members of the community, it is also important for some members of the board to protect the policy.

"When Policy 832 was first questioned in May 2022 at a Policy meeting, it felt like a punch in the gut," said Sarah Evans-Brockett, one of the school board members. "When I saw the revisions that came out of discussions from the task force, my worries were confirmed. The new proposed policy really watered down the original language. The problem for me is that this policy wasn't written for everyone in the community. This policy was written for minority students, brown and black students, LGBTQIA+ students, non English-speaking students, and economically disadvantaged students. Those students face inequities every day, and they don't have time to wait for the rest of the community to get where they are and have been."

Moving forward, an equity task force will be devel-



Policy 832 was adopted August 12, 2020. PV hopes that this policy will spread opportunity and equity throughout the Valley.

PHOTO: CARLY RICHTER

oped to make an action plan for the language of Policy 832 per the superintendent reports. The new action plan will be presented to the school board prior to June 2023. The task force hopes to consist of various members of the com-

munity like teachers, support staff, administrators, students, parents, and business members.

"In the long run, I'm actually glad this policy was brought up for discussion again," Evans-Brockett said.

"This has renewed our focus on equity and the work that we need to do. These can't just be words on a paper. We need to do more for all of our students in Perkiomen Valley."

Homecoming: return of Lenape Tribe to their ancestral land

GEORGIA LOLADZE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Each kilometer of the race was dedicated to the five federally recognized Lenape tribes: The Delaware Nation, Delaware Tribe of Indians, Delaware Nation at Moraviantown, Stockbridge-Munsee Community, and Munsee-Delaware Nation.

PHOTO: MRS. BRECHT

On Oct. 15, the rhythmic sound of beating drums echoed throughout Middle School East's campus. People gathered around to listen to the honor song of the Lenape people, with the autumnal leaves acting as the perfect backdrop for this momentous occasion.

This was the opening

ceremony of the PVSD Foundation 5k Color Run: a drum circle dedicated to the Lenape Tribe. The previous Kagey Road, now named 5 Tammanund Circle, represents the five federally recognized Lenape Tribes and Tammanund, a prominent Chief in Lenape history.

"I think the dedication

helps all of us to realize the value in partnerships and diversity for our community, exposing students and learning about the lives, the cultures, and experiences of others. So, I think that brings real value to all that we offer as a school district," Superintendent Dr. Russell said.

The Perkiomen Valley

School District Foundation has been the main contributor to getting this race started. In collaboration with PV Woods, a 5k race was devised on Oct. 15th, the day of the high school's homecoming, to showcase the newly developed trails in Lenape Arboretum.

"We chose homecoming weekend because we thought it was very appropriate to invite the Lenape people back as a kind of a homecoming for PV woods as well as the Lenape people," Kristin Craven, the Executive Director of the PVSD Foundation said.

The race allowed people to get active, enjoy the beauty of the outdoors, and immerse themselves in the Lenape culture. Every kilometer of the race was dedicated to a specific Lenape Tribe, and all of the trees in the arboretum have the Lenape name with a QR code to scan leading to a video of the correct pronunciation.

Jeremy Johnson, the Cultural Education Direc-

tor of the Delaware Tribe of Indians, was present at the dedication ceremony and said, "Wanishi," which means thank you, to the community involved.

"To see this is something that I would not have imagined a year ago," Johnson said. "I think it is going to stand a long time as a great reminder of who we are as Lenape people and be a great reminder of the relationships we are rebuilding in our original homelands."

As the Lenape Arboretum expands and more Lenape return to Pennsylvania, more opportunities to restore a vibrant culture and foster stronger relationships present themselves.

The arboretum and the road dedication are the first steps in revitalizing a culture that has been forcefully erased throughout history. Representation matters, and being able to showcase the Lenape tribe is a powerful statement.

Photography company promises a “personal touch”

CLAUDIA CARUSO
STAFF WRITER

At the start of the 2022-2023 school year, Perkiomen Valley High School welcomed Showstopper Photography for yearbook portraits and sports photoshoots.

Up until last spring, the high school was under contract with Lifetouch for all school-related photography. However, input from parents and students over the years led the school administration to switch companies, and after interviewing four potential vendors, Showstopper was chosen.

“We were looking for a company who could provide a quality product for a good price, a company with a personal touch and good customer service,” Dr. Moss,

the lead principal of the high school said.

As opposed to Lifetouch with studios throughout the United States and Canada, Showstopper is local to eastern PA with its headquarters in Pottstown, PA. The shift from Lifetouch to Showstopper reflects a wider, growing focus on supporting local businesses over large corporations, especially post-pandemic when personal connections have become more important than ever before.

“We build these relationships, and they like it, and we like it. It’s just a more personal service,” said Mr. Murphy, the owner of Showstopper Photography.

While relationships behind the scenes between administrators

are vital for facilitating business, the relationships built between students and photographers are just as important. Photographers are an extension of their business and its values, and Showstopper continues to commit to its promise of personal service through its hiring process. Showstop-

“We build these relationships, and they like, and we like it. It’s just a more personal service.”

per requires all of its photographers to have worked professionally with children for at least 2 years. The results of this decision are reflected in students’ positive experiences.

“It was great [and] everyone was super

nice,” said Elyse Tancini, a senior who received her portraits from Showstopper.

Alongside personal connections, a critical aspect of the school administration’s decision-making process was affordability. When deciding whether or not to order pictures, the price tag is often a

deal-breaker for families.

“Showstopper has quality products reasonably priced. I like the fact that they are a local company,” Dr. Moss said. “Sometimes big companies can’t focus on individual accounts.”

Showstopper is able to sell affordably-priced pictures for families because of the lack of corporate overhead that is inevitable with a larger company; this is another way Showstopper uses its smaller size and scale to the benefit of its customers.

This first year with Showstopper acts as a trial run as only a one-year contract was entered. Assuming Showstopper is able to commit to its promise of a personal touch, students and families can expect Showstopper’s services in the future.



Showstopper staff having fun and messing around while taking a picture. The company recently took over the photography contract at the school.
PHOTO: SHOWSTOPPERS

Bus driver shortage causes students to miss class

JOHANNA CORKEY
STAFF WRITER

Students and staff at Perkiomen Valley School District have felt the startling effects of an issue with the commute to and from school.

Many students have received messages

from the district informing them that their buses will be over an hour late, meaning they will miss a majority of their first-period class. This can disrupt the student’s learning experience and can cause academic issues.

For athletics, bus-

es have been arriving hours early or late. This cuts into class time towards the end of the day or keeps students at sporting events long after they finish. This is a major inconvenience for students and athletes.

“It’s harming [their] education. Kids deserve better,” said Isabelle Li, junior at Perkiomen Valley High School. “We should really be emphasizing this issue. I take multiple AP classes and have lots of work to do. Our tax dollars are going towards the buses and nobody is stepping up.”

The bus driver shortage isn’t only affecting the Perkiomen Valley School District, but 88% of schools across the nation as well, according to a survey conducted by HopSkip-Drive, another school bus company. The initial drop in drivers occurred back in 2021 when

schools began to transition back into in-person learning.

“A significant challenge of the driver shortage is that many bus drivers never returned to their jobs when schools reopened after the COVID-19 shutdowns. Some were older and had pre-existing medical conditions, making them at high risk for complications from COVID-19. Others were already nearing retirement and decided it was a good time to make a transition,” said Dan Fiorilli, general manager of the STA.

COVID-19 concerns were a major reason for some bus drivers never returning. But in 2022, even with restrictions dwindling, schools are still struggling to find bus drivers.

“Shortages have been long-standing for the student transportation industry,” Fiorilli

said. “We are tackling the ongoing issue from every possible angle, but this is not a problem unique to our organization; it is a problem facing all companies within the student transportation industry.”

Some drivers found that the pandemic was a good time to leave the industry, especially with the abundance of health concerns. While the absence of these drivers creates obstacles, the STA is doing everything it can to ensure students have the most optimal riding experience.

“STA has worked with our district partners to identify routing efficiencies and any opportunities to maximize driver and bus utilization for reduced ride times for all students. Our goal is always to minimize any potential delays in busing in order to provide safe transportation to all students,”

Fiorilli said.

Overall, there are many issues with recruitment and driving schedules. The lack of passionate, intelligent individuals looking to drive the bus to and from schools every day is causing problems for districts across the nation.

“We understand the importance of maintaining operational readiness and have made significant investments in recruitment initiatives,” Fiorilli said. “We are dedicated to hiring and training new bus drivers to resolve this staffing shortage as quickly as possible and offer fully paid CDL training, flexible schedules, and competitive wages.”

The STA encourages anyone interested in a potential career with the company to visit www.STACareers.com.



Students routinely arrive late to school because of a shortage of drivers. The bus company held a hiring event at the school in October to try and fill some of the vacant spots. PHOTO: MELINA CAVALIERE

Auditorium renovation delay sparks frustrations

RAYNA BURKE
NEWS EDITOR

During recent school board meetings, the board has announced that renovations for the high school auditorium will possibly start to create a better environment for studying and any meetings that take place.

Perkiomen Valley High School’s auditorium is not usually used for much other than some assemblies and study halls. When the whole school must meet all together, either the gym or sometimes even the middle school’s auditorium is used.

“It’s not wel-

coming at all, and it is just very uncomfortable. The lower lighting tends to make it feel sort of dreary and hard to focus in. All of the people I’ve talked to agree that it is just not comfortable in there,” sophomore Isabelle Landis said.

Renovations can, though, be costly. For Perkiomen Valley, the range in price would vary depending on how much the school board plans to renovate and what they are planning to do. Currently, the school board wants to focus on fixing the lighting.

The motion made by Rowan Keenan,

a board member since 2021, states, “Request to approve an amended contract with Pittsburgh Stage Company for electrical work at the HS Auditorium at a COSTARS cost of \$226,355.”

According to Dr. Campli, the board is currently waiting on materials to move forward with the renovations. If they were able to start the renovations during the school year, they would either need to find a different place for students to have study hall, or get it done over the winter or spring break.

“I know the school has planned this out for a while, and it

will be an interruption in study hall and the play and all sorts of activities,” junior Arshia Chhabria said.

The renovations to the auditorium will start with the lighting. The dim atmosphere will change to be one that is productive for school work and potential meetings. The school board now has to find out where the money is coming from and when renovations will truly begin.



The seats are original to the auditorium. Renovations have been discussed during recent school board meetings. PHOTO: HAYDEN BRADY

Senior pursues training to become EMT professional **3**

NOOR KAUR
STAFF WRITER

Perkiomen Valley High School's very own Graham Pozeynot is setting out to pursue his passions this year by completing the Emergency Medical Technician training and is on his way to becoming a trained member of the EMS task force.

While in the hospital with a rare neck condition, Pozeynot was faced with extensive wait times due to a lack of staff.

His experience led him to explore the emergency medicine field and inspired him to take the training.

"I was so influenced by the generous and caring atmosphere of the hospital, as well as the

tremendous impact of these workers in every patient's life. I couldn't help but feel an obligation to contribute in the field," Pozeynot said.

An EMT's responsibility is to provide basic life support to those who need to be transported to the hospital. The training is composed of hands-on practice, as well as online training that will prepare Pozeynot to handle a variety of situations that he may encounter.

Following the completion of his training, around Dec. 19th, he will be eligible to take the NREMT certification exam and progress one step closer to his passion. The exam will test his cognitive and psychomotor skills to qual-

ify him for certification. With this certification, he is anticipating a career in nursing, strictly in the ER setting.

By 2023, Pozeynot will be a certified EMT professional and will be equipped to make his impact in the emergency room.

Pozeynot also has some encouraging advice to give other students who are following a similar career path as him.

"Take the exam not only to pass, but to gain experience and mastery in the field," Pozeynot said.

EMT's are vital to the medical field, so having such a young person so dedicated is a great step for the future.

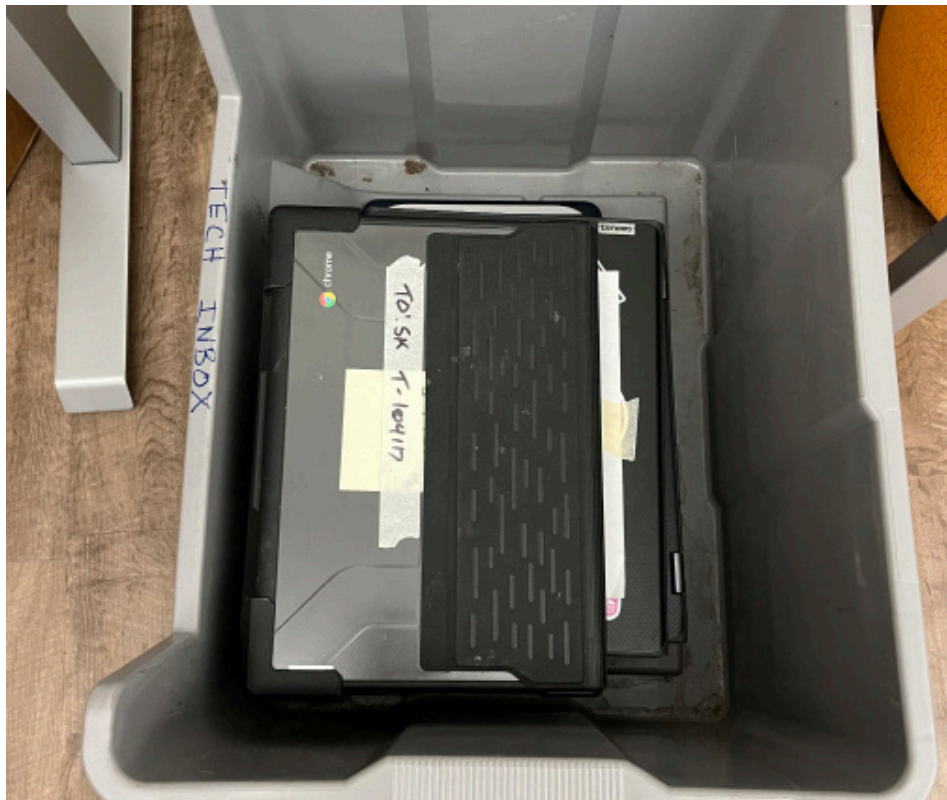


Pozeynot's first day at his internship with the Skippack Ambulance.

PHOTO: GRAHAM POZEYNOT

PV LIFE

Students dumpster dive to recycle technology



The box of broken chromebooks that are set to be repaired by the Viking Genius Bar class.

PHOTO: CARLY DELUCA

GRAHAM POZEYNOT
STAFF WRITER

In August 2022, a couple of Perkiomen Valley students dove deep into the dumpsters at the Middle School East's parking lot to find discarded technology. The dumpsters were filled with the diverse treasures of old projectors, keyboards, and mice.

These students found many valuable items and took home almost every piece of technology that they could find. They even made some money by selling their findings.

"I had 30 keyboards to sell," one of the dumpster divers said.

These profits on supposedly "trash" technology raised suspicion on why these items were

so easily thrown out and not recycled if students found such value in them.

"It cost the school about 1.5 million dollars over the summer to pay for all the new technology," said Mr. Ganesh, the chief information officer.

The state of Pennsylvania requires all schools to participate in a recycling process of some sort. Over the past summer break, PV hired many students to fill gaps in the technology department. Students were required to set up and test new equipment that was to replace the old technology.

"The old equipment was put on trucks for recycling purposes," said Zack Lofton, a student employee over the sum-

mer.

So if the school district claims to recycle old technology, the prolific amount thrown out in the dumpsters could present an issue to individuals who are concerned.

Though it seemed like a waste to some compared to how much technology PV has, the amount in the dumpsters was only a small fraction of how much technology the district owns. Most importantly, according to the chief information officer, the technology that was thrown away was too damaged to be recycled.

"All of the items thrown away were at the end of its warranty and life cycle and were not eligible to be recycled," Mr. Ganesh said.

Commending inclusivity of viking buddies club

CAMERYNN ROOP
PV LIFE EDITOR

The extracurricular club Viking Buddies creates opportunities for students to connect with peers while organizing events that strengthen The Valley's community.

Each month, Viking Buddies hosts events within the club or school-wide. Through this club, buddies and peers form significant friendships.

"Viking Buddies focuses on inclusion for all students. We create a safe environment for all students where we can build friendships and work on communication skills.

"This club is crucial for everyone to feel valued by others," said Alessia Revelli, the president of Viking Buddies.

While the school

offers a similar elective course, Peer Buddies, Viking Buddies endorses social opportunities outside of school. Viking Buddies incentivizes students to attend community activities and form friendships beyond the classroom. Members of Viking Buddies help special education students expand beyond their comfort zones within the campus.

The club plans to continue activities from previous years, such as the Polar Pop, which raises money for the school's Unified Track Team. An approaching club event is the Bocce tournament, one that strives to gain interest for the Unified Bocce team. In addition to larger projects, the club coordinates seasonal activities such as Secret Santa and visiting Santa during the holiday sea-

son.

"We get to participate in fun activities outside of school and at meetings. Also, we can have a buddy that we hang out with and get to know better. It's a great environment to be in and to be able to make new friends," Revelli said.

Students enjoy participating in this club because they create friendships and improve communication skills. Viking Buddies establishes a comfortable atmosphere where students feel safe to enjoy fun activities. Ultimately, Viking Buddies aims for students to feel secure within the entire school.

"The objective of Viking Buddies is to not have to need the club for our special education students to feel included in a meaningful way on

campus. We try to teach through experiences and communication between buddies and their peers," advisor Roche said.

Viking Buddies is enthusiastic about upcoming events and bettering inclusion at the high school. While this club ensures a safe place

for students, it also advocates for students to step outside of their comfort zone on campus.



Matthew Colgan and Isabella Haddad hug at a bocce ball tournament this past fall. Students in Viking Buddies make strong friendships through bonding events around campus.

PHOTO: MELINA CAVALIERE

Seniors win long-standing tradition of powderpuff

CARLY DELUCA
PV LIFE EDITOR

Powderpuff football is a nationwide tradition that promotes the reversed roles of girls playing flag football while boys cheer on the sidelines. This event is a staple for many students, but the majority are unclear as to when and why it actually started.

The first ever recorded powderpuff game was at Eastern State Teachers College in Madison, South Dakota, in 1945, according to cheneyfreepress.com. Following World War II, few men had enrolled in school, causing girls to step into ath-

letic roles in their communities, starting the tradition of powderpuff football. However, the appearance of powderpuff football did not make a resurgence in high schools until the 1970s, when it became a charity event and a new Homecoming ritual designed to show the difficulties of both cheerleading and football.

At Perkiomen Valley, powderpuff football started in a similar way. Dr. Costello, social studies teacher and coach for the junior girls, started the tradition 13 years ago.

"I started powderpuff in 2009 because I was the moderator of the student

forum, and the student forum originally did powderpuff. I came here in 2007, and then I took over the student forum. Then as a fundraiser, we got the powderpuff game," Dr. Costello said.

Ever since powderpuff started, the tradition has evolved to give appreciation to the hard-working football players at Perkiomen Valley.

"It's hard to play the game of football, and the more people that play it, whether it's male or female, have a greater understanding and a greater appreciation of the sport," Dr. Costello said.

At practices, the coaches attempt to be realistic with the

girls and give them the same drills that they would give the boys.

"We try to simulate a regular practice. We do drills like a regular boys' football practice," Dr. Costello said.

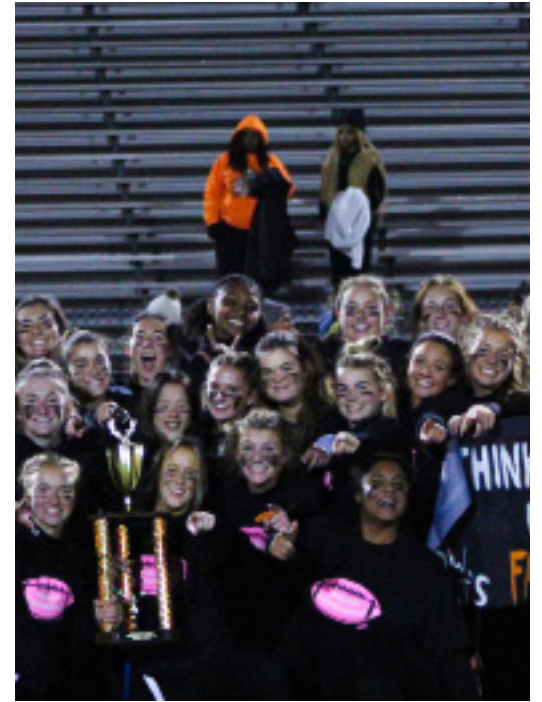
Not only are the football players recognized through the powderpuff game, but so are the cheerleaders. Junior and senior boys are encouraged to sign up to support the girls in healthy competition.

"I thought it would be a fun idea to cheer on the senior girls and support the fellow seniors in my grade while dressing up and being silly," said Morgan McKinney,

a senior powderpuff cheerleader.

After just a few practices led by the sideline cheerleaders, most of the boys find that cheerleading is much more difficult than they had anticipated.

"The guys can understand how difficult it is to be a cheerleader, and the girls can understand how difficult it is to be a football player. I think what they find is football is very physical, and the boys that participate in the cheerleading part also understand that it's not easy throwing people up in the air and catching them," Dr. Costello said.



The senior powderpuff team, pictured above, came out on top with a final score of 28 - 20. PHOTO: SARAH STRAUSBERG

High school welcomes foreign exchange students

RACHAEL DUBROW
WRITER

As Perkiomen Valley High School wrapped up its first marking period, it officially welcomed four new students to its ranks.

These students in particular are here on foreign exchange, which means that they have moved from their home countries to stay in the U.S. for one year.

Gabriel Candido Fernandes is a senior from Minas Gerais, Brazil. This is only the second time he's been to the U.S. after a trip to Disney World in 2016. Fernandes is a part of PV Boys Soccer and was celebrated at the team's senior night on Oct. 6th.

"I'm really enjoying being here and being part of the community, and I'm happy to be here," Fernandes said.

Next is Margarita Anaya, a sophomore who came to PV from her school IES Gerardo Diego located in her home of Madrid, Spain. While originally planning to visit New York three years ago, Anaya's

trip was canceled due to COVID-19, making the foreign exchange program her first experience in the U.S. Anaya talked about how her biggest culture shock was the size of the school and classes, as well as how early PV eats lunch. In Spain, breakfast is traditionally enjoyed around 11:30 a.m.

"I am loving PV; the building is very beautiful and clean, and I got a really good reception," Anaya said.

Pia Estler is a junior from a small village in the middle north of Germany called Wagenhoff. Estler went to school at the European Humboldt Gymnasium in a closeby town named Gifhorn. This is Estler's first time in the U.S. and, so far, she is thrilled with the PV community and teacher-student relationships.

"You could say that my biggest culture shock was that the teachers are all so nice and approachable," Estler said.

Last but not least, Samuel Cayrel is a junior originally from France. For the

past three years, he has been living on a French island named La Reunion near Madagascar. There, he attended his high school La Verger located in St-Marie, which Cayrel states is a much smaller community than PV. This is Cayrel's second time in the U.S., having visited Vermont and New York City five years ago. Cayrel finds the teachers at PV to be nice, and he appreciates all of the activities and sports that the school has to offer.

"I enjoy the football games because the students there have a really good vibe," Cayrel said.

Students might be wondering how there are only four foreign exchange students in what seems like a growing list of multinational students. While there are a small number of official foreign exchange students, there has been a high influx of transfers in the past year.

Little by little, PVHS is becoming wonderfully diverse and learning how to welcome students of all cultures.



New foreign exchange students being welcomed to Perkiomen Valley High school. Pictured (left to right): Samuel Cayrel, Gabriel Candido Fernandes, Pia Elster, Margarita Anaya Corral. PHOTO: ALESSIA REVELLI

PV'S ALBUMS OF 2022

Designed by Cody Rathgeber
All albums voted by students.

blossom - at - Skippack Village, PA
cafe FLORAL & HARDY

Garden Center & Cafe

ACTION KARATE
SKIPPACK
484-991-8306
ACTIONSKIPPACK@GMAIL.COM

COME JOIN US FOR 2 FREE WEEKS

The Voice

2022 - 2023

Editor-in-Chief: Georgia Loladze
 News Editor: Rayna Burke
 Opinions Editor: Kevin Li
 PV Life Editors: Carly DeLuca
 Camerynn Roop
 Sports Editor: Sammy Rehling
 Photography Editor: Lily Ternak
 Copy Editor: Carly Richter
 Adviser: Mr. Tornambe
 E-Mail: pvhvoice@pvsd.org
 Website: https://www.pvvoice.com/



@pvvoice



@pv_voice



@pv_voice

The Perkiomen Valley High School Voice is published six times a year. The Newspaper is an extra-curricular activity, with meetings held after school on Tuesdays at 509 Gravel Pike, Collegeville, PA 19426 in room 123.

Letters to the Editor:

Letters to the editor may be submitted to the newspaper adviser or any member of The Voice editorial staff. 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 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.

Correction Policy:

When corrections have been made to a story, it will be noted in the corrections box on the editorial page in the next print issue. A form for corrections can be found on our web-site at pvvoice.com as well as a form for story ideas.

Retraction Policy:

Perkiomen Valley High School's The Voice will retract an article only if one of the following is violated: obscenity to minors, libelous material, any material that would cause an immediate disturbance to school activities. Contact the editorial staff with any comments, questions or concerns.

Advertising:

The Voice publishes paid advertisements with yearly or monthly publishing options available. Contact us by e-mail at pvhvoice@pvsd.org for more information on advertising.

Affiliations:

The Voice maintains membership with PSPA, CSPA, Quill and Scroll and JEA.

Awards:

Gold Award 2017 - 2018 Pennsylvania School Press Association.
 Keystone Award PSPA.

Homecoming Court

Is it worth celebrating?

The editorial staff voted 8-0 to publish this editorial

The Homecoming dance and its corresponding traditions are events that are supposed to celebrate Perkiomen Valley by honoring its students and encouraging school spirit. However, with the tradition of Homecoming Court, the opposite takes place. What is supposed to be the opportunity to honor students instead devolves into a petty hierarchy between peers that further allow for bigger windows of harassment to occur.

The current method of determining the Homecoming Court winner is done through two Google Forms that are sent to seniors. The first "preliminary ballot" form contains the name of every senior within the high school, and the second "final ballot" form contains the top ten most-voted names, as well as the option to vote for somebody that is not a part of the top ten. The top five people from the second form come together for the halftime ceremony during the Homecoming football game where the winner is crowned.

The method of listing all of the seniors' names in the initial form presents faults. This way is an enforced attempt to limit the possibility of only the most "popular" students winning, however, the attempt is weak, as those

are the students who almost always end up on the ballot. The tactic for somebody to gain votes within this system is by asking friends and other peers to vote for them, meaning, those who know more students will always be the top-voted, and those who do not know nearly as many yet still want to win, will not. This then ultimately causes Homecoming Court to become less of a celebratory tradition and more of a popularity contest where students equate votes to their social status within the school. This can be extremely self-deteriorating in an environment and age group where individuals define themselves based on popularity.

Listing every single senior name on the ballot creates the chance for everybody to run, even those without the desire to do so. Even if somebody who wishes not to be considered for voting can not do anything about it; their name being listed presents them as fair game for Homecoming Court winner.

This extends even further to the individuals who deal with bullying from other students. Despite the frequent attempts at promoting against it, school is a common place for bullying to occur when the opportunity arises. The ability to vote for any se-

nior presents an unfortunate yet perfect opportunity for students against those they dislike or look down upon. The openness in determining Homecoming Court contenders grants students the ability to mockingly force others into running and, if enough votes are obtained, mockingly force them into standing before the entire school.

Having students vote for the Homecoming Court by submitting a form similar to how class officers are initially considered would eliminate the chances of the system's current faults occurring. However, the idea of a Homecoming Court as a whole is the true fault. With the way the Homecoming Court is established now, it only gives students who already receive social validation even more of it, which is senseless. Using Homecoming Court as a system to honor and validate students who do something worth commemorating, like community service or a certain achievement, would allow students who have something to be honored for to actually be appreciated. Changing the way Homecoming Court is celebrated would not only allow for a tradition worth celebrating, but also would allow for a custom that follows PV's desire for an inclusive environment.

Asynchronous days are like...



ILLUSTRATION: KAYLEE COLOMBO

College rankings stand too important in students' future decisions

ADWITA THORAT
 STAFF WRITER

Columbia University is a world-renowned school that has ranked 2nd in the country until now. For a college as prestigious as Columbia, a drop to 16th place is unprecedented. A math professor from Columbia, Michael Thaddeus, released a thesis questioning the rankings that U.S. News allocates to colleges.

"The broader lesson everyone should keep in mind is that U.S. News has shown its operations are so shoddy that both of the rankings are meaningless... If any institution can decline from number 2 to number 18 in a single year, it just discredits the whole ranking operation," Thaddeus told the "New York Times".

In his thesis, the math professor wrote that colleges can manipulate data to their favor, and with that data, the U.S. News assigns rankings. He tested this theory by using Columbia's worst data points—with which he found that Columbia would be ranked 18th place. His paper angered U.S. News, and they responded by dropping Columbia's ranking to 18th.

This unprecedented scandal has left people in a lurch. The Columbia scandal has forced the public to rethink and question rankings and the college decision-making process itself.

"The biggest factor I think for any students considering school is what is a good fit for them," said Mrs. Felty, a PVHS guidance counselor.

In light of these re-

cent events, one question is whether it is fair to give this much meaning to rankings.

A survey from The University of Michigan, conducted on its first-year student body, revealed that 37.1% of students chose the school solely because of its ranking. The sheer amount of students making a life-defining decision based on ranking alone is concerning. Picking a college is not a small decision; it's where the first four years of a person's adult life are spent. This decision is more important than the number allocated to a college.

The issue at hand isn't that students set their sights high and endeavor to be admitted to a high-ranking university, but rather how they react when they are unable to achieve that goal. The fact

of the matter is that the quality of a person's college education is dependent on what they do at the school and not what school they attend. However, some students who keep their sights set on high-ranking schools view it as a failure when they're unable to get into those schools.

"If you're thinking that your life isn't going to work out if you're not getting into the top college, it can be detrimental because you can still have a really good education," Mrs. Felty said regarding the negative effects of rankings on students.

Thaddeus' thesis brought to light the unscrupulous nature of U.S. News. The Columbia scandal has shown that trusting the rankings allocated by U.S. News would be naive, however, its

rankings still stand and hold a sliver of the truth. This brings up the concern of whether or not it is wise for people to grant meaning to the rankings in choosing a college, and if so, to what degree.

"I would say that it is something to consider, but I would not base that decision solely on that," said Mrs. Conlan, a PVHS counselor.

Essentially, students need to keep in mind that rankings are not quite as pivotal as some might think. If a college has a higher ranking, it does not automatically mean that it is the right college. It is important to keep in mind that any college education can be a great one.

The Last Word

Chromebook firewall keeps students on task in the classroom

KEVIN LI
OPINIONS EDITOR

With the implementation of personal technology throughout all schools, the risk of the Internet looms large. As all students have their own Chromebooks and smartphones, what students choose to do with their technology is out of the administration's hands. The lack of supervision of student Internet use and accessibility has led Perkiomen Valley High School to implement a website filtering system to prevent the inappropriate, illegal, and disruptive use of the Internet. PV's new firewall imposed almost a year ago is a positive change for the high school environment.

The new
c o n -

tent blocker does many things for students and teachers alike, but the most pertinent service it provides to the classroom is the distractions it removes. Although the website filtering system does not block social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, or Snapchat, it does block many disruptions such as the comment sections of said apps; often a place of contention that should be separated from the objective classroom. Along with social media apps, many games are blocked that commonly distract students from their everyday work.

But the most imminent part of the school's firewall is how it applies to the search engines used in class. A multitude of gaming, streaming, and other disruptive websites are necessarily removed from students. Many school districts have issues with students being engrossed with their screens rather than their work, and the content blocker is one way Perkiomen Valley High School is

able to achieve this.

With the filter, the school is able to sift through the unnecessary underbelly of the Internet, whether it be with specific content on YouTube to a wide array of websites. Although some are concerned about the number of websites that

actually necessary for class assignments and research being blocked, there is a quick fix. Appropriate websites can be unblocked by teachers as long as a student requests it.

Still, many students may view the content blocker as a premature amenity derived from the administration.

tor's immature fear of student Internet usage, but in actuality, it proves a legitimate preventative measure. It prevents students from being distracted in the first place and has an observable impact on the classroom. Overall, students seem to be more engaged with their class instead of their technology.

At the end of the day, the content blocker implemented by the school is now a part of the school environment and despite its vexation to students, it proves to be a fruitful way to prevent negative Internet use in our classrooms. For the betterment of our education, the school firewall is here to stay.



Source: securly.com

Research projects more difficult due to firewall

NATALIE WUELFING
STAFF WRITER

The dreaded gnome. "Looks like this page isn't allowed," has been the primary offender in halting the progress of many projects, research papers, and class activities.

Most students have had an experience with discovering that necessary sites are blocked to

them, even links provided by teachers. The content blocker should not be kept in place.

The company behind the firewall, Securly, states that the purpose of the web filter system is "to block students' access to inappropriate matter on the Internet." The "inappropriate matter" includes important research websites. According to Securly's help page,

when a website is unrecognized by one of the fourteen blocked categories, it is sorted as uncategorized, a class that administrators, including Perkiomen Valley, can opt to automatically block. With over one billion websites currently existing, it would be impossible for Securly to search each one, meaning many crucial websites go unscanned. The unfortunate repercus-

sions of this decision by administrators fall onto the students, causing frustration at every turn.

However, there is a solution. Students can request their teachers for access to the site, allowing it to be accessed by students. But as anyone who's completed a school project knows, there's always extra work to be done at home. After hours, teachers will not always be there

to authorize sites, putting many students in a difficult situation. It becomes frustrating and incredibly annoying to see that each website necessary is blocked.

Reduced access to resources is something that needs to be taken seriously by administration, especially when it hinders learning by creating an unnecessary distraction in having to request permission to

web pages.

In an era where students are required to learn Online, the restriction of resources to students who require them is contradictory and reflects badly on what Perkiomen Valley's administrators seem to prioritize for their student body.

KEENAN, CICCITTO & ASSOCIATES
Attorneys At Law



Corporate Law Real Estate
Municipal Law Estate Planning
Family Law Personal Injury

www.keenanlaw.com
610-489-6170
376 E. Main Street • Collegeville, PA

Chick-fil-A Royersford

Join our team

- Scholarship Opportunities
- Free Online College Tuition
- Great Pay
- Develop Leadership Skills

Scan to apply

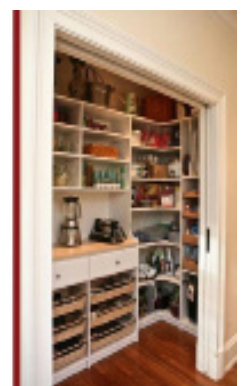



My Custom Closet

Organization solutions that fit any budget:

- Master Bedroom Closets
- Children's Closets
- Kitchen Pantries
- Garage & Mudroom Storage
- ...And More!

Design your dream closet today.
savica@mycustomcloset.com



Cheer team prepares to take on districts

MORGAN MCKINNEY
STAFF WRITER

The 2022-2023 Perkiomen Valley competition cheer team is refining and perfecting its routines for the upcoming season.

"We have a lot of new and returning talent that works together really well," said Coach Lepera, the head cheer coach.

With each practice, the team is achieving new skills and developing a competitive routine with many high-level abilities.

"My goal going into this season is simply to improve from last season," Coach Lepera said. Last year was the

first time Perkiomen Valley had a competitive cheer team in a very long time and Coach Lepera is eager to continue establishing the team's presence in the sport. This January, they will be attending districts with the hopes of earning a spot at states. The cheer team is excited about the new experiences to come this upcoming season. Skylar Berry, one of the captains of the cheer team, comments that the team's biggest strength is its unity.

"We all work together and all connect with each other more than we have ever before," Berry said.

This year, the team places importance on hard work in every sin-

gle practice.

"As captain, I am most excited for working with my team to perfect all of our skills as well as getting new skills," Berry said.

The team has the motivation and strength to be the best that it can be. All of the cheerleaders have been working diligently in the off-season and all of it is paying off. The team is incredibly excited to be competing to the best of their abilities at competitions, districts, and hopefully states.



Senior captain Skylar Berry cheering on the seniors during the fall pep rally. Coach Lepera has stressed the importance of hard work in every practice.

PHOTO: LILY TERNAK



Bowling coaches Dr. Costello and Mr. Kuhn standing side by side.

PHOTO: LILY TERNAK

Bowling transitions from club to sport

SAMMY REHLING
STAFF WRITER

For the first time in over 16 years, Perkiomen Valley High School adds an additional PIAA winter sport for students to participate in. Prior to COVID-19, teachers Dr. Costello and Mr. Kuhn hosted a bowling club for anyone to join. Since then, athletic director Mr. Felty has done the work to solidify bowling as a sport going forward.

The plan is to have a varsity, JV, and developmental team.

"JV and Varsity are structured the same way with five bowlers on a team and ten frames. Each bowler goes twice. Typically, you have your best bowler at the end or in the middle because

if you get a strike in the first frame, you don't get as many points as you would in the tenth frame," Dr. Costello said. "If you get a strike in the tenth frame, you get two more bowls [and] theoretically have an extra shot."

During the first two days of the season, tryouts will determine the lineup and align players' skill level with their spot on the team.

"At this point, we don't plan on cutting anyone, but we'll see how many people come out and how many bowlers the bowling alley can accommodate," Mr. Kuhn said. "We'll end up taking our top five people to be varsity players."

Home matches will take place at Limer-

ick Bowl, and practices will take place Monday through Thursday from roughly 3 to 4:30 p.m.

"Having players compete and the pressure of competition helps, so we might incorporate some inner squad competitions amongst themselves during practices to simulate the pressure they'll deal with during real matches," Mr. Kuhn said.

Tryouts took place on November 28-29. Meets begin away on December 1 at Bristol Pike Lanes vs Holy Ghost Prep. The first home meet is on December 12 at Limerick Bowl vs Holy Ghost Prep. P.V. begins PAC competition on January 4 vs rival Springfield.

Girls soccer team makes PV soccer history

KARIS CHELLEW
STAFF WRITER

The 2022 girls soccer fall season was an incredible journey, not just for the players, but for the community as well.

"Having good chemistry brought us all together which made our game-play very efficient,"

-Hailey Sharkey

The team set individual records for their most wins, best overall record, most goals scored, most total shut-outs, and first appearance in the PAC playoffs. The unity of the

team was solid, and it brought them to districts, a feat not accomplished since 2018. It was a truly remarkable season, and the chemistry between the team was what led to their success.

The team agreed that their best game played was the PAC semi-final against Owen J. Roberts High School.

"Our team came out strong and ready to dominate," Hailey Sharkey, a senior on the team said. "We went in calm, not over or under-confident, but ready to play our game. We knew this game was going to be challenging due to our past experiences with



Perkiomen Valley girls soccer took on Upper Perk at OJR for the PAC Championship. With nerves high, the girls are seen huddled up in overtime to try to figure out a game plan

PHOTO: TIANA MERCHAN

them, but everyone's effort was 100%. We came out on top 3-0 due to the strength and fierceness everybody contributed on and off the field."

While there were many incredibly played games, there were also some hardships. The overall season was not won easily. According to Sharkey, their worst and most difficult game was against Boyertown.

"We started that game a little too slow, and Boyertown capitalized on the opportunity," Haley Moyer, another senior on the team, said. "We did not come out with our normal energy which deflated more once we were down a

goal. It was one of those hard games in the middle of the season where we faced adversity."

The unity the team carried throughout the season was a big contributing factor to the successful games.

"I think the chemistry on this team helped us tremendously by allowing us to feel connected and play more smoothly with each other. Having good chemistry brought us all together which made our game-play very efficient," Sharkey said.

Girls soccer ended the season 14-4-2, losing to Upper Perk in PACs. As they transition into the winter season, the girls will continue playing indoors at The Far Post.

Girls XC race to 6th place

8

SPORTS

DARRON WOO
STAFF WRITER

The PV girls cross country team has become one of the strongest programs in the state yet again this year.

Going into August, the girls had aspirations to place high in states. Mr. Sullivan, the head coach, trusted in the girl's capabilities and commented on the number of skilled runners returning to the team.

"We knew we had a lot of talent coming back, and now our focus is going

to states," Mr. Sullivan said. "The girls are not only doing an excellent job competition-wise, but they also have great chemistry with each other and always make sure their teammates work hard."

The success of the girls cross country team is not something unusual.

"The girls have been successful for a while. We've won the district championship in 2016 and four league championships for the past 6-8 years, so our girls team has been good for

quite a while and very competitive for quite some time," Mr. Leister, another cross country coach, said.

This team is not unaccustomed to winning, and they have the motivation and determination to succeed. The team set the bar high for further accomplishments. However, with every succeeding moment comes team struggles. The team wanted to win PACs and ended up finishing in 3rd place.

"Moving forward, the girls' new goal is to go to states as a team to

see how they could work together to return to Hershey," senior Abi Schweitzer said.

"PACs didn't go how we planned, and I think it motivated us going into districts to make it going into states as a team," senior Sydney Fitzpatrick said.

They responded. The girls finished 3rd in districts, which qualified them for states where they went on to be the 6th fastest team in Pennsylvania for 2022. This team has had a lot of success under

the current senior group of Sydney Fitzpatrick, Abrielle Schweitzer, Elyse Tancini, and Summer Watts, while underclass runners Allison Matasich, Sienna Miller, and Emerson Whetstone give the team a lot of promise in the years to come. For the younger runners, going to states sets a higher bar for cross country in the following years. The team has been incredibly successful so far, and the drive to continue this keeps the team on an inspired track.



Pictured here are sophomores Allie Matasich and Emerson Whetstone competing in leagues. Two weeks later, the team placed 6th in the state, successfully achieving their goal from the beginning of the season.

PHOTO: SYDNEY CALLENDER

Sophomore steps up to the gridiron

ALESSIA REVELLI
STAFF WRITER

The Downingtown West game was just another ordinary match for PV football Vikings Patrick MacDonald and starting quarterback Danny Koehler until the fourth quarter, when Koehler was unexpectedly injured, tearing his ACL and meniscus.

Sophomore Patrick MacDonald found himself thrown into the mix, stepping in as QB.

"I was a little nervous going into the game because I hadn't played

varsity before but I felt ready and confident in the guys around me," MacDonald said.

While the sudden change may have been unexpected, MacDonald was prepared.

"I have been playing football since I was about 5 years old, so for about 10 years," MacDonald said.

Additionally, the coaching staff prepared MacDonald by having him throw to the varsity players during practice to get used to the speed of

varsity games.

"My preparation for the game and other games is also so great because I get to go against a great defense in practice every week," MacDonald said.

Koehler has been a great supporter of MacDonald's efforts and is impressed with his performance so far.

"Patrick and I have developed a good relationship that continues off the field and are constantly talking throughout practice and games about

what's going on out on the field," Koehler said. "Playing quarterback is not easy, especially as a sophomore getting thrown into the mix unexpectedly without even one JV game under his belt. He has stepped up big time."

Both players feel accomplished from this season so far. For Koehler, a highlight from this season was when he watched his brother, Sammy, make the game-winning tackle against Spring-ford on their two-point conversion that would have won them

the game.

"I've felt pretty good about this season so far. I think that there's some good things I've done and some things that I need to still work on and get better at, but overall a good season so far," MacDonald said.

MacDonald is off to a great start in his varsity career, leading the Vikings to victory by sealing the Pioneer Conference Liberty Division conference title, but he believes he has a lot more to give.



Patrick MacDonald #11, during the playoff game against Pope John Paul High School. PV won with a final score of 21-14, further advancing the team while also taking home the PAC Champion title.

PHOTO: SHOWSTOPPERS