

Sage Dining Services Prepare Carefully Tailored Menu to Energize Pingry

By DAVID METZGER (IV)

Students know Sage Food Services as the company that provides lunch food every day. However, their role in Pingry extends far beyond daily lunches. Sage is pivotal to the healthy lifestyle of the community and ensures that school events run smoothly. Often times, students tend to glaze over the importance of the multitude of Sage workers who call Pingry their home: Andrew Whitman, Food Service Director at Pingry, Jay Glassberg, Executive Chef, and Rosane Barreiro, Assistant Food Service Director of Catering.

Mr. Andrew Whitman's role is to direct and facilitate the preparation and serving of food at Pingry. Mr. Whitman described the preparation and effort that goes into making the food that Sage has to provide to Pingry on a daily basis. He said, "Employees start at 6 a.m. or 6:30 a.m. The prep starts and we are ready to go at 10:30, an hour before lunch." When asked about lunch, the main meal that Sage provides, Mr. Whitman remarked that a large amount of effort has to be made because of the amount of food that has to be

produced. "We have four hours to prepare food for over 1,000 people," Mr. Whitman said, adding, "We go through 200-250 tons of pasta, and 18 gallons of chicken noodle soup on a busy day."

Another member of Sage is Jay Glassberg, who is the Executive Chef at Pingry. Chef Glassberg's role at Pingry is to give each cook a detailed description of his or her daily tasks, and order the fresh produce, meats, and other culinary items. Chef Glassberg expressed that a major part

nutritious. "We make everything from scratch, not cooking in large amounts, with homemade stocks, fresh garden vegetables, and no preservatives," he said. However, Chef Glassberg said that what makes his role in Sage so difficult is keeping everything cost-effective. "You must look at your food prices every day before ordering," he explained.

Despite some of the stress, Chef Glassberg is still able to find joy in his work, as he expressed his appreciation for his co-work-

and fresh meals to Pingry students during the day, but also caters various Pingry-related events, run by Rosane Barreiro. Chef Barreiro said her role is to "care of all the catering events that happen here and at Short Hills." Every type of meeting, coffee service and formal event that involves cuisine is catered by Sage. Additionally, celebrations, such as graduation parties or dinner parties are products of Sage Dining. For example, during Career Day, Chef Rosane helped cater the breakfast for speakers. Additionally, she provides the food at the carriage house, located on campus, for any guests who stay at the home. Part of her job is to create monthly tables of food that portray a unique aspect of cooking, known as "Educational Seasoning." These displays allow for students to visually understand new concepts in the culinary arts, and the background and culture of the food.

Pingry's dining services play a pivotal role in the culinary aspects of Pingry life. While students may not always see the many aspects of Sage, it's important to recognize their efforts to provide nutritious food and educate about the culinary arts.



H. Park (VI)

Mr. Andrew Whitman, Ms. Rosane Barreiro, and Mr. Jay Glassberg help prepare fresh meals.

of his job is to cook everything from scratch and make the meals and the Pingry community. Sage not only provides healthy

Snowball Remains a Popular Event

By JESS FOY (V)

The snow on the morning of Saturday, January 24 helped Snowball live up to its name this year. That night, Upper School students arrived at the Dolce Hotel in Basking Ridge for the annual winter semiformal.

Clad in suits and cocktail dresses, students enjoyed a night of dancing and socializing. Holly Butrico (V) said, "One of my favorite parts of Snowball is seeing what everyone wears; I love seeing everyone dressed up."

One of the traditions of Snowball is the Sadie Hawkins proposal style, which means girls ask boys. Thomas Horn (V) said, "It kind of makes things more interesting when you allow the girls to ask the guys." He added, "It adds a different dynamic and

At the event, many students danced to music ranging from today's top hits to throwbacks. Students also enjoyed a wide variety of buffet styled dining options. "I really liked the food, especially the grilled cheese station," Amanda Cosentino (V) said.

A change most students noted from last year's Snowball was the lack of a coat line. Instead of a checked coat window, there was a makeshift "Coat Room" set up to make the hassle of retrieving coats more efficient. Students used the guidelines of the Honor Code in this process, and many agreed that it made departure from the event much easier. Isabella Zanobini (V) noted, "It's great that we are part of a community where we can trust one another with our belongings."



B. Sullivan, R. Oza, E. Sorvino, and R. Salamon (VI) at a pre-party.

takes some of the pressure off us."

Many girls get creative when asking their dates. In the weeks leading up to Snowball, proposals ranged from baked goods and posters to scavenger hunts and puzzles. Meg O'Reilly (IV) said, "It's fun to come up with a cute and creative idea—the reaction is always great."

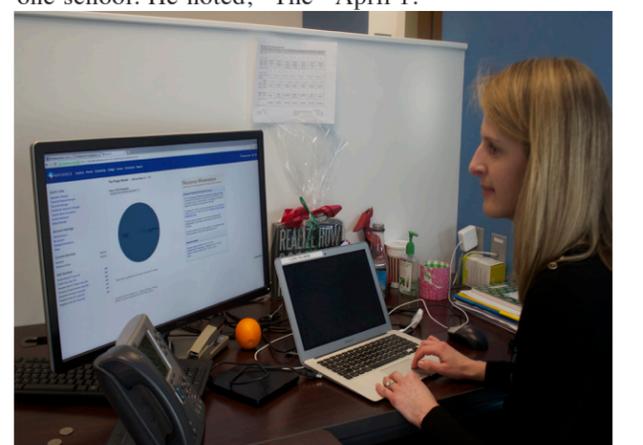
This year's Snowball carried a very exciting and happy vibe. Since the event comes shortly after the end of the first semester, students often see Snowball as a gift for all their hard work over the last few months.

Virginia and Washington University in St. Louis are expected to receive over twenty applications from Pingry students.

Head of the College Counseling Department Mr. Timothy Lear '92 said he expected that a large percentage of the senior class would apply early to at least one school. He noted, "The

This year's advisors to Snowball were History teachers Dr. Megan Jones and Ms. Colleen Kent. When asked about the hassles of planning such a large event, Dr. Jones said, "The biggest stress is making sure that we have a correct record of students who signed up and making sure that the payments for the vendors are arranged on time." She added, "I think that this year's Snowball went very well, and we had the biggest turnout since I've been the Student Government advisor. Next year, we're getting a bigger dance floor."

seniors' accomplishments were recognized by many competitive schools, and several commented on the strength of Pingry's applicants, as demonstrated in countless essays and interviews." He added, "I am confident the class's depth and many talents will result in more good news come April 1."



College Counselor Mrs. Cooperman '90 uses Naviance.

I. Zinn (VI)

Look out for another issue next week that will feature Career Day and the Writing Festival!



James Robertson (IV) and Tan Tan Wang (V) sing "If I Had a Million Dollars" at the Buttondowns Assembly in November. P. 7

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The Coffeehouse event that took place in December featured many singers, rock bands, and poetry read-a-louds. P. 5

Apocalypse

Aidan Zola (V) describes the Netflix show Apocalypse and why it is very successful. P. 6

Buttondowns Assembly

Students enjoyed the annual Buttondowns Assembly, which featured a hilarious video and great singing skills. P. 7

Swimming Team

The Boys' and Girls' Swim Teams have had recent successes this season. P. 8

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Many Students Reap Benefits of Applying Early

By HANNAH BENTON (V)

Applying for college is a stressful and time-consuming process. As a result, a growing number of students have been participating in early application programs, which speeds up the response time of the schools to which they apply.

According to college counselor Mrs. Amy Cooperman '90, 98% of the senior class applied early to at least one school. This includes Early Action (EA), Early Decision (ED), Restrictive Early Action (REA), Priority, and Rolling Admissions.

Of the 96 students who applied Early Decision to schools, 52 were accepted. This means that 54% of Pingry's ED applicants were accepted to one of their top-choice schools.

In addition to the ED commitments, 12 students are "done" with their application processes, having decided to commit to a non-binding school that offered them an acceptance. This brings the total number of students who are "finished" applying to 64 and represents 45% of the entire senior class. Overall, more than 100 students have received at least one acceptance so far.

The early round also featured a variety of schools. Sixty-eight different colleges, of 114 that received early applications, accepted Pingry students. Additionally, 20 students have received

an early acceptance to an Ivy League school. Each of the Ivies accepted at least one Pingry student in the early round.

Some colleges that received ten or more applications in the early round include University of Miami, University of Michigan, Northeastern, University of Pennsylvania, Rutgers, Tulane, Villanova and University of Virginia. Colleges with four or more acceptances in the early round include Hamilton, Harvard, Washington University in St. Louis and University of Wisconsin.

While students continue to apply to their regular decision schools, thirteen have decided to apply ED II. The College Counseling office is looking forward to the results from the students who have applied through this process and hope to receive word in February. Those who applied to schools for regular admissions will receive responses in March and early April.

According to Mrs. Cooperman, as of January 29, 184 colleges are scheduled to receive applications from Pingry students. Of these schools, Boston College, Brown, Cornell, Dartmouth, Duke, Emory, Harvard, Lehigh, University of Miami, University of Michigan, New York University, University of Pennsylvania, Rutgers, Tufts, Tulane, Vanderbilt, Villanova, University of

EDITORIAL

Fighting the “Exceptional” Standard

My sophomore year, I remember walking into the locker room with the Girls' Ice Hockey team, clad in Pingry jerseys. We were losing to a local public school, and as we were wiping the ice off of our skates, some of my teammates shouted, “At least we’re going to college,” and “Your dad works for my dad,” loud enough so that our opponents in the adjacent room could hear.

Though I didn’t realize it as a shy bench player, looking back now, similar remarks reverberate through our school walls every day. Teachers, peers, and assembly speakers tell us all the time: we are the best and the brightest, the supposed future leaders of our world. We’re great, and when considering we are the ones who were chosen from piles of applications, we deserve it.

It’s difficult to turn a corner in school without seeing a Pingry crest with the phrase “Excellence and Honor.” And while these words represent deep school pride, they also represent the idea of exceptionalism: that we are distinct from and superior to others.

I want to start off with a disclaimer: Pingry exceptionalism is good in many ways. It gives us an idea of how we want to shape ourselves and encourages us to be the best we can be, and this ambition is one of the things I love about Pingry.

But what’s concerning about exceptionalism is the sense of hubris it breeds about our school. The idea that we’re exceptional for the sole reason that we go to Pingry is not only ignorant but also potentially damaging.

The honor code, for instance, is praised at almost every single morning meeting and assembly, often with the subtext that it holds us to a morally higher standard than those who aren’t governed by an honor code. But the fact that we have an honor code doesn’t make us inherently moral people. I might even go so far as to argue that the honor code only works well in our school due to our socioeconomic status: a student won’t feel compelled to steal an iPhone or computer because, chances are, he or she already has those things.

It often seems as though we get lost amidst the praise for our honor code and talented student body. I know that many Pingry students, including myself, have experienced times at which we felt superior to others just because we go to a certain school. I come from a public school background, and when hanging out with my town friends, I sometimes find myself sneering at the fact that we have an honor code and they don’t; we use laptops while they use notebooks.

But we need to learn to get over ourselves.

Exceptionalism might just be an inevitable part of the private school experience; Pingry is, after all, an academic institution, and it’s only natural to place emphasis on success and competition. But Pingry can also be a place of exploration and discovery. Exceptionalism does, after all, grow out of talent and pride. But only when let go of this idea that we are exceptional can we take advantage of the unique resources at our fingertips.

—Lori Kim

Rethinking Our Destined Career Paths

By **ABBY BAUER (V)**

What do you want to be when you grow up? It’s a question we have all been asked at some point in our lives.

Ten years ago I wavered between being President of the United States and a kindergarten teacher. The “pop star” phase followed and lasted slightly longer than I wish to admit it had. Five years ago I was confident about my future as a doctor, despite my inherent fear of blood. But now, having begun the process of “growing up,” this question has become increasingly difficult to answer. Yet, with the looming college process, I feel as though it is something I am expected to know.

In advisory this month we were asked to complete a form for the annual Career Day, during which professionals are invited to speak about their careers with juniors and seniors. On the form, we indicated the top five professional seminars we are interested in attending, with options ranging from medicine to entrepreneurship to visual arts.

I understood that the purpose of the day was to expose students to a variety of fields, thus allowing us to find out what we are interested in pursuing. However, as I sat there with my form, waffling between multiple seminars, I felt an enormous pressure to decide what to do with my life. It seemed as though the seminars I numbered on my form would somehow reflect my future career path.

Part of this pressure was provoked by my peers who knew exactly what they wanted to do. (These were the ones who took a mere 20 seconds to number their forms). In a way, I en-

vied how simple and clear-cut it was for them. They knew what “dream school” would match their interests, what their college majors would be, and even had post-graduate plans. Maybe because I naturally aspired for a predictable, certain future or maybe because I feared making a life-altering mistake, but I wanted

that you have a particular interest or “sense of mission,” students scramble to find these things, rather than taking their time to experiment and explore the possibilities.

At times, I wonder whether these teenagers who appear confident in their future career paths are simply sheep among a flock.

ship with The Borgen Project, a political advocacy organization fighting global poverty. Through this experience, I learned much more than journalism: I lobbied for poverty-reducing legislation, I fundraised for the organization, and I improved my communication skills.

During that summer I learned

What do I want to do?



A. Ren (V)

to know these things too.

There is also an added pressure of knowing your major or field of study before entering college. While college is projected to be a time for intellectual exploration and self-discovery, high school students assume that colleges favor candidates who already know what they want to do with their lives.

Though there is no evidence that checking the undeclared major box impairs an applicant’s chance of being accepted, there is concern about how an undeclared major is perceived by an admissions officer. With an emphasis on demonstrating to colleges

Were they influenced by family expectations? Did they make their decision based on the A+ they earned in a particular class? Or are they swayed by the anticipated prestige, reputation, and income derived from a certain job title?

I find it hard to believe that one can choose a career path based solely on the standard school subjects of English, History, Math, etc. While taking these classes is a way to discover our strengths and interests, it is also important to learn and experience these subjects in various forms. By way of example, this past summer I completed a journalism intern-

just as much, if not more, than I typically do in the classroom. And while this experience did not leave me 100 percent certain about what I wanted to pursue, it allowed me to recognize several interests I never knew I had.

I encourage other students to try and experience something outside of school, whether it be an internship, part-time job, or volunteer opportunity, before committing to a career path they believe they are destined for. While I have abandoned my pop star dreams and desire to run for president, I am willing to explore other possibilities now, and I think you should too.

Seetamraju Proposes An Online Grading System For Students and Teachers

By **NEHA SEETAMRAJU (V)**

After returning from Winter Break, teachers give out the last few graded assignments of first semester. And before we know it, the semester comes to a close, and we are soon thereafter getting our report cards.

This time of year is always stressful for everyone, as many of us do not know our exact grades. While we may have a general idea of where we stand because of interim grades, some of us may end up being unpleasantly surprised when we see our report cards. Parents may be shocked as well if they have

not been frequently updated about grades and may demand an explanation.

As I thought about my incoming first semester report card, I remembered my previous school’s mandatory online grade posting system. The system is essentially an online grade book that students and parents have easy access to at all times. With unique usernames and passwords, they can be up to date with all grades so that when report cards are distributed, there are no surprises or questions.

When I first joined my previous school, I complained about this system and how easy it was for my parents to see all my grades. After all, it is much more convenient and desirable to hide the

averages. It would also make it easier for students and teachers to spot an incorrect score.

There are some arguments against posting grades online, though. I recently came across an article in the Times

the online grading system could be very beneficial and worthwhile. Without it, many students may feel complacent without sufficient knowledge of their current grades. With realtime updates, they can see



S. Wang (VI)

bad grades and pretend they never happened. However, every time I got my report card and did not do as well as I had hoped, I immediately regretted not telling my parents earlier. Ultimately, the online grading system made me feel more confident when my final grades were revealed, because my parents and I knew exactly what to expect.

A similar online grade system would benefit everyone, not just students. It’s a convenient tool for teachers, as it makes it easy for them to distribute grades and calculate

titled “I Know What You Did Last Math Class” that states that this type of program can potentially add more stress to some students since parents can see every missed homework assignment and every grade. The article also argues that giving parents more control over their children’s lives does not prepare them for college and the real world. Students should learn to deal with their grades themselves and not have their parents be so involved in the process.

While all this may be true, I still stand by my belief that

where their grades are low and can improve them quickly. Students will learn to be more diligent and can get into the habit of immediately seeing teachers for help when they get poor grades. This habit, instead of procrastinating, will help them in the future even when their parents are not involved.

Even though a few teachers already utilize programs such as Engrade and Moodle to post grades, I hope Pingry will soon consider making online grade posting a school-wide requirement.



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Online Classes Threaten Snow Day “Magic”

By RACHEL WU (V)

Every student knows the sheer joy of waking up late in the morning to the sight of fresh snow outside the window. On a snow day, there is no better feeling than staying in your pajamas, snuggling up with a hot chocolate and crawling back into bed with no intention of emerging until noon.

To me, the sound of Mr. Leef’s voice announcing the cancellation of classes “due to inclement weather” is music to my ears. It means one extra day to study for that impending APUSH test, to finish up that English essay, or to catch up on some much-needed sleep. Recently, however, all of my snow day bliss has been threatened with the new suggestion of classes being held online.

With the drastic increase in snow days in the past year, schools all across the nation have been searching for ways to make up lost class time. Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia have changed their school calendars from the 183-day school year with three built-in snow days to a 180-day school year with twelve built-in snow days. These calendar changes remain in accordance with Virginia state law, which states that students must be

in school for either 180 days or 990 hours. In addition to calendar changes, schools have also been consider-

thought of being dragged out of bed to attend class online is unappealing, to say the least. In a recent

more material for their exams in the spring.

Nonetheless, students cannot help but feel that online classes are invading the delight of their beloved snow days. If you have to set an alarm to wake up early in the morning to log onto Moodle, is it really still a snow day?

Furthermore, not only would online classes be an unhappy obligation dreaded by students, but I also suspect that these sessions would not be productive. In the lazy comfort of my own home, I have no doubt that I will be tempted to go on social networks, to grab a snack from the kitchen and to slack off in general.

Rather than obligating teachers to set up class sessions online, the Pingry ad-



C. Freinberg (VI)

ing extended school days, schedule adjustments, and online classes in preparation for impending snow days.

Following this trend, Pingry has been exploring new ways to prepare for lost class time due to snow days during the 2014-15 school year. In the past, the administration has utilized delayed openings, shorter flex/CP periods, and a curtailed Thanksgiving break. But the latest suggestion has made students cringe in dread: online classes.

Unsurprisingly, the

survey, our administration asked us our opinion on the idea. I have no doubt that the majority of the student body selected “strongly opposed” without hesitation. Without the luxury of sleeping-in until noon, the magic of snow days would be shattered.

The intentions of the administration are not unjustified. With the influx of snow days, teachers are burdened with the stress of teaching an entire curriculum in a compressed time period and students are encumbered with the task of cramming

ministration would help their students and faculty by utilizing other methods of making up class time. I would much rather attend a few extended classes and skip a couple flex periods than be forced to attend class online on a snow day.

As a community, we would all benefit from taking a day to de-stress from time to time. Both students and faculty eagerly welcome snow days, uninterrupted by online classes, as a much-needed break from the fast pace of Pingry life.

We Need Healthier Snack Options at The Bookstore to Keep Us Energized

By KATIE HO (IV)

One day during break, after a particularly strenuous swim practice, I walked home and peered into my pantry to find something that would re-energize my body and silence my grumbling stomach.

As per usual, instead of going for an apple with peanut butter or snacking on some yogurt in the refrigerator, I headed for a wonderful assortment of items that filled me with absolute delight: a few pieces of chocolate, a pack of buttery cookies, and a handful of gummy bears.

I wolfed down these items in a few seconds and felt instant gratification—I not only felt fuller but also happier.

Every day was the same: I would arrive home after practice, craving not a bowl of homemade soup or a few carrot sticks, but the most delightfully packaged, sugar-oozing snacks wrapped in either plastic, a box, or a container. Sugar became my newly found love and one of my best friends over the holidays.

Now that winter break has rapidly come to an end, the formidable New Year, with guaranteed new projects, assignments and tests, has made many students quiver with fear, stress and

anxiety. And one thing that I am noticing, besides caffeine, is that many students are putting into their bodies the same thing that provides me some satisfaction after a particularly hard workout: Sugar.

Looking around during class, I often see people enjoying a refreshing bottle of Snapple, running to the bookstore to grab a pack of M&M’s or gorging down homemade brownies and cookies during advisory. In between classes, students, myself included, are constantly heading over to the cafeteria to pour themselves a hot, steaming cup of tea or coffee—even adding a packet or two of sugar into their drinks at times. Sugar is ubiquitous.

This made me question why we, as human beings, have become so infatuated with a carbohydrate made up of a composition of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen.

It’s not as if people don’t know that too much sugar has negative consequences. Many people are fully aware that though sugar may have a sweet façade, it is extremely dangerous to people when there is too much of it in the body.

Newspapers and newscasts often announce sugar as a serious widespread problem. Health classes across the United States are con-

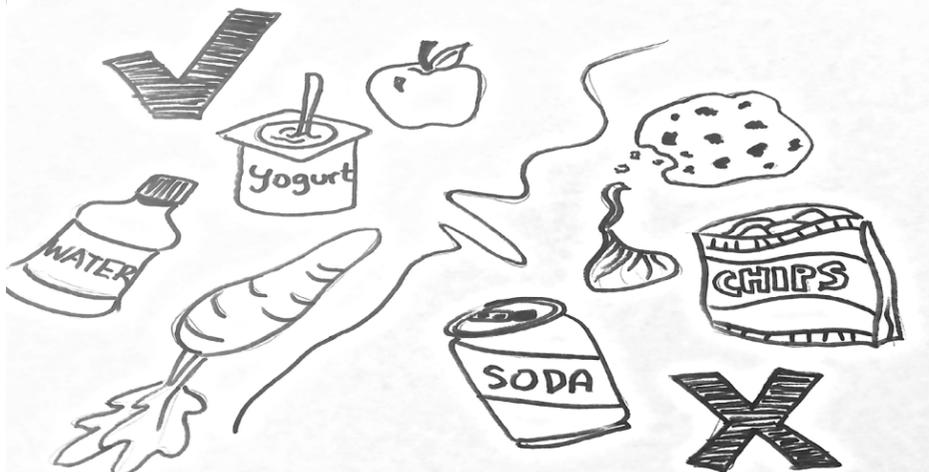
cerned about student health, with many schools taking measures to educate their students about the benefits of eating healthy. However, with sugar available during breakfast, lunch, and dinner, it is becoming increasingly difficult to stay away from such an alluring substance.

According to The New York Times, too much sugar can lead to a multitude of problems, including fatty liver disease, Type 2 diabetes, obesity and kidney disease. And on top of all that, sugar is highly addicting, which I am fairly certain, is why people often seem to crave a chocolate bar—but no one in their right mind ever desires a piece of lettuce or a stick of zucchini. Studies have shown that an abundance of sugar in the body stimulates the brain just as a drug would, which is why it can be so dangerous.

Though lunch options in the cafeteria are quite healthy with a salad bar full of greens and fruits, the bookstore should have healthier snacks to choose from, rather than only supplying bagged chips, packs of candy, and sugary drinks. Schools should also provide healthier alternatives for students who feel like snacking but still want to eat healthily. Some more natural options include packaged carrot sticks with dip, yogurt

cups, and string cheese, all of which are quite tasty and nutritious. This way, it is up to students to make their own decisions on what types of snacks they put into their bodies, with a various selection of healthy and unhealthy options right in front of them. The bookstore will not be encouraging students to consume an immense amount of sugar each day if they provide options for healthier snacks and drinks in the refrigerators and on the shelves.

So, the next time I happen to crave a snack after school, I will be reaching for the yogurt cup sitting at the top of the refrigerator, rather than the dangerous, highly addictive bag of Skittles.



E. Jin (V)

EDITORIAL

Competition Showcases Talent

Recently, at a Quiz Bowl tournament, I was asked by multiple students from another school why Pingry does not have much representation in various competitions. Most notably, these students were referring to activities like the National Science Bowl and other outside competitions that challenge students to recall information learned in school. These tests are multiple-choice, and reward students who are able to memorize large quantities of information at a relatively young age in a short period of time. From my own experience, the majority of the tests I took in middle school revolved around the same basic principle: the more information you remember, the more you understand.

For example, in my eighth-grade English class, we had a test on *To Kill a Mockingbird* that comprised mainly of factual plot-related multiple-choice questions and didn’t deal with “why” or “how” questions. When I came to Pingry, I was surprised to see a lack of these kinds of “memorization” questions in subjects like English and Spanish, and also a lack of competitions and activities that other nearby schools are heavily invested in.

In an article entitled “When Memorization Gets in the Way of Learning” for The Atlantic magazine, the author, Ben Orlin, criticizes the practice of rote memorization in academic subjects, and he claims that this is detrimental to understanding certain subject matter. Just knowing the name of the main character or the location of a robbery is not sufficient to understand the true meaning that the story is trying to convey. Similarly, in the myriad Science Olympiad competitions run by various organizations, simply memorizing the stages of mitosis does not guarantee a comprehensive understanding of the chemical and biological processes.

Last year, I wrote an opinion piece about the AP Exams that dealt mainly with the issue of students needing to memorize large quantities of information in a short period of time. While the AP Exams are gradually changing to reflect more thought-provoking and critical-thinking standards, some aspects of education in the US, and Pingry, are still hindered by issues relating to memorization.

One of the issues is a “cheat sheet.” On some AP Exams and classes, tests come with formula sheets, shortcuts, or a list of given information that is supposed to relieve the student from having to generate the information on the test. However, the continued practice of these sheets led many students to simply neglect knowing how these equations were derived or the context of the given facts. Subsequently, some of these students were unable to explain to others why a shortcut works and couldn’t remember certain facts unless they were provided on a cheat sheet.

To solve this issue, it would be best to provide the basic equations or facts, and then have students generate all the subsequent formulas and events from then on. If students were expected to know the basics like the back of their hand, their ability to derive further information would be reinforced so they could more fully understand concepts in math, science, and history.

In other words, memorization is not necessarily a bad thing. In fact, I think that from a competitive standpoint, having some activities and competitions that reward students who know a lot about certain subjects can be beneficial. From a practical perspective, there are many students at nearby schools who participate in academic competitions, and this exposure does help when making a case to colleges. Students who are able to apply the knowledge learned in class to external competitions will have a leg up on students who devote all their time to schoolwork. Only recently have events like the US Biology Olympiad, Physics Olympiad, and Chemistry Olympics re-appeared in Pingry. These competitions give students a chance to shine and give other schools and organizations an enhanced impression of Pingry. These competitions serve not only to benefit the student, as the student can bolster his/her résumé with achievements, but also the school, as the school gains more prestige and a more visible presence.

Of course, too much competition and memorization is a bad thing. We have all heard the horror stories of cutthroat competitiveness among students across the world, and in some nearby schools, students spend the majority of their time prepping for national math exams or standardized tests like the SAT or the APs. While this kind of competition and memorization is extreme, not all of it is bad or anathema to a good education. Competition can motivate students to work hard and become more interested in a certain subject, and when coupled with a student’s ability to memorize information, it can reward a student’s acumen and showcase the school in a positive light. At the same time, it is important to reinforce the notion of critical thinking and open-ended solutions to problems, so that students can problem-solve and remember key facts at the same time. In order to succeed in an environment focused on both the breadth and depth of knowledge, the current generation of students needs to be exposed to external competitions as well as critical analysis.

—Abhiram Karuppur

Will Standardized Testing Soon Become Obsolete?

By CAROLINE TERENS (V)

As seniors officially send in their applications and juniors just begin the rigorous college process, I start to wonder what actually makes the college search and trying to become the ideal candidate so stressful. While students put so much effort into the way they present themselves in their college essays, their endless lists of extracurricular activities, and the four years spent earning their GPAs, they also have to put aside time to take standardized tests.

I am nearing the middle of my junior year and am beginning to realize what makes the "dreaded year" so difficult and exhausting. While I thought my homework load would increase drastically and my courses would become more challenging, I have noticed that this part of my academic experience has not changed very much since last year. The ACT and SAT are what really put juniors over the edge. With our busy schedules, it is hard to find time after a long

day of school, activities, and homework, to put in the preparation necessary for doing the best

come into play when taking the ACT or SAT. Some students are not good test takers under

to make it "more focused and useful than ever before." There are "Eight Key Changes" that

to believe that the College Board would ever deduct points for a guess or wrong answer because this sends a message that taking risks is detrimental to a student's academic career. This important change and the many others included in the newly designed SAT are being put into effect to truly assess skills that are necessary for college and that are prominent and useful in careers.

While the College Board is making an effort to adapt the SAT to fit the current world that we live in, some colleges de-emphasize the importance of standardized tests. More colleges have been labeling themselves as "test optional" and realizing the outdated and irrelevant nature of the SAT. This ideology is spreading, and hopefully, one day, a test score will not define a student.

William Hess, former Dean of Admissions at Bates College, explained in a PBS interview, "the human mind is simply so complex and so multifaceted and fluid, that trying to find a single measurement tool that will be reliable across the enormous

populations of American students is simply a trip up a blind alley." PBS writer Sarah Sheffer explained that the SAT originated around 1930 as a test to give students from less fortunate backgrounds the opportunity to get a higher education. Ivy League schools first used it as an indicator and then others followed. According to Hiss, what used to be a method of leveling the playing field is now not "reliable cross populations." The so-called "standardized" test clearly does not have the same effect as it used to.

Even though you should still continue to strive to do your best on whichever standardized test you decide to take, you should focus more on what really matters. Your overall academic career, the role you play in your school community and in other extracurricular activities, and the impression you make on your teachers should be a more than effective representation of what type of person you are. No one should have to worry about a single test score diminishing all of the other hard work.



L. Kim (VI)

that we can on these tests.

How can colleges thoroughly read through our essays and teacher recommendations with such care and then look at a score that supposedly defines our intelligence? Can these tests really measure how smart we are or how prepared we are for college? So many other factors

pressure or do not have the same access to tutors and test preparation as others. So why should some colleges base such a large portion of their decision on test results that may not be very legitimate?

The College Board is currently redesigning the SAT, which will debut in Spring 2016,

the College Board is presenting: "command of evidence, essay analyzing a source, focus on math that matters the most, problems grounded in real-world context, analysis in science and in history/social studies, founding document and great global conversation, and no penalty for wrong answers." It is hard

Trichas Stresses the Advantages of Mindfulness

By MARIAM TRICHAS (III)

It's Monday night. You get home from sports at 8:45 p.m.

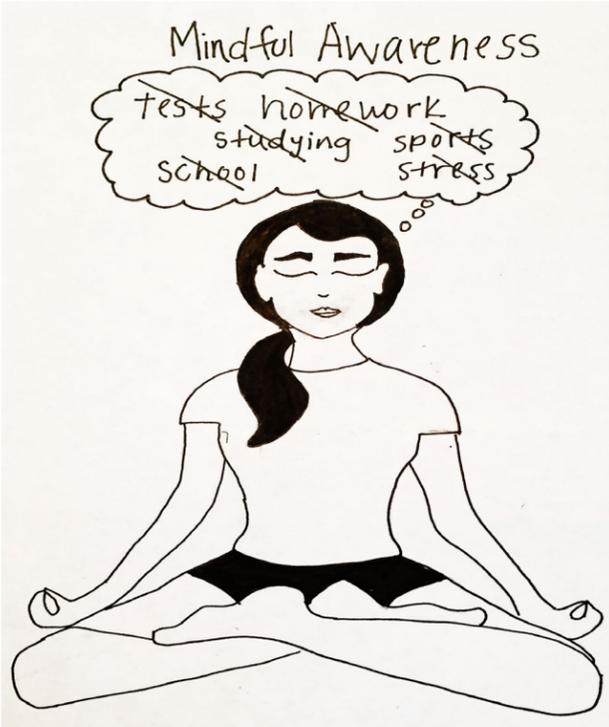
By the time you shower, eat dinner, and study for the three tests you have that week, it's already 1 a.m. This means you only get five hours of sleep.

This is a common scenario for many Pingry students.

If done on a weekly basis, this tight schedule can negatively affect mental and physical health.

And it seems almost impossible to cut out extracurricular activities and cut down the amount of homework and assessments that the academic program requires.

I recently read an article in the New York Times called "Space to Be Mindful." According to author Jane Karr, a "mindfulness room" was unveiled this year at Carnegie



I. Zinn (VI)

Mellon University (CMU).

Angela Ng, an engineering student who was awarded \$3,000 for her idea by the Enhanced Campus Culture initiative, thought out the room.

The room prohibits studying, technology and meetings.

It's a "place to look inside yourself and be clear about your thoughts," according to Ms. Ng.

The room is earth-themed, complete with a waterfall, plant wall, comfy seating and an inspiration whiteboard, where students can write supportive notes to their community.

Students say that the room has helped them relax and feel better about their day overall.

A recent CMU study of

mindfulness meditation found that meditating for just 25 minutes for three consecutive days can significantly reduce stress. Mindfulness meditation has become an increasingly popular way for people to improve their mental and physical health.

By practicing meditation, people learn how to clear their minds and be unconditionally present.

Most students practice mindfulness so that they can relax, which leads to clearer thinking and lower levels of stress.

Many students, including me, have thought of mindfulness as taking up too much time, which is a reason that they don't practice it regularly.

I often tell myself that there are many other things I would rather be doing, like watching TV or surfing the Internet.

But the reality is, if we want to be calmer and less stressed, we need to make time for ourselves.

Recently, I've been practicing mindfulness on the weekends for about five to ten minutes per day.

I didn't realize how much more relaxed I would feel, how much more clearly I would be able to think, and most importantly, how much happier I would be after doing it.

It has also helped me be more efficient and focused when studying.

Even though it might not be something you're interested in, I would definitely encourage giving mindfulness a try if you're looking for a way to destress and focus.

"If we want to be calmer and less stressed, we need to make time for ourselves."

Environmental Education Should Be Emphasized in Schools

By EMERY SORVINO (VI)

Did you know that all of your leftover food from lunch is used to create compost for the kitchen garden? Did you know that our new solar-paneled roof not only looks better, but is also more sustainable? Pingry is a leader in sustainability and environmental education, but it seems as though all our efforts to "be green" go unnoticed.

What our school is doing is admirable, but I'm wondering what we can do to get the community more involved and more interested in the environmental movement. The primary goal of our school is to educate its students and prepare them for college. However, I think a secondary goal is getting the student body interested in the world issues for which we will one day be finding solutions.

Currently, there are many controversies about environmental issues. While there may be debates about the veracity of climate change, it's undeniable that some environmental issues are real and that some of their consequences are unavoidable.

In Naomi Oreskes' recent

Op-Ed in the *New York Times*, "Playing Dumb on Climate Change," she wrote, "We know that carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas, we know that its concentration in the atmosphere has increased by about 40 percent since the industrial revolution, and we know the mechanism by which it warms the planet." It's still unclear what sort of impact these things will have on the planet, but these known facts could be indicators for neces-

sary environmental action. Because environmental issues are so important, I feel that we should incorporate them into everything happening around Pingry, from the academic curriculum to student life.

The school is, in fact, taking many positive steps in terms of environmental education and sustainability. Just look at our solar panels, the organic kitchen garden or the green art path. We have so many resources and tools to be environ-

mentally active, so we should take advantage of them. To use them to their full potential, I encourage more students to enroll in Honors Environmental U.S. History, Environmental Art and the newly added Environmental Science course. In addition, teachers should utilize the outdoor classrooms more often.

Another way for students to get involved is through the Green Group. Obviously, the

whole school will not join this environmental activism club, but perhaps the club itself can do more to involve the student body. When I was an underclassman, the Green Group hosted parties for the entire Pingry community, where students would do garden work while enjoying music, food and the outdoors with their friends. Eating the Garden-to-Table lunches that the Green Group hosts is another enjoyable

way to take advantage of the environmental resources that we have.

Although all of these initiatives are being implemented around campus, many students aren't aware of the efforts that our school is taking to be more sustainable. Even worse, many don't care. However, students should care; even if they aren't fond of gardening or hiking, the environment affects everyone. Pingry is working so hard to make sure that we are doing the right thing with regards to the environment, but what is the use if the students aren't involved in those plans?

The best way to show our appreciation for the school's sustainability efforts is to take advantage of the numerous green resources that we have. Whether that means helping in the garden during free time or even just properly recycling, I think that this is something we should be focusing on. I don't know if there is anything more that the school can do to get us involved. I think that now it is up to us, the student body, to take the initiative and expand our awareness of the environmental movement.

GET INVOLVED!



N. Nnaeto (V)

Gingham, Suede, and Leather SAC Entertains in Winter Assembly

Mark Trends for Spring 2015

By ALEXIS ELLIOTT (III)

As we ring in the New Year, fashion trends shift. It appears as though fashion in 2015 will be much different from the chokers, tea length skirts, and the famous J Crew Chelsea rain boots that dominated the fashion scene in 2014.

For men's fashion, look out for the "streetwear" style, including jogger pants and fashionable running shoes. An alternative to pairing fashionable running shoes with joggers is to wear a pair of Timberlands. Another trend for men is cuffing the bottoms of jeans. The cuffed jean look allows the wearer to show off a nice pair of shoes that were once hidden. The New Year

will also bring in the style of short sleeve button-downs in cool patterns and designs that show off the wearer's arms.

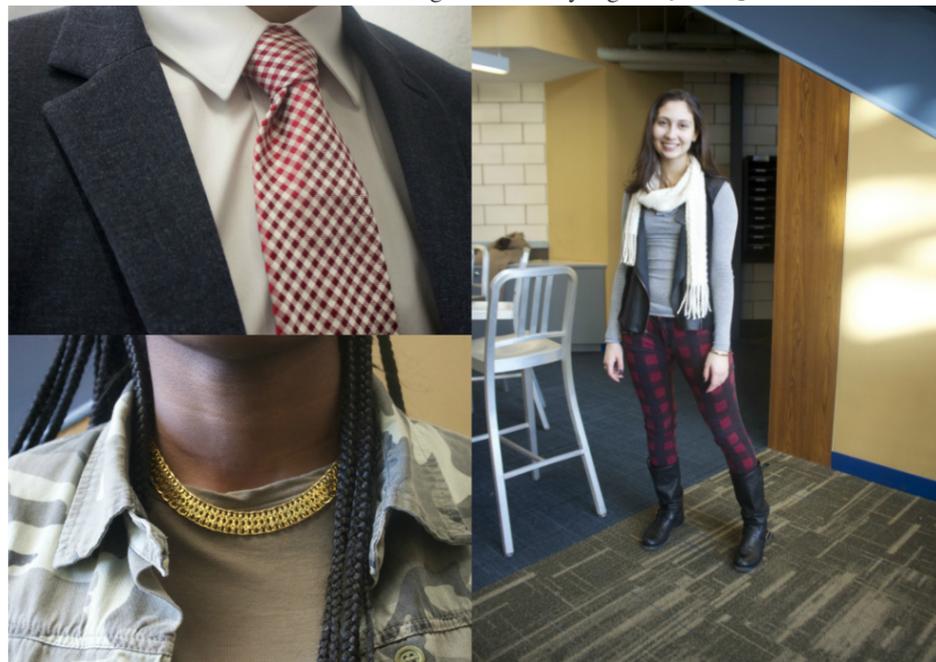
In women's fashion, many trends will evolve as the year progresses. Glamour Magazine predicts that "shirt-dresses" in unique styles will be popular. Although Fall 2014 brought us proper plaids, Gingham will be an increasingly popular design. Gingham brings a swingy vibe and is far from boring. Other trends for women include military greens, dressing in head to toe white, and textured and bright florals.

In 2015, it won't simply be about what you are wearing, but how you style what you are wearing. The new styling

tricks include layering multiple pieces, mixing different textures and putting together various shades.

According to Vogue, clear, dark denim will be a major feature of the fashion scene in 2015 because it is "as sharp as any pair of straightforward trousers." Vogue also stated that "suede is the new leather" due to its soft and fuzzy material. However, Huffington Post challenged this prediction, countering that leather "is not going anywhere" and will remain a top trend in 2015.

Overall, 2015 will see a mix of different fashion trends and designs that will definitely come and go, but it will be exciting to see what trends stay on top.



Various fashionable outfits at Pingry.

I. Zinn (VI)

By JULIA AXTELL (V)

On December 19, 2014, the Upper School gathered in the Lower Commons to watch the annual Student Activities Committee's (SAC) holiday assem-

mas carol. Four male members dressed up in white t-shirts and Santa skirts as they performed the holiday dance to "Jingle Bell Rock" from the popular movie "Mean Girls." SAC leader Alec Kirmser (VI) also brought back

assembly is particularly difficult because they "can only do live acts" so "organizing all the different components to come together" at exactly the right moment is quite challenging.

When asked how the group



Members of the SAC dress up as Santa Claus and dance "Jingle Bell Rock" from Mean Girls.

C. Beard (IV)

bly. Each year SAC holds three assemblies: the Rufus Gunther Day assembly, the holiday assembly, and the spring assembly.

Each assembly is met with anticipation, as students and faculty are eager to hear what jokes and skits SAC will bring, and this year's holiday assembly was no exception.

This year, SAC brought back popular skits like the senior boys fighting each other while only wearing underwear and the giving of sarcastic gifts to members of the audience. Instead of having Santa give the gifts, SAC had member Erin Dugan (V) give the gifts as Mrs. Claus. Another tradition with a slight modification was members singing a Christ-

his "Hanukkah Song" from last year after it was met with wild success, along with his duet partner Jason Resnick (IV).

A new addition to this year's assembly was the "Family Feud" game played between teachers and students. The best part was that students portrayed teachers, while teachers played the roles of students. This hilarious new skit also received a great response and may become an annual sketch.

When asked why this year's holiday assembly was such a success, Kirmser said it is owed to the "ton of people who worked on this in small but important ways." Kirmser also mentioned that preparing for the holiday

comes up with the material, Kirmser said he either "just randomly has an idea for something and will write it down to remember it or someone in the group will pitch an idea" and "if the idea pitched is good" they will "go forward with it."

Kirmser owed much of the assembly's success to "the sheer number of people" who helped make it possible. He gave credit to Dugan for stepping up to do a lot of the work and to the SAC faculty advisor, History teacher Mr. Ted Corvino Jr.'94, for all of his help.

Kirmser said that his favorite part of the assembly was the Jingle Bell Rock dance led by SAC member Ryan Salamon (VI).

Coffeehouse Captivates Large Audience With Catchy Songs

By HANNAH CURTIS (V)

There is no better way to start off the winter season than attending a jazzy and comedic Coffeehouse. On November 25, the "Pretzel Vision" Coffeehouse took place in the Attic Theatre where numerous performers presented acts ranging

from covers of popular songs to stand up comedy. A large audience of students from all grades crowded the space and awaited the acts while observing the artistic pieces displayed on the walls.

The night began with an introduction from Coffeehouse Society members Matt Rice (VI) and Theo Rabke (VI). Over the years, the two seniors

have grown very fond of the event. Rice said, "I went to my first coffee house freshman year and it made a huge impression on me. Now that I am running it as a senior, my goal is to continue the tradition."

Following the introduction, Chris Lucciola (VI) and Clay (V), Rabke's poetry reading, and an original song performed by Nicole Korogodsky (VI). The overwhelmingly positive feedback from the audience proved that the night was one to remember. "My favorite aspect of Coffeehouse is the support that everyone there has for each other. It feels completely judge-free and, as a result, people perform things they would never dream of doing in front of an audience," Julia Friend (VI) said, after performing her cover of "Latch" by Disclosure.

According to Rice, Coffeehouse isn't only a place for students to share their artistic talents. "It is also a gathering of uncensored expression. Coffeehouse is supposed to be a night where anyone who has anything to say can say it in any way they want."

Friend added, "I think Coffeehouse reflects the openness and creativity of the arts program at Pingry. Teachers have always been so welcoming and constantly encourage students to put themselves out there and take risks."

Each year, Coffeehouse provides students with the opportunity to open up and perform pieces in front of a judge-free crowd. Whether it is a performance of an original song or a poetry recitation, Coffeehouse always offers surprises.



I. Zinn (VI)

Performers J. Chartouni (VI), B. Rigby (V), and J. Robertson (IV) entertain the crowd.

from covers of popular songs to stand up comedy. A large audience of students from all grades crowded the space and awaited the acts while observing the artistic pieces displayed on the walls.

The night began with an introduction from Coffeehouse Society members Matt Rice (VI) and Theo Rabke (VI). Over the years, the two seniors

McCullum (VI) performed, jamming out on ukuleles to "Hotel California" by The Eagles. Hunter Conti (VI) and Ellie Harrison (IV) described the performance as "the most memorable part of the night. It was fun, new and incredible."

Other acts included Harrison's cover of "I Know I'm Not the Only One," a piano serenade from Michael James

Hits and Misses

- Hit:** Four-Day Weeks
- Miss:** Snow Day Assignments
- Hit:** Snowball
- Miss:** The long car lines
- Hit:** Being a Patriots Fan
- Miss:** Being a Seahawks Fan
- Miss:** Seniors didn't get their skip day
- Hit:** Mother Nature came in clutch
- Miss:** Having 2 weeks to finish 1st semester
- Hit:** Entering 2nd semester
- Hit:** Aaron Cooper's buzz cut
- Hit:** Paul Cooper's earrings
- Hit:** Swimming and fencing teams break multiple records

Apocalypse is a Fad Among Teens

By AIDAN ZOLA (V)

Flip on the television, head over to Netflix for a study break, or crack open that new book your friend has been talking about, and you're bound to find some trace of a trend that has recently consumed American popular culture: the apocalypse.

Viewers and readers alike follow along as relentless characters face evil powers, personal adversity, and a wild roller coaster ride of human emotion, all byproducts of a post-apocalyptic Earth. Menacing new governments, violent battle scenes and gory hordes of zombies are all included.



Courtesy of Google Images

TV series, movies and books such as the "The Walking Dead," "Revolution," "I Am Legend" and "The Hunger Games" demonstrate this increasingly popular theme with their thrilling, action-packed plots. But the real question is why exactly this idea has become so common in today's culture, and why teenagers are so attracted to it.

Looking at the profitability of producing a post-apocalyptic work is a good place to start. For example, with five seasons of wild success from the desolate, zombie-filled world of "The Walking Dead" and its 17 million viewers comes a desire from other writers and producers to replicate this popularity. "Copycat" TV series, movies and books spring up everywhere in the hopes that they'll be just as economically successful.

Real world occurrences and their effects on consumers provide another logical explanation for the rise in post-apocalyptic work. Rapid climate change, fiery political divisions and international

tensions may put Americans in a pessimistic state of mind, and thus the ideas featured in these movies and shows appear more relevant to everyday life. Fascinations with theories like the end of the world in 2012, partly originating from the end of the Mayan calendar, are also important to consider.

Psychology teacher Ms. Shelby Bartlett '08 provided a scientific explanation as to why teenagers are so drawn to the post-apocalyptic theme. She said, "From a neurological perspective, when we look at the teenage brain there are two main areas that are developing, the amygdala and the frontal cortex." The amygdala

serves as the emotional center of the brain, whereas the frontal cortex acts as the decision-maker. Yet, Ms. Bartlett added, "The interesting thing about the amygdala is that it grows very rapidly in the adolescent brain while the frontal cortex doesn't really develop until around the age of 23 or 24."

So, what does this mean for teenagers enjoying plotlines with zombies and evil governments? In the teenage brain, "There is a lag between a very heightened emotional center and a slower frontal cortex," Ms. Bartlett said. Essentially, a stronger emotional reaction to surroundings and lack of impulse control helps to fuel an interest in violence and gore.

Between the huge business of producing these kinds of works, real world occurrences, and the weaker decision-making section of the adolescent brain, it is logical to say that the rise in post-apocalyptic-oriented plotlines is justified. The stage is perfectly set for a zombie invasion in a cinema near you.

Congratulations to Ayanna Neal (VI) for solving the Crossword Puzzle and Josh Chin (VI) and Prad Maganti (VI) for solving the Sudoku Puzzle! Come to the

Record Office for your prize!

Art Gallery Celebrates Creations by Members of the Talented Fine Arts Faculty

By TRACEY COOPER (IV)

The Hostetter Arts Gallery featured paintings, sculptures, photography and other works by members of the Fine Arts faculty from December 10 until January 27.

Mrs. Jane Edwards displayed photographs of outdoor scenes, including images of a rainbow, a snowy landscape, and students walking through woods. Mrs. Edwards' work also included cloth pieces, which depicted a forest and foliage, extending the theme of nature.

Mrs. Jane Asch exhibited paintings of Young's Beach and Hallock's Bay, both located in Long Island. The works were inspired by her vacation to the area last summer.

Mr. Rich Freiwald showcased vases of evocative images such as guns and a North American Bat with white nose syndrome, a disease decimating bat populations.

Middle School Fine Arts teacher Mrs. Jane Kunzman displayed several watercolor paintings. Some of these paintings depicted pears using various color schemes, while others showed letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Additionally, there was a stack of paintings of Hebrew letters tied together by a ribbon sitting on a table near those that were hung up.

Mrs. Rebecca Sullivan contributed a painting of a California condor wing to scale, as well as models of the five largest pieces of natural land in the United States, excluding Alaska and Hawaii, that do not

contain man-made structures. The surfaces of the models were made of materials that ap-

peared natural and represented the land. Mr. Peter Delman's pieces were larger-than-life paintings of flowers. Mr. Delman explained, "I always found flowers to be kind of an exciting subject because they're very delicate but can be very powerful."



I. Zinn (VI)

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Mr. Peter Delman's pieces were larger-than-life paintings of flowers. Mr. Delman explained, "I always found flowers to be kind of an exciting subject because they're very delicate but can be very powerful."

Lower School Fine Arts teacher Mr. Russell Christian included paintings of a series of self-invented letters of an alphabet.

Fine Arts Department Chair Mr. Miles Boyd's work was made out of burlap and loosely derivative of memories of the abandoned farm that once be-

longed to Mr. Boyd's grandfather. The pieces were geometric, predominantly using

rectangular shapes. Many art students visited the exhibit with their art classes or independently and were thoughtful in their reactions.

Evy Barnett (VI) loved the "metallic shine" of Mrs. Edwards' photographs, and was struck by the originality of Mrs. Sullivan's work. Mr. Christianson's alphabets, she said, "actually inspired me for my next piece."

According to Katie Coyne (V), Mr. Freiwald's bat imagery "added a lot of interest" to the show. She also found Mrs. Kunzman's pictures "really calming and just soothing to look at," whereas Mr. Delman's

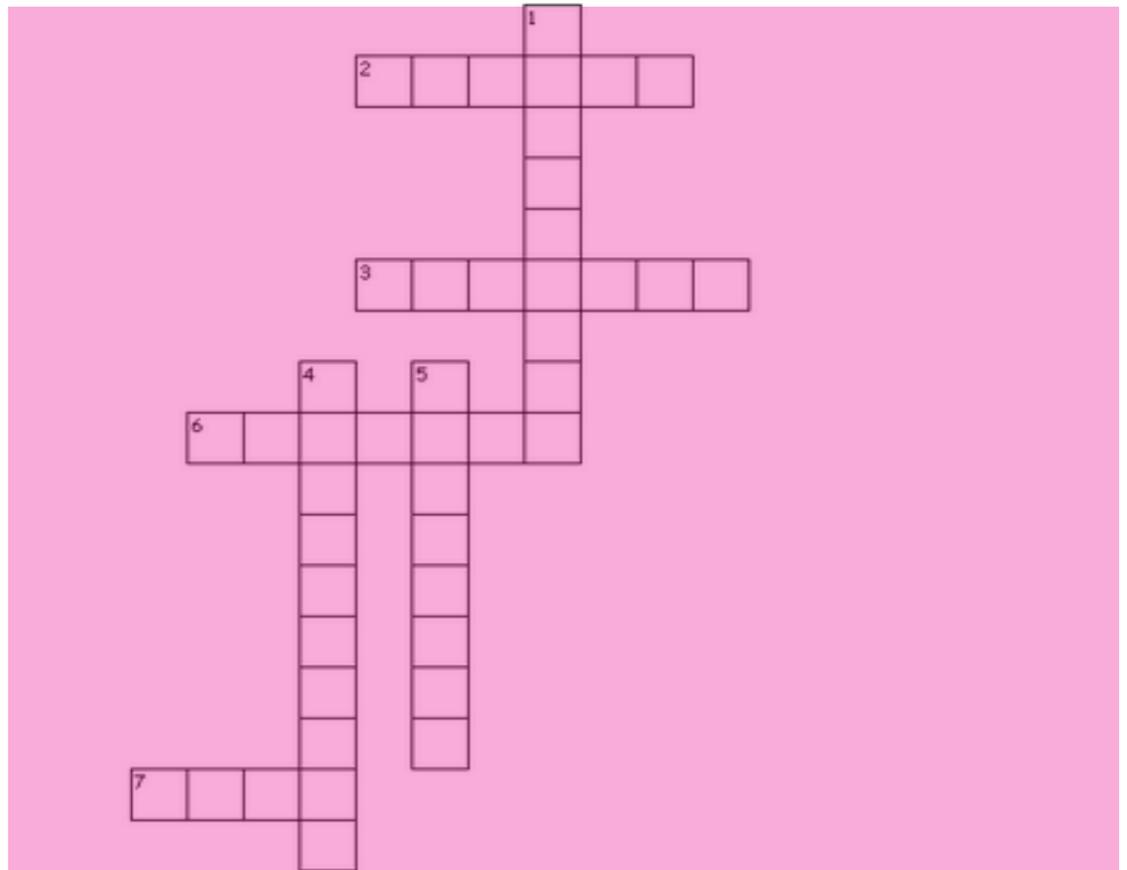
paintings made her think. "I liked the contrast between something that's as smooth

and harmless as a flower, and then how the paintings were really physical and almost scary-looking. There were a lot of different textures and colors going on," she said.

Rebecca Lin (III) agreed. "I think it's cool how he put such simple shapes into a piece of artwork," she said.

These reactions were exactly what the Art faculty hoped for. Mr. Delman said that it was valuable for art students to see their teachers' work because "they learn things from a variety of approaches to art, and it hopefully expands their thinking about what can be done in art, which is a major goal."

February Crossword Puzzle



Across

2. Abby Bauer isn't sure if students know their _____ in high school
3. The county in Virginia that now has 12 built in snow days
6. The last name of the head of SAGE at Pingry
7. The number of players in the ensemble that played "Let it Go"

Down

1. The last name of one of the heads of PEC
4. Julia Friend performed Latch by _____ at Coffeehouse
5. The emotional center of the brain

All of the words in the puzzle are Pingry themed. There are no spaces in any of the answers.

Winter Festival Unites Both Campuses

By ALLY PYNE (III)

On December 10 in Hauser Auditorium, students, teachers and faculty from the Short Hills and Basking Ridge campuses convened to celebrate the upcoming holiday season at the annual All-School Winter Festival.

This year, kindergartners Maeve and Michael Webster (children of History teacher and lacrosse coach Mr. Michael Webster) assisted Student Body President Taylor Dillon (VI) in lighting the festival candle. Dillon said, "Being a part of the candle lighting and working with two different kindergartners made me realize how significant the whole school being together is." He added, "It's the only time out of the whole year that grades K-12 come to-

McAnally, Mr. Tom Berdos, Ms. Vera Izano and Mr. Jay Winston conducted the concert.

Mr. Winston said he "thought the winter festival was a great success." Although he admitted that it was challenging to combine the voices of 6-12 graders, he said, "It was extremely rewarding to see and hear how each of those ensembles came together."

These groups performed songs that ranged from traditional to lighthearted numbers, such as "Reindeer on the Roof," "Shalom Rav," and Respighi's "Ancient Airs and Dances." In keeping with tradition, everyone joined in song for the grand finale, "The Twelve Days of Christmas."

The audience also enjoyed the String Quartet's



Courtesy Pingry Communications

SBP Taylor Dillon (VI) lifts Maeve Webster (K) to light the candle.

Shruti Sagar (III) agreed with Dillon, saying, "Seeing all my previous teachers from the lower school really boosted my holiday spirit and the sense of community I feel at school." She added that she "especially enjoyed watching the fifth graders perform 'Reindeer on the Roof,' the same song my classmates and I sang when we were in the fifth grade."

The concert also featured the Lower, Middle and Upper School choral groups, which performed alongside the Jazz Band, the Sixth Grade Band, the String Ensemble, the String Quartet, the Balladeers, and the Buttendowns.

Music teachers Dr. Andrew Moore, Mr. Sean

rendition of the popular Disney movie Frozen's "Let it Go." The Quartet consisted of violinists Charlie Zhu (V) and Kylie Kirschner (V), violist Emily Kwon (V) and cellist Ethan Chung (III). According to Chung, the group "rehearsed for one and a half weeks in preparation for the concert."

Mr. Winston also wanted to "congratulate the Upper School Handbell Club for taking the initiative to rehearse on their own time." He said, "Their participation added greatly to the concert."

A modified version of the All-School Festival was performed on Thursday, December 11 for the friends and families of the performers.

Entrepreneurship Club Blue Cards Give Members Discounts at Local Stores

By EDWARD JOHNSON (IV)

The Pingry Entrepreneurship Club's (PEC) new offering, the Blue Card, gives



One of the Entrepreneurship Club Blue Cards I. Zinn (VI)

students the opportunity to receive great discounts at local stores, while also giving back to the community. Blue Cards are sold for \$20, and provide the cardholder with dis-

counts at local stores such as Tito's Burritos, Dunkin Donuts, Pizza Brothers, and Smoothie King, among oth-

ers. At most participating stores, the discount is 10%. Co-head of PEC Frederick Chang (VI) said, "The Blue Card creates a relationship between Pingry and the Pingry community, and allows the school to get involved with local businesses." All profits made by PEC through selling Blue Cards go to Kiva, a micro-financing charity that loans money to entrepreneurs in third world countries.

PEC had the idea of bringing Blue Cards to the Pingry community about a year ago and, in such a short time, was able to make the idea a reality. The club has already ordered and customized the cards in bulk, and has begun the process of getting local shops to commit to discounts.

The process of arranging the details with the shop owners was very involved. Co-head of PEC Russell Beckerman (VI) said, "We needed to pitch our idea, and then repeatedly contact them, and then eventually negotiate a percentage discount."

Blue Cards, which are available to the greater Pingry community, are person-

alized with every buyer's name, both to prevent the sharing of Blue Cards and to aid the returning of cards if they are ever lost. Blue Cards do not have barcodes and are not scanned but are simply presented at the time of use.

Although the Blue Card is a very new concept, the club has already sold over 100 cards, a number that PEC hopes to raise by gaining discounts at even more stores.

"In future years, we hope to extend discounts at past restaurants and gain discounts at clothing and fitness stores as well," Chang said.

As of now, PEC is working on deals with Chipotle, Starbucks, Magic Fountain, and Soup Shop.

For more information or to order a card, you can visit the Blue Card Facebook page, which also lists the terms and conditions of participating stores.

SDLC Learns About Diversity At POCC

By JENN KORN (IV)

This December, the Student Diversity Leadership Committee (SDLC) traveled to Indianapolis for the annual People of Color Conference (POCC). The group, led by Dr. Diana Artis, immersed itself entirely in an emotional and intense process. Upon arrival, the students joined 1600 students and 2000 adults from around the nation and then split up into smaller, personal groups. In established "safe spaces," attendees spoke about current events, such as the issues in Ferguson, Missouri, as well as everyday issues regarding race.

According to its website, the mission of POCC is "to provide a safe space for leadership and professional development and networking for people of color and allies of all backgrounds in independent schools."

Pingry students jumped right in on the action, becoming active participants in every

discussion. Speaking about her time at POCC, Sonia Wong (IV) said, "I learned more about myself, and by being in a new and different environment, I was able to see things from a different perspective. The conference made me re-evaluate what is important."

Highlights of the trip included bonding time as a group, as well as meeting new people from other parts of the country. The Pingry group, made up of students from every grade, attended workshops and presentations, watched documentaries and participated in discussions to become further educated about the problems facing people of color in our modern, diverse world.

POCC is meant to empower students and adults and teach them how to see the world from a new perspective. In addition to the students in Pingry's SDLC, faculty from both the middle and upper school attended, as well as parent

representatives from the PSPA. The duration of the trip, three days and four nights, allowed everyone to fully immerse him or herself in the conference.

The SDLC club now finds

seminars titled "Blurring the Lines: Role of Schools in Managing Social Media" and "Finding Voices: Empowering Students of Color in Discussion-Based Classrooms,"



The SDLC club members at POCC in Indianapolis. N. Nnaeto (V)

itself equipped with skills and knowledge that members may not have had before. Hosting

POCC created a safe space for all attendees to discuss and learn from each other.

Buttendowns Assembly Does Not Disappoint

By CAROLINE TERENS (V)

The Buttendowns, Pingry's a capella boys choral group, offered their annual assembly on November 25 in Hauser Auditorium. After only three months of rehearsing, the group had the opportunity to present their musical talents to Middle and Upper School students and faculty.

Buttendowns' President Julian Chartouni (VI) said, "It's a process that we think carefully about, as planning for both our songs and movie begins in the summer. All of those hours spent together rehearsing after school have the effect of bringing our group together in a fantastic way, with each member's personality becoming apparent immediately."

As always, the group first captured the audience with their original movie about a missing pitch pipe,

which was stolen by the Balladeers. The movie received many laughs from the audience as students watched on the big screen. The 20 minute video was self-directed and written by the group members.

Following the video, the Buttendowns entertained the school with four songs from a variety of genres and sometimes even added their own choreography. They performed "Demons" by Imagine Dragons, "Madness" by Muse, a Pingry version of "If I Had A Million Dollars" by The Bare Naked Ladies, and "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" by The Tokens. The featured soloists included TanTan Wang (V), James Robertson (IV), Brian Grimaldi (V), Michael James (V), Hunter Stires (VI), and Chartouni.

Chartouni added, "It was a really rewarding experience for us to be able to

showcase our songs in front of the entire school." He said, "it's always a privilege to work with such a dedicated and talented group, and I've been amazed at what we've been able to accomplish."

The Buttendowns will continue to perform for

the school, and students already look forward to the Valentine's Day serenades in February. As usual, the Buttendowns Assembly was a favorite for many Pingry students and the community continues to be impressed by the group's musical talents.



The Buttendowns singing their final number at the assembly. Courtesy of Pingry Communications

Once you have solved the Crossword Puzzle please take a photo or scan your solutions, and send them to thepingry-record@gmail.com. The first person to send the correct answers to the puzzles will be featured in our next issue and get a prize. Happy Puzzling!

By: David Metzger (IV), Jacquie Jakimowicz (V), Abigail Ren (V), Dillon Noone (V), Megan Pan (III), Katie Ho (IV), Nick Ladino (III), Ally Pyne (III), Christina Costa (V), and Rachel Wu (V)

BOYS' and GIRLS' SKIING

5-6

Despite some warm weather at the beginning of its season, the ski team is optimistic.

Although the team has struggled in past years, captain Gabby Stern (VI) feels that, "there is a lot of potential this year" and is looking forward to "building a strong team." Notably, the team has seen large contributions from underclassmen. With only a few weeks of practice, the team has been competing well. Captain Tucker Buckell (V) said, "I

freshmen.

The boys' team has a current record of 7-3. According to Mr. Li, Brad Hong (V) and Hunter Stires (VI) are making a huge impact on the foil team. In saber, Malcolm Fields (III) and Dillon Noone (V) are both "making a very large contribution."

The girls' team holds a 7-3 record. In foil, Kate Northrop (VI) and Aubrey Malloy (III) are "really holding the group together," according to Mr. Li. Katie Vella (V) and Sarah Wang (VI) are major contributors in epee, and Claudia Jiang (VI) leads the girls' saber team.

Mr. Li hopes to win the State Championship at the end of the season, but if not, he hopes to at least win a district championship title. Both teams have faced stiff competition and are performing well. Mr. Li said his goals for the end of the season are for

matches in its Skyland Conference schedule. Additionally, the team competed in county's and took 5th in the Rutgers Prep tournaments. There have been multiple opportunities for the team to succeed, and as Coach Mark Facciani put it, "The tournament experience gives wrestlers a chance to elevate their level of competition."

Prior to the Skyland Conference and county tournaments, Coach Facciani added that, "I'm looking forward to how the wrestlers will perform in the next two weeks, as it will define the direction of the season."

GIRLS' HOCKEY

1-12

Despite a rough record of 1-12, the girls' ice hockey team is optimistic about the rest of the season.

Led by head coach Sean McAnally and captains Bella Walton (VI), Kacey Weiniger (VI), and Emma Engel (VI), the team had to adjust to the loss of several key players. Assistant Coach Caroline Burke, who joined the team this year, has also been helping players improve by motivating them to work harder during practice.

The team hopes to win more games throughout the rest of the season as they gain more experience. "There have been some ups and downs, but I think the team has been doing pretty well this year," Mr. McAnally said. "The challenge this season is learning how to play more as a team."

Walton, one of the team's leading scorers, is confident that the team "will pull out some wins in the second half of the season" while "having a lot of fun together and with the coaches."

BOYS' and GIRLS' SQUASH

17-3

Both the girls' and boys' squash teams are having a successful season with a 8-0 and 9-3 record, respectively. Girls captain Diana Masch (VI) said, "I'm really proud of my team for really putting in their best effort at practices and matches. And it's really paid off considering we're still undefeated seven matches in." She added, "I'm really excited to see how our team does in the first division at nationals because it's the highest we've ever been seeded." Individually, Masch placed second at the New Jersey High School Championships.

The boys' team had some



Courtesy of Pingry Communications

Girls' Swimming completes a meet.

trouble in the beginning of the season but has had some remarkable wins as of late. These included a close win over top-seeded Lawrenceville and a complete shutout against Delbarton. Senior captain Jonathan Zeitels said, "Although we started off the season slowly, we have been on a roll lately and are playing our best squash right before nationals." Notably, the boys are state champions for the second year in a row. In addition, Zeitels took home first

BOYS' SWIMMING

6-3

Led by Coach Steve Droste and captains Kamau Holston (VI) and Anthony Wang (VI), the boys' swim team is off to a solid start this season. Swimming against many of the top 20 teams in the state, the team currently holds a 6-3 record.

Recently, the team won a home meet against Montgomery High School, with a score of 87-83, which Coach Droste

Cory Ransom (VI) felt that similar losses were "a little frustrating because we've been working really hard but are still coming up a few points short." However, Ransom said with confidence that the girls have "learned from the losses and are getting better and better each game."

Ransom hopes that the team can "finish the season off with a winning record."

GIRLS' SWIMMING

3-6

The girls' swim team, led by captain Lily Graff (VI) and head coach Judy Lee, currently holds a 3-6 record.

The team has had a strong start to the season, with swimmers who regularly swim for club teams and swimmers who only swim at school all training hard for upcoming meets and events. Graff said, "I think it is really impressive that we have the record that we do, considering that many of our swimmers are not club swimmers."

Upcoming events for the team include the Skyland Conference meet and the Cougar Invitational, which team members are very excited about.

According to Graff, these events are "a great opportunity for people to swim events that they might not be able to swim



A. Schmidt (VI) passes the ball.

I. Zinn (VI)

think we're in the right spot for improvement and to do better at this year's state championship."

players to "improve and have a lot of fun."

BOYS' HOCKEY

3-10-1

This season, the boys' ice hockey team hopes to improve upon its 3-10-1 record. Despite kicking off the winter with a strong 3-0 record, the team has found itself in a slump. In the last 11 games, the team has scored just 10 goals.

Led by captain Jamie Smith (VI) and assistant captains Max Cummings (V) and Chris Browne (V), the hockey team continues to practice hard and improve. Coach John Magadini attributes the team's recent hardships to their being young and having difficulty scoring goals.

Smith says that the biggest strength the team has is that, "they're all coachable. They're willing to improve and they listen to the coaches." While lacking club experience and size, the team has a strong spirit and wants to succeed.

As the season continues, the team plans on becoming a stronger, more competitive team. "They're working hard and learning. I'm proud to be their coach," Coach Magadini said. "They never give up."

FENCING

8-10

The boys' and girls' fencing teams, both led by Mr. Theodore Li, have started the season strong. Despite some setbacks, including a short roster, Mr. Li said that everyone this year has stepped up, including the new

WRESTLING

1-6

The varsity wrestling team currently holds a 1-6 record. Although players have faced some obstacles this season, the team's perseverance still remains. "Even though we've lost a few matches due to a large number of injuries on the team, I am still very hopeful that as wrestlers return and with the continual effort demonstrated on the mat, we can have a successful end of the season," captain Hunter Conti (VI) said.

The team has several more matches left this season. Already, the team has faced its rival, Bernards High School, and has begun competing in



N. Davey (III) competes in a Squash match.

H. Park (V)



The girls' ski team practices at Hidden Valley.

G. Stern (VI)

at the New Jersey High School Championships.

WINTER TRACK

The winter track season has gotten off to a solid start, with the team performing well at group meets. The runners are split into three categories: long distance, coached by Mr. Tom Cladek, sprinting, coached by Ms. Sarah Christensen and Ms. Lauren Molinaro, and field. Field athletes participate in throwing, pole-vaulting and jumping.

The long distance runners focus primarily on building stamina with long runs and tempo workouts, while the sprinters work more on speed and strength training.

The team typically attends meets every two or three weeks. Captain Emma Palmer (VI) said, "In the upcoming states meets, we hope that our relay teams will come together and see some new personal records."

As a runner who has been on the team for four years, sprinter Caitlin Mahoney (VI) described her winter track experience by saying, "It's been really cold out there, but we're tough." She added, "We've got a big team this year, and we're all working hard to get faster and stronger."

described as a very big win. "Montgomery was undefeated and they're ranked ninth in the state, so it was a very nice win," Coach Droste said.

The team is looking forward to both the county and state prep meets. "We focus more on championship meets, which we're prepping for," Wang said. "We're going for our eighth state championship win in a row, which is going to be really good for us."

Holston added, "We've all gotten a little bit faster, and we have a lot of new, fast freshmen." The team came in first at the Skyland Conference meet.

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

5-7

The girls' basketball team, led by head coach Courtney Tierney, is off to a steady start with a current 5-7 record. Captain Lauren McLaughlin (VI) noted that the team has a "deep bench with essentially the whole team returning from last year complimented by some promising newcomers." She added that they have had their "fair share of injuries and recent illness" but she is confident that "other players will rise to the occasion."

After a recent 42-46 loss to Warren Hills Regional High School on January 8, captain

in dual meets."

During meets, team members are always encouraging each other. Graff said, "It is always fun to spend a few hours on the deck with the team cheering and bonding." The team is hoping to defend their state championship title this year. Graff said, "I think that if we have everyone trying their best, we can do it again."

BOYS' BASKETBALL

7-6

The boys' basketball team has had a strong start to the season, including wins over rival teams Bernards and Oratory Prep. The current record is 7-6.

Head Coach Jason Murdock is optimistic about the team's future. "We have high expectations," Murdock said. "The guys have dedicated the full offseason, whether through eight lifting or running, or leadership through Drew Gagnon (V), Doug Lachenauer (VI), or Thomas Foreman (VI)."

Foreman said that he "wants to come together as a team and improve." When asked about his role as a captain, Foreman said, "It means a lot to me to represent my classmates and lead the team." The team hopes to improve its current record with upcoming games against Watchung Hills and Middlesex.