



PROWLER



Quince Orchard High School • 15800 Quince Orchard Rd, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Govt. shutdown becomes longest in US history

By **ASHLEIGH GORDON**
Managing Editor

At midnight on December 21, the United States government entered a partial shutdown after Congress was unable to agree on a spending plan that could fund President Trump's requested amount for a wall on the nation's southern border. The ongoing dispute between members of Congress and the President over funding for the wall led to the shutdown of nine departments throughout the government. According to a report by CNBC, more than 420,000 federal employees across numerous agencies had to continue with their work without receiving immediate pay for it. For instance, in the Department of Homeland Security, nearly 53,000 Transportation

Security Administration (TSA) workers, along with 42,000 Coast Guard employees, were working without pay. The proximity of the shutdown has affected people at QO, such as Junior Paige McNeal, whose father works for the Department of Homeland Security and was out of work after the shutdown started. "He is furloughed, meaning he'll get paid eventually," she said. "It's not affecting my dad how it affects other people, but it's still impacting his work." The lack of funding for the wall along the border is causing a strain on those who dedicate their work to creating technology to secure the borders, like McNeal's father. Since the modern Congressional budgeting process began in 1976, there have been a total of seventeen different government shutdowns, as recorded by *The Washington Post*. The longest shutdown, prior to the current one, began in the last few weeks of 1995 and lasted until early 1996. Under Bill Clinton's presidency, Republicans in Congress disagreed with Clinton's federal spending. The shutdown only lasted three weeks; this 2019 shutdown surpassed this record as of January 10. Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich released a statement where he

stated that "Montgomery County is home to thousands of federal employees and contractors. The loss of income not only impacts these workers and their families but our local economy. It's imperative that the government reopen so these residents can get back to work." Living in a county located on the outskirts of Washington, DC, a large make-up of our public school families work for the federal government. Those adults working are not only crucial to their own families, but to the county as a whole. In an effort to assist these families, Montgomery County extended their program called "Dine with Dignity" that pays the remaining balance of school meals for students are unable to pay. Launched in November of 2018, the program has since extended to students whose parents were out of work during the shutdown. However, on January 25, Trump endorsed a stopgap bill, short-term spending bill, to reopen the government for three weeks, allowing for negotiations to take place to approve an appropriations bill. Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer has said that "the President has agreed to [the] request to open the government and then debate border security." This temporary

reopening will allow for the government workers that have been out of work to return and receive their necessary pay. If Congress fails to reach a deal with the President by February 15, however, Trump has threatened to shut down the government again. As of today, he has expressed his plans to declare a national emergency and use military funding to build the wall.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ABC NEWS

"The loss of income not only impacts these workers and their families but our local economy."
- Marc Elrich

Quince Orchard students take the polar plunge

By **HANNAH MYERS**
Managing Editor

If you don't participate in the plunge, do you really go to QO? "Amazing", "freezing", "unforgettable," are just a few words used to describe Maryland's Polar Bear Plunge. The Polar Bear Plunge is an amazing experience that "everyone should get a change to participate in," says Senior Jamie Grossberg. If you don't already know, The Polar Bear Plunge is an event held all over the world, with an event going on right here in the Chesapeake, in which participants plunge into some body of water despite the plummeting winter temperatures. According to The Polar Bear Plunge official site, all proceeds go to supporting Special Olympics Maryland. "The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for persons two years of age and older with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy

and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community," according to Special Olympics Maryland official site. More specifically, \$10 donated would provide two meals for a Special Olympic athlete at a competition, \$25 would provide a uniform for one athlete, \$60 would sponsor one athlete at a competition, \$100 buys enough medals for a Special Olympics team

sport division, \$203 supports one Special Olympics athlete in their sport and \$500 would provide transportation for a team to attend a state competition. In Canada, "Polar Bear Swims", "plunges" or "dips" are a New Year's Day tradition in countless communities across the country. Vancouver, BC's annual Polar Bear Swim Club has been active since 1920 and typically has 1,000 to 2,000 registered participants, with a record 2,128 plunging into English

Bay in 2000. However registration is not enforced and the actual number of swimmers may be significantly higher. In the Netherlands, Every New Year's Day around 10,000 people join in on "Nieuwjaarsduik" or New Year's Dive into the icy cold sea water at Scheveningen, a Dutch beach resort town, since 1960 with over 30,000 people participants every year. Even Antarctica hosts its own polar plunge every midsummer as a rite of passage for scientists and visitors to the Scott Base in late December. Although senior Sofia Retemal has never participated in the Polar Bear Plunge, she knows that it is an honorable "emotional and physical sacrifice" and she wishes that would have taken the chance to participate during her time at QO. In a similar boat, sophomore Julianna Capraro also has never attended the plunge but thinks that we "could get way more people to participate if it got more attention since it sounds like such a rewarding and fun event for such a good cause." The Polar Bear Plunge, although not for the lighthearted, brings our community together for a good cause.

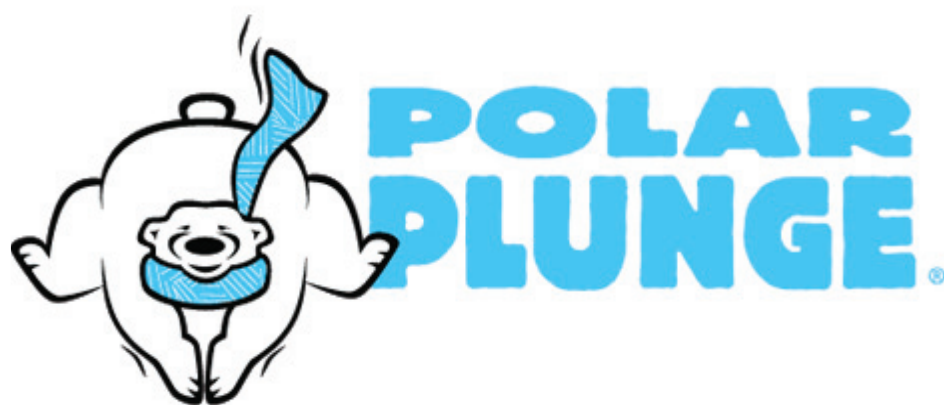


PHOTO COURTESY OF PLUNGEKS.ORG

<p>News</p> <p>Learn more about the new United States Congresspeople</p> <p>Page 2</p>	 <p>PHOTO COURTESY OF THOUGHTCO</p>	<p>Features</p> <p>February is full of special events, from Valentine's Day to Black History Month.</p> <p>Pages 6-7</p>	 <p>PHOTO COURTESY OF LONGISLAND.COM</p>	<p>Sports</p> <p>Super Bowl recap: Patriots win their sixth title</p> <p>Page 11</p>	 <p>PHOTO COURTESY OF USA TODAY</p>
--	--	--	---	--	--


PROWLER STAFF
Editors-in-Chief

Gabi Eyrich
Madison Mills
Kaitlyn Price
Aysha Shahzad

EIC Emeritus

Tori Berry

Associate Editors

Jantzen Focht
Cindy Liu
Jenna Shatzman
Claire Sullivan
Nicki Thomas

Managing Editors

Nikki Ahmadi
Zoe Bell
Ben Fleischer
Ashleigh Gordon
Faith Lane
Zach Levey
Jenna Levy

Staff Writers

Jacob Cheris
Ronnell Foreman
Lisette Geiling
Hannah Myers
Reid Ploshnick

CONTACT INFO

Quince Orchard
High School

15800 Quince Orchard Rd.
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

(301) 840-4686

qohsprowler@gmail.com

Twitter: @qohs_prowler

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Prowler gladly accepts comments, concerns, and letters to the editor. Letters may be emailed to qohsprowler@gmail.com, mailed c/o The Prowler to the school address above, or dropped off directly to Ms. Cooley-Klein in Room 241. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

ABOUT

The Prowler is published six times a year by the students of Quince Orchard High School, and it has been continuously published since the 1988-89 school year. To become a staff member, students take Journalism A & B to qualify for the Advanced Publications class.



Every 15 Minutes spreads important message

By **JENNA LEVY**
Managing Editor

Every 15 Minutes is an organization at Quince Orchard that creates a video every two years, replicating a drunk driving incident. The organization's intentions are to raise awareness of the dangers that come with drinking and driving. "It's cool because real cops and emergency responders come to help express the dangers of what could happen if you drink and drive. E15 minutes forces kids to realize that this could happen to them or their friends," said junior Josie Juhring, President of Every 15 Minutes.

"We make the video so that people from our school can see their friends and peers in an 'accident' and it becomes more personal. We hope that when people see the video they will second guess getting behind the wheel after drinking," said junior Lily Stewart, the treasurer. The video this year will have something new in store for us "as there are more changes than additions from the video two years ago from different leaders to a different theme," according to Stewart.

When you see kids that have makeup and paint on their face that make them look as if they've been deceased, don't fret. The makeup is intended to make the "living dead" seem actually dead

in order to make the drunk driving incident seem as real as possible. Additionally, students may see police officers enter their classrooms and read an obituary. The obituaries are for the people who "died" in the car accident (the living dead). It's not too late to sign up for Every 15 Minutes. Anyone that's still interested can text @kage36 to 810-10 to join the Remind thread.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NOAH CHIET

United States Congress is more diverse than ever

By **AYESHA SHAHZAD**
Editor-in-Chief

The 116th Congress of the United States of America was sworn in on January 3, 2019. One hundred and eleven new Congresspeople, 10 new senators and 101 representatives were sworn in. Many are calling this term's Congress the most diverse that the nation has ever seen.

This Congress differs from many of those before it due to a number of historic "firsts" in office. Senator Kyrsten Sinema from Arizona is the first openly bisexual Congressperson and the state's first female senator. Ayanna Pressley from Massachusetts's 7th district is the state's first black woman in Congress.

There are a number of other firsts worth mentioning, but the name that has been in everyone's mouths as of late is that of America's youngest Congresswoman ever: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Representing New York's 14th congressional district, including parts of the Bronx and Queens, AOC — as she has been dubbed by social media users — advocates relentlessly for her district and has established herself as a household name.

There has also been some controversy surrounding the new Congresspeople. For example, Palestinian-American Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib of district 13 in Detroit, Michigan has been facing a lot of backlash after a recent

comment. (Tlaib, alongside Ilhan Omar of Minnesota's 5th congressional district, is one of the first Muslim women in Congress.) At a party for MoveOn.org in DC, Tlaib was heard saying she wanted to "impeach the motherf---er," the motherf---er being President Trump. "Tlaib was describing a conversation she'd had after winning her seat as the representative for Michigan's 13th congressional district, telling the crowd: 'And when your son looks at you and says, 'Mama, look, you won. Bullies don't win.' And I said, 'Baby, they don't, because we're going to go in there, we're going to impeach the motherf---er!'" according to TheCut.com.

Many were put off by Tlaib's comments. "[A]s I saw

the video of Tlaib's remarks, I thought about the message those girls would receive, the message we would all receive about what our parents are and what is praiseworthy. How would their parents, who believe profanity is improper for religious reasons or other standards, explain to their child why their role model was making news in this way?" wrote Michael Post in an article titled "Rashida Tlaib's profanity about Trump is wrong — it harms the Democratic Party's policy and political objectives."

However, as she began to receive criticism, many on both the left and right began to defend her. "[I] personally like [Trump] but

the GOP 'outrage' over [Tlaib's] mother f---er comment is so absurd; many of those outraged were quick to rationalize every nasty public comment coming out of the president's mouth, which are too numerous to put in a tweet," Charles Gasparino of FOX Business Network tweeted via @CGasparino.

This year's Congress was also sworn in under abnormal conditions. On December 22, what would become the longest government shutdown in US history began. Read about the government shutdown on Page 1.

Why owning a gun is okay: a pro-gun perspective

By **ANONYMOUS**

Currently in the United States, guns are a hot topic of debate. In response to last issue's editorial, "Why literally no one ever needs to own a gun," I would like to present my perspective to allow you more insight as to why someone might want to own firearms. A responsible gun owner poses no threat to society and their reasoning for doing so, in my opinion, can be separated into three categories: defense, sport, and hobby.

First and foremost, the main reason many people own guns is for defense: not only defense against common criminals, but for defense against the government. When you are attacked at home while you are sleeping or out late at night, you can try to call the police, but it is unlikely they will arrive until it is too late and the incident is already over, so it's important to be

able to protect yourself. To raise it up another level, if a government wants to be tyrannical they will do it, even if the citizens disagree, because the government is not and has never been "For the people" and thinking otherwise is naive, which it is why civilians need to be adequately armed and prepared to fight in case of emergency. This is the part I feel most strongly about. Only two generations ago, were my relatives killed in the Holocaust by an elected government. So if I can prevent or stall that happening again to any

group of people by taking up arms against a government, I will do so, and I think it's not only a right to fight tyranny but also a collective responsibility.

Secondly, firearm ownership is for sport. Today, when meat is readily available in stores, hunting is no longer a requirement for survival but often a sport. Other sports associations that involve firearms are IDPA (International Defensive Pistol Association) and IPSC (International Practical Shooting Confederation). Not to mention

that shooting is part of the Olympics in the form of various rifle, pistol, and shotgun matches in the summer, and the biathlon during the winter.

Third, firearms are a hobby. Shooting at paper targets at a range for guns is harmless and fun if you do it safely. Many people collect guns due to their value, which can sometimes be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, or because of their connection to history, since firearms have been present for almost a thousand years. Many interesting, innovative, and downright unusual firearms have been made over time. If you are interesting in learning about firearms themselves and their history, many YouTube channels exist for that reason. My personal favorite is called Forgotten Weapons.

To conclude, I want to say this: no matter what your opinion on gun control, we can save lives without changing the law; an average of 500 people a year die from accidental or negligent use of firearms. I urge all of you to look into taking a class on firearm safety, where you learn to properly handle a firearm, and you may just pick up a new hobby along the way.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

*Anonymous is a current QO senior.



VIEWPOINT

Hollywood is doing politics wrong

By CINDY LIU
Associate Editor

Hollywood has become increasingly political in recent years. Celebrity endorsements are now a major factor in the election process. Everyone has the right to their own opinion; however, I do not think that celebrities or social media influencers should be expressing their political beliefs on their platform—at least, not the way they are doing it right now.

I do not mean that celebrities should refrain from all political activities, but when they do public endorsements, it often comes off as awkward and forced. Recent occurrences such the Golden Globes flu shot stunt had the audience confused and alarmed. As everybody was waiting to hear the results, suddenly men and women in white

lab coats, presumably doctors, came out from behind the curtains, holding loaded syringe sthat they wanted people to take. Reasonably, people were skeptical. Though most of us aren't explicitly taught by our parents not to take shots from some rando, I think it's latent enough to be common sense. As it turns out, the flu shots were fake, as reported later on by *Vanity Fair*. Though some may argue that's just a single incident coming out of wild Hollywood, it signifies a new trend in politics and public endorsements. I disapprove of anti-vaxxers as much as the next person. However, the way that Hollywood is going about it is not ideal.

American politics are now more polarized than ever, which begs the question: do celebrity endorsement have any effect? Will a conservative Republican down in the deep south sud-

denly vote blue just because Oprah told them so? Or will a liberal Democrat in California start supporting Trump just because Kanye does? Very few people would. The way celebrities pursue their agenda is now similar to propaganda. During the 2018 Oscars, Jimmy Kimmel's opening speech took a turn from bad jokes to feminism, the #MeToo movement, and minority representation. Granted, these issues are very important to address. However, if a known comedian such as Jimmy Kimmel brings awareness to such issues, they should one, do it on their own platform, and two, present it seriously first. Kimmel's monologue was mixed with present day issues and jokes, which in turn made him come off as rather insecure. Yes, he is a comedian and it's his job to make jokes. And yes, the Oscars has been met with many contro-

versies in recent years and they should be addressed. But the way it was done? Not good. The way that celebrities are pushing their agenda is not very effective. At times, it even seems as if celebrities are doing more harm to those they support. It often comes off as ingenuine, especially knowing that there's a company behind them.

Hollywood has always been political. Famous celebrities

such as Frank Sinatra and Jack Warner worked for the Democratic Party, creating memorable radio spots for Franklin Roosevelt's reelection campaigns in 1944 according to the *Washington Post*. Hollywood has a long history in politics and people will always have their own opinions, so it would be fruitless to ask Hollywood to stay out of politics. There's just a better way to be involved.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NEWSPUNCH

THE PROWLER THANKS OUR PATRONS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT!

LIFETIME PATRONS

- Faith and Jeff Adler
- Pradeep & Neera Agarwal
- Dr. & Mrs. David Austein
- The Belblidia Family
- The Benton Family
- Ms. Barbara Blum
- Uncle Charlie's Backyard BBQ
- A. Benedict
- Liam Brown
- The Burton Family
- The Burnham Family
- Harry & Susan Chan
- The Chehreghani Family
- The Chu Family
- Janice Long Coe
- Terri & Ira Cohen
- Joseph Conte
- Michelle & Scott Cornblatt
- Noel Danto
- The D'Cruz Family
- Philip Derfler & Linda Tollefson
- Julie Dintamin
- The Dyball Family
- Diane & Dave Faulkner
- ElePress, Christine
- Wilson, & Lauren DeVito
- The Fawley Family
- The Feingold Family
- The Fierstein Family
- Fran & Ken Finkelstein
- Jamie & Barry Freedman
- Donna & Chris Furnas
- Bryn Gaertner
- Gallant Financial Planning, LLC
- Nanette & David Gilles
- The Golan Family
- The Goldstein Family
- The Goorevich Family
- Terri & Fred Gordon
- Anne Graber
- Randy & Becky Hall
- The Hapil Family
- Robin Hieder
- The Horan Family
- The Humphreys Family
- The Hwang Family
- In Honor of the New York Yankees
- Gerry and Sheila Jackson
- *The Kaczmarek Family*
- Susan Katz
- Tara & Jerry Kavadias

- John and Nancy Kelly
- Carol Kempner
- The Kennedy Family
- The Kim Family
- Heather Kramer
- Kate Kronthal
- Tim & Kathy Kurkjian
- The Lake Family
- Laurie & Jim Lewandowski
- Karen Lindstrom
- Loeb Family
- Karen Loggia
- The Manners Family
- The Mancuso Family
- Edward & Elaine McArdle
- John McArdle
- The McKamy Family
- The Mehra Family
- Evelyn & Gary Michel
- The Mills Family
- The Milwit Family
- The Mnatzakanian Family
- Mr. Brian Monk
- Mrs. Janice Monk
- Mr. & Mrs. Steven Monk
- MTUTRT Family

- Foundation
- Elisa Niemtzow
- The Nyland Family
- Alex Okun
- The Parker Family
- Nina Paul
- Dieter & Janet Poetzschke
- *Charlie & Jeanne Polcsa*
- The Price Family
- The Purdy Family
- *Anne & Bob Quinn*
- Laura Rister
- Jamie Rosenthal
- The Rudnic Family
- The Schneibolk Family
- Mindy Stoler
- The Strimple Family
- Patricia Shaffer
- Nancy & Mike Shank
- Diane & John Schmid
- The Schroefer Family
- Carla Tevault
- The Veckman Family
- The Weinstein Family
- The Wilson Family
- Mark & Donna Williams
- Sue & Jay Wingate

PATRONS

- The Fleischer Family
- Jeff and Lisa Frank
- The Hozempa Family
- Mark and Christine Jacobs
- The Lane Family
- Tami Barshay Levey
- The Lumsden Family
- Nataliya Moubray
- The Ploshnick Family

*DENOTES MULTIPLE LIFETIME PATRON DONORS

BECOME A PATRON FOR THE AWARD-WINNING PAPER TODAY!

PATRON'S NAME (FOR MAILING DISTRIBUTION) _____

PATRON'S NAME (AS YOU WOULD LIKE IT TO APPEAR IN PAPER) _____

STREET ADDRESS _____ CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ DONATION \$40 _____ OTHER \$ _____ LIFETIME PATRON \$150 _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO QUINCE ORCHARD HIGH SCHOOL

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Trump decision to withdraw US troops raises confusion

By **NIKKI AHMADI**
Managing Editor

Earlier in December, President Trump sent out a tweet claiming, "After historic victories against ISIS, it's time to bring our great young people home!" The tweet was followed by a video where Trump explains that while it is an honor to serve for this country, it is a shame that so many young Americans are being killed at the hands of ISIS. Because of this, he planned on withdrawing roughly 2,000 U.S. troops from Syria.

Despite the claim made that ISIS had been defeated, less than a month after Trump's tweet, ISIS set off a bomb in the north of Syria that killed 16 people, four of which were U.S. soldiers. Among those killed were American soldiers. This act of violence by a "defeated" group raised speculation regarding the President's decision to withdraw troops.

There were a number of major figures who did not agree with Trump's decision and chose to resign. Jim Mattis, the U.S. Secretary of Defense, announced his resignation just a day after Trump stated he would be withdrawing troops. He approached the White House with his letter



PHOTO COURTESY OF COUNTERCURRENCY.ORG

of resignation ready in hand and asked the Pentagon to make copies of the letter to be distributed around the building. Mattis was viewed as an important person to be at President's Trump's side, considering Trump's, at times, impulsive decisions, and he was a valuable member who balanced with Trump.

Another major figure who decided to step down was Brett McGurk, the special presidential envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. His announcement was shared promptly as well, the

day after Mattis's departure. McGurk had already planned on stepping down in February of this year, but decided to move the date forward with Trump's decision to pull troops. According to the New York Times, McGurk sent an email to his former colleagues voicing his concerns. In the email, McGurk said that "the recent decision by the president came as a shock and was a complete reversal of policy that was articulated to us... It left our coalition partners confused and our fighting partners bewildered."

Trump's original plan to remove troops over the course of 30 days became a four-month plan meeting with Lieutenant General Paul LaCamera. Trump's national security adviser, John R. Bolton, then made comments that might again lengthen this entire process. After a visit to the Middle East, Bolton stated that a set of criteria would need to be met before the troops will be fully removed. He plans to keep troops stationed in Syria until the IS, another term for ISIS, is truly defeated, and to ensure the

protection of Kurdish allies.

A large concern with the troops' withdrawal would be the vulnerable Kurdish people left behind. They fought alongside our troops and their safety was assured. By removing troops, it cannot be guaranteed that Turkey would refrain from attacking our Kurdish allies. Bolton demanded that Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan make certain the Kurdish people would be safe, but he opposed this.

Despite his initial announcement, it is unclear when President Trump will decide to fully remove troops, or whether this decision will even remain.

"After historic victories against ISIS, it's time to bring our great young people home!"

- Donald Trump

Recent discoveries about cancer treatment

New findings in the medical field could benefit society as a whole

By **JENNA LEVY**
Managing Editor

Medical advances occur all the time, but new research and advances on cancer excite the most people. Cancer has a large impact on society, not just across the United States, but the world. Cancer is also one of the biggest contributors to the worldwide death rate. NIH expects the number of new cancer cases "to rise to 23.6 million by 2030."

Medical News Today recently reported research on a molecule that "throws a wrench in cancer's deception plans." By using genetically

modified mice, researchers revealed the process by which cancerous cells trick the immune system and the results: a protein called CD11b that blocks cancer cells. The scientists knew from previous research that M1 macrophages "can stop tumorous growth," according to *Medical News Today*. However, when the protein crossed paths with cancerous cells, a new type of macrophage, M2 macrophages, was formed that does not block the growth of tumors, but actually enhances it. M2 macrophages are similar to the effects of caffeine in that they speed up tumor growth.

Specific cells called T cells protect the body from diseases and

are kept at bay by M2 macrophages, which don't allow the T cells to do their job efficiently. T cells are like the bodyguards of the body: they keep the body safe. The scientists were determined to find a way to amplify the "magic" T cells. They found that certain medications that activate T cells can be extremely effective in suppressing tumor growth.

The researchers got lucky when they found Leukadherin-1 (AKA LA-1), which is a "promising drug" that enhances the activity of CD11b according to *Medical News Today*. The research showed that by "increasing this protein, it drastically reduced tumors in the mice receiving the treatment,"

according to *Medical News Today*.

However, the scientists believe that "it may take years before the molecule translates into a widely available safe treatment for cancer," *Medical News Today*.

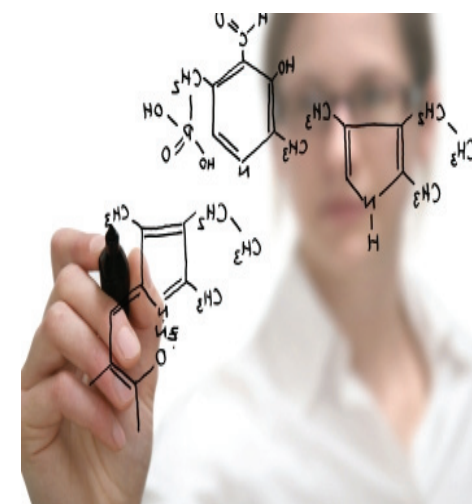


PHOTO COURTESY OF TOBENDLIGHT.COM

The research showed that by "increasing this protein, it drastically reduced tumors in the mice receiving the treatment."

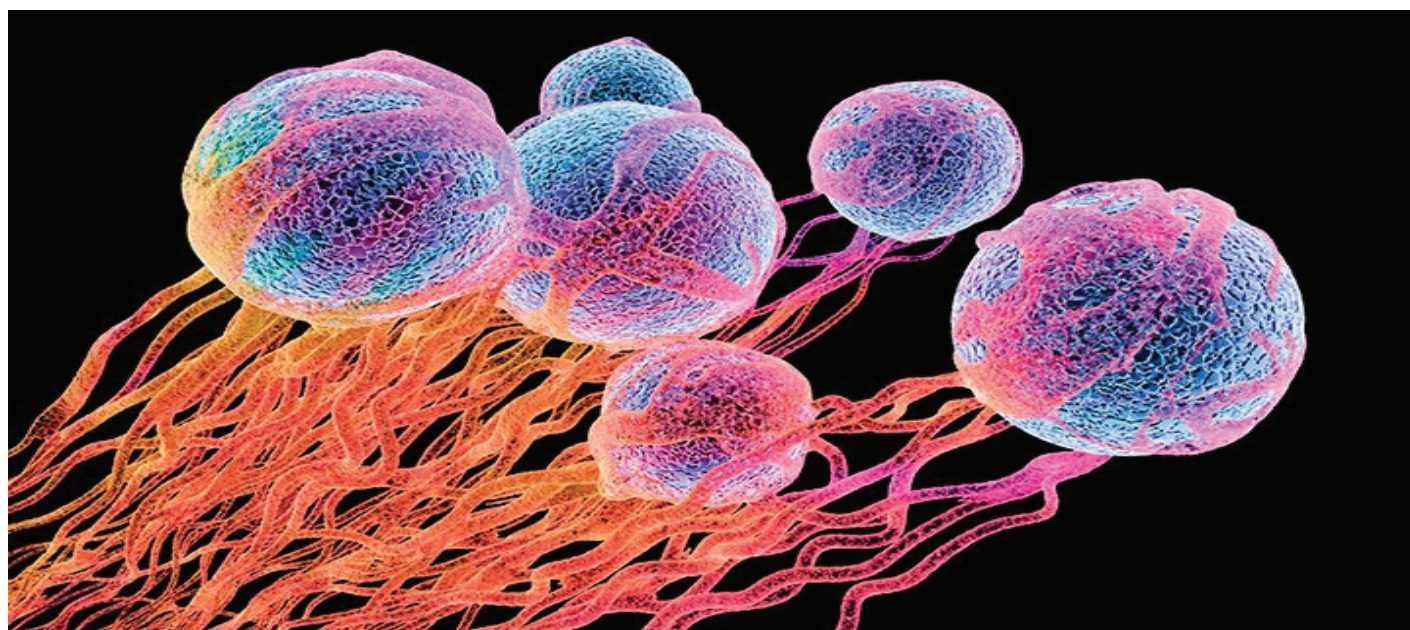


PHOTO COURTESY OF EVERYDAYHEALTH.COM



Engineering program: First LEGO League QO students mentor middle schoolers in engineering

By FAITH LANE
Managing Editor

Engineering is a job, even in the far future that will always be necessary to improve technology and society. This is why senior Will Sullivan and senior Ryan Gniadek got involved in an engineering program called First LEGO League (FLL), where they worked as mentors to middle school kids as they do engineering.

This program, FLL, is a nationwide competition that allows younger engineers to work together to build a LEGO robot that had to accomplish various tasks to earn points. The team, mentored by Sullivan and Gniadek, also had to create a project about how space travel affected humans mentally and physically. Their team, named Orbital Solutions, researched using nuclear fusion to create faster space travel in hopes to reduce the negative effects on humans. They also did “side projects,” which helped the team create the robot and project. For example, to help the team learn how to program the robot, they blindfolded one kid and the others gave him directions to find and pick up an object.

Sullivan states, “While it was a lot of fun helping the kids complete their project and robot and watching them compete, after the meetings finished was my favorite part,” said Sullivan. He and Gniadek would play Super Smash



PHOTO COURTESY OF WILL SULLIVAN

STUDENTS AT WORK: *The students collaborate on their robot project for FLL.*

Bros. together with the middle schoolers, which is where they really got to know each other and hang out. Sullivan added, “A lot of the kids were like miniature versions of [me and] Ryan.” One time they were talking about the future, and Sullivan and Gniadek asked the students if they would want to participate in the program again next year. One of the kids responded, “I’ll do it next year only if you guys are our mentors.” Sullivan noted that this made him very happy and made the experience an overall pos-

itive for him.

Through the hard work of the middle school students, Sullivan, and Gniadek, they finished the competition in 12th out of 20th, which was an impressive place due to the fact that it was the team’s first year competing.

If you want to get involved in this engineering program, you can create a team of kids and enter into the FLL. But Gniadek recommends you join the Engineering and Robotics Club here at QO to learn more about engineering.

Help our home



By CLAIRE SULLIVAN
Associate Editor

As we are constantly interacting with our environment, are we aware of how our actions could impact our lovely home, the Earth? Our daily habits can hurt the planet we thrive on more than you may think, so here are a few quick changes you can make to better the world around you.

- Be aware of your trash

Using reusable items such as tupperware, straws, and water bottles will reduce your daily trash. In America, the average amount of trash is a whopping 4.4 pounds per person per day, according to the EPA.

- Take shorter showers

An average shower uses 5 gallons of water per minute. By taking shorter showers, even if it’s by two minutes, it can not only save you money but reduce the waste of this precious resource.

- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Although you might hear this catchy phrase wherever you go, many people still neglect to achieve the simple act of recycling. Recycling reduces the pollution caused by waste, such as air pollution and water pollution from harmful chemicals.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PINTEREST

VIEWPOINT

Let’s make high school tests a thing of the past

By ZOE BELL
Managing Editor

If you earn an “A” on a test, you’re smart. If you earn a “B,” you’re less than perfect. God forbid you earn less than a “C.” Since when did test scores take over our young lives, turning us into sleep-deprived zombies that study tirelessly every night, sometimes staying up for hours at a time? Perhaps if the school system made some changes, such as emphasizing learning over a test grade, or made high school more relevant to our futures, students might look forward to going to school. High schools should encourage creativity and open-mindedness instead of issuing tests and assessments.

For almost everyone, regardless of intelligence, tests create stress. High school students in particular are becoming more and more anxious due to classroom pressures, such as grades. “Now we’re measuring everything,” said Marco Grados, associate professor of psychiatry and clinical director of child and adolescent psychiatry at The Johns Hopkins Hospital. “School is putting so much pressure on them with the competitiveness.” Especially in high-intensity environments, such as magnet schools, performing well academically can be a stressor.

In fact, teens are so fixated on doing well on tests that some resort to cheating their way through high school, just so they have better chances of getting into their dream colleges. In the “real” world, many of us will be surprised that it’s nothing like high school. At many American colleges and universities, cheating or plagiarism automatically results in expulsion. With such frequent tests and the anxiety of bringing home a failing grade, high school students are conditioned to do whatever it takes to earn an “A.” If

high schools eliminated tests, or rescheduled them so that students aren’t bombarded with three tests in one day, stress would not become an all-consuming factor of teens’ lives.

It is not realistic to expect students to perform their best work under stress. Tests are timed, leaving students worried about whether they will finish in the allotted time. In a timed setting, tests might not reflect the students’ learning and understanding if they are essentially rushing and panicking to complete it on time. In the working world, which we will all hopefully be a part of in five or ten years’ time, not everyone works at the same pace. Yes, there are common deadlines, but there is no one instructing the employee when to start and stop working. Sitting in a classroom and having 45 minutes to demonstrate all of one’s knowledge is not conducive to everyone’s style of learning.

What does a test show about a student? Todd Rose, a high school dropout who now teaches neuroscience at Harvard Graduate School, argues that grades and tests are “one-dimensional,” meaning that teachers cannot judge intelligence solely from the outcome of a test. “If all kids are multidimensional in their talent, their aptitude, you can’t reduce them to a single score,” Rose said. In other words, there are other skills students possess that cannot be seen through pencil and Scantrons. Once teens are out of high school, their test-taking skills will hardly translate into their jobs. The working world prefers creativity, originality, the ability to work well in a team, and so on. In a job, a perfect score on a test will mean nothing to employers, since some of the smartest and most qualified individuals may not be the best test-takers.

However, without tests and assessments, how would the education system

measure students’ understanding? This can be done in stress-free ways that will teach high school students a skill that they will use later on in life. Instead of unit tests, students could be asked to design their own real-life problems and show their solutions, or collaborate on a group project. In my opinion, a hands-on project is one of the best ways to learn and understand virtually any subject in school, since it involves critical thinking, open-mindedness, and teamwork, all of which are emphasized in the “real” world.

As a freshman in biology, I worked with three other students to design a fictional restaurant that incorporated home-grown plants into the food, and we grew our own basil plant. Throughout this project, which was in place of a summative test, we sketched and measured our plants every day and individually designed a children’s menu for a restaurant that demonstrated our understanding of various topics (i.e., digestion, photosynthesis, the carbon cycle). This project stood out to me in particular because creating an environmentally sustainable restaurant is becoming increasingly relevant as the quality of the environment declines. Understanding real-life problems, such as climate change, is so important if we high school students want to go out into the world and make a positive change. Perhaps some of my classmates will grow up to be biologists, environmental scientists, architects, chefs, or managers of their own restaurants. The project given to us was relevant to what people in these careers actually do, including drawing a blueprint of the restaurant. Not only was the biology project enjoyable, this is the content that we will encounter in our futures: identifying the problem and working together to formulate a solution.

Of course, I’m not a student protest-

ing against tests just so I can avoid responsibility. It is necessary, at times, to take tests to demonstrate understanding and mastery of a skill. But tests do not always have to be sitting in rows with pencil and paper. For instance, my middle school offered Rock Band as an elective, a music class that focused on learning about the history of rock music while also playing instruments together as a “band”; I decided to play the keyboard and sing. Each band was made up of two guitarists, one bass, one drummer, and one pianist. We had “playing tests” once every quarter, in which our bands performed our rock song in front of the class for a grade. We earned points for tempo, rhythm, accuracy, and how well we all played together. These were tests I actually looked forward to in middle school, primarily because I could see myself continuing to learn music even after I left the class. Playing tests taught me that if just one instrument is off, the whole performance sounds substandard. In a group, it’s easy to think that I only needed to know my part, but as a band member, I needed to play in time with everyone else. In any group (or band, in this case), the final product relies on every individual. I am grateful that this was taught in a middle school class, since responsibility is one of the traits that companies most value in their employees.

Traditional tests should be erased from high schools since they are a direct cause of anxiety and stress in teens, and more importantly, often have little to no relation to our futures. Perhaps high schools across the nation can focus on collaborating in place of “teaching to the test.” Students should be shown how their future careers are going to operate, rather than the alternative: taking more tests. After all, what would teach us more about how to operate in the real world?



A Snapshot

What's going down in the

By LISETTE GEILING and REID PLOSHNICK

Black History Month

Did you know?

- In 1854, John Mercer Langston became the first Black lawyer when he passed the bar exam in Ohio
- In 1854, Lincoln University became the first black university
- Martin Luther King began college at age 15
- Interracial marriage became fully legal nationwide in 1967
- In 1972, Shirley Chisholm became the first black woman to run for President of the United States



Some of the most influential African Americans



Harriet Tubman



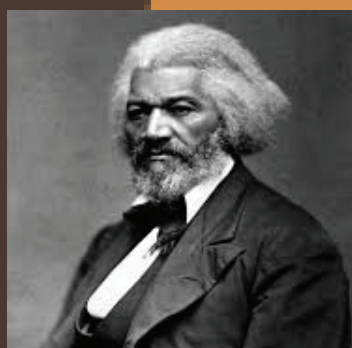
Barrack Obama



Martin Luther King



Rosa Parks



Fredrick Douglass



Ida B. Wells

of February

the second month of 2019



Valentines Day

Feb. 14



We asked Cougars in the hallway who their ideal Celebrity Valentine would be... Here's what they came up with.

Ariana Grande - Seckret Murphy (Senior)

Justin Timberlake - Alexis Prator (Freshman)

Tom Brady - Julia Miller (Senior)

A\$AP Rocky - Sydnie Rivenburgh (Senior)

Sommer Ray - Lawrence Nyce (Junior)

Bradley Cooper - Paige Copenhaver (Senior)

Kate Upton - Kyle Balow (Junior)

Kylie Jenner - Charlie Cherdak (Sophomore)



QO's new little friends : Why we have the E3 policy

By **NICKI THOMAS**
Associate Editor

Some of you may have caught on to the visitors in the school who have neglected to check in at the main office. While we don't know who they are or how many of them there are, the few who have been spotted have been nicknamed "Mickey" and "Stuart Little Ralph Lauren." If you have been fortunate enough not to have had an encounter with these visitors, you may not know they have taken refuge in our school. If you're still confused on who I am referring to, try directing your attention to the small holes in the walls or built-in cabinets. Yes, you guessed it—mice.

"I raised my hand and told Mrs. Yang that I saw an animal."

-Jack Juhring

These little creatures have been spotted around the school, but one decided to make an appearance while social studies teacher Jennifer Yang was teaching her first-period economics students. "My room is super cool [and] it's the place to be," said Yang, theorizing why the mouse decided to inhabit in her classroom. Yang also has a candy drawer, which could have caused the mouse to be attracted to her room specifically.

This mouse was first spotted by junior Jack Juhring. "I raised my hand and told Mrs. Yang that I saw an animal," said Juhring.

Yang's immediate reaction to this comment was fear. "I thought it was a raccoon and I started sweating," said Yang.

"My table mates were scared. [Senior] Jack Gelman jumped like a little girl, but I was unphased," said Juhring. During this time, the mouse continuously ran out from behind Yang's desk then retreated back into a hole in the side paneling near the built-in closet. Students came up with creative solutions to harmlessly catch the mouse, but ultimately Yang just called Building Services. Prior to their arrival, however, the mouse escaped.

A mouse has also made an appearance in ASL teacher Darlene Combs's class. "A mouse ran across the room three times and ran into a hole made in the corner near my desk," said Combs. Building services arrived and placed a humane box trap in order to catch it.

These mice incidents have not seemed to be dependant on the weather, and reports of mice in the school have been ongoing. While we are unsure exactly how these mice are getting into the building, it can be concluded that these appearances will not cease anytime soon.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WORLDARTSME

By **TORI BERRY**
Editor-in-Chief Emeritus

For years, we, as students, have been given grade after grade by our elementary, middle, and high schools. But the tables have turned and now the schools are the ones being graded. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has issued a report card to every public school in the state - and QO received four stars out of five.

That sounds better than it really is. Out of 90 points total, QO only earned 59.8, landing us with a 66%. Of the high schools specifically in MCPS, this was a relatively average score, as most schools had grades between 65-75%; the best score amongst MCPS high schools was Wootton with an 82%, while the lowest was a tie between Gaithersburg and Watkins Mill at 48%. But of all the schools in Maryland, we ended up in the 61st percentile, meaning we scored higher than only about 60% of the public elementary, middle, and high schools in our state.

These grades were determined based on five categories: academic achievement, graduation rate, progress in achieving English language proficiency, readiness for post-secondary success, and school quality/student success. Each category is split into subcategories where points are issued depending on how well the schools met the MSDE's criteria. On QO's report card, we did well in terms of graduation rate, readiness for post-secondary success, English proficiency, and the rate of progress in

English learners.

However, what hurt our grade the most was the academic achievement and school quality/student success categories. Of the 15 possible points that can be earned in the chronic absenteeism subcategory, QO only got 1.5. That's a 10% - imagine bringing that score home to your parents. According to the MSDE, chronic absenteeism is when "[a] student is absent for ten percent or more school days during the school year." The report card states that only about 60% of students at QO are not chronically absent, meaning a whopping 40% of the student body is, to Maryland's standards, absent often enough for it to be a problem.

This problem has not gone unnoticed by MCPS or the administration of QO. Starting this semester, the county is introducing - and strictly enforcing - a new system in an attempt to decrease the amount of student absences: the E3 policy. The system will hold students accountable for their absences through interventions and the risk of receiving an E3, i.e. course failure due to attendance. After three unlawful absences, a warning will be issued via letter and/or mail. After five, students must meet with their counselor to develop an "absence intervention plan," which then is to be shared with and signed by the student's teacher(s). Failure to follow the system could lead to failure in the relevant classes.

For more information on the E3 policy, visit qohs.org, and for the report card, visit reportcard.msde.maryland.gov.

SCORE 10% OFF

**WHEN YOU SHOW YOUR STUDENT ID
AT CALIFORNIA TORTILLA QUINCE ORCHARD**



**FOLLOW US
ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

and show the cashier on your phone for a **FREE** chips and queso with purchase!

@CalTort

Facebook.com/CalTort



Valid though
February 2019.

**California
TORTILLA®**

CALIFORNIA TORTILLA QUINCE ORCHARD
12211 DARNESTOWN ROAD
GAITHERSBURG, MD 20878
301-330-8214

Golden Globes left fans anticipating what's ahead

By **RONNELL FOREMAN**
Staff Writer

We have hit a new year, and with so many resolutions being broken as we speak, we are looking ahead in anticipation of the next big movies that are set to hit theaters. With the recent Golden Globes ceremony happening last month, many fans are hoping for another booming year in the movie industry. 2018 was a great year in superhero movies especially, with *Black Panther* and *Venom* having mainstream success in the box office even though they were not expected to do so. *Spiderman: Into the Spider Verse* also shocked the world with its energetic colors and imaginative world and, to its credit, won Best Animated Motion Picture at the Globes. Freshman Nevyl Douglas had a positive opinion on the *Spiderman* movie. He enjoyed it “immensely because it was very vibrant and colorful,” he said. He wasn’t the only one either. Senior

Chris Jones had a similar opinion. He summarized his opinion: “Miles Morales was a Brooklyn-raised kid, who took over the *Spiderman* role after the *Spiderman* of that dimension died. [He] embodied the image of a young minority and illuminated the *Spiderman* spirit.” *Spider-Verse* not only captivated Jones and Douglas, but even more audiences around the world, receiving a Rotten Tomatoes critic score of 97%. Junior Sophia Nguyen Runland had a different opinion, favoring *Ocean’s 8* as her favorite movie of the year. “The movie demonstrated teamwork and feminine willpower,” she said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GOLD DERBY

However, the academies didn’t feel the same way: *Ocean’s 8* was not nominated for any major award this year.

Some other Golden Globe winners included *Bohemian Rhapsody* for Best Motion Picture and *The Americans* for Best Television series. *Bohemian Rhapsody’s* win shocked many fans, as many thought *Black Panther* would take the title. While the Golden Globes delivered on the shock value, 2019 is sure to present a great line

of movies for next year’s awards.

This year, *Spiderman Far From Home*, *IT Chapter II*, and *The Lion King* are just a few examples of all that are coming, and fans will be blessed with so many more. The movie industry is at an all-time high on the business front, 10 % up since last year in total domestic box office receipts and fans will have the opportunity to embrace this remarkable time period and all cinematic pieces that are put out.

“He embodied the image of a young minority.”

- Chris Jones



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARENASTAGE.ORG

Review: Putin takes center stage in *Kleptocracy*

By **JENNA SHATZMAN**
Associate Editor

For a girl who has seen her fair share of musicals, but can count the number of times she’s seen a play on one hand, venturing to DC to see *Kleptocracy* with the intent of writing a review about it was a little intimidating.

Arena Stage put on the production, which was written by Kenneth Lin (*House of Cards*) and directed by Jackson Gay. *Kleptocracy* takes place during the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Mikhail Khodorkovsky’s rise to power and attempt at opening Russia’s markets to the rest of the world was intercepted by Vladimir Putin.

The Kreeger Theater sat a packed theater (514 audience members) that night, yet young Putin’s opening of the show—in which he reads an excerpt of

a book to the audience that the story will circle back to by the end of the show—felt interpersonal. The fourth wall is immediately broken, sucking the audience into the story from the beginning. It also starts out seemingly as a love story, as young Khodorkovsky begs for the heart of young Inna, but the production then transitions into a political tale.

Sitting on the balcony, we were way closer than we would ever feel comfortable being to the real Putin, but Christopher Geary made Putin an almost likeable character, using charisma and a sense of humor.

While the story was about a rather dark time in Russia’s history, the play felt more like a dramatic comedy than a mournful history lesson. The actors and actresses got laughs from the audience from the beginning. It was most

certainly a more entertaining history lesson than sitting in a cinderblock classroom.

Khodorkovsky, played by Max Woertendyke, was the most prominent character of the production. He was the owner of Eukos Oil and was hoping to hide the corruption involved with his company to maintain himself as the richest man in Russia and eventually become Russia’s first president. Just as Geary did with Putin, Woertendyke made Khodorkovsky out to be a likeable character that I found myself rooting for throughout the show.

When Khodorkovsky collaborates with the United States in his attempt to expand Russia’s markets, the comedic White House Official is introduced. The White House Official, played by Candy Buckley (who some may recognize as Georgina Sparks’s mother in *Gossip*

Girl), was my favorite character in the show and was a crowd favorite as well.

Kleptocracy will run until February 24, so whether you are a history buff or not, I definitely recommend taking a trip to DC and watching *Kleptocracy* for yourself.

“Christopher Geary made Putin an almost likeable character, using charisma and a sense of humor.”



Rams fall to Patriots in most uneventful Super Bowl ever

By **ZACH LEVEY**
Managing Editor

The stage for Super Bowl 53 is set: the New England Patriots, led by “The G.O.A.T.” (Greatest Of All Time) Tom Brady, against the Los Angeles Rams, led by the 2016 first overall pick Jared Goff.

The last time these two teams faced off in the Super Bowl was in 2002 for Super Bowl 36. As a 24-year-old starting quarterback, Brady led the Patriots to a 20-17 Super Bowl 36 victory, taking home his first Super Bowl ring along with the Super Bowl MVP award. While Brady was playing NFL football, Goff was playing football too—only Goff was 7 years old, playing in a peewee tackle football league.

Brady came into Super Bowl 53 with 18 years of starting quarterback experience and 5 Super Bowl championships compared to Goff’s 3 years of NFL experience. Despite the significant difference in quarterbacks, the Rams had the 2019 rushing touchdown leader, Todd Gurley, along with two-time defensive player of the year Aaron Donald. Patriots’ head coach, Bill Belichick, is a three time NFL coach of the year with 7 Super Bowl victories, while the Rams’ head coach, Sean McVay, is the youngest coach in the NFL but has proven himself dangerous during the regular season. With the two best football teams in the world competing for the same goal, the crowd was expecting and hoping for an action-packed finale.

The game began with the Patriots’ kickoff return man, Cordarrelle Patterson, bringing the ball to the 39-yard line. The first drive of the game started off really strong for the Patriots as they ran the ball five plays in a row and could not be stopped. On Brady’s first passing attempt of the game, he misread the coverage as Rams linebacker Cory Littleton found the ball and intercepted

the pass. However, the Rams were completely unable to create any movement on offense. Both their rushing game and passing game were shut down by the Patriots’ defense.

The Patriots looked to get the first points on the board on the board on their second drive. However, they also fell short as their all-star kicker, Stephen Gostkowski, missed a 46-yard field goal.

The first score of the game came with 10 minutes and 29 seconds left in the first half, after Gostkowski redeemed himself and nailed a 42-yard field goal. The rest of the first half remained the same as the beginning: boring. The two teams went to the locker rooms at half-time with the Patriots leading 3-0.

The Rams looked to take the lead immediately after the halftime show but again fall short. Although the Patriots’ defense did take a hit, after safety Patrick Chung left the game after the fourth play of the second half, the game remained the same: neither team could produce anything on offense because of the impressive defense.

At this point in the game, the most thrilling part of the game (third quarter) was when Rams punter Johnny Hekker punted the ball for 65 yards and set the record for longest punt in the Super Bowl. Finally, the Rams tied the game with a 53-yard field goal from kicker Greg Zuerlein.

The defenses continue to outdo the offenses until Brady found tight end Rob Gronkowski for a 29-yard pass that sets up the Patriots at the Rams’ 2-yard line. The Patriots took advantage of this big play as rookie running back Sony Michel powered through into the endzone, putting the Patriots up 10-3 with 7 minutes left in the game. The Rams, still unable to put points up in those final minutes, fell to the Patriots 13-3 in Super Bowl 53.

Tom Brady has become the only player to ever reach six Super Bowl victories, as the Patriots tie the Steelers for most Super Bowl wins, and the young Rams team, with the youngest coach in the league, will come back next year looking for revenge.



PHOTO COURTESY OF USA TODAY

Wide receiver Julian Edelman won his first Super Bowl MVP with 10 receptions for 141 yards along with 8 rushing yards against the Rams.

Sophomore B-ball star shines

By **BEN FLEISCHER**
Managing Editor

Andy Wexler is only a sophomore, but he is one of the stars of the QO boys varsity basketball team. It hasn’t taken long for this skilled underclassman to rise up the ranks and be a starter for the varsity team.

“Being on JV as a freshman really taught me how to score,” Wexler said. “Varsity, though, is much harder and stronger, because every team has at least one guy over 6’4” while JV is a much slower game.”

A lot of players want the glamour of

playing well, but Wexler is different: he plays for his teammates and for the team as a whole. “It’s a big accomplishment to be the leading scorer on the team, but it’s a team game,” he said. “My teammates are the ones [who] feed me the ball and get me the open looks.”

Wexler just wants to win and help get the team further on in the season. If you really love the game like he does, then you wouldn’t want to stop winning. “All I care about is winning,” Wexler said.

The entire team, including Wexler, needs your support to get them through the rest of the season and playoffs. Go be loud, be proud, and be red!



PHOTO COURTESY OF PHIL FABRIZIO

Sophomore Andy Wexler sets up to take a 3-pointer against Wootton.

QO Wrestling ready for playoffs

By **JACOB CHERIS**
Staff Writer

The Quince Orchard varsity wrestling team is ready to thrive in the playoffs. This year’s squad is led by seniors Jose Echeona, Jay Bollinger, and Carlos Guerrero.

The team finished the regular season with a record of 7-7. “Every day during practice we learn from our losses, look at our videos and work on improving our mistakes and perfecting our craft,” said Guerrero. Guerrero, who was 21-5 this season, suffered from a concussion and tore his meniscus, but he believes that has made the team more resilient. He returned to the lineup on January 31. “I feel like the fact that I was out for many days and weeks brought the team to step it up during every match,” he said, “and give a little more effort and come out on top as if I was there.”

For some players, this is their big-

gest postseason yet, because it’s their last. “I make sure to dominate my opponent every single time I step on the mat. That way, I’m putting a lot of points out for my team,” said Echeona. “I have real high expectations for myself, but I have to make sure that I’m dominating every opponent and taking it one match at a time.” Echeona’s record this season was 32-5. And he is ready to crush his opponents and gain momentum in the playoffs.

After missing the playoffs last year, head coach Rob Wolfe believes that this season was different. “Our goal is to improve a little bit every day, and I think that it’s going to show in the playoffs” said Wolfe. “We have high expectations for the postseason and we are going to be a strong tournament team.” The playoffs are just around the corner, as QO is seeking redemption and go into the postseason as one collective unit.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TRACY ROULEAU

Senior Jay Bollinger delivers a mat return against Damascus High School.



Even if Harper goes, he leaves behind a vastly improved Nats team

By JANTZEN FOCHT
Associate Editor

If you were to go back and tell me, amidst all of the Bryce Harper drama that was bound to ensue in the offseason, that the Nationals would quietly have one of the best offseasons in franchise history, I would have most likely told you you were insane; however that's exactly what happened.

After one of the most frustrating seasons in recent memory, the Nationals were expected to not retain Harper in free agency, and most likely have a relatively modest offseason, acquiring bullpen pieces and maybe another starting pitcher or two. This reality that Harper was going to leave has been weighing on me and other Nationals fans for some time now, and I can say from talking to other fans that we were ready for it. We had been bracing for the day down the road, where he stood up in front of a podium, showcasing his new pinstripe-looking jersey, or donning a blue cap with the classic "LA" logo.

And while those situations could still potentially pan out, things don't look so black and white anymore. Following the turning down of a reported ten-year, 300 million dollar deal offered by Rizzo and Co., in most fans minds', Harper was a surefire guarantee to leave the Nationals for a whole lot of cash, and leave behind the only city he had ever known: Washing-

ton, D.C.

The reason why things are so complicated with the Harper and Machado situation right now? It's unclear to what extent these superstar players are actually worth it nowadays. By turning down the aforementioned contract from the Nationals, Harper and his agent Scott Boras essentially set the floor for Harper's payday at \$300 million. The problem with this is—upon further research into Harper's statistics, injury history, and the ever-present media presence and often annoying drama he creates—he really shouldn't be worth much more than 250 million (which still is a LOT of money).

For example, if you were just a casual fan who tunes into ESPN occasionally or attends a Nats game every so often, you would think that Bryce is the next reincarnation of Ken Griffey, Jr. or someone of that stature. You would constantly hear about his various awards including his ROY campaign, or when in 2015 he won the NL MVP while hitting 42 home runs. But the fact is that he's a career .279 hitter who has a history with injuries, is an average defender, and has a streaky presence at the plate recently. (Whether you think this is a matter of his constant intentional walks, the shifts he faces, or his rumored swing changes is a different topic, for a different time.) Subsequently, all of these problems have caused many of baseball's

front offices to back off of signing the young "phenom."

Like just this past week, the Dodgers signed former Diamondbacks Outfielder AJ Pollock to a five-year, 65 million deal, signaling that they weren't willing to break the bank on a player that, dare I say it, is a tad overrated. Brian Cashman of the Yankees has also already come out and clarified that the financial circumstances and the crowded OF situation their team faces inhibits their ability to offer Harper a megadeal; so now that the two favorites to land Harper are out, who all is left?

The answer to this question is seemingly quite short: the Philadelphia Phillies or the Nationals.

While the Phillies have always been in the hunt for both Harper and Machado, I honestly still think there's a chance Harper returns to DC. I just have a feeling that now, after many of the teams that were supposedly in line to offer him a big deal have backed off, I think that Harper could feel slighted at this turn of events, and come back to the city he is most familiar with for still a lot of money.

There are still other potential suitors out there, such as the Chicago White Sox, the San Diego Padres, and the Chicago Cubs; however most of these teams look like longshots to land the slugger, given either their small-market appeal, or their complicated financial situations.

But even if my feeling is wrong, and he does go into next season roaming the outfield of a foreign stadium, the Nationals should still be on track for a quality year. They've filled their need for starting pitchers by signing two-time all star Patrick Corbin and veteran righty Anibal Sanchez. They've corrected the offensive black hole at the catcher position last year by trading for former Indians catcher Yan Gomes, and to my surprise, also reacquired fan favorite Kurt Suzuki, who last played for the Nats in 2013.

Lastly, the Nationals front office maybe made the potential bargain of the offseason in signing 2B Brian Dozier. Dozier, who is coming off a historically bad year, is primed for a bounceback campaign, as he has led all 2B in HR since 2014 with 148, and is a career .246 hitter. He should provide some badly needed pop for a team that could be losing one of their XBH leaders.

The Nationals have done all they can to set themselves up for success. By being aggressive in their attempts to regain the NL East title, they have essentially fixed all of their needs, and are on track for another prosperous season. All they can do now is see if their home-grown OF will return for another year. Now is the time to sit and wait. And sit and wait. And sit and wait....

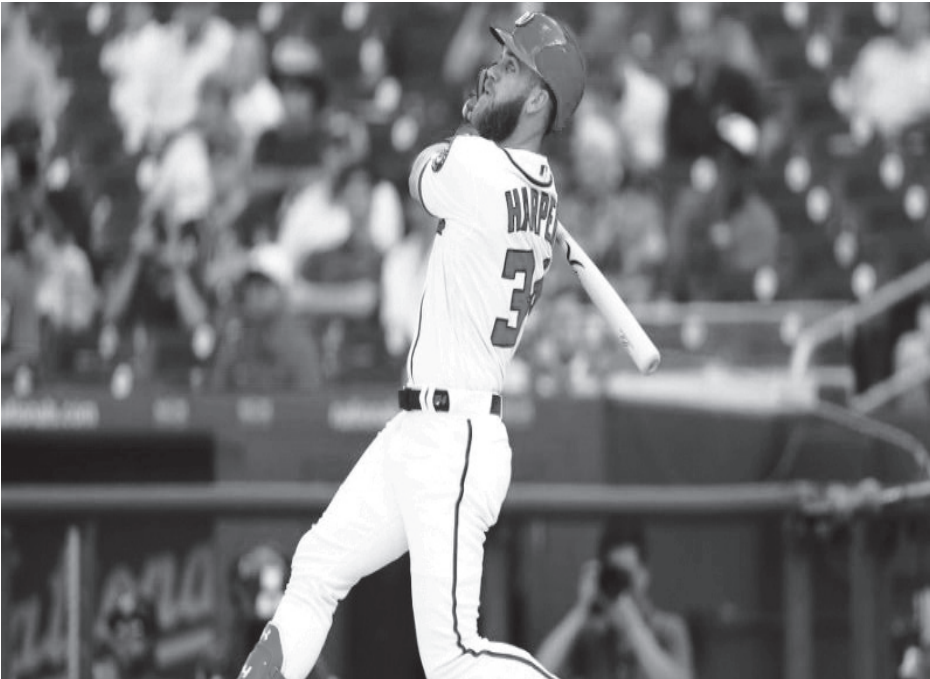


PHOTO COURTESY OF YAHOO SPORTS



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARIZONA SPORTS

FUTURE LOOKING BRIGHT: With the addition of All-Star pitcher Patrick Corbin, among other transactions, the Nats are looking better than last season.

Girls basketball prepares for playoff run by working hard, staying humble

By GABI EYRICH
Editor in Chief

The Quince Orchard girls basketball team is a group of determined, skilled, hardworking student athletes that perform exceptionally during every game. Approaching the end of the season, the girls have come a long way in improving their skills, communication, and mindset.

"In practice we focus on different defenses, offenses, and strengthening our shooting ability, whether it's free throws or shooting drills." senior, Isabella Nicolau said.

Each team has their strengths and weaknesses, as well as each individual player.

Nicolau says that the team has

very strong defense, while they still have room for improvement in team chemistry. Sophomore, Alexa Linchuck says, "Our strengths is that we all work together as a team and can accomplish a lot in what we do" as well as "A weakness in our team is that sometimes we get down on ourselves and it can get hard to overcome that."

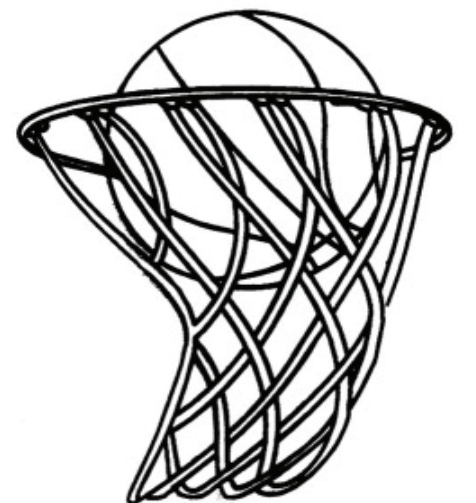
Throughout each practice, game, and team event, the seniors dread their last games on the court as a Quince Orchard Cougar. Nicolau says, "Being on a team brings together a bond that I am going to miss next year, after I graduate."

Senior, Paige Copenhaver says, "I love being in a group where we have fun on and off the court," and that "Our team dinners are always a great time and get us excited for the next game."

"Our strength is that we all work together as a team and can accomplish a lot."

-Alexa Linchuck

With an overall season record of 9-6, the team has defeated several competitive teams. Nicolau says, "Our goals for the season include winning the division, excelling in playoffs, and...striving to win States." The team hopes to conquer many achievements as they transition from the regular season to playoffs. It is essential for the Red Army, family, friends, and the rest of the community to come out and support these hard working players as they finish off the 2018-19 season!



ATHLETE OF THE MONTH QUESTIONNAIRE

Girls Basketball



Lindsay Michaels '19
Senior Lindsay Michaels is known for being a vocal leader off the court. Once she steps on the court, her jump shot is nearly unstoppable.

Wrestling



Jay Bollinger '19
Senior Jay Bollinger's technique allows him to take on bigger opponents. He is known for being aggressive and crushes any opponent who steps on the mat.

Swim & Dive



Emily Mann '19
Senior Emily Mann's determination and spirit motivates her to swim with confidence. Her outstanding butterfly stroke leads her to victory.

Indoor Track & Field



Isaac Blaker '19
Senior Isaac Blaker's work ethic and explosiveness allows him to spring past opponents in the triple jump.

Boys Basketball



Noah Adnan '20
Junior Noah Adnan started out in varsity as a sophomore and has continued to dominate. His mobility and quickness get him in the paint effectively and grab rebounds.

Poms



Morgan Raines '20
Junior Morgan Raines's creativity makes sure that ideas for routines are fresh and exciting. Her ability to quickly pick up choreography enhances her success.

We asked these athletes the following questions...

	Lindsey Michaels	Jay Bollinger	Emily Mann	Isaac Blaker	Morgan Raines	Noah Adnan
Best show to binge watch?	<i>Grey's Anatomy</i>	<i>Johnny Test</i>	<i>Vampire Diaries</i>	<i>Rick and Morty</i>	<i>Friends</i>	<i>Friends</i>
You're stuck on a desert island with one teammate, who would it be?	<i>Jenna Williams</i>	<i>Carlos Guerrero</i>	<i>Becca Owens</i>	<i>Jaylon Bennett</i>	<i>Serena Cullen</i>	<i>Amir Gray</i>
Would you prefer to receive flowers or chocolate?	<i>Chocolate</i>	<i>Chocolate</i>	<i>Chocolate</i>	<i>Chocolate</i>	<i>Flowers</i>	<i>Milk Chocolate</i>
Who is your valentine?	<i>Mr. Wu</i>	<i>Myself</i>	<i>Becca Owens</i>	<i>Roxy (From Kingsman)</i>	<i>Timmy Turner</i>	<i>Jill Balow</i>
Favorite Celebrity Couple?	<i>Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher</i>	<i>Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson</i>	<i>Justin Bieber and Hailey Baldwin</i>	<i>Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie</i>	<i>Kim and Kanye West</i>	<i>Me and Camila Morrone</i>
Favorite saying on a sweetheart candy?	<i>Be my valentine</i>	<i>Be mine</i>	<i>You're sweet</i>	<i>You take my breath away</i>	<i>You're cute</i>	<i>Your toes look nice</i>





2019 scholarships and awards

The Support Education Foundation is proud to provide scholarships to students who strive to further their education and professional development awards to educators who have made a difference by positively impacting student success.

High school seniors

- \$3,000 Dorothy Marvil Scholarship
- \$3,000 Rosemary Brinkley Business and Finance Scholarship

Community college students

- \$3,000 Community College Scholarship

Public school and community college educators

- \$1,000 Maurice Ery Professional Development Award

Learn more
Visit SupportEducation.org for more information and complete eligibility requirements. Applications are due by April 1, 2019.



Educational Systems
Federal Credit Union
estfcu.org | 301.779.8500