

THE PROWLER

Quince Orchard High School — 15800 Quince Orchard Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20878 —   @qohs_prowler

What to expect from the COVID-19 vaccines

QO is currently administrating vaccines for priority group 1A

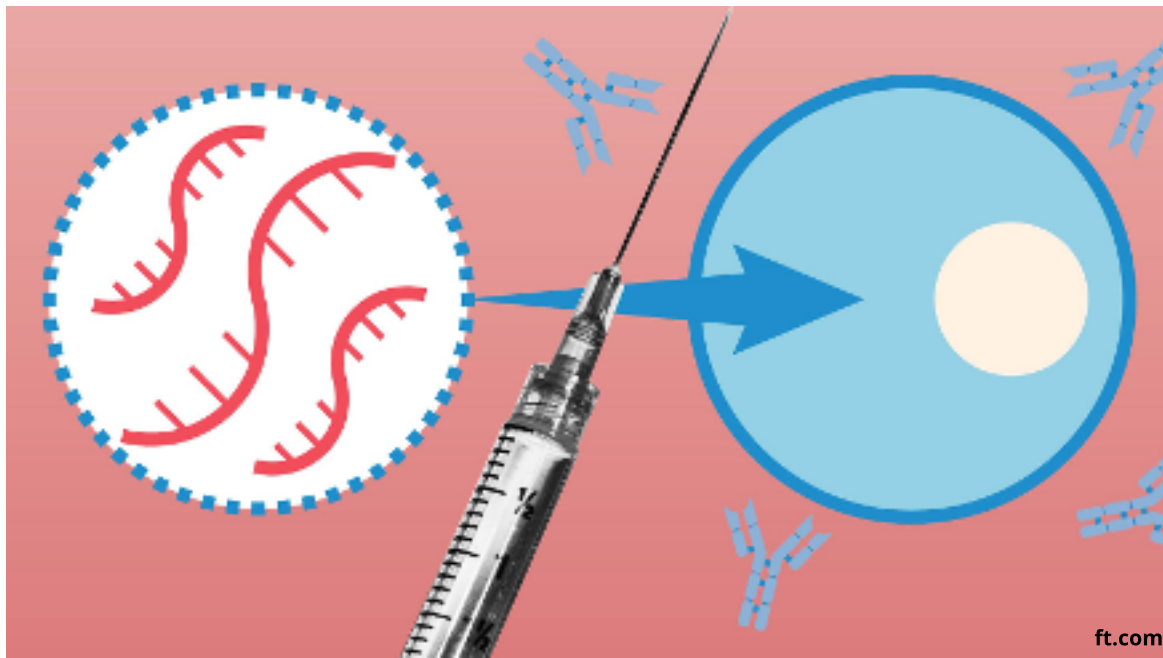
By NATALIA GARCIA
Staff Writer

Are you wondering why there are so many cars at QO? What could be the reason? Sharp, thin, steel needles ready to pierce through the skin. That's right, QO is currently giving out COVID-19 vaccines. Unfortunately, there was some confusion on who is to get vaccinated. According to FOX5 News, dozens of senior citizens came to the high school to get vaccinated and were told they were only available for healthcare workers (priority group 1A). Many seniors claimed that they filled out an online form confirming their appointment.

Montgomery County Health Officer, Dr. Travis Gayles said, "They received a link from other sources that were not from the county site."

While waiting for the vaccine to become available to you, the most important step you can take right now is to get educated. People who are planning to take the vaccine should know the following: side effects, what to expect, and ingredients. Possible side effects include sore muscles, feeling tired, or mild fever. These reactions mean that the vaccine is working to help teach your body how to fight the virus if you are exposed. Be aware that once you receive the shot, it does not mean that you can discontinue the COVID safety procedures.

Also, the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines both require two shots. After you get the first shot, you will get the second shot after 3-4 weeks. The two vaccines have specific ingredients to help protect against the virus. The Pfizer-BioNTech has mRNA (ribonucleic acid) as an active ingredient in the



vaccine. It contains genetic material that provides instructions for our body on how to make a viral protein that triggers an immune response within our bodies. The immune response causes the body to make antibodies to fight COVID-19. Other ingredients in the vaccine include lipids, salts (potassium chloride, monobasic potassium phosphate, sodium chloride, dibasic sodium phosphate dihydrate), and lastly sugar.

The Moderna vaccine has the following ingredients: mRNA (Ribonucleic acid) — which is also used to make our bodies make antibodies — lipids, acids (acetic acid), acid stabilizers

(Tromethamine and Tromethamine hydrochloride), salts (Sodium acetate), and lastly sugar. Overall, both vaccines have very similar ingredients.

Many opposed to taking vaccines are worried about what is in it. However, if you do your research, you can see that vaccines are safe and effective. For more information go to www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines. Furthermore, if you're wondering about the priority groups and where to register visit https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19_vaccine/#priority-groups.

QO teacher under investigation

By MIA RESNICOW
Senior Staff Writer

QO's own social studies teacher, Summer Paglianete, also known as Ms. Pags, is under investigation by MCPS for her alleged involvement in the Capitol riots that took place on January 6.

Here are the facts: around 11 PM on January 27, an anonymous Instagram account by the name of @qoanonom posted to their feed an alleged screenshot from Paglianete's Instagram story, showing her commenting on a post about George Floyd and the 2020 election saying, "Couldn't have voted anyways because he was a violent felon." However this is not true, according to the Minnesota Secretary of State, people who reside in Minnesota who have been convicted of a felony but have finished all parts of their sentence (like parole, probation or supervised release) can register to vote.

The anonymous Instagram account also posted a link to a petition for "holding teachers accountable." As of February 9, the petition has over 4,300 signatures, including the names of other QO teachers, staff and

students. The @qoanonom account also posted to their story screen recordings of Paglianete's Instagram story, allegedly showing her at the Trump rally on January 6 in Washington, DC and marching to the Capitol. However, it is not clear if she entered the Capitol, committed any illegal acts or broke any MCPS policies. Allegedly, Paglianete did not attend any virtual check-ins that day.

Jennifer Yang, a social studies teacher at QO who signed the petition, said, "We have to actively be anti-racist." That is the reason why she signed and commented on the petition. "I think it's really important for the teachers to say something," she added. "It's not right to put it on the shoulders of the students."

Approximately 20 teachers and QO staff members have allegedly signed the petition, and The Prowler was able to confirm the authenticity of six of those signatures.

In the comments of the petition, a number of teachers seem to have taken a similar stance as Yang. "I don't want the students to think that any political speech from any teacher that they see represents the whole staff," said social studies teacher Joshua Schuman. He

continued to say how the teachers and other staff members signed the petition not necessarily to take a political stance, but to show support to students who were upset by the alleged posts.

And while these allegations came as a surprise to a lot of the QO community, one mother of a QO student took to Twitter to share her experience with Paglianete and the administration, both of whom neither confirmed nor denied this story when asked for a comment. Lisa Wade, the mother of alumni Matthew Jones '20, said she experienced Paglianete's racism firsthand. Her Twitter post stated, "My son personally experienced first hand this teacher's racism at QOHS. She abused her power of having someone in her family in law enforcement to harass my son outside of school. Now my 9th grader is in her class and being subjected to her beliefs." This incident was described to the Prowler by both Wade and Jones, and there is a Montgomery County officer in the official directory named James J. Paglianete, who Wade believes is the officer that came to her house.

By 3:00 pm the next day, January 28, the @summerpags Instagram

account had been deleted or disabled. The @qoanonom Instagram account has also been deleted or disabled.

While there are still many unknowns about the outcome of these allegations, administration stated at a staff meeting on February 3 that there have been "a lot of concerns" from staff and families about the incident, and emphasized to "trust the process, even if you don't know the process."

This is a developing story, which The Prowler will continue to report on. If you have any information, please contact us on Twitter or Instagram @qohs_prowler or via email at QOHSproowler@gmail.com.

Prowler staff member Riley Smith also contributed to this report.



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President Biden's 21 days in 2021

Biden wastes no time on issuing executive orders

By SARA KLEMOV
Editor-in-Chief

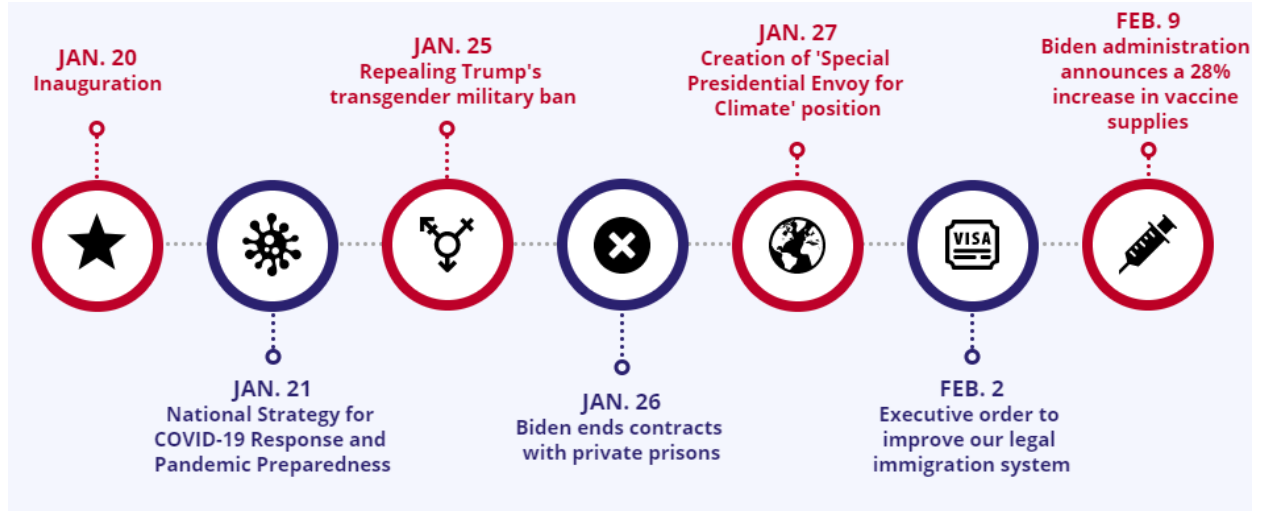
"Today, on this January day, my whole soul is in this. Bringing America together, uniting our people, uniting our nation..."

-Joe Biden, Inauguration Speech, January 20, 2021

Joe Biden is now the 46th President of the United States, and Kamala Harris the first African American, South-Asian, and female Vice President. The first 100 days in office are known to set the tone for the rest of the president's four-year term.

The Biden administration has handfuls of work to do and plans to focus its priorities on COVID-19, the economy, healthcare, environment, and immigration.

Take a look at our timeline below to see what the Biden administration has accomplished from January 20 to February 9 — Biden's first 21 days as President in 2021.



January 20, Inauguration: President Biden and Vice President Harris are officially sworn into office. Biden signs 17 executive orders, most notably: mask mandate on all federal property, non-citizens to be counted in the census, lifting the travel ban on predominantly Muslim countries, halt on border wall construction, re-entering the Paris Climate Accords, revoking the Keystone XL pipeline permit, and extending a federal moratorium (temporary prohibition) on evictions to at least the end of March.

January 21, COVID-19 Response: The Biden administration released a 200-page document titled

"National Strategy for the Covid-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness," which outlines a centralized federal response. A dozen executive orders were signed to carry out this plan that afternoon.

January 22-24, Economy: Biden signed an executive order for economic relief related to the pandemic. This included an increase in nutrition assistance to low-income families and the right for workers to refuse employment if it jeopardizes their health. Biden also improved federal worker protections.

January 25, Americans First: Biden repealed Trump's ban on transgender people in the military. Biden also set a suspended entry on immigrants/travellers from the Schengen Area (Western Europe), UK, Ireland, Brazil, and South Africa due to the increase of coronavirus spreading and new variants in those locations. The "Buy American Executive Order" was signed to maximize the use of and investment in American products by the federal government.

January 26, Equality: Biden signs a memorandum to protect Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders from discrimination, to strengthen relationships with Native American tribes, and to rectify our history of discriminatory housing policies. Federal government contracts with private prisons were also ended.

January 27-28, Climate, Health, and Science: The Biden administration put forth executive orders to address the climate crisis domestically and internationally, strengthen government healthcare systems, and support listening to science when it comes to policy making. Biden has created a new position, the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, that will work with

federal agencies to develop a climate finance plan for implementing sustainable strategies in the U.S. and assisting developing countries in their environmental efforts.

February 2, Immigration: An executive order to improve immigration was signed. It includes improving the naturalization process (path to citizenship), as well as promotion of naturalization. Another executive order was signed to address the cause of migration from Central America. Lastly, an executive order to reunify families separated at the border was signed by Biden.

February 4, Refugees: Biden signs an executive order to "rebuild and enhance" refugee programs, and plan for the impact of climate change on migration. His goal for his first year in office is to increase admissions to provide a safe haven to 125,000 refugees who are fleeing from violence.

February 9, Vaccines: Biden announced the launch of the Federally Qualified Health Center program, which provides more vaccines to communities centers of the under-served and most vulnerable around the United States. "The

program will be phased in, with the first centers able to start ordering vaccines as early as the week of February 15. The initial phase will include at least one Community Health Center in each state, expanding to 250 centers in the coming weeks." The Biden-Harris administration will also increase their nationwide weekly vaccine supply distribution up 28% (about 11 million doses) and work with manufacturers to keep this as the minimum level.

Apart from executive orders and actions, Biden has been working on The American Rescue Plan: an emergency legislative package for COVID-19 relief and funding vaccinations. Biden hopes for this to be a bipartisan effort, but Democrats are preparing to pass the legislation itself with Vice President Harris' tie-breaking vote in the Senate. The GOP continues to work with Biden on compromises, who is open to negotiations, even though Democrats tread on with their trillion dollar stimulus package. The House of Representatives hopes to pass the bill in the next two weeks, aiming to have the bill signed into law before March 14, whether the GOP conforms or not.

Information sourced from [whitehouse.gov](https://www.whitehouse.gov)

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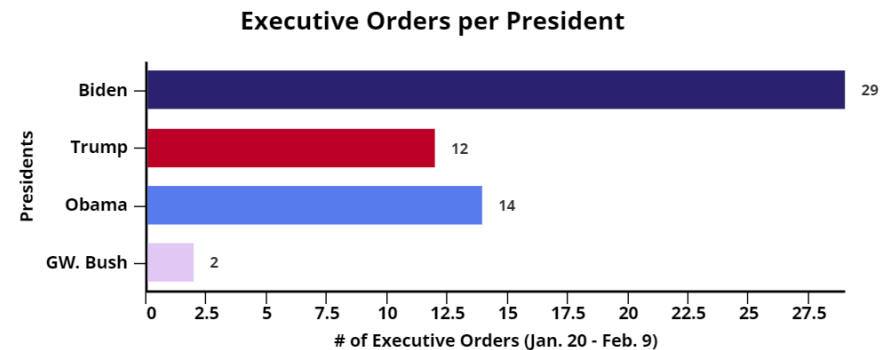
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The Prowler gladly accepts comments, concerns, and letters to the editor from staff, students, and community members. Letters may be mailed c/o The Prowler to the school address above, or they can be emailed to QOHSproowler@gmail.com. Letters may be 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 should take Journalism A & B with Ms. Cooley-Klein to qualify for the Newspaper Production class.



MCPS pushes in-person school to March

By MADDY FREEDMAN
Senior Staff Writer

During a meeting on Tuesday, January 12, the Montgomery County Board of Education voted 7-1 to delay its reopening plan for the third time, pushing back the February 1 start date until at least March 15 — more than a year after buildings closed.

This announcement, although not a total shock, caused some students to sit back in joy, knowing they have an extra month to sit in their bed with pajamas on while listening to Zoom class. However, other students found this announcement as just another disappointment added to a list of thousands that have been caused due to COVID-19. Senior Chloe Levine explained her joy solely for the fact that she "has a half-day schedule for second semester, which means [she] will only have class two days a week,

which is awesome."

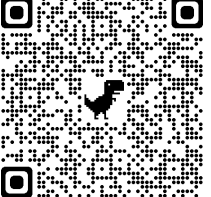
This comes in complete contrast to senior Jason Lebowitz, who stated, "We've already lost the entire school year due to COVID-19, so going back for a couple months and ending the year normally would be great!"

During the meeting that decided this fate, Superintendent Jack Smith said, "I know this is difficult for some, and for others, they're relieved...We think this makes the most sense at this point." Many students however, like junior Rachel Swartz, are "frustrated with MCPS and the lack of information they are displaying," along with the "behind-schedule school start despite almost every other county in Maryland [being] back to in-person learning." She is not the only person to agree with the confusion of why Montgomery County is so behind every other county. Sophomore Lizzie Gelmanhared how she thinks it's

"extremely difficult to stay focused in online school" and doesn't understand why Montgomery County "won't even try to start putting small groups back into school."

The December school board meeting, which voted on and approved a return to school plan, outlined a phased return to in-person learning. This approved plan contained two important factors that still in February Montgomery County has not been able to meet. These factors are a COVID-19 case rate of 15 per 100k residents or less, or a test positivity rate below 5%.

On February 9, the Board of Ed. announced to start phasing students back into school in March. View the update with this QR code.





Navalny won't back down against Putin

How one man has shifted the political dynamic of a global superpower

By RILEY SMITH
Staff Writer

From radicalized violence to some of the worst rates of coronavirus in the world, it's oftentimes difficult as an American, especially now, to fully understand what is going on globally. But, if you have watched the news anytime in the past few months, there is a good chance you have heard of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. But who is Navalny, and why is his arrest so significant?

As the longest-serving Russian leader since Josef Stalin, ex-KGB agent and current President of Russia Vladimir Putin has served with few to no barriers to his power, until now. As both president and Prime Minister on and off for a combined 21 years, Putin has kept an iron grip on power in Russia.

While Putin often runs against candidates with little to no chance of ever succeeding to the Presidency of Russia, in 2016, 41-year-old lawyer Alexi Navalny decided to do one of the most dangerous things a Russian can do: run against Vladimir Putin. During his campaign, Navalny campaigned on the ideas of anti-corruption and making Russia a more democratic state. While



running, Navalny was arrested several times for having unauthorized rallies and was even barred from appearing on television, which he bypassed by starting a widely popular self-named YouTube channel.

But even Navalny couldn't avoid the consequences of running against Putin. During his campaign, Navalny was assaulted when a pedestrian threw a green dye in his face, causing him to lose eighty percent of his vision in his right eye.

Most recently, on August 20 during a flight to Moscow, Navalny fell ill, causing the plane to divert its path and land in Omsk, Russia. Navalny,

then in a comatose state, was flown to Berlin where it was discovered that he had been poisoned with the nerve agent Novichok, a poison classically used by the Russian and Soviet governments. After relearning how to walk and speak, on December 21, Navalny released a video in which he and called a Russian chemical weapons expert who confessed that the poison had been placed in Navalny's underwear by agents from Russia's Federal Security Service and that if the plane had not landed as early as it did, Navalny would be dead.

Following Navalny's recovery, he vowed to return to Russia, and so on

January 17, Navalny took a plane back to Russia only to be arrested upon landing. In order to clear things up upon his arrest, so the public knows if the government poisons Navalny once again, Navalny has stated: "Just in case: I'm not going to hang myself on the window or cut my arms or throat with a spoon." A makeshift court in the police station where Navalny was being held ruled that Navalny is to remain in prison until February 15 for violating his parole.

Following his arrest, Navalny released further documentation and videos revealing further government corruption and then protests erupted. In each of Russia's 11 time zones, hundreds of thousands of protesters went to the street demanding the release of Navalny. As of February second, Navalny has been sentenced to more than two years in prison, and most likely time in a penal colony.

While the Trump administration had nothing to say on the poisoning of Navalny nor the alleged Russian Solarwinds hack, following being sworn in, President Biden's Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, said in a press conference: "We have a deep concern for Mr. Navalny's safety and security — and his voice is the voice of many many Russians and it should be heard not muzzled."

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POC&: Shajia Jafri on being a lesbian woman of color in a Muslim, immigrant household

By ANYA SESAY
Staff Writer

Searching through Shajia Jafri's memories would be quite a convoluted experience. This isn't to say that they lack totality, but that they are so vivid, and often winding that, in order to understand her life, one would first need to know her cultural identity: the daughter of Muslim and immigrant parents, an art connoisseur, an overachiever, and a lesbian woman of color. Her identity is the epitome of intersectionality.

Much of this Quince Orchard senior's life is a series of complex anomalies and perplexing junctions, each captivating the senses: The insolent looks from passersby as she wore her traditional Desi apparel. The spelling of popcorn, the first English word she learned to read. The bitter tone of her cruel classmates as they interrogated her on Osama Bin Laden, or the antagonistic words of strangers who harassed her hijabi mother. The smell of the Pakistani food which could heal all wounds, and the taste of Urdu leaving her lips as she poured out words of every kind to all who listened. The thin dry pages of a brand new book, or the stinging heat of a baking sheet. These memories, among others, have been uniquely shaped by her demographics and their connection to her environment.

Born American, she revels with the best of us in breakfast potatoes,

Gilmore Girls, and all things pop-culture, yet even still, she remains proud of her cultural heritage — proud to be Desi. This ethnic unification remained simple for most of her life, with the exception of a few moments when she feared sharing her cultural pride with the predominantly-white town. It wasn't until middle school that the fullness of her complex identity was revealed.

During her early years of adolescence, Jafri began to realize she had feelings for a girl in her class. Unfazed, she remained unabashed in her truth. Coming out of the closet, she found solace in the accepting comfort of her siblings, and amity in other lesbian women.

"I was familiar with [my sexuality] because my sister had already come out to me," she said.

Others, though, weren't as tolerant of her revelation. "But you're supposed to marry a good Pakistani boy," her father said upon hearing the news. The two were standing on a windy pier, looking out at the roaring waves, and Jafri felt that it was time for

him to know. Months later, she found the courage to tell her mother. According to Jafri, it "didn't go well." Her courage, however, was also prompted by the divulgence of her secret relationship with another girl. "The only reason I came out to my parents was because they [knew I was dating her]," she said.

Jafri remained in the relationship for almost a year. Only recently did the two part ways for a number of reasons — one of which was incidents in which Jafri's white girlfriend made microaggressive comments regarding her ethnic background.

Despite agonizing experiences, Jafri is proud of the wholeness of her identity. Although this has given her the power to be vulnerable and truly honest with her friends, others have taken advantage of her transparency.

During her freshman year at Quince Orchard, in an attempt to figure out their own sexuality, another girl molested Jafri. Because it was her supposed friend, Jafri didn't truly

understand what was happening to her until months later. In gym classes, within the locker room, and when the two were separate from the group, Jafri said this girl would touch her and talk about her body. "I had to teach her about consent five times," Jafri said. "She would slap my [butt] and grab my chest." She suppressed much of these experiences and only realized she was being sexually assaulted as the memories came back to her in her nightmares.

Although she is working through it in therapy now, this time will stay with her forever. In thinking through this experience, Jafri said, "I'm glad that it didn't change my view of other women, especially other queer women. They do have a stereotype of being predators, and I hate that. And even though it happened to me, I know that is a very small minority."

Looking ahead to the future, Jafri has big dreams not only for her professional life, but for her personal one. "I had always wanted a family, and to get married [with] a big Desi wedding, and I still want [that]: I just want it with a woman," she said. She recognizes, though, that there will be obstacles to this cultural blend. "I want all of my family to be [at my wedding] and I know that not all of them will be," Jafri said. But she would rather sacrifice her perfect wedding to live her shameless truth than sacrifice her truth for the dream: "I know that the ones that love me enough will be there." she said.



VIEWPOINT

South Asians are being short-changed

Media worsens perception of South Asians

By JAY MOTIWALA
Senior Staff Writer

If I were to ask you to name South Asian characters in American TV shows and films, what would you say? Would there be a lot? Did you have to think hard? And if you were able to name some, what would they be? Some popular ones include Baljeet from Phineas and Ferb, Ravi from Jessie, and Apu from The Simpsons. Notice any similarities?

They all feed into the common trope for South Asians that we just can't seem to escape from, especially with this generation. The little representation we have perpetuates the stereotype that South Asians are all extremely nerdy, have thick accents all of the time, are weak, and have an abnormal obsession with school. Meanwhile, the small group of positive South Asian characters in popular media, like Beck from Victorious and Kelly Kapoor from The Office, were underutilized in their shows.

And yes, I understand that these complaints are miniscule in comparison to the trouble that black and Hispanic people have to go through. Yet it is important for the public to comprehend that we are more than just our stereotypes, and that our media representation is not helping our case. Brown kids

everywhere can list off a plethora of names that have been used to describe them, such as tech support, and curry-muncher. We've had the red dots on our foreheads be ridiculed, and our accents imitated for laughs. And the worst part about all of this is that it works. They get laughs. Making fun of South Asian culture is so normalized within the media that the viewers at home believe that it is okay. There have been specific episodes on The Simpsons, Phineas and Ferb, and Jessie that use the culture of their Indian characters as the butt of a joke.

These constant negative reinforcements in the media is what allows kids and even adults to constantly make fun of South Asian kids. These ideals have translated into name calling, bullying, and even full-on social media trends.

Last year, a popular TikTok trend started in which people would comment under videos of people in India, claiming that they should "turn off India's WiFi." What started as commenting this under a few admittedly weird posts, from people who just happened to be from India, turned into this phrase being used under every brown person's video, even if they weren't from India. There are also numerous comparisons to Baljeet that Indian creators have to deal with on TikTok and YouTube

videos. The problem is that nobody addresses it. There have been no Instagram threads critiquing this trend that people blindly repost on their story, no mentions of this from the media, and no action being taken to minimize what's happening.

No, we're not asking you to walk on eggshells every time you talk to us. Some South Asian jokes (done in good taste) can actually be quite funny. I implore you all reading this to recognize the stereotypes that South Asians face, and how those are showcased in the media and affects us to this day. Recognition of one

group's troubles can lead to effective change to be made, leading to more worthwhile and enlightening communication and relationships.

Making fun of South Asian culture is so normalized within the media that the viewers at home believe that it is okay.



Apu, a South Asian character from the Simpsons, at the convenience store he owns.



How MCPS is fixing the way it handles sexual assault

The role of student advocacy in creating healthier school environments across the county

By FIONA FEINGOLD
Staff Writer

In 2020, a lot of news was revealed about the way MCPS has handled sexual assault allegations. In mid-June, thousands of survivors took to Instagram and shared their stories. MCPS pledged to thoroughly investigate each allegation and to work on creating a better environment for victims of sexual assault, as well as ensure that perpetrators receive the necessary repercussions.

Right after MCPS addressed these allegations, another controversy occurred, as many sophomores taking health over the summer were unhappy with how the MCPS curriculum taught about sexual assault. The most upsetting assignments asked students to list strategies to prevent sexual misconduct from happening to them. Eventually, the assignments were pulled from the curriculum. (For more in-depth coverage of what happened over the summer, check out the article in last month's issue of The Prowler.)

This school year, many students have been eager to see what reforms MCPS will implement to fix the way they handle sexual assault allegations and teach about the subject. One recent change has been the county-mandated Culture of Respect Training. Available to all students in

MCPS middle and high schools, the training outlined the steps for recognizing and reporting sexual assault. Additionally, MCPS hosted a Let's Talk Respect Town Hall meeting. The town hall had administrators, such as Deputy Superintendent Monifa McKnight, as well as student activists present.

During the town hall, McKnight made sure to remind students that they are MCPS's primary concern. "Students at Montgomery County Public Schools: You are the number one priority to me, Dr. Smith, and every employee in the school district," she said. "Every adult in this school system is absolutely responsible for keeping you safe."

Other reforms include the collection of student data to help school administrators design plans for addressing sexual assault, increased staff training for student welfare/Title IX liaisons, and enhanced BeWell 365 Personal Body Safety Lessons.

The Montgomery County Regional Student Government Association (also known as MCR-SGA, or MCR) has been helping in this process as well. According to Richard Montgomery junior Hana O'Looney, Vice President of MCR, "MCR-SGA has been working to support schools to create individualized responses to their school communities' needs after the events that took place on social media over the summer... MCR's goal has been to support student groups in hosting discussion-based student

events as well as strategic meetings with school administrations to decrease the stigma surrounding the issue of sexual harassment and enact meaningful change in our schools."

MCR is made up of students from across the county, so student advocacy is playing a key role in changing the way that MCPS handles sexual assault.

"I think the events on social media over the summer, if anything, proved just how powerful the power of student voice and advocacy is... This movement of brave students coming out — sometimes without having said anything for years — was the direct cause of many reforms in MCPS teacher and administrative policy changes, as well as curriculum changes for students," O'Looney said.

So, how can interested students participate to make change?

"The Board of Education is ALWAYS looking for public comments, so for any student who wants to speak out on this issue, I definitely recommend that you sign up to testify at a public meeting or email your Board of Education member to voice your concerns," O'Looney advised. "In addition, there are many incredible student groups organizing on this issue, including the Montgomery County Regional Student Government Association (MCR-SGA), MoCo for Change, Students Towards Equitable Public Schools (STEPS), MoCo EmpowHER, and many more that are always open and willing to accept new members."

"I think the events on social media over the summer, if anything, proved just how powerful the power of student voice and advocacy is."
- Hana O'Looney

COVID Cookies

How are Girl Scouts selling cookies during the pandemic?

By ANNA SOYKAN
Staff Writer

February is not only a start to the New Year, but also the ever popular season of Girl Scout cookie sales. With twelve different types of cookies nation wide, the colorful boxes are normally associated with Girl Scouts in their uniforms standing in front of local grocery stores or going door-to-door to sell their cookies. However, this year we find ourselves in the middle of a global pandemic, and going door-to-door is not COVID-friendly. So, how can these cookies still make their way to your house? Well, thanks to the minds of young scouts there are several ways to grab your box...

The Girl Scout organization explains that many troops are working "in creative, socially distant, and contact-free ways," from "running virtual cookie booths on social media to setting up drive-through locations to facilitating orders that ship directly to customers' doors." So, contact the scouts you know and ask them how they are selling their socially distant cookies.

Christina Defiore, a junior at Richard Montgomery High School

and member of Troop 4976, explained that she "posted fliers with a QR code that brings customers to the troop website where they [can] order the cookies." From there, her troop is in charge of delivering all the cookies.

If you rely on the grocery store booths or the scout who goes door-to-door to get your cookies, you're still in luck. Girl Scouts has

partnered with Grubhub, and starting February 1, select troops will be selling the cookies right on the app. You can also check out the database on the national order site to find a troop near you and place your order.

Even a pandemic can't stop these energetic young scouts from selling their famous cookies. Along with the traditional and popular

Samoas, Thin Mints, and Tagalongs, Girl Scouts USA also released, in certain areas, a new French toast-inspired cookie called "Toast-Yay!" The toast-shaped cookies have a signature french toast flavor with one side dipped in icing and the Girl Scout trefoil stamped on top.

The cookies available to our area include the classic Samoas, Thin Mints, Trefoils, Do-Si-Dos and Tagalongs. Some newer cookies include Lemon-ups, S'mores, and Toffee-Tastic.

Some of the most popular cookies include:

- Samoas
- Tagalongs
- Thin Mints
- Girl Scout S'mores
- Trefoils



THE WASHINGTON POST

Black History Month

By STACY SHIN

Senior Staff Writer

As January has come to an end, one of the most important yet often underappreciated months begins: Black History Month! Twenty-eight days to remember and celebrate all of the important people and events that took place throughout the history of the African diaspora. Black History Month, formerly named Black History Week before President Gerald Ford extended it during the Civil Rights Movement, was founded by Carter G. Woodson, also known as the “Father of Black History.” He was an American author, journalist, and historian, and he founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, now called the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, in order to inform individuals about the Black life, history, and culture that the education system so clearly lacked.

If they had not been acknowledged before, 2020’s unexpected events truly shone a light on the systemic racism that has contaminated our justice system for centuries. Following the recent injustices African Americans faced — the brutal killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Tony McDade being only a small fraction of them — we saw BLM protests

gain traction with the hopes of bringing attention to racial inequality and seeking justice. With a new President in office, and not to mention a woman of color as the second-highest in command, we can hopefully make the changes needed to push our nation in the right direction and begin the healing process we’re in great need of. And Black History Month is an important beginning step.

With all that being said, how exactly should one celebrate Black History Month? There is no one answer, of course, and as a non-black person I do not have the authority nor the means to tell you what you should and shouldn’t do. But as an individual who is striving to learn more and educate herself on the history of this month, I would like to share a few resources I have found.

Beginning here at QO, on the Dashboard section of Canvas Classroom, there are a few basic facts about Black History Month (BHM). Additionally, QO is streaming a Black History Month Showcase on February 26 at 6 PM on YouTube in order to celebrate African American achievements and culture and showcase the talents of QO’s Black students. (For anyone

who is interested in participating, there is a link to the Google form sign-up sheet on the Dashboard.) QO students also created the Instagram account @blackatqo this past summer, and recently the account has been sharing different books, podcasts, and other media every day of this month that touch on social justice, politics, and topics that often impact people of color. Simply check their story every day, and there is a new resource for you!

Outside of QO, the National Museum of African American History and Culture is launching free virtual events to preserve the accomplishments of African Americans throughout history. A conversation with Algernon Austin and Jevay Grooms about the effect of COVID-19 on the African American community is one of many, and all that is required is your registration through the museum’s website. The Association for the Study of African American Life and History also plans to hold a number of online events throughout the month of February on topics like “How African American Families Have Been Portrayed in the Media,” which are open to the public and can be accessed on their website.

Black History Month also provides a timely opportunity to support Black-owned businesses. According to CNN, an estimated 40% have had to close down between February and April of 2020, which is “twice the decline experienced by White business owners.” Organizations like Brava provide an easy way to find and order from Black-owned businesses in your area. For Montgomery County, mocoshow.com has multiple lists of Black-owned businesses (including their numbers and websites) ranging from fitness companies and barbers to restaurants and food trucks.

Although this is not nearly all the different ways one could celebrate Black History Month, I hope this provided a helpful hand. If you are looking for more ideas, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People provided many in an article titled “28 Ways to Celebrate Black History Month.” Once again, as I myself am looking for new ways to broaden my perspectives and help to end racial injustice, I encourage you to do the same. Ask questions. Diversify your resources. And you might end up with an understanding you didn’t have before.





How has remote learning impacted QOTV?

By **NATALIE PRICE**
Editor-in-Chief

It's the end of first period on a Friday, and there's only six more classes to get through until the weekend. Students are packing up their things when the morning announcements beam throughout the building. All eyes direct to the Promethean board, where we watch some of Quince Orchard's latest news and features — teachers show us around their classrooms giving us a tour of their "crib," administrators drive around together and sing karaoke, and SGA announces a message regarding Homecoming updates and the big football game tonight (it's a blackout).

This was a typical Friday morning watching QOTV, Quince Orchard's weekly news show that features students, clubs, events, comedy, and more. In any typical year, the options for each new segment were limitless; however, this year's online learning has definitely taken its toll on QOTV.

Typically premiering every Friday morning, QOTV now premieres at the end of each month due to the unideal circumstances of COVID-19. This is

because there simply isn't enough content and footage to create a new video every week.

The process of making each segment begins as all things do: with an idea. During the beginning of class, students meet alongside their teacher Kunal Arora, and discuss the focus of the upcoming segment. While Arora pitches a lot of the ideas for QOTV, students are encouraged to present interests of their own to research and film.

Next comes the process of outlining what will go where in the video, and gathering the actual footage. This is where online learning has made its biggest impact, as there are no in-person sports and clubs, no live activities such as Homecoming or pep rallies, and no students in the building to pull out of class for a brief interview.

"The pitches for our segments have to be extremely specific and have to be designed in a way where we can create this segment within our home using our own technology," said senior Ella Coulson, a member of QOTV. Coulson also mentioned that many of their segments for the current 2020-2021 year have been

made without any new footage. Of course, while this has posed a challenge to overcome, the QOTV students have as a result become more and more resourceful and able to adapt to any situation that comes their way.

One of the biggest aspects of QOTV is the collaboration between members. While learning in person, the students significantly rely on each other and are easily able to tackle a project as a group. In addition, working directly alongside others helps you learn a lot about them. It helps you build positive relationships, which in turn advances overall productivity of the group. Although now, with Zoom being the primary method of communication, this all becomes notably harder.

"Not being able to connect with teammates has definitely decreased the chemistry amongst the team members," Coulson explained.

Returning members at least have the experience and relationships built from previous years on QOTV. Not all students in Arora's class have that luxury, however. Those who have joined the team during this unprecedented year have been forced

to bond with their teammates via Zoom, and gather footage for their segments all by themselves from their own home.

Sophomore Hayden Polsky, a first-year member of QOTV, expressed the difficulties of shooting segments during remote learning.

"Filming from home is definitely a challenge because you need to be your own camera crew, lighting designer, sound mixer, everything," he said. On the other hand, for Polsky, the hard work is worth the reward, as his first year on QOTV completely exceeded his expectations.

"Meeting deadlines with segments is harder than I expected, but creating the show each month is so much fun," said Polsky.

Just like every other QO club and team, QOTV has had to climb over a few large barriers during this remote learning experience. Also, like everyone else, they are determined to make the most of it.

"Creating QOTV episodes is something we all love to do, which I think really drives us in this unfortunate circumstance," explained Coulson.

COVID-19 & Concerts: the resurrection of live events

By **MADDY RUBERY**
Staff Writer

Large crowds of boisterous people, colors dancing throughout the air, music gliding in through ears and out of mouths — a luxury no longer available to the majority of the globe. Instead of famous pop singers and rappers, "COVID-19" is now the most well-known name in the world.

Live and in-person concerts have been on hold for almost a year, with big names such as John Legend and Nial Horan performing on Zoom calls for a select amount of people. In-person concerts create the perfect environment for a super-spreader event due to crammed and close proximity to every person in attendance, making it impossible to ensure safety. But with the new year comes new hope.

During New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's second installment of the State of the State address, he

announced New York Arts Revival, a new public partnership to bring back the arts. ABC News describes the initiative as one that will "include state-funded outdoor pop-up events across New York that will start as soon as February 4" (Rivas). The plan also aims to reopen theatres and revitalize the arts by implementing safety precautions such as rapid testing and air filtration systems.

Hotel, transportation, and restaurant industries have suffered dramatic losses as a result of COVID-19. With the concert industry on a slow rise, this could create a positive effect for all industries. Concerts would bring in more people, in and out of state, to attend safe in-person events.

Governor Cuomo acknowledges the economic importance in the step forward, but also encourages people to understand the cultural and artistic importance New York holds, which is a key factor in driving people to come

visit. "We must bring the arts back to life," said Cuomo. "What is a city without social, cultural, and creative synergies?"

Musicians and actors are thrilled with the news, as the path to opening the nation's stages are finally underway. Adam Krauthamer, the head of a musicians' union, recognizes this as the first step to reopen Broadway. In a quote from CBSN New York, Krauthamer states, "We think any incremental opening is critical at this point to start showing the public that there is a proof of concept that we could open the arts safely."

As for DC, venues still remained closed as a safety precaution. The 9:30 Club, similar to many entertainment and music clubs, have been closed since the pandemic began. The club has been forced to cancel shows and events, with no current sign of when they

may be able to occur again.

New York will hopefully be the first of many to take action in the revitalization of concerts and arts, leading with example and perseverance. As for the state of Maryland, it is unlikely that concerts will be in our near future. But as seen from New York, there is always a possibility. Make sure you are wearing your masks and are social distancing, as this is the only way we might be able to reopen our country safely.



A Spotlight on Quince Orchard's Got Talent

By **KAILY PAULINO**
Senior Staff Writer

This year, our school community has gone through many difficult and drastic changes; everything is virtual. COVID-19 may have stopped us from gathering during football games or sharing classrooms, but it definitely hasn't stopped our school spirit. That's why this year, we still held our annual QO's Got Talent on January 22, with so many new artists sharing the stage even in a virtual setting.

To start the show, the producers honored past fan-favorite performances. With that being said, it's not a show without a host, and the audience first welcomed Vice president of Theater Activities, senior Cora Barr to set the stage and excite the crowd.

First up, Barr welcomed freshman Maren Lewis singing one of her original songs titled "Night Sky." As Lewis performed, clips of

breathhtaking starry nights were shown as a visual effect. Next, the crowd was entertained with a TikTok from senior Faith Jones sharing one of her clips captioned "Me allowing myself 3 minutes of sadness every day." sophomore Noah Mayfield was up next to perform another singing act while also playing the piano — very impressive.

Now, there's no talent show until the Last Minute Crew (LMC) performs. They blew the crowd away with their fun and fresh dance performance to the song "Dynamite" by BTS following Mayfield's act. Later, freshman Sam Shay also performed a singing act while playing the piano. Evidently, there are so many talented musicians and artists here at QOHS.

Halfway through the show, we had senior Jamie Elder showing off one of her amusing comedy skits. The jokes were too relatable and the sound effects made the performance immensely enjoyable. Up next,

sophomore Sammy Krimstein sang and played the guitar to a song from his favorite band, The Black Keys, titled "Tighten Up." Senior Almuriya Abdushakur was next, with another wonderful singing act to keep the crowd amused. Keeping up with the singing act streak, sophomore Hailey Baker was up next with a country song. Afterward, the Africa United Dance group came strong this year through COVID-19 and were able to perform an amazing dance for the crowd. Last but not least, the show ended with a singing act from freshman Catherine Brady, who also showed off her piano skills.

While all of these acts and performances were impressive, there were a few groups who could not participate in the talent show as they usually did before COVID-19. Some missed groups were JUNTOS, Men's Choir, and many more. Overall, though, this amazing talent show proves that not even a pandemic can hide our Cougar pride!

*Evidently,
there are so
many talented
musicians and
artists here at
QOHS.*



REVIEW

Robin Wright's directional debut doesn't quite stick the proper *Landing*

By MATTHEW MINTON
Editor-in-Chief

A woman finds herself lost. She is in pain, grieving, the tears streaming down her cheeks only a fragment of the painful, unimaginable loss she feels inside. Although we don't quite know what has happened in her life to lead her to this point, we begin to piece together and make sense of her past alongside her. As she runs away from society and the people in her life altogether, the company of others no longer serves her well; she can finally begin to make sense of the events in her life in isolation.

In Robin Wright's directorial debut *Land*, which recently premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, Wright portrays Edee, a woman who isolates herself from the outside world in the Rocky Mountains following a devastating loss in her life. The film is largely a one-woman show, with only the local hunter Edee meets, played by Demián Bichir, providing an important human connection as Edee tries to cope with being away from the outside world and moving on from her past.

The wilderness, survival movie drama has been done numerous times

in the past (*Into the Wild*, *127 Hours*), and while *Land* takes a refreshingly slower pace to the genre, focusing on Edee's journey to coping and reconciling with the past, the film lacks the story and character development and unique enough approach to the familiar genre to make a sincere emotional impact. For me, when I was watching this film, the journey that Edee goes through didn't connect with me, especially considering how we don't learn exactly what happened to Edee at the beginning. The first act of the film is easily the slowest and most boring part, as we watch Edee alone, lashing out at her past through her anger. While this aspect is integral to her journey, I found an emotional disconnect between me as an audience member and Edee's actions. I didn't understand where her frustration stemmed from, what she was grieving from, and the film, unfortunately, insists on adding conflict from the outside world that ultimately distracts from the internal journey that Edee undertakes.

Land thankfully does pick up some steam in the second act once Edee meets a local hunter. Their connection is a bright spot in the film,

and Bichir gives an excellent performance as Wright does, but like many other parts of the film, this friendship is not developed enough. Their connection ends up exactly where one would expect, making it difficult to feel an emotional connection when the script only gives the audience the bare minimum of a developed story and doesn't insist on diving deeper.

Where *Land* ultimately ends up, and the overall message of learning to move on, is a nice and beautiful note to end on. However, the film lacks the proper emotional resonance to make this theme hit home because the movie did not pull me into Edee's journey. It has its heart in the right place and a good overall theme, but it just fails to deliver on a deeper more personal level.

To summarize: *Land* has all the right pieces on paper of a compelling, moving film, but cuts itself too short with its execution and could have benefitted from a longer runtime and some re-writes. Although the movie is overall a disappointment, with an insistence on forcing conflict and predictable plot points instead of naturally exploring Edee's journey to forgiveness, *Land* does show sparks of

artistic merit in some key character-bonding moments; with a more developed and fully realized script to work with, Wright could show promise as a future director.

Land releases in theaters on February 12.



IMDB.com

REVIEW

The Incredibles 2: Is it as incredible as the original?

By DIEGO SANTOS
Literature as Film Student

The Incredibles was a beautifully animated, action-packed, family friendly hit when it first came out, winning over \$600 million and a couple of awards, and now only 14 years later, its successor comes into the limelight with its theatrical debut in 2018.

The Incredibles 2 takes place immediately after where the original left off, the family of heroes being faced with the threat of the mighty Underminer, who unfortunately manages to get away. This failure of the family's heroic duty puts a spotlight on the actual necessity and safety of heroes, as all they seem to do is bring destruction on whatever path they tread. The once glorious and mighty heroes are now beginning to be shunned and labeled as mere criminals who reside above the law, however, when all hope seems lost, Mr. and Mrs. Incredible are offered an opportunity by a man who wants nothing more than to revitalize the spirit and hope that the heroes sparked within society.

To be honest, none of the voice actors in the movie disappointed with their performance. All of the characters had voices that matched perfectly, for example, Voyd's voice matched her nervous and excited nature, Dash portrayed by his voice actor as a somewhat bratty, yet caring kid, and Winston whose voice gave off



IMDB.com

the essence of a hopeful and determined man with a clear vision.

The movie had an animation quality that could only be matched with other massively successful animated movies such as *Frozen*, and *Coco*, such as when Mrs. Incredible would accidentally be thrown around by Voyd's amateur-like handling of her portals. The animation of this scene was just really fluid, making it a treat to watch. Another thing I enjoyed about the movie was the humor, especially when Jack-Jack, the baby of the Incredibles family, got into an entire goofy battle with some random raccoon he saw outside his home. Despite its many strengths, one thing I disliked about the movie was that it wasted a potential supervillain,

since said villain, the Underminer, appears at the very beginning of the movie and manages to escape, but is never heard of or even addressed for the rest of the film.

With all the scenes of the Incredibles family fighting alongside one another and helping each other, I would say that the movie definitely promotes the idea of staying by your family, and valuing them as something far greater than anything else.

The movie overall is just great, innocent, fun, exciting, and funny, so I don't see how this film could cater to a specific group of people since any person from any background could watch this movie, and come out satisfied with a smile on their face,

making this a G rated movie for sure.

All in all, I give *The Incredibles 2* a 5 out of 5.

This review was written as a part of the Literature as Film class.

Any person from any background could watch this movie...satisfied with a smile on their face.



Brady captures 7 as Bucs D dominates

By **JAKE ZAIDERMAN**
Staff Writer

"We're coming back," Tom Brady has shut down any retirement rumors after a dazzling performance during Super Bowl LV, and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers have ended their 18-year championship drought for their second Vince Lombardi trophy in franchise history.

After a bunch of pregame festivities, the game got underway a few minutes after 6:30 PM. The game started out slowly for both sides with three punts. Patrick Mahomes looked shaky early on, something that can be attributed to his nagging turf toe and injured offensive line. On the next drive, Mahomes marched them down the field, setting up Harrison Butker for a 49-yard field goal attempt that went right down the middle. Brady was eager to answer Mahomes with a score of his own. Leonard Fournette, recently known as "Playoff Lenny" and now "Super Bowl Lenny," took the first couple of plays for nice gains. Brady then hit Antonio Brown (AB) and Cameron Brate for 16 and 15 yards respectively. The final play of the drive was a Brady to Rob Gronkowski connection for a touchdown. That was a record-setting 13th time they've connected in the endzone for six in the postseason.

The story of the first half was Chiefs defensive penalties. On the Bucs' next two drives, there were lots of penalties called that gained big yardage or kept the drive alive. The first one was a defensive holding on Charvarius Ward on a third down that nullified an interception and an

automatic first down. Then on a fourth and five, Mecole Hardman lined up offside on a field goal attempt, which resulted in a five yard penalty leading to another first down. The very next play was another touchdown to Gronk for his second of the game. Tampa Bay was now up 14-3.

Mahomes then led another drive down the field, resulting in another Butker field goal from 34 yards out, making the score 14-6. That left Brady with 1:01 left before the end of the half.

First play was a handoff to Fournette, triggering Kansas City to call their first timeout. Brady then hit Chris Godwin for eight yards, prompting KC to take their second timeout. Gronk then caught a pass for five yards then the Bucs went no huddle. Brady was looking for superstar receiver Mike Evans deep downfield when Bashaud Breeland was called for pass interference, resulting in a 34-yard gain and automatic first down. Playoff Lenny then caught a ball for 15 yards, resulting in TB using their final timeout of the half with 13 seconds left on the clock.

Next play, Brady targeted Evans in the endzone, but the ball was out of reach to the looks of some. The referees thought otherwise, as they called another pass interference, this time on star safety Tyrann Mathieu. AB then beat Mathieu for a touchdown which was all worthwhile after everything he has been through. His score put the Bucs up 21-6 at the end of the first half.

The halftime show was headlined by The Weeknd. This show

was different from all the others. For one, The Weeknd put \$7 million dollars of his own money into it. Wassim "Sal" Slaiby, The Weeknd's manager and founder/CEO of management company SALXCO, said during an interview with Billboard that he did this so he could "make this halftime show be what he envisioned." The Weeknd's performance was one of the only halftime shows where everything from the singing to dancing was all done live.

Junior Ethan Katz had this to say about the performance: "I enjoyed watching the halftime performance. I thought it was great that he performed well with all the circumstances going on."

Anyway, it was now time for the second half to see who would be crowned the world champions of football.

The Chiefs got the ball to start the second half. They started on the ground with Clyde Edwards-Helaire busting up the middle for 26 yards. Mahomes then threw on the next five plays. The air game wasn't working for the Chiefs all game. The drive resulted in another Butker 52 yard field goal, making the score 21-9.

Tampa Bay's next drive started out with a pair of three yard gains. Gronk then made a huge catch that went for 25 yards. Playoff Lenny then ran the ball to the end zone from 27 yards out, making the score 28-9.

Mahomes looked to spark the offense by going through the air. Instead, star rookie Antoine Winfield Jr. picked him off a deflection. Tampa capitalized adding a field goal to cushion their lead to 31-9.

Mahomes did lead a great drive

spanning from the end of the third into the fourth quarter. On a crucial third down, Mahomes looked in the back corner of the end zone for Bryon Pringle. Pringle reached out and caught the ball but was out of bounds: a tremendous effort with no results.

After a Tampa punt, KC had an opportunity to make the game look a little less like a blowout. Once again marching their way downfield, Mahomes was sacked at the 50 yard line. On a 3rd and 33, Tyreek Hill caught a short pass that shortened the gap, setting them up for a 4th and 10. Mahomes rolled out right and looked for Hill. He got it to him, but the rookie Winfield got there and broke the pass up. These two had a history as in Week 12, Hill torched Winfield and the whole Tampa defense for seven catches, 203 yards, and two touchdowns in the first quarter alone. Hill gave his signature peace sign and backflipped into the end zone on his second touchdown. Winfield remembered and gave him the peace sign, after which he was called for taunting. After the game Winfield said, "It felt amazing to do that, I'm not even gonna lie."

After a Devin White interception and three kneel downs later, Tampa Bay won its second Super Bowl in franchise history. Brady became the second starting quarterback, along with Payton Manning, to lead two different teams to Super Bowl victories and the first to win one in the AFC and NFC. He also won his fifth Super Bowl MVP. This puts Brady higher in the conversation for greatest athlete in any sport of all time.

COVID-19 outbreaks, poor defense leave Wizards struggling to find their identity

By **BEN STROBER**
Editor-in-Chief

2020 was a challenging year for many people ranging from athletes and healthcare workers to the average everyday person. As a result, the challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic have allowed for a shorter NBA season. Now that the season is shorter by 10 games, a slow start could be detrimental to a team trying to make the playoffs. Unfortunately, the Washington Wizards got off which isn't what they needed. Now sitting at 5-15, this is the Wizards' second-slowest start since when they started 0-12 in 2008.

With the addition of former MVP Russel Westbrook, many people had much higher expectations for the Wizards this season. However, Westbrook has missed a few games and played a few games while dealing with a quad injury he suffered in last year's playoffs. Wizards were also thrilled to re-sign sharp shooting Davis Bertans to a new 5-year contract. However, even with some decent talent, the Wizards have found themselves struggling defensively against their opponents, which has been killing them. The Wizards have found themselves giving up 130 or more points a night, which makes it very difficult to beat good teams.

Head coach Scott Brooks is optimistic the team can turn it around. "We're frustrated like Beal has said. We're not giving up... we're going

to turn it around, and when we do turn it around, it's going to be a great feeling." With the Wizard's poor play, many were starting to wonder if the team should possibly trade away their superstar player in Bradley Beal. Beal is currently leading the entire NBA at 33.6 points per game and has been on an absolute tear scoring the basketball.

Beal has shown frustration in his body language on the bench, after games where he would score unconsciously and they still end up with a loss. Even in one game where Beal scored 60 points, the Wizards lost that game to Philadelphia. "Teams just walk all over us," Beal told the media. "We've gotta have some pride, man, some dog," Beal added. "We've got no dog."

It was rumored that Beal was going to request a trade from the team. However, these rumors turned out to be false when Beal came out and said he had no desire of playing for another team.

With the struggles of the team, is the season already a lost cause? Should the Wizards tank and trade for a haul of picks? Many people disagree on this subject but the answer is clear. This team lacks depth on their bench players and overall is terrible defensively. If the Wizards want to turn the season around, they will have to focus on their effort on defense to avoid putting themselves into situations where they have to score an absurd amount of points to

win.

Another hardship the team has faced this season is COVID outbreaks. The Wizards did not play a single game from January 11 through January 24 due to massive outbreaks of COVID. The Wizards had six players test positive at one point. This outbreak likely hurt the team's chemistry since they had two weeks of quarantining.

Lastly, the main focus this season must be to develop young talents such as Deni Avdija and Rui Hachimura. Both were taken ninth overall in the last drafts and could be helpful for the future of the Wizards. Hachimura has been overall solid this season so far, averaging 13 points and 5 rebounds. Avdija looks to be a solid 3-point shooter thus far. His minutes will increase as the season goes on for sure.

With all the Wizards have been through this season, it will be a tough road to turn the season around. "We just have to keep watching film and improving," Brooks said. "We need to do better defensively and work on our rotations, these guys will get it going soon." Brooks is confident the Wizards will turn it around. However, Time is running out: it's time to play with some urgency.

A dejected Bradley Beal looks down in exhaustion after tough loss to Chicago.





COVID-19's impact on the 2021 Washington Capitals

By **KENDALL LUMSDEN**
Senior Staff Writer

Aside from the 6 wins, 3 ties, and 3 losses as of February 8, the Washington Capitals have had a chaotic start to the season.

To start off, head coach Todd Reirden was fired during the off-season. The team decided to bring in Peter Laviolette, who holds 18 years of experience as a head coach, ranks 16th in all-time wins, and brings a career record of 637 wins, 425 ties, and 123 losses to the table.

Secondly, although it was inevitable that COVID-19 would impact the NHL season in some way, the Capitals didn't expect it to affect them so early on. Following their first road trip to Buffalo and Pittsburgh to start their season, starting goalie Ilya Samsonov tested positive for the coronavirus. The team's contact tracing exposed that three players (captain Alexander Ovechkin, forward Evgeny Kuznetsov, and defenseman Dmitry Orlov) spent time in the same hotel room as Samsonov, violating the hockey league's strict road trip precautions. The Capitals organization was fined \$100,000, and the players were required to quarantine for at least 10 days. This angered some fans and family members, such as Ovechkin's wife, Nastya Shubskaya, who questioned the efficiency of the league's rules. She questioned, on her Instagram story, how "of course, you can't catch the virus when you and your teammates sit together on the bench, hug each other when they score a goal, or when they



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are all together in the lounge or locker room... Virus only works in a hotel room."

Although Ovechkin's absence was worrisome, Washington was able to pick up seven of a possible eight points in his absence to remain on top of their division. Another concern was, obviously, Samsonov

actually coming down with the virus. He has since returned, but Vitek Vanecek was able to showcase his talent in light of Samsonov's absence. As a result of this, Vanecek has been named NHL's Rookie of the Month.

Did you know bocce is an allied sport?

By **JULIA DIETRICH**
Staff Writer

To many QO students, Allied Bocce is simply a sport you pass over or have never even heard of. However, to a select few, it is their only chance to play on a team sport in high school. Bocce is an allied sport, which means that it is designed for both students with disabilities and students without disabilities to be able to play it.

Bocce is a fairly simple game. It starts out by the winning team of a coin flip rolling a ball called the pallino down a 60-foot mat. The pallino will end up between the 30-foot mark and the 50-foot mark. Then, each team will have four chances to get their ball closer to the pallino than the other team.

It's the simplicity of the sport that allows it to be accessible. MCPS's official rules allow for slight alterations to accommodate for disabilities, such as adjusting foul lines for players that need to use a ramp to throw the ball. The rules also require two of the four competing players to be student athletes with disabilities.

Bocce is part of the corollary sports program that MCPS created in adherence to a 2008 law, which mandates Maryland schools must give students with disabilities an opportunity to participate in sports. While allied softball is offered in the spring and team handball is offered in the fall, bocce is the most common corollary sport offered at MCPS schools, which is why many middle school special education teachers recommend their students play bocce in high school.

"Before I came to QO, I taught LFI, which means Learning for Independence, and the students go for a certification instead of a diploma, and [bocce] was always a sport we pushed them to do once," said QO bocce coach Julie Lyst.

Teachers aren't the only ones who see the benefits of having students with disabilities play sports.

"Bocce improved not only Crush's mood but the mood of our entire household. The teamwork he learned was immensely valuable and it came home to us as well," said Tom Rowse, the father

of Gregory "Crush" Rowse, a former bocce player at Wootton High School with autism.

However, it's not just students with disabilities that benefit from being part of a team with both disabled and non-disabled students, also known as GenEd students.

"In an IEP [Individualized Education Plan], it always talks about the least restrictive environment. It's the most important thing, so it's always pushed for this student with a

disability . . . to learn how to do this and learn how to do that," said Lyst. "I think it is equally important for GenEd students to be in classes or work with students with disabilities because they're everyday kids: they're everyday people that you're going to see in your community . . . and to not know how to properly interact with them, I think that puts GenEd students and whoever else at a disadvantage."



GIOVANNI PIZZINO



TOM ROWSE



MCPS Athletics Are Back

By ADAM GOTKIN
Staff Writer

MCPS released its "Return to R.A.I.S.E Second Semester Plan" on January 29th, which outlines the return to play plan for the second semester athletics program. With this, in-person athletics will start on Saturday, February 27 with fall sports kicking things off.

Once dropped off at school for practice, students will have to check in and fill out a health assessment to make sure they are COVID clear. They will then report to one of seven pods on the school's campus where athletic practices will occur.

For the first 20 days, this is all that will be taking place, due to the MPSSAA's rule on 20 days of practice before the athletic competition. That leaves March 19 the first day for competition, with the season ending on April 17. The details of this competition season are still unknown but should be shared shortly.

Spring sports will then start on April 17 and continue until June 19 (after graduation and the end of the school year). The winter sports season has been canceled, but MCPS will attempt to plan some opportunities of engagement for the winter sports athletes.

All of this is depending on how the county and state metrics are doing, but if things keep going the way they are, get excited for in-person MCPS athletics to get back underway.

MCPS HIGH SCHOOL SECOND SEMESTER OVERVIEW		
Fall Season	Spring Season	Winter Sports*
February 13 – April 17, 2021	April 17 – June 19, 2021	TBD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bocce • Cross Country • Cheerleading • Field Hockey • Football • Golf • Pompons • Soccer – Boys & Girls • Volleyball – Girls' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allied Softball • Baseball • Gymnastics • Lacrosse – Boys & Girls • Softball • Tennis – Boys & Girls • Track & Field • Volleyball – Boys & Coed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basketball – Boys & Girls • Swimming & Diving • Wrestling

Fall Season	February 13–April 17, 2021
January 29	Open fall registration
February 12	Preliminary framework for operations released
February 13	Season begins with education of stakeholders and preparation for program operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches begin formulating pods/groups for activities • Coaches provide virtual resources to students • Preseason parent/guardian meetings • Education of stakeholders on proper protocol
February 22	Registration closes for fall season
February 23	Confirmed framework for operations released (subject to change during the season)
February 27	Begin in-person activities – conditioning skills-based practices/tryouts
March 19	First contest allowed (or continue with practices)
April 17	Fall season ends

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