

THE PROWLER

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

Nájera takes on new role of principal intern

By **MIA KAUFFMAN**
Staff Writer

If you listen to the phone call that goes out to the QO community every Sunday night, you may notice a difference. There's a new voice behind the calls. Usually principal Beth Thomas, but it's now Ms. Nájera. But why? Well, since December 13, assistant principal Vilma Nájera has been serving as QO's principal intern.

As a part of the training to be a principal, Nájera has to take the next step from administrator and work as a principal intern. By taking over all of the principal's duties, she will get a realistic and firsthand experience of the day-to-day operations of a principal.

But before the internship becomes a reality, there are requirements one has to meet to become a principal. According to her, "you need to have a certain amount of years in leadership, as an assistant principal, and then there's an application process to be considered an intern."

It isn't an easy application process. There are multiple interviews with

high-ranked MCPS officials, a writing task, and resume submissions, along with numerous other requirements. After doing all of that, you may or may not be selected. If you are, it's a year-long internship that involves a lot of shadowing. "It's kind of like student teaching... observing, watching," Nájera added.

While Nájera is principal intern, Principal Thomas is away at Roberto Clemente Middle School as a visiting principal mentoring their principal intern. Another principal, Dr. Alana Miller, is here from Shady Grove Middle School doing the same thing—helping and guiding Ms. Nájera through this process.

Being familiar with the QO community and already working at QO "helped a lot" when transitioning to her new role, according to Nájera, because she had built a foundation at the school and relationships with the staff and students. "I knew the admin team, I know the resource teachers, I know some of the students," said Nájera, so it wasn't a new environment she had to walk into and adjust to.

It isn't guaranteed in the training

program that the school you work at will be the school that you intern at. She explained that some of her colleagues that are doing the internship "went into a whole new school," so to be placed at a school that she was not only familiar with but already worked at was a benefit.

With a new role comes new responsibilities. The responsibilities of a principal share similarities with those of an administrator; however, there are some vast differences as well. The jump from administrator to principal intern resulted in a "totally different" routine. As an 11th grade administrator, Nájera was responsible specifically for the 11th grade and typically dealt with problems and concerns revolving around the junior class. But the principal oversees everyone at the school, so now as principal intern she notices a "different set of responsibilities."

Funny enough, one of her challenges was "getting used to the iPhone," she said. "I'm an Android person and they gave me an iPhone for the whole internship, and I don't know how to use an iPhone that well."

Jokes aside, being cognizant of so many moving parts was a challenge Nájera had to adjust to. There's a laundry list of things she is in charge of, including "having to be aware of instruction, finance, parents, athletics, classes, lunch, all of the things that make up the everyday": things that we, as students, take for granted everyday and may not even realize are such a big undertaking.

With a goal in mind of "pushing forward the vision and mission of our school," with a focus to "create a place where all students feel welcome and like they belong," Nájera will take on her term of principal intern until it ends on January 28.



TWITTER @APVNAJERA

Mixed opinions over MCPS's handling of virus surge

By **FIONA FEINGOLD**
Senior Staff Writer

Following a spike in COVID-19 cases due to the new omicron variant, MCPS has adopted various protective measures in order to prevent students and teachers from contracting the virus. New protocols include an emphasis on contact tracing.

When a student tests positive for COVID-19, the nurse, the attendance secretary, the wellness coordinator, and the athletic director (if the student is an athlete) receive notice from the student's grade level administrator. The administrator will then contact the student and find out the last day they were in the building as well as when they first showed symptoms and tested positive. After that, the real contact tracing begins.

Administrators start by reaching out to anyone who has been in close contact with a student who has tested positive. Close contact is defined as spending 15 minutes of continuous time while being within three feet of someone with COVID-19. This usually includes classmates who sit behind, in front of, and next to the student, according to 10th grade administrator Edith Lee. "We look at the seating charts," she said. "It's about four students for each of your classes that we reach out to as a close contact."

However, exposed students usually don't need to worry. "Most of the time [students are] three feet apart, but just in an abundance of caution, we always contact trace," Lee said.

Students who simply share a class with someone that has tested positive will not be notified. "Being in the class is not considered a high-risk activity. You are completely masked," she added.

So, what should a student do if they have been exposed to someone with COVID-19? "If they feel fine and they've been vaccinated, they should continue to wear their mask [and] attend class and any extracurricular activities as normal," Lee said. If a student starts to display any symptoms and has been exposed, they should stay home.

It is also recommended that students get tested five to seven days after exposure, although this is not mandatory. If a student does not get tested and shows symptoms, they are required to quarantine for a specific period of time. The length of their quarantine will depend on vaccination status and symptoms. Students who test positive must quarantine for ten days.

With so many cases, it can be difficult to properly inform everyone who has been exposed. "I was exposed to [three] people that tested positive in one class and was never notified about it," junior Deeya Mistry said. Mistry also thinks that there should be more testing. "MCPS should extend their testing requirements to include exposed students," she added. Currently, exposed students can only get tested in school if they are symptomatic.

On January 10, each student and

staff member received two rapid tests during eighth period in Cougars Connect. Students who were absent can visit the main office in order to pick up a testing kit. Test results should be reported using the Google Form on the QO website.

If an exposed student starts to display symptoms at school, they can go to the nurse's office and take a rapid test, with parental consent. Students who test positive will then be asked to complete a PCR test (which is more accurate but takes longer to process) in order to verify the result.

Along with contact tracing procedures, MCPS has recently adopted a system of random testing. While this is a new step for high schools, elementary and middle schools have been utilizing random testing since the start of the school year, as many young students were unable to get vaccinated against COVID-19. If parents want their students to be a part of this program, they can "opt-in" by filling out an online form, which can be found on the MCPS website.

On December 17, the county also decided to temporarily suspend all non-athletic extracurriculars through January 7, citing the vaccination requirement for winter athletes. Athletic events are still going on, but no spectators are allowed to attend. Some students were unhappy with the decision, such as junior Patrick Barrett.

"[It's] as if the way a policy like this would affect various other extracurricular groups like theatre,

choir, band, etc. wasn't even taken into proper consideration before the call was made, and it feels extremely unprofessional and disrespectful to us who're being inconvenienced while we look at the athletics programs being virtually unaffected," Barrett said. On January 9, it was announced that in-person extracurricular activities will resume on January 18. Students must report a negative COVID-19 test result in order to participate.

Despite these preventive measures, many students are concerned about the possibility of school going virtual. Schools are sorted into three categories based on their positivity rates: green, yellow, and red. A "green" school has a positivity rate of 3% or less. A "yellow" school has a positivity rate between 3–5%. A "red" school has a positivity rate of 5% or more and previously qualified schools to consider a transition to virtual learning. QO's current positivity rate is 6.34%.

However, a school entering the "red" category was never a guarantee of school closure. Rather, a 5% positivity rate was supposed to "trigger a conversation with the Health Department to determine if a school should be closed, not to automatically close the school," according to Fox5 DC. On January 8, MCPS decided to abandon the 5% benchmark and examine schools more closely on a case-by-case basis.

As of 01/11, 11 MCPS schools have temporarily gone virtual, including Seneca Valley High School.

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Oxford school shooting sparks anxieties about school safety

By MADDY RUBERY
Editor-in-Chief

After four students were shot and killed on November 30, the questions regarding student safety within the United States once again became a topic of heavy discussion. The ripple effect of the Oxford High School shooting sparked conversations that have been heard too many times before.

According to Sandyhookpromise.org, there have been 1,316 school shootings since 1970. How is Quince Orchard prepared if the worst thing that could happen happened?

When 15-year-old Ethan Crumbley opened fire at his Oakland County high school at 12:51pm, students found themselves barricading within the walls of their classrooms. Sixteen-year-old Oxford High School student Dale Schmalenberg told the New York Times that he "didn't really know how to respond." After firing around 30 shots with a semiautomatic handgun, injuring 11, Crumbley surrendered himself to police without a fight.

According to the *New York Times*, the day before the attack, Crumbley was caught searching for ammunition during class, which had led to a meeting with school faculty. On the morning of the shooting, Crumbley's

parents were called to the school in concern for their son's violent behavior. He was reported by his teacher for the graphic depictions of gore he had etched on his desk, labeled with "Blood everywhere" and, "The thoughts won't stop. Help me." After his parents insisted on keeping their son in school for the remainder of the day, Crumbley returned to class, beginning his rampage shortly after.

What measures are in place to prevent the same mistakes made that allowed malicious intent to fester?

"The training we do with fire drills and shelter drills develops routines in staff," says QO mathematics teacher Joshua Davis. "The reason you train is so that when a real situation happens, you default to your training."

Students rely on their teachers not only for education, but for their safety as well. By knowing what to do in a dangerous situation, lives can be protected and people can be saved. It only takes seconds for an attacker to injure and kill several, as seen in other mass shootings such as the Marjory Stoneman Douglas and Sandy Hook massacres.

But still, anxiety remains. "Honestly, sometimes I do not feel safe as a student in QO. This is partly due to the shooting threats that have

occurred," said a QO senior who wished to remain anonymous in order to speak candidly about mental health. "It is not only our school, but many other schools in Maryland have experienced these too. These situations have impacted me and many other students to become more anxious and guarded, as we do not know what to expect after hearing these types of threats."

Plus, the slew of threats of a potential mass/school shooting, fabricated or not, have a deep effect on the students at the receiving end.

The same anonymous student says that no child should have to fear for their lives when they enter the front doors of Quince Orchard, adding that there needs to be a focus, "on how [students] emotionally feel after these situations."

The anonymous student goes on to describe that although they have never felt entirely fearful for their life, a sense of uneasiness and discomfort still linger. "As [students] in the U.S., we shouldn't have to feel agitated and guarded at a place that should be a 'safe environment,'" they said.

The Prowler reached out to the head of security and acting principal of Quince Orchard but were unable to receive a response in time for this article's publication.

"[S]ometimes I do not feel safe"
- Anonymous QO student



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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.

The fate of Roe v. Wade is still uncertain

By AVA GARZAN
Staff Writer

One of the most pivotal decisions in our country's history is soon to be questioned, as the Supreme Court will be reviewing Mississippi's abortion law for the court case *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*.

The case aims to overturn *Roe v. Wade* (1973), the court decision that allowed women to have the right to an abortion prior to the viability of the fetus.

Jackson Women's Health Organization is challenging Mississippi's Gestational Age Act, which prohibits women from having abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy, except for medical emergencies.

According to the National Library of Medicine, fetus viability is at around 24 weeks of gestation.

The Mississippi law prohibits abortions significantly earlier than what was declared in *Roe*, so activists have spoken and the case has been brought to the Supreme Court — its fate lying with a current conservative majority on the court.

This case has sparked uproar from the public, from both ends of the political spectrum. Last month pro-choice activists stood in front of the Supreme Court "with signs reading 'liberate abortion' and 'abortion is essential,' chanting in support of abortion access," said Pete Williams and Teaganne Finn from NBC News.

Many argue the severity of this act and if it is upheld by the Supreme Court, it could completely nullify *Roe*, a precedent meant to protect women's rights to their own bodies.

On the other side of the debate, NBC reports anti-abortion supporters arguing "that the law is intended to regulate 'inhumane procedures.'"

The result of this ruling could have an astronomical impact on the United States, as it could have a domino effect on other states that are already on the fence politically in regards to permitting legal abortion. Adeel Hassan from the New York Times said that if *Roe* is overturned in court, "about one dozen Republican-controlled states already have so-called trigger laws that would make abortion unlawful almost immediately. And more could follow quickly."

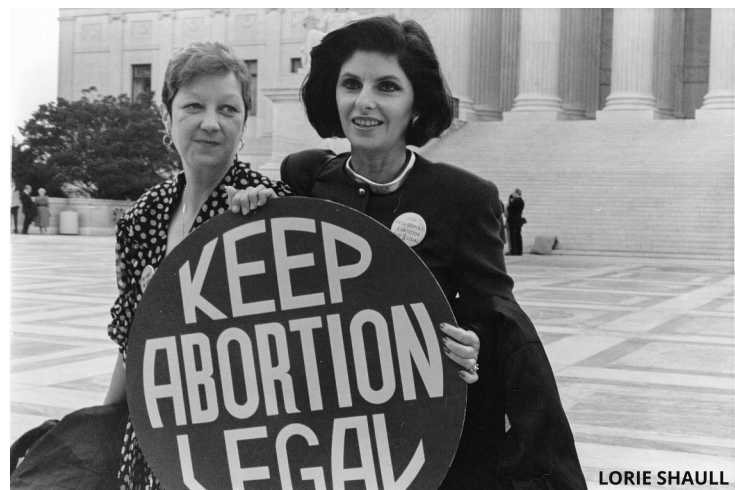
Emphasizing the abortion status in Texas, "in June that says nearly all abortions would become illegal in the state 30 days later if *Roe* is ever overturned. Doctors who then performed an

abortion there could be sentenced to life in prison."

This court decision could lead to many other states without access to legal abortions.

CDC reports abortion rates in parts of the country recently increasing. There then is the question of not only women's rights, but women's safety. Making abortion illegal could result in an increase in clandestine abortions, and with research done by Guttmacher Institute, a pro-choice research organization, "the more restrictive the legal setting, the higher the proportion of abortions that are least safe."

Though we will have to wait until spring before the hearing, the court appears to be leaning towards overturning *Roe*.



LORIE SHAULL

Norma McCorvey, known as "Jane Roe," left, and her lawyer Gloria Allred outside the Supreme Court, 1989.



Montgomery County's substitute teacher crisis

By JAY MOTIWALA
Editor-in-Chief

Montgomery County Public Schools continues to grapple with a major problem: the lack of available substitute teachers.

This substitute shortage was caused by both illogical assumptions from MCPS and unintended consequences from the outside world. A combination of problems, ranging from lack of benefits for substitutes, difficulties obtaining control of the class, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, are some factors that have led to this shortage.

A school can enter an "emergency coverage" system, in which full-time teachers within the same department would have to sub for classes. At one point, QO had an emergency coverage system in which teachers were sometimes called to substitute for classes outside of their own department, which was commonly regarded amongst the teachers as being chaotic.

They have since returned to the old system, where only teachers in the same department provide emergency coverage for classes, but this school, and this county, are still so low on substitutes that it is a regularity for full-time teachers to have to fill in as subs.

The requirements to become a substitute teacher used to be stricter than they are currently. Previously, prospective substitutes were required

to have a bachelor's degree in some sort of education field or completed a teacher education program. According to Learn.org, which lists substitute requirements for school districts around the country, in extreme situations, "the county will accept applicants who have student teaching experience but haven't completed a bachelor's degree yet." That criteria has been thrown out the window. Recently, according to current college students who attended QO in the past, they have been emailed requesting them to fill in as substitutes, even if they are not studying any sort of education-related majors.

So why is this shortage even happening? Irene Posey, a long-term substitute for QO in the English department, says there are multiple factors at play. A large number of them involve COVID-19.

"We've had this sort of rolling wave of things compounding on each other," she said. "To sum it up briefly, it was firstly the mistake of thinking that [MCPS] wouldn't need a lot of subs, and that was just a mistake."

She continued by stating: "It did cause a lot of [waiting] substitutes right then and there to go, 'I need another job to pay the rent, particularly now.' And then training was just lackluster enough in going virtual that a lot of substitutes felt like they were getting blamed for something that wasn't their fault and they quit, and then going back to the

hybrid model made people think it was the worst of both worlds so they quit." She added, "Going back in person, we had yet another wave who just sort of decided 'Okay, it's risky enough and this is stressful enough that I can't do this' and they quit there too."

She also mentioned the large turnaround time and waiting period that

had to go through background checks and extensive training.

Her final reason for the shortage involved substitute compensation, mentioning that "the lack of benefits is actually really significant." She thinks that there could be an influx of new substitutes if these benefits were improved.

Many students throughout



prospective substitutes have to deal with.

"It's a very long process just to get someone from application to actual long-term subbing," Posey said. From her experience, it took over six months for her to actually start teaching from when she submitted her application, as she and other subs

Montgomery County have stories about teachers scrambling to fill in sub positions, and many teachers have experienced the unease of not having stable substitutes. Although MCPS has tried to recruit more substitutes, this problem seems to be continuing on to no end, and it could impact both students and staff for the worse.

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Amy Schneider: first woman to win over a million dollars in Jeopardy!

By E. LEATH
Staff Writer

One week ago, on Friday, January 7, Amy Schneider — an engineering manager from Oakland, California — became the fourth contestant and first woman in the history of Jeopardy! to win over \$1 million dollars during a non-tournament game. On that date, she reached a win total of \$1,019,600.

As stated in an article on the Jeopardy! website, “the only other contestants to win more than \$1 million in regular-season games are Ken Jennings, whose 74-game streak in 2004 yielded \$2,520,700; James Holzhauer, who earned \$2,462,216 over the course of 32 victories in 2019; and Matt Amodio, who won \$1,518,601 during his 38-game streak last year.”

In addition to her new accomplishments, Lynn Elber, an Associated Press television writer, wrote that Schneider is “the first transgender person to qualify for the show’s tournament of champions,” the next of which is planned to occur sometime in the fall of 2022.

The Jeopardy! Tournament of Champions is a yearly event where the fifteen players who have won the most games from the past seasons compete. This is a two-week event with multiple rounds that end with the finals, which lasts two days.

Rising in the ranks and becoming eligible for the tournament has brought Schneider a lot of attention

from the press and media. Schneider has been interviewed about her success in the show and about being a transgender woman.

When interviewed by Elber, Schneider said, “I have definitely heard from other trans people who have been sort of thrilled to see me out there.”

What has moved her the most has been hearing from older generations, including parents and grandparents of transgender people who “fear for their loved ones who are trans, and worry that they might be limited in life. To be able to go out there and show that I can be successful in a very mainstream type of way has, I think, made a lot of them feel better about the people in their lives,” said Schneider.

Schneider has been active on Twitter throughout her Jeopardy! journey, sharing her thoughts and strategies in the game and how she felt at the end of matches. After her record-breaking match, Schneider recalled specific events from the evening. In tweets following that match, Schneider revealed that, before entering the game that day, she calculated how much money she could afford to bet so she could reach a million dollars even if she answered the final Jeopardy! question incorrectly.

Schneider has set many records in her time on Jeopardy! and her ongoing success has gained traction in the mainstream media. Having such a

large audience, she has been able to provide positive representation of transgender women in the media. Whether or not Schneider continues

with Jeopardy!, her persistence and determination continues to inspire individuals to strive for great things.



“I have definitely heard from other trans people who have been sort of thrilled to see me out there.”

- Amy Schneider

A storm looms: the growing tensions between Russia and Ukraine

By MAX HANDELMAN
Staff Writer

In February and March of the year 2014, Russia forcefully annexed the Crimean Peninsula. It was a decision that drew international backlash, but one that especially increased tensions with eastern-bordering Ukraine, whose officials claimed that the annexation violated a score of Russo-Ukrainian agreements, including the Belovezh Accords that legitimized Ukraine and its territory's existence as an international, independent entity.

This event would mark the beginning of what has now drawn out to be a bitter eight-year conflict that has seen the death of more than 14,000 Russian and Ukrainian soldiers and civilians, according to The Council on Foreign Relations.

Despite this grim number, tensions between the two nations have been relatively calm in recent years, with officials reporting no major conflicts but simply increased militarization on the Russo-Ukrainian border. There was even a sign of peace on December 30, 2019, when Russia and Ukraine agreed to swap 76 POW's. However, this glimmer of hope was rather short-lived as the dawn of the 2022 new year saw tensions skyrocket to new heights.

Early this month, Ukrainian authorities and western intelligence reported that 100,000 Russian troops have made several encampments along the Russo-Ukrainian border, a spectacle that has sparked rumors of a

full-blown Russian invasion. According to satellite imagery, Russian forces first began to settle on the Russo-Ukrainian border back in the first week of November, but after two months had passed, the threat only continued to grow larger; the Ukrainian Defense Ministry released a statement claiming that the Russian military is “reinforcing units near the contact line... with additional 122-millimeter self-propelled artillery vehicles, tanks and infantry fighting

vehicles.”

Yet, despite this seemingly hostile behavior, Russia claims that they have no intent on invasion or any military action at all.

“There is no reason to fear some kind of escalatory scenario,” said Russian deputy foreign minister Sergei A. Ryabkov to The New York Times.

Instead, Russia claims that the reason for its drastic measures is to halt the expansion of NATO's

European presence further eastward, hoping to prevent Ukraine from joining the international alliance. Russia's President Vladimir Putin believes that if Ukraine were to join NATO, the country would become a de facto base for both NATO and the US, giving the international alliance a strong foothold in Europe to limit the power of Russian authority.

“We are witnessing not just complete dependence but direct external control, including the deployment of NATO infrastructure,” said President Putin in an essay he wrote in July 2021.

As we are allies of Ukraine, many in the US are wondering if the American military will offer Ukraine support in the case of a war. In regards to possible US intervention, the White House has offered no insight into any specific plan of action, but in a transcript of a recent video call between President Biden and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, President Biden says that the US and its allies “will respond decisively if Russia further invades Ukraine.”

As it stands now, no shot has been fired by either side. However, fears are still growing as both Ukraine and Russia continue to bolster their forces. US intelligence estimates that Russian troop count could reach a staggering 175,000 by the end of this month alone. Even with such a tense atmosphere, all the world can do now is wait to see if this looming storm calmly dissipates or erupts into a full blown hurricane of violence and bloodshed.



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“There is no reason to fear some kind of escalatory scenario.”

- Russian deputy foreign minister Sergei A. Ryabkov



Love hurts, love eels

From Aristotle to Freud, the world's greatest minds have been stumped by the origins of eels

By XAVIER SUGGS
Staff Writer

The story of eel reproduction is as slippery a slope as the animals themselves. From birth to death, European eels travel over 3,000 miles to find the most elusive thing: true love. But eels have no testicles, no ovaries, no sexual reproductive organs whatsoever. And this raises the question: where do baby eels come from? Has God forsaken them to a life without the ability to truly connect to another eel, to find their soulmate, and most importantly...to have sex? And this raises the question: where do baby eels come from?

Before Sigmund Freud ever went on to develop theories about human genitalia, he was searching for the eel kind. In 1876, Freud continued his marine biology studies on the seaside city of Trieste. There, according to a feature from *The New Yorker*, he bought hundreds of eels from fishermen, brought them back to his dissection table, and sliced them for hours searching for any evidence of reproductive organs.

In a letter to his friend, Freud explained his predicament. "My hands are stained by the white and red blood of the sea creatures," he said. "All I see when I close my eyes is the shimmering dead tissue, which haunts my dreams, and all I can think about are the big questions, the ones that go

hand in hand with testicles and ovaries--the universal, pivotal questions."

Freud never did find those testicles, though he shouldn't feel too ashamed, as he wasn't the only philosopher perplexed by the reproductive system of eels. According to *The Science Times*, the Greek philosopher Aristotle theorized that eels spontaneously formed from mud and rainwater or that they

spawned from earthworms. Ancient Egyptians believed that eels were born out of the sun warming the Nile and some Europeans eels were born out of sea-foam.

The first breakthrough in the eel's life cycle was observed by Yves Delage, a French zoologist known for his studies on invertebrates and the inner ear. But on an innocuous morning in 1886, he made the discovery of a lifetime. In Delage's laboratory stood a fish tank which held a leptocephali, a new species of eel at the time. That morning, the leptocephali disappeared, and was

replaced with a longer, transparent fish. Delage had observed a metamorphosis, and later scientists built off this discovery until 1904, when Danish biologist Johannes Schmidt set out on a nearly 20-year journey to search for the origins of eels.

Schmidt's exposition took him from the Mediterranean Sea to the North Atlantic, crossing territories off by the size of the eel larvae. Although



the expedition was interrupted by a shipwreck and World War I, he was able to find what modern scientists describe as the European eel's breeding grounds.

The breeding grounds referred to is the Sargasso Sea, a sea bound by no land territories, but by ocean currents within the Bermuda Triangle. These developments have helped form the life cycle of eels.

Eels go through a series of metamorphoses. The eels first start as larvae, eventually drifting to the coast of Europe, the eel then grow into glass eels, the transparent fish Delage found in his fish tank. The eels start to

migrate upstream and the glass eel transitions into an elver, or a miniature version of the adult eel. As the eel grows it becomes a yellow eel. After a decade or two in freshwater, the eel finally reaches sexual maturity and travels back to the Sargasso Sea.

So that should be it. The eel question should be answered. Adult eels travel back to Sargasso Sea to breed. The only problem with this conclusion is that nobody has ever observed eels, well, you know, doing the nasty. Scientists have tried everything to make two eels breed: giving hormones to females to put them in heat and transporting them to the Sargasso Sea, attaching GPS devices to silver eels as they begin their migration, even dimming the lights and turning up the sexy music. Nothing has worked.

The life of the European eel is a lonely one. Eels are solitary hunters who live most of their life without seeing another eel. With all the metamorphosis the eel undertakes, it can seem like the eel is in a perpetual state of puberty. But don't feel too bad for the eel, as whether by instinct or by luck they eventually find their way back to where it all started: the Sargasso Sea. What goes on there is a mystery: maybe the eels have continuous orgies, or maybe eels really do spawn from seafoam. Whatever it is, science will continue to search for the answer to the existential eel question.

Kabul to Hyattsville: The struggle of Afghani refugees continues

By SAM SMITH
Staff Writer

Can you imagine having to witness your country being taken over by evil and having to uproot the life that you struggled so hard to make? Well that is precisely what refugees Hassim, Zyia (22), and Samim had to do in order to survive the ruthless Taliban takeover in Afghanistan.

A few months ago, I was lucky enough to have these survivors over for Thanksgiving dinner and discuss what they went through during that time.

Hassim and Samim had zero relation to each other before arriving in the United States in November and were just randomly housed together due to the unpreparedness of the US government.

However, they became family quite quickly because trauma tends to bond people that have gone through the same thing together, they say.

Hassim, 27, being the oldest of the three, acts as the father figure to the others and makes sure they stay in line. He has these fatherly traits due to the fact that he is the father to a little boy and girl that are unfortunately stuck in Afghanistan along with his wife.

Getting them to the United States is a grueling procedure that has possibilities of taking years, which

Hassim knows is time that he and his family do not have.

According to Hassim, he believes the news coverage of the Afghani-Taliban issue is far too focused on the Taliban instead of the immigrants who have moved to the United States looking for a brighter future.

"It is always about the violence... They do not want to talk about how we have not received our Social Security cards to even begin working and paying for our rent," he says.

Of course, Hassim will be forever grateful for the hospitality he has received from the United States, but he will never ignore the imperfections of our immigration policies.

The other residents of the apartment also have to pitch in, in order to pay off the rent every month. Hassim mathematically cannot be the only person in that three-person apartment to be contributing to the rent.

So, in order to pull his weight, Samim, 18, felt obligated to get a job so it did not look like he was just along for the ride. However, this is a continuing struggle for him, seeing that he has to juggle school and work.

Now for Samim, the journey to the United States was a true test since he had to leave his parents in order to hopefully live out a better life. An 18 year-old student having to immigrate

to a completely different country where they speak another language was a momentous obstacle that Samim is still scaling.

"It is really hard not to see Baba's face or not to feel Mama's touch, but I know I will see them again so I always keep the tea warm," he says.

I unfortunately could not get a quote from Zyia seeing that he was uncomfortable being interviewed.

Optimism might be the single

most important trait to have when going through such trauma.

The fact that Samim and Hassim can pick themselves up to work for the slight chance to be able to see their loved ones again is truly awe-inspiring.

Even though Samim and Hassim may not be related by blood, they are bound for life due to the trauma they have overcome right next to each other.



COURTESY OF
SAM SMITH

Zyia, Hassim, and the author just before eating Thanksgiving dinner.

By **MADISON SHERMAN**
Staff Writer

New Year's Resolutions

Far-reaching vs. **acquirable** goals:

The New Year has come. It is now 2022! Finally, it's time to start planning how you want to be this year. Each and every year is an opportunity to strive to be your best self and alter the negatives into positives. What will your New Year's resolution be? Take a look at the following steps to form a reasonable New Year's resolution and learn the difference between far-fetched goals and acquirable goals. Take the quiz at the end to help you determine what you need to work on this New Year.

Steps to making New Year's resolutions:

1. **Reflect on your past year:** Remind yourself of activities or people you found joy in and evaluate your hopes for the New Year.
2. **Narrow your focus:** Think of what specific areas you want to be successful in that will allow you to grow as a person in the New Year. These areas can include subjects in school, preparing for future endeavors, such as college, or focusing on family time.
3. **Pick a resolution you haven't used before:** If you planned a resolution for the previous year that didn't work out, feel free to alter it, or change it completely. You live and you learn. Work out the mechanics of your past goal and figure out what needs to be fixed. Remember—you don't want to go after an impractical goal that will cause you frustration and self-doubt.
4. **Be realistic; don't over-do it:** There's a difference between being optimistic and highly unrealistic. Consider your schedule and the amount of time you have to accomplish your resolution. Break your goal down into time increments.
5. **Make a list of potential obstacles:** Barriers can be discouraging, but if you list them out and think through your resolution logistically, you are bound for success.
6. **Give yourself time and develop a positive attitude:** Evolving a worthwhile New Year's resolution, and reaching your goal this New Year, might take some time. Therefore, it's important to stay optimistic and continue being generous to yourself.

Goals can either be classified as acquirable or far-reaching. According to Merriam-Webster, the word acquirable means "capable of being acquired," whereas far-reaching means "having a wide range of effect," or being a "far-flung" idea. Acquirable goals relate to relevant and practical resolutions. In order to achieve an acquirable goal, create SMART goals. You may have heard this term when counselors have lectured you about life choices or setting academic standards for yourself, and you may have decided to tune out; however, SMART goals are important to note when forming a New Year's Resolution. SMART goals stand for:

S- Specific
M- Measurable
A- Achievable
R- Relevant
T- Time-Bound

Every year, thousands of individuals form extensive resolutions, where their goal is too difficult to reach. They end up losing focus on their far-reaching ideas. According to a study conducted by the Clinical Psychology University of Scranton, this is why only 8% of people stick to their New Year's resolutions. If you find that you are someone that lacks discipline with being patient, stick to easier, more likely to be achieved goals rather than wide-ranging ones. It's easy to get carried away with a goal that seems too good to be true, but don't let those unrealistic goals take advantage of your New Year's resolution. You want to stick to your goals, not get rid of them. So, while you finalize your resolution for the New Year, consider these steps and tips, and remind yourself that no one is perfect; if you want something, you have to work for it!

★ Can you guess the three most popular New Year's Resolutions for 2021? ★

America's Top New Year's Resolutions for 2021

Most popular new year's resolutions among those planning to make one or several



QUIZ

What is the biggest challenge for you?

- a). Staying off your phone
- b). Trying new things
- c). Overthinking everything
- d). Managing your time

What are you looking for in the New Year?

- a). Going on more walks
- b). Testing out new restaurants and foods
- c). Keeping up with school work
- d). Prioritizing the important things

What word matches your desired attribute for this year?

- a). Productive
- b). Courageous
- c). Organized
- d). Relaxed

What word matches the negative feelings about yourself that you might want to change from the previous year?

- a). Lazy
- b). Reserved
- c). Disorganized
- d). Overworked

What do you want to eliminate this New Year?

- a). Heavy screen-time hours
- b). Doubting your capabilities
- c). Holding in your feelings and thoughts
- d). Staying up late at night

Mostly A's: Spend more time outdoors

Mostly B's: Take more chances

Mostly C's: Write your thoughts in a diary

Mostly D's: Save time for yourself



These two articles written by students in Ms. Cooley-Klein's Journalism A class. Students interviewed a fellow journalism student and wrote a short profile about them. These two were chosen for publication by Prowler staff.

QO sophomore sets goals for sports and life

By *KAIYA MAYHEW*
Journalism Student

"Unexplainable, it almost felt like I was dreaming."

This is how sophomore Walter Loeb—a member of Quince Orchard's football team—describes what it felt like to win the state championship this fall.

Loeb is an enthusiastic track runner and football player. Although he considers himself better at track, he enjoys football more, due to the sense of brotherhood between teammates.

"It's super exciting," Loeb said when describing the prowess of QO's football team. "It's a great family that was started in the middle of the summer, [considering] what we are now, after winning states together and finishing the fight that we started."

In his free time, Loeb enjoys going to the gym, and playing football with his friends. "Almost all my friends play sports," he said. "We all try to motivate each other to do better."

Although Loeb enjoys both football and track, the two sports involve fundamentally different styles

of competition. "In football, you definitely have, like, a family behind you," he said. "When you're running track—like what I do is the sprints—I'm just solo dolo. I'm in my own zone, I'm in my own lane—literally."

In his freshman year, Loeb got the second best time for the boys' 200 meter run in track and field. He plans to try to beat that score before leaving high school. "It's always super exciting to try and PR, you know, get that record up, do as much as you can to be better," he said.

Despite his affinity for sports, Loeb's ideal career would involve being an FBI agent in California. He plans to use sports to help him pay for college, where he intends to study criminal justice and later move up into a law enforcement career.

"Ever since I was little, I liked watching those types of shows," he explained. "It just excites me a lot, and I find that type of stuff very interesting."

For the time being, though, Loeb is focused on his life in high school. "I don't think I would change anything about my life if I could," he said. "I like how things are going right now."

QO senior reveals how music can make people feel

By *CARLY MALAMUT*
Journalism Student

Some of the musically inclined possess a deeper understanding of emotion and feeling in others. QO's very own Delilah Locke, a senior, has shown her musical ability as the band percussion leader. She has also demonstrated her empathic intentions as an ambassador for Best Buddies.

Finding your passion is an important part of growing and maturing. In Locke's case, music is her passion. She has expressed her feelings towards music as an escape for, "creative expression" adding, "It just makes me happy."

Locke began her musical journey at five years old when she picked up the piano. She has played various instruments throughout the years but finally uncovered a love for percussion and jazz. She currently plays the snare in the Quince Orchard marching band and holds the title of Percussion Leader.

During the Coronavirus lockdown, Locke and her dad wrote music together. Her father plays

guitar and with their collaborative talents, they were able to share a delicate moment of creation. She described this project as a "good outlet to express how I was feeling over COVID."

Other than her musical commitments, Locke is an ambassador for a program called Best Buddies. Best Buddies is an organization that specializes in socializing and assisting peers with special needs such as Down syndrome and autism. Through this responsibility, Locke is able to exhibit the importance of acceptance.

"I love best buddies, it's a really great program. It really teaches everyone about inclusivity and advocacy [for] people with neuro differences," said Locke.

As she reaches the end of her high school career, Locke has decided to continue her education at Kenyon College. Kenyon College is a liberal arts school that provides opportunities for Locke to combine her interests in public health and the creative aspects of her knowledge.

When asked about going to college she said, "I'm really excited for everything to come!"

Chick-fil-A: To eat or not to eat?

The fast food giant has a over a decade of publicity surrounding their contributions to homophobic organizations. Here are the facts.

By *HAYLEY ASAI*
Staff Writer

The question of whether or not to support Chick-fil-A has been asked now for over a decade. The fast food chain with strong traditional Christian values was initially exposed in 2010 for donating money to anti-LGBTQ causes.

Since then, dozens of public statements have been made both confirming and denying Chick-fil-A's continuing of those practices, and the chain has taken the spotlight many times for its controversial behavior. Here's a timeline of events:

2010 - Chick-fil-A donates over \$2 million to anti-LGBTQ charities.

2011 - The restaurant "had agreed to provide some of its famous chicken sandwiches for an upcoming marriage seminar run by one of the state's leading anti-gay organizations," according to TIME. This led to a frenzy online, with many longtime fans of the chain rushing to boycott the beloved sandwich in the name of marriage equality.

2012 - Dan Cathy, the CEO of Chick-fil-A in 2012, does an interview about the fast food chain's values with the *Baptist Press*. During the interview, Cathy strongly affirmed that the company ran under Christian values. Cathy stated that Christianity "is about a personal relationship. Companies are not lost or saved, but certainly individuals are." In a similar interview from the Ken Coleman Show, Cathy stated, "I think we are inviting God's

"We are inviting God's judgment on our nation."

*-Dan Cathy,
Chick-fil-A CEO*

judgment on our nation when we shake our fist at Him and say, 'We know better than you as to what constitutes a marriage.' This statement fell in stark contrast to an earlier interview given to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, in which he said, "We're not anti-anybody."

2012 - Shortly after Cathy's interview appearances, the company Facebook posted several messages, including one which said, "Going forward, our intent is to leave the policy debate over same-sex marriage to the government and political arena." The company also pledged to stop their donations toward anti-LGBTQ organizations.

2013 - An article from GLAAD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) found that Chick-fil-A had actually decreased its donations toward anti-LGBT groups since the initial stories appeared in the media.

2014 - Two years after Cathy's public opposition to same-sex marriage, he said that he regretted his comments on Chick-fil-A's traditional marriage values. In the article from the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Cathy said, "Every leader goes through different phases of maturity, growth and development."

2015 - Chick-fil-A still donated \$1 million to anti-LGBTQ organizations. Following the Supreme Court ruling recognizing same-sex marriage nationwide in 2015, Cathy remarked that the instance was a "sad day for our nation." In response, students from several universities across the country protested against the inclusion of a Chick-fil-A on their campuses. Some of these schools included Johns Hopkins, North Carolina State University, and Indiana University. Johns Hopkins' SGA stated that those who were part of the LGBTQ community would be "subjected to the microaggression of supporting current or future Chick-fil-A development plans." Similar protests took place at the Denver International Airport, where Chick-fil-A was initially slated to open.

2016 - Vice President David Farmer stated that "Chick-fil-A is about food, and that's it." Farmer's statement marked a turning point in which Chick-fil-A took a strong stance against making public political statements tied to the franchise.

2017 - Chick-fil-A's tax file reports show that the chain's foundation donated over \$1.8 million combined to the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Paul Anderson Youth Home, and the Salvation Army.

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes, or FCA, is a Christian religious organization which prohibits their student leaders from committing any "homosexual act[s]," according to its online application.

Paul Anderson Youth Home takes a similar stance towards homosexuality and same-sex marriage.

The Salvation Army has had a previous history of disagreeing with legal protections for LGBTQ people and turning away transgender people from their shelters. In more recent years, the organization has changed to support a policy of non-discrimination towards those in the LGBTQ community.

2019 - Chick-fil-A contests the importance of their donations, stating that they "were relevant and impactful in the community." Chick-fil-A's funding went toward certain programs such as summer camp funding and resources for underprivileged children.

2021 - During the launch of their chicken sandwich, Burger King promised to donate to an LGBTQ group for every chicken sandwich ordered.

While the chain has largely ceased their donations to explicitly anti-LGBT organizations, they have recently donated to places such as the FCA and the Salvation Army, which are familiar to many QO students. Quince Orchard has its own branch of FCA. (*The Prowler* reached out to our school's branch of FCA but we were unable to receive a response by the publication deadline.) In addition, the Salvation Army is a very popular thrifting location for students.

Some LGBTQ activists may recommend a certain course of action, but many of the initial issues with Chick-fil-A are no longer present. However, the chain's past is clear and its attempts at mending its relationship with LGBTQ people have been questionable. Ultimately, it is up to the consumer whether they choose to eat at Chick-fil-A.



Almost a decade with no change?

A look into the 9 year anniversary of the Sandy Hook school shooting and reform movements on gun control

By REESE OWENS
Staff Writer

According to Wikipedia, school is an “educational institution designed to provide learning spaces and learning environments for the teaching of students under the direction of teachers”. But it’s not just that, school is where we come to see our friends, where we come to find ourselves and express our interests from a young age. For many, schools are a safe environment, a comfortable one—one where there’s almost no question over our safety. But, sometimes things change.

Almost a decade has passed since the heartbreaking events of Sandy Hook took place. Nine years still feels like it isn’t enough for other students, parents, and teachers to recover from this tragic school shooting in Newton, Connecticut. The school was even torn down and rebuilt in 2013 with the hope for a safer future for students.

The morning of December 12, 2012, twenty first graders were robbed of a future, and six teachers were killed doing what they loved to do: to teach. These students were little siblings, swimmers, dancers, artists, animal lovers, and so much more.

But ten minutes was all it took for Adam Lanza to take these 26 lives, as

well as his own. Why was 20-year-old Lanza armed with a semi-automatic rifle and two semi-automatic pistols, given his mental health conditions? Almost everyone wondered. To most that were affected by this massacre, there had to be some sort of solution to regulate this issue of gun violence. Many parents thought the events on December 12 would convince more politicians to jump at the chance to regulate who can buy a gun.

Although action was immediately taken by then-President Obama, his call for new gun-safety measures, which specifically expanded background checks for gun buyers, was blocked by the U.S. Senate.

Despite shutdown efforts by the former President Obama, groups rose to address the issue concerning gun safety. Parents of the victims of Sandy Hook united to form the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement with the goal to prevent school shootings through teaching social and emotional intelligence and effective coping skills to students and adults. Scarlett Lewis, leader of the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement, claims, “We can teach our children how to face difficulty, challenges in their lives, by teaching social and emotional and coping skills.” With these practices being put into place, effective shooter drills and cautious safety measures still may not

be enough without the underlying issue being solved. The elephant in the room seems to be the root cause of the violent school shooters, such as anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and neglect. But while all of this is happening, what about the generation that missed this window of opportunity?

Since we are already behind in these social lessons, we have to think ahead and get on top of these gun restrictions—but nine years later and the bigger picture hasn’t changed. According to The Gun Violence Archive, there has been a 41% increase in the amount of mass shootings from 2019 to 2020.

Shannon Watts, a mother of five from Colorado, started a Facebook group the day after the shooting, eventually called Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. This group, along with many others, were able to take action to the state level, where background checks for gun purchases were implemented in four states that didn’t already have them, which led to 49% percent of Americans living in states with expanded background check laws. Change is starting to show through within the states buckling up with more restrictions, but there’s still an obstacle on a bigger scale.

Regulation at the federal level

seems to be the most stubborn. According to Forbes contributor Aaron Smith, “The gun industry continues to produce assault weapons and high-capacity magazines without additional federal restrictions.” The federal government has no new gun laws enforced, except for the 2019 ban on bump stocks (which speed up the rate of fire) used in the 2017 Las Vegas mass shooting. The Las Vegas shooting was the largest mass shooting committed by an individual in the US, we can’t keep waiting until more records are broken to add more federal regulations. In fact, gun sales are actually on the rise as a response to these mass shootings with the idea that everyone needs physical protection. Conversely, US California Senator, Dianne Feinstein claimed that, “One study published in the American Journal of Public Health found that the odds of an assault victim being shot increased 4.5 times if they carried a gun, and the odds of them being killed increased 4.2 times.” Indicating that those who use guns are more likely to be killed by them.

In order for this heartbreaking pandemic of gun violence to end, the mindset of America must shift and laws beyond the state level need to change.

CREATIVE WRITING SUBMISSION

"Someday"

By IVIE TRAN
9th Grade Student

Outside is cold and bleak. The moon watches the wintery landscape, ghostly white. The cold is biting, like a blanket of mist that never seems to want to lift. A boy stands by the door, a backpack swung over his shoulder. Hesitantly, he walks into the house, watching lights dance around the parlor. A ‘Welcome Home’ mat sits smugly by the doorway. He hears the buzz of soft noise further inside. It’s as if the moment he steps inside the doorway, the whole place glows with life. He waits.

He’s only greeted with a warm puff of air. Laughter follows and the sound awakens the most inner parts of him. He’s home. Instantly, the years of anxiety and dread are shed away, and are replaced with a light feeling of euphoria. He feels as if he is floating.

The air inside the house is festive. In the corner sits a small Christmas tree. The smell of holidays and pine is thick in the air, and he inhales it. Against the wall, the lights shimmer brighter than the stars beaming in the sky at night.

He can smell freshly baked cookies wafting from the kitchen, and his feet tap against the ground. The student sheds his shoes by the door.

He finds the kitchen, only lit up by a few flickering candles. Pumpkin spice drifts through the air, as though the scent has long been forgotten despite the changing season. His report cards, from elementary school to high school orientation are tacked

to the fridge. An embarrassing childhood picture, a polaroid photo of him when he first made the track team in sophomore year. Deep rooted emotions arise as he takes in the room like a museum.

Finally, he allows himself to continue, his own emotions unsure. Picture frames line the hallway behind him, filled with family pictures with his loving family and him smiling. They seem to glow even brighter under the dim light. He passes by them, only pausing occasionally to brush his hand against the extravagant mounts.

He continues out of the kitchen, making his way through the house in search of the noise. He finds the living room. It’s sparsely decorated, but feels warm. A fireplace crackles in the corner, flames licking at the air. It goes out. In the center sits a jumble of photo albums, laying spread out on the coffee table. He faintly recalls the family vacations, experiences that

taste cold and far away. He tells himself that maybe they’ll have another one soon. After this pandemic is over.

The student reaches for a glass fox figurine set in the center as decoration. It’s well sculpted, glinting slightly in the darkness of the house. He feels uneasy if he peers at it for too long. The boy instinctively clutches the photo album closer, admiring the faces of two shadowy figures who hug his younger form. He is loved. On this Christmas Eve, he’ll be surrounded with fleeting memories and embracing family.

But it’s only a lie.

Orange tinged glass shatters on the ground. The sound is deafening, but he barely notices. The shards immediately spread on the ground like a blanket of snow, coating it with their crystalline pieces. Suddenly the walls seem too gray, too confining. Like a jail cell. He stands up and darts out of the room.

The picture frames are glazed and unforgiving. Some, if not most are empty. He can’t bring himself to look properly at their faces. Watching the shadows dance around the corners, he decides that it feels too silent. The boy quickly strides back to the kitchen where he passed previously. He takes a seat on a low stool, staring blankly ahead.

He shouldn’t get greedy, everything is fine as it is.

But it actually isn’t.

Tomorrow, Christmas day will come and he will mechanically move back to the parlor to watch the Christmas tree. There may not be any presents. And it doesn’t matter, because this has all become routine. This house is cold and empty. It has nothing, no memories, no occupants, or any touches of personality. The air of pumpkin spice is almost suffocating.

One day though, he tells himself that he’ll stop chasing after this fleeting feeling of joy and actually hold onto something stable. Like family, like friends, like a house that feels whole. But for now, he sits on his stool. He’ll spend the rest of Christmas Eve silently staring at the bare fridge, devoid of any decorations.

And make a wish for himself to find home. What exactly is home? He doesn’t know. He hopes it’s a place where his illusions don’t have to stay illusions. He thinks about the laughter, and the soothing sound of buzzing in his ears.

Someday.



FLICKR / CAMKNOWS



Kings of Maryland again

Quince Orchard Football Wins 2021 State Championship

By ADAM GOTKIN
Editor-in-Chief

Every season, the Quince Orchard varsity football team has one goal: to win a state championship. After losing in the state semifinals in 2019 and a season canceled in 2020, the fire in head coach John Kelley burned stronger than ever.

In the wake of the COVID-19 Delta variant surge, the preseason started on August 11. A week later on August 18, the team had to shut down due to an outbreak that resulted in 26 cases. The outbreak canceled the team's much-needed scrimmages. By the time things had calmed down and everyone could come back to practice, the team's first game was just a couple of days away. Here is a week-to-week breakdown of the team's season.

Week 1 vs. Whitman (W 58-0)

After the COVID-19 outbreak, the Cougars were lucky to face a lackluster opponent in week one. Their dominating win over the Vikings, who ended the season winless, gave the coaches a chance to see what their team was made of. The offense came into the game with the quarterback battle still ongoing between senior Carter Taggart and junior Savan Briggs. Both quarterbacks impressed, throwing for two touchdown passes each.

Week 2 vs. Paint Branch (W 20-14)

Going into week 2, the main focus would be how the Panthers' 4 star quarterback Octavian Smith would fare against Quince Orchard's star-studded defense. In the shadow of "overrated" chants, Smith impressed, putting the Cougars on upset watch. In the fourth quarter, Paint Branch had a 4th and goal opportunity to tie the game and potentially take the lead. Senior Bryce Barnes made a game-saving tackle at the one-yard line to win the game.

Week 3 @ Walter Johnson (W 63-28)

After a nail-biting victory against Paint Branch, the week 3 game vs. Walter Johnson was looked at as a "prove-it" game. The Wildcats were 2-0 and seen as one of the top teams in the county. Walter Johnson was able to keep things close in the first half, trailing by only six at the break, but in the 2nd half, Quince Orchard dominated, outscoring the opposition 35-7.

Week 4 @ Damascus (W 36-0)

After giving up 42 points in the last two weeks, there were many questions around the Quince Orchard team. The quarterback battle concluded, and Briggs was named the starter. In his first start, Briggs stood out, throwing for 171 yards and a touchdown. But more impressive was the team's defense, which held the Swarming Hornets to no points.

Week 5 vs. Seneca Valley (W 35-0)

In the homecoming game, the Cougars came into stride, winning easily against their rivals, the Seneca Valley Screaming Eagles. The game started a three-game stretch before the Northwest game, in which the Cougars were heavily favored in each game.

Week 8 @ Northwest (W 31-0)

All season long, all anyone was looking forward to was this game. The big rivalry: Quince Orchard vs. Northwest. Going into the game, many picked Northwest to win. The Cougars were struggling and the Jaguars were steamrolling all of their opponents. Though the game didn't go as many were expecting: Quince Orchard dominated from start to end, winning the game 31-0. After the game, senior WR Donovan Brown yelled, "It's QO stop trippin!" The quote went semi-viral and followed the team the remainder of the year.

Week 9 vs. Clarksburg (W 38-6)

A week after the Northwest win, Quince Orchard was able to finish the regular season strong, destroying the Coyotes 38-6. Quince Orchard led

Playoffs state quarterfinals vs. Old Mill (W 41-6)

In a rematch of the 2011 state championship game, the QO defense was able to hold the high-powered Patriots offense, led by star quarterback Myles Fulton, to only six points. The Cougars only had to pass the ball six times all game, yet still amassed 312 total yards.

Playoffs state semifinals vs. Northwest (W 14-13)

After a disappointing showing by the Jaguars in week 8, this playoff rematch lived up to the hype. With a spot in the state title game on the line, the two sides' defenses dominated the game. At the end of the first half, the teams were tied at seven. Quince Orchard took the lead in the 3rd quarter via a rushing touchdown by senior Steven Sannienola. Sam Smith made his extra point and QO went up 14-7. Later in the quarter, Northwest struck right back with a touchdown of their own, but the extra point was blocked, and QO stayed in the lead. Northwest had two more opportunities to win with two field goals, but both missed and the Cougars were able to secure their spot in the state championship game.

State Championship vs. Wise (W 31-13)

The two powerhouses of the MPSSAA (Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association) met once again at Navy Marine Corps Memorial Stadium in Annapolis. Going into the contest, the storyline was that if QO could maintain a low-scoring game, they had a chance to win. But if it got into a shootout, Wise, led by their star QB Jayden Sauray, would run away with the game. What actually happened was the opposite. The Cougars were able to jump out to an early 14-0 lead. By the time the first half ended, Quince Orchard was winning 24-13 and while it was still a two possession game, the Cougars held all the momentum. The QO defense was able to hold Wise scoreless in the second half, while scoring one more touchdown of their own, to win the game 31-13. QO gained 466 yards, the most all season, and held Wise to only 27 yards on the ground on 29 rushing attempts. After the long wait, QO was finally back on top. The scene on the field after the game felt like something out of a movie. Players, coaches, support staff... everyone hugging; some crying tears of happiness. Pure jubilation was the only way to describe it.



Week 6 vs. Richard Montgomery (W 41-3)

Against a struggling RM side, Quince Orchard was able to continue their midseason dominance. Sophomore Isiah Blackman-Boyd ran for three touchdowns, an impressive outing that showed the team's depth at the running back position.

Week 7 @ Gaithersburg (W 51-12)

The week 7 battle vs. the Trojans was a task of mental toughness. The team had to try to focus on their current task instead of looking ahead to the next game against their biggest rivals, Northwest. The Cougars struggled early, trailing 6-0 after the first quarter, but were able to bounce back. The game's biggest highlight was senior Sam Smith's school-record-breaking 48 yard field goal. (Smith is a member of the Prowler staff.)

30-0 at halftime in a game that was moved to a Thursday night due to rain in the forecast.

Playoffs first round vs. Gaithersburg (W 49-6)

In a rematch from week 7, the Cougars were able to rest some key players in a dominating win over the Trojans of Gaithersburg. The QO defense was able to hold Gaithersburg to only 33 yards on the ground.

Playoffs second round vs. Walter Johnson (W 51-7)

After struggling in the regular season vs. WJ, some pondered the chance of an upset in the 2nd round of the playoffs. Quince Orchard was able to squash that talk right away, however, with 35 points in the first quarter alone.

The MLB is in a lockout. What's next?

By JAKE ZAIDERMAN
Senior Staff Writer

The owners of Major League Baseball teams officially locked out the players on December 2, with no end in sight. This is baseball's ninth work stoppage in MLB history, consisting of five player strikes and four management lockouts.

A lockout begins when the collective bargaining agreements (CBA) between the MLB and Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA), the players' union, expire after five years without an agreement for the next CBA. The CBA covers all economic aspects of the MLB.

The main focus of the new CBA from the players' standpoint is money. They want to get paid more

when they're in their prime. As regulated in the last CBA, players were hitting the free-agent market in their late 20's through their early 30's. They also want changes to service time manipulation and tanking. Currently, teams can keep prospects in the minors for the first 16 days of the MLB regular season in order for teams to delay their free agency for one year: this is service time manipulation. The players also want to change the "tanking" issue for rebuilding teams. Tanking is essentially when teams don't make an effort to compete throughout a whole season in order to try to get the number one draft pick for the upcoming draft.

The owners, however, want nothing to change. The owners are

making more money than ever: the MLB made almost \$11 billion before the 2020 COVID-shortened season of 60 games compared to a full 162-game season. However, the "owners ultimately wanted to delay the 2020 season until health officials allowed near to or full capacity stadiums," according to Sportico.com. They also asked "the players again to take a pay cut."

The players, of course, declined the owners' wishes and demanded a full season. CBS Sports says the "owners, however, don't want the players to gain such leverage," which is why they imposed a lockout in December, well ahead of Spring Training, which starts in late February or early March.

As for what's next, as of writing,

we don't really know yet. Both sides—the players' union and the owners—won't meet with each other, with pitchers and catching supposed to be reporting to Spring Training in February.

This isn't the first time players have been dissatisfied with the contract/bargaining results in recent years. According to ESPN baseball reporter Jesse Rogers, the players were "not at all happy with how the 2016 collective bargaining agreement negotiations turned out -- or, they say, how the game has changed since." The players feel like they need to make a stand against the owners in this year's negotiations. They want their ideas to be heard and put into place in the next CBA.



Urban Meyer: The most disastrous NFL head coach

By JAKE REVZAN
Staff Writer

Urban Meyer is without a doubt a legendary college football coach. He won two BCS national championships with the Florida Gators in 2006 and 2008 and once more in 2014 with the Ohio State Buckeyes. He was a master at scouting and recruiting talent, but when Meyer made the decision to leave Ohio State in 2018, his career was destroyed.

The Jacksonville Jaguars made the choice to hire Meyer in the 2021 off-season. Many questioned the General Manager's decision since Meyer has zero NFL experience and has found himself in off-field problems in the past. Distractions can be detrimental to NFL franchises and the Jaguar's aren't exactly a stable organization.

A little over a month into the job, on February 11, Meyer hired Chris Doyle to the coaching staff. His time in Jacksonville lasted just 48 hours because there was so much backlash. Doyle was Iowa's strength and condition coach, and many of his former players described him as a racist bully who abuses his power. Meyer publicly stated that he has been friends with Doyle for 20 years, and one can assume Urban knew about Doyle's racism and bullying, something the should never be tolerated.

Then, in May, Meyer decided to give his former Gator QB Tim Tebow an opportunity to play tight end. This signing demonstrates where Urban's head is at. He values his former

college players over the professional athletes on the Jaguars. Tebow has been out of the league for over six years and should have never been signed.

Flash forward to Week 1, and rumors already began to spread about how Meyer wants to leave the team and take the head coaching position at USC. He was heavily linked with the college, but Meyer denied all rumors.

In Week 2, Meyer said, "Every week is like playing Alabama" after an 0-2 start to the season. This was a major red flag and an obvious indication that Meyer was not ready for the NFL. It is common knowledge that there is a massive skill gap between professional athletes and student-athletes. This was a silly thing for Meyer to say, and he began to lose the respect of many Jaguar fans.

Week 4 is when Meyer really began to fall into hot water. After a close loss to the Bengals, the Jaguars remained winless. Instead of flying back with the team, Meyer selfishly decided to stay in Ohio. This is pretty much unheard of since the team always travels together. A few days after, a video surfaced of Meyer dancing with a young girl at a bar who was certainly not his wife. Meyer quickly became an embarrassment to the organization and a huge liability. The Jaguars' management and GM examined the matter and stated that Meyer needs to earn the team's trust. (Personally, if I were the GM, he would be fired on the spot.)

Then, in December, Meyer benched star running back James Robinson for veteran Carlos Hyde.

This recurring theme of favoring former college players has happened once again. Hyde played under Meyer at Ohio State and barely made the Jaguar's final roster. Robinson did eventually return to the game, but not after a lackluster Carlos Hyde performance. Furthermore, rookie QB Trevor Lawrence had to ask Meyer to put Robinson back into the game. This is something a rookie QB should never have to ask a head coach, and Meyer set him up for failure by benching arguably the Jaguars' best offensive weapon.

And this isn't the first controversy with Meyer's handling of Robinson. The latter, as an undrafted rookie, made history last year by becoming a 1,000 yard rusher. He is great and anybody who plays fantasy football knows it. But that didn't matter to Meyer because he wasted a first-round pick by drafting another high-profile running back (Travis Etienne) instead of a different position of need. Robinson has proven himself as a clear-cut starter for the NFL and is very well respected around the Jaguars fan base. Unfortunately, Etienne sustained a season-ending injury in the pre-season, which gave Robinson a well-deserved starting role.

For unknown reasons, Meyer underutilized Robinson and destroyed his confidence. Robinson's touch count was cut in half compared to last season and bad play-calling led to decreased production. When Meyer was eventually fired, Robinson returned to last season's form and became a solid player once again.

The final nail in the coffin came

when Urban Meyer was exposed for calling the assistant coaches losers and physically and verbally abusing the team's kicker. During team meetings, Meyer would call the coaches losers and demand them to present their credentials and accolades to prove their worthiness. Just like his beloved friend Chris Doyle, Meyer used his power to bully the coaches and assert his dominance. This is no way to speak to anyone, let alone your staff, and Meyer's ego shifted the team's focus away from football and onto himself.

Things got even worse for Urban when the news surfaced that he physically hurt his players. According to former kicker Josh Lambo, in reporting from the *Tampa Bay Times*, Meyer would kick him during warm-ups. Lambo reported the incident to the Jaguars' legal team. Lambo said, "It certainly wasn't as hard as he could've done it, but it certainly wasn't a love tap."

Lambo added that he was in shock and responded by saying, "Don't you ever f---ing kick me again." Meyer responded by saying, "I'm the head ball coach, I'll kick you whenever the f--k I want."

Meyer was fired hours after this story was released.

Urban Meyer finished with a 2-11 record and single-handedly dismantled the Jaguars' locker room. Hopefully, the talented James Robinson and the Jaguars can bounce back from Meyer's childish behaviors and distractions.

QO girls basketball rides wave of confidence

By HAILEY BAKER
Staff Writer

The girls varsity basketball team had a killer start to this season—with a record of 4-1 before winter break. Coach Bobby Bishop held tryouts in early November, and the team has been practicing two hours a day six days a week ever since.

Practice consists of the team doing warm-up drills, going over plays and game strategy, and the players scrimmaging each other. The team usually has two to three games per week.

So far this season, the team has played against Magruder High School (W 65-18), Rockville High School (W 51-43), Richard Montgomery (L 50-46), and Gaithersburg High School (W 62-26). On Monday, the team returned for their first game back in the new year, facing off against Gaithersburg High School for the second time this season, and won 55-21.

On game days, the players arrive an hour before the game starts to spend time as a team and warm up together.

"During practices and games, we are always looking for ways to continue improving while also working hard and demonstrating good sportsmanship," senior Olivia Martin said. "I love being able to spend time with my teammates playing a sport we all love. We are very supportive of one another and

love cheering each other on."

Given the amount of time that the team has spent together, the players have gotten to know each other well, and have become very close.

"Throughout the season you begin to learn more about one another to a point where the team [becomes] your family," senior Kathryn Crane said.

Martin agreed, saying the team is "like a family," that the team has a great dynamic, and that the players are "very supportive of each other and love spending time together."

Many of the players have known each other for years, with Crane saying she has known some of the girls on the team for seven years.

Along with many of the players having known each other since they were little, many players have also known Bishop for just as long; he has a basketball program that prepares girls from a young age to eventually play for Quince Orchard, and many girls that are currently on the team formerly did that program.

Martin, in particular, has known Bishop since she was in elementary school.

"I have known Coach Bishop since the fourth grade," Martin said. "He has been an amazing mentor, coach and family friend. He has always been very supportive of me, helping me to continue pushing myself to become a better player and have faith in my skills. He always teaches the importance of teamwork, sportsmanship and just being the best we can be on and off the court."

Sophomore and JV player Sara Miller has also known Bishop since she was little.

"I have known Coach Bishop for seven years. In those seven years, he has helped me individually with my shooting form, and my overall skill level. He has helped the team work on skills needed for games and plays needed as well," Miller said. "He always wants to make sure we are prepared for the season."

Bishop recognizes how special the bond he has with his players is.

"I think with my program, the girls and I have a good relationship to begin with. A lot of girls have been with me for a while. They started playing when they were young, so we have a good connection there," Bishop said.

Despite many of the players having known each other and Bishop for years, there are some players that have only recently started playing with each other. Still, these players are not treated any differently than the players that have known each other longer.

"I have known some of the girls for 8 years, and others only one. Even though I've only known some of my teammates for only one year, I still feel close with them and consider them family," said Crane.

The team is excited for the rest of their season, and is hoping to beat their rival, Northwest High School, who they will play today, January 14.

"I am looking forward to team events, fun practices and also big wins.

I'm excited to beat our rival, Northwest, while also having fun in the process," Crane said. "The whole team works very well together, and I believe we can go far in playoffs this season."

All of the players have been working extremely hard, with the end goal of making it to the state championship in mind.

"I just want to say to the girls—I really appreciate all of the effort you've been putting in," Bishop said.

For girls interested in trying out for girls basketball in the future, Bishop has some advice.

"Mainly I'd say you need to run. Work on your strength as well, so do something other than run. You need to do push-ups, sit-ups, stuff like that. If you have small weights, do them. As far as basketball goes, you need to get a basketball in your hands. Each day, just take thirty minutes to do some kind of dribbling and shooting," Bishop said. "I look for girls who work hard. If you work hard, you might not be as talented, but I can make you a good basketball player. If you work hard, that's what I want."

Regardless of if you think you're good - I don't care. Come out and try out."

- Coach Bobby Bishop



QO Swim & Dive: Glad to be back after missing season to pandemic

By **SAMMY KRIMSTEIN**
Staff Writer

It's 5 a.m. The sun has yet to rise. Most QO students are comfortably asleep, and won't be up for another hour or so. However, it's in these early morning hours before the crack of dawn, that Quince Orchard swimmers and divers get to work—it's time for swim practice.

In fact, these regular early morning team practices are unique to swim and dive. Waking up that early for swimming may seem intolerable—maybe even impossible. However, swimmer and junior swim co-captain James Kissel finds many ways not only to tolerate, but to enjoy those ever-so-early swim practices.

"What keeps me going is the people—the friends you have on the team, and especially the bagels at the end," he joked.

These friendships on QO Swim and Dive don't just motivate swimmers for early practices, but they are the glue of the team. Many of these friendships go back to when team members were younger, through years of swimming on independent club teams together. Over time, the countless hours spent at practices and meets together have resulted in close bonds.

"We actually knew everybody from the start due to summer

swimming," swimmer and junior co-captain Jacob Girimonte said, "so I have known most of the swimmers for around 10 years."

The friendly environment of QO Swim and Dive has helped to create a strong team chemistry. Of course, strong team chemistry is important in any sport, but as head coach Staci Armezzani noted, it bears a unique significance in the sport of swimming.

"Swimming and diving can be a very individualized sport," she said. "And without a team to back you up, it can be very challenging."

A major challenge for swimmers at QO and across the country was the global pandemic. COVID-19 impacted every sport, but swimming was hit especially hard. Not only was the 2020-2021 swim season completely cancelled for all MCPS schools, but pools were closed for a few months at the beginning of the pandemic. Unable to access local pools as they normally would, swimmers like QO junior co-captain Madison Monkevich had to find other ways to keep improving.

"COVID was really rough on my swimming career personally," she said. "I stayed in shape through doing workouts my coach would send and swimming in family pools as often as I could."

Heading into this 2021-2022 season, QO swimmers were eager to get back to the early morning

practices, competitive meets, and the close friendships that they had missed over the pandemic.

"Everyone's back, and they're so excited," Kissel said. "They don't want to ever take it for granted again."

After three dual-meets (not including a scrimmage against Wootton), the Cougar swimmers currently sit with a record of 1-2. On Saturday, December 11, they opened their season with a dual-meet against divisional opponent Damascus, which they lost 218-149. Damascus won all of the relays, greatly contributing to their victory.

The following weekend, however, Quince Orchard would bounce back in a big way. In another dual-meet, this time against Wheaton, they won by a score of 244-123. QO outscored Wheaton in 19 out of the 24 events held at the meet. Senior Gabby Kitchen, junior Brandon Kim, and sophomores Rachel Katz and Ainsley Taylor all finished first place in two different events.

Following a restful winter break and the end of 2021, the Cougars were back in the pool and ready to go for their third dual-meet against Poolesville. Although the QO Girls team won by 15 points, Poolesville won the total meet by a score of 217-153. QO had first place finishes in the Girls 100-yard freestyle (Ainsley Taylor), the Boys 200-yard Individual Medley (Cole Greenberg), the Girls 50-yard freestyle (Ainsley Taylor), and the Boys Diving Competition (Jordan

Ventura).

With more than half of the season still upcoming, QO Swim & Dive has many hopes and goals for the rest of the year. As a team, they look to finish high in the Division II Standings, as well as compete for a state championship.

The Quince Orchard swimmers also have goals on an individual level. For many, a major objective during the season is to qualify for the Washington Metropolitan Interscholastic Swimming and Diving Championships (Metros). Metros is one of the most important and prestigious swimming events in the area, and hosts the top high school swimmers in Maryland. Before winning her seven Olympic Gold Medals, a high school Katie Ledecy swam for Stone Ridge High School in Metros, breaking several national high school records at the event.

With these goals in mind, and the season in full swing, the members of the team still find ways to cherish and appreciate the friendships they have from Swim & Dive. With his high school swim career winding down, senior co-captain Cole Greenberg looks back at the bonds he made.

"As a senior, the thing I'll miss most is being together and working hard with my teammates and friends," he said. "Splitting ways with some of my closest friends is gonna be a hard thing to do, and I'm glad I'm able to spend my final year of high school doing it with them."

QO Swim & Dive Dual-Meet Results

Date	Opponent	Boys Score	Girls Score	Total Score
12/11/21	Damascus	L 110-72	L 108-77	L 218-149
12/18/21	Wheaton	W 119-64	W 125-59	W 244-123
1/8/21	Poolesville	L 132-53	W 100-85	L 217-153

Dual-Meet Point Value Key

Place/Finish	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Individual Race (points)	6	4	3	2	1	0
Relay Race (points)	8	4	2	X	X	X

All Dual-Meet results and statistics are courtesy of reachforthewall.org.



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