

# THE PROWLER

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## Wes Moore and the Democratic Party win big in Maryland

By HANYA SHAHZAD  
Staff Writer

The midterm elections have just come to an end and the results are out. In Maryland, the Democratic Party sees victory throughout the state. The Democrats remain in control of the Senate. It's too soon to call the House as results are still coming in.

A few states stood out in importance to determining the Senate majority. According to CNN, those battleground states included Georgia, Nevada, Arizona, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. The Washington Post added that five states— Arizona, Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Nevada—all had presidential election-denying candidates who ran in multiple positions throughout the state. According to the Washington Post, election deniers lost in prominent statewide positions throughout these states.

One of the most anticipated elections happened in Georgia, with former NFL athlete Herschel Walker running for Senate against Democrat incumbent Raphael Warnock. Walker faced backlash during his campaign with accusations that he has payed for abortions despite his pro-life stance. He is under intense scrutiny by many, although he has also been boosted by an endorsement from former President Donald Trump. Because neither Walker nor Warnock won over 50% of

the vote, the Georgia Senate race is currently facing a run-off election on December 6, 2022. Vice President Kamala Harris may or may not have to cast a tie breaking vote in the Senate depending on whether the Democratic Party gains Warnock.

Another tumultuous election took place in Pennsylvania with former TV show star Dr. Mehmet Oz running for senate as a Republican candidate against Democrat and Pennsylvania Lieutenant Governor John Fetterman. According to the Washington Post, Dr. Oz is infamous for his controversial medical advice. Despite suffering a stroke in the middle of his campaign, Fetterman won his race with 51% of the vote to Oz's 46%. Many GOP members are blaming Trump for backing Oz amid his loss.

According to a Washington Post poll, some of the most important issues this election were the economy, abortion, and inflation. Social studies teacher Karen Jones says one thing she was concerned about while voting was the "erosion of rights like abortion" and "threats to our democracy."

Although Maryland's races may not have been closely watched on a national scale, there was important potential legislation on the

ballot. On Maryland's ballot this year stood the question of whether the state should legalize cannabis, also known as marijuana. Voters decided to make it legal for recreational use for those 21 and older under certain conditions, starting in July 2023.

Governor Larry Hogan will soon leave office and Maryland's new governor will be author, combat veteran, small business owner, and former CEO Wes Moore, a Democrat who ran against Republican Dan Cox, a former state delegate, small businessman, and constitutional attorney. Moore will be the first Black governor of Maryland. Aruna Miller will be the first Asian American lieutenant governor in Maryland. Senior Sue Wari is one student who has felt the positive impact of those milestones. "Representation means a lot, especially in the government [and] especially when you're trying to get a hold of people and their beliefs," she said.

Jones added that Moore has been "a voice for people who have been marginalized."

Before running for governor, Moore served in the Army and as a White House fellow. A few of Moore's goals, according to Maryland Matters, are to implement

affordable healthcare, promote STEM education, and prevent possession of illegal guns.

Senior Caitlyn Burns said she hopes our government will work to prioritize the "safety and rights of women." She adds equal pay initiatives have "gotten a lot better, but there is still room to improve."

Maryland's US Senate race results are in with a win for incumbent Chris Van Hollen, who ran against Republican Chris Chaffee.

The attorney general race was also notable in Maryland with Democrat Anthony Brown winning against Republican Michael Peroutka. Brown is the first Black attorney general in Maryland.

Brown served in the House of Delegates, Congress, and as a lieutenant governor. According to the Washington Post, Brown wants to focus on tackling violent crime and implementing gun control.

Students and faculty reflected on these results.

Wari thinks that Maryland is headed in the right direction amid a "huge polarization trend" throughout the country.

Burns says the election results "reflect how people are feeling after the overturn of Roe vs. Wade."

Jones says it's important to see politicians "reflect the changing demographics of Maryland," as Maryland is becoming more diverse.



## King Charles III: A potential change to the monarchy's role

By ISADORA KAUFMAN  
Staff Writer

The death of Queen Elizabeth II was not only the death of the longest reigning monarch of the United Kingdom, but the death of a major symbol of British tradition and convention.

While Queen Elizabeth II had many accomplishments, one of the things she was most known for was her respect and adherence to her role as head of state.

Often referred to as "Elizabeth the Silent", the Queen was admired for her consistency in staying neutral on political matters. According to The Independent, a British newspaper, "Her Majesty keeps her politics hidden from the public eye at all times. Always neutral, never biased, Elizabeth II has never given a press interview and does not vote in the general election."

According to the British Library, the United Kingdom's national library, the United Kingdom has an unwritten constitution. This means that the United Kingdom's monarchy and government follow the principles established by tradition, convention, and statutes, rather than the words in one written document.

In past years, the role of the United Kingdom's monarch has been reduced to the entirely ceremonial role of head of state, which is solely symbolic in its nature, and has no real influence on the government. As head of state,

Queen Elizabeth II was expected to be a symbol of British tradition, while never expressing her political views.

Since the 19th century, this change in role has been occurring due to the gradually growing pressure from the public for the powers of the monarchy to be given to the Parliament. While this pressure isn't legally binding under any constitution, it is highly unlikely that the monarch would rebel against these expectations because the people would heavily disparage them for doing so.

As Americans, this concept can be hard to grasp: Queen Elizabeth was basically a kid in a candy store, Hershey Kisses and the power to declare war readily available to her, and the only thing really stopping her from taking a bite of those Twizzlers or dissolving parliament entirely, among other powers, were the principles established in past acts, conventions, and the expectations of her people.

With her death, Queen Elizabeth has left this entirely ceremonial role to her son, the now King Charles III. Currently, all the powers of the Monarch are exercised by the Parliament and Prime Minister due to Royal Prerogative and their unwritten constitution. The monarch still must sign off on bills. However, this is simply a formality: the monarch is expected to sign off on all bills given to them regardless of personal opinion.

The people of the United Kingdom and parliament were rarely concerned that Queen Elizabeth would challenge the expectations regarding her role as monarch, but King Charles's past

actions have raised concerns that he will decide to exercise the powers as monarch and express his political views.

Throughout his life, King Charles has been anything but shy when expressing his views regarding the environment and climate change. He has dedicated considerable time giving speeches advocating to fight climate change and financially backed "sustainability initiatives," according to TIME.

While unwritten, the head of state and the head of government (the prime minister) are separate roles and are only expected to interact with one another on a formal basis. TIME predicts that Charles's constant support for environmental protection initiatives could cause conflict between him and the prime minister.

For instance, according to TIME, "In 2015, it was revealed that Charles received confidential papers on the inner workings of the British government that even elected ministers had not seen, prompting a senior Member of Parliament to call him Britain's 'best informed lobbyist.'" While Charles wasn't King during the time of this incident, as a member of the royal family, he is expected to stay out of the British government entirely. Politico predicts that, If Charles continues his activist work, he may stand to forfeit not only approval among the American public — already dented by memory of his 90s affair — but also American interest in the British monarchy as a whole."

The King of the United

Kingdom is also expected to reflect good morals and behavior, as the main symbol of the country. King Charles may have trouble inspiring the people and gaining a sense of his trust in his intentions, due to his adulterous relations with his now-wife while married to Princess Diana.

Although Charles's past actions may signify that he will express his political views as King and attempt to involve himself in the government, thus defying the norms, the fact that Charles is now King is likely to change his behavior. The expectation to stay neutral and detached from the government is much higher for the King, than it is for other members of the royal family. TIME explains how the "scrutiny of Charles will only heighten."

King Charles, officially crowned May of 2023, is only two months into his reign, so only time will tell if he creates a good image for the United Kingdom by adhering to the expectations of being head of state or if he challenges this tradition. If you were the monarch of a nation, would you succumb to the pressure of being uninvolved in government or succumb to the desire of power?



<p><b>News</b></p> <p>Insight on the recent antiracist audit released by MCPS <b>PAGE 4</b></p>	<p><b>STOCKVAULT</b></p>	<p><b>Features</b></p> <p>Hear what QO students think of Taylor Swift's newest album <b>PAGE 9</b></p>	<p><b>Midnights</b></p> <p>TAYLOR SWIFT</p>	<p><b>Sports</b></p> <p>Q &amp; A with QO QB Savan Briggs <b>PAGE 12</b></p>	
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# Recap on MoCo state's attorney assembly

## Presenting the warnings, statistics and impacts of gun violence

By **MOTAZ DEIFY**  
Staff Writer

Gun violence: Related to the abuse of a firearm—where one or a group of people are killed; specifically in terms of groups. According to a quoted Gun Violence Archive statistic on the MCPS website, “the number of teenagers killed or injured by guns has nearly doubled since 2014.” Devastating occurrences such as the deadly shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, and the recent tragedy at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, have been among the events of gun violence that have caused this increase, along with other unfortunate occurrences.

“Kids are scared to go to school,” says freshman Aliyah Beard, adding, “they could get shot or be in danger.”

Across Montgomery County Public Schools, the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office and the Montgomery County Police Department worked together to educate high school students about gun violence and safety throughout this fall.

On October 21, Assistant State Attorney John Lalos and Director of Public Affairs Lauren DeMarco made their way to Quince Orchard High

School to present a schoolwide assembly on gun violence in order to “work together to keep schools safe and gun free,” explained DeMarco. Furthermore, they wanted to empower advocacy against guns in schools and acknowledge the law and consequences.

In the period 8 assembly, DeMarco and Lalos first presented a video to students regarding teenagers killed by guns with the point to “set the tone,” said DeMarco, and to emphasize the reason they were at school talking about gun violence. In the video, survivors and family members of victims were identified—some were paralyzed, mentally and emotionally traumatized; the video explicitly calls for action by “disarm[ing] hate.”

DeMarco also introduces a strategy called “See something, say something,” a slogan that was first initiated shortly after the attacks of September 11, 2001. DeMarco highly advised students to “say something about [a situation],” she said, “Don't just stand by.”

Eventually, Lalos underlines the importance of the slogan; otherwise there will be “consequences if you don't say something,” he added.

Lalos claims the purpose of guns are “not toys, or a phone, or a piece of jewelry,” he stated. “Guns are for

killing; that's all they're for.”

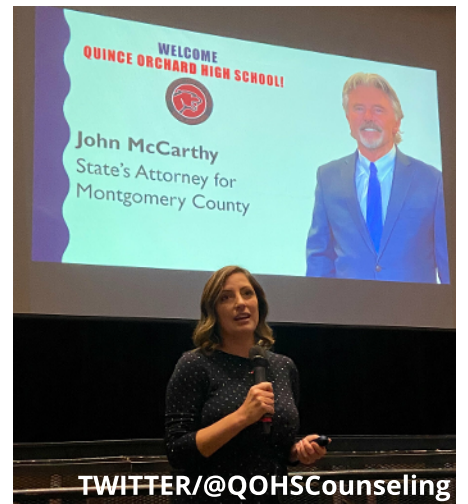
Lalos brought particular attention to ghost guns, weapons that are very untraceable by design, lack identification, and are bought separately to be assembled together. Between 2019 and 2022, the number of guns that were brought to school significantly increased. Most guns that were brought to school the past three years happened to be ghost guns. According to a quoted statement of the Maryland State Police Website, it states a recent enforced restriction of ghost guns that those who possesses a “non-serialized firearm...will be required to have the non-serialized firearm marked with a personal identification number...before a person can sell, offer to sell, or transfer a firearm.” This restriction was put into effect this past June.

The state of Maryland has certain restrictions on buying and possessing a gun, including restrictions for people with criminal records. Acquiring a gun requires a safety course in order to legally obtain one (as a twenty-one year old). Attempts to obtain a gun as an individual under twenty-one is illegal. Lalos mentioned students who are at least sixteen years of age (typically high school students) will be “charged as an adult if they are in possession of a handgun.”

There are many signs that can

lead up to a gun violence threat: therefore, it's important to know those signs. DeMarco explained that such signs of someone at risk of committing gun violence could be “suddenly withdrawing from friends, family and activities, bullying—either bullying or being bullied,” and the person experiencing “chronic loneliness.” Chronic loneliness occurs when feelings of loneliness and social isolation go on for a long period of time.

As many students agreed, Beard viewed the MCPS gun violence assembly as helpful, “I'm informed about gun safety and I think it's important in today's events,” she added.



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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.

# Renowned fake German heiress, Anna Sorokin recently released from jail

By **PATRINA PUN**  
Staff Writer

Netflix sensation *Inventing Anna*, based on a true story, has captured the views of a variety of watchers, especially



true-crime lovers. Case in point: the Netflix adaptation was released in February and was streamed for 196 million hours between the 14th and 20th.

In case you haven't watched the show, the Netflix series highlights the life of fraudster and con artist Anna Sorokin, otherwise known as Anna Delvey. According to *People Magazine*, she was born on January 23, 1991, in Moscow, Russia. Growing up in a normal middle-class family, at the ripe age of 19,

Sorokin moved to Germany to pursue a fashion degree, where she claimed the fictitious name Anna Delvey. In 2013, she was invited to attend Fashion Week in New York on behalf of *Purple Magazine* where she then began her

ultimate scamming escapade. She created an Anna Delvey foundation and a private club to further advance her image. Sorokin even posed as a wealthy German heiress and stole \$275,000 by scamming countless people, hotels, and banks. According to the *New York Times*, it wasn't until May 2019 that she was found guilty of eight charges including grand larceny and theft of services. As a result, Sorokin was sentenced to serve four to twelve years in May of 2019 and was also required to pay hefty fines.

However, as of October fifth of this year, the once-fictitious German heiress was finally released from jail.

According to

*Town and Country* magazine, Sorokin was released from prison on February 11th, 2021, after serving four years due to good behavior. Yet, within a month, Sorokin was taken back into custody by Immigration and Customs Enforcement for overstaying her visa. Up until October 2022, she resided in Orange County Jail until her case was ready to be heard.

While this entire situation played out, Sorokin gained a considerable amount of media attention and a large sum of money from the Netflix adaptation. *People Magazine* highlighted that Sorokin harbored conflicting thoughts about the Netflix adaptation as she felt curious yet dreadful about how the media portrayed her. Although, according to *Today News*, Sorokin claims that “she's changed” for the better after

a time of deep reflection in prison as the exposure to a variety of people and crimes in prison had made her own problems seem insignificant. Yet, regardless of the claims being made, Netflix paid Sorokin \$320,000 for the rights to adapt her life story. She then proceeded to use more than half of the money to pay restitution to the bank and a small sum to settle state fines.

Additionally, according to *Women's Health*, when Sorokin was released from jail with an exception of a \$10,000 bail: she was also required to remain under the tight supervision of ICE, but she had the ability to fight her deportation free from physical custody. Sorokin now remains in New York in a confined household 24 hours a day and has also been banned from using any type of social media platform.



NY TIMES.COM/ TIMOTHY A. CLARY



## VIEWPOINT

# The ugly reality of fast fashion

## *A closer look into the unethical and immoral practices of the fast fashion powerhouse Shein*

By *MLA KAUFFMAN*  
Editor-in-Chief

Famous for its low prices and “trendy” clothing, Shein has made itself a household name, making its way into the hearts of teenagers worldwide by imitating current trends and selling their re-creation at much lower prices. What’s not to love about the ability to buy a top for as cheap as \$3? Instead of paying \$45 for a corset top on Princess Polly, you can shop at Shein, where the same style is being sold at a significantly lower price.

It’s clear what they’re doing is working in their favor. According to Business Insider, in 2020 Shein “pulled in an estimated 10 billion” dollars, which represented a “250% year-on-year increase in revenue.”

This fast-fashion powerhouse seems like the perfect deal: it’s an easy place to get the most “bang for your buck” and follow current fashion trends. However, only looking at the inexpensive and trendiness side of Shein means that

you are only looking at the glorified version of Shein, neglecting to look at the full picture. In reality, Shein is anything but great, and the controversies are pretty horrific.

As stated by the New York Times, Shein has been accused “of working with suppliers that violate labor laws, and failing to make necessary disclosures about factory conditions.”

A recent Cut Magazine article took a deeper dive into Shein’s unethical practices. They found that “workers in both factories work up to 18-hour days.” Forget about weekends, as workers are only “given one day off a month.” In some Shein factories, workers earn a base salary of \$4,000 yuan per month—which translates to approximately \$556 US dollars—to make “500 pieces of clothing per day.” In other factories, workers “received the equivalent of four cents per item.” The average minimum wage in the US is \$7.25 per hour. Assuming a 40 hour work week, a worker in the US will be making a minimum of \$1,160 a

month, already doubling the salary of the typical Shein factory worker.

With low prices, it’s unsurprising that the quality of Shein’s clothing is also pretty poor. Clothing is made with synthetic materials such as polyester and nylon and, according to an medium.com article written by Jerran Gan (freelance copywriter), “unlike their short lifespan in our closets, clothing made from these materials do not decay.” This results in our Shein purchases spending more time in a landfill than our own closets. Shein releases new styles almost daily; as Gan continues that “their own CMO Molly Miao has revealed that the company drops ‘700-1,000 new styles daily.’” Alongside their “ultra-low prices” Shein holds dominance in the fast fashion industry, luring in consumers to buy more and more but consequently “worsening the issue of a global rise in textile waste.”

It’s clear that Shein is extremely problematic, and the public isn’t unaware of these concerns. There have been many occasions where

questions surrounding the unethical practices have made their way onto the front pages of highly accredited news sources. Plus, a simple search on any social media or news platform will help you find hundreds, if not thousands, of posts about these controversies.

So the question is why? Why do people continue to shop from Shein when they know all of the bad things the company does? Because it’s easy to turn a blind eye to one side when there is so much to benefit on the other. When you see five-, four-, or three-dollar “trendy” clothing, it’s hard to pass up the opportunity. I’m even guilty of having shopped at Shein before. But for people who are fortunate enough to avoid this company, we have to stop. Stop supporting a company that ignores the rights of their employees. Stop supporting a company that cares more about money than the state of our environment. Most importantly, we need to stop supporting a company that prioritizes profit over basic morals and human rights.

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# Antiracist audit delivers impactful message about combating racism in MCPS

By HAILEY BAKER  
Senior Staff Writer

In October, Montgomery County Public Schools released the Antiracist Audit report, detailing a district-wide review of practices and policies in place to combat racism. Last spring, MCPS conducted a survey through the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, and gathered students, staff, and family members' input. They received responses from over 130,000 people. The Antiracist Audit report shared the results and the next steps the county will take to create a more antiracist school district.

According to the report, "Students, families, and staff of color reported having a less satisfactory experience with MCPS than other members of the community." The Antiracist System Audit also revealed that "the implementation of policies and application of best practices differs greatly from school to school," suggesting that the system is currently fragmented.

One main finding addressed in the report is that while schools throughout the county have the same goal of being antiracist, there is a lack of a central definition for the terms "racism" and "antiracism." Through

the report, MCPS released a definition for both. They defined racism as "The systemic oppression of a racial group to the social, economic, and political advantage of another. Racism plays out on multiple levels: internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural." However, antiracism is "actively working to ensure racial justice by identifying, interrupting, and dismantling racist practices, policies, and attitudes that disproportionately harm communities of others."

With a central definition for both of these terms, schools are working towards the common goal of being antiracist. In a letter sent out to the MCPS community in the beginning of October, Superintendent Monifa McKnight explained that her last three quarterly meetings with principals and district leaders were focused on developing their skills to be antiracist leaders.

Two teams were developed to bring MCPS closer to their goal of being antiracist—the Antiracist System Audit Steering Committee and the Antiracist Districtwide Implementation Team. The Antiracist System Audit Steering Committee consists of students, staff, families, and community partners to give feedback throughout the stages of the

Antiracist System Audit and hold MCPS leaders accountable to their word. The Antiracist Districtwide Implementation Team was created to increase the number of people in MCPS who are experienced in supporting action on creating a more antiracist school district through training, facilitating, and coaching. All areas of the county are represented in the team.

MCPS will present a comprehensive action plan in March to address the audit findings and recommendations. They will partner with community members, students, and staff to organize conversations about the audit findings and their recommendations for the plan.

At Quince Orchard, administrators will meet frequently to discuss antiracism efforts at QO. Principal Beth Thomas has a common goal of restorative justice, which entails managing relationships, communication, collaboration, conflict resolution, and community building. A video detailing QOHS Restorative Justice was sent out via Canvas, along with a survey asking for feedback. They also sent out the QOHS Student Voice Survey on October 28, with the purpose of ensuring all students feel connected.

Thomas has worked with other

principals in the county to keep plans as transparent as possible, and she has high hopes for QO and its community members. "I think Quince Orchard is very well ahead," she said. "Gaithersburg is one of the most diverse cities in the nation, so we have to do things a little bit differently here."

**"Gaithersburg is one of the most diverse cities in the nation, so we have to do things a little bit differently here."**

*- Beth Thomas*

KEEPING UP WITH THE

# KOUGARS

By MIA KAUFFMAN  
Editor-in-Chief

Welcome, Cougars! Featured here is our new column highlighting important events and sharing the inside scoop of the QO community, so that you can Keep Up With the Kougars!

## Upcoming Seal of Bilingual Test:

Are you a junior or senior? Do you speak another language? Did you earn a 4 or 5 on an AP World Language assessment other than English? Will you complete all of your English requirements by graduation? Well, if all of the above apply to you, then you should be signing up for the Maryland Seal of Bilingual Test. Earning the Seal of Bilingual is a fabulous addition to any resume as it indicates to colleges, university admissions, and future employers that you are bilingual and biliterate and bring a sense of cultural awareness. The test will be held on Tuesday, December 6 from 7:45 AM - 12:30 PM. Seniors may take the test for free, while juniors must pay a fee of \$21. You can register for this test through the following link: <https://bit.ly/SealRegisterMCPS23>. If you have any questions, email Mr. Joe Lynch, the World Languages Resource Teacher, at [joseph\\_p\\_lynch@mcpsmd.org](mailto:joseph_p_lynch@mcpsmd.org).

## Juntos prepares to take the stage:

This Monday, November 21,

QOHS's competitive Latin Dance team, JUNTOS, will take the stage in their annual Latin dance competition. JUNTOS, which stands for "Just Unite Now That's Our Solution," has been a powerful force in the Latin dance scene since its establishment. In their last competition back in 2019, Juntos won "Best in Show" for the Senior Division and came in first for the Salsa competition. However, last year, JUNTOS decided to pull out of this competition due to a perceived lack of fairness by the organizers of the competition, the Hispanic Heritage Fund. JUNTOS dancer and senior Julie Vanegas says she is "excited to be back in the competition world" and is looking forward to "feeling the adrenaline rush from performing and showcasing off the team's talents." The competition is held at Strathmore Performing Arts Center from 6:30 - 9 PM. Make sure to come support Juntos!



INSTAGRAM/@QOJUNTOS

## QO Marching Band ends their season on a high note:

On November 6, QO's very own Marching Band (QOMB) made history, taking home first place in Class 1A of Maryland's State MB

Championships. Alongside their first place victory, QOMB received awards for "Best Overall Effect" and "Best Music Performance."

"So much hard work and heart has gone into 2022's show," the group stated in a congratulatory post on their Instagram, @qombmarchingcougars. "It is truly incredible to end the comp [competition] season on such a positive note and reflect on all [of the] amazing things that came with being a part of this program."



INSTAGRAM/@QOMBARCHINGCOUGARS

Section leader and five-year-member (QOMB allows eighth-graders to participate) Claire Palmer "couldn't believe it" as the band achieved a remarkable "87.4 out of 100 points." Palmer adds that she is very "proud of how far everyone has come this year" and while she will miss the program, she is "happy to finish her experience with a win."

## This month's student highlight:

Running a business is a challenging task as is, but when you throw in being a high school student at the same time—with a million extracurriculars, and endless amounts

of school work—it becomes an even more taxing task. However, for senior Brennan Smith, entrepreneurship comes naturally. During the summer of 2020, Smith "wanted to find a way to remain safe but also make money." He teamed up with fellow QO senior Natalie Hunt, and with the use of their Cricut and home printers, "CustomandCompany" was born. CustomandCompany is a boutique sticker business that sells sticker packs on Etsy. Smith creates different sticker designs on his iPad, and then "uses 'Cricut' software to arrange sticker packs," he says, so that he can cut them out using the Cricut. All of these sticker packs are listed on Etsy where anyone can purchase them. Running this business has been an invaluable experience for Smith: he says he has learned the importance of "responsibility and leadership," having to teach himself "how to manage finances, ordering inventory, marketing, and shipping." Smith has had to understand "how to balance this quickly-growing business along with the rigorous high school classes I was taking." Moving forward, Smith says he plans to take on "more of a behind-the-scenes role" as he moves into college.

If you would like to be featured in our next issue of Keeping Up with the Kougars, please reach out to us through our Twitter or Instagram at @qohs\_prowler, or through email at [QOHSproowler@gmail.com](mailto:QOHSproowler@gmail.com).

## VIEWPOINT

## Pressure and Perfection

By MAMS JAGHA  
Staff Writer

You studied for two weeks, went in for lunch more times than you could count, made a Quizlet with friends, and even went to the local Starbucks to get into that “Rory Gilmore study aesthetic.” The day of the quiz you walked out feeling fine, knowing every topic presented, and having a great rest of your day.... Only to get a 60%.

Cleveland Clinic defines Atychiphobia, as an intense fear of failure. As the school year progresses, so does most students’ Atychiphobia. For modern-day society has programmed us to see our achievements as our purpose.

When we do not excel or meet our

purpose, we attach that to our self-worth. We start to think that the more our grades drop, the less we will be able to do further in school and maybe in life.

“Your grades don’t define who you are,” but junior Gabrielle Hardy can’t help but feel that they do, “Currently, all I do is go to school and play volleyball, so if I don’t excel at those then it does feel like a bad reflection of my character” Hardy reveals, “There’s a TikTok sound that’s currently trending from this A24 Movie Pearl, and she’s sobbing and keeps screaming “I’m a star” because she didn’t get a role in a play, and that reminds me of freshman year when everyone was struggling with APUSH. My mom suggested that I don’t take any others APs like everyone else and

I started crying because I felt I wasn’t as smart.” It’s human nature to try and be perfect, or better than the people around us, and that desire, that want to be

perfect, makes us set goals for ourselves and obsess over those goals until it we reach them while draining ourselves mentally, physically, and emotionally.

Although “Mirrorball” by Taylor Swift is a metaphor for fame and how people feel like they have to be different versions of themselves around different people, there’s a line in the song about that same desire that stuck out to me. Swift states, “I’ve never been a natural; all I do is try, try, try.”

Mediocrity is so looked down upon that as we start to feel like we’re “failing,” or not doing our best; we have certain character flaws that we have to fix to be “better.” Maybe that’s by studying or asking for help. But for some, flaws are something we can’t fix, so we accept them and don’t try to do better.

I would argue that pressure to do well at school is also a factor in the increase of stress, poor performance, and poor mental health seen in students. “I definitely do feel pressured to do well at school because I feel that getting into colleges now is so much more competitive than it used to be, and even if you have perfect grades and a lot of



PUBLICDOMAINPICTURES.NET

extracurriculars, you still might not get into your dream school” junior Arianna Lapcevic explained.

Students aren’t lazy; they’re scared, they’re tired, and they’re exhausted. The education system lacks a community and resources that help students understand that self-worth should not be grounded in levels of success.

Though we do have counselors and people around us that we can talk to, we need more voices to speak on how emotionally exhausting it is for children to hold this much fear and pressure for our “futures to be bright.”

For now, the most advice I can give as a student myself is to let go of any conflicts that are draining (which could mean toxic friends or unnecessary drama), moderate and regulate activities that control your mental and emotional health and focus on beautiful aspects of what you’re able to do.

Your grades do not define who you are or what you can and will do.



RAWPIXEL.COM

## QO Theatre reflects on successful fall play

By SOPHIE FAWKNER  
Staff Writer

It is now time for an exciting part of the year here at Quince Orchard High School. Quince Orchard’s very own theatre department put on a performance in regards to *The Plot, Like Gravy, Thickens* by Billy St. John. All students were very excited to attend the performance on both November 5th and 12th, but have we ever thought about what the cast and crew experienced while preparing for the play?

Senior Giorgia Dallasta, who is the student director for “Gravy,” says that being able to take part in the happening process of the play truly excites her.” Dallasta said, “The rehearsal process was definitely very fun.” “Everyone who is part of it are all friends, too.”

With this being said, it is clear that not only is the process of the play for the cast and crew, but the ability to hang out with friends while working is a huge bonus.

Even with such a diverse group of students working together, Dallasta notes that each person that she works with is excellent at their theatre experiences, making the job much more enjoyable for her. “They’re all talented and funny people who know what they’re doing. This is one of the most enjoyable rehearsal processes I’ve gone through yet,” Dallasta said.

Jack Campbell, who is a senior

stage manager, also claims to love his job as well. “I really enjoy teaching all of the new people how to build the sets and seeing their skills grow and develop,” Campbell said.

With so much hard work and dedication put into the play and stage-making process, it is critical to note who you surround yourself with. Luckily, Campbell says he feels surrounded by people who can help him to create the best possible set the whole Quince Orchard Community can see.

“It is so fun to work with everyone, and the people are always such a pleasure to work with,” Campbell said, “which can explain why my favorite part of creating the play is being able to work with those certain people to make progress on our sets.”

Junior Jordan Richard, who is a cast member and a standby for Edward, Walter, and the Lieutenant, claims to love the play due to its thrilling drama and mystery. “I would say that the play has lots of thrilling parts which helps to engage the viewers, and I really enjoy the numerous mysteries that create



INSTAGRAM @QOHSTHEATRE

The main cast of QO Theatre’s production of “The Plot, Like Gravy, Thickens” poses together.

suspense throughout,” Richard said.

Richard emphasizes that “Gravy” is very impressive and is the most entertaining play he has been in. “It is kind of like looking at a trophy, in the fact that people are impressed by things that go very well,” Richard claims.

Overall, even though “Gravy” is over, the next production scheduled

for QO Theatre is “Anastasia,” in which both the vocal and monologue auditions are on November 28th and 29th. As for the dancing auditions, they are on November 30th, with the invitational callbacks being on December 2nd. So, it is safe to say that QO Theatre has a lot of exciting things ahead of them!

# thanksgiving traditions for all!

by kate belman, sophie fawkner, & hayley asai

Year after year, families come together around the third Thursday in November to celebrate Thanksgiving, a holiday that began all the way back in 1621, when the first British colonists and the Native American Wampanoag tribe shared a feast, which is acknowledged today as the first Thanksgiving feast. In 1789, President George Washington made Thanksgiving a national holiday.



Norman Rockwell

Eventually, in 1863, President Abraham Lincoln encouraged the American [people] to recognize the last Thursday of November as "a day of Thanksgiving." Seven years later, Congress passed legislation to make Thanksgiving a national

**"[Thanksgiving is] a time to get with family and friends to showcase any unspoken gratitude."**

**Sophomore Linda Salcewicz-Gomez**

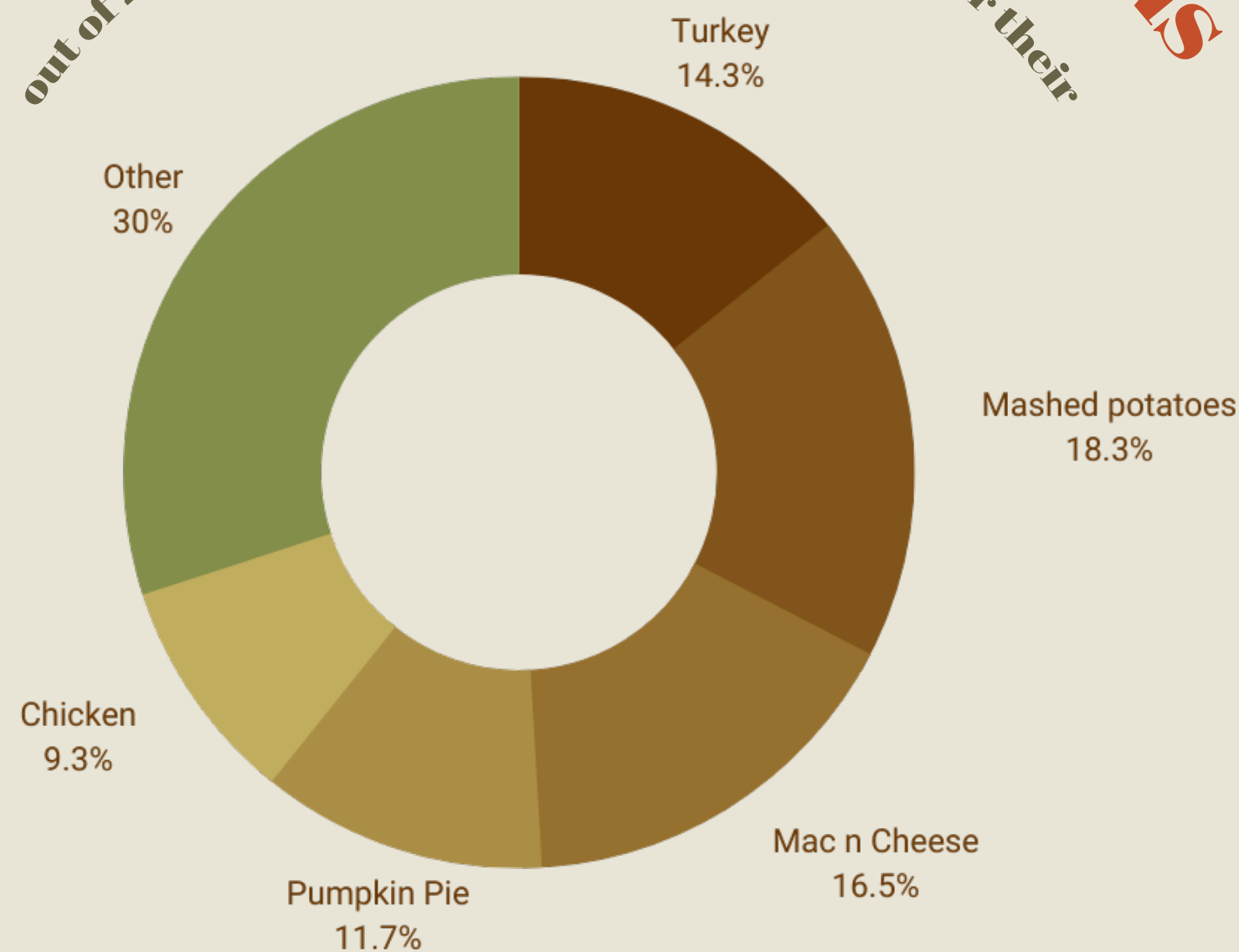
holiday.

Ever since, Americans have taken a special liking to the holiday, forming traditions and making

characters, celebrities, holiday treats, and more.

This year, performances will take place by Big Time Rush, Fitz and the Tantrums, Jordin Sparks,

**favorite thanksgiving foods**  
out of 210 students, here were their responses for their favorite thanksgiving foods



memories on the day. In 1924, the Macy's Department Store started an annual parade that airs on television each year on Thanksgiving morning. Millions of people travel to New York City each year and line the streets of the city to watch the parade. While watching the parade either in person or on TV, viewers can see enormous inflatables of their favorite animated TV and movie

and more. You can also see over 30 colorful floats of different TV shows and movies with characters in costume to match.

The Thanksgiving meal is very well known throughout the country. Typically consisting of a roasted turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, casseroles, macaroni and cheese,



### Tastes Better From Scratch (Lauren Allen)

and bread rolls. Desserts can include many different pies, but most commonly pumpkin pie.

Around Thanksgiving, many people take the time off from work or school to reflect on the last year with the new year coming around the corner. "Originally, [it was] celebrated as a day to give

**"[Being grateful is] to appreciate something that you have because you know you'd miss it if you didn't have it."**

**Junior Michael Taliano**

thanks for the previous year's harvest. [Now,] Thanksgiving has evolved into a holiday for gathering together and expressing gratitude for our blessings." (Sixty+Me)



# "Monster," the fascination behind true crime, and other eerie stories

By **FIONA FEINGOLD** and  
**MADISON SHERMAN**  
*Editors-in-chief*

As soon as "Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story" came out on Netflix in September, murder sprung up on people's minds — well, not in that way! Following in the footsteps of true crime staples like "Serial" and "Conversations with a Killer: The Ted Bundy Tapes," "Monster" has accumulated millions of viewing hours since its release. The craze and excitement over true crime has blown up over the last few years and here's why.

True crime satisfies our most morbid curiosities, allowing fans of the genre to safely engage with their worst fears. Documentaries, podcasts, and movies are all ways to explore darkness from a distance. Many viewers believe that an increased awareness of the circumstances surrounding grisly incidents will prevent them from experiencing the same fate.

In an [NBC interview](#), psychotherapist Kathleen Check explained how true crime often provides listeners with a false sense of security. "Tuning in and following the specifics of a crime also creates a [false] sense [of] being able to 'see inside' the mind of a criminal, thus creating a psychological protective barrier: 'If I know how criminals operate, I can protect myself,'" Clark said.

Groups more likely to be victimized — particularly women — are more likely to engage with true crime media for this reason. According to a [2018 study](#) published in Taylor & Francis, women make up approximately 73% of true crime podcast listeners. Conversely, from 1985 to 2010, 70% of serial killers' victims were women.

True crime's increasing popularity may also be related to our removal

from the "Golden Age of Serial Killers," which took place from the 1970s to the 1990s. [A study](#) from Radford University and Florida Gulf Coast University discovered that approximately 2,741 serial killers were active throughout this period. This number hit a peak in 1987, with a total of 317 active serial killers in the U.S.

One such killer active during the "Golden Age" was Jeffrey Dahmer, the title character in Netflix's original series "Monster." From 1978 to 1991, Dahmer brutally killed 17 young men aged 14 to 33. He preserved their body parts and even ate some of his victims. Unlike most serial killers, who typically feel detached from their chosen targets, Dahmer developed extreme attachments to each. Dahmer is quoted as saying that he "had these obsessive desires and thoughts wanting to control [victims], to...possess [victims] permanently."

Netflix has come under fire for the show, which has primarily received mixed and negative reviews. Family members of Dahmer's victims (including individuals depicted in "Monster" as characters) have spoken against the series and Netflix for not consulting them beforehand.

Along with Dahmer, these are other true crime stories that have intrigued people over the years.

## "Zodiac" killer

From 1968-1969, the so-called "Zodiac" killer was far from quiet about his crimes, terrorizing San Francisco with his murder spree and taunting the police with his famous coded letters. The mysterious killer got his start when Betty Lou Jensen, 16, and David Arthur Faraday, 17, were found lying outside of their shot-up car. Strangely enough, half a year later, another couple was parked four miles away from the crime scene, and they were also gunned down. The survivor of the incident, Michael Mageau, described the killer as a "heavyset white man around 5'8," according to [policel.com](#). The Zodiac Killer took it upon himself to report the evidence, saying:

"I wish to report a double murder. If you go one mile east in Columbus Parkway to a public park, you will find the kids in a brown car. They have been shot with a nine-millimeter Luger. I also killed those kids last year. Good-bye."

A month later, newspapers received the Zodiac Killer's first letter, which described his murders in mysterious ciphers that formed a code. Police have never found him.

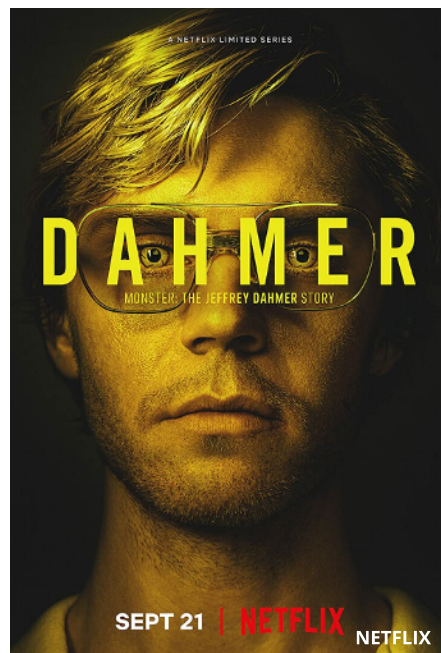
## "Cape Intruder"

Another creepy unsolved case occurred in 2005, in the town of Cape Elizabeth, Maine, by the "Cape Intruder." During the night, the intruder would sneak into the houses of victims who

left their doors unlocked at night, and would be caught staring when victims woke up. No victim has ever been harmed and nothing was ever stolen. Before victims could react, the "Cape Intruder" would flee, leaving the house as it was before he entered. After several more intrusions, the intruder stopped and police were never able to find him. Here's to another reminder to lock your doors at night, folks.

Straying away from true crime and focusing more on the paranormal, here's the story of the haunted bunkbed in Wisconsin. In February 1987, Allan and Deborah Tallman purchased a bunk bed from a secondhand furniture store. As soon as they assembled it in their daughter's room, a horrifying nine months for the family ensued. Their three children became sick frequently. The children claimed that there was a red-eyed witch watching them and that their clock radio came to life. A month later, the bunk bed starting affecting Allan and Deborah as well. They claimed doors would slam, the garage would burst into ghost flames, and voices would yell. The Tallmans finally destroyed the bunk bed and all paranormal activity halted. They sold their home two months later, and afterwards, the house was reported normal by the new family that moved in.

In the relatively safe community we live in, we are less likely to acknowledge our surroundings and the possibility of true crime. However, serial killers like the "Cape Intruder" and the "Zodiac" killer haven't been caught yet, so there is a possibility that they are still out there.



# Best celebrity costumes 2022

By **MADISON SHERMAN**  
*Editors-in-chief*

Everyone goes all out for Halloween, especially celebrities. Nothing is more entertaining than scrolling through social media to witness what your favorite celebrities dressed as for Halloween. From Addison Rae's bloody "Paparazzi" Lady Gaga costume to Kylie Jenner's custom couture gown as Bride of Frankenstein, it is clear that 2022 didn't disappoint as a costume year. Heidi Klum's costume, although not my personal favorite, is worth a notable mention. Her realistic "rain worm" ensemble broke the internet as the most-talked-about-celebrity costume of 2022, where only Klum's mouth and eyes could be seen.

Below are my favorite celebrity looks and costumes of the momentous Halloween season:

## Lizzo:

Lizzo confused fans after she posted on Instagram a short clip of

herself dressed as Marge Simpson, while mimicking Family Guy's Lois Griffin and commenting "The crossover episode y'all been waiting for" in the comments.

However, Lizzo looked incredible armed in yellow body paint, a dramatic blue hairdo, and a shiny green dress.

## Ciara and daughter Sienna:

Ciara and daughter Sienna took it back to the 2000s with this look, recreating Serena and Venus Williams' "Got Milk" campaign. The



pair wore the Williams sisters' signature white beads in their hair and owned their white milk mustaches. This costume was adorable, while also representing female strength and mother-and-daughter empowerment.

## Janelle Monae:

Janelle Monae never fails to make a statement. Monae went full blue this year. She dressed as Diva Plavalaguna, the alien singer from "The Fifth Element". This costume was definitely out of this world and will leave a notable mark on costume culture in the future.

## Diddy:

The 52-year-old rapper nailed it as the Joker, donning horrifying makeup, green hair, and the iconic

green-purple suit. Diddy also embraced the Joker's psychotic ways by acting out in front of cameras and posting a quite terrifying Instagram video.



## Keke Palmer:

Palmer went viral for the photo of her in a castle with long-flowing braids. She looked breathtaking in her old-fashioned ruffled princess gown. Palmer posted an old meme saying, "I want Keke Palmer to play live action rapunzel with 100ft box braids." Palmer soon commented, "You ask, so you shall receive," on Instagram to her 11 million followers.





# Streaming services: The more, the merrier?

By CHASE PASEKOFF  
Staff Writer

The emergence of new digital media platforms has made it difficult to grapple with our online world. The amount of apps on our phones, tablets, and computers seems to be increasing rapidly. One category, in particular, appears to be growing especially quickly: streaming services. Netflix, Hulu, HBOMax, Disney+, Amazon Prime Video, AppleTV, and more — the array of choices seem endless, especially to those used to traditional cable providers.

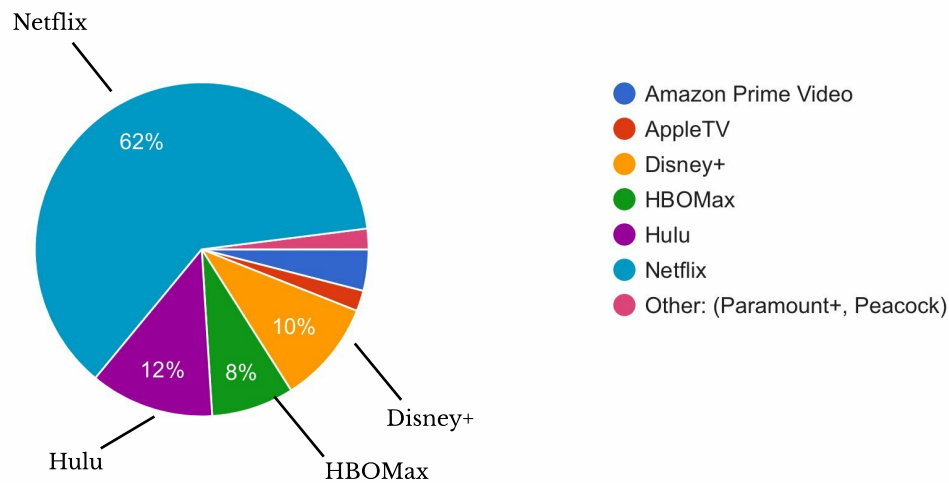
Many cable channels allow their shows to be accessible by only one streaming service; thus, those who don't have cable and want to access all shows they desire have to pay for multiple streaming services simultaneously. With a surplus in streaming options, and people not being thrilled to pay for several services, is there one that reigns supreme?

A Prowler poll taken by 50 QO students answers this question with quite certainty. When prompted with the question "Which streaming service do you prefer?", students were provided with seven choices: Amazon

Prime TV, Apple TV, Disney+, HBO Max, Hulu, Netflix, and an "Other" option to account for services not included. Netflix took first place with 62% of the vote. Netflix was founded in 1997 and currently has over 222 million subscribers worldwide. In

Which streaming service do you prefer?

50 responses



addition to preexisting popular shows such as "Riverdale" and "Gilmore Girls," Netflix also provides its viewers with a wide selection of original content, like "Stranger Things" and "The Umbrella Academy."

Following behind Netflix, with 12% of the overall votes, was Hulu. Hulu was founded in 2007 and has a total of 46.2 million subscribers. Hulu gives their viewers many popular family-oriented shows like "Modern Family" and "The Goldbergs". With shows like these that are only available

on one service, this puts these two in direct competition.

In third place, Disney+, a service with shows/movies primarily targeting younger viewers, had 10% of students selecting it as their top streaming service. Fairly new, Disney+

number. Although more geared toward an adult audience, many students use HBOMax to stream shows like "Euphoria," which has increased in popularity over the past months.

The services ranked at the bottom include Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV, and the "other" streaming services. These services don't live up to the same amount of satisfaction the other streaming services provide for their viewers. This mostly is due to their not being as well-known and widespread to the public as others. An interesting observation that can be made from the results of the poll is the placement of Hulu. Hulu, which ranked second, has fewer global users than Disney+ or HBOMax, however, ranked higher

than them in our poll. A potential reason for this could be due to Hulu's more extensive history, or the fact that Disney+ and HBOMax have a demographic less targeted to teenagers.

With all of the choices at our fingertips today, it can be overwhelming to determine which service takes the trophy. Overall though, if you're looking for just the right one, QO students would recommend you subscribe to Netflix.

## "Question...?" Have you listened to "Midnights" yet?

By CHASE PANTEZZI  
Staff Writer

"Meet me at midnight..." is the first line of "Lavender Haze," the first track on Taylor Swift's tenth studio album, appropriately named "Midnights." On October 21, promptly at 12 AM, fans stayed up to listen to that first line from one of the most anticipated albums in recent memory. Later in the night, the deluxe edition, "Midnights (3am Edition)," was released with seven additional songs. Music videos for two songs and late night show appearances followed throughout the week.

In the months leading up to the album release, fans speculated on social media that Swift would be releasing double albums, a re-release of her previous albums from 2017 and before, or a documentary, plus a plethora of other theories. "The devil works hard, but Swifties work harder," one TikTok user said. It seems like we never know what Swift has planned next.

Students at QO agree that the anticipation of the album prompted feelings of wonder and excitement. Senior Lizzy Emerson said she was "excited to see what creative direction she would go in" with reference to Swift's musical style.

Senior Elisa Sneeringer was also eager to hear something new from one of her childhood favorites. "I've been a massive Taylor Swift fan for a

very long time — I remember listening to 'Fearless' in my bedroom when I was seven," she said. She has been "obsessed" since 'Speak Now,' she added.

When "Midnights" was released last month, students and staff alike did not know how to react to a brand new album with 20 songs — some thought it was good, but not great, upon first impression. Many thought that the album was not as lyrically advanced as some of Swift's other work, which they deem more complex.

"I was in a sense of shock because I was so used to 'folklore' and 'evermore.' It definitely isn't my favorite and not in my top three, but I would definitely listen again," said Sneeringer.

Social studies teacher Mary Nance explained how she would give the album only about a four or five out of ten upon first listen, and agreed that it wasn't a ten out of ten like "folklore" or "evermore."

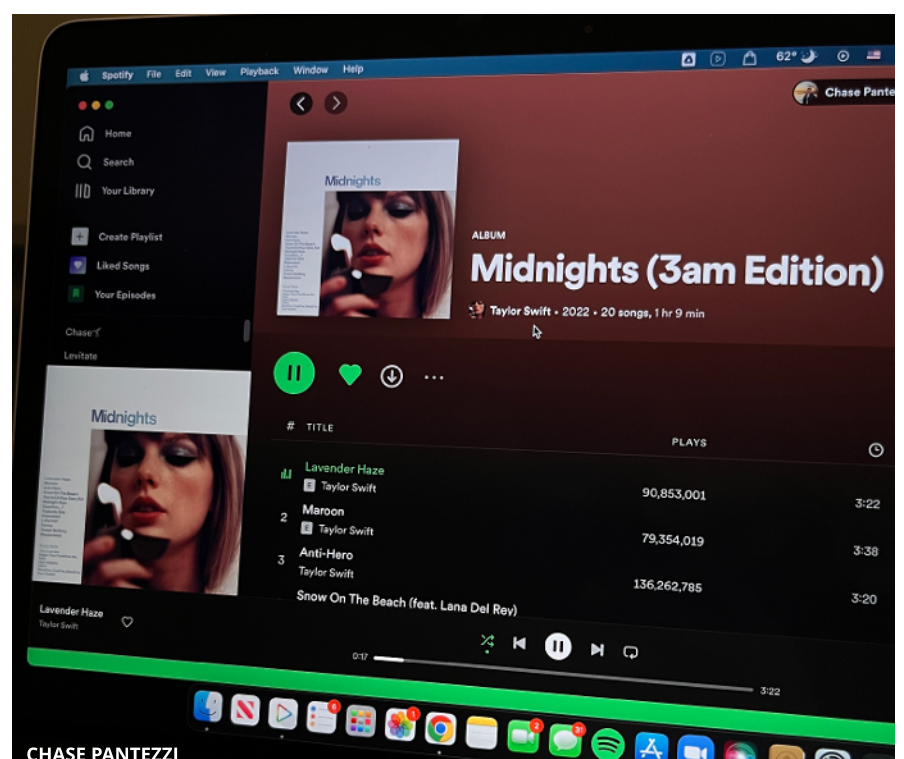
However, impressions of "Midnights" seemed to become more favorable as people listened more. "First listen through I was like, 'Is this really my vibe?' but then the second time through I was like, 'Okay, I like this,'" Emerson said.

Both Emerson and Sneeringer found it interesting how "Midnights" compares to Swift's older albums "Lover" (2019) and "reputation" (2017). For example, "Lavender Haze" from "Midnights" and "I Think He Knows"

from "Lover" have a similar sound, according to many social media users. Emerson made the point that the album has its own "essence," which is "different" from her previous work.

Students and teachers appreciated songs that focus on deeper emotions, such as self-image issues and nostalgia. Nance called "Anti-Hero" "very honest and reflective," while Emerson thought "Bigger Than The Whole Sky" was moving and emotional.

Above all, fans believe that "Midnights" was a substantial addition to an extensive body of work, encompassing many genres and emotions. They are excited for the re-releases of her past albums that so many can relate to, such as "Speak Now." Swift herself captured the essence of the message that her album intends to convey in an Instagram caption: "Life can be dark, starry, cloudy, terrifying, hot, cold, romantic or lonely. Just like Midnights."



CHASE PANTEZZI





# Pickleball: Taking the nation and QO community by storm

By MADELEINE BURKE  
Staff Writer

When you hear the words “fastest-growing sport in the nation,” what comes to mind? Soccer... football? Well, close, but not really. The fastest growing sport in the nation is pickleball: the smaller version of tennis and the longer version of ping pong.

Pickleball’s rules are similar to those in tennis, like keeping the ball in bounds and only serving from the baseline. But unlike tennis, pickleball has a kitchen, or non-volley zone, right in front of the net on both sides to prevent spiking and unfair advantage in games. The ball is light and coreless, creating a low bounce.

The sport was originally created by Barney McCallum in 1972, but since then, famous NBA stars like Kevin Durant and LeBron James have invested in the MLP, Major League Pickleball. Within the next year, MLP’s 12 teams will expand to 16, and prize money is predicted to be over \$2 million.

Pickleball is everywhere, even in Quince Orchard. Math teacher James

Key and TV Production teacher Kunal Arora were caught playing against each other last month after school on the tennis courts.

“We played against each other once, like 3 weeks ago,” said Key.

The two teachers are classroom neighbors, and one day Arora brought the sport up in conversation. Although they are both busy and haven’t played each other since, if Mr. Key has the free time he is open to playing another round.

Key first heard about the sport around three years ago from his son’s coach, who also happened to be a pickleball instructor. He has played a lot with his kids ever since he first stepped onto the court.

Students at QO are enjoying the game as well. Senior Lizzy Emerson has been playing for two years with friends and family on her community courts.

“My aunt and uncle first introduced me to the sport,” said Emerson, “and ever since then I play all the time.”

But the Emersons aren’t the only family who enjoys the sport. The El-Hibri family could be considered pickleball experts to many people. They learned about pickleball from friends, and have been playing since around the time of the pandemic. Like most families, the summer is the most popular time to get on the court for them. They clock in 15 hours a week,

but when temperatures start to cool down, it changes to 5-10 hours.

“We joined the tennis plex for the coming year, which offers indoor play, and so hopefully we can play more,” said Carly El-Hibri.

The El-Hibris are known in the community for being very involved, and this past summer they combined pickleball and the community swim team to create a fun activity for everyone. Two tournaments were advertised to the Kentlands Kingfish community, one for teens and adults and the other for kids. Games were played in doubles and ended up being an event that was well-liked by the whole team.

“We plan to continue the tradition going forward,” El-Hibri said. “Everyone from the beginners to the winners have fun.”

If you are interested in playing pickleball, there is sure to be a court near you. The activity center at Bohrer Park holds pickleball games indoors. You can always come back to QO and play a modified game on the tennis courts.



# Girls soccer advances to state championship

By GRIFFIN OWENS  
Staff Writer

The Cougars are once again knocking at the door of a state championship.

After starting the season with two wins, the team suddenly sat midway through the season only one game over .500. At the time they had lost two of their last three games with their two losses coming at the hands of two contenders. Their first loss against the former state champion, Whitman, and their second coming against rival Northwest.

While losses like that may cause some teams to question their ability to contend in the playoffs, QO took these losses in another way. The Cougars responded by winning five straight games; a turnaround that saw the team outscore their opponents by 21 points through those games.

This winning streak was highlighted by convincing wins such as a 5-0 victory over Northwood and a 8-1 rout of Clarksburg. The team had gone from being on pace to barely finish over .500 to having their best record since the 2019-2020 season.

“We knew that we had the pieces to put together a strong season, but we needed to put them together. Those second losses helped propel the second half of the season,” said head coach Peg Keiller.

However, after facing the team which had beaten them earlier in the season, QO couldn’t get the win. In the county championship the team couldn’t get past Whitman and lost 2-0.

Despite their two losses in the regular season, QO still managed to secure a bye in the first round along with Whitman and Northwest.

On October 29, the team faced Clarksburg in the second round and beat the Coyotes 3-0. While not the 8-1 beating they gave them earlier in the regular season, the win was

dominating enough for the Cougars to roll into the next round.

On November 1, the Cougars faced the Northwest Jaguars for the second time of the year. This time, QO managed to flip the score from earlier in the season, winning the game 2-0. They wouldn’t have been able to get the job done without goals from two sophomores, Simone Mazzarino & Ellie Hodge.

“The majority of our attack has come from younger players,” said coach Keiller, “They have been instrumental in our success.”

The game also saw a shutout performance from senior goalkeeper Carly Schachter who, with some help from the defense, has yet to allow a goal to be scored throughout their dominant playoff run.

It appeared that the mix between young talent and senior leadership was the recipe for success throughout the team’s deep playoff run.

“This group has a great mix of experience and youth, defense and attack, aggressiveness and composure,” said Keiller.

After their victory against the Jaguars, QO was once again the region champion. This was the team’s second straight region championship, third in four years and eighth overall in the Cougars’ history as a team. However, a region championship was not their final goal, the team still had three more games to go before they were state champions.

“I think we’ve seen the most improvement in coming together and working as a whole unit. We still have some work to do in this area, but it’s already paid off both offensively and defensively,” said Keiller.

The team then faced off

against Bladensburg in the next round and soundly defeated them. In their game against Bladensburg, the Cougars scored six goals while shutting their opponent out for the third time this playoff run.

The team’s next matchup would be a familiar one for some on the team: Broadneck. Once again the Cougars would play against Broadneck in a chance to advance to the state championship game against Whitman.

Last year, the Cougars had advanced all the way to the semi-finals before losing to Broadneck in penalty kicks.

This year however, it was a different story, with players on both teams from the class of 22’ going to college, leaving only those from this year’s squads remaining to compete in the playoff rematch.

It was a single goal by sophomore Caroline Donmoyer which secured QO’s redemption and propelled the

Cougars to their fifth appearance in the state championship game under coach Keiller.

Throughout the season and the playoffs, the Cougars overcame losses to competitive opponents and came back stronger than ever. This team has played three teams multiple times, and in those first matchups the team lost two of the three games, including being held to a total of zero goals in those losses. However, in their second matchups, QO has a record of 2-1 with their two wins against returning opponents being in the postseason.

This is all without mentioning their playoff rematch against Broadneck and their third meeting in the state championship match against Whitman, where the Cougars have one final chance to overcome the former state champions. The state champion will be decided on Saturday, November 19, and the game will be played at Loyola University.



TWITTER @QOHSPrin\_Thomas

The team holds up the W for a picture after defeating Broadneck 1-0 to advance to the State Championship game.



# Season Updates

## Boys Soccer

By *OLIVIA MAYTIN*  
Staff Writer

After a promising 10-1-1 season, the Quince Orchard boys soccer team fell to Urbana in region finals at the Cougar Dome. Last year, they lost to Urbana in a heartbreaking 1-0 game in the region semi-finals. This year, they had the chance to avenge last year's loss.

Although many questioned if the team would repeat their success from last year, they never counted themselves out. "Nobody expected us to be a top team this year, so we took every game as a chance to prove ourselves," junior Andrew Silverman said.

From their youngest players to their senior veterans, this Quince Orchard team had plenty of talent throughout the program. Senior and captain Tomas Rebelatto was a leader in the forward line, scoring eleven goals this season.

Some of the new players on the team, like sophomores Avi Sarano, Spencer Davis, and Kevin Kouassi have been key contributing factors to the team as well. Junior Randy Mendoza, the goalkeeper, even won high school athlete of the week from the Montgomery County Sports Hall of Fame.

Despite the individual talent on the field, it was the team chemistry that propelled the team to success.

"The back of our warm-up shirts even say 'We > me,'" Silverman said, "because we are one family, not a team of twenty-five individuals."

On October 24, the Cougars played in their first County Championship in school history. This almost three-hour game was a thriller. The back-and-forth play on the field proved indecisive in regular time and, because both teams kept converting on their penalty kicks, the air was thick with tension. The team chemistry was especially evident when junior Prince Michael Kemani scored the game-winning penalty kick and the entire team rushed onto the field in excitement.

After four years of Quince Orchard boys soccer, the time has come to an end for the seniors. Senior captain Mike Mevo reflected on his time with QO soccer. "This team made high school more fun. Going to practice after school every day has been the best part," he said. "This team is my family."



INSTAGRAM @QOMSoccer

## Girls Field Hockey

By *MADELEINE BURKE*  
Staff Writer

While the Quince Orchard field hockey team's season was cut short earlier than expected, the close knit team was still able to make lasting memories during the time they had together.

For the last three months, the girls have trained and competed in a total of 12 regular season games, but were only able to participate in one game during playoffs. They were able to pull off a win in the division championship game and celebrated their hard-working seniors during the annual senior night. Bright and early on the morning of Saturday, October 8, the Cougars took on the Northwest Jaguars and battled out for the title of division champion. While QO blew past Northwest with a final score of 7-1, the game was still exciting for the team.

"It felt good to see all of our hard work pay off," said sophomore Kayla Pilloff.

Even with this impressive score, the team's record started to fall as they went further into the season and eventually the first game in playoffs.

On Wednesday,

October 19, QO held their senior night to celebrate the class of 2023 for all the hard work they have been putting into the team. This year there were six seniors: Zoe Howard, Natalie Lumsden, Gabrielle Reed, Catalina Salazar, Camille Thomas, Elizabeth Winter.

That night, the Cougars went up against the Wootton Patriots, who had an impressive record of 11-2. QO was not able to bring home a win: the game ended 2-0. But it was still an exciting night to honor their seniors.

The Cougars were given a second chance to defeat the Patriots during the first round of playoffs, but the "very challenging game," as described by sophomore Gabbie Spano, resulted in the end of QO's season.

Although QO field hockey wasn't able to win the state championship they were hopeful for, these girls will cherish the memories they made this season together as a family.



COURTESY OF MICHELE LUMSDEN

## Girls Volleyball

By *SAMMY KRIMSTEIN*  
Editor-in-Chief

After almost three months of practices and games, the 2022 QO girls volleyball season has come to an end. On November 3, the Cougars were eliminated by the rival Northwest Jaguars in the state playoffs.

QO is in one of the most competitive regions in the state: 4A West Region II. Grouped with volleyball powerhouses such as Urbana and Clarksburg, QO's solid 8-6 record was only good enough to place them fifth out of six in the region standings. The Cougars also had a very tough schedule this season. In addition to their regional foes, QO had to face off against Wootton and Sherwood, two of the top teams in Montgomery County.

Their difficult schedule, paired with the grueling grind of the season, taught the team valuable lessons throughout the season.

"Diligence is something I have been taught all four years of playing," said senior Emma Evans, "Two hour practices that involve high energy activities are hard to keep up with, but season after season you learn the importance of moving forward everyday."

The team's relentless mindset helped them make key improvements during the season. With the guidance of head coach Allison Smorse, they were able to turn a weakness into a key strength.

"Serving started out as one of our weaknesses this season, but the team worked really hard on strong consistent serving and it was a big strength in the second half of the season," said Smorse.

Players on the team attributed

Smorse's steady leadership to being a key factor in the team's ability to adjust this year.

"She was an amazing coach with some insane patience and always kind to each and every athlete," said Evans, "She knew how to play the sport and put us exactly where we needed to be."

Through the ups and downs of the season, the team's seniors also found opportunities to provide leadership for the younger players.

"I learned how to be a leader as a captain this year, a skill I'm gonna carry with me forever," said senior Lulu Baker.

Next season, the Cougars look to continue developing their young talent, and make a deep playoff run.

"Our goal moving forward is to work on starting games stronger and staying disciplined right away at the beginning of matches," said Smorse.

When the season ended, Head Coach Smorse left her team with words of encouragement.

"Never forget that even when things get hard, you can push through them," she said, "QO Volleyball will always be your family and will be here to cheer you on."



PRITI MADHAVAN

## Cross Country

By *LILY KAPLAN*  
Staff Writer

The Cross Country girls and boys team has had a successful season this year. With a 4-2 record for the boys team, and a 3-3 record for the girls team, their improvement after three months of practice has shown.

Last season, the running Cougars finished off with a tough loss, running at the MPSSAA 4A west region championship. They finished in 11th place out of 12th, concluding the season.

After the departure of 13 seniors last school year, the class of '23 has tried to set a great example for their underclassmen teammates.

This year's varsity cross country team is mostly composed of seniors, including Mandy Vendittis, Kehan Bhati, and Sophie Thrush, who have been running cross country all throughout high school. Kehan Bhati, the top runner on the team, has said that "[he] has learned a lot about how to stay consistent with [his] running which has helped [him] to improve times."

The freshman runners have grown significantly since the start of the season. Many freshmen who have worked really hard have been moved to the varsity team throughout the season, which has motivated them to stay on the team in future years.



ATHLETIC.NET



# Q & A with QO's QB

## A Conversation with quarterback Savan Briggs

By SAMMY KRIMSTEIN  
Editor-in-Chief

**Q: How did you first get into playing football? How did you first start playing?**

A: Yeah, my dad played in college. I think he's like the main reason I got into football, I guess you can say... I've always had fun with this. I just kept it going until where I am now.

**Q: Where did [your dad] play in college?**

A: James Madison University.

**Q: How exciting was it to receive your first college offer from Robert Morris University?**

A: That was a blessing, man. To be honest, I couldn't even explain it. Because I was smiling, you know, I felt almost tears of joy... You know, you finally have achieved that level that you wanted to be at... all the work you put in, all the prayers, you put in all the stuff like that: it all came true. So it's like a relief, kind of: a great feeling.

**Q: Have you always been QB? Has that always been your thing?**

A: Defense was always my love... I wasn't big enough in high school to play D-end. So my freshman year I played linebacker. And then ...sophomore through senior year, I'm now playing quarterback.

**Q: How have your parents supported your football career?**

A: They've been everything, man, to be honest. My dad always coached

me since I was five. So he's the one I can say that really brought me up into football. He's always been there for me, always taught me lessons in the game — the keys and gems to making it this far, even if it's not on the field: if it's working out each rep, each set matters stuff like that... And my mom's always been a big supporter. When I need to go somewhere for a game, when I need to go somewhere for training, I need to [go to] practice, my mom was always on it... She's always been good at signing me up for sports and stuff like that. If she wasn't there, then I probably wouldn't be playing sports because I wouldn't be signed up.

**Q: How do you enjoy the combination of playing football and basketball?**

A: Basketball's always been a hobby that I really enjoy. So I feel like that's always cool. Some of my teammates play with us. So, you know, like last year I played with [Jalen] Huskey, so our goal was always to try to do it again in basketball. So, it was fun. It's always been fun.

**Q: Who are some of your favorite NFL QBs? Who do you model your game after?**

A: He doesn't play anymore, but a guy I always looked up to was Cam Newton. Cam Newton was always my guy; I used to always wear number one. That's always who I wanted to play after, [who] I wanted to be like. Guys now I really like... I like Aaron

Rodgers, I like the way he can sling the ball, and Justin Fields as a young quarterback.

**Q: How was last year's experience of winning a state championship?**

A: It was such a surreal moment, man, like it still doesn't feel real when you really think about it, it's such a great moment — you really want to do it again... You know, you're hugging your brothers and talking to the coaches after the season. All the hard work we put in before we put on the pads — like May, we were all working out lifting and training, and the goal was always to make it there and win it. So the fact that we were able to do that [after] 14 long weeks. Yeah, it was amazing.

**Q: Do you ever talk with any of QO's past QBs?**

A: I've known Brian Plummer for a while. I used to try training with him when he'd come home for the summer. He always gives me good advice. Great guy.

**Q: What's your pregame routine?**

A: I always eat grapes before the game... Grapes, then I'm gonna go down to the locker room, get dressed. I feel like before the game I play a lot of hype music, old school, like old school, hype music. Stuff to get me excited. And then [right] before game time, I start playing music to calm me down, calm my nerves, to relax myself, to be able to think. You can't be too riled up for the game.

**Q: What kind of thoughts run**



COURTESY OF SAVAN BRIGGS

**through your head during the game?**

A: Confidence booster stuff. I still remind myself that I've been here before, we can do this. No need to feel pressure or anything like that. You're a good player, so you just go out there and ball out, have fun.

**Q: How does the energy from the fans feed into what you do as a quarterback?**

A: I feel like they always bring the energy, bring the juice... Sometimes if you're getting hit while you're throwing a ball, you can't see what happens, [but] you always know if you did something good when they start cheering.

**Q: How do you feel the bonds between teammates contribute to the success of the team?**

A: I feel like our bond is great. I feel like everybody plays for one another in a sense. I feel like it was a whole brotherhood... You could talk to anybody on the team, laugh, goof off, but also be serious and hold [each other] accountable. It's a great thing.

# QO athletes making the big decision

By GRIFFIN OWENS  
Staff Writer

Almost thirteen years ago, the sports world was shaken when LeBron James made the move to leave Cleveland and head down to South Beach to play with the Miami Heat. "The Decision," as it came to be known, was one of the most publicized free agent decisions in sports history. While not quite as infamous, similar versions of this decision are being made at a much smaller level every day throughout the country, including by some student athletes here at QO.

However, most athletes who participate in high school athletics aren't able to make this choice, let alone expect to play at the next level at all. According to ScholarshipStats.com, only a little over 7% of high school athletes go on to play in college. That number is even lower for Division One schools. Still, that statistic doesn't seem to be stopping QO athletes from defying those odds in great numbers.

The class of '22 had twelve football players from last year's championship roster continue playing in college. This year, another group of players from the football team look to do the same, with at least three players having already committed as of publication. One of these players, senior Zach Anderson, a key piece of the Cougars' offensive line, committed to play for the University of Massachusetts on July 3.

According to Anderson, the recruitment process is a little different from the regular application process.

"I was waiting to see which schools were interested in me, so I had to keep all of my options open," said Anderson.

Anderson had over 20 offers, including offers from other D1 schools like Maryland, Liberty, and Navy, but out of all of those he chose Massachusetts.

"My number one priority that I had when I was evaluating schools that had offered me was their education," he said. "Football comes to an end for everyone at some point, so it is extremely important to me that I am set up well to succeed when football ends."

In an article by 247Sports, Anderson mentions how his first visit to the university had left him impressed with the school. The article also mentions the influence that QO alumnus Marcus Bradley '20, who plays for Massachusetts, had on Anderson's decision.

In addition to former teammates, Anderson credits his parents, and more specifically his father, for helping him throughout his recruitment. "My dad has been a key resource for me for all my recruiting and football questions, having been a former football athlete," he said.

The other two commits from our football team are members of the Cougars' vaunted front seven. Both teammates are heading down to North Carolina next fall, with senior linebacker and wide receiver Kendall Johnson committing to Duke University and senior nose tackle Christian Hayes committing to Davidson. Both players announced their commitments on social media

before the start of the school year.

Football players aren't the only commits from QO and fortunately for another athlete, she didn't have to look too far for an offer. Senior Camille Thomas committed to play Division One lacrosse for Mount St. Mary's University, a school located in Maryland, last year. Thomas was shocked to hear that colleges were first recruiting her. "I freaked out. I have a video of me crying," Thomas said.

Thomas committed to the D1 school during her junior season, in which the girls lacrosse team won the regional championship against Clarksburg. In that season, Thomas, a goalie, earned first team all-county honors, a nice pairing with her 146 saves that season.

Her parents (one of whom is Principal Beth Thomas), who had already been through the process with her brother, aided her during recruitment. Thomas also credits others here at the school who helped her throughout the process. "My coaches at QO helped a lot," she said.

Another lacrosse player has also already decided where to play his sport in the spring of 2023; senior Josh Weitzman committed to High Point University over the summer.

Weitzman announced his commitment to High Point on Twitter on July 30, thanking his parents and coaches in the tweet. "The main thing about the recruiting process is that you gotta do what you want," said Weitzman.

Last season, Weitzman was

one of eight QO lacrosse players named to the Montgomery County central all-division team.

"I knew I wanted to go D1 because if I was going to play lacrosse in college, I might as well do it at the highest level," said Weitzman.

Weitzman credits High Point's coaching staff for being part of the reason behind his decision. "They [the coaching staff] were able to talk to me on a level that no other coaching staff was," he said.

Senior athletes Lauren Clark and Grace Oristian are also a part of this group of early commits. Clark committed to the University of Vermont to swim, while Oristian committed to Towson for golf.

On November 9, four of the seven commits were present at QO for their signing day, with Thomas, Weitzman, Clark, and Oristian all signing their national letter of intent and putting their commitments in writing.

Through the first quarter of this school year, the class of '23 has seven commits with athletes from five different sports, and with three more quarters left in the school year, even more commitments are sure to come.



COURTESY OF CAMILLE THOMAS