

THE PROWLER

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A country changed forever

The lasting impact of the January 6 insurrection following its two-year anniversary

By **MIA KAUFFMAN**
Editor-in-Chief

Picture this: a routine Saturday morning bagel run to Capitol Hill ending in barbed wire, machine guns, and a new face of freedom. Streets that were once lively and filled with people: barren and blocked-off. Tourists that once flooded Capitol Hill eager to visit the historic landmarks: non-existent.

This was the reality during my sophomore year when my Dad and I witnessed the aftermath of the January 6 insurrection. A place where I stood only three months prior—once overflowing with tourists, reporters, and locals—had completely transformed into a ghost town.

Now, two years following that transformational day, the profound impact of the insurrection lingers within those same streets. Axios Washington DC expands on the substantial consequences, writing that the “Jan. 6, 2021 Capitol insurrection left violent scars across the nation’s capital, leading many who live and work in the District to forever rethink security.” While “local and federal officials are optimistic about advancements made in law enforcement preparations,” that day still “haunts a wide range of people inside the Capitol, from legislative staffers to workers who keep the building up-and-running.”

It hasn’t only been Washington, DC

that has felt the impact of the insurrection, as our country’s political climate has been burdened with the consequences. Prior to the 2020 presidential election, America was in the midst of battling a great divide within our nation. People fell on two sides of the spectrum, so different, so stubborn, and very rarely falling in the middle.

As the influence of polarization swept across our nation, so has misinformation and false beliefs. One of the most extreme examples of this within the past years has been the Big Lie. As stated in CNN, this lie was born from Trump’s continued attempts to convince the American public “the 2020 presidential election was ‘stolen’ from him” regardless of Biden’s victory in the free and fair election. There have been over 60 court cases about election fraud, and none of them have confirmed there was fraud due to the lack of relevant evidence. This lie left “a major impact on American politics” and is believed to be the largest motivator behind “the storming of the Capitol.”

The insurrection proved how powerful, and dangerous, misinformation can be. Trump used his Twitter platform to feed misinformation directly into the mouths of his followers. An investigative piece by NPR highlights the life of insurrectionist Bruno Cua. According to NPR, Cua was “allegedly seen in multiple videos standing in the Senate Chamber of the U.S. Capitol with a handful of other rioters.” As an insurrectionist, Cua’s story is “a stark example of just how powerful

misinformation can be.” NPR continues that “both prosecution and defense agree that he was radicalized by what he read online, and the decision to embrace the falsehoods he discovered in the chatrooms and social media” had a transformational impact on his mindset and decision-making capabilities.

Cua wasn’t the only one. Over 964 people have been charged with breaching the Capitol so far, and it was found that most were “motivated to storm the building by the falsehoods they had been reading online and social media for months.”

The impact of this polarization-fueled misinformation campaign is prevalent in the aftermath of the insurrection, but Congress is doing something about it. The House of Representatives January 6 Congressional Committee is a bipartisan select committee that was created in July of 2021 to investigate the circumstances of the insurrection.

According to Vox, their main purpose has been “to recommend ‘changes in law, policy, procedures, rules, or regulations’ to prevent further acts of violence” and “to strengthen the security and resilience” of our

democratic institutions.

Since its inception, the committee has held numerous public hearings and interviewed over 1,000 witnesses, focusing on former President Trump’s actions in the weeks and months leading up to the insurrection. While the committee does not hold the authority to hand out charges, they’re able to issue criminal referrals to the Department of Justice which can lead to criminal charges. On December 20, the committee released its final report which included more than 30 transcripts of interviews from its 17-month long investigation. These transcripts include key details to exactly what transpired that day. Working alongside federal courts, the committee and the American justice system are working every day to obtain justice for what happened on that impactful day.



Ticketmaster sparks Bad Blood among Taylor Swift fans

By **HAILEY BAKER**
Senior Staff Writer

Taylor Swift is undoubtedly one of the biggest pop stars of our generation. Five years ago, her Reputation tour became the highest-grossing North American tour of all time. And when Swift announced her upcoming 52-date US leg of the Eras tour on November 1, excited ‘Swifties’ (Swift fans) across the country prepared to buy tickets, but the following debacle has led many to be unable to.

Ticketmaster handled ticket sales for the majority of the dates, along with SeatGeek, who sold tickets for select performances in Texas and Arizona. Ticketmaster used its Verified Fan program, which was set up to allow a select number of fans to register in advance for access to presale tickets. There were only a select number of presale tickets available, though, so not everyone who registered was guaranteed access.

According to The Verge, over 3.5 million fans registered for the program, hoping to gain early access to Eras tour tickets. This was the largest registration in Verified Fan’s history. Out of those who registered, only 1.5 million were reportedly given access to the presale tickets.

The Verified Fan presale started on November 15. During the presale, there was a queue set up for fans with

codes to wait in and eventually purchase tickets on a first-come, first-serve basis. However, fans without codes and robots who hacked their way into the system swarmed the site: fans did not have to input their codes until it was their turn to buy tickets, which caused them to experience hours-long wait times and the site to eventually crash.

Senior and Swiftie Noah Mayfield and his mother both had presale codes, so they were on separate computers to see who got in first, and could purchase tickets. Mayfield lucked out at first, with only 800 people in front of him when he joined the queue.

As time moved by and the number of people in front of him moved down, his hopes were dashed. “We [got] to three people [in front of us.] And for some reason, having three people in front of us [was] taking longer than any of the other changes between numbers that were moving pretty quickly,” said Mayfield. “We were stuck on three for awhile, and then our screen [changed] and we were both letting out very unflattering excitement noises. Then immediately the page [refreshed] and [said] ‘We’re sorry, something went wrong, please rejoin the cue.’”

Mayfield went on Twitter in hopes of finding other fans experiencing the same issue, and found that there were plenty. “What I discovered as far as

people getting kicked out is—I could have had it even worse,” Mayfield said. “Some people made it all the way into the line and started checking out and putting in their credit card information, and as they clicked, they got kicked out.”

After a six-hour ordeal, Mayfield finally got the tickets, but senior and Swiftie Caroline Axley said she never made it into the ticket map. “The queue was going on too long, so I gave up and decided to check back later, thinking there would still be tickets. Then, I checked back later and they were all sold out for the day.”

On top of the mess of the presale, on November 17, Ticketmaster announced the general sale would not happen at all. Ticketmaster cited “extraordinarily high demands” and insufficient remaining tickets as the reason for the cancellation. After this was announced, some people started reselling tickets on sites such as Stubhub for as much as \$22,000.

When fans began to experience a wide array of issues on the site, even a number of memes of Congress called on the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Trade Commission to investigate Ticketmaster and its parent company Live Nation. In 2010, the two companies had merged after a DOJ-brokered settlement that officials claimed would encourage competition and lower prices. However, many officials now have claimed that it has

had the opposite effect.

Senator Richard Blumenthal from Connecticut tweeted that the Eras Tour sale is a perfect example of how the Live Nation and Ticketmaster merger harms consumers by creating what’s close to a monopoly. He urged the DOJ to investigate the state of competition in the ticketing industry.

New York Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez also voiced concerns about Live Nation and Ticketmaster’s near-monopoly. “Daily reminder that Ticketmaster is a monopoly, its merger with Live Nation should have never been approved, and they need to be reigned in. Break them up,” she tweeted.

AEG Presents, the company in charge of handling the Eras Tour, said in a statement to CNBC: “Ticketmaster’s exclusive deals with the vast majority of venues on the Eras tour required us to ticket through their system. We didn’t have a choice.”

Now, the Justice Department has opened an antitrust investigation into Live Nation, with the investigation focused on whether Live Nation Entertainment has abused its power over the multibillion-dollar live music industry. This investigation is ongoing, as the Department of Justice looks into the near monopoly of Live Nation and Ticketmaster.

News

Read about reactions to and effects of Kanye West’s antisemitic statements

PAGE 2



Features

Learn about QO’s new tutoring program

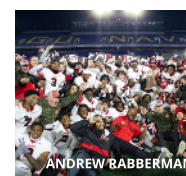
PAGE 8



Sports

A look back at the football 4A State Finals

PAGE 12



Elon Musk's Twitter takeover causes variety of changes

Musk steps in as head of Twitter before announcing search for new CEO after 2 months

By HANYA SHAHZAD
Staff Writer

One of the richest men on earth bought one of the biggest social media platforms...and things happened.

Back in October, Elon Musk bought the major social media platform Twitter in a \$44 billion deal. This brought fear across Twitter users over the ramifications of the leadership by the Tesla and SpaceX CEO. Musk was originally going to back out of the deal, but faced a hairy lawsuit with Twitter, making things difficult. As The New York Times explained in an October article, "Mr. Musk said he would proceed with the acquisition at the original price if Twitter halted its legal battle against him."

Musk started off his tenure by firing multiple Twitter executives. According to The Guardian, "The firings included the chief executive, Parag Agrawal, the chief financial officer, Ned Segal, and the head of legal, policy and trust, Vijaya Gadde." Over a thousand employees have also handed in resignations since Musk took over.

In another change, Musk added beds to Twitter HQ for employees to spend the night, which doesn't come as a surprise regarding his intensive work mindset. This addition is a clear sign of what Musk expects of employees going forward. In addition, The New York Times stated that some employees "were asked to oversee

duties they had never handled before."

Twitter has previously placed bans on users for spreading misinformation, but one of the changes Musk has implemented is allowing certain users known for spreading misinformation in the past, such as former president Donald Trump, back on the platform. This move was taken graciously by many Republicans who feel that Musk's takeover will benefit them. Before Musk, there were some voices of concern that Twitter favored the left.

Another new feature has been allowing users to purchase the Twitter verification symbol by paying an \$8 monthly fee (\$8 on Twitter Blue and \$11 on the app store, according to Vox.) known as Twitter Blue. Users were having a ball with this feature, some going as far as impersonating former president George W. Bush. Companies were affected, such as pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly seeing a dip in their stock after an impersonating account tweeted that the company would offer free insulin. The subscription was temporarily paused and then resumed with updates. There are now gold and gray check marks as well: gold check marks are for companies and gray are for government officials. There are some inconsistencies though. Vox says the gray checkmark "goes to government institutions as well as some individuals, although it doesn't appear that every government official qualifies..." The blue check marks will need to be paid for by those famous and those not starting in a few months. In the meantime, the legacy blue check marks will remain for celebrities and can be purchased by the public as well. Vox notes, "So, for a few months, some of the blue checks you see will belong to people who

paid for them and some will belong to people who didn't, but who are notable."

According to Vox, Twitter has also seen an increase in amounts of hate speech under Musk: "Some of the users posting felt emboldened by Musk's 'free speech absolutist' attitude, and actively tried to test the limits of what they could say on Twitter under the company's new leadership."

Because of this, advertisers have also been worried about where their advertisements might show up on the platform. According to The Atlantic, "They [companies] saw this as a potential threat to what advertisers call 'brand safety,' because it would make it more likely that their ads would end up next to deceptive or offensive content." This could lead to negatively impacted sales and has caused some companies to halt their advertisements on Twitter.

A scandal known as the "Twitter Files" has also rocked the company. The Twitter Files are a multiple part Twitter thread surrounding Twitter's internal documents posted by journalists Matt Taibbi and Bari Weiss, and author Michael Shellenberger. This information was forwarded by Musk, who was eager to see the release.

The threads were created to shed light on apparent Democratic influences over Twitter and the suppression of news for left wing advantages. Taibbi first shared information surrounding "Twitter's content moderation decision-making, including the call to suppress a 2020 New York Post story about Hunter Biden and his laptop," according to CNN. Additionally, CNN says Musk says he didn't read the released files beforehand after the first were released. There are five parts of the

Twitter Files as of now. The second part posted by Bari Weiss claims certain conservative accounts have been "shadowbanned" in the past, meaning their content is not boosted, according to Vox. The remaining parts by Taibbi, Weiss, and Shellenberger surround apparent details of Donald Trump's Twitter account leading up to his ban.

But other journalists have criticized Musk for other recent decisions. Recently, Musk also banned the account of multiple journalists from different outlets. According to the Washington Post, "Musk suggested on Twitter, without evidence, that the journalists had revealed private information about his family, known as doxing." Additionally, he banned the account ElonJet, which would track his plane location using publicly available information.

All these changes and pushback came to a head when Musk posted a poll in December asking whether or not he should step down as CEO and said he would respond accordingly. The poll voted in favor of his resignation, with 57.5% voting "Yes."

Following the poll, Musk seemed to be in favor of the idea of changing polling to Twitter Blue subscribers only. CNN says limited voters to Twitter Blue "could dramatically reduce the number of Twitter users who could vote in polls."

But ultimately, this proposed change did not seem to matter. On December 20, Musk officially announced he will resign as the CEO of Twitter once he finds his replacement. Only time will tell when we'll see a new CEO of Twitter.

Things under Musk's leadership are changing rapidly. Due to Winter Break, December 21, 2022, will be the last day this article is updated.

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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.

Rapper Kanye West's reputation harmed after antisemitic posts

By MOTAZ DEIFY
Staff Writer

The sensational songs of rapper Kanye West (currently known as Ye) have reached the US Billboard Top 100 with four number-one hit singles, and his songs have regularly trended on Spotify, Apple Music, and other music platforms. He has accumulated an average of 51 million monthly listeners around the world, according to a statement from the New York Times.

However, over the last few months, West's reputation was harmed over a different type of media: the many antisemitic comments he made on his social media accounts that have threatened hate and violence against Jews.

One of the first comments that sparked widespread anger across social media was when West said that he would "death con 3 on Jewish people." According to the Washington Post, this comment refers to Defcon, the United States military defense readiness system, in which implied the idea of genocide—the mass murder of an ethnic group.

Some of West's other remarks on Twitter praised Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler. As explained in an article from EuroNews that addresses West, the rapper remarked, "I'm tired of labels, every human being has brought something of value, especially Hitler," despite the tragic events that were caused by Hitler's regime, such as the Holocaust. He then expressed his admiration for Hitler with the phrase, "I love Hitler."

Back in mid-October, West's Twitter

account was suspended due to the antisemitic remarks he made in his tweets. The suspension was lifted in late October after the current CEO (who eventually might step down, as of December 21) Elon Musk acquired the platform. However, after West tweeted an image of a swastika inside the star of David in early December, his Twitter was claimed permanently suspended by Musk and still is as of publication.

After these posts, many businesses decided to cut ties with West, such as Adidas, which created West's shoe brand, Yeezys.

On social media, many comments of anger and disappointment were shown towards West; many individuals and groups in the Jewish community criticized West for all of his antisemitic comments. For example, the Republican Jewish Coalition called West "vile and [a] repugnant cultist," according to a quote from EuroNews. The coalition also identified West as an outcast to the Republican Party, since Republicans such as former president Donald Trump tolerated West as a supporter of Trump during his presidency, and even recently after his presidency; according to CBS News, their most recent encounter was when they both had dinner with white nationalist Nick Fuentes at his Mar-a-Lago estate in late November. However, Trump stated that he was unaware of West's intentions that he would arrive with Fuentes, but proceeded to dine in with them regardless.

Many critics brought up West's bipolar disorder after the scandal had occurred. West was diagnosed with bipolar disorder in 2016. According to The Economic Times, West claims that

he was "mentally misdiagnosed," and also added that he was "drugged out of his mind to act as a well-behaved celebrity."

However, critics say there are many flaws to questioning the correlation between West's actions of antisemitism and his bipolar disorder.

"Bipolar disorder is not an excuse because it has nothing to do with being antisemitic," said junior Derya Kravitz. "I think Kanye has no reason to be speaking on semitism and I don't see how he even came to that position to share his voice," Kravitz added.

As a result of West's comments, many other celebrities such as American socialite and influencer Kim Kardashian, who was previously married to West, shared her support for the Jewish community on her Twitter account. She tweeted, "hate speech is never OK or excusable. I stand together with the Jewish community and call on the terrible violence and hateful rhetoric towards them to come to an immediate end."

Kardashian's response came from the public urging for her to raise awareness about West's harmful actions. Many others, though, told her to not be concerned about tackling the issue, since their relationship ended in 2021, before West made those antisemitic comments in the first place.

Recently, Adidas has decided that they will still continue to release and sell Yeezys within the next year but under one condition—the shoes are being sold without West. However, since West's net worth of \$1.5 million came partially from Adidas and Yeezys, his income is most likely to drop.



Iran's Protests: The causes and effects

By ISADORA KAUFMAN
Staff Writer

Living in the United States, the two couples hugging in the image to the right may not grab your attention, but in Iran, this embrace is an open defiance to the strict laws imposed by the Iranian government.

The Iranian government is a theocracy, where political power is mainly exercised by those belonging to a particular religion: in this case, Islam. The Iranian government, heavily influenced by Islamic ideals, places a high importance on modesty and behavioral codes.

According to the foreign travel advice section of GOV.UK, these Islamic codes restrict many aspects of life in the country, dictating aspects of social and cultural life such as what type of relationships are allowed, who and how one may interact with, and how one should dress, particularly for women.

Protests against the Iranian government have become more prevalent following the death of protester Mahsa Amini on September 16, 2022. Amini was arrested for wearing clothing deemed "inappropriate" by the morality police, a section of Iran's police force whose responsibility is to enforce the government's interpretation of

Islamic law and ideals regarding modesty and interactions.

While the government eliminated Iran's morality police on December 4, in response to the protests, they have continued to respond in ways that attempt to silence the voices of Iranian protesters. According to CNN, the death toll of Iranian protests continues to rise, reaching at least 326 deaths since the protests first began last fall, and the number of protestors that are incarcerated continues to increase as well.

The Iranian protests have not only been grabbing the world's attention due to their size, but by the unifying force they seem to have on the people of Iran. Like many countries, Iran has suffered from ethnic cleavages for years. However, as the protests have continued, Euronews shared a shocking observation from Ramyar Hassini, a spokesman for a human rights organization: "For the first time in the history of Iran since the Islamic Revolution, there is this unique unity between the ethnicities. Everyone is chanting the same slogan. Their demand is the same."



The protests have taken many forms, Euronews reveals, such as refusals to sing Iran's national anthem, burning of hijabs, strikes in schools, torching of buildings, and more.

A method of protesting that has gained popularity on social media worldwide is the public cutting of women's hair in order to openly rebel against the strict laws that declare Iranian women must wear hijab in public.

The hashtag #HairForFreedom has been created to promote the movement.

According to the United States Institute of Peace, celebrities from other countries have also openly participated in the movement such as the French Oscar-winning actress Juliet Binoche.

Despite the clear threat that

protesting poses for those participating, the Iranian people don't give any sign that they will raise a white flag any time soon. According to The New York Times, it is now becoming more common to see Iranian women publicly without hijab, including Iranian athletes and actors who are seen on television. People share how Iranian athlete Elnaz Rekabi, a rock climber, competed at the Asian championships without wearing a hijab, defying the Islamic requirement to wear a hijab even when participating in sporting competitions outside of Iran.

While the protests cause destruction and conflict, they have united the Iranian people in not only rebellion against their government, but in the fight for change and in the fight for their freedom.

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The past and present of the ceaseless bloodshed between Russia and Ukraine

By *PATRINA PUN*
Staff Writer

Russia and Ukraine—two feuding nations with great history that has bled into the present time. The history behind how this disastrous war began and how it has greatly escalated.

Dating back to the 1700s, according to CBS, much of Ukraine's territory was under the Russian empire. Even after a desperate attempt for independence through a series of military and political conflicts from 1917 to 1921, Ukraine evidently lost and soon then became a part of the Soviet Union. Yet, not all hope was lost as Ukraine was still able to develop their own sense of culture and freely speak Ukrainian. Fortunately, on December 1, 1991, a few years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Ukraine successfully voted for independence from the Soviet Union. Although the USSR at the time harbored slight hesitancy and bitterness to recognize Ukraine's independence, they eventually did come to peace with the idea and announced their acknowledgment—and the dissolution of the Soviet Union—shortly after.

However, this “peace” only lasted so long. According to Vox, in November 2013, President Victor Yanukovich, the president of Ukraine at the time, rejected a deal for Ukraine's greater integration with the

European Union. This deal was an excellent way for Ukraine to integrate and harmonize with other fellow European nations and fully break apart from Russia. Undoubtedly, this rejection sparked mass protests and a large amount of mass media coverage. President Yanukovich, along with the support of Russia, responded with immense violence, leading to Yanukovich's ouster as he was then soon run out of the country by protesters.

In desperation to salvage its influence on Ukraine, in 2014 Russia invaded and annexed Crimea, a small region in Ukraine under Russian occupation at the time. The conflict began to worsen as Russian rebels then invaded eastern Ukraine. This began Russia's vicious fight for Ukraine as Vladimir Putin, the current president of Russia, believes that Ukraine is a greater part of Russia.

To no surprise, almost a year ago on February 24, 2022, Russian forces officially invaded Ukraine a second time. President Putin authorized a “special military mission” against the country, hoping to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine and end alleged genocide against Russians in the country, an unfounded allegation.

What entailed to this “military mission” authorized by President Putin according to Conflict on Foreign Relations, were long-range missile strikes that were initially fired to damage Ukrainian military assets, urban residential areas, and

communication and transportation infrastructures. Much of the residential areas also held innocent citizens who were victim to executions, torture, and rape.

By the summer of 2022, the fighting was primarily concentrated in the east and south of Ukraine, with Russian cruise missiles, bombs, cluster munitions, and thermobaric weapons devastating port cities. Russia had even seized several Ukrainian ports and initiated a blockade of food exports.

Regarding the United States in the midst of this war, NATO, which is made up of numerous countries globally including the United States, is heavily involved in this affair.

President Joe Biden had previously reduced information-sharing constraints and allowed for broader dissemination of intelligence and findings with allies and the public to boost allies' defenses and dissuade Russia from taking any aggressive action.

Taking notice of this, Russia's foreign ministry called on NATO to cease military activity and even threatened to take action if NATO were to refuse. NATO responded by threatening to impose economic sanctions.

Fortunately for Ukraine, in the midst of this, continues to receive financial aid from the United States. As of December 20th, according to CNN, there are even plans for President Volodymyr Zelensky of

Ukraine to meet President Biden in the near future.

However even with the favorable assistance from the United States, according to CNN, thousands of innocent Ukrainians who are stuck in the midst of this war are still suffering. According to Statista, as of December 18th, 6,826 Ukrainians have been killed, 428 of them are children. As of Russia's death toll in Ukraine, according to Mediazona, as of December 16th, 10,229 Russian soldiers have been killed. Yet, it is worth noting that this death toll is only based on publicly available reports. It is safe to assume that the real death toll may be significantly higher than what is recorded thus far.

Furthermore, contributing to the high rate of deaths in Ukraine, as of last month, according to CNN, there has been eight waves of missile attacks recently that have caused damage to 40% of the country's high-voltage network facilities; and as winter is quickly approaching, having no electricity will prove to be a serious issue for Ukrainian citizens. Furthermore, Ukraine has taken action by setting off multiple explosions in Russian dominated cities and striking Russian air bases.

Though this war may not be discussed as often anymore on news broadcasts, chaos still remains and lives are continuously being taken day by day. As long as the war continues, so will the rising tension and pressure.

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!

Do you have a special talent?:

If you do, the annual QO Talent Show is coming up on January 20 at 7 PM. This is the perfect opportunity for QO students to showcase their unique talents and for the QO community to support them. While auditions were held January 3 and 4, everyone should still attend the event to support our talented student body. All participants will attend a rehearsal on January 19 to prepare for the show. Cash prizes will be awarded to the winners with third place receiving \$100, second place receiving \$150, and first place receiving the grand prize of \$200. Admission will be \$5 for adults with a student discount of \$3. According to a recent post on @sqaqhs on Instagram, “more information will be released shortly,” so make sure to check out their account if you would like to hear more information.



The Cat's Tale Literary Magazine:

It's that time of year again! QO's very own student-run Literary Magazine is calling all students with creative talent to submit works in areas such as poetry, photography, stories, sheet music, and other forms of art to be published in this year's edition. The QO Literary Magazine, “The Cat's Tale,” is a compilation of students' creative works that is published annually. “[Each year we] decide on a theme for our magazine, collect submissions up until mid to late February, edit the submissions, and then compile all of the edited works into a layout,” says editor-in-chief and senior Lauren Pyon. Submissions should be sent to qohslitmag@gmail.com by mid to late

February, and make sure to use your personal email to send your submissions. Follow @qohslitmag on Instagram to stay up to date on new information.



Student highlight of the month:

Junior Tyler Phughphud is calling fellow QO students with a desire to make an impact to join the QO chapter of Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS)'s Student of the Year Campaign. Working as co-president alongside junior Lexi Fiallo, Phughphud will spearhead a six to eight week initiative to raise money in “honor of a young, local patient who is battling or in remission from blood cancer,” according to the Student of the Year highlight on the LLS website.

From January 21 through March

13, Phughphud says he will be “planning fundraiser events, reaching out to companies, and working hard to raise as much money as possible to reach the chapter's fundraising goal.” Phughphud continued, explaining that if the chapter “raises a certain amount of money, they are invited to attend the gala at the end of the campaign.” Attendees of this gala are capable of receiving the coveted “Student of the Year” award. The honorable “Student of the Year” title is awarded to the candidate or team who raises the most money at the end of the campaign, according to the LLS website.

Phughphud encourages QO students to reach out to him through his email, iphughphud@gmail.com, if you're interested in joining his chapter and to help fund research to find a cure for blood cancer.

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.



LLS WEBSITE



New year, new me?

Students reflect on the value of New Year's resolutions

By CHASE PASEKOFF
Staff Writer

The clock struck 12 on Sunday morning. "How are we in 2023 already?" you might have thought to yourself, memories from this past year, and reflections on past decisions, flooding your brain. Perhaps there were things you wished you'd done differently, or put more time into.

For those looking for a "quick fix," many will turn to the classic, good old-fashioned New Year's resolutions.

Some of the most popular resolutions include aiming for a healthier lifestyle, enduring less screen time, undergoing better sleep habits - and the list goes on and on.

Although notorious for not being sustainable, New Year's resolutions are still very popular, with many news sources and publications giving their readers suggestions on what their resolution should be. However, the number of people who are able to keep these resolutions alive dwindles by the day. It seems after the first few weeks or so, these resolutions seem to completely fade away. Why is that?

For most, the start of the new year is the perfect time to try something new. A clean slate. A new chapter. An opportunity to fix the mistakes you've made over the past year. Yet, as we see time and time again, these changes seem to fall short.

The most common and apparent reason is a combination of two factors: lack of commitment and unrealistic

standards. Many want easy success, but don't care for putting in the time and effort necessary to get the results.

"Some people are just not truly committed to it as they were at the beginning of the year," said freshman Bella Young. "If you have a motivated mindset, you can actually achieve your goals."

Other QO students shared a similar sentiment. "I think when people make goals they can't do, they

get discouraged and just give up," said junior Tahsin Haque. "People don't want to stick with something they think is impossible."

When someone sets out to create a resolution so out of reach from what they're capable of, they're bound to fail within the first few weeks, thus leading to a negative mindset. People tend to dream big and set goals for themselves that are beyond their capabilities. "I think if people try and

'shoot for the stars,' they're just going to be getting upset," Haque added.

Another reason for resolution failure can be setting goals to please others instead of pleasing yourself. "I think a big reason resolutions don't work is because people are making them appeal to society's standards," said junior Alina Miller. "If you're not making the goal for yourself, you're never going to meet it."

Often, people look at others as a sign of what they should be, which is a potential reason why many cannot reach these unattainable goals. Societal pressures and norms are constantly pushing damaging and harmful ideas as to what is considered "normal." Resolution or not, this can quickly create a toxic mindset. "If we look at other people and think that's what we need to be, we'll never be satisfied," Miller added.

Overall, setting goals is never a bad thing in and of itself, but it is important to make sure these goals are being made to benefit yourself, and that they are attainable and realistic. Whether it be eating better, spending more time with family, or learning to stop procrastinating on schoolwork, sometimes less is more. By starting with smaller milestones, it makes the end result that much more of an accomplishment.

With all of this in mind, maybe 2023 is the year for you to make a positive change, and let's hope these changes last longer than a week!



"If you have a motivated mindset, you can actually achieve your goals." - Bella Young

Cougar Dash deliveries: The Extensions Program's school store

By FIONA FEINGOLD
Editor-in-Chief

It's not uncommon for teachers to reward deserving students with food. Pieces of candy for winning Kahoots and unexpected treats brought to class are welcomed with open arms and wider mouths. Now, it's time for students to return the favor.

Run by the Extensions Program, the Cougar Dash store delivers snacks and drinks to staff members on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The store was founded in March, initially operating as a storefront rather than a delivery service. As of December 19, about 25 staff members have opted into receiving deliveries.

The store offers a variety of food items for sale, including popcorn, candy, soda, and sparkling water. Popular items include Veggie Straws, Skinny Pop, Coke Zero and La Croix. Accommodations for dietary restrictions can be made upon request.

"We try and have enough options [to] keep it a little bit healthier for staff," Andrew Wolf, an Extensions Behavior Support teacher, said. "Some would prefer more unhealthy things, but I think what we've offered has been successful as far as selection goes."

So, how exactly does the store work? Deliveries are prepared by



The store offers a variety of food items for sale.

students during third period. To assist students in sorting orders, Extensions teachers mark up laminated order sheets. These reference sheets make it easier for students to find the specific items in an order. "We always try to make sure we have a visual for students... It's helpful for students who

are [nonverbal]," Wolf said.

Orders are then packaged in paper bags and placed in a delivery basket. During periods 4 and 5, students deliver the items to staff members. Following each delivery, students stamp a punch card to verify the order.

The store aims to help students develop "functional and life skills they will use once they leave [the Extensions] Program," according to Wolf. "The more we can teach those independent skills, the better off they'll be when they exit school."

Students involved with the store "have to pick out the right items... [and] have some level of social skills to deliver and count," he added.

Since many Extensions students go out during the day, Wolf tries to rotate which students deliver items. "I try to give everybody the opportunity to deliver so they're all developing these skills," Wolf said.

Overall, Wolf believes the store has been beneficial for Extensions students. "It's been a very good thing for our program, and I think the staff at QO have been very supportive," Wolf said.

Staff members can opt into deliveries by filling out a Google Form. Punch cards are sold for \$10 each.

"It's been a very good thing for our program, and I think the staff at QO have been very supportive." - Andrew Wolf

WHAT WAS NEWS IN 2022

BY Hayley Asai, Kate Belman, & Sophie Fawkner

JANUARY

A destructive eruption occurred on January 14 in the island of Tonga, which is south of Western Samoa. Due to the strong eruption that blasted ash into the atmosphere, it then caused deadly tsunamis across the Pacific, and even affected places as far away as Peru. Though the extent of the natural disaster was extreme, it is still unclear how many casualties there were, since most of the telecommunication towers were destroyed by ash.

FEBRUARY

Adele, a well-known British singer and songwriter, won the BRIT Awards on the 8th. She won Best Artist, Song, and Album of the Year. At the time, Adele was praised for her worldwide sensation of a song, "Easy On Me." The hit was so popular and loved by so many people that she not only won the BRIT awards this year, but she even had won in previous years with nine awards and 16 nominations.

MARCH

On March 8, quarterback Aaron Rodgers who played for the Green Bay Packers made a shocking decision to remain with the Green Bay Packers for the rest of his football career. Now here's the shocking part. In part of his pretty short and brief four year deal he received, he was offered a whopping \$200 million dollars, which would put him up there for being the highest paid player in all of NFL history.

APRIL

Actors Chris Rock and Will Smith were both involved in a very interesting heated beef at the Academy Awards. Comedian and actor, Chris Rock, called actress Jada Pinkett Smith 'GI Jane' due to her hair loss condition. As a result, her husband, Will Smith gave Rock a slap on the face. Due to Will Smith's very questionable behavior represented at the Academy Awards, Smith is now banned from the Oscars for 10 years.

MAY

On May 12, North Korea ordered a national lockdown due to the deadly rise of COVID cases, specifically with the Omicron variant. North Korea was heavily surprised due to the fact that they were receiving their "first" ever cases. Due to the 25 million non-vaccinated people in North Korea, and those who are unaccounted for, this caused even more questions for the world and why North Korea wasn't so quick to act.

JUNE

During June, actor Johnny Depp and actress Amber Heard finished up their six-week trial relating to their marriage. The court ruling in Depp's favor, and awarding him \$15 million in damages. Depp and Heard were married for less than 2 years. Depp claimed that Heard went from a caring and adoring wife to someone who was constantly abusing and attacking him. Heard claimed that her husband had subjected her to years of abuse. He sued her for \$50 million after she had written an op-ed for the Washington Post claiming to have been a "public figure representing domestic abuse."

JULY

25 year-old Olympic gymnast Simone Biles was awarded with the US Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Joe Biden. Biles is the youngest person to ever receive the prestigious award. With 7 Olympic medals, she is tied with Shannon Miller for the most Olympic medals won by an American gymnast. She has won 25 World Championship medals, and is called the most decorated gymnast in history.

AUGUST

US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan, calling it "one of the freest societies in the world." She was the first speaker to visit the country in over 25 years. Pelosi wanted to make it "unequivocally clear" that the United States wouldn't be abandoning the country after she met the President, Tsai Ing-wen, on her visit. Taiwan is a country in East Asia, with a population of over 23 million people.

SEPTEMBER

The world was shocked on September 6, 2022 by Queen Elizabeth II's death. The monarch had reigned for over 70 years, marking the longest reign by any British monarch. The Queen passed away at her summer home, Balmoral Castle. Her funeral was held on September 19, and she was laid to rest in the King George VI Memorial Chapel. The Queen's death sparked both sadness and joy for millions, who all recalled her complicated legacy.

OCTOBER

158 people were killed in a crowd crush on Halloween in the Korean city Itaewon. An estimated 100,000 people gathered on Halloween to celebrate the holiday among the city's bars and restaurants. The victims of the crowd crush found themselves being pushed into a narrow alleyway where they lost control. This tragedy occurred while the Korean President, Yoon Suk-yeol's ratings were at a record low. Ninety seven families of the victims stepped up and asked Yoon to resign, blaming the lives lost on his negligence of safety.

NOVEMBER

Wednesday, the viral Netflix TV series, was released on November 23, 2022. The series stars a familiar figure: Wednesday Addams of the Addams Family. The series focuses on Wednesday, played by Jenna Ortega, as she starts school at Nevermore Academy. There, she finds herself amid new friends and foes, tied up in an enticing mystery. The edgy, goth aesthetic of Wednesday took the internet by storm, sparking a flurry people replicating the iconic Wednesday look. Currently, Wednesday has garnered over 1.2 billion hours of watch time, coming in third for Netflix's most watched TV series.

DECEMBER

SZA is back. It's been over four years since her debut album, CTRL, came out. Since then, she's been busy and has released 16 singles. However, what fans were waiting for was another album. On November 30, SZA posted the cover of her new album, SOS, on her Instagram, hinting at what was to come. Ten days later, SZA released her sophomore album to the world. Fans were astounded by the emotional depth on the album, which cemented SZA as a musical talent. The album even went #1 on Billboard 200.



Q&A about QO's Tutoring Program

By *MADISON SHERMAN*
Editor-in-Chief

The co-leaders of the QO Tutoring Program, English Teacher, Skyra Blanchard, and Special Education Teacher, Melissa Brown, share their experience. In addition to the QO sector of program, MCPS provides more educational resources, such as free online homework help through the platforms FEV and Tutor Me, where students can book virtual sessions with certified tutors, with or without cameras, to get their questions answered.

Q. What inspired you to run the QO Tutoring Program and when was this program established?

Brown: I wanted to work with students after school in order to support them academically. I was asked to Co-lead the CARES Tutoring Program, and I thought that the program was a great way to support students and allow the students to feel more confident about their learning. I

also tutor students that need to work on Executive Functioning Skills.

Blanchard: MCPS started the program last year under the name Cares Tutoring to combat the learning loss that Covid created due to mostly ineffective online learning scenarios experienced by many students. When Mrs. Lee approached me about being the lead with Ms. Scherer last year, I was motivated to be a part of it because I could easily see the effects of Covid on many of our students, and I wanted to help them find help. I also felt like the program required many of the skills that I continue to develop as an educator: personability, organization, and clarity.

Q. Ms. Brown, being a new staff member, what inspired you to run a program and get involved in the QO community?

Brown: As a new teacher, I wanted to get involved in the QO community to build relationships with students and staff.

Q. How does the tutoring program work? Does the program

take place on certain days?

Brown: The tutoring program is run Monday-Thursday in the school building after school or virtually in the evening. We also have some tutors that will tutor Saturday morning.

Blanchard: A limited number of QO staff members serve as MCPS tutors, who help students with content recovery, IEP goals, and preparation for upcoming learning in their classes.

Q. How has the QO Tutoring Program impacted the overall QO community?

Brown: The program has allowed teachers to work with a small group of students, or with students one on one. The students are able to work with a teacher that teaches the subject during the school day, so they are getting tutored on the curriculum they are currently learning or will be learning. Tutors are able to frontload information to students, see where students are making mistakes, and give feedback while the student is being tutored.

Blanchard: The program impacts

the students who are enrolled, as their grades are positively impacted by the consistent aid in learning skills and concepts that may have been missed in earlier grades or class periods for one reason or another. I think the community likes that these types of equitable learning opportunities are available so that money is not a divisive factor when it comes to growing and learning. Additionally, the quality of tutoring is not impacted by money either—our tutors are all knowledgeable teachers and support personnel from QO.

Q. How do you both manage a busy work schedule with teaching and leading a program?

Brown: I use a calendar and write out a to-do list for each day to make sure I am meeting deadlines and completing tasks.

Blanchard: I think I can speak for us both when I say, teachers are always asked to do too much, and we rise to the occasion because we care about students.

Excited about snow days? Think about your impact on our climate first, students say

By *CHASE PANTEZZI*
Staff Writer

Now that winter has set in again, QO students mentally prepare for the chilling cold and constant fluctuation of Maryland weather. While there is only one snow day left before days are added to the school calendar, students still hope for snow days to relieve their stress and have some fun enjoying the cold weather.

Senior Laurel Snow was thrilled for this winter. "I love snow. I especially love skiing. I also love aesthetically drinking hot chocolate—I love it all," she said.

Senior Josie Belkin was also excited. "Looking outside and seeing the landscape covered in white brings me so much joy!" Belkin said. Her favorite part of winter is reading books with a view of the snow.

However, the joy we experience when it snows may soon become more rare. As the effects on our climate worsen, climate activists have been calling on government leaders to take action for decades. In many parts of the world, we can see the effects of climate change as sea levels rise and endangered species suffer.

In Maryland, it seems to be up to debate how climate change manifests itself in the form of winter weather. Senior Lauren Pyon said she thought that snow has actually increased recently in January and February due to climate change.

In contrast, Belkin, an AP Environmental Science (APES) student, disagreed, saying that "the amount of snow is slowly decreasing, but people don't seem to realize it because we occasionally do get a lot of snow."

Snow, also an APES student, wasn't sure. "I think the reason why we feel like it has snowed less is because we have a skewed perspective from when we were younger," she said.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency's website, Maryland's snowfall is decreasing by 0.3 to 0.1% per year on average, according to a graph of increases and decreases in snowfall throughout the

US. It explains that it rains more in some places due to water evaporating from lands and oceans after experiencing warmer temperatures. A key point to remember is that the fluctuation of types of precipitation in Maryland may be because climate

change leads to an increase in other types of precipitation everywhere.

Students interviewed said that the worst parts of climate change are how people and animals are affected, as well as those who refuse the facts.

"[Climate change] disproportionately affects people in third world countries or those with lower incomes, because if you're

living in the middle of nowhere or don't have the same access to resources, it becomes a problem," Snow said.

"Climate change is bad enough in itself, but when people choose to ignore the tireless acts and facts presented by experts, it's incredibly frustrating," said Pyon.

Fortunately, there is action we can take to try to retain Maryland's snowy weather and protect our planet. "The most important thing we can do is pressure our government to restrict multi-billion dollar corporations like Amazon that send trillions of tons of fossil fuels into our atmosphere," said Snow. She added that every person needs to take initiative, and that is the only way that government officials will actually take action.

Belkin added, "One of the most important things people can do to negate the effects of climate change is try to reduce your carbon footprint. For example, I'm vegetarian to reduce mine."

One of the overarching points that students agreed on was that everyone needs to become more educated in order to put pressure on

those in positions of power to take change. Belkin said that taking classes such as APES or Environmental Sustainability, as well as joining QO's environmental club, is one effective way to accomplish that goal.

"Our health and well-being are inherently linked to nature, so it's only fair that we, as individuals, are taking on the role of being protective of our planet earth," said Pyon. "The more educated we are, the more action we'll want to take in order to drive us towards a more informed society."

"When people choose to ignore the tireless acts and facts presented by experts, it's incredibly frustrating"
- *Lauren Pyon*



CHASE PANTEZZI

Students get to enjoy sights such as evergreen trees covered with snow, along with a day off from school, during many Maryland winters.

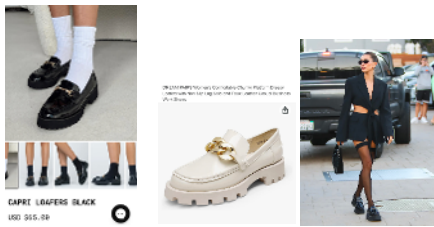
Winter Essentials

By MADISON SHERMAN
Editor-in-Chief

It's that time of year: your breath becomes visible in the bitter air, jagged icicles form on dainty tree branches, and heavy snow falls down from the sky. All you want to do is wrap yourself in a cozy sweater and put on some UGGs—two simple winter staples. Nevertheless, however tempting this may be, the 2023 winter season brings excitement in wardrobe choices, from oversized winter jackets and layered corsets to the return of '80s leg warmers, which, in my opinion, have never gone out of style.

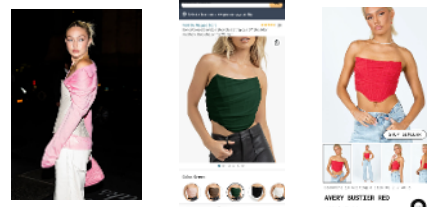
Chunky Platforms: Elevate your shoe game with loafers, an undeniable standout this season and timeless wardrobe staple. Consider a classic black, brown, or white color to go with everything and anything. Style them to form an effortlessly cool street-wear look featuring a blazer, some sunnies, and baggy jeans, or mimic Hailey Bieber's chic all-black look with a black cutout mini dress and tall sheer stockings. Get yours from Amazon or Princess Polly.

High-street wear options:



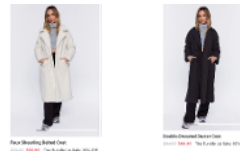
Layered Corsets: It's all about the layering this season! Corsets were a top trend this past summer, but that doesn't mean they can't be worn in the winter months. Celebrity Gigi Hadid took an avant-garde approach to the layered corset trend in her bubblegum pink button-down, a cinched off-white corset, and bright white frayed baggy jeans, paired with a complementary Barbie pink mini bag and pointy heel. Replicate your own Gigi Hadid look with a colorful button-down, distressed jeans, and a corset of your choice.

High-street wear options from Amazon:



Oversized jackets: The so-called "Tent Coat," according to Bustle, is the "statement outerwear trend you want to try this winter." Anything puffy, wool, cotton, cashmere, or leather will do the trick.

Cheaper options from Forever 21:



High-street wear options:



Leg warmers: Leg warmers are back and here to stay. One of the sickest options on the market for leg warmers is denim cutoffs. Leg warmers can be paired with strappy heels or even loafers. Get yours from Revice Denim



Schoolgirl vests: Sweater vests are on the rise, with countless options to choose from. The sweater vest was featured in New York Fashion Week, proving its popularity for this past fall season, but its popularity remains for the winter season as well. Some of my favorite vest designs include Mango's preppy and retro baby blue v-neck vest with bold white, gray, and black lines surrounding the edges, Rag & Bone's bohemian-styled vest with patchwork and a mix of warm and cool tones, and Sea Angne's earthy vibed crochet vest with a collared neck.

Films with Winter Vibes

By MAMS JAGHA
Staff Writer

As the cold winter air approaches, being swallowed by a fluffy blanket near the fireplace, or feeling snug under your covers, with a computer in your lap, smelling the aroma emitted by a scented candle goes along with this cozy time of year.

To fully experience the winter season, the ideal movie is the most essential part of the list. These are a couple of unique movies I would for this time of year.

Home Alone (1990)

What better way to kick off the holiday season than with one of the most enjoyable, funny, (and a little violent) family-friendly movie.

When eight-year-old Kevin McCallister (Macaulay Culkin) gets in trouble the night before a family trip to Paris, his mother (Catherine O'Hara) makes him sleep in the attic. When the McCallisters mistakenly leave for the airport without Kevin, he wakes up to an empty house and assumes his wish to have no family has come true. But his wish soon turns sour when he realizes that two con men (Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern) plan to rob the house and that he must protect it. It is no wonder John Hughes, a writer/director/producer, wrote this film. His work in *The Breakfast Club*, *Ferris Buellers Day off*, and *Sixteen Candles* shine, through his classic approach to films and his incorporation of humor to create a warm-hearted mood in each scene. A Christmas film that I truly feel will never get old and is currently available on Amazon Prime Video, Disney+, etc.

The Grand Budapest Hotel (2014)

Wes Anderson presents one of his most visually pleasing, yet creatively brilliant stories in this masterpiece of a film. It takes place in the 1930s at the popular European ski resort, the Grand Budapest Hotel. The film follows concierge Gustave H. (Ralph Fiennes)

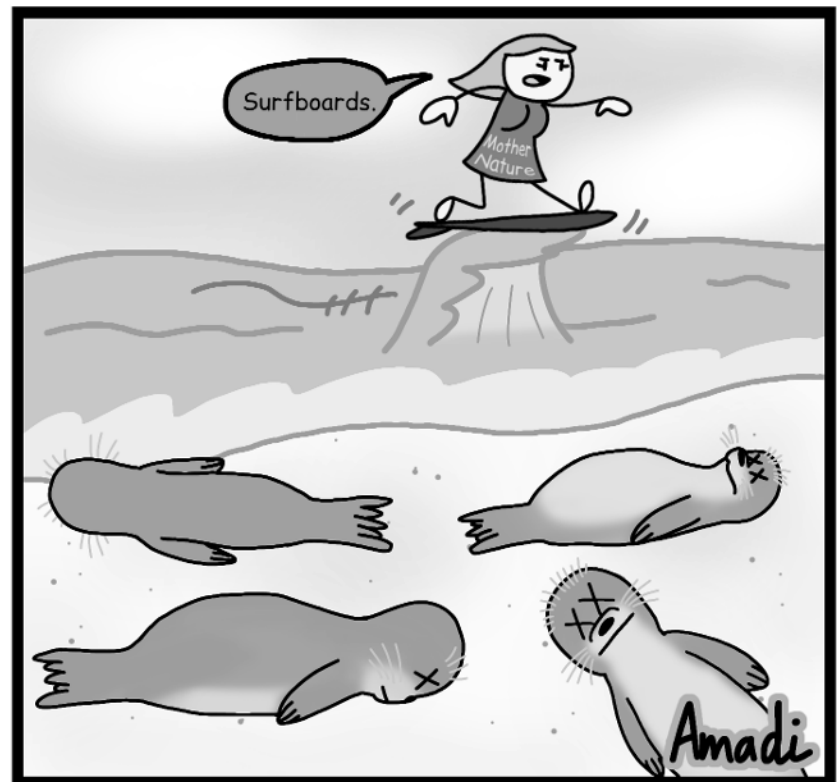
and his lobby boy, Zero (Tony Revolori). As one of Gustave's lovers dies unexpectedly, he is left with a valuable painting but is also the number one suspect in the murder. Enlisting the help of Zero, the two are now on the run from his former lover's family while trying to keep the picture safe. The picturesque compositions, meticulous color palette, stunning sets, production design, and sharp-witted actors all came together to create one of Anderson's most beautiful films. Though this isn't a traditional holiday film, the care and intricacy put into this film makes it feel like a warm hug fitting the mood for a cold winter day that you can watch on Hulu, Amazon Prime Video, and Apple TV.

Christmas with the Kranks (2004)

Though this may not be the best of the modern Christmas classics, it's not the worst. Also, it's kind of ironic that Tim Allen plays Santa Claus in *The Santa Clause* and a Scrooge sort of character in this. Luther (Tim Allen) and Nora Krank (Jamie Lee Curtis) decide to change things up for the holidays and take a cruise in the Caribbean instead. However, their Christmas-obsessed neighbors, Vic Frohmeyer (Dan Aykroyd) and Walt Scheel (M. Emmet Walsh) despise that idea. The Kranks soon find themselves outcasts because of their lack of Christmas spirit. This movie is a cheery and cheesy holiday classic. Although some may find it cliché, its nostalgic tone and lighthearted manner provides an easy-watching experience on platforms like Youtube, Apple Tv, etc.



PHOTO COURTESY OF Flickr



CARTOON BY FRESHMAN AMADI PINKNEY

"December 4, 2022"

In early December, thousands of endangered Caspian seals washed up on the Russian coast of the Caspian Sea. Russian authorities are unsure of what caused the deaths, though so far they believe the seals died from natural causes. Scan the QR code to read more.





Meet the new mind behind the boys basketball team

By **GRIFFIN OWENS**
Staff Writer

Basketball has certainly earned its reputation as one of the more entertaining sports out there. The sport's powerful dunks, flashy passes, and hypnotizing handles justify basketball as one of the most popular sports in the world, and are what make players like LeBron James, Steph Curry, and Kevin Durant some of the most famous athletes in the world.

However, while QO is known for many things, basketball is admittedly not at the top of the list. The reason behind this may be because there is one thing that other sports programs here have managed to achieve that the boys basketball team has not: a state championship.

The Cougars have had their fair share of success with multiple region championships and winning seasons, but they haven't been able to capture that elusive state champion title.

The closest the boys team came to a state championship was their two appearances in the state title game, most recently in 2017 with longtime coach and math teacher Paul Foringer.

However, with the introduction of first-year coach Mac Minturn, many are hoping that QO finally gets closer

to winning that state championship title.

Minturn was publicly announced as the new boys basketball head coach last spring. The April 2 announcement of Minturn's hiring was communicated by a statement from QO athletic director Jeff Rabberman, which was posted on the QO Athletics website and Twitter.

"Being the head coach at QO is an honor and also a big responsibility," said Minturn in a recent interview.

Minturn first got to know some of his players when he coached the Cougars over the summer at Maryland's Elite Varsity Summer League. "They [the team] are a hardworking group that has been very coachable," he said.

While this is Minturn's first year as the head coach of Cougars boys basketball, Minturn is far from a newbie in Montgomery County hoops. Minturn's coaching journey includes coaching stints at Seneca Valley for four years, where he regularly battled QO, in addition to two years at Bullis School in Potomac.

Minturn's playing experience has also helped him with his coaching success. From 2003-2007, Minturn played basketball for Damascus. He continued his playing career into college where he played for Frostburg State University for three years.

"I think having an understanding of what it is like to be a student athlete and being able to see things from their perspective helps you relate to the players," Minturn said.

During the Cougars' improbable run to the state finals in 2017, Minturn was coaching Seneca Valley, where he handed QO one of their three losses in that regular season.

"During my time at Seneca Valley, we had some great games against QO," he said. "They [QO] were always a tough and disciplined team, and you knew you were going to have to play well to beat them."

Minturn followed up his time with Bullis with one year coaching for his alma mater Damascus last season, where he achieved an impressive record of 20-3.

All of Minturn's coaching in the Gaithersburg area has made him no stranger to a lot of the schools in our county.

"I'm very familiar with the other schools [in the county] and how certain teams

play, so that definitely helps," he said.

In his first season here at QO, Minturn set out to build a foundation for a successful basketball program. "I hope to establish a culture of family, hard work, and commitment that our players live up to on and off the court," he said.

He also hopes that his players take away something more than just playing the game. "I hope they learn the value of being a part of a team and what being a great teammate means," he said.



TWITTER/@JAMESMINTURN1

All-state, all-county Cougars excel all around the field

By **MADELEINE BURKE and LILY KAPLAN**
Staff Writers

When it comes to superior athletes, QO has a surplus of them in every sport. One way for these athletes to be recognized for their talent is receiving an all-state or all-county award at the end of their season. This year there were 2 field hockey players, 12 football players, 2 boys soccer players, and 2 girls soccer players to receive this award.

Representing the girls soccer team are senior Lizzie Gelman and junior Annie Faraone.

Faraone has played the midfield position on varsity since her freshman year and was honored for multiple awards. She received first team all-met and first team all-state for the second year in a row. This year, she also received the all-south region award, making her one of the best soccer players not only within the state of Maryland, but the whole South region.

When Faraone first learned that she was chosen for these awards, she was happy and grateful for it, but her mind is only focused on one thing: how successful next year's season can be. This year, QO's girls soccer team fell to Whitman in the MPSSAA 4A State Finals. Nevertheless, Faraone is able to keep a positive attitude, saying, "I am super proud of the season we had."

On the field, Faraone stands out because of her movement off the ball

and being the connecting pass to many great plays. She has learned much of her skill from her club team coach of seven years, but recognizes QO Head Coach Peg Keiller, Assistant Coach Erin Kakalec and all of her teammates as well. Keiller was also named All-met coach of the year.

QO's football team has won the state championship two years in a row, and a key to their success is senior Zach Anderson. Anderson has been playing on the varsity football team since his sophomore year in the offensive line position. This is his second year being named first team all-county, and was named first team all-state last year. He also received the all-met award this year as well.

Anderson described being named all-county as "a representation of all of the hard work and effort I put into football over the last four years."

Anderson's presence on the field is a clear example of why he has been chosen for these awards last year and this year. His ability to dominate the field while being a leader to teammates is fundamental to QO's recent success.

Throughout his high school career, he said he has always looked up to his parents to be his role models in not only football, but other aspects of his life. When he first heard that he was chosen for these awards, his parents were the first people he told.

Anderson is hardly the only football player that is being recognized for his talent. This year, two QO players were also recognized as players of the year: senior Kendall

Johnson, who plays the defensive end and tight end positions, and junior Jaylen Harvey, who plays the defensive end position.

We also see field hockey getting recognized for all-state teams. They were being coached under Kathleen Sigwart, and had a very successful season this fall.

Senior Elizabeth Winter is on the varsity field hockey team, and this year she was named as an honorable mention. "It's basically like 3rd team," said Winter. This was a big honor because Winter is relatively new to the sport. She has been playing field hockey for all four years of high school; however, her main sport is lacrosse.

"I was honestly pretty shocked, especially because this isn't my main sport and I haven't been playing for that long," she said.

This award didn't come easy for Winter. "I always pushed myself to work hard and perform at practice and [it] paid off when it came to games," she said.

Zach Anderson	1st All-Met, 1st All-County	Football
Kendall Johnson	1st All-Met, POY All-County	Football
Jaylen Harvey	2nd All-Met, DPOY All-County	Football
Shae Terry	Hon. Mention All-Met, 1st All-County	Football
Savan Briggs	Hon. Mention All-Met, 1st All-County	Football
Iverson Howard	Hon. Mention All-Met, 1st All-County	Football
Tavahri Groves	1st All-County	Football
Matthieu Longa	1st All-County	Football
Ryan Sewall	Hon. Mention All-County	Football
Adrian Irby	Hon. Mention All-County	Football
Christian Hayes	Hon. Mention All-County	Football
Socrati Wurah	Hon. Mention All-County	Football
Angel Pelaez	Hon. Mention All-County	Football
Elisha West	Hon. Mention All-County	Football
Aydan West	Hon. Mention All-County	Football
Mike Mevo	Hon. Mention All-Met, 2nd All-State	Boys Soccer
Tomas Rebelatto	Hon. Mention All-Met, 1st All-State	Boys Soccer
Annie Faraone	1st All-Met, 1st All-State	Girls Soccer
Lizzie Gelman	Hon. Mention All-Met, 2nd	Girls Soccer
Peg Keiller	Coach of the Year All-Met	Girls Soccer
Emma Evans	Hon. Mention All-County	Girls Volleyball
Elizabeth Winter	Hon. Mention All-State, 2nd All-County	Field Hockey
Lila Moncak	2nd All-County	Field Hockey



Season Updates

Indoor Track

By LILY KAPLAN
Staff Writer

Our running Cougars don't quit—even in the cold of winter. These dedicated runners don't stop at anything to improve their times and running abilities. Although nine seniors left this team last year, we see the appearance of 15 freshmen.

Although not much has happened in the season yet, the running Cougars have had a few meets in the last few months.

Freshman Mikaela Pak placed 8th at the MCPS meet #1 long jump event, doing best out of all the QO girls varsity runners at that event. This is her first year running track, and she describes her team's performance as



BETH THOMAS

"pretty well," and that being new on the team has been "welcoming and everyone helps each other."

As for her own performance on the team, Pak has also described it as "pretty well," and that she has seen her "speed and stamina improving."

As much as we see these freshmen shining on the team, we also see the seniors continuing to work hard every day to become a better runner.

Senior Raihanna Terrell feels like she has been doing well so far. "I was able to decrease my time in the 55 meter dash," she said. Terrell was on the indoor track team freshman year, but then took a break in order to prepare for the oncoming track seasons and cross country seasons. This can also be said about Senior Gary Bellomy-Holub, who said that "I'm also excited to see how the work I have been doing in indoor track will translate to outdoor track in the spring."

However, for Terrell's senior year, she is back on the winter team, with intentions to improve and place varsity. Terrell would like to "run 7.8 second 55 [dash]." Terrell is still planning on improving during the season as it progresses.

The indoor track team has seemed to have had a good start. Even though it's cold, our running Cougars are committed to becoming faster and stronger every season.

Swim and Dive

By MADELEINE BURKE
Staff Writer

When temperatures begin to freeze, QO athletes move inside for their winter sports seasons. This means for many students that there is no better time to put your swimsuit on and dive into a pool.

This year, the QO swim and dive team is stacked with some of the fastest swimmers and highest skilled divers of our division. Everyone on the team has high expectations for the 2022-23 season.

Junior captain Ainsley Taylor has been swimming since she was four years old and it has really paid off. Taylor swims a 23.82 50 free, which makes her the fastest swimmer on the girls side of the team. Due to covid, she missed out on her freshman year, but luckily she was able to compete sophomore year. Due to this being Ainsley's first season as a captain, she has some goals set for the team.

"It's not about your time, it's about everyone putting their best effort to get their hand on the wall first," Taylor said.

The team practices twice a week at an indoor pool after school. During these hour-long practices, the team starts out with a warm-up, followed by a main set. Occasionally they will end with flip turns and dives.

While the swimmers are completing laps, the dive team is twisting and turning off boards into the pool. The team consists of 12 divers with a wide range of experience.

Because there isn't a specific diving coach, the captains lead the hour-long practices with feedback from the more experienced divers. The dive captains are junior Taylor Renzi and senior Lizzy Emerson.

While each competing 4 dives per meet, the starting lineup includes senior Maximus Seo, junior Cole Garver, junior Andrew Chen, Renzi, Emerson, and senior Mandy Vendittis.

Renzi first got into diving because of her older sister being on the dive team, but also because of her own past tumbling skills. She always knew the team was a fun experience, and wanted to continue that tradition as captain this season.

"We all cheer each other on and, no matter what, make sure nobody takes themselves too seriously," Taylor said.

Both swim and dive are known for their team chemistry and spirit. Taylor describes the team as enthusiastic and determined, and if you go to their next meet, you will see how both these statements are very true.

Towards the end of the swim season, qualifying swimmers are given the opportunity to compete in Metros—a championship meet that includes all the public and private schools in the area. Last year, Taylor was invited to the meet, and did so well that she also qualified to compete in the MPSSAA 4A/3A State Championship.

As of December 31, the team's record is 2-0 for boys and 1-1 for girls. Their next meet is tomorrow, January 7, against Poolesville.

Boys Basketball

By GRIFFIN OWENS
Staff Writer

The Cougars are looking to build off last year's successful season. Last year's team managed an impressive record of 11-7, and won their first game in the playoffs against Urbana before losing to rival Northwest in the second round of playoffs.

That was the team's best record since 2017, when they had advanced all the way to the state championship game before falling to Perry Hall.

However, this season is a little different: with the departure of multiple seniors, including former team captain and former scoring leader Drew Heinrichs '22, others will have to step up and take their place.

While it's still early in the season, those players seem to include seniors Savan Briggs, Collin Carter, and junior DJ Abegeasah, who scored 15 points against Richard Montgomery while Briggs scored 11 points in the season opener against Rockville.

This season, the team's most notable change, however, was the stepping down of math teacher Paul Foringer from coaching duties, and the introduction of new head coach Mac Minturn.

All of these changes have been a challenge to these promising Cougars, who are looking to recapture their magic from that 2017 season, something that the new coach seems to be working towards.

The Cougars have typically started the season strong, most recently

starting off 4-0 last year before ending up at their record of 11-7, and winning 5 of their first 6 games in the 2019-2020 season before ending up with a sub .500 record for the second straight year.

However, this year has been different, as the team started out losing four of their first five games.

Their season opener saw them keep it close with Rockville before an offensive explosion in the fourth quarter, which saw both teams score double digits in a game that slipped away from the Cougars.

In their third game, QO was leading the Gaithersburg Trojans by one point heading into the fourth quarter; they ended up losing by 19 points.

One thing the new coach is now stressing is the team's strategy on the defensive side of the ball. "We spend time every day working on ball defense. Being able to stay in front of the ball is a big part of being successful on defense," said Minturn.

In their one win against Seneca Valley, the Cougars held Coach Minturn's former team to only forty-four points, with Briggs scoring a double double with 11 points and 10 rebounds, and juniors Keyshawn Carter and Christian While also scoring in double digits.

It will take time for the team to adjust with new leaders taking the helm. QO will try to establish themselves and their way to win in their first season with a new head coach. Despite all of their setbacks to start the season, the team still aims to become dangerous by playoff time.



Girls Basketball

By SAMMY KRIMSTEIN
Editor-in-Chief

Over the past few years, Quince Orchard Girls Basketball has established itself as a winning program. Since the 2018-2019 season, they have been a constant fixture near the top of 4A West Region. Still, a region championship has eluded the Cougars. Their last trip to the region championship was during the 2019-2020 season, where they lost to the dominant Clarksburg Coyotes.

This year, Quince Orchard is looking to finally get over that hump. Led by head coach Bobby Bishop, the Cougars are off to a solid start. With a record of 6-2, the Cougars are counting on leadership from their seniors this year.

"Part of being a leader and a captain is recognizing that we are apart of something larger than ourselves so it's not just about us and our achievements," said senior Phoebe Dubios.

With eight seniors graduating last year, the team has introduced a new wave of younger players. Their relationships with the veterans off the floor have helped shape their performance on the floor.

"I think our bond has translated onto the court and is helping us keep each other calm on the court when the tension/emotion get high," said senior Jennifer Juhring, who is committed to play at Salisbury University.

Thus far, QO has seen their relationships off the court impact their game in a positive way. Over winter break, Quince Orchard hosted the QO Holiday Tournament, where teams from around the area came to QO to



MATTHEW MILLS

compete. With a shortened roster, everyone had to step up. Winning their first game in a low-scoring affair against Walter Johnson, QO beat Tuscarora in their second game by almost 20, clinching a tournament victory. The tournament was valuable experience in a playoff-like setting for Quince Orchard.

"This holiday tournament is going to help us prepare for playoffs..." said Juhring. "We learned how to fight through a close game and stay strong through the last quarter which is vital in playoffs when you're playing tough teams."

With 14 regular season games still ahead of them, the Cougars have been working to improve their game, so they're ready come playoff time. Focusing on their defensive rotations and offensive plays, QO hopes to bring an unrivaled level of intensity and mental toughness to each and every game.

"In the end we are a team and whether [we] win or we lose," said Dubios, "We do it together so working hard, remaining optimistic, and keeping up our competitive spirit is the goal."

The Cougars take on the undefeated Clarksburg Coyotes in a home game tonight at 7:15.



Q & A with Athletic Director Jeff Rabberman

By OLIVIA MAYTIN
Staff Writer

These responses have been edited for length and clarity.

Q: How long have you been an athletic director?

A: I have been an athletic director for the past six years.

Q: Before being an athletic director, you were a baseball coach. Can you explain [more about] that?

A: I've been a baseball coach for 15 years. I was an assistant coach at Springbrook, and then I went over to Gaithersburg and was an assistant coach there for a year, and then was the head baseball coach there for nine years. So baseball has been a big part of my life, playing and coaching, and is part of the reason I became an athletic director.

Q: What are some of the successes that you had as a coach?

A: Well, Gaithersburg baseball won five division titles, three regional titles, and a state championship back in 2015. So I've been able to have success at that level. I coached the Summerwood Creek collegiate team for 11 years, and I had over 30 kids that I coached that were drafted. It's something that I enjoy and that I am passionate about.

Q: Did you play baseball in college?

A: Yes. I played at a JUCO (junior college) in Pennsylvania at Bucks

County Community College. I played there for a year, and then I transferred to Temple [University] because I hurt my shoulder and I was done. However, I was a JV baseball coach up there for three years at a local school.

Q: How did being a coach help you to become an athletic director?

A: I think it helps a lot. I have a lot of different jobs, and one of my primary jobs is to help develop our coaching staff and be there for them for advice or things like that. If you're in this position and you haven't gone through that as a coach, I think it makes it really difficult to give that sort of feedback to the coach. I was fortunate that we had a lot of success to cater for. And that is what I really enjoy about being an athletic director. I love helping develop our coaches. And, you know, not only do I give them advice, I learn a lot from them as well. We all kind of give back to each other.

Q: What is your day-to-day schedule like as an athletic director?

A: Every day is different. Usually, during the day, I try [to] spend my time getting as much computer work and financial stuff done as possible. I send emails with updates for the coaches and correspond with parents and community members. After 2:30, I walk around and try to get to all the practices as I possibly can. And when there are games, I set up the field or the court. I spend time going to games, watching the teams play, watching our coaches coach, and just

being at these events to make sure everything is running smoothly and safely.

Q: What is one of your best experiences at QO?

A: It's honestly really hard to just pick one of them. More than anything, I really feel like we've created a family atmosphere in our program. I honestly look at my coaches as family. I think I have really good relationships with all of them. I think we have an outstanding coaching staff. I try to develop relationships with our student-athletes.

Q: How does it feel that two fall sports teams made it to States this season, and one of them won?

A: It feels great to see our student-athletes and coaches exceed. However, our program is a lot more than when you win or lose. It's not all about that at the end of the day. Our coaches are out there coaching, we have tremendous athletes at the school, we have a tremendous coaching staff, and our community support is really second to none. And when you integrate all those things together, you are creating really good things. The boy's soccer team went to the county championship. Even though they fell short, they've had a tremendous year in the growth of that program. Field Hockey won the division; Kehan [Bhati], on the cross country team, went to States; cheer advanced to region finals; and girls' volleyball had a good couple of years in a row. The credit goes to the

coaches and student-athletes, and parents for all their support.

Q: Can you talk a little about the QO sports culture?

A: I mean, honestly, that kind of culture started 30-plus years ago when the school opened. I think we're surrounded by a really, really strong community. Not all the high schools in Montgomery County have that sort of community aspect that we do. And I think a lot of pride goes into being a QO athlete and going into the school period. So I think it's a good place. I think everybody's very fortunate to be here and have the support that they have with our school being as big into sports and we're successful because of that. And we just have student-athletes and coaches that are very, very talented and good with what they do. So it's been fun to be a part of it.

Q: What do you want people to know about you?

A: I want everybody in our program to be successful, and anything our teams need, I'm there for them, and I want to get them what they need. My door's always open for our student-athletes. I think that caring and understanding and following through with that is something that's really, really important.

QO Football: State Champs Again

By SAMMY KRIMSTEIN
Editor-in-Chief

Thursday, December 1 felt like déjà vu for Quince Orchard football. For the second year in a row, they had reached the biggest stage: Navy Marine Corps Memorial Stadium in Annapolis, MD. Once again, it was time for the 4A State Finals.

Last year's trip to Annapolis was a new experience for most of the Cougars. After a historic undefeated season, the Cougars had a chance to take in the thrills that come along with playing in the championship game. It was a special experience for everyone involved, all culminating in a dominating 31-13 victory over Dr. Henry A Wise High School.

This year, after yet another undefeated season, the Cougars were back in Annapolis. With a title to defend, QO played the 2022 season with a target on their back.

"Our kids embraced it all year long," said head coach John Kelley. "They knew that all year, going into the season, that they would be hunted."

With one more game to play, that target wasn't going anywhere. Standing in the way of another QO state title was Charles H. Flowers High School, who had an undefeated season themselves—their most successful season in school history.

Success wasn't new to Flowers football, but any success they had was overshadowed by the sheer dominance of the Wise Pumas—their in-county rival. Since Wise was established in 2006, the school has won an astounding five football state championships, beating Flowers repeatedly in the process. Heading

into the 2022 season, Flowers hadn't beat Wise in 14 years.

For Flowers, the 2022 season brought upon a sense of change, and a feeling of hope. Stacked with DI-level talent at every turn, it seemed like this could finally be the year for Flowers to beat Wise.—for David to slay Goliath. En route to their first-ever state championship appearance, Flowers faced Wise twice—once in the regular season and once in state semifinals. They took care of business both times.

While overcoming Wise was certainly a triumph, it was far from the end goal for Flowers. Just as Quince Orchard was hungry to repeat for the first time, the Jaguars were hungry to make history, and bring a title to their hometown of Springdale for the first time. The stage was set. Soon, the football was kicked into the air, and the 4A State Finals were underway.

Quince Orchard got the ball first on the brisk 40-degree evening, setting the tone with a methodical 10 play drive, capped with a one yard touchdown by sophomore Iverson Howard. It was 7-0 Cougars to start.

The pressure was on, and Flowers responded. They had driven to midfield when senior QB Sean Johnson fired over the middle, finding a wide open Matthew Ogunniyi with tons of room to run. Ogunniyi, a senior, sped past the QO defense into the endzone, and it was a tie game. 7-7.

On their second drive of the night, QO looked to replicate the pace and power of the first. The Cougars had driven all the way to the five yard-line when they suffered a fatal blow—a 13 yard sack. This forced QO to take a 31 yard field goal, which they missed. The first quarter came to a close with the score locked at 7-7.

Defense took over the game in the second quarter, on both sides. There were four punts before finally, with four minutes left in the quarter, QO rediscovered their offensive rhythm. Senior QB Savan Briggs connected with senior Zach Zarchin for 15 yards, and after two big carries from Howard and junior Isiah Blackman, the Cougars found themselves in field goal range once again. This time, they converted on the opportunity. With just seven seconds left in the second quarter, sophomore Evan Church nailed it from 26 yards. Going into halftime, the Cougars led 10-7.

Flowers would receive to begin the second half, with a chance to tie with a field goal, or take the lead with a touchdown. They had a chance to reestablish the momentum in their favor. The drive started just as planned. Johnson hit Ogunniyi in stride for 15, and scrambled twice to help move Flowers into the red zone. A score within reach, Johnson dropped back to throw, gazing for the endzone. The pocket collapsing around him, he tried to escape, but it was to no avail. Bursting through the middle was junior DJ Abegesah, sacking Flowers and forcing a field goal—which Flowers missed. The long Flowers drive was in vain. QO still led 10-7.

Although their next drive lasted into the early fourth quarter, QO came up empty again. Flowers forced a long field goal, and the Cougars couldn't convert. With 10:51 left in regulation, the Cougars were still in front, 10-7.

Taking over at their own 20, Flowers had a crucial opportunity in front of them. They had stuck with the Quince Orchard team that seemed

unstoppable all season. With one solid drive, they would become the first team all season to hold a lead over QO. They would be firmly in the driver's seat in the state championship game. They would be en route to their first state championship in school history.

Unfortunately for the Jaguars, junior Jaylen Harvey had other plans. Flying off the right edge, Harvey flew in forcefully for the sack, forcing the ball out of the hands of the QB Johnson. The ball bounced backwards, and as QO senior Kendall Johnson saw it lying in the endzone, he thought of something else.

"It was my high school career," said Johnson. "All I dream about is being two-time state champions, and when I saw the ball, I saw that in my hands, and I just chased it."

He chased it, picked it up, and just like that, the game was completely flipped. The score was 17-7, but the clutch defensive play shifted every ounce of momentum towards QO. Flowers' next drive resulted in yet another defensive score for QO—a safety on a blocked punt.

The Cougars got the ball back, and began wearing down Flowers on the ground. After marching down the field, Howard powered into the endzone for another TD, his second on the day. The sophomore running back ended his day with 195 yards on 27 carries. A 37 yard Howard run on the next offensive drive set up a 1 yard Briggs rushing TD—his last play as a Cougar was a touchdown.

Soon, the clock ticked down, and it was over. The Quince Orchard Cougars were back-to-back state champions.