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THE

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THE PROWLER

Quince Orchard High School — 15800 Quince Orchard Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20878 — @qohs\_prowler

# A repeat of the 2020 election?

BY ISADORA KAUFMAN  
*Editor-in-chief*

The fight for the seat in the Oval Office may be a repeat of the 2020 election. The two most likely candidates: one whose mugshot went viral last month and the other whose unprecedented age concerns some voters.

In late August, former President Donald Trump's mugshot from the Fulton County Jail in Georgia went viral, being rapidly spread on every social media platform. The picture was not only humorous for many Americans but also a first in presidential history. Trump is not the first president to be arrested, but he is the first former president to face criminal charges. In Georgia, Trump is accused of having tampered with the election results of the 2020 presidential election by committing multiple acts of fraud, including the falsification of documents with the hope of persuading Georgia legislators to "reject lawful votes cast by duly elected officials", according to the BBC. This is one of several criminal charges accusing Trump of illegal interference in the results of the 2020 election.

Despite the thousands of memes mocking Trump and 41 state criminal charges against him, the past president is still predicted to be the Republican party nominee in the 2024 Presidential election. According to NPR, while Trump has 12 challengers for the Republican party nomination, he is still "far ahead of them in polls" because "the fractured

field has made it hard for voters to coalesce around a single alternative."

Biden's capabilities as President have been heavily questioned lately, not for his criminal record, but for his old age. The octogenarian, already the oldest sitting President, has been claimed by not only Republican voters but Democratic voters as well as too old for the job. Politico stated that 70% of Americans in a poll conducted stated that his age is a serious concern because of the effects it may have or already be having on "his physical and mental competence." However, according to the Washington Post, experts on aging state given the benefits of both candidate's socioeconomic status, "including access to high-quality healthcare", there is "little reason" to doubt the "continued health" of either presidential candidate. However, his age is not the only reason for the lack of support from voters: Politico's poll also shares how 58% of Americans believe that Biden's policies have made economic conditions in the U.S. worse.

Biden has only two competitors: an ardent anti-vaccine activist and a self-help guru promoting medical myths. Both pose little threat to Biden obtaining the 2024 Democratic presidential nomination. While Biden's approval ratings as current President have not been high, Reuters reporter Costas Pitas shares that Biden's "democratic allies feel he is the only Democratic candidate who can defeat Trump". Similar to the 2020 election, if a rerun were to occur between Trump



and Biden, Biden has a decent chance at winning the presidency, not because of the overwhelming support for his campaign or actions as President, but because of the voters who would rather settle for Biden than vote for Trump.

Trump's actions when he was President will also play a role in voter's decisions this election. As a candidate, he is more polarizing than Biden, because of the way he shaped the Supreme Court, the same court that reversed the effects of *Roe v. Wade*. According to BioMed Central, since the reversal, "These decisions have additionally impacted on access to HIV care and support, and increased unwanted/unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions, all of which led to highly politicized maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity outcomes continuously

monitored by the World Health Organization and the United Nations on the global scale." His actions have negatively impacted women across the country, making him a highly contentious political figure.

While Presidential reelection typically depends on the "incumbent's performance in office", according to an analysis from CNN, the choice voters make next autumn is more likely to "come down largely to their feelings about Trump". CNN states the results of a poll: "62% of those backing Trump said they saw their choice mainly as a show of support for him, with a similar 64% of those backing Biden saying they viewed their choice largely as a vote *against* Trump." In other words, more of Biden's voters are anti-Trump than pro-Biden. The 2024 election is likely to come down to who voters dislike less, not who they like more.

# Russo-Ukrainian War Update

BY PATRINA PUN  
*Staff Writer*

The Russo-Ukrainian War: a war that lacks a real beginning or end. Two nations with an extensive history of hostility and bloodshed. Who will rise as the distinct winner has yet to be determined. Though there has been less of a media coverage on live television regarding the warfare, the tension between the two nations has reached new heights. Ukraine continues to demonstrate their capability to willfully stand against Russia as they have taken the initiative towards an offensive lead in the war.

Diving deeper into the internal warfare between the two nations, Ukraine has certainly gained some momentum despite other setbacks. According to CNN, on September 17, Ukraine successfully recaptured a key village near Bakhmut, which has been critical to their counteroffensive attack in the east. This is certainly an accomplishment in their books, but Ukrainian Press Officer Oleksandr Borodin claimed on live television that "there is nothing left of the village of Andriivka," indicating that perhaps a "few basements" may be left. Indeed, a hard pill for civilians to swallow as they have nothing to go back to. Furthermore, as of September 22, according to the Guardian, Ukraine launched

a missile attack on the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea fleet in Sevastopol, the largest city in Crimea, Russia. This strike is an evident display of Ukraine's confidence amidst the war and vulnerability of such vital infrastructures in Russia. Ukrainian officials applaud the attack, but claim that they still

*"[They] have a long way to go to destroy the enemy's capabilities"*

- CNN

in Crimea, the origin of the war.

Unfortunately for every win Ukraine has, there will be a loss to counteract it. According to CNN, while Ukraine was recapturing Bakhmut, Russia struck Ukraine's border regions in Odessa with missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles, and artillery. Agricultural land and a grain storage facility were the only things reported damaged amidst the attack. Moreover, a day later, Russia also invaded Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region including cities

and villages, but no casualties were reported. However, six civilian casualties were reported in the southeastern Zaporizhzhya region in Ukraine. Twenty villages were attacked nearly a hundred times by shelling. Similarly, as of September 22, Russia also launched a missile in the central Ukrainian city of Kremenchuk, which injured at least 31 civilians and killed one.

On a global scale of this war, according to CNN, a few weeks ago the United States National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan discussed the hostile situation between the two feuding nations with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi in hopes to gain China's support with Ukraine. However, Beijing has yet to scale back ties with Russia, and Russia's President Vladimir Putin was recently personally invited by China's President Xi Jinping to visit China in October. As a result of the meeting between the two nations, it was claimed that they plan to conduct further communication in the future. Further, North Korea's President Kim Jong Un has also concluded his trip from Russia as he was gifted a parting gift of a bulletproof vest and a set of drones. However, it still remains unclear what was discussed between the two nations.

Unfortunately for Russia, for every ally gained, there will be an ally lost. Armenia, one of Russia's oldest allies, had recently sent humanitarian aid to Ukraine for the first time as they harbored a personal dislike for Russia because of their lack of aid in defending Armenia from aggression against Azerbaijan.

Lastly, Ukraine has recently shown considerable effort in attempting to gain international support and weaponry. According to CNN, on September 22, Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau held a bilateral meeting with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky, after which Trudeau publicly announced his support towards Ukraine. Since January 2022, Canada has committed several billion dollars in support to Ukraine for financial and military funding. Further, according to Slate, Zelensky traveled to the United States of America in hopes of further funding for the war effort. He was promised another package from President Joe Biden, but was denied the ability to join a joint session of Congress.

Undoubtedly, this war has demonstrated both of the nation's determination in ascending to victory in this war. Until then, citizens of the globe must wait in anticipation for the next big update.



# Broken curriculum: AP courses banned

BY KAYLA PILLOFF  
Staff Writer

Censorship has been an ongoing issue in high schools in the United States. More specifically, certain states have attempted to or successfully banned teaching certain AP classes whose topics have been deemed by some to be controversial and inappropriate for class settings.

Over the summer, Florida governor Ron DeSantis signed a bill that restricts schools from teaching about gender and sexuality. AP Psychology, a common AP course taken by over 28,000 Florida students last year according to a statement released by CollegeBoard, includes both topics on gender and sexual identity. Florida districts said they would only keep the course if College Board removed the units that discussed gender and sexuality. The organization refused, as doing so would go against their values. "To best prepare these students for college placement... the topic on gender and sexual orientation will continue to be required," College Board said in a statement.

Both topics will still be included on the end-of-year course exam, and censoring it would deem Florida students ineligible for college credit.

More recently, Florida's Education Commissioner, Manny Diaz Jr. tried to clarify the ban, saying that teachers in Florida can

teach AP Psych as long as it is taught in an age-appropriate way and is consistent with state laws. However, after DeSantis passed the "Parental Rights in Education" law more commonly known as the "don't say gay" law, which restricts public school teachers from teaching about sexual orientation and gender, many teachers statewide are fearful of teaching the course as it could cause them legal trouble. This accounts for the reason why the majority of Florida counties have opted out of offering the class.

It's not just AP Psychology that is being banned, though: AP African American Studies, a new course that will be available in the fall of 2024, has stirred up lots of controversies. The new class was going to be piloted in numerous high schools, including some in Arkansas this school year. In a last minute call, the Arkansas Department of Education pulled the class before the school year started per Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders' request.

It's not just the class being pulled; multiple states have used it as leverage to ban all talk of racial history. Both Arkansas and Florida have canceled the class saying it lacked "educational value and historical accuracy," according to a statement from the Florida Department of Education. The course covers all of African American history, beyond just slavery,



Florida Governor Ron DeSantis speaking before signing Parental Rights in Education Bill

including arts, science and geography.

Despite the state's new restrictions, some counties in Arkansas are refusing to put the ban in place. For example, Little Rock will offer the class despite government interjections. The decision is not easy, though, with the state making sure that the exam fees will not be paid for, and the class most likely will not be counted for high school credit. Nevertheless, Little Rock is encouraging students to take it, paying for its own fee waivers for the exam.

While AP classes being banned is generally a new thing, it is uncertain whether it will continue to happen. Banning a course like AP African American Studies will, "Continue the same

conversations and problems that the United States has faced since the founding..." said AP history teacher Jamie Kimbrough-Groves, "it's important to teach history through a lens other than what is traditionally taught in US history classes."

"I think teaching Psychology without mentioning sex is absurd," said AP Psychology teacher Penny Keune.

Censorship continues to cause an ongoing debate between schools and various state authorities regarding what content can be included in their courses. It remains to provide a challenge for those working in the education system as well as government officials.

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The Prowler gladly accepts comments, concerns, and letters to the editor. Letters may be emailed to QOHSprowler@gmail.com, mailed c/o The Prowler to the school address above, or dropped off directly to Ms. Cooley-Klein in Room 234. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

## ABOUT

The Prowler is published six times a year by the students of Quince Orchard High School, and it has been continuously published since the school opened in the fall of 1988. To become a staff member, students should take Journalism A & B with Ms. Cooley-Klein, then fill out an application to join the Prowler staff for the following year.

# COVID-19's comeback

BY NADIA AUNG  
Staff Writer

A new covid variant is on the loose — EG.5, nicknamed Eris, has raised concerns of public health experts as this variant is more transmissible or severe than previous Omicron sub variants.

According to NBC News, there has been an uptick in COVID-19 cases since late June in the U.S. As the fall season approaches, thousands of people are testing positive, hospitalizations are increasing, and mask mandates are coming back.

According to Yale Medicine, reports have shown that Eris is more contagious, and has surpassed Arcturus, another highly contagious subvariant of Omicron.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has classified Eris as a "variant of interest," meaning countries should monitor this one more closely than past variants because of mutations that could make it more contagious or severe. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data, Eris is the top strain circulating in the U.S., causing 22% of cases over the last two weeks of August.

As students are returning to school this year, the numbers of cases are rising and administrators are concerned. According to WTOP News, an elementary school principal in Maryland mandated several days of masking for a class of kindergarteners where four people tested positive. The governor of New York also announced a plan to distribute free N95 and KN95 masks to schools this fall. Some southern states like Texas and Alabama are requiring the use of masks as cases there continue to multiply. The South Texas Independent School District temporarily closed the fourth week of August due to the numerous infections reported.

As of late September, no mask mandate requirement has arrived at QO; however, there seem to be a number of people calling in sick. Eden Whitman is a new staff member at QO in the health wing and is knowledgeable in this topic. "We've definitely seen a rise in cases, and we're seeing it more in certain groups like in certain clubs," said Whitman. This year, the Department of Health (HHS) is treating COVID procedures a bit differently. "The HHS is not requiring us to do testing at school, to give out COVID tests, to provide students with masks, and also, they're not required to tell us either so we don't have an exact count of cases," said Whitman.

*"People are disgusting and need to wash their hands and take care of themselves."*

- Elena Nguyen



According to a sophomore who wished to remain anonymous, they have noticed a large amount of sicknesses going around school. "I think it's because of flu season. more students are getting sick and that's why cases are rising. Everyone is getting sick going back to school due to being around a lot of people and because of that, there are a lot of germs being spread," said the student.

"You were around groups of people like your family, and your friends for summer break, spending a lot of time outside, and now you're inside these walls again and everyone is together and we got all these mixes of people coming from different places, so it makes sense that COVID would be on the rise," said Whitman.

Whitman states that preventive care is always easier than once you're sick. "If somebody is presenting with cold symptoms, I think that they should absolutely wear a mask to school, it's not required but I think it's just common decency at this point. Having home covid tests is also a good idea," said Whitman.

Sophomore Elena Nguyen believes that staying healthy and regular hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of viruses. "People are disgusting and need to wash their hands and take care of themselves," said Nguyen.

The CDC recommends staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccines, improving ventilation and spending time outdoors, staying home if symptoms occur, and avoiding contact with people suspected or confirmed to have COVID.



PHOTO BY NADIA AUNG



# Paint Branch principal on leave after multiple sexual assault allegations

BY MAGGIE BRADY  
Staff Writer

Farquhar Middle School principal Joel Beidleman was promoted to principal of Paint Branch High School in June of 2023, despite MCPS receiving six complaints about his behavior in the past year. In total, MCPS has received at least 18 reports of workplace abuse or harassment against Beidleman. These reports included a “pattern of harassment, threats, retaliation, workplace bullying and other inappropriate conduct spanning at least 12 years across three campuses,” according to an investigation by The Washington Post that brought this story to the public this summer.

According to the Post, these reports first came in 2016, but MCPS did not begin an investigation into Beidleman until 2020, which is when the school district found that he did not violate their sexual misconduct policy. Prior to his promotion, Beidleman worked as an assistant principal at Roberto Clemente, Lakelands Park, and as principal at Farquhar Middle School, where most of the reports stem from.

Teachers and parents have made claims that Beidleman made inappropriate comments towards them and their children. “During two Jan. 31, 2018, assemblies for seventh- and eighth-grade students and staff,

Beidleman lamented that Farquhar girls were dressing and acting ‘like hos and thots,’ according to The Post. Multiple staff members left their jobs because “he berated, humiliated or yelled at staff frequently.”

Despite numerous reports accumulating over several years, MCPS did not officially put him on a leave of absence until June of 2023, after The Post began asking questions about the allegations due to Beidleman’s promotion.

**These findings “detail significant and troubling failures by senior management in MCPS.”**

—Karla Silvestre

Since then, MCPS has hired attorneys to conduct independent internal investigations, in which investigators interviewed nearly 60 current and former employees and collected more than 30,000 documents. The Board of Education had investigators look into “whether senior MCPS personnel received or

were aware of complaints prior to the promotion; whether any such complaints were appropriately investigated; what, if any, actions MCPS took in response to those complaints; and whether those complaints affected the promotion process.”

A summary of the report stated that multiple members of the administration, who were part of the promotion process, did not “inquire about the specific nature of the allegations against Beidleman including their disposition.” The report summary also stated that those same administrators “failed to take any remedial action or promptly notify the Board once they knew specific details about the allegations.”

Key members of the school system’s leadership learned details about the investigation by July 19 but did not share that information with the Board until August 4. There is no evidence that the Board was aware of the pending investigation, the disposition of the investigation, or any other allegations relating to Beidleman before his promotion on June 23.

The report also found that “although the district received many informal complaints against Beidleman, it investigated only the claims of misconduct filed to the central office on a specific form and ignored the rest,” said The Post. The school district ignored multiple anonymous complaints because they weren’t “formal complaints”

submitted on the proper paperwork. These findings “detail significant and troubling failures by senior management in MCPS,” said Karla Silvestre, president of the Montgomery County Board of Education.

The failures by senior management “fits with the pattern that a lot of people believe this is not the first time that this has happened,” said County Executive Marc Elrich in an interview with WTOP News.

As for what’s next, MCPS Superintendent Monifa McKnight said in a statement to WTOP: “In the coming days, I’ll be announcing a series of swift and immediate actions I’ll be prepared to take to ensure accountability. I will also be working closely with my team to develop a comprehensive corrective action plan, as directed by the Board.”



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# The Great Resignation and The Great Reflection

BY CHRISTIAN LEE  
Staff Writer

The Great Resignation, also known as the Big Quit, was a pandemic phenomenon in which millions of employees voluntarily quit their jobs in a mass exodus. Although COVID-19 was, in some measure, a stimulus for a record number of resignations in the U.S., many other problems factored into employees' search for better working conditions.

Workers were dissatisfied with toxic workplace cultures, lack of benefits, and the work-life imbalance that came with their careers. For a brief period in 2020, when the pandemic began posing an uncertainty about the future of employment, most employees held onto their jobs. However, this drastically changed in 2021, when stay-at-home orders gave workers the time to reconsider the current state of their occupations. This trend continued into the following year where, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, roughly 50.5 million people quit their jobs in 2022 compared to 47.7 million that quit in 2021.

This increase in job openings prompted employers to take action and reinvent the work space. They had to learn the hard way that their employees were not as loyal as they had thought, and that people were

entering a new age of improvement and reflection that was once thought impossible.

Many employers maximized job benefits, increased pay, and improved working conditions. As a result, employers are witnessing a significant decrease in job quits in 2023, where as of July, job openings have lowered to only 8.8 million.

What emerged from the Great Resignation became known as the Great Reflection, a term which appears to have first been used by Forbes on August 9, 2022. The Great Resignation is a period of introspection in which people must decide what the future of their careers will look like.

Here at Quince Orchard High School, we received insight into different teachers' views on the Great Resignation. All three teachers agreed that pandemic phenomenon didn't directly affect their lives, although virtual restrictions did.

"Most teachers stuck through [virtual learning], and many of my friends who worked in the government had no choice but to continue working," said English teacher Kristi Mangan. "I do understand why service workers left — they were exposed to unhealthy conditions, and that forced people to reflect on their jobs."

Science teacher Lisa Short added that changing jobs in the middle of the pandemic, for her, was "financial suicide," and that although building



virtual modules was difficult for most teachers, the support of the science department made it extremely rewarding. She believes workers are now "pickier" about their jobs, as well as "resilient" and "thinking outside the box."

Additionally, social studies resource teacher Jamie Kimbrough-Groves stated that the Great Resignation made a long lasting impact on millennials, shaping the way they approach work. "If we should learn anything from [the Great Resignation], it's to take care of ourselves and prioritize our health," she said.

While these teachers strongly believe that reevaluating job conditions is key to reflecting on the Great Resignation, they also

acknowledge that there is not much to reconsider about Quince Orchard High School due to its strong sense of community.

"I love working with students and love seeing student growth," said Kimbrough-Groves.

Mangan added, "I love that students are very driven and conscientious. And I love the school administration because they're so supportive."

Although the Great Resignation has affected all walks of life, we can hope that Quince Orchard remains the same in that we continually foster a sense of belonging and community for both students and staff.

## KEEPING UP WITH THE KOUGARS

BY PATRINA PUN  
Staff Writer

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

### NEW POLICIES AT QUINCE ORCHARD FOR OUR NEW SCHOOL YEAR

With the new incoming school year, Quince Orchard High School has now incorporated a new attendance policy. Anything more than ten consecutive unexcused absences will result in an automatic unenrollment from school. Fortunately, students still have the ability to re-enroll back into the same school afterwards, but it is certainly an adjustment for all.

Further, Quince Orchard has also reinforced the attendance policy rule of informing our attendance secretary Stephanie Bradley regarding an absence at least three days prior. Also, any absence that is more than three consecutive school days requires a doctor's note or an additional documentation that must be approved by the school to be excused.

Lastly, a new schedule has

also been introduced to both Quince Orchard's staff and students. Instead of Cougars Connect and QOTV being on separate days and eating away imperative teaching hours, Cougars Connect and QOTV are now conjoined into one block every Friday immediately following the third period. This ensures less instructional time is being taken away each week and fewer weekly schedule changes.

### TROUBLE IN PAVED PARADISE WITH QUINCE ORCHARD PARKING LOT?

Kicking off the new school year, a new round of both juniors and seniors have put their freshly new licenses to use. However, a few complaints have arisen from the upperclassmen regarding the parking situation at QO. Whether it be the drop-off lanes or securing a parking spot, the morning car lines have been extremely time-consuming, to say the least.

One of the many reasons for such a delay is the addition of new portables that has consumed previous teacher parking spots, so some student spots had to be converted to teacher spots. As a result, students must now drive even farther in the lot just to get a spot, causing a slowdown.

Combined with strict security regulating morning and afternoon departure and the fact that there are only two entrances into the parking lot, the situation has proven to be an issue for some students. Senior Eddie Bedore

regarded this situation as

*"ridiculous and completely unfair."*

-Eddie Bedore

Before receiving his parking pass, Bedore parked at QO and claimed it took him "over 20 minutes to enter the parking lot."

He argues that "admin criticizes... students for being late and does little to make the parking lot much more efficient."

Additionally, according to Bedore, seniors with half days are being told to park at Safeway. He says being forced to park at Safeway has made him late to his Montgomery College class multiple times.

Because of limited space, however, there is only so much that can be done.

Assistant Principal Edith Lee says that students can help mitigate parking lot woes by carpooling, arriving early, and "making sure they abide by all the parking permit rules."

### STUDENT HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH:

Imagine balancing theatre and academics. Not too bad, right? Now throw in being both a student director and president of Quince Orchard Theatre, while juggling multiple rigorous AP classes and other extracurricular activities. Do you think you could do it now?

Catherine Brady, a senior at Quince Orchard High School, has certainly demonstrated her capability of being an involved student over the years through theatre and her studies.

Due to her passion for theatre, Brady typically works on stage by starring in lead roles in various plays such as "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" or "Newsies."

However, more recently she has taken a step back from being in the cast and shifted her focus towards new responsibilities.

With her new role as student director, she now deals with rehearsal, the audition panel, casting ideas, and any sort of support for the adult creative team. She describes the position as "different, yet cool."

Despite her theatrical achievements, juggling such a role can be quite demanding, especially with academics in the picture. Not only has Brady challenged herself to taking 4 APs this year, putting her total to 10 AP classes, she is also an active member in numerous honor societies including Mu Alpha Theta Honor Society, Tri-M Music Honor Society, National Honor Society, and Rho Khappa.

With such a busy schedule on her hands as well, time management is essential in order to balance her passion and studies. Brady claims the method behind juggling such a load is to "know when you can work on certain things and essentially allocate time for academics." Though things can get slightly overwhelming for the senior, Brady continues to successfully manage her time and set an impressive standard for others.



# Happy Homecoming, Cougars!

BY MOLLY RUBMAN  
Staff Writer

Football games have begun, the air is getting chilly, homework is piling up, five teachers assign tests on the same day, and your friends are getting busy with sports and extracurriculars; Homecoming season is upon us once again.

Homecoming is a time for our school to come together as a community and celebrate the start of the new school year. Schools across America participate in this annual tradition, holding spirit weeks and dances for the students. English Language Development teacher Madlynn Bard has been planning the dance with the SGA and Brown and Ashman. "I think that by being more inclusive of other people, this year's Homecoming is going to bring us together," Bard said.

This year, QO will be nominating and voting students for Homecoming royalty, which took place during Cougars Connect. Aside from Homecoming royalty, QO has a lot of other traditions for this event. The festivities started yesterday with the hallway decoration competition: each grade got assigned a theme to decorate their hallway with and competed for who decorated it the best. This year, we are going back in time to the 60s for the freshmen, 70s for the sophomores, 80s for the juniors, and the 90s for the seniors. "I think juniors will win homecoming hallways!" said junior Sophie Bee, the Class of 2025 Vice President.

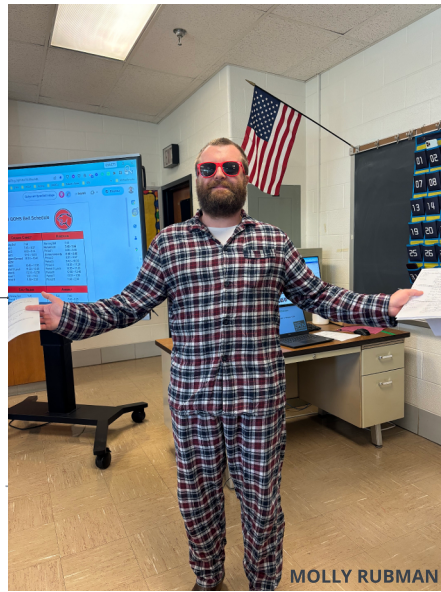
And based on past experience, her prediction is probably right: for the past two years, the junior class has won the hallway decorating contest. We will see if that legacy continues today when the winners get announced at the pep rally before the Homecoming game. QO is up against Seneca Valley for our 'Lights Out' game tonight, so wear all black and come with spirit and Cougar pride. Once the game is over and the clock hits 12:00 AM tonight, Homecoming day will officially have begun.

The rush of adrenaline you get putting your makeup on, doing your hair, zipping up your dress, or frantically tying that tie, is how you know Homecoming is about to commence. Some people go on a date and others go with friends, but no matter who you go with you can have an awesome time celebrating school spirit. The school provides a dance—usually held in the courtyard or the gym—filled with decor, food, and awesome music from a DJ. This year, tickets cost \$25.

When asked what her favorite thing about homecoming was, junior Maren Bollini said, "Going out with my friends, having dinner, and dressing up."

"I love having fun with everyone!" Junior Brooke Youmans added.

Lyla Holstein, a representative for the class of 2025, is very excited for the school dance. "I think it's really fun to support the school and the dance is a good opportunity to get involved," Holstein says.



MOLLY RUBMAN



MOLLY RUBMAN

Teachers Oliver Llewellyn, Megan Cooley-Klein, and Kristi Mangan participating in Pajama Day and Twin Day for Homecoming spirit week.



On the other hand, although the school puts so much effort into creating an amazing dance, many students choose not to attend.

Sophomore Ella Blaine reasons that she thinks, "It is becoming less common for the students to attend the school dance because it's become the norm for each group of friends to do their own thing instead of all coming together and having a good time," she said.

People have become more socially divided and close with their specific groups, potentially as a result of COVID.

Nevertheless, it doesn't matter where you are or who you're with, as long as you are having a good time and enjoying yourself. Happy Homecoming and QO hopes to see you there tomorrow night.

## Sneak Peek into the World of Latin Culture

By DAVID GUEVARA  
Staff Writer

The school year is finally underway! With the new school year beginning there are many other things also beginning with QO, like school sports and school clubs. But QO also likes to celebrate a variety of cultural months. Embracing these different cultures to help their students feel more comfortable and represented. Hispanic Heritage Month being the first of many cultural months that is celebrated at QO throughout the school year.

On September 15, Hispanic Heritage Month began, giving an opportunity for Latino culture to be expressed and shown more explicitly to the school community. A way to really celebrate Hispanic cultures is to understand the things that are emphasized within some countries' cultures and the differences and similarities that they have with other Hispanic countries and as well as why they do what they do.

Food, like most other cultures, is one of the most important things, if not the most important thing, in Hispanic and Latino culture. With so many different types of dishes and foods like tamales, pupusas, tacos, enchiladas, carne asada, empanadas, pico de gallo, and many more. All the Latino countries typically have their own spin on the different dishes and some that are more popular than others.

In Bolivia, one of the most common and popular dishes there is "silpancho."

"[It's] a certain type of sirloin that is flattened up and tenderized. Then they put it into the fryer, and it comes out as a shriveled piece of meat," said senior Elijah Teran, who is from Bolivia.

He also mentioned another dish called "salteña de carne," which is a pastry filled with beef or pork and is mixed with a spicy and sweet sauce.

This specifically is very similar to what some Latino countries call empanadas; depending on the country, the empanadas contain different ingredients within them. Like in Guatemala, there are two versions of empanadas: there is one with chicken, peas, and carrots, while the other is sweet and filled with custard.

Another dish that varies across Latin American countries is enchiladas, most notably from Mexican culture. Their enchiladas are corn tortillas that wrap around cheese and chicken, baked with red sauce and cheese, while Puerto Rican enchiladas contain red beans with tomato sauce, Mexican cheese, and different types of greens.

Another important part within Hispanic culture is the clothing. In Peru, for instance, they wear "Inca clothing," said senior Ryan Hansen, who is Peruvian. He also described that, traditionally, the men wear "a band of cloth around their waist" and women wear "long cotton dresses."

Similarly, in Guatemala their traditional clothing comes from some native tribes, Mayan-inspired clothing called "traje," said Junior Daniella Cruz. Being from Guatemala, she described the clothing as "bright and colorful" and made typically from cotton.

Another popular and embraced part of Hispanic heritage is the music and the dancing, with the most popular forms of dancing being "Salsa, Bachata, Merengue, Cumbia, Pachanga, and Tango," according to Tehran. He also mentioned popular types of music that are similar to the dances, with an additional style notably known in Mexico called "Mariachi."

The last, but not least, thing that should be known about Hispanic culture is the love they have for their respective sports, the main sport in most Hispanic countries being fútbol, also known as soccer.

In other Hispanic countries like Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic, baseball is the most popular sport.

There are a lot more customs and differences in each individual country, as well as similarities, but this is just a sneak peek to Hispanic culture and the wide variety it brings. With Hispanic Heritage Month

coming to an end on Oct 13, QO has a few more activities left planned to celebrate it. Today QO is giving the opportunity for students to break pinatas during lunch and on the last day of Hispanic Heritage Month there is a Quinceañera day. Be sure to be there and celebrate Hispanic Culture with us!



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



FLICKR



FLICKR/HARRY D.



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

# COUGAR CLUBS

By SOPHIA LEE & ELISHA SENGA

## FAMILIES 4 FAMILIES

A relatively new club, Families 4 Families, is coming back for its second year at QO to continue serving the community. The club partners with The Lollipop Kids Foundation to provide food to local families who have children with disabilities. Families 4 Families' club president senior Elesia Dell'Orfano says: "Our ultimate goal for the club is to release the stress off the parents to provide food for that week. We want to help support families in need and bring some joy to the kids with goodies and notes in the food bags." The club holds food drops, where members drop off food, pack it up, and drive it over to The Lollipop Kids Foundation, where they then get to gift it directly to the families. Families 4 Families not only supports community members, but also members of the club itself. "It has allowed me to gain leadership skills and confidence to talk, lead, and organize," says Dell'Orfano. She encourages QO students to join this club to aid people in need because "seeing the impact and joy it leaves on these families makes you feel really good after." To become a member, join the Remind by texting the code @43cb3d8 to 81010. For more information, talk to the club sponsor, Ms.Bru, in room 321.

## MINORITY SCHOLARS PROGRAM



Hispanic Heritage Month celebrated by handing flags during lunch  
TWITTER: @rjustilien

The Minority Scholars Program was founded in 2005 at Walter Johnson HS to discuss various issues facing minority groups including race (ethnicity), religion, sexual orientation, and disabilities. in Montgomery County. The club is a student-led association; therefore, discussions, plans, and ideas will be made by students. "More people should join this school year for change in QO," says MSP secretary, Junior Kamsi IHEME. MSP aims to fix the problems of minority groups in QO go through, and organize dances, food, and activities for the students at our school for Hispanic Heritage Month, Asian Heritage Month, Pride Month, and Black History Month. The club needs a large student body at our school. You can prepare for college, earn scholarships, summer internships, and lots of SSL. Towards the end of the year, MSP has a retreat in a school that includes a concert, cultural dances, poems, step teams, and free food and drinks. Meetings take place during lunch every other Tuesday. You can join today on Remind @mspqohs

## CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

Circle of Friends is making a comeback this year for a great cause. After the absence of this club last year, the club's president, junior Charlotte Nash, wanted to restart it to help out a part of the community that she cares deeply about. Circle of Friends makes thoughtful cards with nice messages and pictures for residents in nursing homes in order to put a smile on their faces. "Our goal is to try and make the situation they are going through better and to show how much they are loved," Nash says. All students are welcome to join this club here at QO, and Nash encourages them to do so because "it is a fun and easy activity that goes towards a good cause." Students can earn SSL hours through this club just by taking the time to share a little kindness. Text the Remind code @cofgo to 81010 to join Circle of Friends, or talk to their sponsor Mr. Dimmick.



## BLACK STUDENT UNION

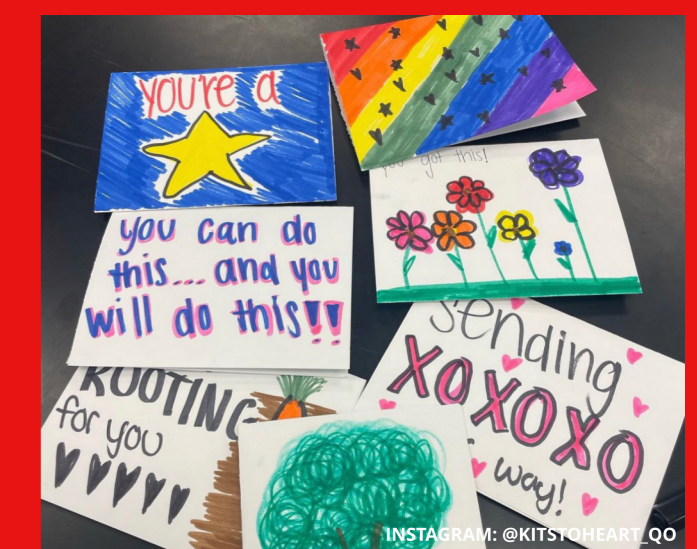
The Black Student Union is a black-cultivated club at QO. Black students meet every other Thursday in Room 326 to form a safe place for Black students at our school. At each meeting snacks, pizza, and drinks are provided as students discuss racism, colorism, police brutality, injustice, and systemic racism. Senior Oceane Galamo, the SGA liaison this school year, says she hopes "more black/brown students sign up for leadership positions." During Black History Month in February, club members join together to share ideas on arrangements for a fashion show that includes street fashion, traditional African clothes, poems, spirit week, and singers. This assembly takes place during Cougars Connect. Any active member can be a part of the spread of Black culture and problems to the entire school. BSU is currently looking for underclassmen who are willing to participate in leadership. If you want to make a difference, join today @qobsu on Remind.

## AFRICAN STUDENT UNION

The African Student Union was formed only last year, bringing all people of African and Afro-Caribbean descent to celebrate the continent's culture and diversity. During meetings, snacks, and drinks are shared in group discussions. The leaders create slides for meetings on topics including skin bleaching and colorism, and games such as "Guess the Afrobeat song" and "Who has the best jollof?" ASU also has a dance team that club members can try out for. ASU and BSU come together during Black History Month to form the fashion show and are always in need of club members willing to model traditional African clothes. (You can bring your own from home!) Leadership positions for this club are currently open. One of the two presidents, Junior Ivanna Kabba, wants to be able to "present performances and collaborate with other clubs at Quince Orchard." The ASU goal is to provide a community for the current generation of African teens and share that community with Quince Orchard. If you want to help fulfill this goal, attend a meeting every Tuesday after school in Room 125.

## KITS TO HEART

Another great club to look out for at QO is Kits to Heart. The club is starting up its second year to continue making the lives of struggling children in our community a little bit brighter. Kits to Heart supports local kids with cancer by making friendship bracelets and cards for them to spread a little love. Kits to Heart's social media leader, junior Brooke Youmans, says "the ultimate goal is to brighten the kids' day." Youmans encourages students to become a part of Kits to Heart because "doing little things like making cards and friendship bracelets can make a big impact in these kids' lives." Simple acts can make such a difference in the lives of kids who may be dealing with unfortunate situations. "I am proud to be a part of this club and help participate in making people happy," Youmans adds. To join Kits to Heart, text the Remind code @qokits to 81010, and meetings will be held in room 340 with Ms. Miller.



A few cards that club members have made for the kids during Kits to Heart meetings.  
INSTAGRAM: @KITSTOHEART.QO

# Review: Lum Thai is a culinary success

BY SOPHIE FAWKNER  
Senior Staff Writer

It can be extremely hard to find a decent restaurant nowadays. You either encounter a satisfying or horrible dining experience, with sites such as Yelp not necessarily providing the most honest reviews.

I have had a fair share of mediocre and horrible dining experiences, with Thai food being the least consistent dining option that I have encountered.

Since that seemed to always be the case, my family and I had to drive all the way to Virginia just to get some decent Thai food. That's until Lum Thai officially opened up in March.

Located in Muddy Branch Square, Lum Thai offers a large variety of authentic Thai cuisine.

From fresh and light options such as papaya salad and chicken satay to a more dense and warming option like the green curry, Lum Thai has many options for everyone's desires.

For me, the pineapple fried rice—a stir-fried mix of jasmine rice, eggs, pineapple, cashews, tomatoes, carrots, cilantro, and onions—is one of my favorite dishes.

As someone who doesn't particularly enjoy sweet food, I was reluctant to try it.

However, not only is the visual presentation of the fried rice (which is in a whole pineapple) very appealing, but the flavor combinations of the sweet pineapple and savory flavors of the sauce on the rice work well together.

The fried rice also wasn't greasy, which is a huge factor in deciding if I like the food or not. While the price of \$20 for one dish can seem a bit high for a typical meal, the portion sizes are comparable to the cost.

I often finish all of my food at every single restaurant I go to, especially when it comes to Thai food.

However, I always leave with more than half of my food as leftovers at Lum Thai. Clearly, it is worth the price and visit.

Another great dish that I recommend from Lum Thai is their papaya salad.

A papaya salad sounds simple to some, due to the fact that it's just shredded vegetables in a sweet sauce.

However, it is a dish that can be disgusting if it isn't prepared properly. Everytime I go to Lum Thai, though, the shredded papaya is always fresh and crisp, the blend of spice and sweetness isn't overpowering, and there is still sufficient flavor.

I personally love spicy food, so their papaya salad is great for those who love spicier options.

Not only is the food at Lum Thai delicious and consistent, but the service is impeccable and reliable. It doesn't matter what day or time it is, my family and I are always kindly greeted and taken care of constantly by everyone who works at Lum Thai.

The welcoming and well-decorated space of Lum Thai is also a great aspect.

Even though the interior of restaurants don't directly impact their food quality, the interior of Lum Thai is very cozy and well-organized.

Everything is clean, orderly, and the space feels open despite it being smaller in size.

Overall, Lum Thai is an exceptional Thai restaurant for any occasion. It has everything someone would want in a restaurant, as both the food and service are reliable and wonderful.

Lum Thai exceeded my expectations and is my favorite Thai restaurant thus far.



SOPHIE FAWKNER

# AP tests are now free. What does this mean for QO students?

BY CHASE PASEKOFF  
Editor-in-Chief

AP exams — three-hour long tests assessing you on all of the knowledge you've learned over the past year in your AP class. If you were to ask a QO student, parent, or teacher, they would probably tell you that one of the most unreasonable aspects of AP testing was the \$98 fee per test. For those taking several AP exams, this results in hundreds of dollars spent simply on taking the tests. If that wasn't inconvenient enough, it sometimes proved to be a waste if the student's score wasn't high enough to receive college credits.

While AP fee waivers have been available for several years, reserved for students who were financially stressed, MCPS recently approved an initiative that makes AP testing free for all students, regardless of financial background.

**"MCPS will pay for all AP and IB exams. Students enrolled in an AP or IB course will be encouraged to participate in the corresponding exam at no cost to them."**

—MCPS News Bulletin

This will undoubtedly result in significant changes not only in the number of students who will sit for each exam but also, potentially, the average scores for said exams.

While this seems to be an inherently positive change that MCPS has made, does everyone agree with that sentiment?

Senior Nicole Weiner does not believe free testing will necessarily improve test scores, because then "there's less pressure to do well," she said.

Senior Cadyn O'Halloran offered a differing view. "I think free AP testing will improve scores because it takes off the pressure of finances from the students that could be negatively impacting their scores," she stated.

This opinion was not only shared amongst students, however. AP English Language & Composition teacher Andrea Lo expressed her view on the topic from the perspective of an AP teacher. "I don't foresee an improvement in test scores, but I do believe it will encourage more students to take the test," Lo said.

While there may be a variety of opinions as to whether or not this change will have a net positive or a negative impact on students' performances, there seems to be more of an agreement as to whether cost played a role in students electing to take the exams in general. "The cost of testing was a decently significant factor in students not taking AP tests in prior years," said Weiner. "\$98 is a large commitment, especially if you don't feel confident with the material."

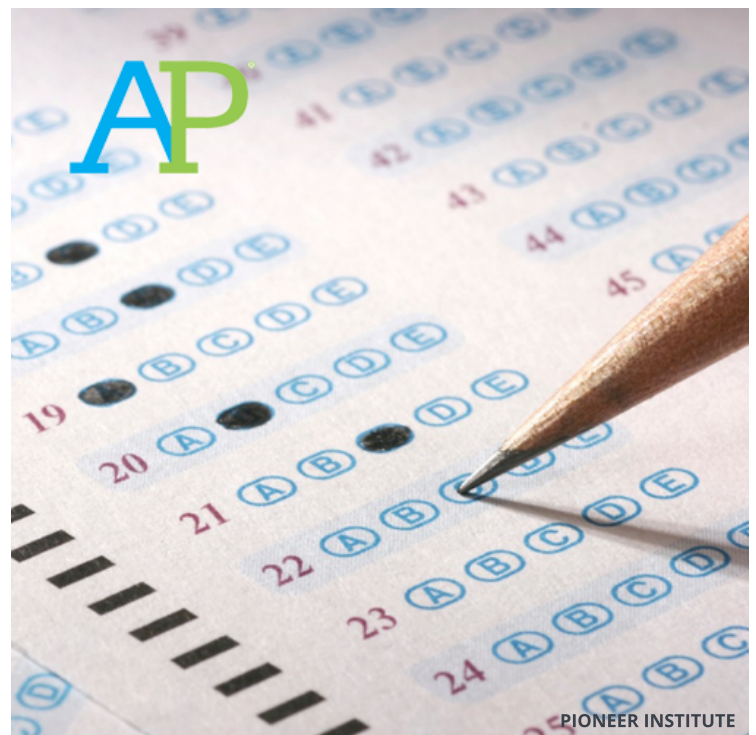
O'Halloran shared a very similar sentiment. "I think the cost was a major factor because students are less inclined to attempt to take a test they have to pay for, especially if their confidence on the topic is low," she said.

Another interesting avenue that could be explored is whether or not taking multiple AP courses can affect the scores of the students.

"In my experience, when students are taking multiple exams during AP testing week (3+), they don't perform well on all of them," Lo said.

Keeping this in mind, it will surely be interesting to see if MCPS can rebound from its dip in test scores in recent years. According to the MCPS Data Dashboard, students in courses like AP US Government, AP Physics, and AP US History have not been able to achieve a mean score above a 3 (the lowest passing score) in the past several years.

Perhaps a shift to free testing could prove to be a positive change. Overall, providing more financial aid for standardized tests, especially those that can be beneficial when entering a higher education institution, will likely turn out to be helpful to individuals, regardless of the county-wide implications.



PIONEER INSTITUTE



## VIEWPOINT

# The 'Barbenheimer' Premiere and the Importance of Media Literacy

BY: MAMS JAGHA  
Editor-in-Chief

On July 21, Christopher Nolan's 'Oppenheimer' and Greta Gerwig's 'Barbie' made their worldwide premiere in theaters. The double feature 'Barbenheimer' was first coined after Warner Bros. teased that 'Barbie' was being released on the 21st, which happened to be the same day 'Oppenheimer' would also premiere. As fans of both movies began to debate which would be better, which to see first, or which not to see, the nickname for the online craze was created.

The biopic directed by Christopher Nolan tells of the rise and fall of J. Robert Oppenheimer and his role in the development of the atomic bomb during World War II, while Greta Gerwig's meta-comedy follows Barbie and Ken as they explore the joys and perils of the real world.

Since Nolan is more of an abstract director, he leaves the moral of the story up to viewers to dissect, and although 'Barbie' wasn't as intricately layered in its purpose, Gerwig still left the views she depicted about femininity and feminism up for interpretation.

However, people's expectations of the movies heavily influenced each.

As 'Oppenheimer' is a historical film and focuses mainly on one specific character, it is easy to misunderstand the message of the movie, and that is what many did as they watched the film. Some viewers stated that Nolan was "siding" with Oppie and diminishing the impact of Hiroshima, and others even said that Nolan wanted viewers to "forgive" Oppie in a way. They took a complicated man and a complex film and oversimplified it.

The same issue arose with 'Barbie' after it premiered and many felt the movie was extremely baseline in its views on femininity and feminism. Though I understood why many felt this was an issue, I had to take a step back and not look into the film itself but look into what the purpose of each was and how who was directing it impacted that.

Although both films are extremely different in their styles, Nolan and Gerwig are the type of directors who make you feel that you genuinely need to reflect and examine their movies after you've watched them to truly understand their purpose and role in our society.

For 'Barbie', the purpose of the movie was to instill confidence in young women by identifying the stereotypes and negative messages that society has created, but also how we can use them to our advantage and grow as a community. For 'Oppenheimer', however, the purpose of the film was more layered. The title character is not depicted as a hero, but as a man who created something that he himself could not fully understand, a power that humans fear but also want to control. Both films pick out societal issues, and although one is more upfront in its objective,

they both leave us questioning how we function and grow as a society.

We live in a time where we are constantly bombarded with information overload. This continuous consumption of political messages, passing trends, and harmful data has rendered many of us numb to it and normalized our unhealthy viewing. When we reflect on what we are taking in we have to be less loose in how we analyze certain pieces because in this day and age, art has become less transparent and more symbolic.



## Noah Kahan: Stick Season

BY MADDIE KING  
Staff Writer

As the so-called "season of the sticks" approaches and the weather gets cooler, it only feels appropriate to highlight the artist who coined the term "stick season": Noah Kahan. After the release of his third studio album in 2022, Kahan blew up with his unique, catchy, singer-songwriter style. In the beginning of this past summer, he released an extended version of this album, renaming it "Stick Season: We'll All Be Here Forever."

The release of this extended album is when Kahan truly took the music scene by storm, exemplified when he played on June 9, the day of the release, at Merriweather Post Pavilion in Columbia, Maryland. Performing for over 15,000 attendees, Kahan was in a state of euphoria the entire show. Shortly after the show concluded, Kahan's new songs gained significant popularity on Tik Tok—prompting him to gain over 100,000 followers on Instagram overnight. Since then, it's been nearly impossible to secure tickets to the rest of his tour, with the European leg becoming sold out in a matter of minutes.

Recently, his first night of residency in upstate New York caused an 18,000-person traffic back-up on the roads to Saratoga Springs. Popular Tik Tok influencer

@twentyminuteslater captured the sunset over a highway jammed with cars and captioned the video "only would sit in stop and go traffic for @Noah Kahan."

Going from playing at local coffee shops to playing for thousands of people "has definitely been an adjustment," Kahan told *People* magazine earlier this year, even before his deluxe album had been released.

So why has Kahan's music been "Everywhere and Everything" people have been talking about these days? Kahan has taken a very personal approach to his music — speaking, for example, of his experiences struggling with mental health. This has inspired many people around the world to start opening up about their similar challenges, too. has started a chain reaction of people sharing their stories — contributing to reducing mental health stigmatization. Obviously, whatever Kahan is doing has been working, catching the attention of big names in the industry, from singing "Work Song" on stage with Hozier, to re-recording his song "Dial Drunk" with Post Malone, and lastly re-releasing his song "Call Your Mom" with another up-and-coming singer-songwriter Lizzy McAlpine.

## Another princess, another problem: Public outrage over new Snow White movie

BY AMBRIELLA YAGAKA  
Staff Writer

If you are not familiar with the tale of Snow White, it all begins with the Wicked Queen. She asks her magic mirror, "Who's the fairest of them all?" to which the mirror responds with Snow White, her young stepdaughter. Snow White and The Prince have a heartfelt moment, as she does her chores. Filled with anger and jealousy, the Wicked Queen hires a huntsman to kill Snow White, but he fails to go through with it, allowing Snow White to escape into the forest. There, she finds seven dwarfs who welcome her into their home after she insists on cooking and cleaning. Soon, the Wicked Queen tricks Snow White into eating a poisoned apple. In the end, the Prince brings her back to life with a true love kiss. This has been the origin of the story for years.

The Snow White we all know and love is known for being kind, slightly naive, and having a pure soul, all while never losing hope in finding her one true love and gaining freedom from her cruel life. So what happens when the narrative of the story changes? Is the tale still considered Snow White anymore without the moral of the story? This is what's happening in Disney's new Snow White live-action remake, which is scheduled to be released on March 22, 2024.

Although the movie has been receiving a lot of criticism, the production team doesn't seem to have any motive to change the

plot/cast in any direction, which stirs up more commotion among Snow White fans.

Rachel Zegler and her team have claimed in many interviews that the new remake will have a "modern" twist, but no one expected them to be so grand.

In a YouTube interview with Variety, Zegler stated, "I just mean that it's no longer 1937... We absolutely wrote a 'Snow White' that... she's not going to be saved by the prince, and she's not going to be dreaming about true love; she's going to be dreaming about becoming the leader she knows she can be and that her late father told her that she could be if she was fearless, fair, brave and true... It's really not about the love story at all, which is really, really wonderful."

This resulted in hate comments stating that Disney was implying the wrong message about love and claiming it as "modern." People want the Snow White everyone knows and loves, not a Snow White who is trying too hard to fit societal norms.

Although Disney had the right intentions of making a Princess that is socially acceptable right now, as she doesn't rely on a man to be happy at the end of a movie, this twists the whole point of a classic movie that has always been focused on a gentle girl yearning for love, dismissing the deep moral of the actual story. If anything, Snow White is an inspiration to many young women. There is nothing wrong with falling in love, so this movie shouldn't teach young girls that they are not modern women for dreaming of it.





# Athlete of the Month

BY OLIVIA MAYTIN  
Senior Staff Writer

This just in: Athlete of the Month is back and better than ever! Each team provided us with information on why these specific athletes deserve the "Athlete of the Month" title. Read more for interviews with each Athlete of the Month.

## GIRLS SOCCER - SENIOR MEGAN MOON

Varsity coach Peg Keiller chose Megan because she "is the sole senior leading a very strong back line." She also scored the season's first goal in our home opener against Walter Johnson.

**Q. What hobbies or interests do you have outside of sports?**

A. I enjoy hanging out with my friends and spending time with family.

**Q. How did you spend your time this summer?**

A. I went to the beach, spent time with friends, and went to the pool.

**Q. What is your favorite pre-game or practice meal?**

A. My favorite pregame meal is avocado toast.

**Q. How do you balance being a student-athlete?**

A. I do my homework and study after practice and make sure on game days I get my work done before the game.

**Q. What song gets you the most hyped-up for a game?**

A. "Give Me Everything" by Pitbull

**Q. Do you feel a strong sense of community with your team?**

A. Our team is like a family. We are so close and are always supporting each other.

## BOYS SOCCER - SENIOR ANDREW SILVERMAN

Varsity coach Bruno Tejo chose Andrew Silverman because he is a leader on and off the field and keeps the boys connected with each other.

**Q. What hobbies or interests do you have outside of sports?**

A. I mountain bike and snowboard in my free time.

**Q. How did you spend your time this summer?**

A. I went to the beach and played soccer all summer.

**Q. What is your favorite pre-game or practice meal?**

A. My favorite pre-game meal is a banana and a rice cake.

**Q. How do you balance being a student-athlete?**

A. I stay organized and on top of my work. I'll do homework whenever I have free time, like at lunch or during free periods.

**Q. What song gets you the most hyped-up for a game?**

A. "Apologize" by Baby Keem

**Q. Do you feel a strong sense of community with your team?**

A. 100%. Most of our team grew up playing soccer together and we're all extremely close on and off the field.

## GIRLS VOLLEYBALL - SENIOR SARAH MANION

Varsity manager Eddie Bedore chose Sarah Manion because she gets so many kills every game and she is super supportive of her teammates.

**Q. What hobbies or interests do you have outside of sports?**

A. I like hanging with my friends and watching other sports teams' games.

**Q. How did you spend your time this summer?**

A. I went to the beach a lot and played a lot of beach volleyball.

**Q. What is your favorite pre-game or practice meal?**

A. CHICK-FIL-A!

**Q. How do you balance being a student-athlete?**

A. I work hard and stay focused in school so that I have the least possible amount of work after school.

**Q. What song gets you the most hyped-up for a game?**

A. "SkeeYee" by Sexy Red

**Q. Do you feel a strong sense of community with your team?**

A. Yes, we all support each other no matter what and love seeing each other every day!

## FOOTBALL - SENIOR NINO MARZULLO

Varsity teammate junior James Wilson chose Nino Marzullo because he improved a lot since last season. He is proving he can play at a high level and shows he can take the team to another state championship. He is a leader of the team.

**Q. What hobbies or interests do you have outside of sports?**

A. I enjoy spending time with my friends and family. I also enjoy listening to music.

**Q. How did you spend your time this summer?**

A. I spent my time this summer by being in the gym a lot and going to the beach. I spent a lot of time trying to perfect my craft and be the best I could be for the upcoming season.

**Q. What is your favorite pre-game or practice meal?**

A. My favorite pre-game meal is definitely fruit. I like to keep things light so I don't feel heavy during the game. After the games, I always eat Chick-fil-A.

**Q. How do you balance being a student-athlete?**

A. I balance being a student-athlete by making sure all my schoolwork is done first, then focusing on football. I try and keep a set schedule for homework and stuff like that so everything is organized.

**Q. What song gets you the most hyped-up for a game?**

A. I honestly don't like to get really hype before games. I like to keep things chill, so I'll usually listen to meditation music to get my mind in the right space before the game.

**Q. Do you feel a strong sense of community with your team?**

A. Yes, I feel me and my team have a strong connection that is getting stronger and stronger with every game we play together.

Look out in the November issue for other fall sports!



## QO Golf

BY PRITI MADHAVAN  
Staff Writer

The QO golf season is in full swing, and according to the players, it's going exceptionally well. The golf team is putting their best foot forward, and their performance reflects that effort.

Currently, the Cougars have found themselves in the second-place position for most matches. Although they've cinched the top spot only a handful of times, the silver lining is that QO is playing their best golf possible. This season has been marked by their dedication to improvement, and their consistent performance demonstrates QO Golf's progress.

One of QO's standout golfers, sophomore Katie Joyce, shared her reason for taking up golf. In the aftermath of a torn ACL sustained while playing soccer in May 2022, she turned to golf as an alternative sporting pursuit. After such a difficult injury to sustain both physically and emotionally, a much lower impact sport such as golf was just what she needed. Her grandpa and dad, both avid golf enthusiasts, were all major influences in her decision to jump into this challenging yet rewarding sport.

Being a part of the golf team has brought about numerous positive experiences for the players. One aspect that Joyce made sure to emphasize is the opportunity to play golf three times a week, whether it be matches or practices. This frequent exposure to the game has allowed the team to sharpen their skills and refine their techniques constantly.

Being on the golf team has also provided a platform for the golfers to interact with peers from other schools. "Meeting new people and forming connections with people who don't go here has to be my favorite part," Joyce said.



Joyce (on the left) and a teammate post-practice.

These newfound relationships provide real opportunities to learn more about the sport from different perspectives.

Of course, no sports season is without its challenges. Joyce acknowledges that there are days when the game becomes difficult. However, the focus on golf, combined with the support of her teammates and coaches, has made overcoming these hurdles more manageable.

When asked about her least favorite aspect of golf, Joyce mentioned extreme weather conditions as the biggest hurdle. With temperatures reaching 110 degrees in September, Joyce passed out at one memorable practice. The wind is also a big factor in golf, and Joyce mentioned the frustration tied to extra windy days. These challenges have proven to push players to the limits, but it's also an integral part of the sport, forcing players to adapt their strategies and skills.

Despite the occasional difficulties, Joyce says that her favorite part of being on the golf team besides meeting new people is deepening her understanding of the sport. The connections made and the knowledge gained have enriched her experience as an athlete at QO.

As QO golf continues their journey through this season, it's clear that the team's commitment, improvement, and enthusiasm are driving their success. With each swing, they edge closer to their goals, and the lessons learned both on and off the green are likely to leave a lasting impact on every team member.

## Another version of tennis makes its debut to QO athletics

BY MOTAZ DEIFY  
Senior Staff Writer

During the fall, QO athletes and non-athletes may be familiar with: kicking a soccer ball, swinging a golf club, serving a volleyball, swinging a field hockey stick at a ball, throwing a football, dancing, or running. However, some students may not be familiar with swinging a paddle at a ball—an action you take in pickleball, a simple pickup game played with friends that has now come to QO as a pilot program that was initiated this fall.

Pickleball, similar to bocce and allied softball, is a corollary sport that is basically a different version of tennis, and will be played on a modified tennis court. All competitions and practices will be held outside. Usually, pickleball can be played in either singles or doubles, but for QO pickleball, it will be "played in doubles only," says Athletic Director Jeffery Rabberman.

Holding the team together is science resource teacher Jennifer Yeck, who coached cheer for 22 years, poms for three years, and allied bocce for two years. "It's so quick to get the pilot program going, and get a certain number of kids to make the team," says Yeck. Flashing right before anyone's eyes, practices began two weeks after the interest meeting, September 28, with games to start the week of October 9.



One important aspect of pickleball is that half of the team must be students with disabilities. With that in mind, Yeck is most excited about, "the partnership and community building between the student athletes; a great combination to help kids with disabilities and match them up with kids without disabilities," she says.

An interest meeting for joining the team was held on Wednesday, September 13, which encouraged any student from grades 9-12 who wished to participate on a varsity school interscholastic athletics team, whether they have played other sports at some point in their lives or not.

Because pickleball is a part of QO Athletics, Rabberman emphasizes the R.A.I.S.E core values of MCPS Athletics apply just like any other sport. "The R.A.I.S.E core values we do for all MCPS athletics doesn't change for [pickleball]," he says. Some critical core values include respect, sportsmanship, integrity and character, spirited and safe competition.

"The corollary sports in general embody all of the R.A.I.S.E core values," says Yeck, "because there is that great sense of community between the student athletes and the coaches."

Furthermore, these core values teach all young athletes to gain the skills they need in order to succeed after high school and beyond, like, as Yeck points out, "working with people that are different from them."

Although there always will be competitiveness in the sport, Yeck says the pickleball environment is "very positive and super encouraging on both sides."



# Season Updates

## Girls Soccer

BY NOAH KRAVITZ  
Staff Writer

The fall soccer season for the girls is underway. After months of training and preparation, they start their journey towards the ultimate goal: a state championship. The team is led by Coach Peg Keiller, who has continued to show excellent leadership throughout the beginning of the season.

The Cougars opened the season with a victory against Walter Johnson by a score of 2 to 1, with goals scored by senior Megan Moon and junior Caroline Donmoyer. Even though both offenses were aggressive throughout, with shots on goal from both sides, both goalies for QO & WJ kept up with big saves throughout the game. But the Cougars prevailed in the end.

QO's next opportunity was against Churchill, where the Cougars demolished them 6-2.

Senior Annie Faraone had strong words to describe the first games of the season. "Our mindset going into the first few games, was to give it our all. Both W. J. and Churchill are talented teams, at the end of the day, the hardest-working team was going to win. We knew that was going to be us."

She was certainly right about that, as the Cougars would now sit at

a 2-0 record to begin the season. But QO's biggest matchup of the year awaited them: the team that defeated the Cougars last year in the state championship matchup, the Walt Whitman Vikings. A very talented team that is very hard to defeat in any type of matchup. Especially given that the Cougars played Whitman last year three times and lost all of those games. The last time our girls team defeated the Vikings was four years ago back in 2019.

This matchup included moments of adversity and hardship. Both teams stayed in the game for as long as they could in an intense battle that would have to be decided in overtime. In the end, though, it was the Cougars who came out on top, a huge win for QO against Whitman with a final score of 2-1. Twins Erin and Ellie Hodge scored both goals for the Cougars, with Ellie scoring the game-winning goal in overtime.

That thrilling game would be a big confidence booster for their next contest against Magruder high school, whom they defeated 5-0.

In the first four games for QO this year, the Cougars are 4-0—a big tone-setter for the team to start their season! QO's next matchup will be taking place at the Cougar Dome against Clarksburg on October 10. Be sure to cheer for your outstanding Cougars!

## Field Hockey

BY MOTAZ DEIFY  
Senior Staff Writer

After a tough loss in last season's first playoff game, the Quince Orchard field hockey team is looking forward to advancing further into the season, coming back stronger than ever.

Five weeks into the season and six total games played as of October 2, the Cougars are currently standing at 4-2. To start the season off on September 5, the team has battled through adversity, upset in their first two games by Churchill and by Walter Johnson in overtime. However, this has not stopped them from becoming the best they can be, as they continue to work hard each and every day.

After the first two losses, it was a turning point for the Cougars when they dominated against Wheaton, Gaithersburg, and Seneca Valley in three consecutive games, with shutout scores of 7-0, 10-0, and 7-0.

The team consists of returning and new players—ones who have never stepped into the Cougar Dome before—making big contributions to the team's success as a whole, including freshmen Tess Thorpe and Krista Lagas, who have outstanding skills to make the varsity team during their first year.

Thorpe claims that one of the team's successes is when "we almost won our first game of the season when we haven't played much with each other before," she said.

Returning players include the team captains of this season: senior Lila Moncak, and juniors Hannah Wagner and Kayla Pilloff. (Note: Pilloff is a member of The Prowler.)

They continue to grow strong bonds as the season progresses. Thorpe describes the girls as "so welcoming, nice and super funny," becoming not only one team, but one family.

With playoffs underway in less than three weeks, Thorpe is "confident that [the] team will succeed" and "if we work hard, then we will [succeed]."

Come cheer on the field hockey team while they are away on Tuesday, October 10, against John F. Kennedy under the lights at 7 PM.



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## Girls Volleyball

By LILY KAPLAN  
Senior Staff Writer

It is no surprise that the girls varsity volleyball team has worked hard to be where they are today.

This year, the team is composed of one freshman, seven sophomores, two juniors, and three seniors. There are six more sophomores than there were last year.

Their tryouts took place over the course of three days in early August, and cuts were made every day.

"Since tryouts were pretty early," senior middle hitter Gabby Hardy explained, "I tried to get a lot of sleep and stay hydrated so I am ready for each day."

Hardy has been playing volleyball at QO for three years: one on JV and the other two on varsity. As one of the seniors on the team, Hardy hopes to solidify some of her skills and hopefully lead the team to win some playoff games.

Hardy shares a common goal with some of her other teammates. Junior libero Sofia Bolanos says that she "hopes to end with a better record for the volleyball team than last year."

"And I hope to be closer to my teammates," she added.

The team's first game was against Poolesville on September 5th, and the Cougars had a fantastic win of 3-0. However, the second game ended with a loss against Walter Johnson on September 13. With this loss, the girls are committed to becoming the best team they can be. Sophomore middle hitter Faith Ukiteyedi claims that going forward, the team needs to "work on our serve receive and get stronger at it."

Ukiteyedi, along with Bolanos and Hardy, believes that working together as a team and practicing hard will ultimately be what they need to have a successful season. "We plan on putting in extra work even when off the court," she said. "Focusing on our mental well-being as a team and staying positive. We will also continue to have intense and challenging practices."

The fall season surely isn't over yet. The girls continue to train hard in order to reach their common goal: a successful season. Their next game is on Monday, October 9 at Winston Churchill High School.

## Boys Soccer

BY DYLAN FLAIM  
Staff Writer

Following a second round playoff exit to Urbana in penalty kicks last season, QO Boys Soccer is out for revenge.

"I think that game was a game we could have won," said senior captain Prince Kemani when asked about the Urbana game.

So far, the Cougars, with a combination of returning and new pieces, have been even better than last season. Two of the biggest stars on this team are transfers, sophomore Iker Garzon, who is from Ecuador, and senior Darren Gamez, a transfer from Washington Christian Academy in Olney. They have already made a huge impact for QO, scoring goal after goal.

When asked on how it felt transferring to QO, Gamez had only good things to say. "It feels great, man. Everyone here is so nice, very welcoming. I feel like it's a great environment and we are doing pretty good," he said.

Despite a draw to Gaithersburg, the Cougars are still undefeated, with impressive wins over teams such as Whitman, Churchill, and Bethesda-Chevy Chase. The job is not finished, though, as the Cougars have one goal: to go far in the postseason.

"We at least want to win the county championship again, win the regional final, and just perform well overall," said junior Ron Abarjel. Senior captain Jordan Zelof agrees. "We definitely want to make it out of the region this year. That's probably our biggest goal, since we haven't done that in QO's history."

It should be a fun end of the season for Quince Orchard, as they hope to close the regular season undefeated. The final home regular season game for the Cougars will take place on Thursday, October 19 against Sherwood. The MPSSAA State Tournament begins at the end of October, with Quince Orchard likely hosting their first game of the tournament on Saturday, October 28. Make sure to come out and support your Cougars!



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# Another week, another win

By MADELEINE BURKE  
*Editor-in-Chief*

QO football is the most feared team on every opponent's schedule. They currently have a streak of 35 wins, making their most recent loss back in 2019, against rivals Northwest in the playoffs.

In an attempt to make the games more interesting for the players and fans, the regular season schedule changed this year to include matchups against two teams out in Virginia and a couple different Maryland teams outside of MCPS.

September 2 was the first game of the season and was against one of the two Virginia teams, South County located in Lorton, who won their first-ever state championship back in 2019. The game ended in QO crushing South County 33-0.

The third game of the season was played against the second Virginia team, Stone Bridge located in Ashburn, who gave QO a scare of potentially breaking their long-standing winning streak. With only two minutes left in the last quarter, QO was down a point and just received possession of the ball. Head Coach John Kelly said he was able to keep the players

level headed by assuring them that "until the game is over, there is always time to win." And that is just what happened. With 17 seconds left in the game, quarterback Nino Marzullo 24' threw a 49-yard TD pass to Tavahri Groves 24', leading him straight to the end zone for the game winner.

The likelihood of QO winning another state championship for the third year in a row only grows as the season continues. QO faced their toughest competition at the beginning of the season, which only proved that they can play harder teams and still come out on top. But now that they have gotten over that hill, the rest of the season is predicted to fly by without any challenging competition.

The team's success has various factors to it, a few being the strong football culture that has bred competitive players who are committed to winning, as well as the line of experienced coaches that are able to lead them there.

This isn't the first time that Coach Kelly is in this championship position. Back in high school, when he was just John Kelly, he was part of a back-to-back state championship team at Seneca



Valley in 1997 and 1998 where he was a linebacker. Given that QO is anticipated to win the state championship for a third year in a row, he could break his high school record, only now as a coach instead of a player.

Back in Kelly's day, as he describes, Seneca Valley was "one of the premier programs in the state at the time." Now he is the coach of arguably the best public school football program in the state. But the job search did not come easy. Originally when searching for a coaching job in the area, Kelly applied to many schools, but QO was the

only one to get back to him, offering him the defensive coordinator position. The rest is history.

Coincidentally, QO is playing tonight in the Dome against Seneca Valley, Kelly's high school alma mater. It is also the Homecoming game, so it is sure to be another one you won't want to miss.



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