



Parkway Central High School,
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PUMAS**

Grammy Season



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PUMAS**



The Top Albums of the Year Ranked

pg.12-13

Illustration by senior Danielle Malt

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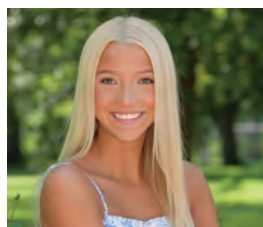
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KAMALA HARRIS: AN INSPIRATION

Students discuss Harris's impact on future female leaders.

Allison Loudenback
Staff Reporter

On Jan. 20, the day of President Joe Biden's inauguration, youth poet laureate Amanda Gorman recited a spoken-word piece entitled "The Hill We Climb," in which she discussed the importance of unity and collaboration.

With Gorman's message of togetherness in mind, many have noted the importance of Kamala Harris's role as Vice President and her potential to unify the country in unique ways. Harris, a woman of African-American and South Asian descent, has been lauded for her ability to represent so many voices that have been silenced in the past and are sometimes still silenced today.

Harris's vice presidency has opened the eyes of many to the importance of diverse representation and female leadership. The significance of these elements is often underestimated in a variety of settings, from school clubs to mainstream media. In high school specifically, teachers and student leaders alike often work to actively create a community that promotes inclusivity and the acceptance of many different perspectives, and diversity is key to creating this sort of environment.

"Racial diversity is essential," sophomore Gaaya Binoj said. "Many racial issues have been disregarded and unresolved for years—partially because of a lack of diversity in leadership."

Binoj has competed in Speech & Debate since the beginning of her freshman year, and finds it encouraging to be a part of a female-dominated club. The cliché of a "strong

male leader", particularly when accompanied by the flawed idea that women are submissive and shallow, has been instilled in our minds from a very young age, and Harris's contribution to breaking that stereotype is crucial.

"I think Kamala Harris's role as Vice President will inspire little girls right now," Binoj said. "It's always motivating to see someone who looks like you in power...I know many fellow Indians are so proud to see her in office."

Harris's task of not only assuming the duties of Vice President but also acting as a role model for young girls is especially important. Having a mainstream figure to look up to is deeply impactful for the next generation of women and minorities.

"Female leadership proves that it can be done," sophomore Nisha Murali said. "Regardless of everything women are told and all the systemic barriers preventing our success, it is incredibly empowering to look at a female leader doing well and know that we are also capable of that."

Murali is also a member of the Speech & Debate team, and hopes to pursue a career as a judge, inspired by figures such as Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. She hopes that the Biden-Harris administration will address many social justice causes such as police brutality and violence against minorities, and continues to emphasize the importance of diversity and representation when it comes to understanding these issues.

Sophomore Sierra Jones also views Harris's strides for female and minority leadership as both inspiring and pivotal.

"[Racial diversity] allows for particular racial groups to be heard and represented, which is essential to maintaining a fair political environment," Jones said. "And since a wom-

an has never held a position as president or vice president, it has inspired many to defy the odds."



Students watching Biden's inauguration from the classroom on Jan. 29. Photo by Abby Prywitch.

Sophomore Class President Dani Taylor also hopes to promote the value of inclusivity within the school. Her goal for the class of 2023 is for them to grow close with one another and form a close-knit community.

"As a female, I find it so inspiring for a woman to be in power. For most of American History, men have been leading our country but Kamala changed that," Taylor said. "I also think racial diversity is extremely important...because it brings out different viewpoints...and it gives everyone an opportunity to take part in."

THE PARKWAY CENTRAL PARKING LOT

Ellie Mueller
Staff Reporter

With school back in session and fewer people taking the buses, the parking lot seems more crowded than ever. Some of the problems with the parking lot include the entrance and exit situation, the amount of parking spaces, and the parking pass to no parking pass ratio.

One of the biggest complaints about the parking lot is the parking pass predicament. This year due to the pandemic, Parkway Central is selling parking passes for \$40 this semester, compared to the \$80 in previous years. While school policy states students can only park in the parking lot with a pass, some students are not willing to pay the price but still park, and parking spaces are being taken by non-pass holders.

"I'm not going to pay for a \$40 parking pass if it's only for one semester, with the chance of being contacted and sent home and wasting two weeks worth of parking," senior Jacob Weinberg said.

The administration recognizes this issue, and empathizes with the student body. Assistant principal Sarah Power recognizes this issue and is doing her best to help prevent unwanted parkers.

"We have the next two weeks right now to start going out there and making sure people are putting their parking

passes out," Power said. But she thinks the price is reasonable "I am not concerned about people paying for their parking passes, especially since it's only \$40."

Another common complaint that Power received is "when visitors come, because they park in the student parking lot which disrupts the flow of the lot."

When it comes to the general set up of the parking lot, there is only one way in and one way out, which becomes problematic, especially leaving school. Typically, school gets out at 2:30 and school buses leave at 2:37. If a student gets to their car by 2:32-2:33, they can "beat the buses" and get home as early as 2:40, compared to 3.

Unfortunately, Power believes this is something that will stay the same. "The set up will not change," Power said.

If the parking lot were to be changed, one idea Parkway Central employee Melvin Griffin threw out was numbering the parking spaces.

"So that at the beginning of the year, if you purchase a parking space and that space would be assigned to you all year long," Griffin said.

This would be convenient for the school and student body because it would ensure you a spot everyday. View our multimedia story at pchcorral.com



Cars line up to exit the parking lot at the end of the school day. Photo by Ellie Mueller.

GOOD FIT FOR A KING

Ryan King is named new head football coach for PCH

Abby Prywitch
Editor-in-Chief

After ten years of being a member of the Parkway Central football program coaching staff, Ryan King is named new head coach after Mark Goldenberg steps down from the position. Ever since King started his teaching career at Central, he hoped to someday be able to apply for the head coach position.

"I wanted to take it to the next level by being the head coach because it allows me to put my own mark on Parkway Central football," King said.

Football has been a part of King's life for a long time as he started playing at 7 years old. He finished his career at Truman State University where he played Division II football. Junior football player John Ellis was not surprised with the announcement.

"I saw it coming with King being selected as the next head coach. I also felt excited because I think King is a good coach and I already have a good relationship built with him," Ellis said.

Being a head coach of a sport adds many new responsibilities. King will now have to manage the everyday tasks of being a head coach both during the season and offseason. He believes some responsibilities he will be adding include planning practices, checking in on players, communicating with families, and during the off season, taking a larger role in player recruitment, off season workouts and team devel-

opment.

"I'm not sure he needs any advice from me; he clearly knows way more about this game than I ever will," Theobald said. "The biggest thing for any new head coach is to trust yourself and your process...He knows about the traditions of PCH football and will now be able to put his own touch onto those and continue to grow the program."

Theobald is excited for King and this new opportunity for him to take over the position of head coach.

"Coach King is extremely knowledgeable about the game and is a true X's and O's football nerd (and I mean that in the highest regard)," Theobald said.

Theobald believes that not only does King have an intelligent football mind, but he is also an amazing role model for the kids inside and outside of the classroom. King has shown the ability to make strong and positive connections with his players and students.

"This will only be enhanced with his role as the head football coach at PCH," Theobald said.

King believes his strengths in terms of coaching is building relationships with the players as well as, helping them improve on their technique and teaching them the nuances of the game.

"I think he will do well. Obviously being a first-year head coach isn't easy, but I think he will do well and other coaches and players will definitely be there to offer him support. He definitely already has plenty of coaching experience so that will help as well," Ellis said.

As head coach, he is most looking forward to getting to work with the football players where he can have a bigger impact on them not only as players but as individuals.

"We will miss Goldie and appreciate beyond words all he has done, not just for our football program, but the PCH community as a whole," athletic director John Theobald said.

Goldenberg has been the head football coach for the past 18 seasons which included many successes, but King is looking forward to the future of the program.

"[My goal for the program is] to get back to the historical success Parkway Central Football has enjoyed over its history," King said.



Ryan King coaches from the sideline at the football game against Parkway South on Oct. 3. Photo by Christine Stricker.

REPAIRING A NATIONAL MONUMENT

Abby Prywitch
Editor-in-Chief

High school students are always working through hypothetical problems, but a group of Parkway Central students got the chance to solve a real life problem involving one of St. Louis's most famous landmarks.

Every year the Gateway Arch National Park Services challenges high school students to come up with ways to improve the Arch and its surroundings.

"It's a yearly engineering competition (with a new issue that needs to be solved around the arch grounds) that goes between high school and the college-level that was recently started a few years ago by the Arch groundskeepers," junior Ethan Gegg said.

This year five students participated in the Gateway Arch Annual Engineering Challenge. This group consisted of seniors Jordyn Gegg, Eric Chen, Joshua Laue, Jon Volpe and sophomore Ethan Gegg. This was the first year Parkway Central students have participated in this competition.

Whenever there is heavy rain, large water puddles form on the sidewalks which affects the park's appearance and are a safety problem in the winter when it freezes. The Parkway Central team worked to find a solution to this problem.

"This year there was flooding that ruined all the trees and soil around the area and the challenge was to create a solution to solve the flooding problem," Chen said.

The five Central students also known as the PCH Arch Drainage Design team conducted ample research and made multiple trips to the arch ground during inclement weather to try and think of ways they could solve the problem. After contemplating many options, they decided to go with an integrated "slot" drainage system.

"We had Zoom calls two to three times a week and we did research on different things like types of drains, the materials that we will use, the costs of the entire thing, and how long it would take for everything to be installed," Chen said.

The boys led the team on their own and did not have anyone supervise the team, but they did get some advice from adults.

"We had the previous control Robotics coach, Jason Gegg, help to give some advice for our team, as well as tips from an experienced civil engineer. Otherwise, the supervision and scheduling of meetings was left up to our team of five," Ethan said.

When creating their proposal, there were a few key constraints they had to follow since the Gateway Arch is a national monument and any changes to the property require an approved act from Congress. For example, the Arch grounds landscaping, utility lines and sidewalks could not be changed, the soil composition could not be changed, and lastly, the St. Louis Union workforce was required.

Their proposal incorporated a clever design solution and a well-thought-out bid package that included timelines, cost estimates and contingency plans. The boys presented their overall bid package and executive summary on Nov. 19 at the Gateway Arch Museum to a panel of expert engineering judges.

"The team's proposal was a slot drain with a two-inch slot that went around the sidewalk and drained into six-inch circumference pipes underground and the drain deposited the water into nearby storm drains," Chen said.

The judges were judging based on the practicality of the design, how well the solution blended into the existing environment and the efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

The group of boys competed against three other private

high schools which were Gibault Catholic, Christian Brothers College, and St. Louis University High School.

The PCH Arch Drainage Design team took home a win and as a result unseated the prior two-year back-to-back champions, Christian Brothers College High School.

"It felt surprising at first for sure. We had no idea of what to expect, but we stuck with our idea confidently, against the three private high schools we were against," Ethan said. "It definitely felt good though to know what work we did had paid off."

While the boys did win the competition, the Arch also has professionals on the job.

"From one of the competition supervisors, we heard that a professional engineer is on the job as well, so it will be interesting to see what design is going to be used, and how similar it will be to ours. As far as we've heard though, our design was impressive for a high school team," Ethan said.



Seniors Eric Chen, Joshua Laue, Jon Volpe, Jordyn Gegg, and sophomore Ethan Gegg pose with their first place trophy. Picture courtesy of Brenda Nguyen.

TESTING EXAMINED

Does taking a test in a certain atmosphere impact your grade?

Brooke Kraizer
News and Features Editor

Coming back to school has been a crucial part of 2021. Walking into the building, seeing friends and teacher safely is exciting, almost like going back to normal. There is definitely some adjusting to do and testing is something that both teachers and students are trying to adapt to.

Students taking classes virtually and in-person are faced with tests almost every week, if not multiple times a week. Testing formats have changed in so many different ways; some are in person, some are online, some are open note and some of them are not. Teachers are trying to find the best way to test students, taking the past few months of virtual learning into consideration.

There is controversy over what the “right” way to test is. To teachers, giving a standard closed-note test is something they are used to, but for students that might not be the best way to show their knowledge. When the whole student population was at home it was more likely that the tests were open-note because teachers couldn’t be in the room while their student was taking the test. This method would prevent cheating because using notes wouldn’t be held against students. Now that students are back in school they are noticing more and more tests are closed-note. This raises the question: do students at home have an advantage over the students at school taking a test?

Mason Seigel (11) has already taken a few tests in-person and feels that when students both at-home and in person are given a test, the at-home students have an advantage because they could use their notes if they wanted to.

“There is definitely an advantage with taking tests at home but I trust that people aren’t using outside resources when taking tests at home because that wouldn’t be good,” Seigel said.

“I like taking tests online because it’s less pressure and it’s more relaxing,” Seigel said.

Being at home also creates a certain level of comfort when taking a test. Some may have testing anxiety or get stressed out when in a room with other people.

Alissa Barnholtz is a freshman who spent her first few months of high school at home, but is happy to be in-person with a somewhat normal high school experience. Both Seigel and Barnholtz mentioned that taking tests online takes stress off and it is a more relaxed experience. “I like taking tests online better because I feel like I can focus better,” Barnholtz said.

English teacher Martha Rudolph and math teacher Heather Jafari have already given one or more tests since returning back to school. Both teachers agreed that there is really no advantage or disadvantage. The people in person can ask questions while the people at home could use their notes if they were cheating, therefore the students in person may have more of an advantage because they can get help and ask questions.

“I think students at home have a disadvantage because the students in class can ask questions,” Rudolph said. She also mentioned that when her students are taking a test she can read their body language and offer help when needed.

“I think they have an even playing field because the people in person can get help from the teacher,” Jafari said.

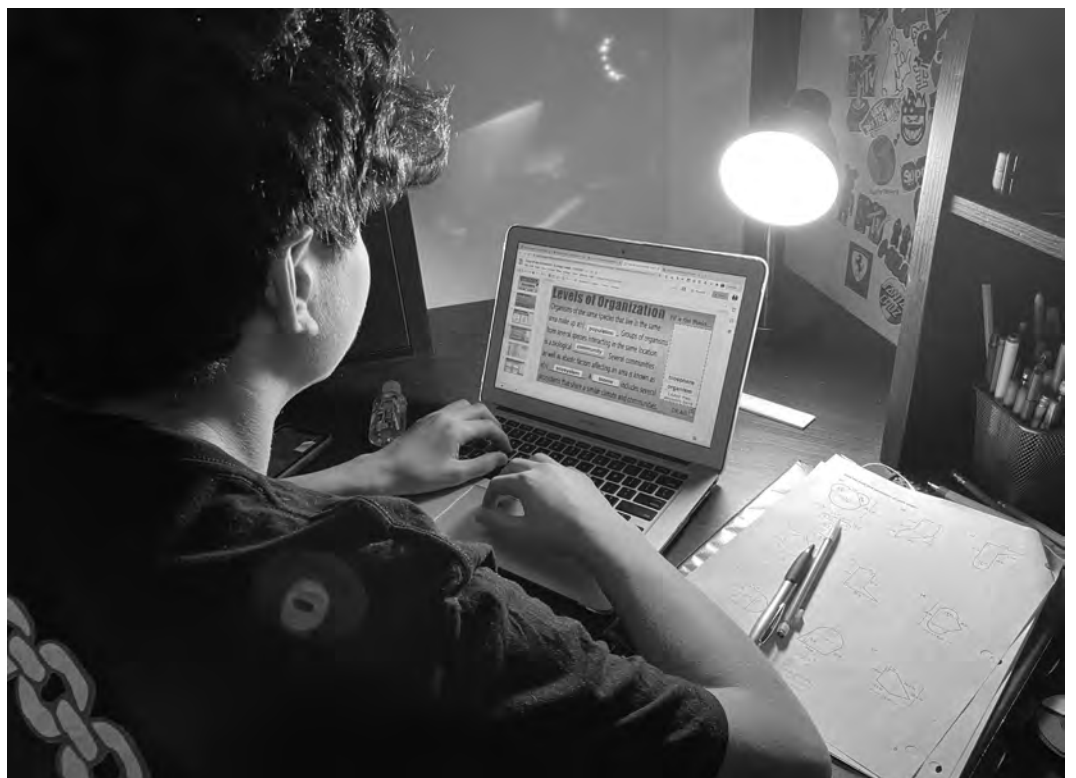
Although both teachers have given tests they have done so very differently. Jafari is using a website called “Delta Math” which gives each student different numbers in their

problems when testing. Rudolph is giving “normal tests” but is changing them for students in-person versus online. If a student is online then they have a written portion because that way they can use their notes but not find direct answers. If a student is in person then she gives them a partial closed note portion as well as an open note portion

“I do half and half for the in person students,” Rudolph said. She is testing this way because it gives students the opportunity to show their knowledge over content without notes and then dig deeper when using their notes to prove they understand a prompt.

According to Jafari, Delta Math is working because it is giving all students the same types of problems but with different numbers. Therefore if they try to work or get answers from their friends it would be wrong. Jafari finds it can be helpful for students to use the website because if someone is normally in class but is sick or can’t make it to school that day, they can take the test from home. Because the tests are open-note, students have to take a picture and turn in their work when they are finished. When students show their work, it allows the teacher to see if they are doing the way they were taught or if they are using Photomath or Mathway to help solve their test.

“I make sure my kids submit their work so I can check their work and their problems,” Jafari said.



Top: Freshman Karon Penny working on classwork in Math class. Photo by: Andrew Staggengborg. Above: Freshman Jacob Abowitz working on homework at home. Photo by: Gabby Abowitz

JOE BIDEN TAKES OFFICE

Jan. 20 marked the transition to the Biden Administration

Alex Maisenhelder
Online Managing Editor

Soon on Jan. 20, marked the end of Donald J. Trump's presidency and the beginning of Joseph R. Biden's. Along with the presidency, the Senate also flipped to a Democrat majority with Senators Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock of Georgia being sworn in. While this left the Senate itself split 50-50, Vice President Kamala Harris (D) holds the tie-breaking vote if it is needed.

Shortly after being inaugurated as President of the United States, Biden went to action and signed 17 executive orders, proclamations, and memorandums. While most people are aware that

he signed a multitude of actions shortly after assuming office, it is better to take a deeper look at what these executive orders, proclamations, and memorandums seek to accomplish.

The actions cover a plethora of topics from the pandemic, to immigration, to the climate, to LGBTQ rights, etc.

On the topic of the pandemic, Biden is requiring social distancing and mask wearing on all federal property and all federal employees. Biden is also reinstating ties with the World Health Organization (WHO), after Trump and his administration chose to withdraw the United States' membership and funding last year. Lastly it was also announced that Dr. Anthony Fauci, who has been the lead NIAID advisor during the whole pandemic, will be the head of U.S. Delegation to the WHO's executive board.

In addition, Climate Change is an issue that is first and foremost and President Biden has treated it as such by signing a letter to re-enter the United States in the Paris climate accords. Trump had previously removed the United States from the coalition that was working to move away from fossil fuels, which was aligned with his action of an executive order to grant the Keystone XL Pipeline the permits it needed. However, one of Biden's actions actually rescinded the pipeline's permits which is more in accordance with his idea of working towards a power source of the future such as



DACA recipients and their supporters rally outside the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., on June 18, 2020. (Drew Angerer/Getty Images/TNS)

electric cars.

"With the way the whole climate debate is going, I feel it is kind of foolish to invest in fossil fuels, it is a waste of money that could be spent towards renewable energy" senior Matt Schnaare said. While it is true that people are looking to move towards renewable energy sources due to the environmental impact of fossil fuels, it is also worth noting that lithium quarries/mines which are a primary thing in making the lithium ion car batteries which are popular in electric vehicles.

President Biden also took some steps forward on immigration related issues. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which Trump sought for his years to end has been bolstered by Biden. DACA allows protection for child immigrants also known as Dreamers. DACA is an organization that helps protect those Dreamers from deportation. In addition to bolstering DACA President Biden has also called on Congress to enact legislation that would help provide a permanent status as well as a path to citizenship for the Dreamers. Along the theme of blocking deportations, there were a few executive orders signed by Biden that overturned Trump's attempt to aggressively seek out and deport unauthorized immigrants, as well as one order that specifically blocked the deportation of Liberians. Immigration issues have recently become one of, if not the most polarizing issue in the world of American politics, but it might not be as big of an issue as it is blow up to be.

"Immigration is an issue that is brought out to be a bigger issue than it is. I feel that immigration is not critical to the real issues facing America today, America has bigger issues to worry about" Schnaare said.

Furthermore, President Biden signed an executive order into action that revoked the plan of the Trump administration to exclude noncitizens from the census count. This could have profound impact on politics as seats in the House of Representatives are decided and redistributed in accordance with the census which is taken every 10 years. Also, with the speeding up the process and helping give a path to Dreamers towards citizenship could influence future elections at the state and national level. This is due to the fact immigrants whether they are unauthorized, a legal permanent resident, or a Foreign-born U.S. citizen the majority either identify or lean democratic.

There is also an argument that counting noncitizens in the census count could actually be an action to benefit all Americans no matter how they got here. As this is on the idea of funding.

"If they have American citizens in the best interest, it is warranted to count noncitizens in the census, because that way you have proper funding and allocation to areas" Schnaare said. "This is due to the fact that if you don't count

them the areas could be underfunded and undersupplied for their actual population which would be crucial if the American citizens were in their best interests."

Biden also implemented actions to extend a federal moratorium on evictions as well as he

asked certain agencies including the urban development, Veterans Affairs and Housing, and the Agriculture departments to extend a moratorium on foreclosures on federally guaranteed mortgages which was put into action in response to the Pandemic.

One of Biden's main selling points, even to Democrats was not that he was Joe Biden, but more that he was not Trump. So seeing the changes immediately put in place, even if they are just reversing Trump's policies and actions is a welcome sight to those who elected him.

"It sends a message, that I personally agree with, that most of the executive orders were mostly just undoing or overturning decisions Trump had made while in office, it is a message to say that the last four years were not normal" Schnaare said.

Furthermore, one of Trump's major detractors to those who criticized him was almost how he treated the Presidency as a business and did it selfishly.

"I feel that Biden plays more of a familial role than a business role" junior Olivia Qian said. "Even if it is just mostly for show, it is nice seeing the President and First Lady have empathy and showing compassion and caring about others."

In addition to many incidents throughout his presidency, highlighted by the Jan. 6 insurrection, Trump caught a lot of criticism for his lack of being hard on people that posed extremely controversial and/

or offensive agendas.

"From where I stood on it, I thought, political stance aside, that to lead a country I would want a certain level of morals present and frequently I did not really see that with Trump" Qian said. "Whether or not he believed in the racist, homophobic, or xenophobic things, I do not feel that he really did enough to talk down or go against it when people around him or his supporters were purveying those things."

While there might not be a unanimous consensus on this topic, everyone that I have talked to, or things that I have read throughout the process of creating this agree that America has a lot of issues on its plate right now and is nowhere near perfect as it likes to portray itself.

Overall Biden has an extremely busy first day in office, but only time can tell how effective his policies will be in the long run and what their long lasting impact will be.



Image courtesy of <https://twitter.com/WhiteHouse>.

“ My biggest issue with Trump was his foreign policy and I feel like most of what Biden did was just reverting to the status quo that existed before Trump. ”

- Matt Schnaare (12)

TAKING A STAND, OR A SEAT

The disconnect from the national anthem and daily life

Emma Li
Staff Reporter

Most people remember the controversy surrounding the NFL in 2016 as players protested police brutality by kneeling during the national anthem. Nearly five years later, activists' messages are just as important, and many high schoolers are disappointed in the disparities between what the anthem suggests compared to what the country has become.

Francis Scott Key wrote "The Star-Spangled Banner" during the War of 1812. While it was not the official American national anthem until 1931, it was played at sporting events as far back as 1897. It rose in popularity during WWI as the sense of nationalism increased, but the tradition only became widespread as technology developed to allow events low in funds to play pre-recorded music.

High schoolers, whether they are an athlete or spectator, often find themselves rising before a game to pay respect to the national anthem. It is ingrained in tradition, yet students of various backgrounds are questioning the meaning behind what they support.

"I still don't think that we are 'free,'" senior Diego Cruz Bilbraut said. "We have problems with racism... a lot of people don't accept other people."

Bilbraut is an American citizen who was born in Puerto Rico. Although the anthem does not fully encompass all groups, it still provides a common goal for many.

"I think the anthem and the pledge of allegiance are meant for not forgetting that you are part of a reputation that keeps getting stronger," Bilbraut said.

The reputation that Bilbraut speaks of is more important than ever. Western culture is under constant scrutiny in global news and politics, and the irony is unmistakable.

"When other countries look at the American flag, they think freedom and peace and everybody's equal," junior Shariff Robinson said. "But once you actually get into the United States, you see it's not that way. Some people don't have the same [rights] as other people."

All eyes are on America as we enter a new administration. People have a responsibility to their community to uphold their reputation. We have a ways to go before we voluntarily show pride in the country we are part of.

"I don't really know the significance of the Pledge of Allegiance and the national anthem," senior Yousef Ahmad said. "They're used so often it's almost like it's lost its meaning and has become a formality."

For others, there has never been much meaning to the pledge at all.

"I remember in first grade, we used to all stand up and [say the pledge] in the morning," Robinson said. "It didn't really mean nothing at that time... but now if it was required, I wouldn't do it."

Immigrants often experience even more confusion over the meaning of the pledge, especially with old habits to compare with. Senior Nandhini Sivabalakannan immigrated to the United States from India in first grade, at the age of six.

"I had just immigrated from India, and my teachers told me to stand up and just say the pledge," Sivabalakannan said. "I just remember thinking it was such a weird thing because we didn't do it back in India. There is a song praising the state, but it's not pledging allegiance to the country. It's just talking about how wonderful our culture is, and our community."

Sivabalakannan notes that the U.S. flag is often more visible than the Indian flag, and it is not in a good way.

"You turn the corner anywhere and you see a flag," Sivabalakannan said. "It's almost like 1984 by George Orwell, how they say 'Big Brother's always watching you.' It's almost like it's almost lost its significance. Back in India, you were only allowed to raise a flag during special occasions, and only at federal buildings, so you won't really see it anywhere else, so there's significance there. But just to have it at every corner, I think it loses its meaning."

Few people consider their actions when habits of rising for the flag become so ingrained.

I remember moving to Parkway from a school that did not say the pledge, and was utterly confused when everyone stood up, faced the same direction, and said the same words. I never asked, and eventually figured it out. I am disappointed that no one explained to me the meaning behind what I had to do to "fit in," but I did it. It did not change my citizenship status.

Saying the pledge does not change the fact that I was born in America, and does not change my political opinions, or lack thereof at the time. I wondered what everyone was doing, and what secret knowledge they had that I did not. A few years later, an old man on Halloween had my friend and I recite the pledge before he gave us candy. It was a trick that we could do, and it was meaningless to us.

Physical education teacher and basketball coach Aaron Mueller sees both sides of the conflict on students' right to stand or sit for the pledge.

"I believe that students have the right to exercise that freedom of expression," Mueller said. "Many in our country have been treated unjustly for a long time. This is one form of protesting against these injustices."

Announcements in Parkway always include the Pledge of Allegiance, and has been a source of animosity to students who have less faith in the country, but are pressured, or even guilted, into complying. I have had to sit through lectures from teachers in the past on how people have died for the flag, and how the least we could do is stand, even though kneeling is often a symbol of respect.

"There is no verbal pressure to do it, but I've certainly seen teachers and staff members who give me the side eye of 'why aren't you standing for the pledge?'" Sivabalakannan said. "As an immigrant, as a person of color, this country has discriminated against me and people of my kind so often. If the country is not treating me with respect, isn't it enough for them to see what I'm trying to do by sitting for the pledge?"

Also, sitting and kneeling have rarely been an insult in the various cultures of the world. A tradition in Chinese New Year is to *kētóu* to the people you respect, such as parents and teachers, where you kneel and touch your head to the floor before them. People kneel when they pray, such as when Tim Tebow, an openly Christian player, prayed on the football field in 2011. Sitting and kneeling is not disrespectful.

While those who are currently in or have served in the military deserve respect, to me, the flag represents all Americans. If that is at the forefront of my mind, and if I believe that those less fortunate than I deserve more respect than what has been handed to them, then I have to trust that is enough reason to question the various symbols of America.

I believe that the flag, anthem, pledge, and people of America should represent all of its inhabitants, regardless

of citizenship. A country is not a country without the people within it.

"I feel like the national anthem is to honor our veterans," Robinson said. "Like my dad, he's a veteran. If it's the national anthem, I will always honor my father. [But if] it's just the pledge of allegiance, they try to make it stand for freedom and everybody's equal and it's just not true. And this year with the Black Lives Matter protests, it's just shown everybody's true colors, and how people really act behind doors."

My privilege has allowed me to ignore politics for much longer than it should have. In the aftermath of the murders of people such as George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, I have begun to stay more informed. I am not Black, and I have not experienced racism in the ways that many people have. However, I can use my privilege for good. I am still learning, and I worry that I am not saying the "right" thing. I am open to criticism and conversation, and the country and its symbols should be too.

The insurrection at the Capital should not have happened, and maybe I am naive for thinking that the polarization of politics can go away because of it. But the opposite of being naive is giving up: pushing out other opinions, making generalizations, losing respect for yourself and others. Americans pride themselves in their ability to persevere, but that skill needs to be turned inwards.

Open the conversation, listen to others, have respect for yourself and what you represent. Stand for the anthem to show your respect to the goals they represent. Sit for the anthem to show your respect for those the country ignores. These actions are both important to maintain the country's honor.

I personally will be helping the school with morning announcements, and I will be saying the pledge, because I choose to believe that the flag represents all people, and is a map to where we need to go. Americans are proud of their bravery, and I think one of the bravest things to do is to recognize yourself as a problem, and to stand up for yourself. Stand, or sit, against America. It's really for America. Talk about the problems we allow to happen, and fix it. The action of sitting or standing is only the first step to real action.



Girls volleyball stand for the pledge before a game on October 21, 2020. "When we do add the pledge to sporting events, people don't really see the significance of it," Sivabalakannan said. "We're being brainwashed to pledge allegiance to a country when we're not soldiers in the military or in the navy, because we've been taught to do it from such a young age." Photo by Christine Stricker.

SUPERBOWL LV IN TAMPA

The Bucs became the first team to win at home in the Superbowl

Alex Maisenhelder

Online Managing Editor

Superbowl LV brought an end to an interesting season for the NFL, who suffered through the pandemic like nearly everyone else. Due to the coronavirus, in-person attendance was either fully barred or limited throughout the whole season, resulting in the lowest attended Superbowl ever, breaking the record previously held by Superbowl I between the Chiefs and the Packers. Even with the lack of attendance, it was still a spectacle to watch with all the usual antics; a flashy half-time performance, amped-up players, and even a streaker.

The Chiefs called heads and won the opening coin toss. They chose to defer to the second half meaning that Tampa Bay is starting the game with the ball; 11 straight teams to win the toss in the Super Bowl have chosen to defer.

First Quarter: The Bucs started off the game with a quick 3 & out after an incompleting on third down, unlike they did last game in Green Bay when they opened up with a touchdown.

The Chiefs prevented an early 3 & out thanks to a 11-yard scramble by Patrick Mahomes, but they failed to get another first down and had to punt it for only the second time this postseason.

A quick run on first down netted the Bucs a new set of downs, but then they quickly ended up at a 4th & 14 and had to punt away.

Two runs gave the Chiefs another first down to work with. On first down, Mahomes rolled out of the pocket and scrambled for yet another first down. With a free play thanks to an offside call, Mahomes fired downfield and had his pass barely deflected by the Bucs secondary. Following two nothing plays, another deep incompleting to Tyreek Hill, left them at 4th down. Harrison Butker then converted the 49-yard field goal for the first points of the game with 5:10 left in the first quarter, marking the 62nd consecutive game that they had held the lead-in.

With three straight runs by Leonard Fournette, the Bucs picked up another first down on the ground. After a holding call on the Chiefs defense, Tom Brady completed a 16-yard pass to Antonio Brown for the first. Brady finished off the drive with an 8-yard touchdown to Rob Gronkowski; setting them alone and breaking the tie for most touchdowns in the postseason by a quarterback-receiver duo.

An explosive return by Pringle set them up with good field position. The first quarter came to an end with the Bucs leading 7-3.

Second Quarter: Starting off the quarter, the Chiefs were forced into a 3 & out, giving possession back to the Buccaneers.

With the ball back in his hands, Tom Brady completed a deep pass to Mike Evans taking them all the way to the 6-yard line, picking up 31-yards. The Chiefs defense came up big with multiple goal line stops take over the ball on their own 1; one of the lone bright points in the game for their defense.

After getting the ball back on their own 1, Mahomes fired a quick pass to Tyreek Hill who made his way through the

defense getting them a first and some room to work with. The drive ended quickly with a drop by Travis Kelce to force them to punt again. A holding penalty on the first punt forced them to punt a second time. Townsend shanked his second punt giving the Bucs good field position to start their drive with.

Tampa Bay started their drive with a shortened field thanks to the shanked punt, and with another holding penalty on the Chiefs, the Bucs got a first down. Following the penalty, the Bucs couldn't get another first and were forced to attempt a 40-yard field goal, which Ryan Succop made. However, a Chiefs player lined up offside for the field-goal and the penalty gave the Bucs a new set of downs. Tom Brady did not waste any time finding Rob Gronkowski for another touchdown; pushing their lead to 14-3.

Following the Bucs' second touchdown, Mahomes starts off the drive with a quick completion to Kelce for the first. Mahomes completed to Kelce again for a first before rushing for another. Kelce again caught a pass for the first down putting them in the red zone. Coming off of the 2-minute warning, they were not able to get a first and are forced to attempt another field goal, from 34-yards, the kick was good.

Following the Kansas City score, Tom Brady slowly worked for the first with Gronkowski muscling his way to the first down. A deep pass interference penalty brought them within reach of the touchdown. Another defensive pass interference by Tyrann Mathieu in the end zone brought the Bucs to the 1-yard line. Tom Brady shortly after threw a touchdown to Antonio Brown. The extra point from Succop was good. The first half ends with the Bucs up 21-6.



A view of the pirate ship Jose Gasparilla ahead of Super Bowl LV on February 1, 2021, in Tampa, Florida. (Mike Ehrmann/Getty Images/TNS)

Third Quarter: Coming off of the second-half kickoff, Clyde Edwards-Helaire broke out for a 26-yard run, the Chief's biggest play of the game to that point. The Chiefs followed it up with a pass to Kelce and another run for the first. The Chiefs ended up having to attempt a 52-yard field goal which was good, bringing the score to 21-9 in favor of the Bucs.

The Bucs started their first drive of the second half from their own 21. A pass completion to Fournette got them the first on third down. A big completion to Gronkowski got

them to the Chiefs 27. Fournette rushed for a 27-yard touchdown. Fournette's dominance on the ground continually just bouncing off of tackles and outmuscling the Chief's defense became a painful theme for fans of the defending champions.

Mahomes suffered a sack on second down of their drive, and on the following play Mahomes was intercepted off of a deflection. Quickly giving the Buccaneers possession back.

The Bucs had a few successful runs to get them a couple of first downs. Brady fired for the endzone but the pass was incomplete. A huge misplay with a snap over Brady's head meant that they had to attempt a deep field goal. A 52-yard attempt by Succop was good. Succop's connection brought the score even further out of reach for the Chiefs at a 31-9 deficit.

Edwards-Helaire rushed for a first down following a holding call on the Bucs. A big completion to Tyreek Hill got the Chiefs a first down after LeVonte David knocked down a pass in the middle of the field on the previous play. The third quarter ended with the Bucs up 31-9, desperation was starting to set in on the Chiefs sideline. The defending champs were used to being down a possession or two in the playoffs but this was the largest deficit they had faced in the playoffs since they were down 24 to the Texans in the Divisional Round the year before.

Fourth Quarter: Mahomes started off the fourth quarter with a solid completion to Travis Kelce for the first down. Mahomes was pressured on third and again fourth down, producing two circus throws with the first being just out of reach and the second bouncing off the chest/helmet of the receiver. Despite Mahomes' best efforts at extending the play, the Chiefs turned it over on downs.

A barrage of rushing plays slowly marching down the field. Tom Brady took a deep shot attempting to find Gronkowski, but the pass fell incomplete. This incompleting meant that the Bucs had to punt for the first time since they punted on their opening two drives.

The Chiefs had another big completion to Kelce to start off their drive; it has become customary this year for Kelce to put up ridiculous numbers and the Super Bowl was no different with him putting up north of 100 yards despite how hard of a game Mahomes was having. Mahomes was sacked on the ensuing first down. Later on in the drive, a roughing the passer penalty on Jason Pierre-Paul gave the Chiefs 15 yards and a first. However, a big sack and a completion to Hill only brought them to a 4th & 10. The Chiefs were not able to convert on fourth down and turned the ball over on downs.

At this point it was just a game of possession for the Bucs and running down to the clock, they could already see the light at the end of the tunnel and just had to ride it out. The Bucs had a lackluster drive and ended up punting it from their own 19.

The Chiefs had an uninspiring drive working their way down the field ending with an interception in the endzone, which effectively sealed the game.

Tom Brady kneeled out the rest of the game resulting in his seventh Super Bowl victory.

Tom Brady also claimed his 5th Super Bowl MVP after going 21/29 for 201 yards and three touchdowns.

FROM QUARANTINE TO QUARTERS

Boys basketball works through challenges of being quarantined

Abby Prywitch
Editor-in-Chief

Despite various setbacks this season the boys varsity basketball team remains hopeful for the end of their season. Between quarantine, key players facing injuries and only a few returning players this winter the team has encountered many hardships.

“This season we’ve faced a lot of adversity with COVID, injuries, and only returning three varsity players,” senior Jackson Shanker said.

The team as a whole has faced two quarantines that lasted for two weeks each that have caused hurdles for the team. During their quarantine period the team was unable to practice or have games together and it is not easy to not practice for two weeks and come back.

“We have been working to establish an identity of hard work and togetherness. At times, this has been tough to do because we’ve missed out on so much practice time with quarantine and weather,” Mueller said. “But that Parkway Central basketball identity was established long before our players were born, and we have a responsibility to carry it on.”

Despite all of these setbacks, junior Andrew King has still managed to work on his goals this season.

“I’ve certainly been able to grow closer to some of my goals and work my way towards being an important part of the team,” junior Andrew King said.

The team as a whole has been working hard to overcome the various challenges they have faced along the way.

“This season I’m just proud of how we have battled every game and workout our best through the various challenges we have faced,” senior Jackson Shanker said.

For Shanker a highlight of the season so far was beating Parkway South two times.

“They are rivals with us so that was a fun experience,” Shanker said.

Joe Siervo, a junior player, has looked on the bright side of things.

“Personally I’m just glad we got to play and were able to have a full season even though there weren’t any fans. It was good for the seniors to actually get to have a basketball season,” Siervo said.

Mueller is fortunate that they were able to even have a season because in the fall he thought there was a possibility they wouldn’t have a season at all.

“I’ve enjoyed getting to go to practice everyday and be around the team. We’ve had some nice victories along the way too,” Mueller said. “Probably the three that stand out are Liberty, Summit, and Mehlville. In both the Summit and Mehlville games, we came from behind and really played together as a team.”

Senior Adam Kokal decided to return to basketball for this season since last year he made the decision to play club volleyball instead. Adam’s brother, Oliver is a freshman who made the varsity team this year, so the boys get the opportunity to play on the same team.

“Playing with Oliver and my friends is something I’ll miss and glad I chose to do,” Adam said.

Oliver and Siervo are leading the boys team in scoring. Oliver is currently the top scorer for the Colts with 158

points.

“Oliver has continued to improve and become more comfortable and aggressive throughout the year. He is going to have a great career here,” head coach Aaron Mueller said.

With less than two weeks left of the season the team’s goal is to continue to improve and compete and try to finish the season on a high note.

“Our schedule is tough, but we want to be playing our best basketball going into the district tournament, which starts on Saturday Feb. 27,” Mueller said.

The boys are hopeful for the remainder of the season.

“I’m hoping the rest of the season will be as much fun as the first half. We’ve got a couple more weeks left, but finishing out the season strong and healthy would be great and just leaving it all out on the court so there’s no regrets after the season’s over,” Adam said.



Junior Christian Pollard dribbles the basketball past a Parkway North Player at their home game on Nov. 30. Photo by Christine Stricker.

NEW ADDITIONS TO GIRLS BASKETBALL

Abby Prywitch
Editor-in-Chief

This year the girls varsity basketball team only returned one starter from last year’s team and is a young team.

“We have definitely faced some challenges this season. Being a younger team with the graduation of four senior starters last year, we definitely faced some growing pains,” Sophomore Maggie Roberts said.

This year the team had several players come out for this season that did not play last year including juniors Mercedes Browder and Jady Wallis and seniors Jessica Parsons and Ohio transfer Hannah Sanford. Both the returning players and new players have all brought something to the team.

“I honestly could name every player on the roster and what they individually bring to the team to make us better,” Guilfoyle said.

Having a team with a lot of girls who had never played together is not easy, but the girls worked on building this up.

“One major challenge we’ve had this year is communicating. With almost an entire new team there’s a lot of rebuilding and getting to know each other play,” Meier said.

This is Wallis’ first year playing basketball since 7th grade.

“Everyone was so inclusive. I’ve made so many friends between all the grades and it’s fun getting to play with everyone,” Wallis said.

For Wallace since she has not played for a while she

had a big learning curve, but was thankful the coaches took her under their wings and helped her improve.

“With a little bit of help, I was able to sharpen some of my previous skills and learn so many new ones and new plays all in a short period of time,” Wallis said.

Head coach Brian Guilfoyle identified Roberts as one of his more consistent players.

Roberts leads the team in scoring with a 11.7 points per game average, rebounding, assists, steals and throw throw percentage. Roberts has a 76% accuracy rate for her free throws.

The team has two captains, senior Grace Meier and junior Maggie Huff and are huge leaders on the team according to Guilfoyle.

Meier’s highlight of the season is the ability to be able to go out and play everyday, practices and games even with the current situation. She is meeting her goal for the season was to maintain 33% three point shooting.

This season the biggest thing the girls have worked on as a team is their consistency and chemistry.

“Confidence is a big part of high school sports and you have to believe in each other to be successful,” Guilfoyle said. “We have a very young team so they are learning lots of new concepts. One player can’t make the team successful. It takes the entire team buying into playing hard and giving everything they have for each other every night. If you care about each other you will help your teammates on and off the court. We want these relationships to last a lifetime.”

COVID-19 has brought challenges for many sports

teams. The girls faced one two week quarantine, but they did not let this stop them from working on their skills.

“Luckily because of Zoom we were able to continue practicing our skills from home and learning as you go,” Wallis said.

Guilfoyle hopes that for the remainder of the season the team continues to bond together and shows confidence in each other as they go into district action.

“I want players to give complete effort every night and enjoy the remaining games,” Guilfoyle said. “We were very fortunate to have a season and the kids really battled through adversity and became stronger.”



Sophomore Maggie Roberts goes to steal the ball at the game against Parkway West on Jan. 11. Photo by Christine Stricker.

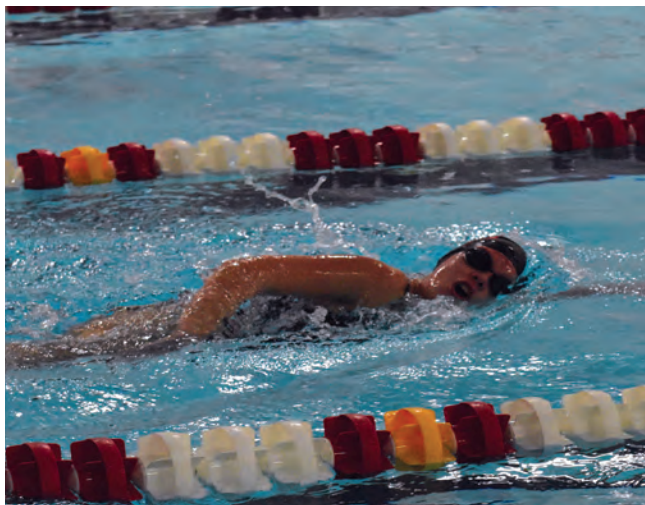
PUTTING OFF POOL PROBLEMS

Oldest pool in Parkway, swimmers push for a new pool

Maddie Hewgley
Staff Reporter

Sophie Bain and anyone who has taken freshman P.E. knows the most disgusting and outdated part of our school - the pool.

“The ceiling sometimes leaks, there’s a lot of mold on the pool deck, there’s sand and other gross things at the bottom of the pool,” Bain said. “The viewing section is awful! When we used to have spectators, it was hard for them to see everything because of the big pillars right in front of them. The locker rooms need some work as well. Half of the showers are broken, there’s mold everywhere in the shower area, one of the bathroom stall doors are broken, and the locker room floods frequently. Bugs are seen so often on the pool deck and in the locker rooms as well. Central’s pool definitely needs work.”



Bain swims freestyle in Central’s pool at the meet against Pattonville on Dec. 16.
Photo by Christine Stricker.

Despite these conditions, Parkway currently only has plans to replace the pool’s filtration system. These replacements are happening at all four Parkway high schools as part of routine maintenance and upkeep, but are not in response to Central’s current unsatisfactory conditions.

Central’s neglect of its pool has led to some students feeling neglected. Junior Sarah Hirsch, fresh off her trip to state where she represented the Central dive team, echoes just this.

“The school won’t pay for [a new pool] or get swim and dive sponsored because all they care about is basketball and football. Even though the swim and dive teams and the water polo team have brought in more wins for school than the football team [and] the basketball team,” Hirsch said.

Hirsch thinks Central should make it its mission to provide equal opportunities to all students in all sports and to demolish the existing double standard felt by the student athletes.

On top of the conditions, there is another significant issue with Central’s pool - the depth.

According to Parkway Athletic Director, Mike Roth, Central’s pool was built in the 1960s and, since then, the current safety regulations for the depth of the pool have changed. However, Central’s pool depth is up to code, because its age grandfathers it in.

Junior member of the dive team, Alyssa Smith, identifies the depth of the pool as a reason Parkway should look



Hirsch dives into the deep end of Central’s pool at the meet against Affton on Jan. 14.
Photo by Kaye Tate.

into a new pool for Central.

“A new pool would allow it to be deep in the diving area and would allow us to get a better quality board as opposed to a board whose screws we have to put back in everyday,” Smith said.

The board is old and some of the screws in the platform which connects the board to the pool deck fall out frequently when using the board.

Additionally, despite it technically being legal, the current depth of the pool’s deep end presents a danger to our divers.

“Diving would benefit from a new pool because I would be able to do harder dives and not feel like I’m going to hit my head at the bottom of the pool, which I have done, and it is painful,” Hirsch said.

Whether it be to make the pool legal, improve conditions for every Central student, offer pool visitors a welcoming environment, protect the safety of our divers, or to spend taxpayer dollars equitably across all sports facilities, Central has a plethora of reasons to improve the conditions of its pool beyond a new filtration system.

Roth was candid about the current pool situation.

“We are very aware that our pools have aged, there’s

no doubt about it. That’s a fact and we need to stay on top of the maintenance and the aesthetics and just make sure everything is top quality for our student athletes and coaches,” Roth said.

One of the greatest challenges the Parkway district faces when making major renovations is that they have four high schools. If one school were to get a new pool, the district would be expected to pay for new pools at all the schools. This has resulted in the district favoring upkeep and maintenance over starting from scratch.

According to an article from Fox2Now, Kirkwood High School was able to build an entirely new pool. However, the steep cost totaled about \$11 million, \$10 million of which came from donation.



Walker Natatorium at Kirkwood High School.



Parkway Central High School pool.

Building a new pool is no cheap task and, for Parkway, it would be four times the cost.

When asked if there are currently any plans for greater improvements to the pool beyond a new filtration system, Roth admitted this is not the first time such a question has been brought to his attention.

“There have been conversations [about a new pool],” Roth said. “I’ve been in Parkway almost 29 years and it seems like almost every year there’s conversation about what we’re going to do with our pools. At some point in time we might have to bite the bullet and say ‘Hey, what’s best? Do we keep our on-site facilities? Do we build a Parkway natatorium?’ But there’s other needs in Parkway too so it’s just a matter of where that falls into place.”

While “at some point in time” does not sound very promising or definite, student athletes can be assured that the subpar conditions of Central’s pool are on Parkway’s radar.

SMALL BUT MIGHTY

Wrestlers plan for sectionals

By Andrew Staggenborg
Reporter



Lateef Barrett (9) starts to implement a move to turn his opponent and gain control of the match. He won nine matches the season. Barrett using "bulldog" move while he attempts to win. Photo by Christine Stricker



Yousef Ahmad (12) takes his opponent to the mat trying to score points. "I'm really tall and lanky, so I have been put in matches with people way stronger than me. So I end up using more skills than just brute force." said Ahmad. He enjoying his last year playing wrestling. Photo by Sydney Kolker and Julia Solomon



Caleb Powell (9) sizes up his opponent to determine his next move. Photo by Sydney Kolker and Julia Solomon



Lateef Barrett (9) holds his opponent to the mat as the referee looks for the pin. Barrett got six wins by pinning his opponent. Photo by Christine Stricker



Coaches Lee Brown and Syed Ahmad discuss the matchups for the meet. In wrestling mental preparation is tantamount. The coaches are happy this year to produce the first winning season in six years and the first state qualifier in five years. Photo by Sydney Kolker and Julia Solomon

2021 Grammy Nominated Albums of the Year *Ranked*

Trey Williams
Managing Editor



“Women in Music Pt. III” by HAIM Soft Rock

BEST SONGS: “The Steps,” “Up From A Dream,” “Gasoline,” “3 AM,” “Don’t Wanna,” “Another Try,” “I’ve Been Down,” “FUBT”
WORST SONG:

“All That Ever Mattered”

8.5/10

I am not surprised that the band members are related considering how tightly together the vocals, drums, guitars, bass, and everything else fit together. This has catchy songs, creative and varied instrumentation, clever songwriting, and a great atmosphere throughout. This is hands down the best album I have listened to so far. Everyone should give this album a try.

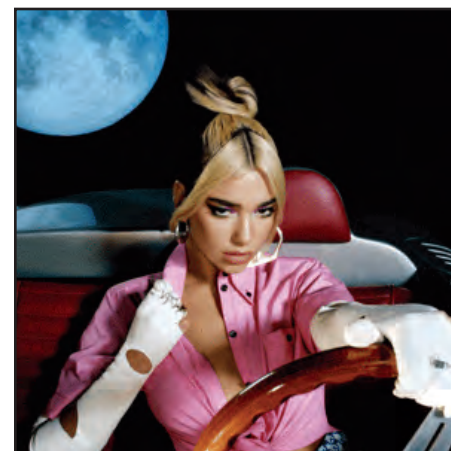


“Folklore” by Taylor Swift Folk

BEST SONGS: “exile,” “august,” “illicit affairs,” “mirrorball,” “mad woman,” “this is me trying,” “peace,” “seven,” “betty”
WORST SONG:
“the 1”

7.5/10

Despite a few duds and a lack of innovation, “Folklore” is an enjoyable record. I love the lyrics throughout, I love Swift’s vocals, I love the atmospheric and cozy instrumentation, and I love the consistent aesthetic throughout the track list. I think many people that wouldn’t otherwise like Taylor Swift’s work should try this album out.

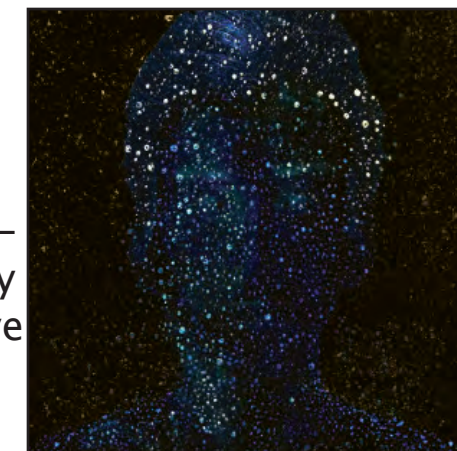


“Future Nostalgia” by Dua Lipa Pop

BEST SONGS: “Future Nostalgia,” “Levitating,” “Pretty Please,” “Hallucinate,” “Love Again,” “Break My Heart”
WORST SONG:
“Good in Bed”

7.0/10

Overall, I enjoyed this album a lot more than I thought I would. The instrumentals and vocal performances are stellar on the majority of the tracks here. I also loved the aesthetic of this album. The title really captured Dua Lipa’s sound here. Despite some misses, I would recommend this album to anyone that wants a good pop album.

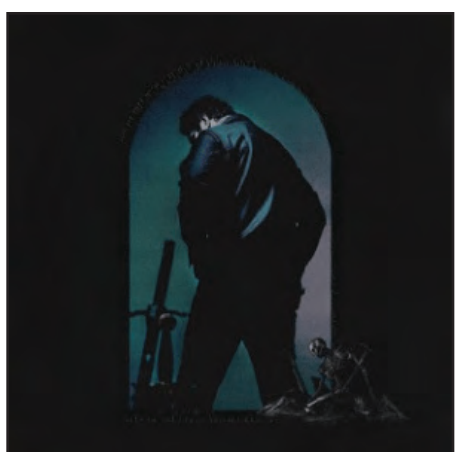


“Djesse Vol. 3” by Jacob Collier Neo-Soul

BEST SONGS: “All I Need,” “Butterflies,” “Light It Up On Me,” “Sleeping On My Dreams”
WORST SONG:
“Count the People”

5.5/10

Jacob Collier does a great job showing his talent here as an instrumentalist and a producer, but he has a lot to work on when it comes to songwriting, lyrics, and emotional impact. I could see Collier making a masterpiece, but he isn’t there yet. I would recommend the highlights here, but I can’t recommend the whole thing.



“Hollywood’s Bleeding” by Post Malone Pop Rap

BEST SONGS: “Enemies,” “Circles,” “Take What You Want,” “Staring at the Sun,” “Sunflower,” “Good-byes”
WORST SONG:

“Wow.”

5.0/10

I have liked Post Malone songs in the past, but this is not his best work. This is another case of a decent album being hidden inside a giant “meh” album. The good tracks here are fun, dramatic, and well made. The bad tracks here are bland, corny, and annoying. If you’re already a Post Malone fan, check this out. If you are not, this album will not change your mind.



“Chilombo” by Jhené Aiko R&B

BEST SONGS: “One Way St.,” “Surrender,” “Summer 2020,” “Pray For You,” “Lightning and Thunder,” “Party For Me”
WORST SONG:
“LOVE”

5.0/10

This album is 20 tracks. The quality of this album could have doubled if the track list were cut in half. There are so many songs here that feel like fluff. There weren’t many terrible songs here, it just felt like the same song over and over. I think Jhené Aiko has a lot of room to grow as an artist. I think if she becomes more comfortable with her voice and becomes more selective with the songs she puts on her albums, she has the potential to make a great album. “Chilombo” is not that album.



“Everyday Life” by Coldplay Pop Rock

BEST SONGS: “Sunrise,” “Church,” “Trouble in Town,” “Guns,” “Orphans,” “Eko”
WORST SONG:
“WOTW/POTP”

4.5/10

This album is not terrible. There are very few moments here of incompetency. My issue with this is that there are way too many songs here that are just “fine.” “Everyday Life” is more consistent, but is that a good thing if it’s consistently uninteresting? There are some decent tracks here, but I can’t recommend this album.



“Black Pumas” by Black Pumas Psychedelic Soul

BEST SONGS: “OCT 33,” “Confines,” “Sweet Conversations,” “Red Rover,” “Politicians In My Eyes”
WORST SONG:
“Know You Better”

4.0/10

Black Pumas has a lot of potential. I love the vocals and aesthetic of this album. When this group tries to make something epic, it nearly always works out. When they just go for a vibe, their poor production and sparse instrumentals bore me to death. This is a group to look out for, but this band is not quite there yet. If you aren’t into psychedelic or soul music, I can’t recommend this album.

BISHOP'S POST RESTAURANT REVIEW

An inside look into a Chesterfield Bistro

Written by Ellie Mueller
Student Reporter

Described on their website as “an upscale casual bistro” Bishop's Post, named partially after NHL hockey player Ben Bishop and co-founder Ben Bishop Jr., Bishop's Post is the embodiment of a sports bar and upscale bistro. Formally known as Oceano, it was reopened in Chesterfield after the general manager at the time, Christy Rayfield, wanted to incorporate the history of Chesterfield into the community. Located on Chesterfield parkway, this joint is a place you can't miss.

As I walked in the doors accompanied by my dad, we were immediately greeted and seated by the host. We were asked if we wanted a booth or table, and we chose a table. As we were walking to our table, the manager greeted us with a wave and a “have a good night”. When we were seated, I took a good look at the dining room, as it was my first time dining with them. The average customer(s) were older people on a date, or a family of four. Not to dig on anyone's appearance, but they all looked cleaned up and put together.

After we were seated, we were greeted by our waitress, who brought us menus and cold glasses of water to our table. After letting us look over the menu, she came back and took our first order, which was appetizers. When it came time to order, she gave us a run down of the menu and all the specials going on. I asked her a question about a dish I was pondering to get, and she told me everything I needed to know.

The ambience of Bishop's Post had a country club and bistro-esque. It had simple decor and neutral tones of gold, brown, black, white, and beige, which I thought was fitting. The dining room was dimmed, but natural light streamed in from a wall lined with windows. The booths were located on this wall, and each booth had an overhanging light. I enjoyed the fireplace in the wall, which I thought gave it the bistro vibe. It is a bigger restaurant, offering private event spaces and a full bar. They are also COVID friendly, abiding by the CDC guidelines by having disposable menus, socially distanced tables, and required masks. They are also known for their outdoor patio seating, which offers live music, heaters, umbrellas over the tables, and a beautiful garden backing up into a stone wall.

Now the fun parts: The menu(s) and food. In total, Bishop's Post has five menus: lunch, dinner, to-go, to-go family specials, and for my adult crowd, a wine menu. We were given the dinner menu; On it, it includes five starters, four salad/onesoup options (same as lunch), and 10 entrees. Compared to the lunch menu, which has seven sandwich options and four entree options, I believe it's fitting for a dinner occasion. I wish the menu had more options, I think some of the lunch options could also go on the dinner menu, like the beef medallions and grilled chicken. The to-go menus took me by surprise, because I was not expecting to see that much variety. They offered pizzas & flatbreads, which are not on the menu, and a kids menu. Overall, I give the menu(s) a solid 7.5/10. All dishes are priced between \$10 and \$36, which is reasonable for the quality and portions you are getting.

One of the first things, and honestly the only bad thing I have to say about the food is that the complimentary bread and butter was just OK. In a basket, there are five rolls. You can tell by the shape and looking at the bottom of the roll that these are house-made, but they were flavorless. I was hoping the butter would help it out, but unfortunately it was

unsalted. A positive thing I do have to say about the bread is that it was both dense and airy. And although the butter was unsalted, it was soft and fluffy, and easily cut through-able.

My dad and I were excited to see that flash fried calamari was an appetizer. It was served with a lemon aioli for dipping and a lemon slice to add flavor. I was pleasantly surprised by this dish. It was served with a cilantro garnish and it was overall presented on the plate well. You definitely got your money's worth, as this was \$14. They were flash fried, which meant they weren't over coated with batter. It was very tender and not too chewy, but I do wish there was a little more crisp to it. It had super good seasonings, and the lemon juice added another element to it.

When I was looking at the menu for my entree, I was in between the pasta primavera and the grilled salmon, and decided on the grilled salmon after my dad convinced me. My dad ordered the Bishop's Post burger and a cup of spicy seafood gumbo, which of course I had to try.

The Grilled Salmon, priced at a whopping \$28, was indeed worth it. I ordered it medium well (dad's recommendation!) and because of this it was a tad dry, but nonetheless delicious. The sauce made the dish. Described on the menu as “a country grain mustard, sweet chili glaze” it was a perfect pairing for the salmon and the mixed vegetable pilaf the salmon was served on. There was a good amount on and around the dish and it worked well with the rice/vegetable medley. Speaking of that, it was a decent balance of rice and vegetables. I wish there was less red and green bell peppers and more rice, but I'm not complaining. The dish was served hot, plated well, and everything was cooked right. I would give my entree a 8/10.

The spicy seafood gumbo, which was priced at \$8 for a cup, was also delicious. Served with a package of crackers, this was worth the price. I could only take a spoonful, but that's honestly all I needed. It was served hot, with steam arising from the cup. This dish has fantastic flavor. It was the right amount of spicy; the kind of spicy where you'll need a sip of water to cool the tongue, but not a massive gulp. It also had a good consistency where it wasn't too thick or too liquidy. The stir ins, which were vegetables, shrimp, crab, and andouille sausage were smothered in cajun seasoning. The only complaint I have is that I didn't get my own!

The 2nd main entree that was ordered was the signature Bishop's Post Burger, priced at \$15. It was a classic cheeseburger done right with two 4 ounce patties, American cheese, lettuce, onions, tomato, and pickles, you can't miss. The burger came open-faced, so you can assemble the toppings yourself. I was not expecting their burger to be THAT good, but my expectations were exceeded. At some restaurants, they use frozen patties and heat them up, but you can tell this is handmade and resembles a smash burger. It was juicy, cooked just enough, and had good seasonings. It came with a side of fries, which were also amazing. They weren't too greasy or soggy (which is a pet peeve of mine) and had a good crisp to them. They came out hot and fresh, and were already salted. I did in fact steal some from my dad. The



The grilled salmon dish and ambience. Photo by Ellie Mueller

food was very well done. It was good quality and you can tell that an effort is made to ensure you are getting your money's worth. Although the dishes were expensive, there were enough leftovers to bring home. The food is rich, so you'll feel full a little sooner, but very satisfied.

The wait for our food was about 13-15 minutes, which was understandable as we ordered dishes that have a longer preparation time. The dishes came out hot and our waitress made sure to check in on us at the appropriate times. She gave us the check when we were taking our last bites which I counted as convenient. My experience dining in at Bishop's Post was satisfactory. As much as I enjoyed it, I would only go back on occasion, and when I have the spending money to do so. I recommend going here if you are looking for a date night spot, or celebrating a birthday.

REVIEW: HBO'S "EUPHORIA"

Sam Levinson's compelling series leaves a lasting impact on Gen-Z

Allison Loudonback

Staff Reporter

CONTENT WARNING!

With a captivating soundtrack that topped Spotify charts, signature makeup looks that revolutionized teenagers' perspectives on self-expression, and surreal visual cinematography, director Sam Levinson's series "Euphoria" exists as the epitome of Gen-Z pop culture and aesthetic. Many television shows known for being popular amongst teenagers, such as *The Office* or *Friends*, feature a comedic, lighthearted perception of everyday life. However, *Euphoria* is unlike any other show I've ever watched: not only was I impressed by its visually striking elements, but also by Levinson's readiness to portray such harrowing issues that are commonly overlooked and stigmatized.

"Euphoria" was released on June 16, 2019 on the HBO streaming service. Though it's been almost 2 years since its initial premiere, the riveting impacts of this series remain a prominent topic of discussion among critics and viewers alike. Even prior to watching the show, I was aware of not only its popularity among teenagers but also the substantial amount of controversy it had garnered. Featuring a relatively diverse cast of actors, from former Disney Channel star Zendaya to model and activist Hunter Schafer, "Euphoria" tackles what seems to be a laundry list of social issues: drug addiction, underage drinking, teenage pregnancy, abusive relationships, childhood trauma, and more.

The series' main character and perpetual narrator is 17-year-old Rue Bennett (Zendaya), who struggles with an addiction to opioids and has recently returned to high school following a summer spent at a rehabilitation center. As the show progresses, we learn about the situations of many other characters, including the traumatic background of transgender high schooler Jules (Schafer), the toxic relation-

ship between the equally impetuous Maddy (Alexa Demie) and Nate (Jacob Elordi), and the intense family troubles faced by sisters Cassie (Sydney Sweeney) and Lexi Howard (Maude Apatow).

Each episode felt like its own mini-series, as each one is dedicated to describing a specific character. I particularly enjoyed listening to each of their stories; each one introduced different, equally fascinating storylines that enhanced my understanding of many highly stigmatized topics.

Although "Euphoria" is certainly intended to be shocking, I felt as though Levinson bit off more than he could chew at times. While all of the issues addressed in the show are incredibly important to acknowledge, some of them lacked depth. For instance, (SPOILER ALERT), Cassie's accidental pregnancy was simply brought up in one or two episodes, and for the rest of the series, it was never discussed further. If the point of this portrayal is to open dialogue about such critical problems faced by teens today, I think the issues should be handled with sensitivity, rather than being included simply for shock value.

Further warning: there were many graphic scenes in the series, and while I completely recognize that this inclusion is sometimes central to the storylines, they truly emphasize the fact that this series is not for the faint of heart. Considering the amount of issues that Levinson attempts to address in merely eight episodes, I felt the extensive and drawn-out nature of these voyeuristic and disturbing scenes often came off as irrelevant or unnecessary to supplement the plot itself.

However, in my opinion, these less impressive factors pale in comparison to the complex beauty of the show. One key aspect of *Euphoria* that truly solidified its role as "groundbreaking" was its musical soundtrack. Composed by British singer-songwriter Labrinth, the soundtrack of *Euphoria* combines starkly different genres of music--gospel, instrumental, hip-hop, electronic--to create a distinct sound that listeners will automatically associate with the allure of *Euphoria*. I thought that the featured songs such as "All for

Us" and "Still Don't Know My Name" perfectly capture the intensity and poignancy of the stories.

Despite the extreme and occasionally inaccurate portrayal of adolescent life featured in *Euphoria*, I thoroughly enjoyed the show. I would strongly recommend registering for a free trial of HBO Max just to stream this series--the gorgeous visuals and incredible acting make for an enjoyable watch, but these aspects are accompanied by the gruesome, shocking subject matters of each episode that will undoubtedly leave viewers heavily impacted. My overall rating of *Euphoria* is four point five out of five stars: it's unique, impactful, and deeply intriguing.



Housecats - By Danielle Malt



The Cookie Crumbls in STL

Crumbl Cookie Bakes its way into everyone's heart

Gabby Abowitz and Brooke Kraizer
Art Director and Photography Editor, and Features Editor

Cookies are an easy go-to dessert for people of all ages. Whether you are making them homemade, scooping dough out of a container or going to a store to buy them, they always hit the spot. Crumbl Cookies made St. Louis cookie lovers dreams come true when they opened in Ballwin on Oct. 29.

Crumbl has a variety of cookie flavors as well as ice cream flavors. Every week they rotate four cookie flavors

while keeping their constant Milk Chocolate Chip and Chilled Sugar on the menu. When we stopped in during the week of Jan. 25, their weekly flavors were oatmeal chocolate chip, cornbread, chilled cookies and cream milkshake, buckeye brownie.

To make this business even more appealing Crumbl offers inside ordering, curbside pickup, catering and shipping. These cookies are very intriguing, but what most customers do not see and isn't in plain view is that one cookie equals two servings. A single cookie ranges from 300 calories, all the way up to 900 calories. The nutrition and allergy infor-

mation for each cookie can be found on the Crumbl website.

When you are craving Crumbl, there are many ways to get the food itself, as they have options for delivery, curbside, catering, and even shipping. When we walked into the white and light pink themed store, we discovered a fun and cute atmosphere. The friendly workers created an easy and comfortable experience.

We tried a variety of cookies during the week of Jan. 25, and rated everything from taste, texture, to presentation.



The **chilled sugar cookie** is the other classic cookie that is ready to order all year long. The classic sugar cookie is topped with a light pink sweet almond frosting. This is the only cookie that contains nuts we reviewed, so make sure if you have an allergy to check the ingredients on the Crumbl website. If you are not a big sweets person, the frosting is on the sweeter side which is what tends to happen when it is a sugar cookie.

Rating: 10/10



When thinking about the perfect **chocolate chip cookie**, this is the best it gets. This is one of Crumbl's classic cookies that stays all year round and we could see why. A warm, thick cookie, with the chocolate chips melted throughout. The inside is soft and gooey, but not to the point of being raw.

Rating: 10/10



The **buckeye brownie** is a warm chocolate cookie with semi-sweet chips topped with peanut butter mousse and a semi-sweet chocolate drizzle. This cookie was very rich within the first bite. The peanut butter mouse was not drying to the mouth which was a pleasant surprise. Since the peanut butter mousse was only on top of the middle, it was a little bit overwhelming, it had the potential to be better if the mousse was smoothed throughout the cookie.

Rating: 7/10

The **Oreo cream milkshake** is a chilled cookie topped with cookies & cream frosting and a mini Oreo. The mini Oreo on top was a good accent but it was a little dented into the frosting. Since it is a chilled cookie, it is less dense than the warmed cookies which makes it easier to eat more of the cookie which could be a good or bad thing. We were a bit weary if a cookie could pull off a milkshake flavoring but we were pleasantly surprised it did. The frosting itself has mixed Oreo in it so you really get the Oreo flavoring in the cookie.

Rating: 9/10



The **cornbread** cookie is an interesting take on turning a savory food into a cookie. This warm cornbread cookie is topped with a honey butter glaze and a dollop of honey butter cream. When imagining the flavor of this cookie, your imagination is most likely correct. When thinking about the consistency of the cookie, it is very similar to corn bread, a gritty texture. To describe the taste it is as if they mixed sugar cookie dough with actual cornbread. The coloring of the cookie is a bright yellow. When opening the package however, we were disappointed because the honey butter glaze spread throughout the box and had a very oily consistency.

Rating: 6/10



Oatmeal choc. Chip: This is a warm oatmeal cookie with milk chocolate chips throughout. This cookie looks just like the chocolate chip but they are extremely different. Trying to slice into this cookie with plastic silverware is impossible. The inside is more gooey which helps balance out the crispiness of the outside. You can definitely taste the oats in the cookie which is a plus based on your preference, minus in our books. If deciding between an oatmeal chocolate chip or normal chocolate chip cookie, go with the normal.

Rating: 6/10



DAY IN THE LIFE:ESOL STUDENT

Book discussion help navigate new world

Andrew Staggenborg
Staff Reporter



Stacy Stibal explains to the students what "Time is Gold" means. Stacy Stibal had been teaching ESOL for 20 years. She enjoys seeing students progress in English and find success after high school. Stacy studied abroad in college and have always been interested in learning about other cultures. She worked as an International family coordinator at a job before teaching in Parkway and loved working with the families. So Stibal decided she wanted to be on the educational end of that work, so she got certified to be an ESOL teacher.



ESOL student Mudasir Khalji (9) is listening to the teacher during his class. Khalji is from Afghanistan. He has been to the USA for almost 4 years. His hobby is playing soccer. He also a polyglot, the person who speaks five languages. The languages he speaks are: Pashto, Hindi, Persian, Arabic, and a little bit of Spanish. Halji is from Afghanistan. He has been to the USA for almost 4 years. His hobby is playing soccer. He also a polyglot, the person who speaks five languages. The languages he speaks are: Pashto, Hindi, Persian, Arabic, and a little bit of Spanish.



ESOL student Sara Medina (10) listening to the teacher Stacy Stibal, while she explains about the book "The Outsiders". Medina came from Columbia. She have been in the USA for two years. This is her first year at PCH. She has hobby such as play video games. She also speaks Spanish as her native language.



Students in ESOL English 2 listen to Stacy Stibal, while she is talks about a chapter in the book "The Outsiders". The students came from different countries, and speak different languages. But PCH connects them together in ESOL classes.



ESOL helps students to learn English as a second language. It helps them how to speak grammatically correct. But also how to be better with reading and writing. Usually PCH has around 60-70 students which come to ESOL each year. Some years there are more than others. The pandemic has impacted international travel, so this year teachers didn't have a lot of new students. During most normal years PCH gets around 10-15 new ESOL students.

THE EXCHANGE MUST GO ON

Tomas Canals makes his way to the U.S. despite hurdles

Abby Prywitch
Editor-in-Chief

The pandemic has canceled a lot of things, but exchange student Tomas Canals did not let COVID-19 stop him from traveling all the way from Spain to the United States. It was not an easy process, and Canal and his family encountered many obstacles along the way.

“For example, the U.S Embassy in Madrid closed, many flights were canceled and the U.S government considered not issuing visas,” Canals said.

This was Canals’ last year to be able to be a foreign exchange student, so his host family did everything they could to make it happen.

“There were numerous times where we could have easily given up, but knowing the experience that Tomas has already had makes us certain that we made the right decision,” host father Stephen Rutherford said.

Canals and his host family are grateful that principal Tim McCarthy allowed him to enroll, as schools are not required to accept exchange students and some school districts banned all exchange students this year.

Both Tomas and his host family take the virus seriously.

“Nothing is 100% risk free, but Tomas knows that masks are needed and he took all of the necessary precautions when traveling to the USA. I work in a job where I am considered an essential worker so I’m used to going out and dealing with people,” Rutherford said.

Virtual school made it harder for everyone to have social connections, but for Canals it was his first year attending Parkway Central. He made the boys varsity soccer team which allowed him to meet new people.

“Sports is a great way to make friends in any country, so I was happy that I had the opportunity to join the team and make friends,” Canals said.

Canals believes being a foreign exchange student is an experience everyone should have. His father and his host dad were both exchange students in high school and they were both greatly impacted by it.

“My older sister was an exchange student to Arkansas last year so my natural family was very supportive,” Canals said.

Canals talks to his family around once per week. His host family can notice how much his family means to him.

“Tomas is a very respectful and mature person. He comes from a large and very close family in Barcelona. It’s

easy to see that family is very important to Tomas and we know he misses his natural family. He knows that he was given a great opportunity to be here in such a unique year and he is making the most of it,” Rutherford said.

“I’m experiencing a real American family life. My English is improving day-by-day, and I’m learning a lot about my American hometown, St. Louis,” Canals said.

Tomas’s host family are not Catholic but they support his desire to go to mass each week and introduced him to a local Catholic landmark.

“We enjoyed showing him the Cathedral Basilica here in St. Louis which has the largest collection of mosaics outside of Russia. Having sons from different religions has led to some fascinating discussions,” Rutherford said.

The Cathedral Basilica is one of his favorite places in St. Louis.

“It reminds me of St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City,” Canals said.

One of the biggest differences Canals noticed about living in the United States is that in Spain he lived in an apartment in downtown Barcelona and here he lives in a house in the suburbs. In Spain, he rides a subway to school instead of a school bus. Another difference for Canals is regarding meal time.

“With my natural family we eat breakfast and dinner together. Here my American dad is gone before I wake up,” Canals said.

The Rutherfords have been hosting foreign exchange students since 2005 when their four children were three, five, one and a half, and six months. They started hosting students because of Rutherford’s experiences as a foreign exchange student when he was in high school.

“Twenty years after my experience I told my wife I wanted to give a young person the same opportunity. My wife responded by saying, ‘Are you nuts?’ In the end she agreed to try it and after the first year we were hooked,” Rutherford said.

Rutherford believes hosting is one of the greatest edu-

cational gifts that parents can give their children.

“Our natural children now have brothers all over the world. They’ve learned how to recognize the humanity in others especially in those who may not look the same or approach issues in the same way,” Rutherford said.

One of the biggest misunderstandings about being a host family is that you have to have a high school aged kid to host which is not true. Rutherford believes that families with elementary school aged kids make great host families and even empty nesters can be wonderful host families.

“I know a few couples who turned to hosting when they were unable to have children,” Rutherford said.

There are never enough host families for the number of kids who want to come. Rutherford’s tip for being a successful host family is to view the student as your own son or daughter.

“If you can truly see the student in this way, then you never want the year to end,” Rutherford said.



Tomas Canals posing with an American flag in downtown St. Louis. Photo courtesy of Tomas Canals.



Above, Tomas Canals visiting the Arch in downtown St. Louis. Photo courtesy of Tomas Canals. Below, Tomas Canals and his host father at Election Day. Photo courtesy of Tomas Canals.

FROM GANG TO TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Maddie Hewgley

Staff Reporter

Parkway Central High School alumnus Darrion Cockrell is currently riding the high off of his most recent success - Missouri 2021 Teacher of the Year.

Cockrell is a P.E. teacher at Crestwood Elementary in the Lindbergh School District. However, Cockrell's roots lie as a Colt, as he attended both Central High and Central Middle Schools.

"Being the 2021 MOTOY brings everything full circle for me. It's a testament to the impact that educators and education has had on my journey towards success. I can say with 100% confidence that I would not be where I am today without loving, supportive and amazing educators," Cockrell said.

One of the educators who has been a great mentor to Cockrell is still here at Central - P.E. teacher Michael Wright.

"[Cockrell] has a smile that would always light up a room, a kind personality, he was a hard worker, he was kind to all students, worked well with others, and was a great part of our Central community," Wright said.

In 2013, Cockrell student taught with Wright before becoming Crestwood's P.E. teacher in 2015.

"I could tell he was going to be a great teacher then. He worked great with students, always made class fun, and was knowledgeable about what he was teaching," Wright said.

Wright wasn't the only teacher Cockrell had a lasting impact on. Math teacher Gina Caruso also fondly recalls having him as a student.

"Darrion was always smiling, outgoing and personable," Caruso said. "He was incredibly kind and polite to everyone. Yes, he was a talented athlete, but he never put himself into a box or a specific social status."

Cockrell works hard not only to make sure his students know he cares about them, but to give them and their families as many opportunities as he can to keep them physically and mentally fit.

Inspired by Michelle Obama's "Let's Move!" initiatives, Cockrell started his own crossfit program at Crestwood, known as CrestFit. Cockrell also started what he coined the Dads' Club Open Gym, a weekly event allowing dads to play basketball together in the evening, as a part of his efforts to get families moving and active as well.

"The fact that I get to be that positive impact and have the ability to truly guide students towards their future success as my teachers did for me is so rewarding. The role of the teacher is to be that constant positive force that continues to push their students towards greatness," Cockrell said.

However, Cockrell's path to success was not a straight shot. From childhood, he's had to overcome inconceivable hardships.

Born to a drug-addicted mother and losing his father at age four, Cockrell spent much of his childhood navigat-

ing through the foster care system. Although he enjoyed school, life outside of school was oftentimes turbulent and, at the very young age of 10, he joined a gang. In 7th grade, Cockrell was adopted by his football coach and his wife.

"Many of the things I went through growing up in the city and living in West County has allowed me the ability to relate to my students and the confidence to help with some of the matters their families unfortunately may be facing. Having my background and knowing how to navigate through some of those waters have given me the opportunity to build trust and provide a good amount of support," Cockrell said.

Cockrell attributes the great teachers and mentors he had growing up, like Wright and Caruso, to his success in switching the narrative and finding a way out of an arduous situation.

"My love for people and wanting kids to have a good experience in education was part of my motivation in becoming a teacher. I wanted to provide that same happy place that many of my teachers provided for me in school," Cockrell said.

Caruso also shares how Darrion's accomplishments have impacted our community.

"Everyone now knows Darrion's incredible story of where he came from to where he is now and I could not be more proud of him. Darrion is an inspiration to us all and we could not ask for a better role model as Missouri Teacher of the Year," Caruso said.

Cockrell's experience at Central not only fueled his passion for education, but it also left him with many fond memories.

"High school had its challenges but it was some of the best years of my life. Central provided me with many great friends, memories, sporting events and connections with teachers. Some of my fondest memories are winning Prom King, having two great football games on TV and almost making it to state. I would give anything for another pep rally. The entire school, cheerleaders, the band and everyone in the big gym. I can hear everyone now screaming 05!! 06!! 07!! Etc. I miss Central. Best high school in America!! GO COLTS!!," Cockrell said.

In addition to the great impact he has had on the students and families of Crestwood Elementary, Cockrell continues building an inclusive culture throughout his community as he is an active member in Crestwood's diversity committee.

"People are always talking about being 'woke' or being for diversity. But my role as a black educator is to challenge people and see how 'woke' they really are. Ask and answer the tough questions about diversity. Empowering students because of their differences and making sure everyone has a voice, an understanding and respect for everyone despite their differences. Embrace individuality and make it a part of the plan that brings people closer together, while also continuing to be the change that I want to see," Cockrell said.

Cockrell emphasizes the importance of carrying these morals into the classroom with him.

"An educated black man teaching other students and showing them that you can achieve success despite the color of your skin or any preconceived notions/biases people may already have. I'm all about building community and the culture I've created with my CrestFit program has been a huge part of my success in doing so," Cockrell said.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has not made it any easier for Cockrell to accomplish this.

"In the beginning the hardest part was creating the same culture of P.E. virtually for my students as they experienced in person. I had to create a virtual platform that was balanced with fun interactive activities, mental health



Cockrell, smiling and wearing his football jersey, stands on the Central field in 1998.

sessions and plenty of resources to keep my students and their families engaged," Cockrell said.

No stranger to adversity, Cockrell has met the challenges of the pandemic head-on with the same principles that have brought him success thus far.

"I've had to make sure students stay masked up, socially distant, are practicing healthy hygiene habits while also continuing to have fun staying fit. Although it's been tough, knowing we are all in the same boat together doing the best we can despite this pandemic has given me the motivation I need to keep pushing forward," Cockrell said.

Another incredible award Cockrell has recently received is the Box Top for Education Innovative Teacher of the Year. As if that achievement wasn't a big enough honor, Cockrell was nominated by Chance the Rapper. Chance was also the one to present Cockrell with the award.

"When I found out I would be accepting my award live with him on Instagram I was really nervous. Not only was I going to be talking to one of the dopest rappers in the game, but our interview would also be live and watched by thousands of people. As he introduced me my heart began to pound like crazy and I had no idea what I was going to say, do or anything. As we got into the interview I relaxed and it was just so natural. Felt like I was talking to one of my boys and having a good time. We laughed, danced and just celebrated the impact and importance of great educators. Not to mention the \$30,000 he gave me! Truly one of the best experiences ever," Cockrell said.

\$15,000 went to Crestwood Elementary and the \$15,000 went directly to Cockrell.

Cockrell hopes his experience inspires other students to overcome their hardships and turn them into successes the way he did.

"All students have the ability to have the utmost positive and successful future that they want. But, they have to truly want it. They have to put in the work and know that when, not if, but when it gets hard, you still have to keep moving forward. If you want to shine you have to grind," Cockrell said.

Cockrell's message also extends to teachers wanting to have an impact on their students the way he's had on his.

"As for teachers, it's all about connections. Being your authentic self while building relations and connections through trust, love and support. You can be the greatest in the world in your content area, but it means nothing if your students have no connections or are unable to buy into whatever you're trying to teach them," Cockrell said.



Cockrell stands proudly in his gym at Crestwood Elementary in front of the CrestFit banner.

A QUEEN IN A GAME OF KINGS

Playing chess to unlock a confrontational side

Emma Li
Staff Reporter

Soft spoken and kind, sophomore Gaayathri Binoj, Gaaya to most, is a person who can get along with anyone, and sees the good in everyone. But even a warmhearted person can find a way to open their combative side.

Binoj has been playing chess competitively for four years now, which is late in the world of chess, where students usually begin around the age of seven or eight. She began by taking classes at a Hindu temple with her friend in middle school, and her interest has not waned since.

“My progress in the beginning was really slow, but I loved the adrenaline of a chess game,” Binoj said. “Even though the games are quite long, your emotions really go up and down because any move you make can change the outcome of the game.”

Chess first emerged around 1500 years ago, and continues to hold people’s attention today, with about 605 million adults in the world who regularly play chess. The origins of the game are highly debated, though it is widely acknowledged that a group of people worked together to create the game, which spread from North India, to Persia, then to the rest of Asia, and eventually the entire world.

However, a famous legend tells of a king who orders a wise man to create a game that mimics life, where each piece has its own rules on how it can move, and is made up of sacrifices, large and small. Although the story with the king may only be a legend, it does represent a goal of common purpose, which may be why so many people are still drawn to the game to this day. It has helped people to learn strategies that can be taken off the board and into daily life, even in a modern world.

“I used to be a passive player,” Binoj said. “I hated attacking people in chess because that was just my personality. But in chess you’re forced to take those risky, aggressive moves, you’re forced to gambit your pieces, and in daily life it makes you more receptive to taking risks that might come with good rewards.”

Chess is known for being complicated, with lots of rules. But sometimes, straying off the beaten path is better.

“I like chess because even if you’re in the worst position, the hardest situation, there’s always a way you can find to get yourself out,” Binoj said. “Just two weeks ago, I was in a tournament and I was in a bad endgame position, and if I had kept playing normally, I definitely would have lost. But there’s a trick where I sacrificed all of my pieces, and my opponent had to checkmate me with a knight and a bishop. It’s known as the bishop and knight checkmate and it’s one of the hardest. So, he couldn’t do that because most people can’t, so it ended up being a drawn game.”

During chess tournaments, players take notation, which records the moves made or location of the pieces, depending on the style of notation. It is crucial for players to make these notes, so they can learn from their mistakes.

“I’ve had three chess teachers, and the most impactful one was Candidate Master Chris Land,” Binoj said. “He used to teach in Houston every Wednesday, we’d go to a Taco Bell and he’d play over my games. I never took good notation, but he helped me learn how to take good notation and get better from that.”

A Candidate Master is a title granted by the FIDE, the World Chess Federation, to anyone with a rating of 2200 or higher. Ratings are given to competitive players of a variety of experiences. Beginners usually start at around 1200, and international professional players can achieve a ranking of

2500 or higher. Binoj is currently at a rating of 1640, which is consistently above average, though it changes due to performance, and is not the highest she has achieved.

“The last few years have been hard for me in chess,” Binoj said. “I didn’t improve as fast as I was improving before, so that was definitely disappointing. After I moved to St. Louis [three years ago], I lost, like, 100 rating points. I lost motivation as well, because I thought I was getting worse instead of improving.”

Sudha Somarajan is Binoj’s mother, and a steady support. Binoj recalls her mother driving her to distant tournaments, as far away as a two hour drive. But that is not the only support she gives.



Binoj values chess as an everyday hobby. “Every loss is just another way to learn something about how to improve,” Binoj said. “I think that’s the biggest thing you can learn from playing games.” Photo by Emma Li.

“I don’t have any knowledge in chess, so I don’t give any advice specific to chess,” Somarajan said. “My main role is that whenever she goes to a tournament, and she’s not feeling confident, I try to encourage her. I tell her it doesn’t matter if you lose or not, but try to play your best. Don’t think about your opponents. Just try to do your best.”

In the past year, opponents have become easier to overlook, as chess tournaments have moved online along with nearly everything else, often making it more lonely in the individual sport.

“Going online has changed a lot about chess tournaments,” Binoj said. “It’s usually not as fun, because for in-person tournaments you talk to your opponent after the game, you learn about their ideas behind the moves. Online, you sometimes have to have two cameras to make sure you’re not cheating, and they put it through cheat detection software.”

Beyond the isolation of playing online, few of the people behind those screens are women. Grandmaster Hou Yifan is the only woman on the list of the top 100 players in the world as of December 2020, and there has never been a female world champion.

Although there is no scientific evidence that male or female minds are better suited to chess, there is still a large gender gap in chess players. On the FIDE rating list in 2019, only 10.1% of players were women, and women in the chess

world are consistently subjected to misogynistic comments.

Grandmaster Jennifer Shahade even created an enlarged chessboard filled with insults she and other female players had endured, entitled Not Particularly Beautiful. Binoj has had experience being excluded as a female chess player as well.

“Gender has a big impact on chess,” Binoj said. “It’s the culture of chess as well, because after your games, there’s like twenty minutes in between each round and all the boys would play blitz games together, and banter, and have all this fun, and you just kind of feel a little left out.”

However, organizations such as the St. Louis Chess Club are taking steps to encourage women to pursue chess, such

as offering online beginner classes for women on platforms such as Twitch, and hosting the Cairns Cup, a tournament for the top women in the world. In the summer of 2020, Binoj participated in an all-girls youth tournament named after Ruth Haring, an international chess master who competed in the United States Women’s Championship in the 1970s and 80s, represented the U.S. in multiple Chess Olympiads, and was elected to the U.S. Chess Federation Executive Board in 2009.

“This summer I got to play at the Ruth Haring National Tournament of Girl State Champions,” Binoj said. “It was virtual, but I was very proud that I got to play for Missouri at that tournament. This year it was based on rating, so they sent one girl per state. I didn’t do particularly well at the tournament, but it was a great experience to play in a tournament that was just full of girls.

Usually, I don’t get to play a single girl at most tournaments because the participation rates are so low, so it’s special to play with people like me.”

It’s often frustrating to beginner players when the pieces have rules and limitations on where and how they move. In fact, the earliest versions of chess were much more limited in movement, including the queen, the weakest piece at the time, because it could only move one square at a time in a diagonal direction. Now, it can move forwards, backwards, and diagonally, at a distance only limited by pieces in the way.

“I like the queen, because she’s the strongest piece on the board,” Binoj said. “She’s stronger than the king, stronger than everyone else. And, the whole point of pawns is that when they get to the end of the board they can become any piece they want, and usually they become queens because those are the strongest.”

Binoj has won multiple awards for her efforts, though she modestly insists that they are from years past. The most valuable prize is the game itself.

“I would love to encourage other people to play, cause even if you don’t want to play competitively in tournaments, even playing online can change your life,” Binoj said. “It’s not just a game that teaches you lessons, it’s just a good pastime, a hobby, and it’s a way that a lot of people can connect, because it’s the game of kings and the king of games.”

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FROM UKRAINE TO ST. LOUIS

Aspiring artist adapts to U.S. living

Gabby Abowitz
Photography Editor and Art Director

Andrew Staggenborg(12) may look like an average high school senior. In reality, Staggenborg has faced many obstacles to get where he is today. From birth until the age of 13, Staggenborg lived in Ukraine, the second largest country in Eastern Europe, where Ukrainian is the official language. He experienced a tougher childhood than most students. During Staggenborg's childhood, his mother passed away when he was only 4 years old.

"I really miss my mom, and it was unfair that I had a biological mom only for a short time. It's hard to lose parents," Staggenborg said.

Though officially an orphan, he always had family to turn to. His grandma was his biggest supporter and guardian, and he is grateful for what he did have.

"I never lived in an orphanage, but I can say that this is not fun. So enjoy what you have, and be proud of it, because there are a lot of kids who don't have that," Staggenborg



Pictured is the old and beautiful architecture of Ukraine. Picture by Andrew Staggenborg.

said.

Staggenborg's school in the Ukraine partnered with a program called "Circle of Friends," which is an international exchange program for students to be paired with parents. While it is not normally an adoption program, that is what ended up happening for Staggenborg.

"In 2016, [my American] mom saw my picture and there were four boys in the picture, but parents chose me," Staggenborg said.

Though officially adopted by the Staggenborgs, he still keeps in touch with his Ukrainian grandma, aunts, and cousins, and misses them dearly.

Learning English would be a big struggle for anyone,

let alone a 13-year-old moving to a new country without any family.

Although Andrew's adoptive siblings went to South, Andrew came to PCH because we have the best ESOL program in the district. He enjoys going to Central most because of how much the teachers care about him and makes sure he has all resources available.

His favorite things to do in St. Louis includes hiking at different parks all over St. Louis, his favorite being Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park. Andrew also enjoys going to the St. Louis Art Museum and viewing all the artwork.

Staggenborg started his photography hobby while still in Ukraine. He photographed his friend, and she did the same in return and it progressed his love for photography and helped him improve his skills.

"It's so fun to take pictures, there is something inside of me which tells me 'grab camera and go!'" Staggenborg said. Taking Convergence Journalism is what sparked his interest in graphic design, while creating infographics.

Staggenborg is also gifted in languages, his first being Ukrainian. Then he learned Russian because the two languages are similar and come from the same roots. Once coming to the United States, he had to learn English to communicate with his host family and it took him two years of being tutored to feel comfortable with the language. At Central, he also took Spanish 1 to challenge himself.

"My dream is to know five languages and be a polyglot. I can do it, but it takes time," he said.

Staggenborg shares advice he has for other people trying to learn English, or any language.

"The big tip is to memorize words and try to use them in conversation," he said. "Memorizing texts in English is also a good thing. I don't have any tricks, but I think you should try to trick your brain. Try to learn at least five words per a day."

Andrew is planning on continuing his education at St. Louis Community College-Meramec where he is hoping to earn a bachelor in graphic design to fulfill his dream of becoming a graphic designer and continuing his artistic career. He

also enjoys playing the guitar and drawing.

As of now, Staggenborg has traveled to a few cities in Ukraine such as Odessa, Crimea and Kiev. In the U.S., he has also visited Washington, Wisconsin, New York and Florida. His ultimate dream is to be able to visit all 50 states along with other parts of the world.

Staggenborg enjoys the U.S. but misses more than just his Ukrainian family.

"I really miss walking outside on cobblestone streets. I really enjoy architecture and here it's hard to find old places with architecture. Of course, how to forget about food? I miss Ukrainian food," Staggenborg said.



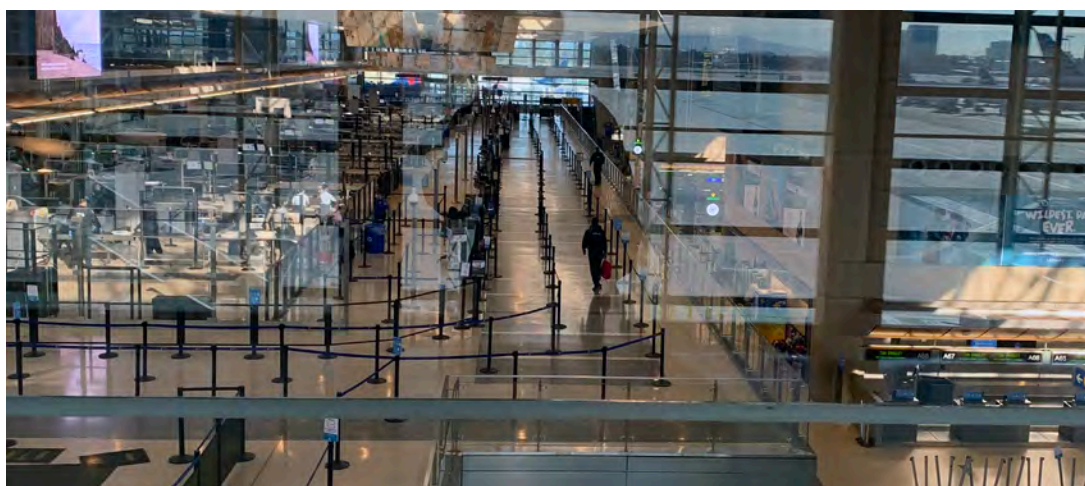
Top: Andrew Staggenborg is a senior at Parkway Central High School. Photo by Gabby Abowitz. Middle: Staggenborg's American family celebrates the holidays. Above: Staggenborg's Ukrainian family tours the city. Photos courtesy of Staggenborg family.

COMBATING CORONA IN KOREA

Junior Kevin Kim stays up late and attends virtual school overseas



Junior Kevin Kim and his family skiing during his visit to South Korea. Photo courtesy of Kevin Kim.



Kim's view of the Korea Incheon International Airport after leaving the plane and arriving in South Korea. Photo by Kevin Kim.



Airplane seats on the Kim's international flight to South Korea. Photo by Kevin Kim.

Sydney Stahlschmidt
Copy Editor

Junior Kevin Kim is trying to get into a normal routine for the third quarter, but it's a little different for him because he's attending virtual classes from a completely different time zone...in South Korea.

This is Kim's second time visiting Korea during the COVID-19 pandemic. His family normally visits multiple times a year. However, this time around, his experience has been much more restricted.

"[Last time] was less strict about going out or not filling out the temperature clocks. We came last year around August 2020 and corona cases were much lower," Kim said.

Even after visiting several times before, Kim wasn't nervous to visit Korea due to his experiences but the new coronavirus laws and the risk of acquiring the virus himself were difficult.

"When we were at American airports we were a bit more careful since they have a lot of cases reported in airports but I wasn't really nervous because I can speak English and Korean fluently," Kim said.

When Kim arrived at the Korea Incheon International Airport, there were many new rules and forms for him to deal with before going to stay with family. The government

also required Kim to download an app and measure his symptoms to ensure he was quarantined and wasn't exposed to the virus.

"The process was a bit complicated and confusing but it was to make sure everything was good," Kim said. "Fortunately, me and my family all tested negative for corona virus and two days later, they sent us two big boxes of food and supplies such as microwave rice, ready to go meals, powder meals, and dried salted seaweeds."

While Kim's whole family tested negative for the virus, his experience still contained difficulties. He was separated from other family members during the quarantine period.

"My mom and older brother went before my dad, younger brother, and I," Kim said. "My mom and older brother are quarantining in a different place than my dad, brother, and I because it gets way too crowded if we are all together."

Kim is experiencing many great opportunities and getting to enjoy some of his favorite things during his time in Korea.

"One of the best things is that I can basically eat all the food that I could only eat in Korea and since I can't go out, I don't have to wear a mask," Kim said. "South Korea has one of the best delivery food services in the world, so we get lots of food and meals delivered."

While Kim enjoys all the great opportunities when visiting his family in South Korea, there are many difficulties

with attending virtual PCH courses and adjusting to the time zone.

"We are having some time difference issues and turning in assignments on time. To adjust to school time we have to sleep during lunch to dinner time and wake up at 10:30 p.m. and stuff up till 6 a.m. and go back to sleep," Kim said. "It is a difficult cycle and having to keep up with assignments and projects is very difficult but maintaining good grades are really important to us at the same time."

Not only is it difficult to deal with the changes in time zone, due to being contained in his families home, Kim and his family don't have many activities to be involved in outside of school.

"There are a lot of bad sides to this experience because it kinda feels like prison and trying to attend school from here is very difficult because of the time difference and WIFI connections," Kim said. "Since we have nothing to do, my younger brother and I brought our Xbox and watch TV, Netflix, and Youtube when we are bored."

While there are many ups and downs in Kim's trip to South Korea during a pandemic, many people, including Kim, turn to family as a good support system during these difficult times.

"Since me, my dad, brothers, and mom are apart, we Facetime and text each other almost daily," Kim said.

WORLD TRAVELER & PROFE

Dan Kelty taught abroad before coming to Parkway

Abby Prywitch
Editor-in-Chief



Before coming to teach at Parkway Central, longtime Spanish teacher Dan Kelty taught in multiple countries around the world. Kelty taught for a year in Mexico, Venezuela and Slovakia. Kelty had different experiences in each country.

During his time in Mexico he taught at an American high school/ middle school. Kelty taught workers of the embassy's kids and wealthy Mexicans. The students were all bilingual and spoke both English and Spanish. During his time there he taught middle school typing, math and English.

One thing that made his students from Mexico so different from his Central students was that they were bilingual. Students could speak both English and Spanish perfectly.

"They could flip from English to Spanish, like flipping a switch; it was amazing, they had perfect accents so, that was really neat," Kelty said.

His students from his school in Mexico City were really wealthy and they would invite the teachers over to their houses.

"They're like mansions over there. They're like castles and it was neat seeing that side of life," Kelty said.

Spanish five student Emily Lander always looks forward to going to Spanish class.

"I enjoy Mr. Kelty's class because he makes everything so fun. Anything he teaches us he always tries to incorporate like a game or just makes it funny so it's really enjoyable," Lander said.

Senior Alexis Baumgarten really likes the community Kelty creates within his classroom.

"I really enjoy being in Mr. Kelty's class because I feel like he helped me improve my Spanish a lot and just created a really welcoming environment for all the students to try their hardest and take risks learning a new language," Baumgarten said.

On the weekends Kelty got the opportunity to sightsee. He thought Mexico was very neat because of its culture. When in Mexico, Kelty got the chance to go to both coasts.

"When you travel through Mexico, you eat in these little restaurants, and the food's fantastic, like food, you'll never eat again in your life," Kelty said.

During his time in Slovakia, he lived in the capital city Bratislava, which is one hour away from Vienna, two hours away from Budapest and four hours away from Prague.

"I mean, these are big cities, and it was so neat. And we also went to Germany and Italy," Kelty said.

Kelty would have loved to stay in Mexico City, but the smog was so bad that it was making him sick.

When he lived in Slovakia during 1993-1994 it was not long after the Berlin wall came down dividing East and West Germany. Kelty's students had grown up under communism and would tell him unique stories about what it was like growing up.

"They were people who didn't show emotions on their faces. And they said, 'we have poker faces because of communism' because under communism you learn how to hide your feelings," Kelty said.

They learned how to hide their emotions because under communism you don't want anybody to know what you're thinking. Kelty thought that was culturally really interesting to experience and to see.

"It really gives you an insight into the post-communist countries," Kelty said.

While Kelty's experiences teaching abroad were great, he offers a piece of advice for those who consider teaching English abroad.

"I would suggest you get some kind of a background in teaching English as a foreign language," Kelty said. "I didn't really feel like I was that good of a teacher because I really didn't know the techniques used. But the people you work with are great and very interesting."