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Georgetown Day High School

April 2022

Parking Fee for Students Will Double

BY CALLIE SOLOMON

GDS will significantly increase the price for students to park on campus next year in an effort to make the school more environmentally friendly and reduce traffic in the neighborhood.

The base price of the parking spots at the school will double from \$900 for the 2021-2022 academic year to \$1,800 for the 2022-2023 academic year. Currently, there are 50 parking spaces available to juniors and seniors. There is now a \$300 price reduction for each student driver who brings another student passenger to school, a discount that will increase to \$600 next year in tandem with the price increase.

The higher price for parking is intended to provide additional incentives for students to carpool, GDS' chief financial officer, Jeffrey Houser, told the *Bit*. Starting next year, a student driver with no passengers will have to pay \$1,800 for parking, but a carpool of four people will park for free.

"For anyone driving, bringing passengers, and more of them, the cheaper it really becomes," Houser said. Financial aid will be applied to the fee of parking spaces at the same rate as tuition.

GDS must limit the amount of traffic to school under an agreement with its Advisory Neighborhood Commission, an advisory council elected by residents that deals with zoning and other local issues. Houser acknowledged that the commitment is one of the reasons for implementing the new pricing system.

Adding to GDS' need to reduce traffic, the other main reason for the 100 percent price increase "is that we as an institution have a commitment and we've talked about a commitment to going green," Houser said.

The school has not publicized the change to the student body. Instead, students will receive the information about the fee structure after asking about purchasing a parking space, Houser said. If there are more interested students than there are spots, the school will hold a lottery.

All three students interviewed by the *Bit* who currently park at the school are unhappy about the price increase. Two were shocked to hear about the change in interviews with the *Bit*.

Senior Felicia Paul, who has been parking at GDS since the

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Photo by Annabel Hilzenrath.

Students Cheer Jackson Confirmation After Republican Attacks on GDS

BY ETHAN WOLIN

Ketanji Brown Jackson, an appeals court judge and GDS trustee, was confirmed by the Senate on April 7 to become the first Black woman on the Supreme Court, drawing cheers and applause from an animated crowd of high school students and faculty who gathered spontaneously in the Forum to watch the Senate's 53-47 vote being finalized and announced.

Jackson's confirmation, backed by three Republican

senators and all 50 Democrats, came after a partisan process in which some Republicans and right-wing media outlets stridently attacked President Joe Biden's nominee for, among other objections, her affiliation with GDS, in an effort to associate her with culture-war stances they oppose.

When she assumes Justice Stephen Breyer's seat on the Court at the end of its term this summer, Jackson will continue a line of justices who sent

children to GDS—namely, Thurgood Marshall and Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

The news of Jackson's confirmation delighted the school community. Over a hundred students and teachers amassed in the Forum, many remaining there even as eighth-period classes began, to witness the historic moment formally unfold. Live footage from the Senate was projected on the Forum's large screen. Chants of "GDS"

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Thrust Into Spotlight, GDS Stays Quiet Before Confirmation Vote Is Done

BY ILA DOHRMANN

During the Senate confirmation hearings for justice-designate Ketanji Brown Jackson, a GDS trustee, the school was the subject of extensive media coverage on a national scale. Head of School Russell Shaw emailed GDS' faculty and staff on March 22 asking that they "please do not speak to the press."

In an email to students and parents on March 28, Shaw wrote, "We have chosen not to speak to the press or communicate extensively with our own community during the confirmation process. We look forward to communicating more fully at the appropriate time."

Jackson was confirmed to

the Supreme Court on April 7. The administration has not publicized any new information about its press policy, but the communications office circulated a special edition of its newsletter Hopper Happenings to parents and teachers several hours after Jackson's confirmation, which included a blog post by Shaw discussing GDS' role in the hearings for the first time publically.

The school's public Instagram account, which members of the communications office usually add to on a daily basis when school's in session, saw its first post since March 17 several hours after Jackson was confirmed.

Director of Communications

Alison Grasheim declined an interview with the *Bit* during the hearings, pointing to the school's decision not to talk to reporters about Jackson. More than ten other staff members declined interview requests.

In an interview with the *Bit* during the confirmation process, English teacher John Burghardt said he thought Shaw's request "deflated our posture of being progressive, liberal, honoring each individual, to the extent that we would allow each individual who works for the school to speak her or his mind."

Burghardt suggested that in the future GDS' leaders might weigh the reasons for not

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GDS Guard Hurt in Burke Shooting

BY NICO DAVID-FOX

Tony Harris, a member of the GDS security team, was shot on Friday, April 22, outside Edmund Burke School. He was running the Burke car pick-up lane at the time of the shooting, Burke sophomore Mia Davidson told the *Bit*. Harris was severely wounded in the incident, according to authorities from the D.C. police department.

After undergoing surgery, he was in a stable condition but remained in intensive care on the afternoon of April 26, Head of School Russell Shaw wrote then in an email to the GDS community.

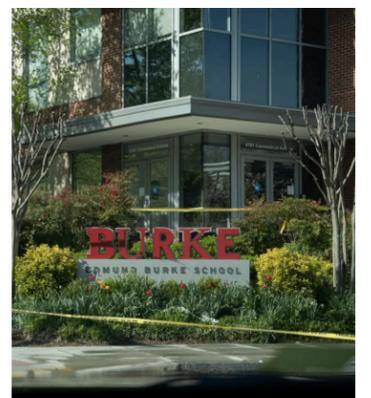
The shooting happened right outside Burke, a private middle and high school located in the Van Ness neighborhood, less than two miles from GDS. Harris was on duty at Burke, where he provides security services part-time. Shots rang out at 3:17 p.m., two minutes after the school was dismissed, according to a video posted by the shooter on 4chan.

The 23-year-old shooter, Raymond Spencer, firing a rifle from a nearby apartment building, first shot many rounds through the glass windows of the enclosed bridge that connects the two buildings of Burke on either side of the school's carpool lane. Spencer subsequently wounded a sixth-grade student who was fleeing on the bridge.

Spencer then aimed his weapon below the bridge at a man who appears to be Harris, who was running behind a car, and shot in his direction over ten times, as seen in the video. In the clip, the man had on a bright yellow crossing guard vest because he was conducting the line of parents in cars waiting to pick up their kids.

"There is not a day that has gone by that Tony has not expressed how grateful he is to be a part of GDS," Shelley Harris, GDS' director of security, wrote in a statement to the *Bit*. "Every day he has shown

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Edmund Burke School. Photo by Reid Alexander.

IN THE NEWS

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Rebalancing a grade

Sadie Foer reports on GDS' admissions decisions for the incoming freshman class.

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OPINION

Political diversity, too

Catherine Dooley argues that GDS should help students grow more politically open-minded.

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SPORTS

A mid-season boost

Jeremiah Farr and Raphael Wolf cover Sports Saturday, at which GDS spring teams won all but one game.

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EDITORIAL

A call for assembly speakers

The editors of the *Bit* urge GDS to return to a routine of frequent guest speakers at assemblies.

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GDS Security Team Member Wounded While on Duty at Burke Is Hospitalized

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up with the willingness to contribute to the safe environment all security team members work so hard to provide.”

On Monday, April 25, the high school community assembled in the Forum before class to hear from High School Principal Katie Gibson, Shaw and Shelley Harris about Tony Harris’ condition and how best to support him and his family.

Shaw asked the school to observe a moment of silence to send good wishes to Harris. In his April 26 email, Shaw wrote that “there will be a long road to recovery.”

At the time of the shooting, Davidson was with a group of students walking toward the bridge. They were preparing to leave the school when they heard the sounds of gunfire. “All the glass went up in the air and then dropped,” she said. “All the windows were crashing, and everything was exploding. There were bullets flying everywhere.”

The group of students first took refuge in a teacher’s office in the building but a few were later asked to move into a safer location, a janitorial closet, where adults checked in periodically. “We were sitting in that dark closet for maybe four hours,” she said. “We were all freaking out and praying together. All we could do was wait.”

The long, drawn-out lockdown at Burke was a traumatic experience for students and teachers. Many students were crying and contacting their parents, according to Burke students who spoke to the *Bit*. One sophomore even had to wrap her jacket around the injured

sixth-grade student’s bullet wound to prevent further bleeding, Davidson said.

French and Spanish teacher Nicole Sade told the *Bit* that her son, a seventh-grader at Burke, was one of the few students who left the building before the shooting began. She described the distress that his classmates experienced during the incident. “Imagine being twelve years old and locked up until nighttime,” Sade said.

In the evening, police officers found Spencer, who had died by suicide just before the officers entered the apartment. He had fired over 100 rounds of ammunition and injured four people, including Harris, although no one had been killed.

On the afternoon of the shooting, several nearby schools such as Sidwell Friends went on lockdown, although most students had already left for the day by the time the attack was reported. Sections of Howard University and the University of the District of Columbia were placed on lockdown as well. GDS never followed suit even though it was “prepared to move to lockdown if authorities recommended

this step at any time,” according to an email from Shaw addressed to the GDS community.

On April 24, at an event celebrating the life of former Director Gladys Stern, Shaw described Harris as a “beloved member of our security team.” Shaw then asked the attendees to participate in a moment of silence in order to send prayers to Harris, who he said was at the George Washington University Hospital.

In an interview with the *Bit*, jazz teacher Brad Linde said that Harris is a “sweetheart” who he has spoken with periodically at GDS events.

Sophomore Darwin Gu said in an interview that he found the shooting “very concerning and scary” given Burke’s proximity to GDS’ campus.

Of the ten GDS students contacted by the *Bit*, none had ever spoken to Harris at length. The Burke communications team did not respond to a request for comment.

Zachary Jager contributed reporting.



The shattered glass bridge at Burke. Photo by Reid Alexander.

Civic Lab Hosts Speakers on Zoom But Draws Few Students to Watch

BY COLE HUH

During lunchtime on March 15, history teacher Sue Ikenberry sat down to watch a Zoom conversation about civic engagement and democracy projected on one of the library’s large screens. Although the event was publicized to students and teachers through an all-school email and posters, she was the only one to attend.

GDS’ Civic Lab, an initiative founded last year with the goal of helping students enact social change, has hosted nine Zoom conversations between its founding executive director, Barbara Eghan, and external speakers about topics related to civic engagement. Three were at 7 p.m. online; the other six were at noon and played in the library during lunch. These events, part of the Civic Lab Speaker Series, have been mostly empty except for a few students or teachers.

Sophomore Julian Montes-Sharp, who said he has attended four of the events in the library, estimated for the *Bit* that around five people have been in attendance when he has gone.

Eghan told the *Bit* she is aware of the low attendance and is hopeful for an increase. “I do expect it to grow,” Eghan said in an interview before the March 15 event. “It’s hard to say what my expectations are.”

The Speaker Series is mostly meant for students, Eghan said, but there has been more teacher than student attendance, likely due to students’ extracurricular commitments. Tuan Nguyen, who teaches studio arts and is the Civic Lab’s program associate, said in an interview that the Zoom format “was based on GDS guest policy.” The school did not allow guests on campus at the beginning of the year, due to COVID protocols, but now does.

According to Nguyen, the Speaker Series is going to continue at GDS for the foreseeable future, with in-person speakers next school year. When asked about future attendance, Nguyen said, “Hopefully in-person next year we’ll have more.”

Senior Adam Leff, who watched one Speaker Series conversation from the library, told the *Bit* that the online format may dissuade students. “I got really tired of Zooming over the pandemic,” Leff said.

Sophomore Lina Fawaz, who has not attended any of the conversations, said that their scheduling may affect student attendance.

“It’s at lunch and most people want to hang out with their friends,” she said. “You want free time in between your classes—nobody wants to go and listen.”

Ikenberry, a frequent attendee of the Speaker Series, agreed that timing was holding back attendance. “Lunch is only 45 minutes and kids cherish it,” Ikenberry said. “I don’t think kids want to give up their lunch.” She suggested the events be held during community time instead.

Although students may miss the Speaker Series conversations live, they are all recorded and uploaded on YouTube and the Civic Lab website. Nguyen said he “hasn’t checked the viewing rates.”

Fawaz said it was not clear to her what the purpose of the Civic Lab is. “I don’t really know what it entails,” she said. “I’ve just seen emails talking about speakers who are coming every now and then.”

According to Eghan, the purpose of the Speaker Series is to “have discussions on a number of different topics” and “introduce folks to a lot of different civic avenues.” These avenues include political engagement, academia and entrepreneurship. “We’re introducing a wide array of ways to have a social impact,” Eghan said.

Montes-Sharp said that he has gone to the Speaker Series to “learn things that I don’t really know about.” He added, “It’s an interesting opportunity.”

The Civic Lab was founded last year, and the Speaker Series is one of several facets of the Civic Lab. It has also helped run a program of dialogue among students called the Discussion Lab and has created a Social Venture Lab to support students with entrepreneurial ideas and an Art and Activism Lab for creating art related to social justice issues.

Eghan said that the Speaker Series was created as the first initiative of the Civic Lab as she and Nguyen “were laying the groundwork for these learning labs.” Their goal, as Eghan put it, is to have “young people think about, ‘How do I drive social change?’”

The speakers have included leaders of nonprofits and companies such as the Civil Rights Corps, Just The Pill, and Choose Love.

“It’s kind of tragic,” Leff said when asked about students’ involvement in the Civic Lab. “They’re starting this program that’s meant to do community outreach and it feels like they haven’t even reached the GDS community yet.”

Base Parking Spot Fee for Students to Double to \$1800 Next School Year

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beginning of this school year, is skeptical that even a significant price increase will lead to more carpooling. “If people were going to carpool,” she said, “it would have already happened, especially with the shift to the unified campus and their emphasis on carpooling or biking to school.”

Students who live within one mile of the school or a Red Line Metro station will be on a different payment plan altogether: They will have to pay \$2,400 for a parking space next year, with the same \$600 discount for passengers. Houser explained that the idea behind the higher fee is that people living in that proximity to GDS or the Metro “would certainly be able

to choose an alternative mode of transportation.”

Paul said that drivers who live close to GDS should not be charged more so long as they carpool like other students. “They’re still helping with reducing the amount of people who drive to school because they’re carpooling,” she said.

Selene Ko, the parent of a high school student, said in an interview with the *Bit* that families may not be in a position to pay the doubled price for the parking spots even if they do not qualify for financial assistance. “There could be an inequity issue there,” she said.

Senior Sophie Zinn drives three students to school in the morning and sometimes brings one home in the afternoon. She parks

at GDS for free.

She said that she believes the new system will work to increase the amount of carpooling due to the coercive impact of the price increase. “It’s just forcing them to make that decision because otherwise they have to pay an absurd amount of money that not everyone can just dish out for a parking spot,” Zinn said.

“It might create a little bit of an incentive for me to carpool,”
Getlan said.

Junior Jacob Getlan, who drives his brother to school, told the *Bit* that he will still purchase a parking spot despite the price increase. “It might create a little bit of an incentive for me to carpool,” he said.

He added that the people who currently park at the school are willing to pay the current, relatively high price, and that he does not think the new cost will “necessarily stop them too much from committing to it next year.”



Cars parked in the GDS high school garage. Photo by Olivia Brown.



One teacher came to the library on March 15 for a Civic Lab Speaker Series conversation. Photo by Sawyer Thompson.

FEATURES

Performances and Memories Abound at Brunch Honoring Gladys Stern

BY ZACHARY JAGER

About 160 people gathered in the lower/middle school gym on April 24 for a brunch celebrating the life and legacy of former Director Gladys Stern. The event featured music and dance performances and speeches by a slate of people who knew her through GDS. Several speakers tied Stern's guiding principle of valuing children to the school's mission and attention that GDS received during Ketanji Brown Jackson's Supreme Court confirmation process.

Stern, who was the high school's first principal and then held a role equivalent to head of school, passed away on Nov. 14, 2021 at 104 years old. The celebration brunch coincided with Alumni Weekend and attracted alumni and current and former parents and teachers.

After the attendees mingled in what Head of School Russell Shaw described as a "family reunion," he

began by having those at the event observe a moment of silence for Tony Harris, a member of GDS' security team who was injured during an April 22 shooting on Connecticut Avenue.

Shaw said that Stern was "a GDS legend," adding, "Gladys loved this school. She loved this community.

"She loved the arts," Shaw continued, "and today, we will be honoring her by sharing the talents of some GDS alumni, students and faculty."

Former GDS dance and drama teacher Sammi Rosenfeld '09 performed an interpretive dance to various soundtracks that revolved around the GDS community, including a recording of Jackson's description of GDS at her Senate confirmation hearings and an audio recording from a class Rosenfeld taught at the school.

D.C. artist Jay Coleman '90 painted a portrait of Stern that was revealed at the event to applause and will be displayed at the school.

He said that his multicolored portrait was meant to represent the diversity that "GDS has shown the world."

Former Associate Head of School Kevin Barr, now the school's director of hiring, introduced speeches by four people, each representing a different part of the GDS community: faculty, parents, students and administration.

Former teacher and administrator Walter Ailes represented the faculty and shared a letter that he sent to Stern in 2015. He wrote to her, "You had an internal compass shaped by your humility, your intellect and heart that allowed you to make countless decisions both large and small that would move the school forward."

Alumni Board President Cordenia Paige began her speech by offering a definition of the word "legacy," followed by a story about something her father and Stern had in common: Neither watched TV. "The something that I received from Gladys and my father was a love of learning and reading," Paige said.

Multiple speakers proudly talked about Republican senators' misrepresentations of the school during Jackson's confirmation hearings.

Peter Branch, the previous head of school, said that after hearing a senator accuse the school of progressive indoctrination it was "clear to me that she had never met any GDS students. None of them could be taught what to think,



A brunch honoring Gladys Stern took place in the lower/middle school gym. Photos by Max Kaminski.

because all of them have been taught how to think."

Shaw presented Michael Stern, Gladys Stern's son, with a gift from the school—an image of his mother etched in crystal. "It's a great honor to be associated with such a famous, or should I say infamous institution," he said, after a previous speaker had mentioned the Jackson hearings.

And Stern reminded the audience, "Actually, I can lay claim to being responsible for you all being here." His mother began working at GDS after enrolling him in 1954.

Beginning at 11 a.m., the attendees mingled for half an hour while a high school band, 9 AM Lemonade, played blues music.

According to Director of Community Relations Joyce DePass, who helped organize the event, planning for it started shortly after Stern's death. All attendees were required to show proof of COVID vaccination and were asked to wear their masks when not eating or drinking.

Over 300 people RSVPed, DePass told the *Bit*. Only about half of that number attended, according to a count by the *Bit*.

In an interview with the *Bit*, former French teacher Gail Massot called the event a "wonderful tribute to the salient philosophy of Gladys: What is good for the child?" Massot said that Stern "always knew exactly who you were and what was going on in your life."

The event was concluded by performances from GDS lower school dance teachers who are members of the Dana Tai Soon Burgess Dance Company and one by a group of eighth graders.

Barr told the *Bit* that Gladys helped to build a school that "had a heart and valued intellectual prowess." According to Barr, when it comes to his attitudes towards school, "I pretty much just open my mouth and out pops Gladys."



Shaw speaks during a ceremony celebrating Stern's legacy.

Eco-Market Day Fair Showcases Student Groups' Activism Efforts

BY AIDAN MOSTASHARI

The Student Action Committee (SAC) and the Environmental Task Force (ETF) co-hosted Eco-Market Day, a public event aimed at educating attendees about eco-friendly living, on April 23. According to senior and SAC chair Maddie Feldman, one of the aims of the event was to help the ETF's bid to certify GDS as an environmentally sustainable school with Eco-Schools USA—an educational program that drives environmentally conscious action in schools across the country—by showing the school's commitment to sustainability.

The SAC, which is broken into separate subcommittees focusing on a variety of social justice topics, set up booths, ranging

from a voter registration booth to a clothing-swap booth that encouraged reusing clothes, outside the lower/middle school building. The event was open to the public, and all booths were operated by GDS student volunteers.

Although this was the first-ever Eco-Market Day, Feldman said she hopes that it will become an annual tradition at GDS. She added that the name of the event was intended to be reminiscent of Country Market Day, a fair GDS hosted every fall before the pandemic. Because so many underclassmen contributed to Eco-Market Day, Feldman is optimistic that the event will continue, as there will be experienced students next year who can continue the tradition.

Students put up posters around the school to get the word out about Eco-Market Day and generate interest in the weeks leading up to the event.

Junior Asha Adiga-Biro leads a subcommittee of the ETF on sustainability, and it was originally her idea to have an Eco-Market Day. When she first approached Assistant Principal for School Life Quinn Killy, she thought he "was going to veto the idea," because it was such a big undertaking, but found that he "was actually so helpful."

Killy suggested that Eco-Market Day coincide with Sports Saturday and Alumni Weekend to increase foot traffic. This tactic worked on junior Robert Anopolsky, who came to look at different booths and to watch the lacrosse game. He ended up liking the event and found the booths interesting. He added that he would recommend it to others next year.

Students running the clothing-swap booth collected articles of clothing as donations before the event. The clothes were laid out for anyone who wanted to trade an article of clothing or pay three dollars. "Fashion is a very wasteful industry, and it is really bad for the environment," junior Lila Harris, a volunteer who helped run the booth, said.



The Voter Mobilization Initiative's booth and snow cone station. Photos by Olivia Brown.

Harris brought up how damaging the chemicals used to make clothes are to the environment and to workers. She added that reusing clothes is important so that they do not end up in landfills.

Harris estimated that about fifty people came to the booth she was working at that day. One attendee, junior Griffin Brown, said he purchased some "booty shorts" from the booth. He said he would try to wear them at his next crew regatta, but he confessed that he might end up giving them to his sister. Brown said he liked the idea of supporting the booth because he didn't want to contribute to the fast fashion industry.

Eco-Market Day isn't the first large-scale project the ETF

has organized; in the first semester of the school year, the ETF taught younger students about the importance of nature and engaged in other efforts to further spread awareness about its mission. Adiga-Biro said the subcommittee "made a workbook that had word searches, info about the environment, ways to combat climate change and reflection questions on how to help."

At the end of the day, Feldman said that the goal of the event was to "get to the everyday Washingtonian and help them integrate more environmental sustainability into their everyday lives and promote healthy living as a whole."



Eco Market-Day stations outside the lower/middle school.

FEATURES

Community Members Gather in Forum to Watch Vote Being Finalized

Continued from Page 1

emanated from the senior corner, and some students recorded the scene on their phones.

“It was wonderful to see the GDS community come together in support of Ketanji Brown Jackson’s confirmation,” senior Annabel Williams said in an interview.

Those gathered in the Forum waited as the final announcement was delayed by Senator Rand Paul’s late arrival to the roll-call vote. Quinn Killy, the assistant principal for school life, stood up to say he was checking how long the proceedings were expected to last.

Five minutes later, when Vice President Kamala Harris read the outcome of the vote, the Forum hushed, then erupted in claps and joyous shouts. Democrats in the Senate reacted similarly as the Republican side of the chamber emptied.

Freshman Khari Bell told the *Bit* he arrived late to his graphic design class because he was watching the vote from above the Forum—only to find the Senate livestream playing in the classroom, too.

“It was wonderful to see the GDS community come together in support of Ketanji Brown Jackson’s confirmation,” Williams said.

Bell said he was hopeful that Jackson’s presence on the Court could help counter racist stigmas about Black people. “It’s very refreshing to see African Americans in places of power, especially in such



Footage from the Senate was projected on the Forum’s screen. Photos by Reid Alexander.

historic moments,” he said.

Mo Elleithe, a GDS parent and former Democratic strategist who is the executive director of Georgetown University’s Institute of Politics and Public

Service, said in a phone interview with the *Bit* that Jackson “has shattered a pretty significant glass ceiling.” He added, “She will bring a perspective to the Court that has never been brought before.”

Jackson will not, however, be the first justice to have served on the GDS Board, a designation that belongs to Marshall, who was also the first Black justice. Jackson—whose daughter, Leila, is a senior—joined the Board in 2019. Though the justice-designate remains on the Board’s webpage, Head of School Russell Shaw told the *Bit* in February he anticipates she will step down.

In Judiciary Committee hearings during the week of March 21, two Republican senators brought up Jackson’s service on the GDS Board, seeking to tie her to the school’s

progressive values and what they called “critical race theory.”

Elleithe, a Fox News contributor, said the attacks were never meant to “derail” her confirmation.

“It was a strategy designed to stoke the fear and anger that is too pervasive in our politics today,” he said, as well as to energize Republican voters ahead of the midterm elections in the fall. “While opponents of hers were trying to make GDS a bit of a boogeyman, what it also did was highlight for everybody else the kind of social justice education that the school is known for.”

Bell said he thought some students were especially excited about Jackson’s confirmation because of the criticism of GDS. “After all that slander,” he said, “I feel like it’s a final triumph.”



Seniors react to Jackson’s confirmation.

Jackson Confirmation Prompts Pride Among GDS Alumni

BY CAROLINE GARLAND

Students and faculty gathered in the Forum to watch Ketanji Brown Jackson become the first Black woman to be confirmed to the Supreme Court on April 7. But current GDS students weren’t the only ones invested in the hearings; several alumni interviewed by the *Bit* were thrilled by the news.

Jackson, who joined GDS’ Board of Trustees in 2019 and serves on the External Affairs Committee and the Facilities Master Planning Committee, was nominated to the Court by President Biden on February 25, and was confirmed on April 7.

“I’m very happy,” Rachel Yavinsky ’01, a current GDS parent, said. She attributes Jackson’s success to her hard work and intelligence. “I was really proud of how well she did and how well she spoke about GDS,” Yavinsky added.

Tamara Lawson ’92, a

current GDS parent, was very impressed by Jackson during the confirmation hearings. “Judge Jackson was supremely qualified—overqualified, compared to past nominees,” she said. “[She] had the comportment and the presence that is perfect for Supreme Court justices.” Lawson thought that those close to Jackson who came to speak on her behalf, including the chair of GDS’ Board, Lisa Fairfax, proved that “every point in her career prepared her for this huge opportunity.”

During the hearings, Senator Ted Cruz questioned Jackson about her position on the GDS Board and, in particular, about critical race theory and its alleged role in the school’s curriculum. Adrienne Biel ’01, who has a fourth-grader at GDS, was not surprised by Cruz’s questions, which she deemed “ridiculous. He had something that he wanted to say, even though it really had nothing to do with her,” Biel

said, adding that she thought Jackson handled the questions well. “She stayed to her point and didn’t get flustered at all.”

Yavinsky told the *Bit* that she showed her first-grader a short, edited video of a part of the hearing when Jackson spoke about the history of GDS. “She was like, ‘Why is that man asking her those questions? Why are they being like that to her?’” Yavinsky said. She explained that she told her daughter that the senators were “afraid of her power, afraid of how smart she is and how successful she is,” and said that she “didn’t really have a better way of explaining it.”

Michael Schaffer ’91, a current GDS parent and senior editor at POLITICO, wrote about how the GDS alumni community reacted to Cruz’s questioning. “Online, [GDS] alums tweeted out Cruz’s derision as an emblem of pride,” he wrote.

Julia Blount ’08, a former middle school history teacher at GDS, found the hearings

interesting from a historical perspective. “Over time, the Supreme Court confirmations have gotten increasingly more political,” she said. “I was curious about some of the questions that came up.” She added that the alumni community was very active on social media, discussing the coverage the school was getting, and was intrigued to see GDS in the news in relation to the Court. “I definitely thought and went, ‘Oh my goodness! I can’t believe GDS is in the middle of a Supreme Court hearing!’”

“I was really proud of how well she did and how well she spoke about GDS,” Yavinsky said.

Nora Abramson ’97, a current GDS parent, said she was “horrified” by the line of questioning that Jackson received

from Cruz. “I think it just showed to me how polarized the country is,” she said. She added that Cruz “was whipping up the Republican base” on the very things that drew GDS parents to the school.

Blount noted how important the confirmation of Jackson was not just because she will be the first Black woman to serve on the court, but also because a woman of color, Vice President Kamala Harris, presided over the final vote. “In my lifetime—well, ever—there’s never been two women of color, Black women, in the highest level of two branches of the U.S. government at one time,” she said. “It was very powerful to recognize that in two branches of government, there are now women of color and Black women at the top.”

Lawson reiterated the significance of Jackson’s race and gender as a Supreme Court Justice. “It was just a beautiful thing,” she said. “That was just a joy to watch.”

FEATURES

Watching GDS Under Attack: ‘This Puts Us on the Map of What’s Right’

BY ETHAN WOLIN

When Senator Ted Cruz of Texas began pressing Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson about her connection to, and past praise for, GDS, Jackson responded with a tribute to the school’s founding story as the first integrated school in D.C.

“The idea of equality, justice, is at the core of the Georgetown Day School mission,” Jackson, a member of the Board of Trustees, told the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Two Republican senators used GDS to tie Jackson to educational practices they find objectionable—including the teaching of what they call critical race theory—during the Supreme Court confirmation hearings that lasted from March 21 to 24, thrusting the school into the national limelight as part of contentious debates about K–12 education.

GDS community members, away from school for spring break, watched the line of attack emerge with bewilderment, frustration and a unifying sense of pride in the school’s values.

After hearing Jackson’s defense of GDS, theater director Laura Rosberg emailed all high school students and staff, saying Jackson’s response to Cruz made her weep. “She represents us so brilliantly,” Rosberg wrote.

Rosberg said in a Zoom interview with the *Bit* that she was “gobsmacked” by the Republicans’ questioning. But, she added, “I felt instantly that this is the best fundraiser ever for GDS, that this puts us on the map of what’s right and

moral.”

Head of School Russell Shaw’s first message about the hearings came on March 28, the penultimate day of vacation, in an email addressed to the school community. He commended Jackson’s description of GDS’ founding and mission, announced that the school would have increased security protection and said administrators would say more “at the appropriate time.”

‘Filled and Overflowing With Critical Race Theory’

About 12 minutes into his allotted time to question Jackson on March 22, Cruz, having heard her paeon to GDS’ mission, said, “If you look at the Georgetown Day School’s curriculum, it is filled and overflowing with critical race theory.”

Republican politicians have used the term to castigate educational approaches they see as playing up the role of racism in American history and institutions.

Cruz held up several books that he said are “assigned or recommended” by GDS and read short excerpts from one, scholar Ibram X. Kendi’s illustrated children’s book *Antiracist Baby*. He quoted, too, from *Stamped (For Kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Kendi and Jason Reynolds—a book the senator claimed to have read fully.

Kendi writes in *Antiracist Baby*, “Babies are taught to be racist or antiracist—there’s no neutrality.”

When Cruz asked her whether she agreed “that babies are racist,”

Jackson said, “I do not believe that any child should be made to feel as though they are racist or though they are not valued or though they are less than, that they are victims, that they are oppressors.”

She also said that she does not know whether critical race theory is taught at GDS and that the Board does not determine the curriculum. The Board has been involved in shaping GDS’ anti-racist efforts over the past two years in its high-level governance role.

Senior Julien Berman, who is familiar with critical race theory from research for debate, said he has not encountered the formal area of scholarship—which, broadly speaking, critiques other understandings of American law and society by examining the continued influence of systemic racism—in his classes at GDS.

He noted that the GDS History Speaker Series recently hosted Professor Scott Hancock of Gettysburg College for a talk on Zoom about critical race theory.

Three of the books Cruz mentioned are listed among dozens of other items on a public list of “anti-racist resources” prepared by GDS’ diversity, equity and inclusion office. *Antiracist Baby* appeared on a menu of suggestions on the GDS website for commemorating Black Lives Matter at School’s 2022 Week of Action. *Stamped (For Kids)* was recommended to third through fifth graders on GDS’ 2021 optional summer reading list.

“I have not reviewed any of those books,” Jackson told Cruz. “They don’t come up in my work as a judge, which I am, respectfully, here to address.”

Junior Sophie Bronner said she does not think the same attacks would have been leveled against a white male nominee who sat on GDS’ Board. “Attacking a school that is trying to be inclusive as a way to put down the first Black, female judge who will sit on the Supreme Court,” she said, “I just think it’s so negative and uncalled-for and inappropriate.”

When asked about Cruz’s statement that GDS teaches critical race theory, Bronner, also a debater, said, “I completely disagree. If GDS were overflowing

with critical race theory, I would be just the happiest girl in the world.”

‘A Negative Light’

Tennessee’s Marsha Blackburn was the first senator to talk about GDS, albeit not by name, in the hearings.

In her opening statement on March 21, Blackburn told the nominee, “You serve on the Board of a school that teaches kindergartners, five-year-old children, that they can choose their gender and teaches them about so-called white privilege.”

Blackburn continued that the same school “has hosted an organization called Woke Kindergarten.”

A minute-long video about women who influenced Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—part of Woke Kindergarten, an “abolitionist” educational approach developed by Akiea “Ki” Gross—appeared on the same webpage of suggestions as *Antiracist Baby*. Gross presented at a lower school in-service day, according to an article by storyteller Danny Stock on the GDS website.

Blackburn also said that the school “pushes an anti-racist education program for white families.”

GDS parent Vicky Marchand—who co-founded and leads the White Anti-Racist Group, or WAG, which discusses white privilege—told the *Bit* that Blackburn’s seeming characterization of the group was false because parents asked to start it. Six to ten parents now attend the group’s monthly Zoom meetings, Marchand said.

However, parents are required to sign an enrollment contract that includes a new provision mandating that they actively support GDS’ efforts to promote diversity, equity and inclusion and combat bigotry. Members of the Board discussed the change at a virtual parent meeting in January.

Sophomore Talia Berger said she was saddened to see “something that I know GDS takes pride in,” its emphasis on diversity and inclusion, “put in a negative light.”

A Burst of Publicity

The Washington Post, *The New York Times* and other news organizations published articles about GDS in the wake of the

hearing-room mentions. A photo of senior Leila Jackson beaming at her mother as she testified went viral online.

Community members watched strangers by turns lambaste and applaud GDS online and discussed the attention GDS was receiving. “The entire situation has brought so much pride and so much excitement to the community,” senior Pallavi Bhargava said in a phone interview.

GDS has also been the subject of coverage by right-wing media. The headline of one story posted on Breitbart, a far-right outlet, claimed that GDS teaches “cultural Marxism.”

Berman said he is concerned that GDS may face similar threats or protests as did Comet Ping Pong, the D.C. pizza restaurant—owned by a GDS alumnus—that in 2016 found itself at the center of a conspiracy theory about a sex trafficking scheme run by Democratic officials. Others interviewed by the *Bit* did not share the worry.

In his March 28 email, Shaw said that the school would increase the presence of security staff as a “precautionary step” and that police officers would regularly monitor the campus. “To be clear, no specific threats have been made against GDS,” Shaw wrote, adding that “we have received many, many calls from individuals around the country voicing their support for the School.”

School officials have not commented publicly on the Republicans’ attacks against GDS. According to Rosberg, Shaw emailed teachers asking that they speak with the communications office if contacted by journalists.

Shaw did not respond to emailed requests for an interview with the *Bit*.

Rosberg said she read another Breitbart story that accused the school of pushing “adult sexual content on children,” including through the 2021 spring musical, *Spring Awakening*, which she directed.

“Somebody trying to raise hell, that’s all I make of it. It doesn’t bother me one bit,” Rosberg said. “Talk about digging up something from nowhere.”



Digital illustration by Nava Mach.

With National Attention, School Opts for Strategy of Silence

Continued from Page 1
speaking to the press against the recognition that “we can’t follow corporate directives like this, gag orders, and be who we say we are.”

Freshman Jada Aksu said she agreed with Shaw’s decision given how “the media can warp things.” Senior Jake Markarian also thought the decision was wise.

In its coverage of the school, *The Washington Post* wrote that GDS staffers and former board members only agreed to be interviewed “on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment publicly about the school.”

History teacher Sue

Ikenberry said that when Shaw addressed faculty on their first day back from spring break, he attributed GDS’ silence to a request from the White House. Shaw did not respond to emailed requests for an interview.

Ikenberry was initially skeptical of the school’s decision. “You always want to cooperate with the media,” she said. “That’s my first instinct.” But hearing that GDS’ silence was due to a White House request made her reconsider, she said.

Sophomore Alex Marchand told the *Bit* that GDS’ silence “was definitely a smart move because I don’t think Russell

wants to impact Ketanji Jackson’s confirmation process.

GDS’ silence “was definitely a smart move because I don’t think Russell wants to impact Ketanji Jackson’s confirmation process,” Marchand said.

The same day that Shaw sent the email to faculty and staff asking that they not speak

to the press, Fox News published an article claiming the school teaches critical race theory. The following day, Breitbart published two articles claiming GDS pushes “cultural Marxism” and “adult sexual

content” on its students.

Markarian said he thought it was unnecessary for the school to defend itself against the right-wing media since “everyone that knows GDS knows these things are untrue.”



The communications office Photo by Hercules Zhang.

FEATURES

Unseen by Students, Controller Keeps School Finances in Check

BY ADELE ZIEMBA

Tucked away in GDS' business office in the lower/middle school building, the school's controller, Crystal Lemon, and her team crunch numbers and create spreadsheets to make sure that GDS' finances are stable. The team is one of the many parts of the school that allows students to have such a comprehensive education.

As a controller, Lemon oversees GDS' accounting team by making sure that the school's funds are recorded properly. Her duties include managing the money coming in through tuition and fundraising, along with directing money towards different departments and school necessities. Her team also works closely with the advancement and admissions offices to deal with financial aid for students.

Recently, Lemon focused a large amount of her work on GDS' construction of the lower/middle school building and ensuring that the school's finances were maintained throughout the process.

"We're capturing all of the transactions that happen," Lemon told the *Bit* in an interview.

According to Lemon, the business office has been reducing the amount of paper it uses by utilizing credit cards instead

of checks whenever possible and printing less paper.

Lemon started her career as an accountant because she was extremely interested in math when she was younger. She stumbled upon the profession of accounting after discovering a questionnaire offered at her high school library to help students determine which careers to pursue. Based on the results, Lemon was directed to become a math teacher or an accountant. She decided to try accounting, as she was not eager to teach. "I don't know if I'm really that person to stand up in front of a crowd," she said.

She went to school for accounting at Hampton University in Northern Virginia before working her first job as a staff accountant at Envision EMI, a company that helps students explore different career paths. Roughly five years later, she moved to a senior accountant position at the National Society of Collegiate Scholars (NSCS) where she "was the only person that had accounting knowledge within the organization."

It was at NSCS where Lemon had her first encounter with an audit, an official inspection of financial accounts. Since none of her colleagues had experience with accounting, she was left to work on her own. "My team



Crystal Lemon via Zoom. Photo by Sawyer Thompson.

really couldn't really help me, so I ended up doing a really bad job on the audit," she said. She learned from the auditors how to perform a more successful audit, and the following year, she "had a great audit, and everything went well."

Despite having already accomplished much as an accountant, Lemon still wanted to do more with her career; she told herself that "there was a lot more to learn within the accounting world." In order to gain further knowledge, she moved on to an accounting firm called Tate and Tryon, a company that handles finances for non-profit organizations. "I had about five or

six different clients that I did accounting work for and I learned a lot there," she said. Lemon served as a senior accountant at the company for about seven years before deciding that she wanted to try something different.

Six years ago, the opportunity for a change in position opened to Lemon when GDS began searching for a controller.

Lemon said that the school seemed "like a great place to be, especially with the mission and just being in the school environment." She thinks of her job "like a puzzle" since she needs to see where money comes from, deposit it in the right place, check

for inconsistencies and put the information into a spreadsheet for GDS' chief financial officer, Jeffrey Houser.

Houser told the *Bit* that Lemon has a "tenacious appetite for getting things done and done accurately," but also has a great sense of humor.

Lemon's current team is composed of Zahoor Khalil and Anne Ellyse Kania. Together, they manage to pull data into formats that allow for recordings of transactions. Although Lemon and her team don't directly work with students, her and her team's work allows the school to function and offer resources to students.

Facing 'the End of Something,' Lifers Reminisce on 14 Years at GDS

BY ETHAN WOLIN

The first members of the class of 2022 arrived at GDS in 2008. Some walked that fall into Jody Welsh and Denise Jones' combined pre-K and kindergarten class, where I would join them the next year. Now, they are less than two months away from graduation and grappling with the fast-approaching end of their 14-year GDS careers.

Five of the seniors who were in that class—Dylan Bronner, Sophia Gore, Kira Grossfield, Noah Shelton and Joyce Simmons—joined me recently for a conversation about their experiences at GDS and the emotions surfacing as they prepare to go.

Near the end, I asked if anyone was left with any more memories they wanted to recount. Shelton recalled being given his GDS email address. Bronner jumped in: "Every account I've ever made has been under my dbronner22 email." "So what's going to happen?" I asked.

"I'm gonna have to reset everything," he said.

The interview below has been condensed and edited for clarity.

You're going to be done taking classes next week. Has the approaching end of the school year made you think more, or even differently, about your long careers at GDS?

Simmons: Yes, especially thinking about the next step, going to college, because I've been here

my whole life—it's all I've ever known. I had an admitted-students day a few days ago, and that was one of the first times when I had to go out and meet new people.

Gore: When I was going through the college process, to Joyce's point, it made me realize what I wanted in college. I've never really been in a situation where I've been a new student or didn't know anybody going in, which is daunting. But it made me realize I wanted a smaller school or I wanted the feeling of more of a community kind of to mimic GDS—which I never thought I would have wanted, because I always love to hate on GDS.

What memories do you have that encapsulate a GDS education?

Grossfield: Especially with the Ketanji Brown Jackson hearings, I've reflected a lot on how I was educated. It's been really interesting. I think GDS has changed a lot since when we were in lower/middle school. I think it's gotten a lot more liberal and probably politically correct than it was back in the day.

Bronner: When I think of staples of GDS forever, I think of going into the middle school gym for the really big all-school assemblies—like the lion dances coming in, or having the pride assembly, or doing the Christmas assembly. The big yearly assemblies. I can still visualize what they looked like.

Shelton: They do a good job with learning about different

cultures and a lot of different types of people, whether it was one of the big assemblies in the gym with the whole school, or just one of the Friday assemblies in the black box.

Does GDS feel like the same school that it was in 2008 when you arrived?

Bronner: I think the morals are still the same, but I do think that the way that a lot of the stuff we learned is taught to the kids now is a little bit different. Or I'd assume so based on some of the stuff I know they're not doing anymore, like Turkey Run [which was an old third-grade overnight camping trip during which students and teachers dressed in colonial attire].

Grossfield: They're probably not doing the underground railroad. [For a simulation during the fifth-grade overnight, students pretended to be escaping enslavement while being chased by acted slave catchers.] That was bad.

Shelton: A lot of the teachers have changed. It's gonna happen. It's also a new lower/middle school building, so, from when we were there, everything is different visually.

Bronner: We have a lot more diverse staff now. I don't know the exact numbers, but I know that we have a lot more, not only racially diverse staff, but a lot of LGBTQ+-identifying staff members, too.

Are you conscious of your unique position as lifers, compared to other classmates of

yours who arrived at GDS later?

Simmons: Sometimes, there'll be a group of us who have been here a while, and we'll be talking about a funny story, or about the camping trips, or a teacher, and the newer students—I don't realize it in the moment, but talking to them later, they're like, "I could not relate whatsoever."

We've talked some about how GDS has changed. How have you changed? How has your education at GDS shaped you?

Gore: GDS is really good at creating an environment for talking and being able to talk about hard subjects. I remember being in an outside-of-school, camp-type situation, where even discussing race was a very big deal. GDS made us comfortable with being uncomfortable.

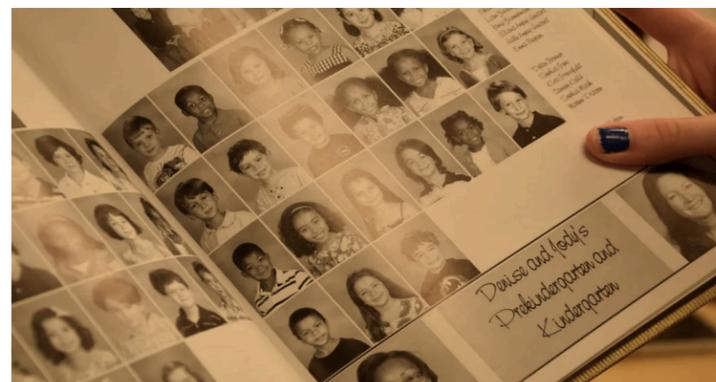
Simmons: I've definitely come to realize, since being at GDS, learning and knowledge is fun and cool. In first grade, when we would read our first book or

something, especially as a girl, you're like, "Oh, do I need to know all of this? It's too hard." But GDS makes it fun, and they make it interesting, and you want to do the best you can. I feel like not every school fosters that type of environment.

Pretty soon, you'll graduate. How do you expect to approach that transition?

Bronner: The closer I've gotten to it, the more difficult it's become. It feels now that it came a lot quicker than I expected. And so I'm spending a lot of time now looking back at a lot of stuff that I learned, a lot of stuff that I went through.

Grossfield: I have always been very bad at keeping in touch with people. And I'm going to try my hardest, but I've been reaching the realization that it truly is the end of something. Yes, we'll probably see people, but this just won't exist anymore. So I've been coming to terms with that.



The 2009/2010 GDS lower/middle school yearbook shows pictures of Denise Jones and Jody Welsh's pre-K/K class, including the author and interviewees. Photo by Olivia Brown.

FEATURES

School Admits More Boys to Rebalance Incoming Freshman Class

BY SADIE FOER

Sam Wood, an applicant to the GDS class of 2026, gathered his whole family around his laptop on Friday, March 4, as he clicked through to Ravenna, the applications portal GDS uses. In an interview with the *Bit*, Wood happily reported his letter from GDS “started with ‘Congratulations.’”

Newly admitted freshmen put down preliminary deposits securing their spots right before spring break, marking the end of this year’s admissions cycle. After an application process that was entirely virtual, GDS opened its doors for the new admits for the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, hosting open houses and shadow buddy visits where prospective students could spend a half-day at GDS with a current freshman over the two weeks before decisions were due.

The admissions team strives to create a balanced class, Director of Enrollment Management and Financial Aid Chris Levy explained to the *Bit*. “We’re looking at gender balance, diversity in all of its definitions, and we take that information and use it to inform what the makeup of the newly admitted kids to ninth grade will be,” he said.

One particularly salient imbalance in the class of 2026 at the GDS middle school is its gender makeup, with female students currently outnumbering male students by a ratio of about 3 to 2. To counteract the disproportionate number of female students, the school admitted a proportionately larger number of male students to the incoming class.

Ben Kanter, an eighth grader at GDS, reflected that the imbalance has made school harder socially and he is looking forward to having a more balanced class. Having a smaller number of male students created a “social ladder,” according to Kanter. “There’s not enough space for people to have their own different friend groups because the numbers are so slim,” he said, so he is looking forward to the influx of male students next year.

However, EJ Mazo, also an eighth grader at GDS, is skeptical of the reported gender ratio. Mazo, who identifies as gender fluid, has many friends who were assigned female at birth (AFAB) but don’t identify as girls and could be miscounted. “There are a lot of closeted AFAB trans people.” They posed the question, “Would the statistics be different if every trans person were out of the closet?”

Although Mazo hasn’t noticed issues as a result of gender imbalance, they recognized the potential benefits of admitting more male students. “I think it should be based more on intellectual ability rather than gender, but it is also important to have a diverse grade,” they said.

In addition to diversity, the financial aid budget is a factor that shapes the incoming class. GDS guarantees that it will meet 100 percent of the financial aid needs of its students. “The goal is to make sure that once you get here, you aren’t worried about these additional expenses,” Levy said.

During the first round of review, the application readers don’t look at the financial aid needs of applicants. But during the second

round of consideration, Levy explained, the admissions office has to reconcile the number of applicants in the pool who might need aid with its budget.

For the past two admissions cycles, the application process had been virtual. Levy said that during a normal year, students and parents would have had the opportunity to come to campus before applying. “There’s something to be said about sitting across from the person, being able to have that direct engagement, to shake a hand, to give a hug, to walk someone to different classes to have them see the kids in action,” he said. “It’s pretty special.”

Not having these in-person opportunities made it harder for this year’s prospective students to get that same understanding of GDS. Wood explained that “it was harder to recognize how the school

community was when you could just see it through a computer.”

Last year, incoming freshmen didn’t get a chance to visit the school in person until the Summer Bridge orientation program, well after they made the decision to attend GDS.

Freshman Ellie Schaffer, who came to GDS from Alice Deal Middle School, attended a virtual open house where teachers discussed their curricula when she applied last year. She was also paired with an upperclassman whom she could ask questions over email, which provided some insight into the life of GDS students but “much less so than doing the shadow program.” Schaffer, who hosted a shadow buddy this year, said that it was helpful for new admits “to get the overall experience of what it’s like to be here.”

For Levy, the two-week period

before students matriculate is about creating “opportunities for families to really feel and experience what GDS is all about.”

Before attending the shadow buddy day, Wood had only been on campus a few times to watch his sister, junior Alex Wood, play basketball. So for him, the shadow buddy visit was crucial for getting a sense of the school community: He said his visit put him “in the shoes of a GDS student.”

Other students agreed that being on campus for the shadow buddy program and open houses helped them get a sense of the community and student experience.

“It’s hard when you haven’t stepped foot in the school,” Deb Oremland, a parent of a newly admitted incoming freshman, said of her daughter’s application process. “But once she was accepted, the doors were open.”



The admissions office at the high school. Photo by Reid Alexander.

Classes, Tours, Festivities and More Fill Alumni Reunion Weekend

BY MARK ORR

GDS hosted an alumni reunion weekend on April 22 and 23 to welcome graduates of all ages back to campus. The weekend’s festivities were organized by the school’s alumni engagement office and alumni board.

On Friday and Saturday, alumni attended events including a Washington Nationals baseball game, Black and LGBTQ affinity gatherings, tours of the new lower/middle school building and mock high school classes. The events culminated with an on-campus reunion party on Saturday evening.

In addition to those events, alumni from the classes of ’87 and ’97 held their own off-campus gatherings at nearby restaurants

on Friday evening.

Members of the GDS faculty toured alumni around the new lower/middle school on Saturday morning. Terrence Carter ’97, who toured the campus, spoke with the *Bit* about the contemporary look of the new building. “It’s amazing how advanced it is. GDS has always been cutting edge,” he said, “but it’s interesting to see it now, flashing forward.”

After tours, alumni had the opportunity to attend mock classes taught by faculty members Bobby Asher, Sue Ikenberry and Kevin Barr. The classes ran for 45 minutes, with teachers presenting from slideshows and engaging in discussions with alumni, many of whom had Asher, Ikenberry or Barr as teachers when they attended GDS.

CJ Greenhill Caldera ’10

said that attending Asher’s mock neuroscience class during the reunion amounted to “the stuff that dreams are made of. Bobby’s AP psych class made a huge difference in my life during a very critical period of my growing up. I’m very grateful.”

“Social media is fun to catch up with people but actually seeing them in person was really meaningful,” Lockhart said.

Barr, who conducted a class called “America’s Obsession with Whiteness: Moby-Dick and Race,” said he expected the discussion to focus on a “critical analysis of whiteness” in the context of the novel Moby-Dick but instead the class evolved into a broader conversation about whiteness today.

Barr added that it was “lovely to put together a group of now-adults who were willing to return to the GDS ethos and challenge one another.”

After reminiscing with her former students over old yearbooks, Ikenberry gave a lecture about the presidential election of 1948.



Alumni were invited to campus for the first time since the pandemic.

Photos by Reid Alexander.

Phattiyakul added that she had “really nice, deep, meaningful conversations” at the party, particularly ones about other alumni’s families. “The music was amazing and there were really good vibes,” she said.

“I was awfully nervous about doing it,” she said in an interview after the class. “More interaction usually depends on people having done a little reading.”

The alumni reunion party was held at 8 p.m. on Saturday evening in the lower/middle school black box, where attendees enjoyed catered food, drinks and art created by fellow GDS alumni.

Tanya Phattiyakul ’97, a professional artist, was among those who had been asked by the party’s organizers to contribute work. Her piece was a multimedia abstract painting from a collection entitled *Invisible*. She said she appreciated the art showcase but it “wasn’t as publicized as it could have been. I didn’t find out about it until two weeks prior to the event itself.”

“I just moved here, which is why I haven’t come to these events before,” Claire Lockhart ’12 said. “Social media is fun to catch up with people but actually seeing them in person was really meaningful.”

“I always enjoy alumni weekend in one way or another,” Ikenberry said. “I just wish I could get to all of the many things going on.”

“It’s really encouraging for me to see the people that my classmates have turned into,” Jessica Lazar Bates ’97 said.



A group of alumni attended a mock high school class with neuroscience teacher Bobby Asher on April 23.

OPINIONS

Goodbye, Masks; Hello, Freedom!

BY AYMANN ENAYETULLAH

Since GDS removed its indoor mask mandate on March 14, students, faculty members and visitors are no longer required to wear masks indoors. According to an email from Head of School Russell Shaw on March 9, the school's decision was based on recent updates in guidance from the CDC and D.C. Department of Health. Not everyone feels content or comfortable with the decision, but GDS made the right call by going mask-optional.

Since the mandate was lifted, the dynamic of the high school has changed. As a freshman, I am seeing certain peers and teachers' faces for the very first time, and it feels refreshing to be able to distinguish different emotions from facial expressions. Masked and unmasked students are socializing with and learning alongside each other, and despite the new divide over whether to mask, GDS' sense of community is still present, if not more so.

In the past month, cases in the District have fallen and GDS' infection rate has dropped to below one

percent. Almost all eligible community members are fully vaccinated, and with an increasing number of people having received boosters, it makes sense that masks are no longer required. Many of GDS' peer schools are in the process of lifting their mask mandates; DCPS is no longer requiring masks effective March 16.

"The announcement came in due time," senior Max Grosman said in an interview the day of Shaw's email. "It'll be really nice to return to a sense of normalcy that we had before the pandemic." Grosman believes that the change will be positive and he looks forward to finally seeing people's faces.

Masks have hindered the way people interact with each other, often at the expense of students learning effectively. I frequently have trouble understanding what my masked teachers and peers are saying. In classes like Spanish, where it is important to read each other's lips in order to learn pronunciation, my teacher often has had to take off her mask to show us how to say certain words.

Masks have also been challenging socially—it has become increasingly difficult for me to decipher people's emotions and personal connections are lost.

"Masks have undoubtedly affected how I connect with my teachers and my classmates," freshman Jhet Bond said. "I feel pretty excited about the decision and look forward to this new chapter."

Shaw said in his email he anticipates that many will continue to wear masks, and many have, which they have every right to do. COVID-19 poses a higher threat to some community members than others and it should be everyone's utmost priority to respect and embrace each other's decisions. Studies have found that one-way masking is highly effective, especially for fully vaccinated and boosted individuals.

Since the pandemic's beginning, masks have been a topic of debate in the American political sphere, but masks aren't as politicized as they once were, and as of late, the removal of mandates has received bipartisan support across the country. Students no longer need

to feel worried about any political implications of their decision and should instead embrace personal choice.

In the past, I have often felt reluctant to take off my mask in public because of assumptions others might make on my political beliefs. For example, last summer, when masks were no longer mandated in most places for vaccinated people, I never wanted to take mine off despite my peers doing so. Nowadays, I don't feel that same judgment and instead feel relieved that the stigma

has finally dissipated.

"Everybody is vaccinated and we all get tested biweekly," freshman Audrey Leff said, "so I feel totally safe."

Leaving masks behind doesn't necessarily mean the end of the pandemic—the normalcy that we've been longing for may not return until the far future. But in the meantime, we can look forward to the countless benefits that come with being mask-optional and continue to thrive as a community of respect and acceptance.



Students at the top of the Forum on March 14, the first day without the mask mandate. Photo by Reid Alexander.

GDS Must Realize That Hispanics Are Not a Monolith

BY NATALIA FREDMAN

After spending the last nine years at a school where I was one of three Hispanic students in my grade of 50, I was eager to start my freshman year at GDS. Based on the school's website, an info session and reports from many peers at GDS, I was under the impression that students were knowledgeable about the diversity of the Hispanic community.

My eagerness soon turned into disappointment during the first week of Hispanic Heritage Month, when I realized Hispanics were often portrayed by many administrators at the school as a monolith in assemblies, lesson plans, conversations about race and ethnicity and more. And outside of Hispanic Heritage Month, most of the administrators and teachers rarely mentioned Hispanics, and when someone did, the conversation never went past food.

Hispanics are not a homogeneous group, and regarding them as one strips them of their individuality. During the one month they are talked about and celebrated nationally, there was clearly a lack of understanding of the depth of the Hispanic community at GDS. Whether your skin is light or dark doesn't make you more or less Hispanic. The group is incredibly diverse, yet its variety in culture is largely unrecognized by the school.

When Noel Quiñones, a Puerto Rican poet, spoke at the assembly for Hispanic Heritage Month, he represented only one type of Hispanic: Puerto Rican. Having a speaker from only one place in Latin America disregards the diverse ethnic and geographical makeup of the culture. An achievable solution would be to have a panel of speakers with different experiences as Hispanic people—people of different countries, religions, races and genders. To make

all Hispanic students and faculty feel represented, there simply need to be more backgrounds reflected in GDS' speakers.

Additionally, in students' hoppers and on the GDS Google calendar, the high school's assembly was titled "Spanish Heritage Month," while the actual month-long period marks five countries' independence from Spain. This oversight in naming is representative of the greater issue with GDS' attitude towards Hispanic culture; it shows that Hispanic people are not accurately represented even in the titles of our school's assemblies.

After the assembly in October, I began to wonder if I was the only one who noticed the misrepresentation of the Hispanic community at GDS. I thought that community members weren't consciously trying to hurt groups of Hispanic people, but rather that their perception of what being Hispanic means was simply incorrect.

History teacher Ricardo Carmona, who teaches a history course on Latin America, said that administrators at GDS are "not actively harming the community," but rather "are just not helping." He also said that the school "doesn't look for opportunities to celebrate Latine culture" outside of Hispanic Heritage Month.

This failure can be attributed to two reasons: a lack of understanding about Hispanic culture and the small number of Hispanic people at GDS. "Because there are few Hispanics, I feel there is less pressure for these events," freshman Elena Valdez said of programs during Hispanic Heritage Month. "The size of the community matters."

It is possible that not many people have protested these poorly executed events because there aren't enough people to speak up. "Nobody should really speak for us

except us," Carmona said of Hispanic people. Both Valdez's and Carmona's thoughts made me wonder, are there even enough of "us?"

"If you are not aware of the diversity of the Latine community, you won't be able to see it," he said. "If you don't know it exists, how can you look for it?"

Senior Yael Wellisch, a co-head of HOLA, GDS' Hispanic and Latine affinity group, spoke about the need to increase the number of Hispanics in the student body and administration. "It's growing, but there still needs to be more progress and an emphasis in admissions," she said. "Improvement is representation; there needs to be an increase of faculty representation that isn't just in the language office."

GDS is on a road to progress. In recent years, the school has added a Latin American history class, HOLA has grown in numbers and some students and faculty even decorated for Día de los Muertos. "Once you open the door to talking about Latin American culture, you can go further into it," sophomore Victoria Agerskov-Townsend, a co-head of HOLA and the Hispanic and Latine Support Alliance, said.

Hispanic Heritage Month is a great opportunity to talk about Hispanic culture. At first, the discussions can be an introduction to the community. To ensure these events are executed properly, there must be Hispanic input during their planning. And we can then move beyond the surface and talk about different aspects of Hispanic cultures, issues and life. Hispanic history can be discussed; immigration, migration, border control and voting rights are all vital topics when understanding the Hispanic community. There must be a wider understanding of how Hispanics aren't a monolith. GDS is on the right track, so let's push it to continue to be better.

Watching a War on Social Media

BY OLIVER THOMAS

For young people such as me, the war in Ukraine has been truly unlike anything we have lived through. We have seen a terrible civil war unfolding in Syria for over ten years now and other conflicts across the world, some of which the United States has been involved in. Some of these conflicts have been just as destructive, but Ukraine has felt very different for young Americans given the role of social media and the significance of the conflict to the West.

My and my classmates' social media feeds are flooded with war like never before. People on the ground have been filming the invasion on their personal devices and sharing that footage with millions on social media instantaneously. These are just ordinary people, not professional journalists.

The role of social media has in some ways been a double-edged sword for onlookers. On one hand, we are able to see what ordinary people in Ukraine are experiencing through social media, which has led people who would otherwise be completely disconnected from the conflict to be able to empathize and better understand what is happening.

On the other hand, young generations are faced with the problem of not knowing what information they see online to believe. We have seen rampant disinformation about the conflict. Young people should be mindful that the information they find on social media may be pushing an unreal narrative in an attempt to either entertain, push an agenda or boost Ukrainian morale.

This war also presents a reality that young people are unfamiliar with: an armed conflict in Europe involving a major world military power. War in Europe is something that we read about in history textbooks. It was not something I ever expected to see taking place in my lifetime. For me,

this war has brought about the realization that history is unfolding before my very eyes.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has seen an outpouring of support from Americans unlike similarly bloody conflicts in my lifetime—for example, Saudi Arabia's military presence in Yemen—perhaps because the cities and towns that we see being destroyed by the Russians look like home for many in the West, unlike other wars in the 21st century.

At the end of the day, a town destroyed is a town destroyed, and a life lost is a life lost no matter where or what the implications are. In order to be good global citizens, it is necessary to reflect on why Americans, and more specifically members of the GDS community, haven't given as much attention to other important conflicts as they have to Ukraine. The outpouring of support has been inspiring, but people should not only care about unjust wars when everyone around them does.

Seeing that much of Eastern Europe is now more closely aligned with the West and more democratic than during the Cold War, I had always thought of Soviet-era oppression I grew up hearing about as a thing of the past. Putin's invasion is reminiscent of stories of Soviet aggression I had heard but never lived through.

For young people, the war in Ukraine presents itself as a moment of reckoning. Peace in Europe, something we once took for granted, now seems less certain.

I have lived through the reigns of numerous autocratic and oppressive rulers—North Korea's Kim Jong Un, for example, or Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro—but none who are as powerful as and have posed the same threat to democracy as Putin. Watching Putin roll in and attempt to topple a democracy is truly eye-opening and should prompt us all to reflect on our values and how we can best uphold them.

OPINIONS

The War in Ukraine and Toni Morrison's View of Goodness

BY NICK PENNIMAN

In 2012, Toni Morrison spoke at the Harvard Divinity School on the subject of altruism—or “goodness,” as she prefers to call it—in literature. One might think, given the profound pain and darkness Morrison explores in much of her work, that her premise might have had something to do with writers’ and readers’ inattention to evil, their unwillingness to confront it or their preference for shallow or false goodness. But she made a different case.

“I have never been interested in or impressed by evil itself,” she said, “but I have been confounded by how attractive it is to others. I am stunned by the attention given to its every whisper and shout.

“Evil has a blockbuster audience; Goodness lurks backstage,” she continued in the lecture, which *The New York Times* published in written form in 2019. “Evil has vivid speech; Goodness bites its tongue.”

Morrison focuses on this phenomenon in literature but implies that it exists in our culture in general—in the conversations we have and the thoughts we think.

As Vladimir Putin’s evil rears its head in the war in Ukraine, I wonder whether now is a good time to revisit Morrison’s thinking.

So many of the TV shows and movies and podcasts we consume, in addition to our literature, are obsessed with evil: true crime podcasts, *Joker*, *Criminal Minds*, *American Horror Story*. So many others are intent on depicting something less than evil but generally lurking around it: corruption, sleaziness, sociopathy, betrayal. (Think: *Succession*, or all the network shows that are just different versions of *NCIS*.)

Squid Game, Netflix’s most viewed show of all time—which raked in 1.65 billion hours of viewing in the 28 days after its release last year (equivalent to more than 182,000 years in total)—is a good example. In the first episode, dozens of innocent contestants are quickly killed as the game’s unnamed mastermind drinks a cocktail and watches the massacre, reminiscent of school shootings in the U.S. In the show, as Frank Bruni wrote in the *Times*, “God is an assassin, tipsy and merciless in his gilded lair.”

Look at the fiction category of the *Times*’ bestseller list on any given week and you’ll likely find a murder mystery (or something pretty close to one) in a top slot.

Some of the evil with which we entertain ourselves is the real-world kind; some is not—implausible, fantastic, just for thrills. Sometimes its creator is attempting to understand evil, expose it, take it down; other times, the goal is to simply make it addictive. Some artists have serious ideas about evil, its roots and its mechanics; others really don’t.

Whatever the case, evil gets a lot of airtime. Why?

“Is it its theatricality, its costume, its blood spray, the emotional satisfaction that comes with its investigation more than with its collapse?” Morrison asks. “Perhaps it



Pro-Ukraine protesters demonstrated in Lafayette Square in late February. Photo by Nick Penniman.

is how it dances, the music it inspires, its clothing, its nakedness, its sexual disguise, its passionate howl, and its danger.”

We may be afraid of evil, or condemn it, but we are also thrilled by it. We may appreciate goodness, but we may also see evil, as Morrison says the writer Umberto Eco does, as “a thrilling intelligence scornful of the monotony and stupidity of good intentions.”

We dislike evil when it appears on CNN, but we love it when it appears on Netflix.

Why isn’t goodness as well-disposed to draw an enthusiastic audience? Morrison’s answer is simple: “The formula in which evil reigns is bad versus good, but the deck is stacked because goodness in contemporary literature seems to be equated with weakness, as pitiful (a girl running frightened and helpless through the woods while the pursuing villain gets more of our attention than her savior).

“Contemporary literature is not interested in goodness on a large or even limited scale.”

There are exceptions, of course, but the observation still rings true today. We are more likely to be dismissive of or cynical about goodness than invested in it. We see goodness as dull and simple, evil as cunning and complicated.

Just watch this scene from *No Country For Old Men*, a movie made by two of America’s most revered directors (the Coen brothers), adapted from a novel by one of America’s most revered writers (Cormac McCarthy), awarded America’s top prize for filmmaking.

As Anton Chigurh, McCarthy’s ambassador of evil, begins to unspool his logic of murder and nihilism via a life-or-death coin toss, we get the sense that the man behind the counter has a far shallower grip on moral, philosophical questions than Chigurh, who knows something more. The man behind the counter stutters, repeats himself, gets frightened—he plays evil’s game.

Morrison points out that such a representation of goodness is the norm in American literature: It is Melville’s Billy Budd, “who can only stutter,” and his Bartleby, who “[confines] language to repetition”; it is Coetzee’s Michael K, “with a harelip that so limits his speech that communication with him is virtually impossible”; and it is Faulkner’s Benjy, “an idiot.”

She claims that many late 20th- and early 21st-century literary heavyweights—Philip Roth,

Norman Mailer, Saul Bellow—“are masters at exposing the frailty, the pointlessness, the comedy of goodness.”

To be clear: I don’t want to suggest that there is some kind of moral failing in being disposed to evil-heavy entertainment, or that we must monitor the ratio of goodness- to evil-focused art we consume. And there is, of course, value in attempting to interrogate evil, to scare an audience out of complacency, to force people to confront the recessive human urges from which they are not immune, etc. (I also think that *No Country*, in both book and movie form, is phenomenal.)

But I do believe that we should not be blithe about the purpose of art or cynical about what it can achieve. If a sense of responsibility is lacking in our current politics, should we really cede responsibility when it comes to art, too?

As the writer George Saunders observed in 2018, “For a long time now, it seems to me, our culture has assumed that the function of art is to warn, to blame, to critique, to scoff, to dismiss. And those are some of its functions, for sure. But an art that only does those things is destructive. Destruction already being the dominant mode of our culture, we don’t need any more of it.”

Goodness is just as capable of illuminating the answers to difficult moral questions as evil is—if not more so. That is evident in Morrison’s own work: Through acts of love and compassion, characters from Paul D in *Beloved* to Florens’ unnamed mother in *A Mercy* offer us ideas about how to think and live.

Even if goodness is less entertaining than evil, is it more helpful?

That, among others, is a question I believe the war in Ukraine forces us to consider. And Morrison’s goal of giving goodness a strong voice is one the war forces us to take more seriously.

In Ukraine, goodness has a strong voice indeed. It has no note of apology, and it refuses to play evil’s game. It’s the Ukrainians risking their lives for their fellow citizens. It’s the volunteers making meals for refugees at the Ukrainian border. It’s the Russians unafraid to face years of jail time for speaking out against their government. It’s a bunch of other things that don’t have to do with the war that happen every day, unnoticed and unremarked upon.

Goodness is out there. So who’s writing it?

GDS Should Expose Us to Varying Political Views

BY CATHERINE DOOLEY

Growing up, I remember frequent dinners with extended family, listening to my conservative and liberal relatives discuss political issues. Hearing both sides has allowed me to form and feel assured in my own political identity.

In my two years at GDS, I’ve realized that most of my peers have not had the same political exposure as me. Washington, D.C., is ranked as the second most liberal city in the U.S., right behind San Francisco, according to World Population Review. In the 2020 presidential election, 92.1% of Washingtonians voted for Joe Biden.

Even among D.C. schools, GDS has a reputation of being overwhelmingly liberal. Whenever I tell someone I go to GDS, they are quick to ask me, “Do students there even know what conservatives or Republicans believe? Or do they just associate ‘conservative’ with ‘bad’ or ‘racist’?”

I’m concerned for GDS students. We rarely encounter conservative viewpoints, and when we do hear about them, it’s from a liberal perspective.

Many people in the GDS community associate all conservatives with racist and homophobic right-wing radicals who aren’t even worth debating. That frustrates me because some of my conservative family members and friends are people of color and others are members of the LGBTQ+ community—they don’t fit that stereotype at all.

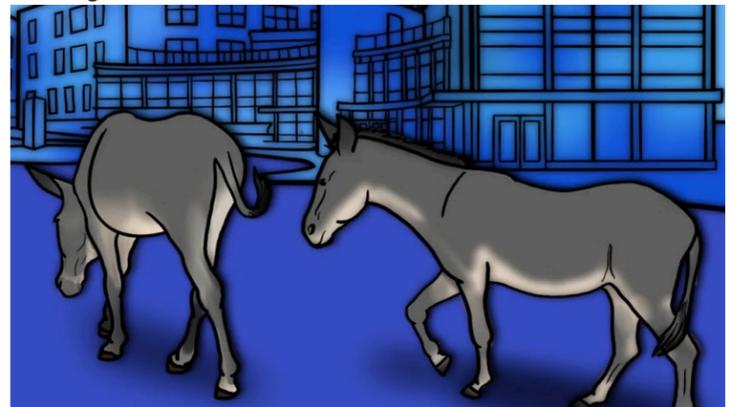
The political makeup at GDS does not represent our country. How are we supposed to engage with our peers outside of the GDS community when we aren’t being exposed to people whose views don’t align with the majority of the school?

We, like everyone, need to be challenged by people who disagree and be given the opportunity to defend our views and try on different ideas. We are in for a rude awakening when we leave the GDS bubble.

There is certainly a so-called correct political persuasion at GDS. If you aren’t liberal or left-leaning, you are considered an outcast at school, even though the GDS website says, “At GDS, we cultivate a warm, diverse, inclusive community.”

“It gets to a point where sometimes people are pretty non-accepting of even small deviations from the one opinion that’s considered politically correct,” senior Avani Ahuja told me.

I remember when a GDS friend told me not to date a guy because he was a “Trumpie,” even though she wasn’t even sure he supports Trump. Nothing else about him mattered to my friend, only his supposed politics. Many GDS students I know would agree.



Digital illustration by Nava Mach.

GDS may not be responsible for students’ closed-mindedness, but for our sake, the school should make an effort to counteract that mindset before we graduate and venture off into the real world. One way for teachers and administrators to do that would be to prioritize political diversity among guest speakers in classes and at assemblies.

Jeffrey Goldberg, a former GDS parent and the editor-in-chief of *The Atlantic*, said in an interview that “the more GDS can do to teach its students that people with differing viewpoints are not axiomatically enemies, the better off GDS students will be, not only intellectually, but in their future academic careers and professions.”

Sophomore Malcolm Baar said that at GDS, non-liberal students “are shunned by other people, and what they think doesn’t matter. It’s seen as irrelevant.”

If GDS helped us engage in more conversations with people who don’t agree, students could break the habit of mindlessly subscribing to partisan views.

GDS takes pride in enrolling students and hiring teachers of different backgrounds with regard to race, ethnicity, gender identity and socioeconomic status. Even though the school has diversity in those areas, it lacks political diversity, so it is all the more important that the school try to expose its students to different viewpoints in the classroom.

I understand that it is hard for GDS to bring in right-leaning assembly speakers since D.C. is so liberal, but we’ve brought in speakers from all over the country. The school’s liberal atmosphere may not be appealing to some conservatives, but assuming that fact without trying is itself a part of the problem that a more politically diverse lineup of speakers could help combat. And reaching across the aisle is a major conservative talking point.

Assemblies shouldn’t just be a way for the school to endorse speakers, but a way to foster political engagement. As we all know, GDS students like to challenge assembly speakers. Diversity of opinion fuels discourse.

Sophomore Joe Finkelstein believes that not learning about other viewpoints restricts students’ ability to engage across the political spectrum. Even if your mind isn’t changed, he said, “understanding the opposite viewpoint gives you a better ability to argue against it.”

“Diversity is hugely important,” Goldberg said, “but if you have a community in which people from diverse racial, ethnic, religious and gender backgrounds all think exactly the same way, you are not fully diverse.”

PHOTO

Holi in Photos: With Burst of Colored Dust, Festival Returns to GDS

BY KAIDEN J. YU AND REID ALEXANDER

The high school celebrated the Hindu holiday Holi on April 15 for the first time since 2019. After a group of students explained the festival's significance in the Forum, community members moved to the field, where most picked up packets of colored dust to fling into the air at once. A pair of *Augur Bit* photographers took photos of the vibrant scene.



Photo by Kaiden J. Yu.



Photo by Kaiden J. Yu.



Photo by Reid Alexander.



Photo by Kaiden J. Yu.



Photo by Kaiden J. Yu.



Photo by Kaiden J. Yu.



Photo by Reid Alexander.



Photo by Reid Alexander.

SPORTS

Spring Teams Get Boost As GDS Goes 4–1 on Sports Saturday

BY JEREMIAH FARR AND
RAPHAEL WOLF

GDS students gathered on April 23 on the high school field and half a mile south at Sidwell Friends School to watch their classmates compete in five sports games as part of the bi-annual Sports Saturday tradition.

The men's and women's varsity lacrosse teams and the varsity softball team played at GDS, while men's varsity baseball played a doubleheader against Saint James at Sidwell. GDS teams won four of Saturday's five games, all except for the first ballgame at Sidwell.

"Today's Sports Saturday was a huge success," Athletic Director David Gillespie said. "It was also alumni weekend, so we had a lot of GDS alumni who came back today and were able to come to the games. Our fan turnout was really great."

Throughout the day, hundreds of people—faculty, staff, middle and high schoolers and their families—milled about campus, taking part in both the Sports Saturday festivities and GDS' first annual Eco-Market Day fair, hosted by the Student Action Committee and Environmental Task Force.

"There are teams in all of our sports that we would struggle against and then there are other teams where we might have pretty dominant wins," Gillespie, who scheduled the day's games, said. "So I was trying to find

teams that were a good level of competition."

The common thread between the coaches and athletes the *Bit* interviewed was pride and optimism approaching the end of the season.

The men's varsity lacrosse team kicked off the day with a game against D.C. International School. GDS immediately took control, with seven goals in the first quarter. They took their foot off the gas eventually, but kept it a shutout, with the final score 13–0.

"You could see that everyone was focused and had worked hard, and this was an example of that paying off," senior Hayden Martz, one of the team's captains, said. "All of the guys got playing time, which was nice, and it was all around a good performance."

Head coach Taylor Brown believes that the game was a sign of good things to come. "We have a young team, and today we saw them all play well together," he said. "It's just important that they keep working hard for the rest of the season."

Spectators who stuck around the high school field after the men's game were joined by a bigger crowd to watch the women's varsity lacrosse team play Bishop McNamara High School at noon. GDS led for most of the game, cruising to an 18–11 win. "We loved showing our home crowd what we could do," head coach Parker

Benedict said after the game.

"Today was a really good opportunity to showcase a lot of the different talents we have on this team," Benedict added. "It was great to see our seniors being leaders on the field."

The men's varsity baseball team traded the lead with Saint James for most of the first game in the doubleheader. A clutch double by senior Ken Bailey tied the game at eight runs in the seventh inning, which would have been the last. But Saint James staved off the Hoppers' rally, blasting two home runs in an extra inning to put the game out of reach, resulting in a final score of 13–9.

GDS did not back down, however, and rebounded with a dominating 18–3 win in the second game.

"We did a good job with getting the bats going early in the second game," senior Noah Shelton said, "and in the first game we did not do that." Shelton thinks that the win will provide the team with momentum heading into the playoffs in spite of its losing record.

Both games witnessed contention between the umpires and the Saint James coach, who loudly voiced his disapproval of many calls. His starting pitcher was ejected in the second game following a verbal altercation with the home plate umpire.

The GDS bench watched the antics amusedly and remained spirited throughout the day—their jokes,



Sophomore Talia Berger runs with the ball past a Bishop McNamara player on April 23. Photo by Kaiden J. Yu.

along with head coach Todd Carter's reminders to stay composed and focused, could be heard from the stands.

When sophomore Matt Del Guercio, No. 5, was pitching to Saint James' star player, who wears No. 6, the GDS bench hollered, "Why was six scared of five? Because five eight six." When GDS was at bat, the players suggested that it was in Saint James's outfielders' best interest to shift to 37th Street.

In a post-game interview, Carter said he was pleased with the team's offensive consistency, an area that he is looking to improve upon going into the playoffs, in the second game.

Women's varsity softball also won against D.C. International, 25–9, earning its first victory of the season.

"We're a young team. We're trying to come out of the last COVID years just piecing it together," head

coach Donna Stallworth said. "Getting this win today can really motivate the girls, and it'll help for the remainder of the season." The team has practices and games scheduled through the end of May, according to the athletic calendar.

Senior Eve Kolker, one of the team's captains, agreed with Stallworth that the game "showed the team that we can do this and we can win."

Stallworth also thought that the win was a sign of the team's progress. "We're going to play some hard teams," she said, but "every practice we're getting better, we're understanding the game more."

"We haven't had what I would call a normal spring sports season in a while because of COVID," Gillespie said. "So it's great to have all the teams back out on the field, especially with so many people here to support them."

Students, Teachers Play in GDS' First Organized Futsal Tournament

BY SLOANE HOLDER

This winter, GDS students and faculty competed in the school's first ever futsal tournament. After years of pick-up indoor soccer games after school, Assistant Principal for School Life and men's varsity soccer coach Quinn Killy and supporting students, many of whom were players on the men's varsity soccer team, finally decided to start an organized league.

The indoor soccer games transitioned into futsal, a variation of indoor soccer, this year due to increased student participation. A few students brought up the idea of the switch to Killy before the season began. Because of the high volume of participants—freshman Sam Pastreich estimated that over 30 players joined—Killy was motivated to turn the informal games into an organized league.

Indoor soccer games have been a tradition at the school for many years but stopped this year when Killy made the transition to futsal. Unlike this year's futsal games, the indoor soccer matches were recreational and started with just a few soccer players and a faculty member present.

Futsal is a lot like indoor soccer, but there are a few key differences between the sports. In futsal, there are fewer players on the court, the ball is smaller than it is in indoor soccer, there are no offsides penalties and the court is smaller, which often make the game more intense and fast-paced.

The main reason that futsal has been able to keep its popularity at GDS is due to student participation, according to Killy. "It is totally student interest," he said. "If there was no interest, then it wouldn't happen."

Futsal is open to all GDS students, but many of the participants this year

were members of the men's varsity soccer team.

The weeks of intense futsal matches started in mid-January and finished in early March because of many breaks in the tournament's action due to scheduling conflicts. This year, there were six official teams, including an all-faculty team. The faculty team consisted of teachers and staff members from the lower, middle and high schools.

Senior Jeremy Grace, a player on the men's varsity soccer team who participated in the futsal tournament, said that he appreciated the diversity of the participants in the tournament. He cited the fact that the teams ranged from a faculty team to a team made up of only freshmen. "It has been awesome; you have Quinn and staff members on the team and the freshman team," he said. "It has been really fun."

Although the faculty team never won a game, they added more competition for the students, Killy said.

Although futsal has become popular at GDS, it is not recognized as an official winter sport in the Mid-Atlantic Athletic Conference or the Independent School League. Since Killy coaches soccer in the fall, he is not allowed to coach futsal during the off-season. In order to align with the leagues' rules, Killy also decided to involve only GDS students in the futsal tournament. "For me to be involved in it, it has to be open to all GDS kids and it can't involve coaching," he said.

Though interscholastic futsal may not be an option for the future at GDS, Grace wants the sport to live on at the school even after he graduates this spring. "I definitely want them to continue it on," he said. "I would definitely be in support of it coming back next year."

Varsity Volleyball Squad Vanquishes Male Challengers in Well-Attended Showdown

BY BEN HELLMAN

Six of the women's varsity volleyball team's seniors defeated a team of senior boys from the Nets Club in two straight sets, 25–19 and 20–15, on March 17.

The game was a long time in the making, as it was originally proposed after the women's team made it to the D.C. state finals in the fall. "We were watching [the women's team], and we were like, 'Oh yeah, we can do that,'" senior Ben Freedman, a captain of the men's team, said.

Senior Pallavi Bhargava, captain of the women's varsity volleyball team, also believed that the men's team had some merit. "I had played volleyball with these boys on the senior trip a lot, and they were actually really good," she said. However, she was still confident that her team would win. "I didn't think they really had a chance at beating the varsity team, because we actually play and had been practicing five days a week," she added in reference to the fall volleyball season.

The men's team practiced at Nets Club meetings through the winter and early spring and were coached by juniors and co-heads of the club Lucy Mezey, Izzy Auerswald and Drew Cowan.

On the day of the match, the men's team took the court wearing the Red Barons intramural uniforms from the GDS middle school. After the fans filled the bleachers, the women's team came into the gym and took the other side in their uniforms from the fall season. Bhargava was impressed with the crowd. "It was the biggest turnout, more than any of our home games," she said. "It was really great to see the student section turn out; it felt like fall sports again."

The women's team had not played together since the end of their season, and, according to Freedman, two of the players had not played on a volleyball club team outside of school during the hiatus.

The women's lack of team coordination was clear early in the match, as Freedman scored four points during his serve, helping the men jump to a 6–3 lead. Senior Noah Shelton scored the men's fifth point with a powerful spike, sparking loud cheers from the crowd. The set remained close, and a string of missed serves by both sides brought the score to 10–10.

However, the women's team pulled away with an eight-point serve by Bhargava. After the match, she told the *Bit* about her approach to serving. "Our goal was to serve aggressively," she said. "I served straight down the line and across the court because those are harder angles to pass from, and also because I have more practice serving to those spots."

While senior Max Burns built up some momentum with a four-point serve late in the game, it was not enough to mount a comeback for the men's team. After winning a point off Burns' serve, the women's team finished off the first set, winning by a score of 25–19.

The two teams switched sides of the court for the second set, which was

truncated to be played to 20 points instead of the usual 25 due to the approaching end of the lunch period. Once again, the set started evenly, but only up to a 4–4 score. Bhargava's serve, which had downed the Nets Club team in the first set, was stifled quickly. Despite the men counteracting Bhargava's serve, the women's team slowly pulled away, matching each serve from the men with more points of their own.

While the men's team had a string of points scored on spikes by senior hitters Luke Flyer, Burns and Shelton, they could not break even for the rest of the game, and eventually fell 20–15.

Despite the loss, Mezey had positive remarks about the men's team's performance. "I was very proud of what they did," she said. "I think they went to their fullest potential."

Freedman, however, was more critical than Mezey. "Our biggest weakness was serves and the serve receive," he said. "Our back row wasn't communicating well. I was going for balls without calling for it."

Though disappointed by his team's play, Freedman was keen to play another game against the women's team. "I don't know if my team would be on board, but I think it would be fun later in the year to do a rematch," he said.



Seniors from the women's varsity volleyball team celebrate their victory on March 17. Photo by Reid Alexander.

SPORTS

Baseball Players Bond on Spring Break Trip to Disney World

BY LUCAS SULLIVAN

Over spring break, the GDS men's varsity and junior-varsity baseball teams left for Florida for a four-day trip to Disney World to kick off their season. The trip is an annual tradition for the teams but has been called off in recent years due to COVID.

The teams faced several logistical issues during the four days. On the first day, sophomore Cole Huh got caught in the long wait at security at the airport and missed the teams' flight. However, he got to Orlando only a couple of hours later on the next flight. (Huh is a reporter for the *Bit*.)

There also had not been a bus arranged for the teams' transportation around Florida, so the players commuted to their various activity areas separately via Uber, according to senior Miles Huh.

The teams split their trip into two: they spent one half at Disney World's Magic Kingdom Park and the other at Disney World's EPCOT. Members of the teams were impressed by the Magic Kingdom's hotel but especially enjoyed the all-you-can-eat buffet at the EPCOT hotel, according to several players.

Each day, the teams had two baseball sessions—one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The sessions included team practices and games against schools from other states. Following each day's baseball activities, the players went to one of the Disney World parks.

Over the course of the trip, the varsity team played four scrimmages against three different schools and ended with a record of 1–3. The opposing teams proved a great challenge for the newly assembled GDS team, and yielded much progress for the Hoppers. "They always come out better," Todd Carter, head coach of the team, said of players' improvement.

Despite their packed schedule, the varsity and junior-varsity teams found time for various bonding activities, such as group discussions, meals and board games. Senior Max Burns highlighted the importance of the team spirit that the trip provided. "Without Florida, the team bond is weaker," he said. Burns also reflected on the recent years when COVID caused the cancellation of the trip, saying that the team had not had as close of a bond as it did in the years when the players went to Florida. He said that before the trip, he had been anticipating the positive

change that the "amazing opportunity" would bring to the upcoming season.

After getting to know the other members of the team better, Burns and two other varsity players said that they expect to have a promising lineup that is more offensively inclined than in previous years. "We have some of the best bats I've seen in my years here," Burns said.

Miles Huh was more hesitant about the team's possible success, citing the recent injuries sustained by junior Ben Carter and freshman Eli Zucker. However, Huh expects the team to bounce back.

While it's hard to tell how the season will turn out so early, Todd Carter said that he sees the potential for a great team. He also said he believes in the importance of a competitive mentality in order to win. "We have all the pieces; it's just a matter of keeping everyone healthy and performing on game day," he said.



Baseball players gather at practice after school. Photo by Shaila Joshi.

The GDS Track Coach Who Placed Seventh in the U.S. Indoor 800 Meters

BY VICTOR SINGH

Jonah Koech, a native Kenyan and member of one of D.C.'s most elite track clubs, joined the GDS track and field team's coaching staff this past winter. Koech, born in Eldoret, Kenya, has been running for as long as he can remember.

Koech was formally introduced to the sport by his high school coach, Colm O'Connell. With help from O'Connell, Koech became fast enough to run at a professional level.

According to Koech, O'Connell appreciated his skill early on. "He saw my talent and he said, 'We are going to work on it,'" Koech said. "He is like my mentor."

Koech's talent eventually warranted his move to the D.C. area for better track opportunities. In the District, Koech joined the highly esteemed District Track Club. Koech's coach at the District Track Club, Tom Brunlek, reached out to GDS' head track coach, Anthony Belber.

"He was working out with the District Track Club, which is an elite track program for adults," Belber said of Koech. "And their head coach, who I've known from the world of track and field, reached out to me and said, 'We have this new young member of our team and he's looking to get a start in some coaching.'"

Soon after Brunlek's call to Belber, Koech came to one of GDS'

fall cross country practices and introduced himself to the team, joining them for a run. Koech was then offered a job as the assistant distance coach for the winter track season.

With the hiring of Koech, Belber said it is clear that GDS is investing in the best coaches and resources for its athletes. "[GDS Athletic Director] David Gillespie has been really supportive whenever I asked for assistant coaches here or there, whether they're working for specific events," Belber said. "David's been great at hiring people."

Not only has Koech worked to help GDS' runners improve, but according to Belber, he also added esteem to the team. "People take him seriously because they know he is running at a very high level," Belber said.

Koech recently placed seventh in the 800-meter race at the U.S. Track and Field Indoor Championships, with a time of one minute and 49 seconds.

Belber also emphasized Koech's involvement in coaching all of the team's runners. "He's not just interested in our top athletes; he wants to see everyone progressing and improving," he said. "He recognizes that everyone gets something out of running."

Koech knows his impact on the team and recognizes GDS runners' skill. "What I see about GDS is that

it's like a family, and they have people that are very talented here," he said. "It's a special place to be."

As a coach, Koech said that he wants to do all that he can to help the school's developing runners. "I want to help those people who are young because there are some other things that they were never shown," he said. "I'm ready to show them what they're supposed to do."

Several runners who spoke with the *Bit* said that they felt Koech was a huge help to the team. "He really inspired us," sophomore Rand Poellnitz, a distance runner on the winter track team, said. "There are some older members [of the team] who watch his runs—watch his races. We can all see someone who's really talented at work, and we can use that to inspire how we work."

"Ever since he came, he has been a real inspiration to all the team members," sophomore Abel Elias, a distance runner on the winter track team, said. "His story and where he comes from—he's a real inspiration to us all."

Koech's time with GDS' running community will last longer than just a single winter season, as he has accepted a coaching role for the spring. According to Belber, Koech has had a delayed start in the season due to personal matters, but is expected to return in coming weeks.

Scores

Here are the results GDS winter athletics teams' games, meets and tournaments from March 28 to April 23. The grasshopper icon denotes GDS wins. Results compiled by Alex Gerson. Grasshopper icon by Nava Mach.

Men's varsity baseball

- Thursday, March 31: St. Stephen's and St. Agnes (12) def. GDS (4)
 - Saturday, April 2: Flint Hill (3) def. GDS (1)
 - Saturday, April 9: Maret (10) def. GDS (0)
 - Saturday, April 9: Maret (12) def. GDS (2)
 - Tuesday, April 12: GDS (10) def. St. Andrew's (3) 🐛
 - Thursday, April 14: Potomac (4) def. GDS (0)
 - Saturday, April 16: Potomac (15) def. GDS (9)
 - Tuesday, April 19: Flint Hill (10) def. GDS (4)
 - Thursday, April 21: Sidwell (7) def. GDS (3)
 - Saturday, April 23: Saint James (13) def. GDS (9)
 - Saturday, April 23: GDS (18) def. Saint James (3) 🐛

Men's junior-varsity baseball

- Saturday, April 2: Flint Hill (12) def. GDS (2)
- Friday, April 8: Maret (10) def. GDS (1)
- Wednesday, April 13: Sidwell (10) def. GDS (0)
- Saturday, April 16: Potomac (12) def. GDS (0)

Women's varsity softball

- Tuesday, April 5: Visitation (25) def. GDS (0)
- Thursday, April 14: St. Stephen's & St. Agnes (17) def. GDS (14)
- Wednesday, April 20: Potomac (17) def. GDS (0)
- Thursday, April 21: Madeira (16) def. GDS (11)
- Saturday, April 23: GDS (25) def. D.C. International (9) 🐛

Men's varsity lacrosse

- Friday, April 1: Flint Hill (14) def. GDS (6)
- Monday, April 4: Saint John's Catholic Prep (13) def. GDS (3)
- Wednesday, April 6: Potomac (15) def. GDS (1)
- Tuesday, April 12: Sidwell (16) def. GDS (3)
- Wednesday, April 20: Saint James (12) def. GDS (0)
- Saturday, April 23: GDS (13) def. D.C. International (0) 🐛

Women's varsity lacrosse

- Tuesday, April 5: GDS (16) def. St. Andrew's (11) 🐛
- Thursday, April 7: Episcopal (20) def. GDS (8)
- Wednesday, April 20: National Cathedral (20) def. GDS (4)
- Saturday, April 23: GDS (18) def. Bishop McNamara (11) 🐛

Women's junior-varsity lacrosse

- Thursday, April 7: Episcopal (6) def. GDS (2)

Men's varsity tennis

- In tennis, teams compete against each other in seven matches (four singles matches and three doubles matches). The team that wins the most matches is the winner.
 - Monday, April 4: GDS (7) def. Jewish Day School (0) 🐛
 - Tuesday, April 12: GDS (4) def. Flint Hill (3) 🐛

Track and field

- A team's score in track and field is the sum of the points it won based on placements in individual events and relays.
 - Friday, April 1: Cronly Invitational at Episcopal
 - Men first of six schools 🐛
 - Women second of nine schools
 - Wednesday, April 6: St. Albans Tri-Meet
 - Men first of three schools 🐛
 - Women second of two schools
 - Saturday, April 9: Woodward Relays at Georgetown Prep
 - Men 15th of 20 schools
 - Saturday, April 9: Potomac Invitational (results unavailable)
 - Tuesday, April 12: St. Albans Tri-Meet
 - Men third of three schools
 - Women third of three schools
 - Saturday, April 16: St. Albans Mini-Invite
 - Men second of 11 schools
 - Women second of nine schools

ARTS

The Augur Lit

Event Puts Spoken Poetry's Connective Power on Display

BY AVRAM SHAPIRO

There is something magical about the experience of listening to poetry live. From 6 to 8 p.m. on April 21, sitting on the second-floor patio at GDS' first spoken-word poetry night, I experienced firsthand performed poetry's ability to speak to people on a profound level and engage with complex ideas. Watching students and professionals alike take the mic and perform, one after another, was like witnessing a metaphysical dialogue: call and then response, affirmations of ideas followed by their contradictions.

The event began just after it stopped raining (as if rain had stopped for poetry—how poetic). The organizers had laid out a buffet of food. As people trickled in, lights, decorations and music DJ'ed by art teacher Adrian Loving completed the atmosphere. It was not long before college counselor Darius Pardner, whose upbeat hosting smoothed the transitions between poets throughout the evening, took to the stage. He introduced the event's faculty sponsors, English

Department Chair Aisha Sidibé and PE teacher Kevin Jackson, and set ground rules for the audience, including encouraging people to snap, clap and cheer to show appreciation for each poet's vulnerability.

It was an exhilarating night—participatory and challenging, philosophical and penetrating, cerebral and deeply felt, Shapiro writes.

The relationship between the audience and the performer is arguably the most essential component of spoken-word poetry (similar to slam poetry, in which poets compete). Vocal emphasis and inflection matter much more here than in other forms of poetry, because connecting with listeners through performance is just as important as the language itself. That connection was

a constant at the Thursday evening GDS event, making even people who were not performing feel like they were participating.

The stylistic and thematic variation of the poetry was particularly fascinating to see. Topics ranged from the toll of racism to superficiality and self-doubt in a high school social climate. Language choices varied as well; some poets favored a more imagery-heavy style, while others used simple language to convey messages more explicitly.

Two complementary poems about racism did the latter. A clear-eyed, steadily performed poem by junior Christian Freeman examined the burden of historical racism on modern-day Black people. Sophomore Joshua Reynolds' poem thrust attendees into a visceral understanding of the terror of being Black in America, reaching its climax as he stared intently at the audience after cataloguing double-standards and injustices. Together, they painted a picture of the way both past and present racism have robbed Black people of appreciation, equal treatment and, often, their lives.

Among numerous other student performers, sophomore Talia Berger critiqued high schoolers' materialism using shoes as an example; junior Ben Carter humorously, but pointedly, confronted his insecurities; and sophomore Zoe Ferguson lovingly framed her mother's life in the context of racism, relationships and resilience. Above all, distinctness of voice was evident in every performance. In a night about



The poetry event was DJ'ed by Adrian Loving, left, and hosted by Darius Pardner. Photos by Olivia Brown.

connection and affinity, individuality was equally important, each poet's unique perspective representing essential parts of a larger, collective whole.

The two professional poets, Da Truth and Backpack Jeff, contributed their adult life experiences to the collage of ideas.

Da Truth was my favorite of the two; her poetry was rhythmic and precise. At one point during her performance she rallied the audience to sing along to the hook of a popular Queen Latifah song: "U.N.I.T.Y., that's a unity." It was an almost spiritual experience.

The other pro poet, Backpack Jeff, examined self-doubt, love and his own success. He delivered his poems with conviction, but his self-reflection sometimes came across as self-congratulatory. At one point when he referred to his expansive collection of shoes in a poem about the turn of his financial fortunes, Backpack Jeff stopped to acknowledge Berger's earlier point about the pitfalls of consumerist culture.

The interplay between Berger and Backpack Jeff's ideas in that moment highlighted how we can understand concepts more deeply through one another. Interactions between the audience and performers, as well as between performers, were ultimately the key to the night's success, fostering feelings of connection and community, and deepening social and cultural reflection.

As the night drew to a close, what struck me particularly was the faces of fellow audience members, how much everyone seemed to be enlivened by watching people perform. What spoken-word poetry does so well, which was on display on the GDS high school patio, is removing the elitism from poetry; it is an art form about reaching people, whatever their background, ethnicity or context. It was an exhilarating night—participatory and challenging, philosophical and penetrating, cerebral and deeply felt. If and when Slam Poetry Night returns, I for one will be sure not to miss it.



Sophomore Zoe Ferguson performed a poem about her mother.

THE AUGUR BITE

Tofu Rice Bowl

BY KATE TOUFANIAN

This is an easy vegetarian meal that can be made in about 45 minutes for lunch or dinner. I came up with this recipe at a friend's house after her mom made a basic rice and tofu dish. My friend and I raided the fridge and found different sauces and toppings to spice the dish up. Enjoy!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup jasmine rice
- 1 ¾ cups water
- ½ tsp salt
- 7 oz firm tofu
- 3 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tsp hot sauce
- 2 tsp honey

Optional toppings:

- ½ cup sliced pineapple
- ½ cup edamame
- 2 sheets of sliced nori
- A few pinches of sesame seeds

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Heat rice, water and salt in a pot over high heat until reaching a soft boil.
3. Set stove to simmer, cover pot and leave for 20 minutes.
4. Cut tofu into 1 inch

squares, about ¼ inch thick.

5. Sandwich tofu between two paper towels and set a heavy baking tray on top to squeeze out excess water.
6. Oil a baking tray with 2 tbsp of sesame oil.
7. Lay tofu out on baking tray and put it in the oven for 15 minutes.
8. After cooking rice for 20 minutes, move the pot off the burner and leave it covered for 10 more minutes.
9. Mix soy sauce, honey, hot sauce and rest of sesame oil in a bowl.
10. After cooking the tofu



for 15 minutes, flip every piece and cook for an additional 10 minutes.

11. Put half the rice in a serving bowl and store the rest away for future use (there's no

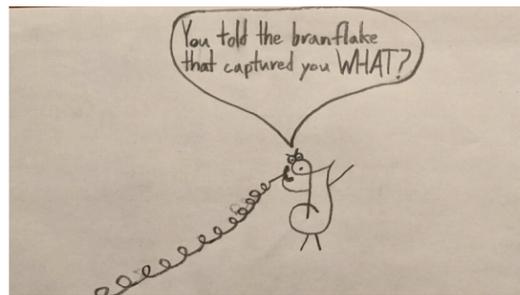
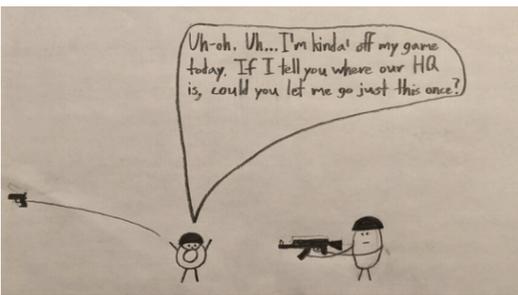
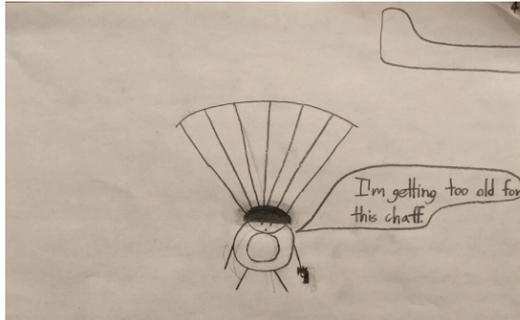
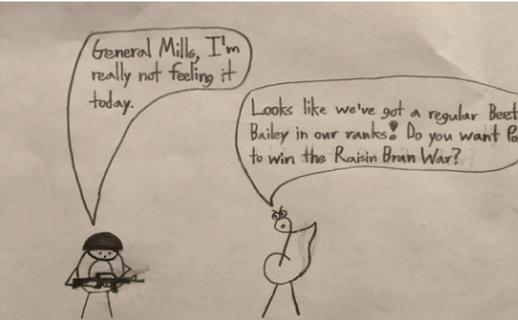
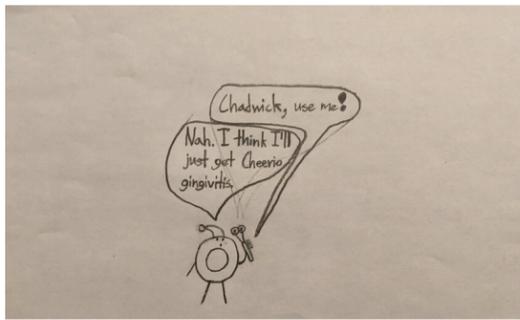
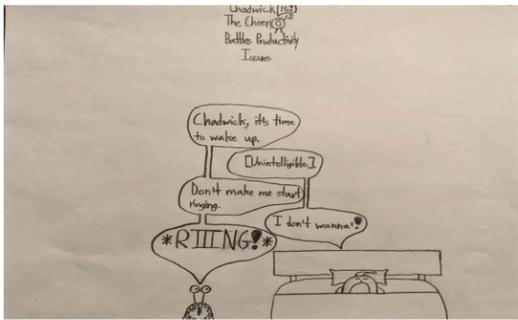
Photo by Kate Toufanian. good way to make less than 1 cup of rice).

12. Take the tofu out of the oven and add to serving bowl.
13. Drizzle sauce on top and add your choice of toppings.

COMEDY

Chadwick Struggles With Productivity

BY JULIUS BOXER-COOPER



Bit-Doms

BY ANNABEL HILZENRATH, STELLA TONGOUR AND AVRAM SHAPIRO

GDS athletics dominate at Sports Saturday with a record of 4-1!

Shoutout to David! It must be hard to find these teams for us to play.



Bobby Asher holds a sleep week raffle to promote a good night's sleep.

I wanted the flying alarm clock!



The Pride Assembly was great!

And it coincided perfectly with America Monday.



The high school goes on Hopper Holiday.

ZavaZone let us all cosplay as middle schoolers for a day!



Our beloved seniors are leaving.

Forget about Ted Cruz; this is our worst nightmare.



KBJ is confirmed!

GDS receives record number of applications and breaks the record it already held for most mentions on D.C. Urban Moms.



Footloose opens this week!

... Never mind.



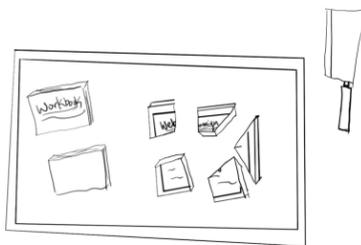
Recipe for Crispy Fried Homework

BY PHOENIX ZHANG



Step 1: Gather your homework.

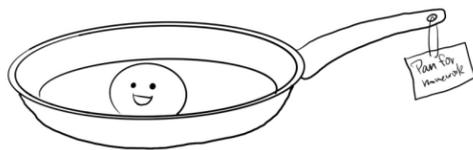
Note: No homework was harmed in the making of this recipe.



Step 2: Cut the homework into pieces.



Step 3: Cut the homework into even smaller pieces.



Step 4: Put oil or butter in a pan.



Step 5: Sprinkle homework into the pan.



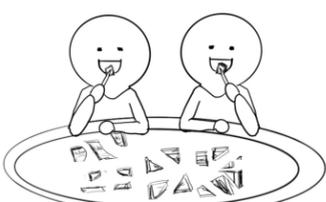
Step 6: Turn heat on high and stir the homework.



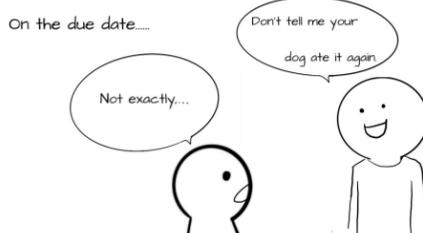
Step 7: Add sauces.



Step 8: Serve the crispy fried homework on a plate.



Step 9: Enjoy with a friend!



Four GDS Limericks

BY LUKE FEDORCHAK

I'm Late

Through the halls I blast,
I can't be late for this class.
I walk through the entry
The room is empty!
It's my free period, alas.

The Test I Probably Failed

I leave the class confused.
My time was truly misused.
The problems that appeared
Were really quite weird.
I already know I'm doomed.

Free Period

With half my free gone to waste
I rush through my work with haste.
But I'm in for a surprise,
For I hadn't realized
That I have a unit test I must face.

The All-School Assembly

The Forum feels like a jail.
The pace is like that of a snail.
30 minutes on,
They're still going strong.
This could have been in an email.



Digital illustration by Abel Elias.

EDITORIALS

What Ever Happened to Assembly Speakers?

Before the pandemic, assembly speakers were a regular feature of school life. They would arrive on Davenport Street on ordinary Friday mornings to talk in front of a packed Forum before facing sometimes-protracted questions from students up until, and often for minutes after, the bell heralded a return to classes.

This school year, however, even as GDS has fallen almost fully into its prepandemic rhythms, assemblies with guest speakers feel like a rarity. Putting aside assemblies without visitors, the high school is on track to have six free Friday community times by the end of the school year, to students' short-term relief but long-term detriment.

With changing COVID precautions, it is understandable that the school did not snap back into the swing of frequent speakers, and that it has yet to hear from one since the rebirth of all-school gatherings in the Forum last month. But administrators should now make an effort to fill the spring calendar—or the fall's, if the spring's is set—with guests ready to inform, move and challenge students.

This year, the high school held its traditional assemblies—First Friday, disassembly and the like, plus those commemorating Christmas, Passover and other holidays. Excluding that category, the high school will have had 17 assemblies by the end of the school year, down from 20 in the last full prepandemic school year, according to Quinn Killy, the assistant principal for school

life.

When outside speakers have come on campus to talk to the whole high school this academic year, it has most often been for a special occasion—New York Times reporter Jodi Kantor for the Benjamin Cooper Memorial Lecture in November, or the Social Justice Teach-In Day's main speakers, preservationist Gabrielle Etienne Woodard-Carter and TV chef Pati Jinich, in February.

There is no reason to limit guest appearances to annual events, since GDS is fortunate to be able to regularly bring in compelling visitors. Hosting guest speakers only enriches the school's intellectual life. They can introduce unfamiliar ideas to the community, spark conversations about topics beyond students' immediate lives—even inspire us to take up new interests or aspirations.

Take Ellen Patterson, one of only five in-person guest speakers this school year. She spoke at an assembly in November about EVERFI, the social entrepreneurship company where she is an executive. Patterson's talk provoked debate among students about the notion of profit-driven enterprises for social change.

Assemblies are among the only times, and certainly the most consistent times, when the entire high school can learn together and leave with, at a minimum, something in common to discuss. They help underpin the very idea that the over 600 students and teachers who are meant to attend them constitute a single

educational community.

And assemblies, like every other aspect of school life, have undergone a dizzying rollercoaster of adaptations since the pandemic began.

Through months of remote or hybrid classes, high school administrators arranged a steady stream of virtual talks by outside speakers, including several focused on social justice and anti-racism in the wake of 2020's tragedies and protests.

Assemblies this year have taken a variety of forms, with some projected via Zoom to either advisories or two grades seated in the library, even though the basic format of school has remained unchanged.

Now that COVID precautions are almost completely relaxed, administrators can make

in-person assemblies featuring outside speakers a near-weekly custom.

While they're at it, organizers (often Killy or members of the office of diversity, equity and inclusion) should help make assemblies intellectually exciting—genuine exchanges of ideas, not anodyne orgies of smile-and-nod agreement.

That begins with inviting speakers who will challenge the predominant views at GDS or address topics less often discussed here. What about hosting someone to present a conservative stance on a cultural and political question like abortion? or to tackle the Israel–Palestine conflict? or to take on legacy college admissions?

The high school uses a different schedule now than it did

before the pandemic, one that leaves greater flexibility to repurpose the 10-to-10:40 a.m. slot allotted variously to Monday meetings, community time, advisory and assemblies.

Some students may prefer 40 unscheduled minutes when 10 a.m. on a Friday rolls around. But the erratic scheduling renders the time useless for recurrent club meetings, and with only three periods left before the weekend, most students are not at the peak of their week's work.

We hope that, with a routine of guest speakers, students and teachers will walk out of first or second period classes on Fridays wondering not whether there is an assembly at all, but who is waiting at the base of the Forum to talk.



The full high school assemblies in the Forum on March 7. Photo by Kaiden J. Yu.

The Promise of New Administrative Blood

In December, *The Augur Bit* published an editorial calling for GDS to elevate internal candidates for two high-ranking administrative roles the school was seeking to fill—associate head of school (formerly Kevin Barr) and high school principal (now Katie Gibson).

Things did not exactly go our way: Beginning this summer, Meg Goldner Rabinowitz, the assistant head of the Northwest School in Seattle, will be GDS' associate head of school, and Yom Odamten Fox, the director of community and global partnerships and interim director of diversity, equity and inclusion at the Dalton School in New York, will be the high school principal.

What a wonderful opportunity.

If they approach their positions, and the community approaches them, in the right way, the two new administrators could help bring students closer to the leaders of their school.

There are already promising signs that Rabinowitz and Fox share that goal: Rabinowitz told the *Bit* in January that she would

like to teach a course by her second year at GDS. Fox said she hopes to meet nearly every high school community member by winter break and is open to someday co-teaching a class.

Fox certainly had the right idea when she said, "I don't want to be holed up in my office by myself, answering emails or running from meeting to meeting."

The two picks are in some ways similar: Both work at private schools outside D.C. Both have taught humanities (Rabinowitz, English; Fox, history). Both, interestingly, have been site directors for Global Online Academy, a consortium of schools around the world that offers online classes.

And it is heartening to see that Rabinowitz and Fox seem to share the priority of being accessible and connected to the student body.

We recommend that they make a point of interacting with students at sports games, performances and other school events; introduce themselves thoroughly at an assembly early in the year; and host open-house conversations for students and faculty

who are especially interested in forming personal relationships with the new faces of administrative authority. Above all, they must arrive at GDS with a genuine spirit of curiosity about how the school works.

Especially for a newcomer, the role of principal should lend itself well to frequent contact with students. Fox can meet with clubs or club leaders to understand what they do, roam the hallways and the Forum, ask people questions, learn people's names, remember them, use them—anything to strengthen relations with students from the get-go.

For Rabinowitz, who will presumably sit in an office in the lower/middle school building and whose appointment the school did not publicize to students, that task may require an even more concerted effort. In a letter announcing Rabinowitz's selection that was linked to a parent newsletter, Head of School Russell Shaw explained that the associate head of school is "the chief administrative officer of the school."

For her conference-room decision-making in areas such as hiring to fit GDS specifically,

Rabinowitz will need to develop an on-the-ground familiarity with the high school community, first and foremost by spending enough time in and around it that students know who she is and what she does—and not assuming they don't care.

Administrators alone cannot create a climate in which they are, and appear, tuned in to student life and build amicable relationships with students. Making the most of the impending administrative transitions is a two-way street.

As next school year begins, students should be eager to get to know Fox and Rabinowitz and give them a chance to adjust to a new workplace. We should look out for them to be immersed in the community and not let them fall into cloistered ways.

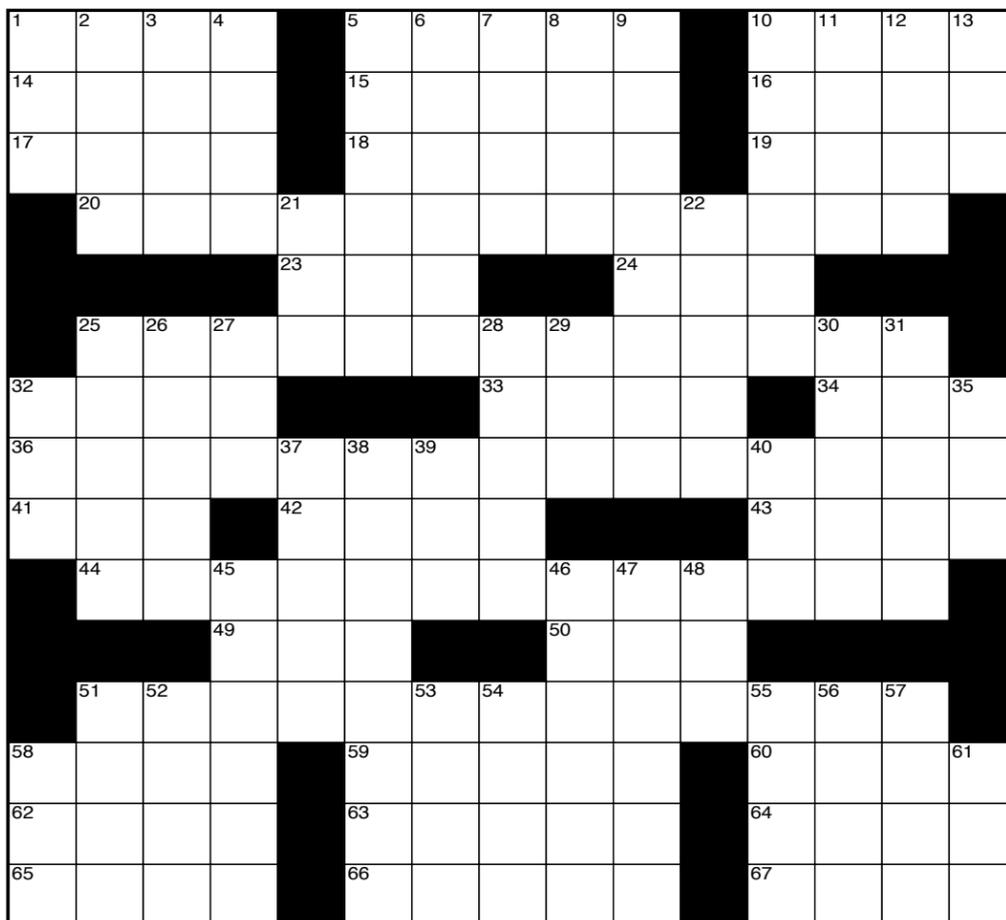
With new leaders comes a chance for all community members to invest anew in making the high school feel as tight-knit as it can be, all the way to the ground-floor high school leadership suites and the administrative offices across the street.



Digital illustration by Nava Mach.

Hopper Crossword: Mid-Term Racket

BY DANIEL OTTO-MANZANO



- 32 As of this edition, the current mo.
 35 HTML formatting language
 37 Strike lightly
 38 Water, as a farm
 39 "Fuck you" artist ____ Lo Green
 40 Oui's opposite
 45 Quadriceps location
 46 Rap god?
 47 Give for a cause
 48 Inventor Whitney
 51 The ugly duckling, secretly
 52 Lightbulb unit
 53 Olive genus
 54 Heavy breath
 55 Numbers like 1, 3, 5, 7
 56 "He searched every ____ and cranny"
 57 Type of truck
 58 Word following nail or day
 61 Part of a weightlifting set

ACROSS

- 1 Upper-class event?
 5 Second generation Japanese American
 10 Subtracts antonym
 14 It's not serious
 15 "We're all alone, ____ own"
 16 Pingu sound
 17 Poet Teasdale
 18 Bull prefix
 19 Destressing activity often done with Katie Gibson
 20 Secure funding
 23 Human's evolutionary ancestor
 24 Merry
 25 Public office purpose
 32 French greeting
 33 Spanish ayes
 34 Thunder b-ball team location
 36 Partisan back and forth?
 41 Baseball stat
 42 Base times height, in geometry
 43 English class dict.

- 44 Create examples
 49 ____ polloi
 50 Measurement unit in Polly's class
 51 Debate goal
 58 Coolness
 59 One of Ariel's sisters in "The Little Mermaid"
 60 Active sort
 62 Trail
 63 Palindromic Christopher Nolan movie
 64 Capitol cap
 65 Itty-bitty insects
 66 Words on a Wonderland cake
 67 Day the seniors were missed

DOWN

- 1 Sleep week attire, for short
 2 Katy Perry lyrics "You're gonna hear me ____"
 3 Gumbo ingredient
 4 "You're not a snack, you're a whole ____!"
 5 2014 Rae Sremmurd song about romantic preference
 6 Vague response to "Are you done yet?"
 7 Campbell's product
 8 Continental currency
 9 Symbol of absolute rule
 10 Nobody in particular
 11 Object to knock on
 12 Toes, slangily
 13 Cathedral boys school (abbr)
 21 Loo (abbr)
 22 "____ Q" (Creedence Clearwater Revival hit)
 25 Drools
 26 "Hate Me" — JuiceWRLD and ____ Goulding
 27 Business stat
 28 Guy who allegedly had an apple fall on his head
 29 Michael Jackson's "Don't Stop ____ You Get Enough"
 30 Duet, for nine
 31 Drifts in a car e.g.

The Augur Bit

"A very auger bit will now be turned into your souls until your honesty is proved"

Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*

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