

AI-Generated Report Card Comments Worry Some Parents and Students

BY PETER KUMAR AND LEO NYBERG

ChatGPT was used to write comments on first-semester report cards, teachers said in interviews with the *Bit*. GDS parents and students worried about how ChatGPT would affect the personal touch of comments.

Spanish teacher Nico Sheets told the *Bit* that he has used ChatGPT to help write report card comments, and history teacher Sue Ikenberry said that she has heard of other teachers considering using ChatGPT to write comments. Some students and parents were indifferent to the use of AI in report card comments, while others were concerned.

Sheets said that he had used ChatGPT to write comments by inputting students' "qualities" and "things they need to work on" and then paraphrasing what ChatGPT produced in his comments. "I found it really helpful because you're writing over 50 student comments. Sometimes you get repetitive, and you need some other ways of expressing

your ideas," he added. Sheets said that he thought ChatGPT helped him "formulate ways" to express himself in the comments.

Max Holtzman, the father of a GDS sophomore, said he thought the AI program was "a great source of efficiency," but he did not think it could replace teachers' "actual thoughts about an individual."

"I don't think I feel too good about teachers using ChatGPT to write comments, especially when you're paying the kind of money you pay for a school like GDS," Holtzman said. "I would be kind of upset as a parent to know that the level of attention in such a small school is being taken away to save five to ten minutes per kid."

Holtzman said that he thought using the AI program would cause important details to be lost. "ChatGPT might not provide an accurate reflection of how your kid is doing," he said.

Assistant Principal of Academics Khalid Bashir told the

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Tenleytown Residents Reprimand GDS



Photo of morning drop-off at lower/middle school. Photo by Sawyer Thompson.

BY SADIE FOER

"This feels a little bit surreal," Head of School Russell Shaw said during a Feb. 9 meeting as he faced a Zoom screen of Tenleytown residents and the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC), a hyper-local governing body that advises D.C. agencies. The commissioners scolded Shaw, the Founding Executive Director of the Center for Civic Engagement, Barbara Eghan, Director of Innovation and Technology Tim Lyons and other school administrators for not filing the enrollment report that showed that the school was overenrolled for the 2021-2022 school year.

The topic of contention at the meeting was GDS' violation of its zoning order and agreement with the ANC by overenrolling approximately 50 students two years in a row, according to a resolution passed by the ANC. The school then violated its agreement again by neglecting to file the required annual enrollment report. ANC commissioners addressed the violation during their Feb. 9 meeting,

expressing their frustration with the school's administration.

In late October, Shaw was preparing with the school's zoning lawyer for his presentation at the Nov. 16 ANC meeting. The lawyer asked to look at last year's traffic and enrollment reports, and the two realized the enrollment report had not been submitted to the ANC. Shaw called ANC Chair Jonathan Bender and set up a meeting.

In order to approve its construction for the unified campus, GDS and the ANC came in 2017 to an agreement called the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which requires GDS to take measures to decrease traffic.

Starting in the 2020-2021 school year, GDS was permitted to enroll 1075 students. If the school were to meet its traffic goals for two consecutive years, it could increase enrollment to 1125. After the fifth year of the agreement, the school would face legal consequences if it exceeded its trip counts.

The school measures traffic goals by "trips," each time a car

drives on or off campus. The number of trips is recorded during the peak hours of morning, early afternoon and late afternoon.

According to Chris Oster, GDS' transportation marketing associate, the school failed to meet its trip limits in the morning and early afternoon slots in the May 2021 audit. In the fall 2022 audit, it met its trip count in the morning and early afternoon but failed the late afternoon count.

The school increased enrollment to 1119 for the 2021-2022 school year and to 1124 for the 2022-2023 school year without achieving its trip counts for two consecutive years, in violation of the MOU, according to the 2022 enrollment report filed with the ANC.

In 2020, when lower and middle school students were in a hybrid learning model and only coming to campus a few days a week, students weren't required to carpool and after-school activities were on pause. "This is really the first year that GDS and the

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The English department. Photo by Olivia Brown.

Nine Competitors Put Math Skills to the Test in GDS' Integration Bee

BY NICK VON HINDENBURG AND JEREMIAH FARR

On Thursday, Mar. 2, about 350 students, faculty and family members gathered in the forum for GDS' inaugural Integration Bee. The Bee began at 6 p.m. with live jazz music, and the announcers, junior Cole Huh and senior Ethan Wolin, introduced the competition and its competitors.

Sponsoring the Bee was Mugs and Donuts, a club that seeks to explore the "deep realms of pure mathematics," according to an email from

its head, junior Ollie Alfonso-Frank. The Bee was organized by Alfonso-Frank and Wolin. In an all-school email sent on Feb. 22, Wolin described the Bee as "a tournament-style math competition with timed, head-to-head match-ups."

Wolin and Huh both write for the *Bit*.

The Bee consisted of four rounds between the nine competitors. In each round, two competitors went head to head, attempting to solve an integral before their opponent. (Integration is the mathematical process of finding the area under

the graph of a function.)

Wolin said that the Bee was "designed to enthrall spectators" with live commentary detailing the contestants' backstories, music and club-sponsored prizes.

Alfonso-Frank had the idea to host an Integration Bee a few months ago during a meeting of Mugs and Donuts. Alfonso-Frank thought that it would be fun to host a math competition for the high school, and he said he was inspired by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's annual Integration Bee.

Alfonso-Frank then called Wolin, whom he had shared a

calculus class with, and Wolin was on board with the idea. They began to prepare for the Bee a couple of months ago. They were "dreaming big" and began talking to their friends and teachers and assigning roles to those who wanted to get involved, according to Alfonso-Frank. "It all really came together quite nicely," Alfonso-Frank said.

Nineteen competitors initially tried out to enter the competition. They were each given 20 minutes to complete 20 integrals. The top ten scorers were entered into the Bee, and their

seeding was assigned based on their scores. Sophomore Kevin Xia, who was the fifth seed in the Integration Bee and finished second in the competition, said that he read his calculus textbook and did a few exercises in preparation.

Though ten participants qualified for the Bee, science teacher Gabe Koo was unable to attend, so only nine people competed. Senior Lucie Johnson was supposed to compete against Koo in a preliminary match, and Johnson automatically moved

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Eliana Green reports on the Black Student Union's go-go dance, which included other schools.

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Ava Blum and Clio Blum detail how they assisted Ukrainian refugees.

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ANC Scolds GDS for Being Overenrolled Two Years in a Row

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neighborhood are seeing what this agreement looks like," said Oster.

Additionally, administrators were adapting to COVID and the new unified campus during the 2021-2022 school year. "We had a lot on our plate and amidst that we dropped the ball," Shaw told the *Bit*.

Shaw also said staff turnover was another administrative challenge. He noted that the director of enrollment management changed from Barbara Eghan to Chris Levy in late 2021.

GDS has always admitted more students than its class size because not all admitted students will choose to enroll. According to Barbara Eghan, former director of enrollment management and financial aid and one of the administrators ensuring that GDS is in compliance with the BZA, the yield increased from 65% pre-pandemic to 80% for students admitted for the 2021-2022 school year.

Although he realized that the school was overenrolled, Shaw said that he didn't realize that it needed to be reported to the ANC. "When I thought about our ANC, I thought about traffic; that was my wiring," Shaw said.

But Bender and other commissioners still have questions outstanding. "It's very hard to see how this could have happened," he told the *Bit*. American University and Georgetown University were overenrolled similarly to GDS because of the pandemic, but they disclosed the violations to their respective ANCs. He said that, if the school had alerted the ANC after the first year, "we would have worked together and there would not have been a second year of

overenrollment."

Bender also alleges that GDS has not filed sufficient traffic reports to the District Department of Transportation (DDOT).

"We have filed our reports with DDOT," Oster told the *Bit*. "I have receipts of us sending that report," he added.

Jeff Blum, chair of the GDS board, told the *Bit* that he was "troubled" by the manner in which the Feb. 9 meeting was held. "The chair presented a 20- to 25-minute indictment of GDS," he said. "Some of his points were true and correct while others were not," he said.

Blum said that it is difficult "to watch the ANC try to drag GDS through the mud when I know how much effort the school has made over the last five years to live up to its obligations under the agreement."

"It feels to me like we were deceived," ANC secretary Amy Hall said during the meeting.

"I'm just really disappointed by the whole situation," said commissioner and GDS parent Ali Gianinno. She said that the school has made "major errors," although she appreciates the school as a parent. Gianinno abstained from voting on the resolution but said that she supports Bender's decision to "hold GDS accountable."

During the meeting, Elisabeth Leamy, a Tenleytown resident, called GDS' behavior "cheating."

The school and commissioners have been negotiating what action to take. GDS originally proposed

financing services to the community, such as extending the bike lane GDS built along 42nd Street or hiring an additional traffic officer at Janney Elementary School.

ANC commissioners Bender and Tom Quinn recommended that the school develop the former Metro chiller plant on the corner of Ellicott and 42nd Street, which GDS owns, into deeply affordable housing units. Bender said the affordable housing would be "consistent with GDS' commitment to social justice." GDS concluded that the project would be too expensive and cost \$16 million.

Shaw would prefer an accommodation that is relevant to the increased traffic in the neighborhood, and the housing project wouldn't fulfill the school's mission of education, he said.

Bender hopes that GDS will admit that "they missed the mark by a lot." Additionally, he believes that the costs for Shaw's proposed measures

don't make up for increased revenues from additional tuition. Shaw disputed Bender's claim that GDS was profiting off the additional tuition due to overenrollment, saying that the school is a non-profit and invests money from tuition into students' education.

The River School, another independent school in D.C. that shares the same ANC with GDS, is in the process of building a new campus at 4220 Nebraska Avenue, just under a mile away from the GDS campus. The school is negotiating a similar agreement with the ANC, using the same lawyer as GDS.

In response to the violation, GDS has internally tightened its administrative oversight. Now, Eghan and Director of Innovation and Technology Tim Lyons are updating reporting mechanisms, educating families on their traffic obligations and making sure the school decreases enrollment to ensure that GDS is in compliance

with the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA), the independent body that approved the unified campus. Lyons was selected because of his background in real estate.

The ANC has passed a resolution stating that GDS has violated its zoning order and MOU and authorizing commissioners to file with the BZA for legal recourse if the two bodies don't come to an agreement. But the final consequences for the school have yet to be determined.

Bender said that his and Shaw's relationship has been "excellent, cordial" and trusting, but that "trust has been broken in a really kind of severe way," he said.

"We made a mistake," Shaw said. "We're a human institution that made an administrative mistake during extraordinary circumstances. And that, over time, I fully expect that the school will have a great relationship with Tenleytown."



Photo of a morning drop-off line at the lower/middle school. Photo by Sawyer Thompson.

Nine Students Showcase Math Skills in School's First Integration Bee

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up to the quarterfinals.

To announce the contestants, the Bee's organizers sent an email to the high school with a link to a video entitled "The Bee Is Buzzing." Administrators promptly removed the email from students' inboxes, objecting to profanity in the song that the video played.

The quarterfinal match was where the biggest upset of the Integration Bee occurred, with Johnson beating math team

captain Ashok Tate, the first seed in the Bee. According to the Bee's organizers, in the "March Mathness" bracket that students and faculty were invited to fill out, Tate was most often ranked first to be the "Grand Integrator."

When given the first integral in his semi-final match against junior Zach Kovner, junior Max Froomkin wrote an incorrect answer. Kovner won the round, and in the second round, he presented his answer just before Froomkin. The

officials ruled that Kovner's answer was correct, moving him to the finals.

During the final match between Kovner and Xia, Froomkin pointed out to Alfonso-Frank that he believed Kovner's answer to the second integral of the semi-final match was incorrect. Alfonso-Frank said in an interview with the *Bit* that it is "unfortunate" there was a disagreement. As the officials did not keep track of participants' responses, "we have no way of knowing that there was a mistake," Alfonso-Frank said. Froomkin declined to comment on the concerns he raised to Alfonso-Frank.

In the final match, Xia and Kovner were given 4:30 to complete the first integral. With 1:30 left, Kovner circled an incorrect answer, meaning that Xia had the rest of the time to finish the problem, and Kovner was not allowed to make a second attempt at the integral. Xia circled his answer with three seconds left on the clock, but it was also incorrect.

On the second integral, neither Xia nor Kovner was able to answer in the allotted time,

so they went to a third integral. Kovner solved the third integral with 1:53 left. His answer was correct, and he took a 1-0 lead. Kovner also completed the fourth integral, and he was crowned the "Grand Integrator."

After the competition, the announcers held a trophy ceremony where they announced that nobody had a perfect bracket but the closest bracket was by junior Abel Elias. Elias was not present to claim his prize of a donut, so the prize was awarded to the next best bracket, which belonged to Kovner.

The overwhelming sense after the competition was that it was a success. "It went so much better than we could even imagine," said senior Asha Adiga-Biro, who worked with Alfonso-Frank and Wolin to produce the Bee. "It was great to see how committed Ethan and Ollie were to it and how many people came to watch," she said.

Alfonso-Frank shared Adiga-Biro's sentiment. "My favorite part was seeing the crowd—the support we had," Alfonso-Frank said, mentioning that there was "tons of support" from competitors' friends

and families.

"It was great that everyone was able to make math into such an exciting thing for so many people," Tate said.

Alfonso-Frank said he planned to hold the Bee again next year, and it would be bigger and better. When asked if he would make changes to the competition, Alfonso-Frank responded, "I guess you'll have to wait and see. It will be exciting."

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Photo by Nick von Hindenburg.

FEATURES

ChatGPT Report Card Comments Upset Some Parents and Students

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Bit that he hopes any teacher using ChatGPT is “using it in an attempt to better represent their sense of who a kid is as opposed to falsely pretending that they know the kid.”

Five of the students interviewed by the *Bit* said they thought that comments were useful because they provided personalized feedback.

“Comments on report cards are important for me because it shows that there are actual connections between me and my teacher,” senior Percival Liu said.

Teachers write comments for every student they teach. Comments appear on semester and final report cards and are visible to parents and students.

Sophomore Tyler Smallwood said that he would be unhappy if his report card comments were written by ChatGPT. He said that teachers “spend a lot of time telling us not to plagiarize and not to use any of these tools to help us.” He added that he thought it would be “hypocritical” for teachers to use ChatGPT.

Senior Jacqueline Metzger said that teachers not telling

students about using the AI program for comments is similar to students plagiarizing their assignments. “It’s freaky and a little bit of a betrayal of trust when teachers go and do that,” she said. “If teachers don’t tell us they are using it, it’s the exact same thing they’re telling us not to do.”

Math Department Chair Lee Goldman said there is a difference between students using ChatGPT for essays and teachers using it for report card comments because the AI might prevent students from learning writing skills, while teachers have already developed those skills.

Senior Christian Freeman said that he was in favor of ChatGPT being used in a variety of ways, including to help teachers write comments. “I don’t think that anything that teachers write would be original anyway,” he said. He added that he thought it was difficult for teachers to find new feedback to write when they teach dozens of students.

“I assume that even before ChatGPT, teachers were pasting standard comments about participation through all of their comments,” Suann Song, the parent

of a GDS junior, said. She added that as long as teachers personalized the comments they generated from ChatGPT, she was okay with the use of the program.

Ikenberry noted that, overall, “comments are very formulaic, so I can see how it would be pretty easy for the AI to write something.”

According to Goldman, teachers write comments by looking at a student’s grades and taking into consideration notes teachers have taken about the student.

ChatGPT is an AI chatbot that has garnered attention from students, teachers and the administration since its release on Nov. 30, 2022. According to OpenAI, the company that built ChatGPT, the program is “trained to follow an instruction in a prompt and provide a detailed response.”

To use the program, users enter prompts, and the AI program responds with multi-paragraph explanations. For comments, teachers could input information about a given student, such as his or her grades, written assignments and personal feedback, and have the AI program produce

a response.

Metzger told the *Bit* that she had “mixed feelings” about ChatGPT. She thought the AI program did not produce high-quality writing, so comments produced by it would not meet the same standards as comments written by teachers.

“I feel like comments are meant to be personalized,” sophomore Alessandro Alfandari said.

Alfandari said comments written by AI would not be as personal. Alfandari said that he would prefer to have comments written by teachers.

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Goldman said that, in comments, teachers “want to write the things that are supporting the grade and any suggestions you have for that student moving forward.”

She added that there is an ongoing debate among faculty about whether comments should be

written for the students or the parents. “It’s sort of this dual purpose of writing to the parent and to the student,” she said.

Bashir added that while each department has its own process for writing student comments, administrators provide guidelines for teachers.

Bashir said that these guidelines focus on how to effectively communicate constructive feedback to students. “It’s my hope that we continue to bolster those guidelines so that each department gives a clear sense of what should be covered in a comment,” he said.

Guidelines are presented annually at a faculty meeting, and teachers provide input on policies for the year’s report card comments.

Goldman said that she was focused on looking at how teachers’ comments help their students “move forward” and improve in the future. She also said that she did not think she would be able to tell if teachers were using ChatGPT to write comments.

Black Student Union Hosts First Post-Pandemic Go-Go Dance

BY ELIANA GREEN

On Friday, March 3, GDS’ Black Student Union (BSU) hosted its first post-pandemic go-go dance that was open to other schools and featured a live band. The dance lasted from 8:30 to 11 p.m. and hosted five other D.C.-area schools: Sidwell, Maret, Bullis, Jackson-Reed and St. John’s.

Backyard Band, a widely known local go-go band that plays covers of popular songs, performed at the go-go. Leading up to the band’s performance beginning at 9:15 p.m., the BSU played pre-recorded popular songs. About 275 tickets were sold for this year’s go-go by the BSUs at GDS and other schools.

Last May, the go-go was only open to GDS students and had COVID precautions and a DJ instead of a live band. The last time GDS hosted a traditional go-go dance was in the spring of 2019.

BSU co-head senior Dionne Harris said she had heard stories about GDS’ previous go-gos when she started high school. “I heard that the go-gos and mixers were super fun,” she said “We kind of wanted to live up to that, if not better.”

Members of the BSU sold tickets in the Internet Cafe to GDS students throughout February. Harris said the initial plan was to have 300 tickets available to GDS students and 100 tickets available to students from other schools.

BSU co-head senior Drew Cowan attributed the difficulty of selling tickets to GDS students to a lack of interest from underclassmen. “A lot of freshmen and sophomores didn’t come because they didn’t really know what it was,” he said. Cowan added that students may have been disappointed by last year’s smaller-scale go-go.

Maret junior Mya Stuckey said she heard about the go-go through her school’s BSU. She said she grew up listening to go-go music but had never experienced it live. Stuckey added that she thought hosting a go-go band was a great way to educate D.C.-area students about D.C. history and culture.

Bullis freshman Carter Mitchell said he learned about

the dance from Instagram and saw the go-go as a way to embrace his culture. “As an African American, I feel it’s a part of my history, and I like to be able to experience that.” Mitchell had never heard go-go music before and appreciated the opportunity to learn about and enjoy it.

Cowan said that the hardest part about organizing the go-go was rebuilding momentum that had been lost due to the pandemic. “We were really trying to rebuild from previous years, and that was the hardest part,” Cowan said.

When attendees arrived at the go-go, security guards scanned them with hand-held metal detectors. High School Director of Security Nick Prout

said that the security measures were strict because some attendees were from outside the GDS community. “We don’t know what someone may bring into the school,” he said.

St. Albans sophomore Christian Weaver said he preferred the pre-recorded songs played between sets of live go-go music. “I enjoyed the music that the go-go was playing, too, but if it was a little bit less loud I would’ve probably liked it more,” he said.

Students began to leave during the band’s second set, and by the time the band had finished playing, few attendees remained on the dance floor. Killy expressed disappointment that at recent dances attendees had been leaving early. “A lot of students are putting a lot of time into

organizing these things,” he said. “I think we set the bar pretty high,” Harris said.

She said she hoped that future BSUs would continue to raise that bar. Harris added that, going forward, she hoped that the BSU would invite more schools. Harris said that students from other schools contacted her through social media and asked why they were not invited.

Killy said the quality of each year’s go-go depends on the students who put it together. He hopes that next year’s BSU organizers “will be excited and put a lot of energy and organization into making it even bigger and better than this year.”



Students at the go-go. Photo by Olivia Brown.

FEATURES

Longtime Science Teacher Bill Wallace to Retire

BY LEO NYBERG

After 25 years of teaching at GDS, high school science teacher Bill Wallace will retire at the end of the 2022-23 school year.

Currently, Wallace teaches Neuroscience, Physiology and Research Methods in Biology. Before GDS stopped offering AP science classes in 2018, he taught AP Biology. He also coached men's soccer at GDS from 2000 to 2005.

In 2017, Wallace and Bobby Asher, the current Director of Student Life and Wellness, worked together to design the neuroscience class, a course that is popular among juniors and seniors. "It was something we talked about doing for years," Asher said.

Wallace described the neuroscience course as a "unique" class. "There is no other course in the country, and I have searched, that teaches neuroscience the way that we do," he said. He added that what makes the class unique is the curriculum's combination of biology and neuroscience.

Asher said that Wallace writes the textbook for the class and has added more chapters as recently as the summer of 2022.

Wallace is "such a nice guy," said senior Jacqueline Metzger, who is taking neuroscience this year. "He's funny, he's definitely a little quirky, but all the best GDS teachers are," she added. "He has a way of making people feel at ease and a way of making people feel included. He just has a genuine love of teaching and it shines through in class."

In past years, Wallace focused on one specific disease for his physiology class to study, such as pediatric cancer and diabetes. This year, however, Wallace is covering several different diseases such as kuru disease and sickle cell anemia. "He's calling it his all-star year, since it's his last year," junior Sala Higgins, a student in Wallace's physiology class, said.

Wallace told the *Bit* that the freedom GDS grants teachers was one of the most enjoyable elements of his time at the school. "GDS has allowed me to innovate," he said. He added that he created the three courses he teaches.

"His style of teaching is really good," Higgins said. "He's also so knowledgeable about what he is teaching," she added.

Before coming to GDS in 1998, Wallace was an assistant professor in the psychiatry department at the Fishberg Center for Neuroscience at Mount Sinai in New York from 1986 to 1992. From 1992 to 1998, he ran a lab at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), where he studied Alzheimers.

He added that his research experience at the NIH carried over particularly well to his Research Methods in Biology course, a class that fosters the scientific process and questioning, Wallace said. "The best way to get kids to think scientifically is to present kids with scientific problems, and that's the basis of this course," he added.

Wallace said that he disliked teaching AP science classes

because "it's taught like a survey course: lots of topics, not much detail and not a lot of the kids doing science." The rigid AP tests were another concern that Wallace raised to Head of School Russell Shaw and others in the administration. "The AP test was just regurgitating back information, but not a whole lot of what do you do with that information."

Despite his gratitude for the freedom GDS gave him, Wallace expressed some frustrations in an interview with the *Bit*. "We don't do enough for kids who want to do science outside the classroom," he said. As a result, Wallace has been mentoring students over the summer outside GDS.

"I would love to see a program where a 9th grader can come in and say, 'I'm interested in research,' and then for four years follow this program so for their junior and senior years they can actually do an investigation," he explained.

"The number of research opportunities he's created for kids in the summers is amazing," Asher said.

One student who benefited from Wallace's mentorship is Emily Scarrow '21. She started researching with Wallace in 2019, the summer of her sophomore year. Scarrow continued her research project with an independent study her junior year, under Wallace's continued mentorship. This summer, she is working at the NIH with the Deputy Chief of Cancer Research, an opportunity she credits to Wallace.

Wallace's departure will lead to some changes in the science department's curricula and course offerings. Science Department Chair Nina Butler-Roberts admires Wallace's love for his courses. "The beautiful thing is that those courses were built out of Bill's love for those subjects, so I don't think anybody could teach it the way Bill does," she said.

She expects some change in course availability. The Research in Biology class is listed as "not offered" in the 2023-24 High School Course of Study, but the neuroscience and physiology courses are still being offered. Asher said that it is uncertain whether or not another teacher will be hired to teach neuroscience with him.

Butler-Roberts said that if a lot of students register for neuroscience or physiology, then a new teacher may be hired to teach these courses. She added that despite

Wallace's retirement, she hopes to reach out to him informally and consult with him about the future of the science department.

After retiring, Wallace and his wife, who is part Swedish and is also retiring, plan to live in Sweden for the summer and visit family in South Africa. He plans to eventually start a D.C. Chapter of the National Science Teacher Association once he returns from Sweden. He also plans to serve as Head of Alumni for D.C. winners of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Teaching, a prestigious award in which the president of the United States recognizes up to 108 science and mathematics teachers a year. He won the award in 2011.

"I hope people realize Bill is really an institution here," Asher said. "He gives a lot of his heart and his everything to the kids."



Science teacher Bill Wallace. Photo by Hercules Zhang.

GDS to Put History Book on Sale After Alumni Call for Access

BY ETHAN WOLIN

Members of the GDS alumni Facebook group raised objections this month to the limited distribution of a school history book produced by former associate head of school Kevin Barr. The volume, created to commemorate the school's 75th anniversary in 2020, had reached few readers since a small run of copies was printed last year.

"Ludicrous that the book is not widely available," one alumnus commented. "Should be required reading for every student, administrator and teacher." Another responded, "The idea that it would be used as a gift to big donors was particularly galling." In one exchange, alumni discussed intentions to "rabble rouse" so administrators might make the book accessible to them.

The discussion, set off by a Jan. 19 post sharing an *Augur Bit* profile of Barr that had been published online the week before, involved comments by over two dozen members of the private Facebook group, screenshots of which were shared with the *Bit*. Many of the commenters voiced a desire for copies of the little-seen book, along with puzzlement about the school's approach to it. Two alumni told the *Bit* they emailed Head of School Russell Shaw with their concerns.

Within a week of the Facebook conversation, administrators decided to make the book, 75 Years

at Georgetown Day School, available for sale online, members of the advancement office said. An online order form is expected to open in the coming days, Correy Hudson, the director of alumni engagement, told the *Bit*.

Alison Grasheim, the director of communications and interim director of external affairs, said the book will be priced at \$30, plus \$5 for shipping, and will be advertised in upcoming email newsletters to alumni, parents, teachers and high school students.

Barr devotes about one-third of the 160-page volume to the story of several of GDS' founding figures. Then come 26 essays contributed by former students and faculty members about their memories from GDS. Barr retired in 2020 after working at the school for 43 years but returned last spring semester to serve in a part-time role focused mainly on hiring.

In interviews with the *Bit* this fall and winter, Barr cast the 75th anniversary book as a tool that community members, and especially teachers, should use to better acquaint themselves with GDS' past—a crucial way, in his view, to avoid losing sight of its distinctive educational philosophy amid a spate of changes for the institution.

But last year, after the pandemic had shattered broader plans to celebrate the 75th anniversary, administrators ordered only about

200 hardback copies of the book. They did not announce the completed book to almost any students, parents or teachers, according to Grasheim, instead using it as a gift for donors and special visitors. Hudson told the *Bit* that administrators never planned to keep the book out of sight but, amid the pandemic's disruptions, did not pay attention to publicizing it.

"We're happy to acknowledge that maybe we could have promoted it better," Hudson said in an interview. "We accept that criticism, and we're definitely looking to correct that." Alison Grasheim, the director of communications and interim director of external affairs, said she was glad to see alumni more interested in the book than she had previously encountered or anticipated.

Hudson said that the book was promoted during the alumni reunion weekend last April. Grasheim said that, in her recollection, the book was only publicized at the check-in table for a brunch, on the Sunday of alumni weekend, honoring Gladys Stern, the former director (the position now called the head of school), who had died in November 2021.

The copies had not been delivered before the brunch as Grasheim had hoped, she said, but the approximately 160 attendees were able to pre-order the book online as they entered. Not one did so. The school

closed the order form down after the event, Hudson said. Administrators made no further effort to broadly market the book.

Neither Grasheim nor Hudson knew how many of the original 200 copies remain in the advancement office's hands. The office has begun to look into options for printing more copies if necessary, Grasheim said, including the possibility of a paperback format.

When emailed for comment on the plans to sell and market the book, Barr only suggested that releasing a free digital version could help disseminate the book's contents.

"It's a testament to just how much GDS is a part of who we are and the impact it had on all of us that we've had this vibrant conversation about the book," Nick Jacobs '90 wrote in a comment on Facebook, following over 50 other comments on the post. "Seems to me this in itself demonstrates why the book needs to be shared with everyone. It's not just the origin story of the school but is [sic] part of each of our own stories too."

Longtime history teacher Sue Ikenberry, who initially posted the Barr profile to the Facebook group, was struck by the uncommonly large number of responses the post received. Ikenberry added that the 75th anniversary book, which she has yet to read but hopes to get, might be useful for incorporating

the story of GDS' early years into the freshman history course's study of D.C. history.

A handful of students have looked at 75 Years at Georgetown Day School in the library or checked it out since the profile's publication, according to the librarian, Rhona Campbell. The library received its two copies of the book after Campbell learned in an interview with the *Bit* that the book was printed.

Gabriela Tobal '87, who contributed to the Facebook conversation and also emailed Shaw about the book, said that its limited distribution seemed at odds with GDS' egalitarian values. "I want GDS to be like that fair, communal place that I remember," Tobal said in an interview. "I feel that Kevin's efforts should be honored in a way that is communal."

Tobal, the vice president for business development at a biotech company in California, who was in Barr's English class her freshman year, now intends to buy a copy of the book he assembled.

In a response to Tobal's email that she shared with the *Bit*, Shaw wrote, "I'm so grateful to you for reaching out, for asking questions and, in true GDS tradition, for rabble-raising. It is most welcome." Shaw invited Tobal to visit campus if she comes to D.C., and to let him know so he can welcome her.

OPINIONS

An Honors English Class Won't Help Our English Education

BY NATALIA FREEDMAN

A month ago, when I received an email listing the course offerings for the 2023-2024 school year, I was thrilled by the vast number of options. As a rising junior, I have a new freedom when choosing my classes. Yet as I narrowed down my schedule for the upcoming year, I noticed that there were no advanced, grade-specific English courses. In the core English curriculum required for all high school students, there isn't an option to enroll in an extended- or honors-level class like there is in other subjects.

When I first decided to write this article, with only one level of required English and echoing concerns voiced by my friends, I believed the English department should have offered more levels. However, after speaking to students and teachers, my perspective shifted; I realized that not only should GDS not add English levels, but doing so would work against our English education.

Katherine Dunbar, the chair of the English department, believes that having one level of a required, grade-specific English course is an integral part of the high school curriculum. The idea of learning with a randomized group of students is beneficial due to the "different voices, perspectives and levels of engagement," Dunbar said.

In an honors-level English course, having students who are primarily focused on English

would limit the variety of voices in the classroom, and breaking students into different English levels would limit diversity. STEM-focused students, who may not take an honors-level English course, might bring a more analytical approach to class, while English-focused students might bring a more creative approach. Because English is a discussion-based class in which many different perspectives are shared, and students can learn from each other, having a variety of learners is crucial.

English is an inclusive subject. Everyone can participate and learn from each other through class discussions and exchanging their own experiences and ideas. This collaboration, which benefits from a diverse range of viewpoints, is unique to courses in the English and history departments. In math classes that have clear distinctions in the levels of understanding they require, students of different levels benefit from individualized instruction.

Originally, I thought that the number of courses offered by GDS wasn't enough for students to demonstrate and explore their passion for English. For a STEM-oriented student, it's easy to fill up your schedule with UL and Honors classes. The number of STEM courses makes it possible for colleges to understand the specific areas of science you are interested in. For an English-oriented student, it is more difficult to display your interests.

However, Dunbar noted in our interview that there are many opportunities for motivated students to further their learning through the support of their teachers and independent studies. "We can take you as far as you can go," Dunbar said. I agree, and I have experienced this openness in the English department myself. Last year, when my English class discussed Homer's the Odyssey, I was curious about the book. I approached my teacher after class to learn more, and we discussed the Odyssey in detail, with my teacher recommending an author whom I could read outside of class to further my understanding of the text.

The individualized attention that students receive, and the varied ability to further explore a text inside and outside of class, make English unique.

When writing an English paper, there is no limit to what you can accomplish. A student can choose areas of a text they are intrigued by and explore them without the "cap," as Dunbar put it, that exists in math or science, where knowing all of the answers will get you a perfect score.

Additionally, students already feel overwhelming pressure to take rigorous classes.

I have personally felt pressure to choose a higher-level math course next school year, and adding Honors English to GDS' course offerings would only add stress. As in other subjects that offer multiple levels, students might feel obligated to take Honors English to prove their academic abilities to colleges, without necessarily being excited to learn at a higher level.

At first glance, it's easy to miss why GDS has only one level of English. It is not a lack of attention paid to English students, but rather a dedication to delivering a diverse and limitless learning environment.

ENGLISH

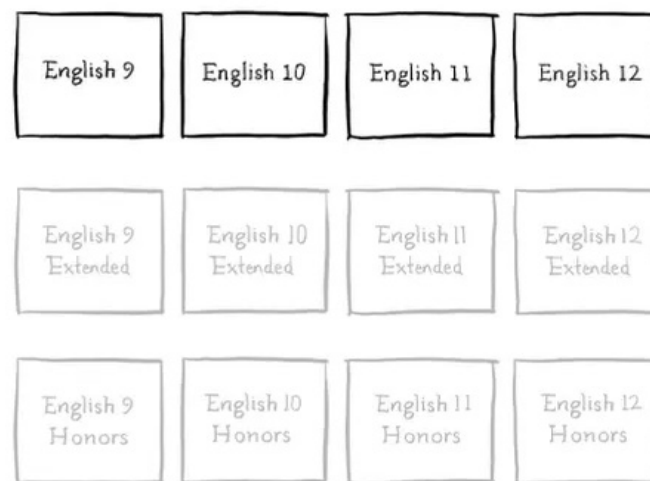


Illustration by Phoenix Zhang.

We Need to Talk About the Earthquake in Turkey and Syria

BY ELENA VALDEZ

I've always admired how much GDS students cared about social justice issues such as Ukraine and Afghan refugees, but when a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Turkey and Syria on Feb. 6, the GDS community seemed to turn a blind eye.

The earthquake displaced over 2.4 million people, destroyed over 200,000 buildings, caused \$55 to \$90 billion in property damage and killed over 50,000 people, according to Reuters. The damage caused in both countries is irreparable. Given the horrific circumstances, it's shocking that students haven't posted about it as much as the events in Ukraine, for example, on social media and are not engaging in conversation about the event. The GDS community should work to actively educate ourselves about this humanitarian crisis.

Students interviewed by the Bit recall seeing the event on the news when the earthquake immediately happened but did not see much follow-up. Junior Claire Simon said she has "heard almost nothing in mainstream U.S. media."

Senior Lydia Kabiri said that in American news outlets, it is "hard to connect with less

Christian, westernized beliefs" as there is a lack of attention to Middle Eastern issues in U.S. news. Kabiri brought up a fascinating point; we, as Americans, are more comfortable with uplifting stories that resonate more with our identities as Americans than we do with stories that are foreign to our ways of life. That is why it is our responsibility, not only as members of our school community but also as global citizens, to actively ensure that we are educating ourselves and others about issues that may not necessarily be as familiar as events in America.

In an American Conservative article, Brad Hoff wrote that United Nations (U.N.) humanitarian officials, charity organizations, and church leaders are urging the immediate lifting of sanctions and argue that U.S.-led sanctions punish the Syrian people. The earthquake is relevant to the United States because while the U.S. sanctions do not directly restrict humanitarian aid, they have impeded the ability of Syria to receive the necessary aid to combat the earthquake, Aya Batrawy wrote in an NPR article.

Furthermore, the Go Fund Me website states that in order to comply with international sanctions, all donations given to Syria must be carefully reviewed by

the Go Fund Me Trust and Safety team.

Following the earthquake in Turkey, the biggest in Turkey's recorded history, the country received \$1 billion dollars in aid from the U.N., and while that has helped tremendously with the relief efforts, there are still millions of people living in dire situations.

Syria, one of the oldest civilizations in the world, has had a very different experience. Syria only received \$397 million from

the U.N.

According to an NBC article, only 5% of affected areas in Syria have been searched, whereas almost 80% of the rubble in Turkey has been searched. Syria simply does not have the funds or equipment to search impacted areas and rescue civilians.

So how should GDS students educate themselves on events like this earthquake? We can read more about it in the news, engage in conversation, post more

about it on social media and find donation drives near us. Even though the earthquake has occurred so far from the country we call home, we have a responsibility as global citizens to learn about issues in the Middle East and help those who are struggling around the world. As members of our school community, we have the power to make the change that we seek in the world, even globally.



Digital Illustration by Nava Mach.

OPINIONS

What Volunteering on the Polish-Ukrainian Border Taught Us About Unity

BY AVA BLUM AND CLIO BLUM

Over the summer, our family traveled to the border between Poland and Ukraine to assist refugees fleeing the Russian-Ukrainian war. With no plan except a desire to help in any way we could, we located a nearby train station and ventured in, looking for opportunities where we could help.

The station was often the very first destination for Ukrainian refugees who had just escaped the war. By night, incoming trains released floods of Ukrainians arriving, often for the first time, to Poland. For hours each day, we saw hundreds waiting for their train to arrive, enduring the hot summer sun, unsure of where they'd go, when they'd leave Poland or what their futures held.

There, we met some English-speaking volunteers who brought us to a small booth on a deserted train platform. The booth was run by a grassroots organization named *Prze_Misio* and served as a pitstop, providing free food rations, drinks and general supplies to refugees between stops on their harrowing journeys.

Soon, we were behind the booth, helping fellow volunteers package snack bags, helping migrants lift their luggage onto arriving trains and playing with children to distract them from the exhaustion and uncertainty.

Two weeks later, we moved deeper into Poland to volunteer at the Jewish Community Center in Krakow. As we packaged food rations for war refugees,



A stand with supplies for Ukrainian refugees. Photo by Clio Blum.

we met Ania, a 15-year-old girl who had fled the Russian invasion of her hometown of Irpin just outside the capital of Kyiv.

Although our lives were unimaginably different, we were still connected by our teenage experiences. We discussed our ambitions for school and wondered what we'd be when we grew up. Regardless of our different cultures and experiences, at the end of the day, we found unity gathered around an assembly line belting Lizzo while stuffing lentils

into plastic bags.

Despite how quickly we hit it off, we could have never imagined the horrors Ania had seen. "You can find many butterflies in the field near my old house," she said, showing us photos that looked like they were straight out of a Disney movie.

"But you can't go there anymore—there are many bombs, and you could die."

Irpin was one of the most heavily targeted areas at the beginning of the war, and Ania told us that her mother and grandmother were forced to flee their home as Russian bombs neared her village. She had to leave her dog with neighbors who stayed, and her father was drafted to serve in the war. She said that many of her classmates fled, too, but she didn't know where all of them ended up. The life that she had known was gone.

Ania's new normal was our nightmare. Yet the fear we felt listening to Ania's stories also reminded us of the power of our connection. Our conversations with Ania allowed us to empathize with the Ukrainian people affected by the war. We realized the invaders who would mercilessly kill children in towns like Ania's failed to recognize the human connection they shared with their victims. They only saw differences.

Despite how divergent our life experiences were, our bond with Ania was proof that finding common ground can help us overcome our differences.

Though our experience occurred overseas, the lesson applies back at home, too. Congress is gridlocked due to party polarization, preventing lawmakers from

passing desperately needed legislation. The divisions in our government reflect our nation as a whole—like Putin convinced his supporters to see Ukrainians as enemies, we Americans are letting rhetoric pit us against each other.

Even at GDS, we need to remember our connections are stronger than our differences. We live in a dominantly liberal environment often dubbed "the GDS bubble." Often, we receive opinions that oppose our own with hostility. While our culture celebrates questioning and challenging people and ideas, we should

make sure to do so in a way that respects others and never dehumanizes them, no matter how much we disagree. Because it is dehumanizing people, and viewing them as our enemies, that leads to war.

In a time when war could mean nuclear annihilation, the ability to resolve issues peacefully is more vital than ever. At GDS, we're taught to be advocates and changemakers. It's up to us to apply our valuable perspectives in the real world, remembering that what brings us together is stronger than what tears us apart.

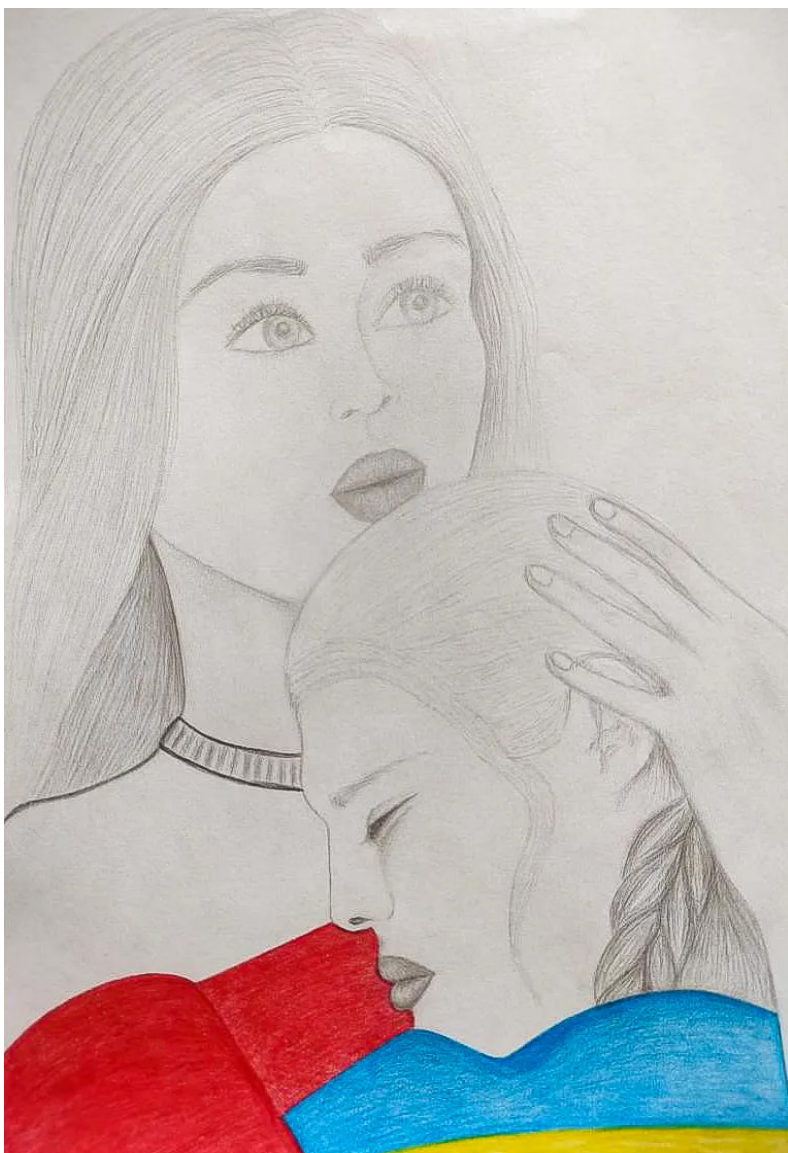


Illustration by Ania Maryniako.



A train station in Pzemyzl, Poland. Photo by Ava Blum.

SPORTS

Men Place 5th, Women Place 9th in Track Championship

BY FINLEY MEYER

After a successful cross country season, GDS runners completed a winter track season by competing in the District of Columbia State Athletic Association (DCSAA) championships.

The Championships took place on Tuesday, Feb. 14 and were held at the PG Sportsplex in Prince George's County, Maryland. Twenty-six schools competed, including GDS. The men's varsity team placed fifth out of 17 teams, and the women's varsity team placed ninth out of 14 teams.

"I liked the community," freshman Alexandra Solomon, a first-time winter track runner, said. "I like that I get to know the upperclassmen, and it's nice to get to know everyone at meets."

"People are very invested this winter," high school indoor track head coach Anthony Belber said. "Everyone on that team is taking advantage of their opportunities to train hard and to pursue their goals. There has not been a lot of coaxing or encouragement needed from the coaches. The athletes seem very driven from within, which is exciting," he said.

At the DCSAA Championships, GDS placed fourth in both the men's varsity 4×200-meter relay and the men's varsity 4×400-meter relay race. GDS also placed second in the men's varsity 4×800-meter relay race.

According to Belber, at an average winter track meet there are about 14 events. The events are very similar to those of the spring track season, but because winter track takes place indoors, some events are different. For example, the 500-meter dash is specific to the winter track.

The DCSAA Championships had many more events than an average winter track meet. There were 16 men's events and 16 women's events. GDS competed in all events except the women's shot put and women's triple jump. No female athletes were interested in participating in those events.

Senior Nate Bazemore placed third in the men's varsity 800-meter race and senior Christian Freeman placed eighth in the men's varsity 55-meter hurdles. Senior Luke Cohen also placed fifth in the men's varsity 1600-meter and fourth in the men's varsity 3200-meter races.

"I think we definitely have a really strong senior class right now," Cohen, who is a team captain, said. "I think it's really fun to have been together for four years and through COVID and everything. It's made us really close," he added.

Belber noted that every member of the cross country team trains similarly and runs the same races, which unites the team. He said that because the winter track team has so many different kinds of runners and practices for different events,

it is harder for runners to feel connected to each other.

"The women's team had a lot of new runners who came through and worked really hard this season," junior Amelia Oscherwitz said. "Winter isn't really a season we train to win; it's more to set a foundation for the spring. I think we did a really good job."

Four-year winter track runner and senior Milo Borek shared Oscherwitz's sentiment, adding that the season was a success. "We did really well

from start to finish, and I think everyone produced a lot this season and was able to run some of their best races," he said.

"I think the relays were really fun to watch," freshman and first-time winter track runner Zoe Maas said. "It was really cool to see the teamwork in play."

When the seniors graduate, team captain and four-year runner Pilar Holder believes that the team will be in good hands. "We have a lot of underclassmen who are very eager to do really well," she said.



Winter track runners lining up to compete in a track meet. Photo by Kaiden J. Yu.

Winter Teams End Sports Saturday With Four Wins

BY SAM WOOD AND ZACH LUNDMAN

GDS' triannual Sports Saturday took place on Jan. 21, with events in men's wrestling and men's and women's basketball. All of the events ended in wins for GDS.

The GDS men's wrestling team kicked off winter Sports Saturday in commanding fashion, beating a short-handed St. Andrew's team by a score of 63-6. The GDS team was originally scheduled to play Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School, but they canceled the game at the last minute.

"Things went pretty well," head coach Grayson Shepperd '11 said. Shepperd was especially pleased with sophomore Tyler Smallwood's win. "That's his first match back from injury, and he looked really good," Shepperd added. "It's good to see he hasn't really missed a beat." Team captains senior William Edwards and junior Mario Imbroscio also picked up wins.

As the season moves past the halfway mark, GDS wrestling sets their sights on winning the Mid-Atlantic Conference (MAC) championship again. "We want to win the MAC again," Shepperd said. "We definitely have a good chance, but we definitely have our work to do," he said. The

team won the conference last year.

Edwards said he thinks the team will "do really well" in the MAC championships. "I think we should have at least four to five champions," he said. "We have a strong chance of winning it." He added that he thought Saint James Catholic School would be their toughest competition.

In the second event of the day, the junior varsity men's basketball team won its game against St. Anselm's Abbey School with a score of 41-39. GDS was losing 39-38 with 1:30 left in the fourth quarter until freshman Benjamin Gold scored a layup to put GDS up 40-39. The GDS defense was able to fend off St. Anselm's offense, and the game ended with a score of 41-39.

"Even though we played bad, we found a way to win," head coach Cliff Coates said about the team's performance.

Team captain Julien McGinniss played an essential role in the team's victory, scoring 11 points and ending up as the highest scorer of the game. "I think I played all right, but I could have played better," McGinniss said. "This was a tough game for us but I'm glad we still won." The team looks forward to its next

game against Potomac School on Tuesday.

The varsity women's basketball team managed to defeat D.C. International School (DCI) in a tightly contested match ending with a final score of 48-39. GDS started off slow, with the first quarter ending with them down 10-5 due to DCI's defense. They managed to close the gap, and the first half ended with a score of 20-19 favoring DCI. The GDS offense improved in the third quarter and took the lead 33-29.

GDS lost the lead with three minutes left, going down 36-35. Freshman Cai Roberson regained the lead, making a two-point shot to put GDS up 37-36. Layups and free throws by junior Madisyn Moore-Nicholson and freshman Sabine Hletko Wood allowed GDS to maintain their lead over DCI and take the victory.

Head coach Pam Stanfield said that she was happy with the team's victory, but she added that she wants the team to work on rebounding because "we're giving up too many offensive rebounds." The team's next game is on Tuesday against Holton-Arms.

The final game of Sports Saturday was the GDS men's

varsity basketball team against St. Anselm's and ended in a 59-42 victory for GDS. During the first half, GDS had a slim lead over their opponents, leading 26-19. But in the second half, the GDS offense scored 20 points in the third quarter and 13 points in the fourth quarter. St. Anselm's was only able to score nine points in the 3rd quarter and 14 points in the fourth quarter. Junior Toby Viorst

was the highest scorer for GDS, scoring 15 points.

Junior Alion Glover went down from a head injury in the last minutes of the fourth quarter and was lying on the floor for approximately five minutes. An ambulance was called and Glover was able to get up and sit down by the court while EMTs observed him. Athletic Director David Gillespie declined to comment at the time.



Photo by Kaiden J. Yu.

SPORTS

Greg Dallinger: Science Teacher by Day, Scoreboard Operator by Night

BY SAM WOOD

High school science teacher Greg Dallinger grew up going to basketball games with his father, a chemistry professor at Wabash University who kept track of the basketball team's stats for over 30 years. Sitting on the bench next to his father, Dallinger acquired his love of basketball.

Dallinger has followed in his father's shoes by running the scoreboard for all of GDS' home games for the past seven years he has worked at the school. "I like the game just being run well," he said.

Dallinger started running scoreboards at Wabash University, where he taught chemistry alongside his father. At Wabash, Dallinger occasionally helped with recording stats, such as the number of assists of each player, radio broadcasting and keeping track of score.

When scorekeeping at Wabash University basketball games, Dallinger noted that there were different people who kept track of the game stats. "At most basketball games, you have a shot clock operator, game clock operator and scoreboard operator," in addition to the team managers, he said. At Wabash, he had the opportunity to

work in all three roles during different games.

At GDS, Dallinger runs all three jobs at once, which he said can be difficult. "There can be a lot that happens," he said. As Dallinger keeps track of time and score, team managers from GDS log other stats and records next to Dallinger. "Sometimes I don't see if a ball hit the basket," he said. "The scorebooks on either side of me can say yes or no."

"He takes his job so seriously, but you can tell how much fun he's having in the process," said senior Lila Boyle, team manager of and statistician for the women's varsity basketball team.

Dallinger said that the most important part of his job is ensuring the games run efficiently and professionally. "It means a lot to me when other coaches and referees come in and say, 'We're at GDS. This game is going to be run well,'" he said. Dallinger added that he refrains from celebrating during games. "You cannot root for teams from the bench because you are an official administrator running the game," he said. "I love when we do well, but I cannot celebrate."

Dallinger started keeping the score at GDS when former athletic

director Kathy Hudson asked him to in 2016. Dallinger had to contemplate whether he could take the job, because it would be a "pretty big time commitment."

Dallinger also decided that if he was going to operate the scoreboard, he would do it for all teams—women's and men's junior varsity and varsity. Dallinger said he believes that "everyone deserves a well-run basketball game," and

he thinks that women's sports specifically often "get the short end of the stick."

In addition to loving basketball, Dallinger also loved to dance as a child. When he joined his high school dance team, Dallinger said he was the first male member of a dance collective in the state of Indiana, and he performed with the Indianapolis Ballet in three productions. Dallinger continued dancing

in college. While his team did not compete in any tournaments, Dallinger danced at halftime during the College of Wooster's basketball games.

As the spring sports season begins, Dallinger said he will enjoy a break from the time commitment of keeping the scoreboard for all of GDS' basketball games but will also miss the role. "I just love basketball," he said.



Photo by Ellie Kessler.

Four Junior and Senior Athletes Recruited to Compete in College

BY MOLLY KURTZER-ELLENBOGENBY

For many GDS students, applying to college is the same arduous process involving lots of essays, interviews, recommendations and waiting. However, a select few have had a unique experience. There are currently four Hoppers who were recruited to universities due to their outstanding performance in sports: seniors Pierson Cooper and Tatiana Nazlymov and juniors Clara Yu and Adriano Arioti.

Cooper will play baseball for Tufts University, Nazlymov will fence for Princeton University, Yu will play volleyball for Columbia University and Arioti will swim for Harvard University. For these students, the college process began the summer after their sophomore years, when schools were first allowed to contact prospective athletes.

These athletes' recruitments are part of a larger trend of increased athletic success for GDS. In addition to the state championship-winning volleyball team that Yu plays for, the varsity wrestling team recently won the MAC championship. In the fall, the

women's varsity cross country team won the ISL championship, and the men's varsity cross country team came in second place in the MAC championship. Women's varsity soccer also won the ISL championship for the A division, and GDS had ten athletes from the cross country and volleyball teams selected by the District of Columbia State Athletic Association for its all-state teams.

Senior Pierson Cooper committed to Tufts University in August 2022. After attending a number of sports camps hosted by college recruiters to showcase his talents, Cooper decided on Tufts. He liked the academics and location, and he said that Tufts' program is "very highly regarded," with a coach whom Cooper enjoyed speaking to.

Cooper added that he is making sure to use the remainder of his last year in high school to improve the skills he will need for college. "Learning to balance my baseball life and also my academic work will be a big thing," Cooper said.

Though he has missed some school days for tournaments, Cooper

said he has managed to keep up with high school and baseball by being communicative with his teachers, who have been understanding.

Senior Tatiana Nazlymov, who fences, committed to Princeton University at the beginning of her junior year, after a few months of communicating with coaches at Princeton. "I just knew I wanted to go to Princeton pretty early," Nazlymov said, explaining that she reached out to the Princeton coach, scheduled an interview, visited and was offered a verbal commitment.

Her verbal commitment meant that she still had to go through the formal application process but was guaranteed a spot in the class of 2027 if she met the academic requirements. "I had to get at least 1450 on the SAT and just get good grades," she said.

GDS does not have a fencing team, meaning that Nazlymov's training happened outside school. Nazlymov comes from a long line of fencers; her grandfather is Vladimir Nazlymov, a six-time Olympic medalist who played for the Soviet Union and a ten-time International Fencing

Federation World Champion. Her parents run Nazlymov Fencing Foundation, where she trains.

Nazlymov began fencing at the age of eight, and she said that while she did feel pressure to join the sport because of her family's connection to fencing, she has grown to love it. Nazlymov is currently 12th in the International Fencing Federation rankings for junior saber competitors and 47th out of all age groups. She said that she has missed a considerable amount of school to fence.

Nazlymov said she flew back and forth between D.C. and Europe last school year, missing what she estimated to be 90 classes and making up schoolwork when she returned home. This year, Nazlymov has been staying in Europe between competitions, most recently spending two weeks in Bulgaria. Additionally, she has competed in Africa and will compete in Asia.

Her upcoming tournaments in Europe and Asia are significant for Nazlymov, as her performance will determine if she will qualify for the United States fencing team at the Paris Olympics in 2024. "If I am top three or top four in the country by next year, then I will make the Olympics," she explained. As of Jan. 15, she was ranked fifth in women's saber fighting by USA Fencing, and she competed for the US in the 2022 World Fencing Championships, which took place in Egypt in July.

Junior Clara Yu's volleyball career began just five years ago, when she was 12 years old. After playing recreationally, Yu began to play competitively a couple of years ago, when she realized that she wanted to play in college. She attended multiple volleyball summer camps, began cementing her role on the school team and joined a travel team. This fall season, when the GDS women's volleyball team won the DCSAA state championship, Yu was selected as the DCSAA

girls volleyball player of the year.

Since June after her sophomore year, Yu has been contacted by about 15 schools. "It's just a lot of phone calls, emails and Zooms with the coaches," Yu said, to figure out what different programs offer.

After narrowing her list of colleges down to Harvard, Columbia, Emory and Fordham, she decided on Columbia in November. "It felt like the right fit," Yu said. She liked the coaches and the girls on the team, who "were just really nice and welcoming." Columbia "seemed like a place where I could see myself growing over the next four years," Yu said.

To Yu, finding a college that provided a high-quality education was a priority. When she was able to find a place where she could thrive both academically and on the volleyball team, it was "a dream come true."

Junior Adriano Arioti has been swimming competitively since he was seven years old. Earlier this year, Arioti verbally committed to swim for Harvard University. For Arioti, academics were always important. "My parents have been a big part of that process, making sure that I know that academics are the biggest priority," Arioti said.

This year, Arioti broke at least three school records: one individual record in the 50-meter freestyle event and two relays. Arioti broke the school's record for the 200-meter medley relay with juniors Curan Palmer and Joseph Stocker and senior John Yuan. He also broke the record for the 200-meter freestyle relay with Palmer, Yuan and sophomore Peter Kumar. Both Palmer and Kumar are on the Bit's staff. When speaking about the records, Arioti explained that though he could not remember the specific times, "we didn't just break the records. There were a bunch that we basically destroyed."



Junior Adriano Arioti competes in a meet with Bullis and Sidwell. Photo by Kaiden J. Yu.

ARTS

Professional Musicians Teach Students Through Performances

BY ALEXA GILLESPIE

For the eight years since jazz teacher Brad Linde came to GDS, he has invited dozens of experienced guest artists and bands to perform at lunch and to conduct masterclasses with jazz students during class time.

This school year, Linde has invited guest artists Sara Serpa, a vocalist and composer, and Allison Miller, a drummer, to perform for his students. Linde also organized a jazz festival, bringing in professional musicians to teach

workshops and judge live performances featuring GDS students and students from other schools.

The musicians are people Linde has met or performed with during his time as a musician outside GDS. “I have a lot of friends and colleagues that I know, and whenever I see them on tour, I invite them to come by,” he said. “They’re already on the road, their hotel is taken care of, their travel is taken care of and for a nominal fee they’ll come out and change the lives of my students.”

According to Linde, he

learned jazz from hearing guest artists who visited his college. “Students learn best from experiential learning,” he said. “And who has more experience than professional musicians?”

The lunchtime performances are open to all students, faculty and staff. “It’s not background music. It’s not music to shop for groceries,” Linde said. “I mean, it’s a high art that catches the attention. The performance is the point.”

This year, Serpa led a masterclass for jazz students and a

workshop at the Social Justice Teach-In Day, where she spoke about her business, which seeks to empower female and non-binary musicians through mentorships. During Serpa’s workshop, she showed a scene from a movie about the Portuguese occupation of Angola that she wrote the music for. Serpa explained that her compositions for the film were her way of acknowledging her family, which was forced to leave Angola.

Linde said he invited Serpa to show his students how to convey a message through their music. “We sometimes think of music as entertainment, and we don’t think of it as a vehicle for political action or artistic expression,” Linde explained.

In addition to Serpa, Miller, accompanied by five other musicians and four dancers, came for a workshop and lunchtime performance in February.

Freshman Alexandra Solomon thought it was helpful to see dancers and musicians perform together. “It was cool to see how they all played off of each other,” Solomon said.

“It gives a whole perspective of learning about drums and musical theory,” freshman Lomahn Sun said. “Professionals show us how we can do that.”

The artist masterclasses can take many forms. Often, the visiting band performs before students ask questions in an open forum about the artists’ creative processes, how they write or

arrange songs and how they get gigs. Sometimes, students even get the opportunity to play with the guest artists or perform their own songs and receive feedback.

To junior Hudson Brown, it was especially helpful to play with the guest artists. “Playing with people that are better than you helps improve the way you play,” he said.

Wadada Leo Smith, a professional trumpeter and Pulitzer Prize finalist, came to GDS last year. He performed at lunch and at a nighttime concert, where he played an original composition dedicated to GDS and Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, who sat on the Board of Trustees at the time of the concert but later resigned.

Six of the students who spoke with the Bit said that they learned a lot from hearing the guest artists perform and from asking them questions about their music. “Brad brings in such a variety of different artists and styles, and there’s something different to learn from each,” senior Jacob Getlan said.

“They all bring different stuff,” junior Max Boughner said. “It gives people ideas for things they can do, and I just think it’s cool to see professional musicians coming to the school to inspire people.”

“My plans are to keep working with creative musicians who have redefined the language of music,” Linde said.



Photo by Kaiden J. Yu.

The Augur Beat: Songs Community Members Recommend for Your Playlist

BY MARGARET BLOMSTROM

Just like many other people who recently got their Spotify Wrapped or Apple Music Replay, I realized I spent a large percentage of last year listening to music—and, in my case at least, it was the same music. Over, and over, and over again, I listened to the same genres of music: classic rock and indie pop.

There’s nothing wrong with staying in that comfort zone, but I always like discovering new music. I started looking at my friends’ music rewinds from various apps (if someone listened to one song two hundred times, it must be good, right?), and I also asked them for recommendations. And I liked a lot of them; there were some misses, but many of the songs made it onto one of my top playlists.

I ended up receiving a huge variety of new music to listen to. People had such different music tastes, and, if that was true on a smaller scale—just among my friends—the variation among all of GDS had to be even larger. Thus, I set out to get music recommendations from many different members of the GDS community, with the goal of finding new songs and artists I never would

have listened to otherwise.

Here are the recommendations I got:

“Smile” by Nat King Cole, from junior Clara Wartell

Why? “It’s a good jazzy-esque song. It’s not a car song, but it’s good for studying or when you’re in your feels, or a jazzy dance. It’s just a good song that I’ve liked for so long. Some songs go out of style, but I’ve listened to this one so many times and I’ve never gotten tired of it.”

“Me and Your Mama” by Childish Gambino, from junior Anissa McGinnis

Why? “It evokes a lot of emotion and takes you through a story. It also reminds me of a younger, easier time when I would ride in my parents’ car and sing my heart out to this song.”

The English Beat, from Anthony Belber, a history teacher and running coach

Why? “It’s a 1980s ska band. Timeless. Lively. It’s what I was listening to in high school and what GDS students should be listening to.”

“Duele el Amor” by Aleks Syntek and Ana Torroja, from freshman Emi Fitzgibbons

Why? “I just found the song on a whim. It’s a duet, and it’s really pretty how they have the two

voices together.”

“Garden” by Fujii Kaze, from senior Elly Robinson

Why? “It’s really chill and mellow, but at the end, it gets really, really grand, and I like how it builds a lot.”

“Sphere” by Creo, from junior Morgana Brand

Why? “This song got me through no fewer than four pandemic panic attacks because I focused on the amount of moving pieces. I always feel like there’s more to the song than I remembered last time.”

“Time Lapse” by NCT 127, from senior Maya Raman

Why? “I like it because the chorus is ever so offbeat and it’s sort of off-putting in a good way.”

AJR, from freshman Zoya Mghenyi

Why? “Their music is weirdly a mixture of upbeat with the trumpet but mellow at the same time, and their songs are funny but also very relatable. Also, the artists themselves are very fun.”

“Mind over Matter (Reprise)” by Young the Giant, from junior Xander Grunwaldt

Why? “It’s depressing but groovy.”

“Heartless” by The

Weeknd, from senior Lila Fishman

Why? “The lyrics are beautiful and the beat is sick.”

Marissa Mur, from Parker Benedict, a Spanish teacher

Why? “She sings in Spanish. If I had to pick one of her songs, Yin Yang is my favorite. It’s calming music but also with a little bit of a tropical twist, which I need in the winter.”

“Ruins” from the video game Undertale by Toby Fox, from sophomore Noah Spector

Why? “I recommend it because it’s good. It’s just good. I like it.”

“Can’t Hold Us” by Macklemore and Ryan Lewis, from sophomore Daniel Reilly

Why? “Only because it’s a good erging song. The only time I listen to music now is when I row.”

And now from me:

“These are Days” by 10,000 Maniacs

Why? This song is just so happy. It’s a reminder to not only live in but also enjoy every moment. It’s one of my go-to feel-good songs because it’s cheerful and untroubled without feeling forced. It’s just really gorgeous, and I hope it makes you feel happy too!

THE AUGUR BITE

Basic Overnight Oats

BY ELLIE KESSLER

Many students say they don't eat breakfast because they don't have enough time in the morning to make something. However, this recipe is not only delicious and nutritious, but it is also quick and easy to make. This recipe is prepared in advance and can be stored in the fridge for up to five days, so you can meal-prep your breakfast for the entire week in only a couple of minutes. It provides the classic base for overnight oats and you can add whichever toppings and flavorings you like.

Ingredients:

- ½ cup old-fashioned oats
- ½ cup milk
- 1 tsp chia seeds
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp maple syrup or honey
- Pinch of salt
- ¼ tsp cinnamon
- Toppings of your choice: nuts, seeds, fruit, nut butter, dried fruit, etc.

Instructions:

1. Put all ingredients, except the toppings, into your container of choice to store in the fridge. I



Photo by Ellie Kessler.

2. Mix well with a spoon or shake the container to combine.
3. Seal your container and put it in the refrigerator for at least six hours.

4. Once the oats have been refrigerated long enough, add your toppings of choice and they are ready to eat!

Easy Peas

BY AROHI NARAYAN

This simple recipe makes the best peas you'll ever have. It's very easy, has ingredients everyone can find at home and is packed with a lot of flavor. It's a common breakfast dish in India, but you can also have it as a snack or with lunch or dinner.

Ingredients:

- 1 bag of frozen sweet peas (16 oz)
- 2 tbsp fresh ginger
- 1 green chili (optional)
- Salt to taste
- 2 tsp cumin seeds
- 2 tbsp neutral oil
- Half a lime

Instructions:

1. Dice the ginger and cut the green chili lengthwise.
2. Heat up a skillet on medium heat.
3. When the skillet is hot, add oil.
4. When the oil is slightly smoking, add cumin seeds and stir for about 1–2 minutes.
5. When the seeds start to pop, add in the ginger, salt and peas. Stir.
6. Cover the skillet with a lid and stir every 5 minutes until tender.
7. Add the chili and stir.
8. Serve with a squeeze of lime.



Photo by Arohi Narayan.

Bandit Taco vs. District Taco

BY CALLIE SOLOMON AND NORA SACHSE

Which is better: Bandit Taco or District Taco? On a Friday evening, we set out to determine which was the better of these two restaurants. For consistency, we decided to order the same set of three tacos at each restaurant: chicken, carnitas and a vegan protein option—tofu or Beyond Meat. In addition to the tacos, we also rated the ambiance, seating options, price, proximity to GDS and wait time at each restaurant.

Bandit Taco
4629 41st St. NW, Washington, D.C., 20016

Ambiance: 9/10

Seating/Space: 5/10

Carnitas Taco: 8.5/10



Photo by Nora Sachse.

Chicken Tinga Taco: 7/10

Tofu Taco: 8/10

Price: \$12.93 (5/10)

Proximity to GDS: 0.2 miles (10/10)

Wait Time: 4:53 (8/10)

TOTAL: 7.6/10

Overall, we were very pleased with Bandit Taco. The ambiance was welcoming and cozy, with warm, wooden walls, a handwritten menu on a blackboard and colorful seating arrangements. We received our food in less than five minutes after ordering and were happy to find the tacos beautifully presented on a silver tray with colorful garnishes. On the

whole, we liked their flavor and thought the sauces and toppings complemented the well-seasoned proteins. The tacos tasted fresh and had a satisfying crunch from the vegetable garnishes, which included sliced radish, corn, scallions and cilantro. They were accompanied by two tasty free salsas—a mild green tomatillo salsa and a spicy, smoky red salsa. However, the store was crowded and had limited indoor seating. When we left our seats to order, another group sat down at the table, and we only found a new spot after more people left. Despite the seating complications, we found our experience at Bandit Taco very enjoyable.

District Taco
4600 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, D.C., 20016

Ambiance: 5.5/10

Seating/Space: 9/10

Carnitas Taco: 4/10

Pollo Asado Taco: 6/10

Itza (Beyond Meat) Taco: 5/10

Price: \$12.79 (5/10)

Proximity to GDS: 0.3 miles (9/10)

Wait Time: 11:59 (3/10)



Photo by Callie Solomon.

TOTAL: 4.7/10

District Taco, on the other hand, was a disappointment. Even though it had plenty of indoor and outdoor seating, the ambiance felt uncomfortable. The lights were fluorescent and made the restaurant feel like an industrial fast-food chain—unlike Bandit Taco, which felt local and cozy. The kiosk system for ordering was modern but confusing. After finally placing our order, it took twelve minutes before our food was ready. Even though we ordered “for here,” the food came in a paper bag. Inside, the individually wrapped tacos were misshapen and appeared to be hastily made, with ingredients irregularly distributed throughout the taco. The tacos were especially disappointing compared to Bandit's neat ones

with intentional toppings. We were also unimpressed by the ingredients: the tomatoes were mushy, the cheese unmelted and the cilantro wilted. Worst of all, the protein and tortillas tasted processed and unfresh. However, we noticed that District's tacos were slightly larger than Bandit's, so we got more food for approximately the same price. Overall, we found the tacos unappealing and did not finish them.

In the end, there was a clear winner: Bandit Taco. It was superior to District Taco in all categories other than price—which was about the same between the two—and seating availability. Bandit Taco is the perfect spot for going out during lunch, and we highly recommend it to any GDS student looking for delicious, fresh tacos.

THE AUGUR BITE

Gujiyas

BY AROHI NARAYAN

Gujiyas are a popular sweet treat to eat during the Holi festival. Many households, including my own, will make them together as a family. Some people make the milk cake filling from scratch out of sweetened milk solids and nuts, but it is much easier to buy it from a store. If you don't live near an Indian grocery store, you can use chocolate instead of milk cake for the filling.

For the dough:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tbsp melted ghee (clarified butter)
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup cold milk

For the filling:

- Store-bought milk cake (you can find it at most Indian grocery stores) or chocolate (milk cake is more traditional, but it tastes good with chocolate too)
- Vegetable oil for frying

Steps:

Making the dough:

1. Put the flour into a bowl and pour the melted ghee onto the flour.
2. Mix the ghee into the flour until the mixture

3. resembles breadcrumbs.
3. Add 4 tablespoons of the milk and knead.
4. Add more milk as needed. The dough should be firm and tight. You might not need to add all of the milk indicated.
5. Roll the dough into small circles about 3-4 inches in diameter. Make sure to roll it really thin—the dough should be slightly translucent.

Folding the gujiyas:

1. Dip your finger in water and

- go around the circumference of the rolled dough.
2. Put a teaspoon of milk cake in the middle and fold the dough circle in half.
3. Seal the circle shut by pressing the edges
4. Cut them with a serrated roller or a pizza cutter. Make sure there are no holes so the milk cake doesn't get in the oil.
5. Put the gujiya on a plate and cover with a moist paper towel. I would recommend making all of the gujiyas first and then frying them.
6. Fry in oil on low heat until both are slightly golden brown.



Photo by Arohi Narayan.

Healthy Chocolate Chip Cookies

BY LEXI BERZOK

Directions:

Over the summer, I attempted to go vegan. At first, it was terrific, but after a few months, I was constantly hungry and realized it wasn't my best option. Even though vegan life isn't for me, I am on a mission to find foods that will make my tummy feel its best.

I love cookies. I wanted to find a healthy alternative to the traditional sugary delights, but I couldn't find a recipe on the internet. So I decided to make my own! Unlike traditional chocolate chip cookies, this recipe calls for chickpea flour and monk fruit sweetener to make cookies that are gluten- and sugar-free. I hope you enjoy!

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of chickpea flour
- 1 cup of dairy-free butter (I like the Earth Balance brand)
- 1 1/2 cups of monk fruit sweetener
- 2 large eggs
- 1 package of vegan chocolate chips (I like the brand Lilly's)
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt

Combine the butter and monk fruit sweetener together. I recommend using a hand mixer to combine. Mix in the eggs and vanilla. Add the chickpea flour, baking soda and salt. Mix until smooth. Pour in the chocolate chips and disperse them evenly throughout the batter. Pop the batter in the fridge for 3–24 hours. Once it's chilled, place teaspoons of the batter on a baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 12–15 minutes. The shapes can be wonky once they come out of the oven because chickpea flour doesn't rise the same as usual flour, so I recommend using a cookie cutter or something circular to give your cookies a round shape. They take 3–5 minutes to cool, and then enjoy!



Photo by Lexi Berzok.

COMEDY

Overheard at GDS: Half-Birthday Edition

BY ANNABEL HILZENRATH

I hope we're in agreement that February is the best month—it's the month after my half-birthday, after all. To celebrate my half-and-six-days, the school held a party with all the works: ball gowns from the lost and found, Rome Pizza and Sub catered and we used the plastic knife on the tech desk to cut the cake. Even Punxsutawney Phil the groundhog was there. I'm sorry I couldn't invite all of you, but there really is only so much room in the school to fit people. Out of the kindness of my heart, though, I've decided to grant public access to the party favor. Please enjoy an assemblage of statements I've overheard in our beloved community.

“My uncle is a cult leader. I just found this out last night.”

“Someone's nail was in my hair and it was not mine.”

“I've never been the same since the Mexican cartel beheading.”

“If either of my grandchildren gets one tattoo or does one drug,

they are out of my will. That's it.” Russell Shaw.

“Remember, God gives his toughest battles to his hottest shoulders.”

“Do people at school talk to you? Or are they just confused about what comes out of your mouth?”

“He told me he's a communist but like Stalin, not Marx.”

“So many of these people could be really pretty if I, like, gave them a makeover.”

“Sue [Ikenberry] was dumpster-diving one day, and she found all this stuff.”

“I mean, it's obviously bad he's racist, but if he would just give me the A... I wouldn't care.”

“I like how casual his feet are in the picture. That was so cute to me.” Speaking of Head of School

“That actually was sending me in such a spiral because I need to have a romantic Italian summer before it becomes fascist again.”

“It could be a Saturday Night Live skit if it was funny, but I can't figure out the funny part.”

“Were you, like, surprised that you got in?”

“Every so often my mom will just be like looking on The Augur Bit and she'll say, ‘When's Annabel publishing another comedy article?’”



Digital illustration by Ivy Sand.

Bit-Doms

Classes are canceled to celebrate Hopper Holiday.

I was seriously excited for Young Sheldon.

Spring break finally arrives.

It also concludes...

Students venture on minimesters.

Why should curling only be for minimester?

The high school is moving to a Georgetown campus, GDSshoppers Instagram says.

Ha ha. April Fools?

High school rejoices at the first annual Integration Bee.

The only thing marketing was missing was its own Spotify playlist.



Hopper Crossword

BY CURAN PALMER

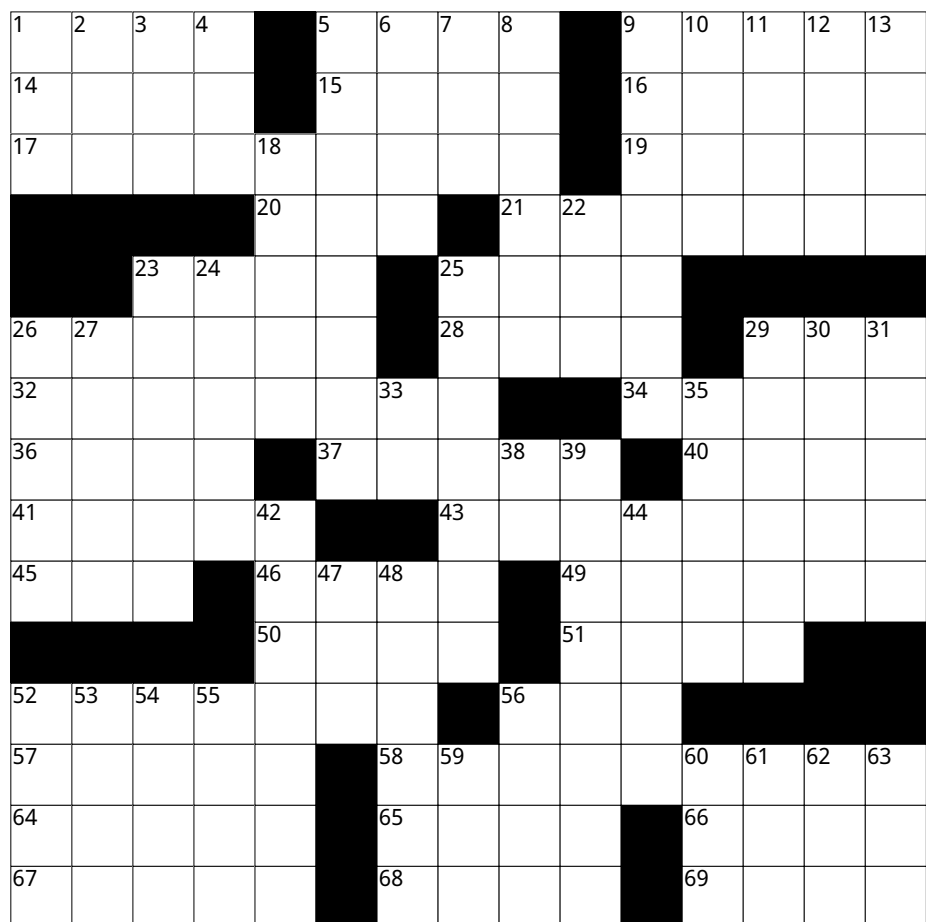
ACROSS

- 1 Board game with a spinner and set path
 5 "_ boy!" (phrase of congratulations)
 9 Coke, Sprite, or Pepsi, for examples
 14 Scent
 15 Goddess of Pop, known for "Moonstruck" and "Believe"
 16 Capital of Ecuador
 17 Song by Heart, also a long predatory fish
 19 Runner Bolt
 20 Free (of)
 21 "Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" band
 23 Asleep
 25 Level
 26 "My Heart Will Go On" singer Dion
 28 Boat's trail
 29 Harry's friend Weasley
 32 Being borrowed by, as in a soccer player
 34 Place to cook
 36 Condemn (to)
 37 With 12 down: "How _ _ _ _?" common search for first time suit wearers
 40 Continent home to 60% of Earth's population

- 41 Actor Cary, known for Westley
 43 Tilted, or how a board is placed to form a ramp
 45 _ el Hanout
 46 Conceal
 49 "_ Hearts," song by Gym Class Heroes, ft. Adam Levine
 50 Nickname for retired Rangers and Yankees third baseman
 51 Simple
 52 "Heart_" by Pat Benatar or Led Zeppelin
 56 Car in between sedan and minivan
 57 Home base at a ski resort
 58 "Heart-_" by Nirvana
 64 Striped big cat
 65 Mother's sister
 66 Hammer's target
 67 Sliders on snow
 68 A most painful object to step on
 69 Sandwich shop

DOWN

- 1 High-arcing tennis shot
 2 Author activist _ B. Wells
 3 In favor of
 4 Make a mistake
 5 Auto collision
 6 Dull sound made upon impact
 7 Word before "Ed" or "Talk"
 8 Lawrence's land



- 9 Quadrilaterals with equal angles and sides
 10 Remove (from office)
 11 Sun_, ancient Egyptian clock
 12 See 37 Across
 13 Male children
 18 Gladiator battleground
 22 "A mouse!"
 23 Lets Happen
 24 Ecological community
 25 A type of sloth
 26 Computer programmer
 27 Sherlock's sister
 29 Prayer beads
 30 Relating to sheep
 31 "Cool!"
 33 Homonym of 1+1

- 35 Stories
 38 Popular
 39 Approach nonchalantly
 42 Often in salt and pepper versions
 44 Ward (off)
 47 Anger
 48 Type of fin
 52 Acronymic sandwiches
 53 Stir up
 54 Advantage
 55 Type of cheddar relating to time spent flavoring
 56 Belted, as a song
 59 Shade of color
 60 Roleplaying game
 61 Nickname for a partner
 62 Common ocean spill
 63 41 in letters

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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