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The Great Return of the Pie Eating Contest

by Lucia Maynard

Before I begin, I should point out that Kate, our editor in chief, has no idea what I’m writing in this article. So consider this an exclusive behind the scenes rundown of what happened at the 2023 Pie Eating Competition.

For those of you that did not attend, the event of the year was sponsored by paper*. About a month in advance, Kate and I sat down in the middle of our Calculus class to hash out the details of who should be selected as teacher and student representatives. Fan-favorite Mr. Sneed was hesitant to sign up at first, but after 20 grueling minutes of negotiation, Kate was able to get him on board. Then came the merch, posters, and buckets to help publicize the event. Week by week, paper* kept a score-board of who had raised the most money; only the top 10 students could compete. Soon after, the day of the contest arrived, and everyone gathered in the Commons to cheer on their favorite competitors.

The event MCs were none other than Ari Katz and Kate-Yeonjae Jeong. Each teacher competitor was introduced with an individualized song. Mr. Morales, for example, was played Bottoms Up, with the lyrics “It’s Mr. Steal Your Girl” on full blast. Mr. Hammon was played The Table, one of his very own songs. Dr. Blandon teamed up with Mr. Perez for her introduction. As an intermission, the dancers performed and amped up the crowd. For the student round, it wasn’t clear who would win until the competition began. Ultimately, Luke Hawash and Mr. Morales were crowned the champions of the competition.

A Tell-All With Pie Eating Champion Luke Hawash

When I took on this project of covering the pie eating competition, I knew that I couldn’t get far without interviewing our newly titled student Pie Eating Champ, Luke Hawash. Luke fully committed to every aspect of the contest, likely because of his spiritual connection to the event itself. When asked, he stated simply that he knew that he was going to win the contest before it had even started. About a month before the contest, Luke spoke to the Virgin Mary

in a dream where she told him “You will win the Pie Eating Contest.” Immediately, he began preparations for his campaign.

First, he had to make it into the Final 10. This wasn’t difficult for Luke, because within the first few days, he topped the charts for the most money raised by a student, likely due to his flashy sense of fashion and expertise as a dancer. He lost steam towards the end of the money raising period, only to focus on his long term and short term training goals. Luke committed to the gym for at least 3 hours a day and added 1000 calories to his maintenance diet. The day of, he underwent his final training drills, and graciously gave a detailed description of each exercise for any aspiring champions to follow.

Luke’s Pie Day Workout:

(all of these exercises must be completed with bathroom calisthenics equipment)

Calf Raises x 300
Pull Ups x 50
Chin Ups x 50
Leg Raises x 100
Burpees x 50

To finish off, a lap around the 3rd floor.

In retrospect, Luke says the only thing he would have changed about his performance in the Pie Eating Contest was “to be more perfect - which is not possible”. He made Reid Sline and Zech Bocchetto, two highly motivated competitors, look feeble out there in comparison. On the day of the Pie Eating Contest, Luke says that he entered a state that was divorced from his human self, channeling an animalistic drive to win. He became a spectator to his own performance, watching himself do L sits and pump his fists in the air in front of the entire school. Luke reports that his performance gave HSPVA a hope at something greater. He says he hopes that this will be the start of a new era where

excellence is no longer rare.

Unrequited Love?

As we all know, paper* editor Kate-Yeonjae Jeong led the planning of the Pie Eating Competition. She shares that at first, she was reluctant to even consider such a school-wide event for paper*. The final push was when her Creative Writing teachers invited Ms. Cardenas (the former retired PVA librarian) for a lunch visit, where they helped with the preliminary stages of planning. Kate was meticulous and thought of every detail down to a DJ, a videographer with drones, coordination with administration, and even a co-host, Ari Katz.

When asked about the first time he and Kate met, Ari says it was “love at first sight,” and that he knew he couldn’t turn down an opportunity like this. Ari then began planning the perfect outfit: a mankini. The mankini is near and dear to Ari’s heart as it has been passed from generation to generation in his Kazakh family. Ari carefully noted that to wash the mankini would be to take away its charm. He chose to wear a suit on top (to keep it classy) with the straps of the mankini peeking through (to commemorate his heritage and Borat).

When asked, Ari says he can only hope that Kate shares his loving sentiments. Kate retorted that Ari should be so lucky to be able to continue his role as the co-host. In terms of the future of this contest, Kate says the contestant pool will be much smaller and more competitive in years to come. This means if you want to be guaranteed a spot, you better start following Luke Hawash’s training schedule.

Short Note from Mr. Morales

Mr. Morales, our resident teacher Pie Eating Contest Champion, shared that the honor of winning the Pie Eating contest now follows him everywhere. He aims to continue his reign as Pie Eating Champion unless he can be properly challenged by another teacher. As for that, only time can tell, but one thing is for sure: the next Pie Eating Contest is to be eagerly anticipated.

Pie Eating Competition Recognition

Congratulations to our 2023 Pie Eating Contest Winners:

Luke Hawash, Creative Writing ‘23

Mr. Morales, Piano Department

Your resilience, fortitude, and unmatched pie-eating skills are respected amongst the HSPVA community. We applaud you!

Acknowledgements for Those Who Made the Pie Eating Contest Possible:

The hosts: Kate-Yeonjae Jeong, Ari Katz

Student Contestants: Reid Sline, Jones Bowman, Elliot Stravato, Luke Hawash, Stephen Hill, Eduardo Hernandez, Kieran Holmes,

Hayden Miller, Liam Mathus, Zechariah Bocchetto

Faculty Contestants: Ms. Dana, Mr. Falomo, Mr. Hammon, Mr. Barnes, Ms. Llano, Mr. Sneed, Mr. Morales, Mr. Mendez, Mr. Longoria, Dr. Blandon, Mr. Denning

The Planning Crew: Lila Mankad, Lucia Maynard, Rafael Valdes, Brian Oliveira, Hannah Horwath, Catie Giesen, Natalia Alarcon-Castro, Chloe Cheuk, Alayna Davis, Eva Rami

Our amazing HSPVA custodians: Mr. Martinez and Ms. Bonilla

Jacob Lopez, for DJing and for his cool set

Jupiter Zimmerman-Yang, for flawless audio

Noah Alapat, for videography and drones

Irene Roddy and Mikey Harper, for photos

Claire Schunemann, Riley Miller, Madelyn Munz, Laila McGuire, Madison Manning, Kylie Schwab, for the halftime dance performance

Creative Writing Dept (Class of 2023), for helping make the pies & set-up

Ms. Cardenas, for coming out of retirement to encourage the return of the contest, and Ms. Switek & Ms. Apte, for bringing Ms. Cardenas

All that donated to this fundraiser to keep paper* running!

The Mastermind Behind @pvaloveletters

by Lila Mankad

In fall of 2021, a mysterious hero emerged under an unassuming name: @pvaloveletters. It was an Instagram account that allowed HSPVA students to submit anonymous messages of appreciation to their friends. PVA didn’t disappoint.

You’re frickin awesome. Y’all are some of the best second family I’ve had and I wouldn’t trade it for anything. When I hear [the vocalists] singing in the hallway I just stop and listen. Thanks for being you.

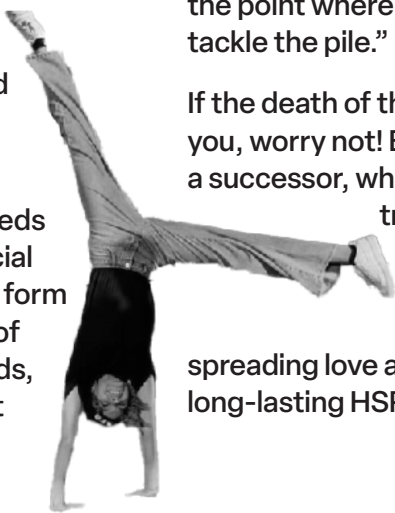
Quickly, the idea caught on, and the account had hundreds of submissions from all sorts of PVA students.

All this time, the orchestrator behind this beacon of positivity has remained unknown. Until now. In an exclusive interview with paper*, Elijah Islam revealed himself as the mastermind behind @pvaloveletters.

Pvaloveletters, Elijah explained, was actually not the first of its kind. Another account, @hspvaloveletters, had sprung up during quarantine, but had since gone inactive. Despite being back in person, Elijah found that

there was still a need for the account. “People changed over quarantine,” says Elijah. “And lots of people were being made fun of.” Elijah describes other Instagram accounts that created a “negative atmosphere” at PVA in a time when community was sorely needed. “I thought, this shouldn’t be what we start off with. Let me make something sweet to counteract this.” And so, @pvaloveletters was born.

The response was overwhelming. Within days, the account had hundreds of followers, including HSPVA’s official Instagram. At its height, the google form received 30 submissions a day, full of appreciation and love for their friends, departments, lunch buddies, secret crushes, or even just someone they passed every day in the hallway.



The Mastermind himself

“There is a very beautiful kind of love that exists as a result of our student body being artists,” says Elijah. Poetry was a popular format for love letters, and people often gushed about the joy of being surrounded by talented artists. Compliments to the leads of all-school musicals were common. Sometimes, people would send love letters to themselves— self-love!

But eventually, after a long series of postings, the account went quiet. Why? The answer seems to be pretty much junior year. “It got to the point where I physically couldn’t sit down to tackle the pile.”

If the death of this lovely account saddened you, worry not! Elijah will soon be looking for a successor, whose identity will, keeping with tradition, remain anonymous. He will also be seeking a team of people to help manage submissions, helping ensure that spreading love and positivity can become a long-lasting HSPVA tradition.

Texas’ Takeover Explained

by Eva Rami

Sometime over spring break, I opened my phone to numerous news notifications: Texas Education Agency Announces Takeover of Houston Independent School District. Immediately, questions arose amongst my friends and me: When? How? Why?

In an article from Houston Public Media, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) cites specific schools in the district that have failed to perform up to par in the past years, including the predominantly mentioned Wheatley High, as scapegoats for their state takeover. They announced that drastic changes to the district will happen relatively fast and with ease since they have the full support of the state of Texas and Gov. Greg Abbott. Education Commissioner Mike Morath told the news outlet, “This action places a board of Houstonians — who have a firm belief that all children can learn and can achieve at high levels when properly supported — this action places that kind of board in charge of the district.”

The state of Texas began threatening state takeover of HISD in 2019, and since then has slowly replaced locally elected board members with their own. Essentially, a state takeover will give the TEA full control over the educational board and laws regarding the Houston Independent School District. In June, the Texas Education Agency plans to fully dismantle the current board, including current superintendent Millard House II, and replace them with their own board of managers. At meetings held after the announcement, state spokespeople were almost immediately shouted off the stage by upset community members. “Give us the mic!” they shouted. Houstonians wasted no time before becoming a collective opposition

to the newly announced state takeover.

This takeover has been seen as political by many. In Texas, the Democratic Party holds power locally in most cities, but contrary to many populous cities, Houston’s education system is not under mayoral control. This means that Texas’ state government has the power to approve education bills and, of course, take over entire districts. HISD has a large percentage of Black or Hispanic students, and many argue that race plays a role in the takeover. In other state takeovers, circumstances have been similar. In an NBC News article, Professor Domingo Morel of political sciences and public services at NYU states, “If we just focus[ed] on taking over school districts because they underperform, we would have a lot more takeovers. But that’s not what happens.” State Representative Jarvis Johnson has expressed his discontent at the TEA’s plan, too, saying, “We have way bigger issues weighing on our state that could use the governor’s immediate attention.” Mayor Sylvester Turner has expressed similar sentiments, saying, “This is about...the leadership...wanting to run local units of government and they want it their way. This is not about the kids.” He criticized the TEA for putting its power into fixing the wrong things, stating, “Kids right now in school are concerned about gun violence.”

The majority of HISD’s low-income students are non-white. In Houston’s historic Fifth Ward,

at Bruce Elementary, a school that rose from a D to a B accountability rating, the majority of the student body, about 72% African-American and 27% Hispanic or Latino, was categorized as “economically disadvantaged.” At West University Elementary, which has an A accountability rating, over 60% of the student body is white, with less than 2% identifying as African-American or Black. Less than 7% of the student body was classified as “economically disadvantaged.” However, past state takeovers of school districts across the states haven’t proven very beneficial in the long run. But money is. It should go without saying that students with lower income lack access to resources that would inevitably help them in their studies. And Texas isn’t helping; Texas has one of the largest spending gaps, meaning that what the state is spending is much less than they need to be. Research at Rutgers University showed that in order to bring lower-income students up to par with the national average, Texas would need to spend \$12,682 more on every student each year. Rutgers University researchers found that states with little to no spending gap have low-income students that perform at or above the national average.

In truth, Texas could solve this issue with more readily available resources, funds, and better-listening ears. Unfortunately, the state of Texas has proven unable to provide any of these to the numerous students and residents of Houston, opting instead to initiate a move for complete control over the district when things inevitably aren’t up to standard. As Mayor Sylvester Turner stated of the Texas Education Agency, “The state deserves an F. So who takes them over?”

Match the Overheard to the Teacher

by Brian Oliveira

Draw a line between the quotes and the teacher! The solution is on page ten.

1. “I have to maintain a 300-foot distance from Chuck-E-Cheese’s.”

2. “Why are you guys so obsessed with balls?”

3. “Leave! Leave the Google Doc! Leave quickly!”

4. “I’m having hot man summer!”

5. “I love feet.”

6. “Trauma, trauma, trauma. That’s too much trauma!”

7. “You can’t see my toes and you never will.”

8. “What are those things that block the hallways? Oh yeah, freshmen!”

9. “If anybody is gonna make you cry, you know it’s gonna be me.”

10. “Ugh! Table flip emoji!”

11. “You wouldn’t believe how many times I’ve found my TV remote in my refrigerator.”

12. “Traumatize your kids now, get rich later.”
- A) Ms. Chase

B) Mr. Landry

C) Mr. Denning

D) Ms. Garza

E) Ms. Byers

F) Mr. Lozano

G) Mr. Bingham

H) Ms. Hall

I) Mr. Davis

J) Ms. Rosales

K) Ms. Hill

L) Mr. Hammon



HSPVA Survival Series: Enjoying High School

by Chloe Cheuk

Navigating through HSPVA and envisioning the years ahead might seem stressful and daunting. Fortunately, Emily Lin (UT Austin), Scout Brooks (Theater Senior), and Aaron LaVohn (Vocal Senior) have imparted some wisdom on how to make high school less stressful and more enjoyable!

Dealing with Grade Anxiety

How do you move on from a test grade?

- Have a checklist of questions:
- 1) Am I happy with my grade?

2) What did I do well? What could I have done better?

3) What will I change before the next exam?

Having a fixed set of questions stops you from blaming yourself for doing poorly on tests and instead gives your mind something else to focus on—improvement.

Know that everything can be resolved if you put effort into it. Retake the bad test. Go to tutorials. Study more for the next one.

How can you perform well in school while also maintaining your mental health?

Make room for yourself in your schedule. When you take the time to do what you love, everything else flies by.

Surround yourself with people that make you happy and do things that help you relax. One assignment will never be more important than your mental well-being.

Remembering High School Memories

How to keep in touch with your close friends if you go to different colleges?

Be intentional with your friendships. Keeping

in touch with friends far away requires making time for the people you want to keep in your life. Schedule calls or texts in advance. It’s also important to note that just because you no longer talk on a daily basis doesn’t mean that you’re no longer holding space for each other.

How to remember the high school experience (both good and bad memories)?

Journaling every night after school allows you to look back on all the highlights and disappointments over the years.

Talk about your memories with friends. PVA students have such a unique shared experience that no one else can understand and talking about all the crazy stuff that you’ve experienced together over the years adds another great layer to those memories of the PVA experience.

How To Make High School More Memorable

Do you have anything you regret not doing in high school? Anything you don’t?

Sleeping! Your health should be your top priority. I also wish I’d tried more things in high school instead of picking a niche and avoiding things I thought I’d be bad at. Also, there are a lot of free events and resources in the Houston area, and I definitely should have taken more advantage of them when I had the chance.

I regret not going to as many performances

before senior year. Yes, I had to deal with CO-VID restrictions, but there were so many great performance opportunities I missed out on, and there’s only so much time in senior year.

Is there anything you would change about the way you approached the end of high school?

Live in the moment more and worry less about the future because college ended up being so much better than I could have imagined. Still, don’t completely stop reflecting on high school since it can help you be grateful for your friends and experiences.

Just because it’s your last semester in your hometown doesn’t mean you have to busy yourself saying goodbye to everything. Make more time for yourself to sleep.



Was the Choice Ever Truly Ours?

by Ashton Macklin

You, dear reader, are surely aware of that ever-omniscient phrase that benedicts the start of each 2nd Period...excluding test days, of course. I've certainly heard it parroted, often mockingly, by other students in expectation each morning: "Make it a great day or not, the choice is always yours. (...bye guys!)"

I loathe it, from a philosophical standpoint, although I understand why it exists. I am told, through the griots and heralds of HSPVA's Oral Histories, that the phrase was started by a student on the announcements, who was then encouraged to entrench it into tradition. Now, the "bye, guys" is funny (especially to one Mr. Trout), but, through both internal deconstruction and generally agreeable discussion with others, I present my manifesto on my dissatisfaction with the phrase. (This goes out to you, Ms. Hill!)

I forward the following theses in opposition to the insinuation that one must or can "make it a great day or not, [because] the choice is always [theirs]":

The claim assumes one's complete autonomy in how one can act or control portions of their life, either physically or by means of societal structures.

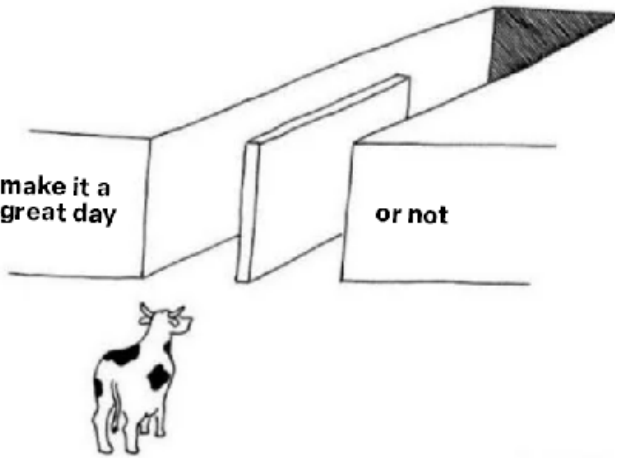
The claim assumes one's complete autonomy and neutrality in their psychological ability to not only process, handle, but also control their mental state, which may contradict a subconscious desire to have a great day (Neurodivergences are major variables here).

By insinuating that the listener "make it a great day," even if indirect, the listener may be pressured into considering possibly harmful experiences as having composed a "great day."

Why do I write this? Because it isn't said enough that it's okay to have a bad day. It's

okay to have an okay day. It's okay to have human emotions, to cry, to feel a certain way. Most importantly, it's okay if those feelings are caused by something out of your control—you shouldn't feel pressured to feel what you don't want to feel. We live in a culture where dissatisfaction with the status quo threatens the status quo. Make it whatever day you want, if you can. If you can't, hang in there—there's someone out there to help.

the choices you make in the day are in your hands, but the circumstances surrounding it are not: thus, is the ability to have a good day truly up to you?

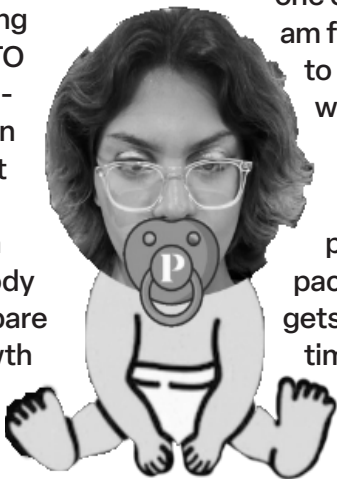


A Freshman Reflection: Looking Back

by Andrew Hernandez, Growing Baby

The end of the year approaches, my first year as a visual arts student at HSPVA is coming to a close. The past year has been the hardest and most exhausting experience of my life, and I have racked up lessons and bruises and theater hours like nickels in a swear jar.

I was naked and afraid entering this school. I had neither a PTO mom nor a senior older brother nor middle school friends in my department. I had no past and no future, just winging it day by day. It has now been many days, and I realize nobody would have been able to prepare me for the changes and growth I would undergo. Nobody except for me.



I thought I'd get worse at my art, but I am here to confirm that the program works. As grueling, demanding, and exhaustive as it is, I have seen a huge improvement in my technique, and I've never produced so much art in my life. Through everything that has happened, art has been my one constant, and I think it's the love of my life. I am forever grateful for the opportunity I've had to fall in love with it, to let myself get lost in what I create.

Through all of the glitz and the glamor, HSPVA is still high school. We are all complex creatures and scared kids in a fast-paced academic environment. The tension gets high, and we act our age. If I could rewind time, I'd tell myself to forgive people and to forgive myself. Everyone has their motives and their history. People will hurt you, and you will hurt other people as well.

Everything will fall into place around you if you carry yourself with kindness as your purpose. Let people work themselves out, and let yourself discover the magic of this school without blowing up over someone else.

I think, above all, I'd warn myself against how little I trusted myself. I'd say, focus on the people who seek you out and stay far, far away from people that smile too much. Never ignore your gut.

As we near the end of this article, I want to say thank you for all this school has taught me in just a year. I thank paper* for supporting my silly little lists and my friends for understanding what it's like to experience HSPVA. I can't wait to return and create with love and healing in mind.

2023 Senior Confessions

compiled by Lucia Maynard

"The Senior Theater Class had an outbreak of mono- they just can't keep their hands to themselves."

"Teachers always say that you won't keep your friends from high school, but I think *they* just couldn't keep their friends from high school."

"I burned out my tires in front of Dr. Blandon."

"I popped up the windshield wipers on a teacher's car."

"Half the Senior Dance Department have gone out with this one person and regretted it."

"I see Mr. Landry every time I go to the school gym."

"Mariachi has ruined my health and my hair."

"Practice rooms hold a lot of secrets."

"PVA boys are a little too confident."

"I ran the @pvaconfessions account, and I will never reveal my identity."

"The most unlikely couples get together at PVA during their senior year."

"I've dated almost everyone in my department."

"I still don't understand what the Creative Writers do during their art area time."

"One time I stalked my ex on Spotify to make sure the guy I was worried about didn't try to take my spot."

ENTERTAINMENT

Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania

by Brian Oliveria

As the first film of the MCU’s “Phase 5”, *Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania* had a lot riding on it to succeed, but seems to have fallen just short. The reception to this film has been noticeably mixed: audience scores are relatively high while critics call it one of the worst entries in the MCU. My feelings on the movie are definitely mixed.

There’s plenty of positives to be found in this film, such as the cast. Paul Rudd is as charming as ever and really props this movie up, Michelle Pfeiffer gets more of a spotlight, and Jonathan Majors absolutely slays it as the film’s villain, Kang (more on him in a sec). There are some pretty good

action sequences in the film, and the design of the Quantum Realm, which the film spends its majority in, is creative. It’s a fun enough movie to turn your brain off and watch, but the more you look at it, the more the cracks in *Quantumania* (and in the MCU as a whole) start to show.

Marvel has been rushing out projects on an insane schedule, and it really shows in movies like this. The CGI may have nice designs behind it, but it is overall shoddily executed due to corners being cut. The ambitious story feels disjointed and not fleshed out. It’s bigger than Ant-Man’s previous low-stakes comedies but doesn’t quite succeed at its goal of being an Avengers-level conflict either. Jonathan Majors’ Kang is great, but if Marvel could barely handle writing a solo movie with him as a villain, I’m worried about his future as the next big bad

Sweet, sweet summertime!

The freedom of finishing finals!

The bittersweet end-of-year performances

Still struggling with the stairs after 8 months of PVA

Humid, humid summertime!

of the MCU (especially since the *Quantumania* writers have been hired to write the next two Avengers films).

All in all, *Quantumania* isn’t a terrible experience, but if Marvel keeps this act up, things are going to get worse very quickly.

MUSIC

Did You Know That There’s A Tunnel Under Ocean Boulevard

by Andrew Hernandez, Sad Girl

The new Lana del Dey record is a masterpiece in every sense of the word. With some of the best production and songwriting we will get all year, *Did You Know That There’s A Tunnel Under Ocean Boulevard* takes us on a journey through a dark tunnel and releases us into the light as Lana reminiscences on her past trauma and shares the bright vision of the future she has ahead of her.

These lyrics are the ones that had me clawing at the walls, pulling my hair out, and punching my mother:

“**The Grants**” - “My sister’s first born child, I’m going to take that too with me.”

“**DYKTTATUOB**” - “Don’t forget me, like the tunnel under Ocean Boulevard.”

“**Sweet**” - “Do you want children, do you wanna marry me? Do you want to run marathons in Long Beach by the sea? I’ve got things to do, like nothing at all, I want to do them with you.”

“**A&W**” - “I’m a princess, I’m divisive. Ask me why I’m like this.”

“**Candy Necklaces**” - the piano riff at 3:14

“**Kintsugi**” - “I’m in the mountains, I’m probably running away from the feelings I get.”

“**Fingertips**” - “Will the baby be alright, will I have one of mine?”

“**Paris, Texas**” - “When everyone’s stars are bright, brighter than you are, it’s time to go.”

“**GFPSOTSOMFAHDSF**” - “Grandfather, please stand on the shoulders of my father as he’s deep sea fishing for sharks in the Pacific.”

“**Let the light in**” - “Light the candles and go back to bed.”

“**Margaret**” - “He met Margaret on our rooftop, she was wearing white. He was like, ‘I might be in trouble.’”

“**Fishtail**” - “Don’t you dare say that you’ll braid my hair, babe. If you don’t really care, you wanted me sadder. I’m not that smart but I’ve got things to say.”

“**Peppers**” - “My boyfriend tested positive for COVID. It don’t matter we’ve been kissing, so whatever he has, I have. I won’t cry.”

Why would she write this ?? Does she not know how much this lyric changed my life?

“**Taco Truck x VB**” - “If you weren’t mine (never die, not tonight) I’d be jealous of your love.”

Portals

by Charlotte Witz

Following the release of a new album teaser, many Melanie Martinez fans were curious about the new image and music style shown. Melanie’s past albums have often touched on difficult subjects while painting a very childlike, innocent atmosphere. The new album teaser suggested something very different from Melanie’s old image.

That’s not to say that this new image is bad. It’s quite the opposite. While the facial prosthetics and “forest fairy” aesthetic did alarm long-time fans, the image change did present intriguing ideas. Portals’ major themes are very different from both Crybaby and K-12’s themes. Crybaby and K-12 explore traumatic events and real life struggles through a “pastel” lens, while Portals

steps away from the use of metaphors and delicate instrumentals. Portals explores the endless cycle of life and death, and the supposed “space” in-between. Portals begins with a song titled “DEATH”, and ends with a song titled “WOMB” (not considering the songs added on in the Deluxe Edition). Both of these songs carry a very strong message – the end of something, and the beginning of another. That isn’t to say that every song in Portals is about death, though. For example, Melanie’s song “BATTLE OF THE LARYNX ” is about speaking out for yourself when someone attempts to undermine your voice. It carries a feminist message that is often seen in Melanie’s songs (For example: “Strawberry Shortcake” – K-12, “Alphabet Boy” – Crybaby, “Mrs. Potato Head”

– Cry Baby, etc.). “NYMPHOLOGY” and “EVIL” also follow a very similar theme – recognizing one’s own power, and respecting yourself before anyone else.

One of Melanie’s most popular songs from Portals happens to be track two: “VOID”. This song follows track one, “DEATH”, on a much more contemplative note. “VOID” is partially about the void that follows death. It’s also about processing strong feelings from the past. “VOID” has all the reason to be as popular as it is – it’s a powerful song.

Do I think that you should give this album a listen? Absolutely! Will it be your new favorite album from Melanie Martinez? Maybe!

Frida’s Rhythm and Beats: May Flowers

by Frida Ruiz Berman

So it is May! The flowers are blooming, and June is teeming on the horizon. May is the longest month - it just feels too long after April with its showers and much too far away from June and the summer peace it brings. To get through this busy May of finals and AP Exams, here is a playlist to soothe your troubles!

“Your Smile” - Rufus

“Your Smile” is a song that just feels like the summer breeze. As May approaches, we become more and more desperate for relaxation, and as far as that Theater Department goes, the feeling of sunlight hitting our skin. “Your Smile” is amazingly mood repairing, somehow immediately transporting you to a shady summer street where the sunlight just barely peeks through. Perfect for imagining a stressless life, “Your Smile” is a fantastic option to add to your summer playlist.

En La Playa - Hombres G

An unconventional choice, “En La Playa” by Hombres G seems to me the perfect beach song. Filled with lusty and unapologetic romanticism, Hombres G managed to create a catchy, incredibly listenable song for the summertime. Hombres G, a Spanish pop band, took the world by storm during the 1980s and are a prominent part of the childhood of any Hispanic kid with ‘papas rockeros’. But whether you grew up with Hombres G or not, “En La Playa” is a good option to expand your taste into the relatively untapped world of Spanish rock.

“Let The Light In” - Lana Del Rey ft, Father John Misty

“Let The Light” In by Lana Del Rey and Father John Misty is the perfect song for May. With May, a month so full of promises and excitement, “Let The Light In” from Lana’s new album *Did You Know That There’s a Tunnel Under Ocean Blvd.* is the perfect song. Probably my favorite off the album, the combination of Father John

Misty and Lana never fails to deliver everything and more. Moody, listenable, soft, and utterly enjoyable, “Let The Light In” is officially my song of the spring.

“All My Love” - Led Zeppelin

If I could pick one quintessential summer song, this would simply be it. As we prepare for the long days at the beach, or walking around the city, scalding in the summer sun, “All My Love by Led Zeppelin” is the perfect soundtrack. “All Of My Love” feels like sticking your hands out of the car to feel a temporary breeze, or feeling the beads of sweat roll down your neck in the middle of June.

I admit I may be partial to this song because it reminds me of the spring I spent at my former place of employment, The Hobbit Cafe. Still, I can say with pride that when this song played, I was exponentially happier.

“Halah” - Mazzy Star

“Halah” by Mazzy Star is another one of those no-brainer May songs. It feels like the warm breeze as school slowly draws to an end. Any Mazzy Star song in itself is automatically a winning take, but something about this song is so calming, heartfelt, and just deeply personal. If you’re new to Mazzy Star, you might try taking a look at their most popular album, *So Tonight That I Might See*. Still, “Halah” is another option to begin within their first album *She Hangs Brightly*. Nevertheless, whether new to Mazzy Star or a weathered fan, their music is most definitely worth taking a listen to this spring/summer season.



“In My Room” - The Beach Boys

As the final song of the year, I’d like to leave you, my dear readers, with one of the most beautiful songs ever written. “In My Room” by the Beach Boys is the ideal song for the high school experience - there is no other time in life in which your own room is so magical, so personal, and so incandescently yours. I write about this song to remind you seniors of the limited amount of time you have in your room (you will be missed); to tell the freshmen to go crazy decorating your room (it is your only space!) ; and finally to tell the sophomores and juniors to simply hang tight, and enjoy the rest of it. I hope you enjoy the genius harmonies of this song, and I thank everyone for a great year!



FOOD

Rating School Lunches

(As someone who hasn’t eaten them in over a year.)

by Cayenne Souknary

Chicken Sandwich: 4/10

There was really nothing special about it. It tasted like a chicken sandwich. But, every once in a while, you’d bite into it and there would be a different texture, or hard to chew.

Cheeseburger: 6/10

This used to be my go-to, as it was a pretty standard meal. Sure, there may be better burgers out there (of course), but there’s nothing particularly wrong with a school burger—and it was edible.

Tamale: 7/10

They weren’t bad, but I’ve also never tried one outside of school, so I have nothing to compare it to.

Asian Teriyaki Chicken Poppers with Rice: 8/10

This was the name used on the official HISD website, but at school I’m pretty sure people just called it orange chicken. This meal was only served on occasion. The rice was really

dry, though, which brought the rating down a bit. In my opinion, it was one of the best options—probably my favorite of all the lunches.

Cheese/Pepperoni Pizza: 2/10

The cheese slid off the pizza super easily, so minus points for that. The bread part also didn’t taste like pizza-bread. The school pizza was usually one of my last-resort options, coming from someone who generally enjoys eating pizza.

Cheese Bread Bites: 1/10

There was just too much cheese on the inside, and it wasn’t even a good kind of cheese. I did not like this one at all.

Spicy Chicken Sandwich: 5/10

There was more flavor in this than the normal chicken sandwich, but the different texture thing remained. Ignoring the consistency, I liked the spice.

Beef Nachos: 9/10

I’ve never had them with cheese, which just



The notorious Fish with Cheese

looked really weird. However, the chips and beef were good. Did I only like this meal because of the chips? Yes. Maybe.

Fish with Cheese: 1/10

I’ve only had it once, and I think it was because the only other option was cheese bread. Personally, I’m very skeptical about any fish, since it spoils faster than meat. That aside, the lunch was unappetizing because of the cheese. The fish was fine, though. Or it would’ve been, if I could’ve tasted it over the cheese.

Ratatouille in Review: Does the Pixar film earn its Michelin Stars?

by Hayden Miller and Lina Wu, featuring Madame Blanche

From foodie Instagram to TikTok musicals, *Ratatouille* occupies a special place in Gen Z culture. The film has inspired countless memes, remixes, and fan art on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter. Despite all the hype surrounding *Ratatouille*, one question remains unanswered: how accurately does the film depict the life of a chef?

To examine the inner workings of the cuisine at the story’s heart, we interviewed Madame Blanche, HSPVA’s French teacher, who had a career as a professional chef before she graced us with her presence.

Her 20-year cooking career began when she received the opportunity to run the salad station at a D.C. restaurant. Despite barely knowing how to cook, she had to devise two specials a day. Madame Blanche then moved around, serving as the head chef at catering companies and as the pastry chef at Wolfgang Puck’s Postrio at the Venetian, where a highlight of her time was serving President Bill Clinton.

“They made us leave the kitchen while they had sniffer dogs come around, and then they searched us, and then we could go back. [Clinton] came in through the kitchen, and he stood right next to me, and they took a picture of us [which I never got]. The next morning he was going to play golf, so I got up at 3 in the morning and made donuts and sent them off to his golf game.”

Other highlights of her career include cooking for a bridal shower attended by Julia Louis-Dreyfus and walking past David Bowie while catering the Billboard Music Awards.

Collete teaches Linguini How to Cook: 9.5/10

In this scene, Linguini’s love interest Collete, a *rôtisseur* at Gusteau’s, teaches him how to properly cook in a restaurant setting, advising him to “Keep your station clear, or I will kill you.” First, Madame Blanche takes issue with Collete’s knife skills, admonishing that “if you hold the handle, you’re likely to not hold the knife well and cut yourself, so you always have your fingers on the blade.”

However, all the other details check out: “In French kitchens, people are very particular about your station and keeping it clean. Most people do that anyway because you have to cook really fast, and you have people to do the dishes for you, which [the film] didn’t have.”

While Collete’s claim that every chef has an origin story worthy of its own spinoff Disney+ show might be exaggerated, Madame Blanche states that she has heard her fair share of crazy tales as many people are recovering from hardship in the industry. She observes that it’s “mostly a really close community— restaurant kitchens build a real family because you’re always helping someone else. You have to be a close unit because you’re working in your station, but you have to put the food up at the exact same time as everyone else.”

Remy prepares Ratatouille (aka the most iconic scene): 9/10

We’ve reached the titular scene of the film, in which Remy prepares ratatouille for the feared food critic Anton Ego, who falls in love with the dish because it triggers an extensive flashback to his childhood in the countryside. Madame Blanche gives it “a pretty high mark for realism except for the part that it’s cooked by a rat.”

Preparation-wise, nothing is left out. “Ratatouille is just eggplant, zucchini, tomato, and it’s cooked down. People make it differently. Sometimes people are very purist and insist on it being sliced, and other people just saute it.”

She also finds the characterization of Ego to be realistic, stating that “food critics arrive and they don’t tell you they’re showing up, but most people recognize them so you find out in the kitchen like ‘oh that’s so and so!’ The chef would be right on the line, making sure every plate was perfect.”

Linguini is Hired at Gusteau’s: 8.5/10

Linguini’s first appearance at Gusteau’s is when we are first introduced to the chaotic kitchen. The other chefs (and Linguini’s future co-workers) are submerged in their element, taking charge of their respective stations with an efficiency and skill that Blanche believes wonderfully reflects the chaotic hustle and bustle of restaurant services. Skinner, the head chef, strolls in nonchalantly. In contrast, the other chefs greet him with a regimental “Hello Chef!” which Madame Blanche believes is “pretty accurate” considering the militaristic nature of European restaurants.

However, Madame Blanche points out a plot hole regarding Linguini’s job as the garbage boy: the dishwasher usually takes care of the garbage. In other words, there is no such thing as a “garbage boy” in most high-end restaurants. Despite this, the traditional hierarchy in European kitchens leads to much unpaid labor.

According to Madame Blanche, “In Europe, many people start out in [culinary] school, and for your senior year, you work in a kitchen, so they have a lot of free labor. That’s why Michelin Star restaurants may have 15 people working on the lines, which would normally be crazy expensive, but they are working for free.”

Remy fixes soup: 7/10

Madame Blanche approaches this iconic scene with understandable skepticism. When Linguini first tastes the soup, he exhibits an intense reaction. Madame Blanche questions, “You might taste something that doesn’t taste great, but are you really going to run to a window and throw it up right there?” Perhaps the soup was truly abhorrent, but Remy’s actions to save the soup are subject to critique as well.



The number of ingredients Remy put into the giant pot was hardly reasonable to turn a soup that makes you want to throw up into a culinary masterpiece. To fix a soup, you “keep messing with it until you get it right, but the amount of stuff was a little off- like three little pieces of leaf.” Madame Blanche also critiques Remy’s robust technique: “I wouldn’t just throw [the leeks] in. If I were adding leeks to a soup that is ready to serve, I would cook the leeks down a little bit, maybe put some of the soup in, and then put it back in the soup.”

What the scene nails is the workplace environment. French kitchens are very intense, and this scene shows it.

Madame Blanche stated she always avoided kitchens with French male chefs or people trained in French culinary school for good reason. She knew someone who burnt some nuts, hid them in her apron, ran outside, and threw them away on the street so the head chef wouldn’t learn about her mistake.

She then told us about another chef in D.C who was pulled off a line cook because “he had his hand around the guy’s neck because he was so intense.” Skinner’s reaction to Linguini’s impromptu soup was hardly an overreaction compared to real-world scenarios.

“What he did to fix the soup was not real, but the French chef guy [Skinner] was probably not too far off.”

Remy cooks Breakfast: 5/10

While Remy preparing an omelet for Linguini’s breakfast is adorable, Madame Blanche is not impressed. “First, I’d doubt you sleep in your chef’s jacket and an apron [referencing Linguini’s sleepwear].” She also takes offense with Linguini’s terminology when he calls a leaf Remy used for flavoring a spice rather than an herb.

This scene also fails to perfect the dish: “French omelets aren’t usually eaten for breakfast. They have them for lunch or even dinner. They make them by moving the pan to have the egg cooked in layers. French omelets aren’t folded like a taco either; they’re usually a tri-fold.”

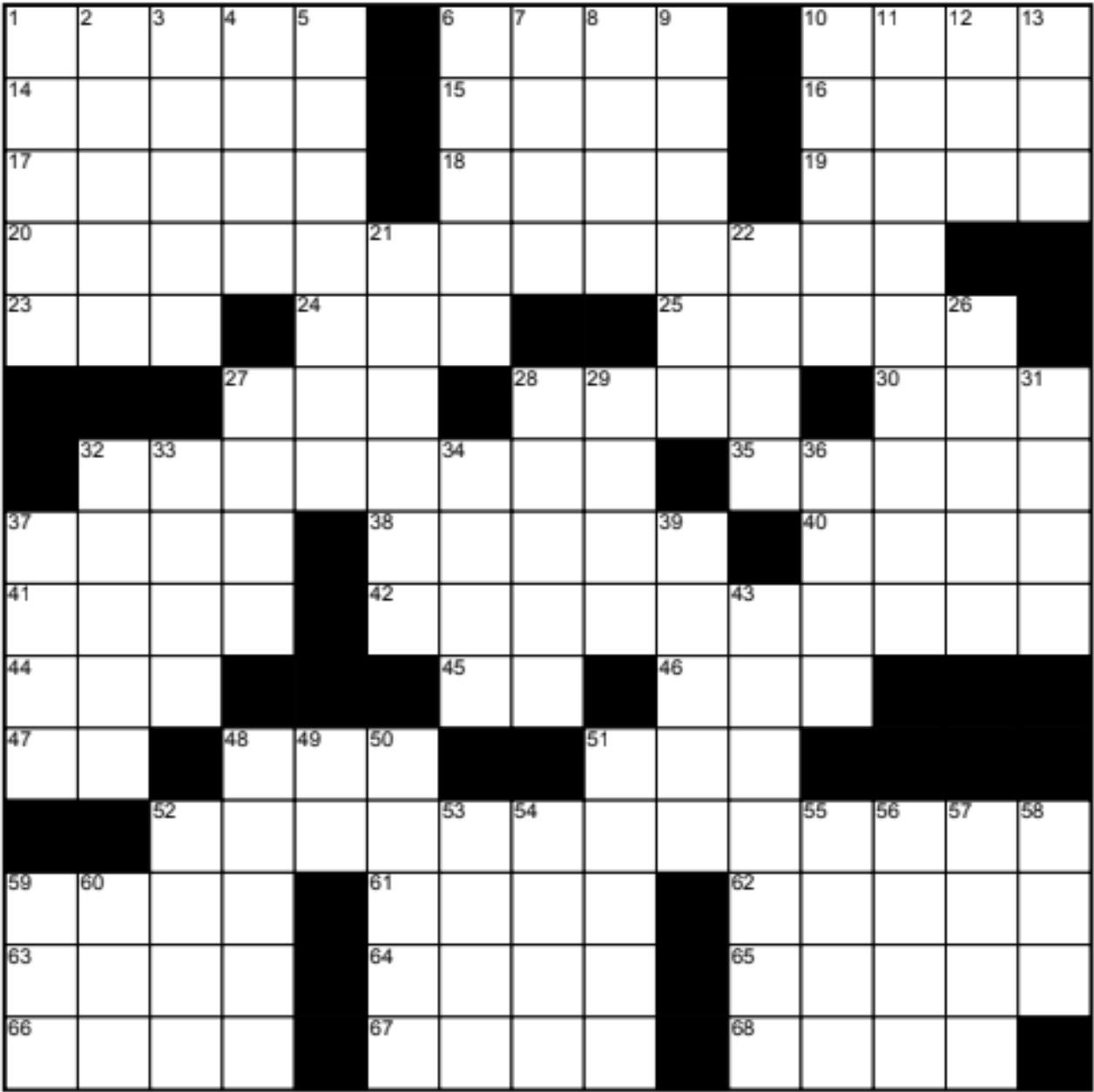
In Conclusion

While she no longer cooks professionally, Madame Blanche still loves food, particularly “bread and cheese. “Those I could just live off forever.” She also enjoys cooking jerk chicken and Cuban citrus pork, which she learned from a co-worker specializing in cuisine from the African Diaspora. Readers will be pleased to know that she also occasionally makes ratatouille. “I like to roast eggplant, zucchini, and tomatoes a lot, especially in the summer.”

With our time coming together to a close, Madame Blanche touches on the central message of the film — “Anyone can cook!” — offering words of encouragement to the next generation of chefs. “You have to really, really, really love food and cooking because it’s a very difficult profession; once you become a sous chef or a pastry chef, or chef, you’re working probably six days a week at least 12 hours a day.” Once you get past the grind however, she states you enter a world like no other full of “food, and that family atmosphere, and it’s really fun.”

Crossword: Let the Sunshine In

by Sofia Fontenot



ACROSS

- 1 Side of an animal
- 6 It may be full of bologna
- 10 Prefix for ‘potent’ or ‘present’
- 14 ‘___ turn’ (unlucky board game square)
- 15 Cookie cooker
- 16 Brunch or dinner
- 17 Sudden ___ symptoms
- 18 Bird house?
- 19 “When all __ fails...”
- 20 *Encouragement to the dusk to come faster?
- 23 Thing hidden up your sleeve?
- 24 Dash counterpart, in Morse
- 25 All set
- 27 Seoul-based Soul manufacturer
- 28 “If it ___ broke, don’t fix it”
- 30 Pole for fishing
- 32 *Full-costume practice for a summertime musical, with 42-Across?
- 35 Cleverly avoid
- 37 Suffix with ‘joy’ or ‘bike’
- 38 Go inside
- 40 “I couldn’t agree more!”

- 41 Stash
- 42 *See 32-Across
- 44 The Mystery Machine, for one
- 45 Mini iPhone type
- 46 Piece of yoga equipment
- 47 Media-managing dept., in business
- 48 Type of slow-drying paint
- 51 Little sister in ‘My Neighbor Totoro’
- 52 *What one might see through emerald-tinted glasses?
- 59 Dance that may be performed at a luau
- 61 Scottish vetoes
- 62 “That doesn’t surprise me”
- 63 “___ first you don’t succeed...”
- 64 Petty quarrel
- 65 “Nifty!”
- 66 A la ___ (with ice cream)
- 67 A piece of cake
- 68 Airport loading dock

DOWN

- 1 Fauna counterpart
- 2 Solitary type
- 3 Indian state known for its tea

- 4 “All You ___ Is Love”; 1967 song
- 5 Type of singing grasshopper
- 6 Holey confection?
- 7 Like numbers divisible by two
- 8 Fewer
- 9 Unpaid worker, perhaps
- 10 Alpha : first :: ___ : last
- 11 Overly sentimental theatrics
- 12 Rapper Lil ___ X
- 13 Tahiti, par exemple
- 21 High flier
- 22 Head of France?
- 26 Make a long-distance call?
- 27 “I ___ it all along!”
- 28 As far ___ eye can see
- 29 “How obvious it seems now!”
- 31 Bears’ hibernating spots
- 32 Stringed Indian instrument
- 33 Relative of 39-Down
- 34 Endings for ethyl- and benz-
- 36 Boundless
- 37 “Please reply,” initially
- 39 Starving college students’ sustenance
- 43 Banister
- 48 Give a speech
- 49 E.g.
- 50 Part of an eye or camera
- 51 Stale-smelling
- 52 “Orange you ___ I didn’t say banana?”
- 53 Cabbage type used for kimchi
- 54 Caspian and Baltic, for two
- 55 Place to buy storage shelves and Swedish meatballs
- 56 Pesky picnic fly
- 57 Table d’ ___ (fixed-price menu)
- 58 It takes ___ to tango
- 59 That guy over there
- 60 ET’s vehicle

Teacher Talk: A Special With Ms. Hall

by Mr. Landry and Ms. Manchac

For those of you who are not in Vocal, Ms. Julia Hall is retiring at the end of this year to “live her best life with the hummingbirds and butterflies and a few voice students to pay the mortgage.” She is one of the few teachers who has experience in all three HSPVA campuses. First as a vocal major at Temple Beth Israel located at 3517 Austin and later at the 4001 Stanford and 790 Austin campuses as a vocal faculty member. Before we lose such a wonderful trove of knowledge and stories, Teacher Talk thought we should sit down and have a chat about what it means to be a part of HSPVA.

What was your favorite campus and why?

Temple Beth Israel for sure – my high school campus where I forged life-long relationships. There was a big outside “commons” where happenings just “happened” during lunch and were not planned. There were no auditions of who did or did not perform and art flowed freely. It was also a smaller campus, 10th-12th grade only, so it was just over 400 students total. This meant that you knew everyone on campus and it felt like a big family.

Also, having three years instead of four meant there was a clear beginning, middle, and end, and you took advantage of each one. We also had a strong sense of community because we were so young as a school. PVA was an escape from the harsh realities of the outside world and we held ourselves to our sacred artistic space.

Unfortunately, some students presently choose to demean others instead of building them up, but we didn’t used to do that. Because we were still an experiment, we had a feeling of survival and responsibility for the future. There was a chance that if we did not do our part we might be closed. We were an important entity in the city...and look at us now!

Are there traditions that you wish could come back?

More improvised art events. We now have formal happenings, LDCs, DJ Fridays etc. Don’t get me wrong, after school events need to be planned and scheduled, but lunch can just happen! Art does not always need to be a production. Get a group of friends together and perform! This building has different places to perform that are different than what we have had before, but art is what we create, not where we are.

I also wish that once in a while we could remove phones and just be present with each other. I know this is not a “tradition”, but you are here in this wonderful place for four years and it will be over before you know it. Connect with the people here while you have the chance.

Beyond traditions, what do you feel makes HSPVA, HSPVA?

Students who may not “fit” at other schools have a safe home here. Being here you may not even realize it, but we are truly a unique school with a wonderful diverse group of young minds that is hard to find anywhere else. It is generally safe for students to experiment here and

find out what excites them. We are forgiving of each other and recognize that we are trying to grow in both the arts and as people. While not as much as I wish, we do care for each other and support each other, even if we have different interests. No day is the same.

What words of wisdom would you like to pass along to the students?

Be true to yourself and follow your dreams. This is your life. Learn from your mistakes and grow from your accomplishments. Ask for advice from those who have come before you and actually listen! While we are all different, we have more in common than you might think. Find that common ground and celebrate your differences. Every day is a chance to lift someone up, not put them down. The only way we will continue another 52 years of being HSPVA is by continuing to learn and grow.

Any words of wisdom for the faculty?

We are teachers. While it is ok to be kind and friendly, at the end of the day, we are the adults in the room and the students need us to help create a space where it is safe for them to grow academically and artistically. The more consistent we are, the better, as we help the students know expectations and boundaries.

Love your kids and hold yourself to a high standard and you will see the students will rise to meet you. Be a good mentor and role model. And finally, believe it or not 40 years will fly by... don’t give up!

Answers for your paper* puzzles!

Overheard-Teacher Matching:

1) G, 2) C, 3) A, 4) L, 5) D, 6) E, 7) J, 8) B, 9) H, 10) I, 11) F, 12) K

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Up, Up, and Away: The Class of 2023

- Soup Russell**- Syracuse University, Studio Art

Katie Randall- University of Texas at Austin, Radio-TV-Film

Alika Jimenez- Rice University, Cognitive Sciences and/or Social Policy Analysis

Gabby Iaroslavitz- University of Texas at San Antonio, Environmental Sciences

Allison Craft- Sewanee: The University of the South, Psychology

Christian Hinojosa- University of Texas at Austin, Plan II

Aaron LaVohn- University of Houston, Music Education

Elijah Islam- DePaul University, Theatre Studies

Brynn Carl- The University of Texas at Austin, Music Education

Akshay Padmakumar- The University of Texas at Austin, Electrical and Computer Engineering

Timothy Moss- Peabody, Vocal Performance

Reid Sline- Harvard, Neuroscience

Reid Sline- Miami University, Engineering Management for Environmental Engineering

Hayden Miller- Royal Academy of Music, Piano Performance

Chanice Posada- Howard University, Political Science with a minor in Journalism

Sophia Reinhardt - California Institute of the Arts, Fine Arts

Nicole Rodríguez Gálvez- New York University, Contemporary Voice

Kerrigan Gaither- Skidmore College, Psychology

Kat Henry- Sarah Lawrence College, English Literature

Layla Crear- The University of Texas, Theatre and Communications

Luke Hawash- Yale, Sports Management

Sam Goldfarb- University of Michigan, B.M. in Piano Performance

Mia Butler- University of Denver, Harp Music Performance

Brandon Hinrichs- University of Texas at San Antonio, Studio Art

Edlyn Escoto- Texas A&M Galveston, Marine Biology

Deonna Ford- University of Miami, Undeclared

Morgan Hsieh- University of Texas at Austin, Public Relations

Ashley Chu- University of Texas at Austin, Architectural Engineering

Hayden Patrice Brown- Kansas City Art Institute, Illustration

Zachary Enano- Kansas City Art Institute, Illustration

Christopher Christian- Kansas City Art Institute , Illustration

Sabena Sustaita- University of Houston, Accounting

Keira Modkins- School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Fine Art

Skye Guidry- University of North Texas, Bachelor of Music in Composition

Michael Chase- The Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University, Music for New Media

Aimee MacDonald- University of the Pacific, Jazz Studies

Vada Schneider- University of Houston, Piano Performance

Adrian Rodriguez- Penn State University, Microbiology

Caroline Anthony- Trinity University, Biology

Scout Brooks- Sarah Lawrence College, Theatre

Sonya Azencott- Bryn Mawr College, Classical and Near Eastern Cultures

Catalina Duong- University of Texas at Austin, Double Major in Dance and Biochemistry

Caroline Lawson- University of Houston Moores School of Music, Flute Performance

Derion Ervin- Xavier University of Louisiana, Biology pre-med

Rey Cooper- University of St. Andrews, Film Studies

Angela Mercado- DePaul University , Film and Television BFA

Elliot Stravato- Brown University, Visual Art and English (Double Major)

Haley Prince- Columbia College Chicago, Musical Theatre

Derion Ervin- Xavier University of Louisiana, Biology pre-med

Olivia Gonzales- Rice University, Vocal Performance

Ishan Baker- The University of Texas at Austin, Neuroscience

Cameron Allison- Parsons School of Design, Design and Technology

Breylyn Brown- University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Directing

Izabella Zhang- University of Texas at Austin, Canfield Business Honors

Oli Amrein- New York University, Dance BFA

Sofia Lowery- Trinity University, Physics and Percussion

Angela Mercado- DePaul University, Film and Television BFA

Maddy Nguyen- Brigham Young University, Economics

Seven Modad- Hampton University, Marine Science

Natalie Hampton- Stanford University, Undecided

Lina Wu- University of Houston Honors College, Business Marketing

Nic Malinsky- University of Vermont, Neuroscience

Sasha Bruk- Emerson College, Communication Disorders

Fiona Condron- University of Texas at Austin, Psychology

Ava Mackie- Rhodes College, Psychology

Rebecca Bloome- Brandeis University, Undecided

Jeffery Kepfer- United States Marine Corps

Heather Smith- Trinity University, Creative Writing and Communications

Elisabeth Ross- Kansas City Art Institute, Illustration

Noah Young- Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Horn Performance

Raelyn Pickens- University of North Texas, Double Majoring in Speech and Language Pathology and Early Elementary Education
- 

Overheard@PVA

“I thought someone was stealing my identity, but it turns out I’ve been putting in the wrong Social Security number for years!”

-Alexine Salmons

“Do pigeons have lungs?”

-Reid Sline

“Is that a breakup text? Those are the best.”

- Mr. Landry

“I want to be a housewife. I’m just done with this school.”

- Jasmine Lin

“If your mom drops you off in the middle of nowhere, that’s not my problem.”

- Mr. Waddell

“You don’t know if he’s facing forward or sideways... he’s that skinny!”

- Sra. Jiménez, on her husband

“I have no dignity- that’s why I’m in theatre.”

-Stefan Herrera

“I don’t need to pay \$15 to be Asian!”

- Eva Rami, on not joining AAPA Club

“I consider myself a vaccine for racism. I build up your tolerance slowly.”

-Connor Powers

“You’re cute... enjoy your unemployment.”

- Mrs. Landry

“It’s better to be pissed off than pissed on.”

-Zech Bocchetto

“Guys, I’m not racist, I’m just trying to be funny.”

-Mr. D

“God gave you one butt, use it or you lose it.”

-James Perales

“I’ve always wanted to zine-bomb the school.... No wait, like a confetti bomb! Anyways, whatever. I love this place.”

-Ms. Switek

“I am biracial. My dad’s from New Jersey and my mom’s from Alabama.”

- Jones Bowman

“I want to be reincarnated as a memorial bench so people can sit on me.”

-Isobel Stevenson

“You think I have influence over the moms?”

-Mr. Hammon

“The jazz kids may be goofy, but they’re also some of the most normal students in the school.”

-Mr. Sneed

“I don’t like listening to bald people.”

-Alex Graf

“Instead of soh-cah-toa, it’s suck-my-toes.”

-Mr. Pham

“You have some choices, but you can’t escape the Great Depression.”

-Ms. Chase