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THE PROWLER

Quince Orchard High School — 15800 Quince Orchard Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20878 — [@qohs_prowler](#)

New interim superintendent Felder has many years of experience in MCPS, other states

BY CHRISTIAN LEE
Staff Writer

The Montgomery County Board of Education appointed Dr. Monique Felder as interim superintendent on February 6, after the previous superintendent Dr. Monifa McKnight stepped down over disapproval and dissatisfaction among the MCPS community concerning staff misconduct and deficiencies in the Department of Compliance and Investigations.

“Dr. Felder has a long and successful career in public education, and is already familiar with MCPS,” said Karla Silvestre, president of the Board of Education. “We are confident that her background in district leadership, instruction and administration makes her the right person to carry us through this transition and begin the work to rebuild trust among staff and the community, while we identify the next permanent superintendent.”

On the same day, Dr. Felder released a statement reintroducing herself to MCPS families. “After nearly a decade away, I am thrilled to be back in the district that molded me into the educator and leader I am today. As someone with deep ties to MCPS, I hold a profound understanding of the strengths and challenges we face, and I am fully committed to ensuring the

continued success of our schools.” Felder continued in declaring, “In my role as the interim superintendent over these next few months, my primary objective is to create stability within the district. I want to ensure consistency for our staff, students, and families and pave the way for a seamless transition to the next superintendent. My immediate focus is on closing out the 2023-24 school year on a high note and keeping the spotlight firmly on our students where it belongs.”

Prior to her rise to superintendency, Dr. Felder worked for 15 years in MCPS as a principal, assistant principal and classroom teacher, during which she was recognized with the International Reading Association’s Award for Exemplary Reading Programs in the state of Maryland, and as a finalist for The Washington Post’s Outstanding Leadership Award. Shortly thereafter, she served as the Executive Director for Teaching and Learning at Prince George’s County Public Schools, as well as the Chief Academic Officer for Metro Nashville Public Schools, which raised SAT scores and decreased suspensions during her tenure. Since then, she has spent four years as superintendent for Orange County Public Schools in North Carolina, where she was nominated for Regional Superintendent of the Year.

Dr. Felder holds a bachelor of

arts degree in elementary education from York College, a master’s degree from Johns Hopkins University with a specialization in elementary science and mathematics, and a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Virginia Tech. She has also pursued post-doctoral studies at McDaniel College, earning an advanced certificate in Equity and Excellence in Education.

However, within her 32 years of experience in public education, Dr. Felder was also the subject of a series of investigative reports from 2016 through 2019, when News Channel 5 in Nashville found numerous problems in the city’s schools.

In February 2019, News Channel 5 reported, “A top Metro Schools official [Dr. Felder] pocketed thousands of dollars in consulting fees from a group with ties to companies doing business with the district. But our News Channel 5 investigation discovered that Dr. Monique Felder failed to disclose money that she received in 2017 until auditors started asking questions.”

More specifically, a recently released audit of Metro Nashville Public Schools reported that Dr. Felder received \$4,000 in 2017 from the Education Research and Development Institute, an industry trade group that pays school officials to sit down with technology companies, giving them feedback on products they hope to sell to those

officials.

Then, in November 2019, Dr. Felder left Nashville for the superintendent position at Orange County Public Schools in North Carolina.

During a news conference on February 6, Felder was asked about the previous financial disclosure situation from her time serving in Nashville, which she cited as a simple error.

In the announcement regarding her hiring, the Montgomery County Board of Education wrote, “In the vein of transparency, the Board wants to make it clear that they are aware of a prior investigation into the financial disclosure reporting of an honorarium received by Dr. Felder from an educational consulting company in 2019. The Board has reviewed the findings and is confident that the findings were unsubstantiated as the report concluded. The Board is confident that Dr. Felder is a trustworthy, upstanding and highly respected educational leader who will be able to competently guide MCPS through this transition.”

With MCPS’s transition to new leadership, students, staff, and families alike are anticipating the return of a leader who can support them through the upcoming school year and put them at the forefront of their agenda.

Finalists selected for 2024 SMOB election

BY NADIA AUNG
Staff Writer

On February 14, Sam (Samantha) Ross and Praneel Suvarna were selected as finalists for the MCPS Student Member of the Board (SMOB). Ross and Suvarna will continue to campaign in the upcoming weeks, working hard to become the 47th elected SMOB, representing 160,000 MCPS students.

What is a SMOB? A SMOB is a high school junior or senior who is a voting member of the Montgomery County Board of Education. They can vote on matters related to collective bargaining, capital and operating budgets, and school closings, reopenings and boundaries.

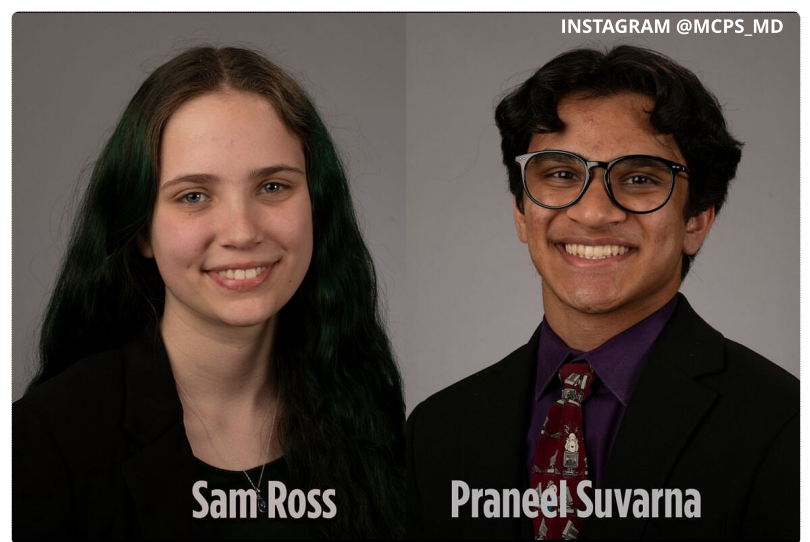
Ross is a junior at Montgomery Blair High School. She has much experience leading and advocating in MCPS: She is currently serving as Director of Community Relations in the Montgomery County Regional SGA, co-chaired an MCPS committee. She has testified 12 times at the Board and once to the county council, advocating for students on a variety of issues from mental health and safety, to construction and the budget, and works with current SMOB Sami Saeed. Ross is also an

intern for MCPS, where she watches meetings and takes notes, gives observations about different trends in MCPS and education, writes summaries of public comments and other documents, and learns about how the system works overall.

Ross’s biggest priority in her SMOB campaign is ensuring students are heard. “We’re all on the same team, we all want student success, but students feel so disconnected from the leadership and staff of MCPS. I want to fix that by encouraging MCPS leadership to make themselves more visible to students by engaging students and by always bringing to the Board table what the students think,” she said in an interview with The Prowler.

Outside of her advocacy, she does gymnastics and rowing, along with teaching gymnastics at UMD to kids. She enjoys spending time outdoors with her family and friends and likes to attend events like sports games and concerts.

Like Ross, Suvarna has also been able to intern at MCPS’s central office. He also served as the Vice President of Montgomery County Regional Student Government Association (MCR), where he has been able to speak to hundreds of



students across the county about the issues they care about.

Suvarna has always wanted to help people around him. “It’s a big part of who I am and the main reason I got involved in advocacy and SGA,” he said in an interview with The Prowler. “After having worked within the advocacy side of MCPS over the last couple of years, I know how the system works and I’m ready to get change accomplished,” he added.

The number one issue that Suvarna wants to address is the drug and opioid crisis within our schools. “This is not an issue that has gone away over the past year, and I think a critical step that we need to take is to pass a resolution that calls for MCPS

staff and security to be equipped with narcan, alongside placing safety buttons in bathrooms,” he said.

For the past two years, Suvarna was a varsity wrestling athlete, alongside being involved in chorus and theater. He was also able to help start the Model UN team at Clarksburg, where he’s been able to connect with students of all backgrounds across the county, understanding different issues and perspectives.

Voting will be live on Wednesday, April 17 and is open to all middle and high school students in MCPS. Information will be sent through school emails as the election gets closer.



MCPS considers the fate of key programs in next year's budget

BY MAGGIE BRADY
Staff Writer

With the budget for the 2025 fiscal year (FY25) due soon, the MCPS Board of Education has big decisions to make regarding the funding of several MCPS programs. The three programs most at risk of being modified or even eliminated are the MCPS Virtual Academy (MVA), the Innovative Schools Initiative (ISC), and the Leader In Me (LiM) program.

The MVA was established in 2021 and provides online education for students in grades one through twelve. The academy consists of a comprehensive instructional program where students engage in synchronous and asynchronous lessons five days a week. The MVA provides "students in critical thinking by providing student choice, and cultivating social-emotional well-being in a safe space," according to the MVA's website.

The program originally received its funding from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief fund (ESSER) in March of 2020. The fund was established to provide relief to all public schools from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the money from the ESSER is no longer available, and the MVA is at risk of being eliminated from MCPS funding for future school years.

Several students, teachers, and

parents testified at a Board meeting on February 20 advocating for the program. "The Virtual Academy represents an innovative approach to meeting the needs of these students. Our students are not only thriving, but they are exceeding standards," said Nancy Perry, a teacher at the Virtual Academy.

Those in support of the program are hoping it can simply be reduced to a sustainable size instead of being done away with for good. "For many families, the Virtual Academy is the only place where their students have been successful," said Perry.

"The Leader in Me (LIM) program is not the social-emotional support that our students need in general, nor appropriate for pandemic fallout."

-Melissa McKenna

Another program that could potentially be removed in FY25 is the Innovative Schools initiative. This program has been implemented in

two elementary schools, Arcola ES and Roscoe E. Nix ES, and has received mixed reviews from those involved. Based on board testimony, the Arcola community seems to only have positive things to say about the initiative, while those at Roscoe E. Nix are hoping to see the program come to an end.

Through the Innovative Schools initiative, students at these two schools have an extended school year starting around 30 days earlier than most other MCPS schools. "This early start reduces summer learning loss and gives students a jump-start on their school year, as they explore new concepts and connect with signature programs like Project Lead the Way," according to the MCPS website.

At the February 20 Board meeting, members of the Arcola community collected to show their support for the program. "[T]he Innovative School Calendar is moving the needle for students' academic achievement, and also for the overall well-being of our children, parents, and community," said Lyndon Orinion, the Vice President of the Arcola PTA, in his testimony before the Board.

However, these sentiments were not shared by parents and teachers at Roscoe Nix, who came before the Board and pleaded for the removal of the program. Many referred to the fact that "ISC did not have a

detectable effect on student reading and mathematics performance by the Spring administration of the MAP," according to an evaluation done by MCPS in August 2023.

The final program at risk is the Leader in Me program, which was initially established in the 2021-2022 school year where it was implemented in 80 elementary, middle, and high schools, including QO. The program itself seeks to "empower[s] students, educators, and families with essential leadership and life skills, preparing them to excel," according to the LiM website.

The renewal of LiM for the FY25 did not receive much support Board meeting. "The Leader in Me (LIM) program is not the social emotional support that our students need in general, nor appropriate for pandemic fallout," said Melissa McKenna, a member of the NAACP's parent's council, in her testimony before the BOE.

Debates regarding each program's future funding within MCPS will continue throughout March and into the month of May. The Board hopes to adopt the finalized budget for FY25 in early June.



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ABOUT

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

Larry Hogan, former Maryland governor, announces his run for Senate

BYKAYLA PILLOFF
Staff Writer

Larry Hogan, the former governor of Maryland from 2015 to 2023, has officially announced that he will be running for Senate.

Hogan will be running for an open seat, as Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Maryland) announced that he is retiring once he finishes out his term. Cardin has been in office for 17 years.

Hogan is a member of the Republican party, a stark contrast from Maryland, a deep blue state. However, he was a popular critic of former President Donald Trump and left the governor's office with a 77% approval rating, according to a Gonzales poll.

Despite such a high approval rating, Hogan running for Senate raises some serious concerns for the Democratic Party, who approve of him running the state but worry about him pushing the Senate even further right. One of the key issues being abortion. This issue was raised immediately, with the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee releasing a statement that said: "A vote for Republican Larry Hogan is a vote to make Mitch McConnell Majority Leader and turn the Senate over to Republicans so they can pass a national abortion ban."

In terms of Hogan's opinions, he has stated that he personally opposes abortions, but "never sought to overturn Maryland law protecting the procedure," according to the Baltimore Sun.

Despite this, in 2022 he "vetoed legislation to end a restriction that only physicians provide abortions" which was ultimately overridden by Democrats who control the legislature, according to AP News. He then "refused to release \$3.5 million in the state budget to help fund training," according to CBS News.

Hogan's main competition is Congressman David Trone (D-06) and Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks (D). In a poll conducted by Ragnar Research Partners (commissioned by the NRSC), which surveyed 600 likely voters, Hogan garnered 49% support, compared to Trone's 33%. Between Hogan and Alsobrooks, the survey reported Hogan with 52% support, with Alsobrooks at 23%. Another poll, conducted by Emerson College, which surveyed 1,000 licensed voters, showed Hogan and Trone tied with 42%, and Hogan leading over Alsobrooks 44% to 37%.

While still early, these polls show that Hogan is a promising candidate for the GOP, which is key for the Republican party if they want to flip the Senate and elect a new Senate leader, as McConnell has announced he is retiring in November. According to the Washington Post, "Republicans need to flip two seats to win back power if President Biden is re-elected, but just one if Mr. Trump or another Republican captures the White House."

In terms of other candidates, Trone currently presents the most competition for Hogan. Trone, who owns Total Wine & More, has not shied away from using money towards his campaign. As of the beginning of February, Trone has spent \$23.3 million straight from his pocket, according to MoCo360. He also has reported that he is willing to spend upwards of \$50 million on his campaign.

Luanne Bru, an AP US Government teacher explains the importance of that fact. "Money is crucial because media exposure is everything," she said. "Historically, the more money a candidate has, the more likely—unless they are an incumbent—the more likely they are



Larry Hogan, former governor of Maryland.

to win."

And while Hogan is not an incumbent for the Senate, he was the governor of Maryland for eight years. Familiarity could play a key role in Hogan getting votes, as name recognition is huge.

"People are aware of who [Hogan] is and so I do think that if people don't educate themselves, what do they always do?" Bru added. "They [pick] the name they hear."

Primaries take place on May 14, and General elections take place on November 5. With an open seat in the Senate, Maryland citizens' votes could play a key role in which party captures the Senate majority.





What to expect from the 2024 presidential election

BY PATRINA PUN
Senior Staff Writer

In just a little over half a year, many Americans will be participating in one of the most anticipated events of the year—the 2024 presidential election. The national election will be taking place on November 5 with two candidates from both parties: current President Joe Biden of the Democratic party and former President Donald Trump of the Republican party.

According to NBC, President Biden was a former senator and lawyer before his elected presidency. Biden strongly advocates for social security, medicare, equal tax distribution, and much more as a standing Democrat since 1969. He was elected to the presidency in January 2021 after successfully beating Trump. However, according to Reuters, his approval rating has significantly decreased since the beginning of his term, as now 58% of Americans disapprove of him according to one recent poll. Despite Biden's controversial presidency, he has made notable efforts for reelection.

In the recent State of the Union address to Congress given by Biden, he covered a variety of topics including his accomplishments as President, his second-term agenda, and reelection. According to CNN, in controversial topics such as

abortion or immigration,

Biden would compare his views to Trump's view, which was rewarded with cheers from the Democrats. Regarding the unfounded allegations Trump made with the 2020 election being "stolen," Biden commented that the election rumors itself is the "gravest threat to democracy."

Throughout the address, Biden demonstrated enthusiasm and energy despite comments regarding his age. He also continued to advocate for American leadership abroad such as instances like the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. Biden took this opportunity to outline his campaign for re-election as he referred to the next four years to be "the greatest comeback story never told."

On the other hand, former President Trump has returned yet again to campaign for his second term of presidency despite legal challenges against him. According to NBC, since 2021, Trump has been federally charged with mishandling classified documents and indicted in a case related to a payoff to a porn star. According to Bloomberg News, Trump is appealing many of his cases for the time being.

Despite questions of the legality of Trump's campaign, according to AP News, if Trump were to win a



second term he pledged to, among other things, control the US-Mexico border and to "stop the invasion of our southern border" by ending all illegal immigration. He wants to undergo the largest deportation operation in American history. He also plans to terminate the Department of Education and end the war in Ukraine before he is even inaugurated to stop the "endless flow of American treasure to Ukraine."

Many things are still subject to change in this eventful time leading up to November, including the decision of the American citizen.

"That's you, the American people."
-Joe Biden



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Russian opposition leader dies in prison

BY ISADORA KAUFMAN
Editor-in-Chief

Last month, Alexei Navalny, Russian President Vladimir Putin's greatest opponent, passed away on February 16. The medical staff who attempted to resuscitate Navalny, after he suddenly went unconscious, told his family he died from "Sudden Death Syndrome."

According to Reuters, another prisoner claims that the ambulance arrived several hours later after Navalny's death, suggesting the prison staff did not give Navalny a fair chance at survival.

Navalny passed away in a Russian prison in the Polar Wolf colony, known to be "one of the toughest prisons in Russia," according to Reuters. The prison is known for its extremely frigid climate, cruel punishments, and lack of proper treatment and food for the prisoners. Navalny was imprisoned due to multiple charges against him that are highly speculated to be created by Putin and his Kremlin regime as a way to silence his voice.

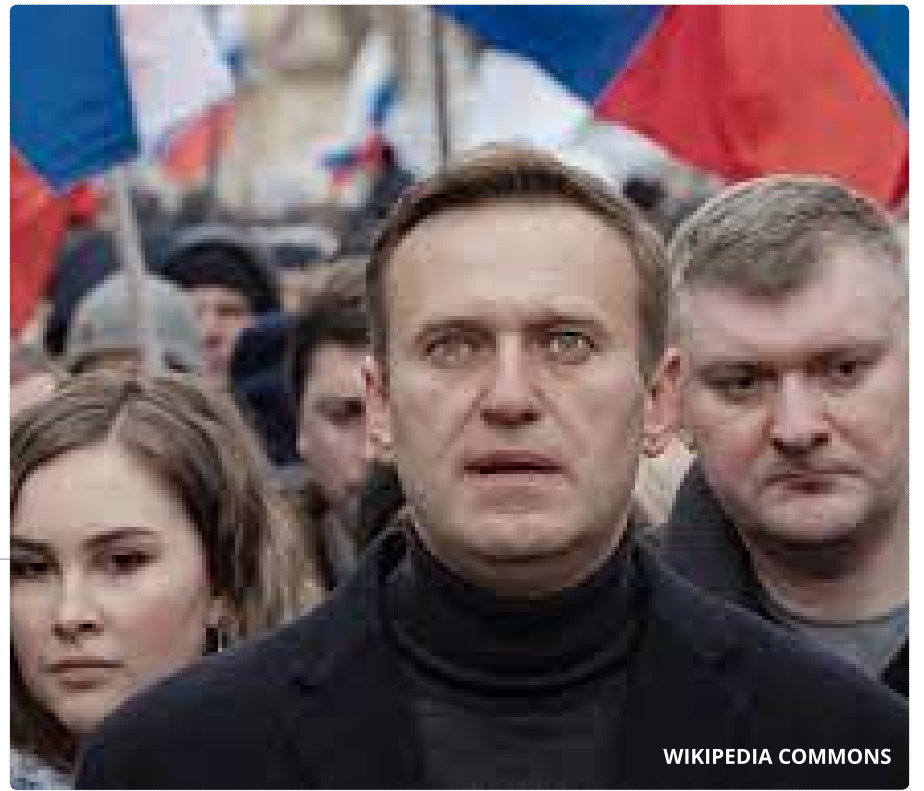
Navalny has been the leader of Russia's opposition to Putin's leadership for over ten years. He is known for his brave acts of rebellion against Putin's attempt at censoring any negative comments made about him, by organizing large protests, doing investigations on the corruption of Russia's government, and openly sharing the corruption he discovers on social media platforms like YouTube where his channel has over 6 million followers. He famously posted one video on YouTube where

he "accused then Prime-Minister Dmitry Medvedev of corruption, getting over seven million views in its first week," according to the New York Times.

Throughout his career as an activist, several attempts had been made to hurt and assassinate Navalny, including poison in his food and chemicals being thrown in his face. Despite the constant risk being so outspoken posed to his safety, Navalny never showed signs of giving up. Even during one of his court hearings, his statement to his supporters was: "I'm not afraid and you should not be afraid."

While his death caused an increase in political protests, and many publicly mourned his passing, Jamie Dettmer of Politico wrote that "this hardly amounts to a political awakening or outpouring," explaining how, without a strong opposition leader like Navalny, there is no real threat to Putin's power or guarantee of a change in the future. Dettmer explains how Putin's voice remains powerful, especially in influencing people's view of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, as he still has the "continued support from most Russians... who adhere to his historical narrative that Ukraine is irrevocably part of the 'Russian World.'"

In a PBS interview with Dan Storyev, a managing editor of an organization known as OVD-Info that works "to end political persecution in Russia," Storyev expressed a more positive sentiment for the future of Russia. He explained that although this marks the loss of a



leader, Navalny's symbolism and spirit still remains in the Russian people who are "taking all the power they have and they are trying to carry Navalny's banner." He says it is "quite clear that the Russian opposition is not mourning... but organizing."

As Navalny was buried, the soundtrack of the famous action movie "Terminator 2" played in the background. Storyev explains how he believes this is a purposeful reference to the final shot of Terminator 2, where the main character goes down

with a thumbs up, and it "sums up what Navalny would have wanted... that he believed in a Russia that is not just free, but in a Russia that is happy and beautiful."



KEEPING UP WITH THE KOUGARS

BY PATRINA PUN
Senior Staff Writer

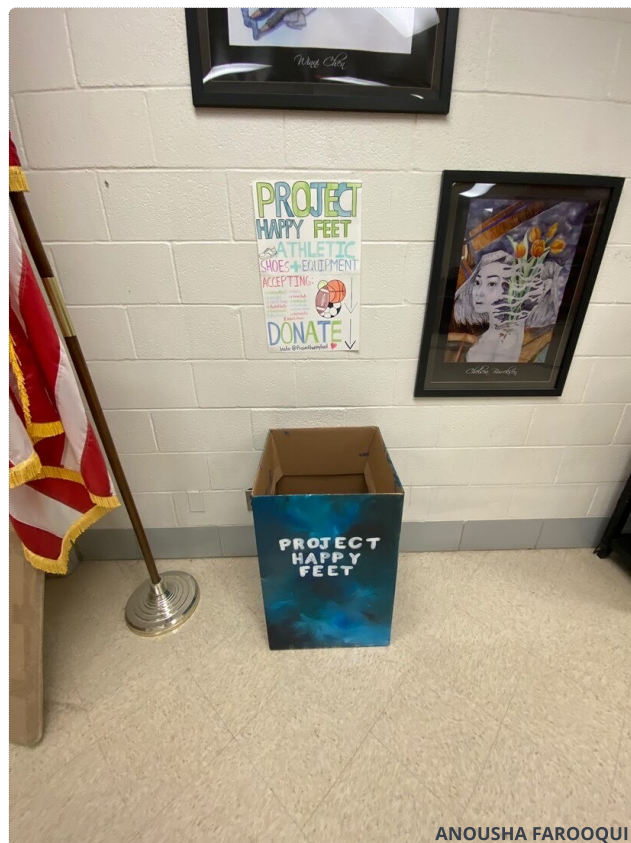
Welcome back, Cougars! Featured here is our column highlighting important events and the inside scoop at QO, so that you can Keep Up With the Kougars!

PROJECT HAPPY FEET AT QUINCE ORCHARD:

Project Happy Feet is an up and coming organization that has expanded nation-wide. The organization is now present at Quince Orchard High School where a donation box is located in the front lobby. Students are able to donate old athletic shoes.

The organization was first created by a group of UCLA medical students who dedicated their time towards providing the homeless with podiatric care. The concept quickly gained traction and expanded across states such as Georgia, Texas, New York, and Maryland. Local schools here in MCPS such as Churchill, Clarksburg, Northwest, and even Quince Orchard have donation boxes set up.

Sophomore Anousha Farooqui is an ambassador of the organization and has started the Quince Orchard donation box. Every month, Farooqui will empty out the box and perform a shoe cleaning, after which her team will then decide which school will receive the donations. Additionally, Farooqui is consistently hanging flyers up



ANOUSHA FAROOQUI

and creating posters to draw attention to the organization. Outside of school, she aids in setting up fundraisers at sports events such as the Capital Hill Volleyball Tournament.

This organization is certainly not made up of a group of people, but rather a community of people as Quince Orchard students are highly encouraged to participate. By spreading the word or donating, Quince Orchard students can make a difference and help sports to be accessible to everyone.

Farooqui joined this organization to aid her community and create a

better environment for others.

She first learned of this organization through the usage of social media and thought to start a donation box at Quince Orchard. By being a part of this organization, she says, she stays connected with her community to ensure she does not "miss out on an experience of a lifetime."

If you would like to be featured in our next issue of Keeping Up with the Kougars, please reach out to us through our email at QOHSproowler@gmail.com!




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Believers vs. skeptics: do you follow superstitions?

BY MOLLY RUBMAN
Staff Writer

Imagine this: you're walking down the street on a gloomy day after having a hard week, and come across a field with a four-leaf clover poking out. You pick up that clover and all of a sudden the next day you wake up and feel much better, the sun is out, and you're optimistic for the week ahead. Was it the four-leaf clover that did that? Do you believe objects or actions that we take can alter our lives in supernatural ways?

As St. Patrick's Day falls upon us in two days, the shamrock starts appearing everywhere. Contrary to what some believe, though, the shamrock and the four-leaf clover are not the same and represent different things. The shamrock is one of the symbols of Ireland and of St. Patrick himself—Ireland's patron saint—and is used as a metaphor for the Holy Trinity. On the other hand, the four-leaf clover is just a plant that looks similar to the shamrock and is said to bring good luck.

So while we start to see all of these green little plants around, do people truly believe that good spirits are in the air? Is it just the four-leaf clover that 'brings people luck' or are there other symbols or precautions people believe will make their lives better? How many people truly believe in good luck charms or superstitions, and if they do what are they?

We have all heard the usual and well-known superstitions such as "step on the crack, you break your mother's back" or "Don't look a black cat in the eyes." But what other ones are there?

Physics and chemistry teacher Oliver Llewellyn claims he has several superstitions. "Don't walk under a ladder; never put new shoes on a table or a countertop; if you spill salt, throw it over your left shoulder as quick as you can; if you see a magpie (bird) you are supposed to salute it; don't break a mirror; Friday the 13th, obviously. Never plan on doing anything that day," he says. When asked what will happen if he does not complete these actions, Llewellyn said, "Bad luck, of course."

Others have more ritualized superstitions that they believe completing will bring them good luck rather than prevent bad luck. Senior Cadyn O'Halloran, for example, explains one of her rituals. "I have a sweatshirt that I wear for every SAT and AP test, and I always do better with it," she says.

Likewise, senior Alina Miller also performs actions for good luck. "I have rituals such as box breathing and grounding myself that I do before tests or performances to help me do better," Miller says.

However, not everyone feels this way, like junior Marvin Zacarias, who says he does not have any superstitions.

"I don't have any superstitions because I don't believe in them," he says. "I don't think something small like knocking on wood is going to affect my day."

Similar to Zacarias, AP Psychology and women's studies teacher Jessica Burdette also does not believe in superstitions. "I don't believe in fate. I actually believe more in free will, where I make my future," Burdette says.



CREAZILLA

There is still the question of the true reasoning behind these ideas, perspectives, and beliefs. Is there factual evidence that performing a certain action will genuinely alter your day ahead? When asked what Llewellyn's reasoning is that superstitions actually makes a difference in life, he leaves us with a critical question.

"What's my reasoning? Do you have any reason to doubt it? I think the burden of proof is on you," he said.

Student opinions on Daylight Savings Time

BY BROOKE LYONS
Staff Writer

As we approach spring, the flowers start to bloom and the weather starts to warm. While our moods begin to brighten, the sky follows suit. When the sun rises an hour earlier in the winter, and an hour later in the spring this is typically what we refer to as Daylight Saving Time (DST).

This year, DST started on Sunday, March 10 at 2:00 AM local time and will be in effect until early November.

The history of these sudden changes in time date back to World War I. In 1916 Germany, this concept was introduced as a way to save energy. The US took inspiration and implemented this change in 1918, but it failed to succeed due to farmer protests.

DST was implemented once again during World War II; however, it failed once more. DST began to become more recognized, though,

and in 1966, DST was signed into law by Congress, which still exists today.

Multiple studies from Business Insider explains the drawbacks of losing an hour of sleep as short-term symptoms include a state of jetlag, an increased risk of car crashes, and an increased risk of work accidents. These symptoms are typically associated with losing an hour of daylight in the spring.

But what do students today think about the unchanged implementation of DST? Senior Devyn Dees said, "In the wintertime, my family gets home later, and in the summer they're home earlier, but both can have negative consequences."

"I know people would want to get rid of this day which I think is silly," Dees added, "but depending on how many people want to get rid of DST, it might be gone in the future."

Senior Neheid "Tay" Balala has a more inspirational view on Daylight Savings. "I think humans should always adapt to their surroundings,

and Daylight Savings Time is a switch where the most thriving people will thrive," he said.

Balala runs a local clothing brand by the name of 'Left Paris' as he said, "Humans like to work in the morning for the sunshine. I like to work every hour". He believes that Daylight Savings Time shouldn't impact his schedule on shipping and bringing customers quality-made clothing.

Some productivity tips for DST, in addition to internal motivation, are getting more sunlight, adjusting your clocks to designated times, and making sure you keep intact with your circadian rhythm.

Sophomore Elle Vuong shared rather neutral views on DST. "This day doesn't affect me that much, so it's not that significant to me," she said.

Vuong also explained, "I thought daylight saving time was just dependent on what the sun does. I don't know if people actually get affected." Her response is reflected in data shown by the online newspaper

Bergen Record that stated 83% of people surveyed believe this clock-moving ritual doesn't help with conserving energy.

According to Fox Business, 57% of people disapproved of this time-changing ritual, 22% enjoyed it, and 21% were neutral. How do you feel about our clocks recently losing an hour?



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MUSIC BY JOHN KANDER

LYRICS BY FRED EBB

BASED ON THE PLAY BY MAURINE DALLAS WATKINS

SCRIPT ADAPTATION BY DAVID THOMPSON

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MS. BURDETTE

Social Studies Department

Q: Why did you decide to start the Women's Studies class at QO?

A: "I wanted to be able to offer students an opportunity to learn and talk about issues that they experience differently from everyone else, and give students a place where everyone could feel comfortable asking uncomfortable questions."

Q: Why is it important to teach about the subject?

A: "Quite frankly, girls grow up thinking it's inappropriate to ask questions about themselves; we're supposed to "just know" stuff. It's also really important for everyone to consider a class like this because it will challenge your existing worldviews and help everyone become more aware and empathetic to what people who are not like them are experiencing. Finally, it's an opportunity to teach students where change is needed and how to foster that change - big and small."

Q: What are your experiences being a woman in education?

A: "Fortunately, I don't have any super dramatic experiences of being marginalized in education. I have experienced microaggressions from colleagues, [and I've] missed opportunities because those in charge didn't think I'd be interested because they assumed I was too busy, so they didn't tell me about it. Mostly, I've been fortunate to have supportive women in leadership who guide, encourage, and empower me."

MS. BLANCHARD

English Department

Q: What's it like juggling being a mom and a teacher?

A: "It's kind of like being a juggler, ha ha. There are always balls in the air (e.g. lesson planning, grading, teaching both my students and my 3-year-old, cleaning, making dinner, etc.), but only the next one coming down is the priority. Once you toss that one in the air, the next one takes precedence... and so on and so forth."

Q: What are your experiences being a woman in education?

A: "In education, it's been much easier to be a woman than I imagine in other professions, as education is overwhelmingly female-dominated. The pros have definitely been that I've been literally mentored and "grown" by females in power. I get to collaborate with amazing women every day. Some of the women I work with are even some of my best friends. It's been great!"

Q: What do you like to do outside of school?

A: "I'm a big fan of physical activity. I ride my Peloton bike a lot. I also like to go to the gym to do more crossfit-style workouts. Oh, let me not forget that I also like to eat. My favorite dish is the Universe Roll (sushi) from Asia 9. Yum!"

MRS. HAASE

Science Department

Q: What is it like being a woman in the STEM field?

A: "I have been VERY lucky in that I've never faced the kind of discrimination that some other women have. Have I run into people being dismissive or less invested in me than they were in other (male) students?... I will say that of the three professors that served on my thesis committee, the two women were by far more supportive and engaged in the day-to-day aspects of my research than my male advisor. But again, that could just be that my research lined up more with theirs than with his, or even that he already had one foot out the door. Compare that to the women science friends I have at certain federal agencies that have been part of class-action lawsuits involving gender discrimination—I've never faced anything like that. That said, what I did learn as an archaeologist is that women tend to have a much different career path than men. Globally the majority of archaeology majors are women, but if you look at professional archaeologists, it is a male-dominated field."

Q: Can you tell us about your time working at NASA before becoming a teacher in MCPS?

A: "I was able to transition my archaeology background into an Education and Outreach consultant for NASA Headquarters... It was my job to translate what the literal rocket scientists and brain surgeons said into something that non-scientists would understand. I wrote speeches, congressional testimony, journal articles, and K-12 curriculum, and I staffed the NASA booth at the big math and science education conferences. I mostly worked with scientists and engineers, but some of them had also been astronauts, which was always cool."

INSPIRING WOMEN AT QO

In honor of Women's History Month

By SOPHIA LEE & MADDIE KING

MRS. KEUNE

Social Studies Department

Q: How many years have you been teaching here?

A: "I have been at QO since it opened in 1988, making this my 35th year at QO."

Q: Over the years, how has the stigma around being a female teacher at QO changed?

A: "When the school first opened, there were many more men in leadership positions—Since there were more men than women in Social Studies, and since we [had] a male resource teacher, the women of the department would have an annual Women's Party to help develop support for each other."

Q: Any advice for girls at QO who want to go into education?

A: "I would advise girls to go in to education only if they really want to teach! They need to teach subjects they love, so teaching will be a joy and not a chore."



TikTok vs. Music Taste: How influential is TikTok to its users?

BY AMBRIELLA YAGAKA
Staff Writer

Have you ever heard the saying “You have TikTok music taste?” Or have you noticed that most songs in your playlist come from your saved sound collection on TikTok? Well, this saying has evolved from the rising popularity of the app. TikTok became popular in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic and has become the most downloaded since then. One could say that it is the most used and influential app for users.

This is common in the new age of social media as TikTok has become the most popular social music streaming app that allows people to create 3-second to 10-minute videos. Due to its massive popularity, rising music creators find themselves promoting their music on the platform to gain listeners. You even find bigger celebrities on TikTok promoting their music, like Nicki Minaj, Ariana Grande, The Weeknd, and more.

Due to this fact, having a “TikTok music taste” is less of an insult and more of a common fact. If you’re on TikTok, there’s a high chance that you will be influenced by content creators trying to promote their music, whether it’s a big artist trying to promote a new song or a small music artist trying to make a living.

As mentioned earlier, TikTok

even has a feature that specifically allows a user to save sounds and music from a video that they want to use later. Or you could also just be saving a song because you find it catchy and want to add it to a playlist later. This is how the music TikTok works: creators create and the watchers are influenced.

To demonstrate this phenomenon, an interview was conducted with QO senior Sidhika Shah about how TikTok influences someone’s playlist. The interview is sourced from an AP Psychology study by Shah and some of her classmates, including QO seniors Lola Iwayemi and Lazar Bozac. This assignment’s goal is to learn how experiments are carried out in psychology and what is ethical. Since TikTok is such a mass-used app, they decided that an experiment on this topic would create interesting results. It will show just how influential TikTok is to the teenage group of users’ lifestyles.

The assignment was to design an experiment following the appropriate experimental design: hypothesis, control and experimental groups, independent and dependent variables, and a brief description of your proposed method to demonstrate your knowledge. They went around interviewing those who use TikTok for at least an hour and a half a day, comparing playlists to trendy songs on TikTok.

Q: Can you explain what the psychology assignment was about?

A: We had 20 people: a control group, and an experimental group. The control group said that if people spend less than a certain amount on TikTok and their music app, then they can be a part of the control group and for the experimental group, we decided that anyone who spends more than an hour and a half or two hours on TikTok, we would check their music playlist and see if the songs from TikTok match the songs that they have on their playlist to see if TikTok has affected their music taste.

Q: Did your group choose this topic? If yes, why?

A: We had to make up our own experiment. We chose it because social media plays a very big role right now, especially for teenagers, so we thought it would be a good idea.

Q: How did you collect your information?

A: We went around and asked people to collect some data from them, and they let us. And then we added it all to a Google form to study.

Q: Did you go for a specific group of people? Grade? Age?

A: We mostly did all grades—as long as you’re in high school and a teenager—because including elderly people would create confounding variables.

Q: How many respondents did you obtain?

A: I don’t remember the exact number, but I know that we had at least 20 people.

Q: What did you expect the results to look like?

A: I mostly expected that TikTok would affect someone’s music taste because teenagers spend a lot of time on TikTok. It’s a very popular app.

Q: And finally, what were the results of your experiment?

A: The results were what I expected. Like 20 of the respondents had songs on their playlist that were popular on TikTok.



Vultures 1: Why listen?

BY SOPHIE FAWKNER and
ELISHA SENGA
Senior Staff Writer and Staff Writer

Music has always been seen as an important aspect of everyday life throughout history.

As a form of entertainment, therapy, and relaxation, music offers its wide-ranged listeners a variety of artists and genres to choose from.

Even if you were to look back a simple twenty-years ago, people commonly only focused on the good qualities of the artist and songs, and never really questioned the beliefs and wrong-doings of their desired artists.

However, in more recent years, people tend to have a more fixed position on the personal beliefs of an artist, in which they pose the question of whether or not music should be separated from its artist.

To gain a deeper understanding of the popular question of whether people are separating music from its artist, rapper Kanye West would be a prime example.

For instance, West has been deemed a very problematic artist for much of his long-lasting career in the music industry.

Recently, despite his troublesome tendencies of spreading anti-semitic views and being racist, Kanye West came out with an album called *Vultures 1*.

Surprisingly to some, the album has done pretty well, topping music charts in Australia, Canada, and Germany, and starting to gain prominence in the United States. Consequently, many students at QO have some thoughts on the newly released album.

Freshman Tristan Lee believes that “some of the songs were just okay, but mainly the album was pretty decent overall.”

While he thinks the album was good, Lee does also say that he doesn’t support his actions, which is the sole reason why Lee separates his music from the artist.

Similarly, junior Katherine Stepp shares that she “doesn’t support Kanye’s actions or views, but [she] really like[s] his music.”

Stepp makes a point that it is common for people to not support Kanye’s problematic beliefs, but still be able to enjoy the music that they love. In the realm of music appreciation, where to draw the line between the artists and their art has been a subject of debate.

Junior Lauriana Douanla boldly said, “I don’t listen to Kanye and I don’t keep up,” a sentiment shared by many who choose to abstain from listening to Kanye’s music based on his actions. Therefore, the actions of Kanye aren’t worth listening to in his new album.

On the other hand, junior Kamsi Itheme is a current listener of Kanye West. “I like to listen to Kanye but I can’t ignore some of the things he says,” Itheme admitted.

This echoes the internal struggle faced by fans who struggle to enjoy the music while condemning the behavior of the artists. Kanye West has always been a controversial artist.

Whether it’s because of his extreme political beliefs or his drama with other celebrities, fans of Kanye are often left angered, disappointed, and even shocked by his ludicrous behavior.

Evidently, due to the unexpected release of his new album, new and old issues have been brought to the forefront once again.

However, based on the large number of fans who continue to enjoy his music, but still make sure to separate his extreme actions from his songs, West has been noted as an impactful artist within the music industry.



Kanye West’s new album: *Vultures*

VIEWPOINT Works of fiction are always political

By MAMS JAGHA
Editor-in-Chief

As the second movie in the widely acclaimed “Dune” franchise debuted on March 1, there has been a surge in conversations about the associations between politics and liberation in the real world and its portrayal through works of fiction. Like many dystopian novels, dystopian novels have themes that serve as allegories for modern government control and societal fears. As dystopian stories often depict a world where a government possesses too much power, often limiting freedom and autonomy, they serve as a reflection on current societal issues and the decline of civil liberties. However, the real question that has stemmed from those conversations, is “Why is it so easy to ignore these problems in real life but defend and rally around

the “heroes” in dystopian media?”

Here’s my theory: dystopian literature is a commentary on present society, but since it is usually set in the future (a symbol in itself), many are usually ignorant about its allegories, which makes it incredibly easy to ignore their message.

Works of fiction will always provide insight into current society and how we can be the leading cause of our decline of independence. Common with many science fiction and apocalyptic to post-apocalyptic novels, the climax of most stories includes the “hero” heavily questioning their morality and passion for the cause. The reason why many authors like Suzanna Collins (“The Hunger Games”), Philip K. Dick (“Blade Runner”), and even Veronica Roth (“Divergent”) add symbols is to allude to modern-day society and that even the “heroes” question their roles in crises and

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The fashion ins for this spring

BY KATE BELMAN
Senior Staff Writer

Congrats! We have almost made it to spring. After a long and dark winter, things are finally looking up. Birds are chirping, bees are buzzing, and with Daylight Savings just passing on March 10, the days are getting longer and it's staying lighter later. Along with a new season—spring will officially begin on Tuesday, March 19—comes a whole new wardrobe.

This year's spring fashion trends, according to *Vogue*, include items like great white dresses, ice blues (a pale, pure, teal aqua-green with a jewel undertone), pencil skirts, and more. Predicted by the *Vogue* Runway Team and then finding their way to the stores, these pieces are IN for the spring of 2024.

For a more sophisticated look, the pencil skirt is a great option. So-called 'corporate core' has made its way onto numerous runways this past season. *Vogue* recommends "[considering] styles that emphasize texture—latex, croc-embossed, and (faux) leather—and pair with more relaxed opposites, like a simple T-shirt or crew neck sweater" for the optimal look.

Who What Wear, a digital fashion publication and community for women interested in developing their personal style and shopping, states that "An Absolutely Perfect Spring 2024 Wardrobe Looks Like This—a lightweight sweater, a timeless belt, denim cutoffs, pointed flats, a pair of

statement earrings, and many more."

Glamour says, however, that fringe is back in, along with the return of the preppy aesthetic with athletic prep. Think "Gossip Girl" outfit vibes — polo shirts, track jackets, and button-down shirts — but this time with a new attitude. Lots of matching tracksuits and preppy sweaters can be found at Free People, Aritzia, and many more stores.

The color 'rich burgundy' is back after popping up in lots of runway shows, so make sure to add it into your spring wardrobe. 'Girlcore' refers to the embrace of the style that is considered to be traditionally feminine, consisting of bows, ruffles, and lace, so embrace the fun of this trend and show off your favorite pink piece.

Maybe you've heard of the 'Mob Wife' aesthetic, which popped up on TikTok a couple of months ago. Animal print is all the rage. Leopard is very popular with streetwear style influencers, especially with a furry leopard-printed coat. B, with temperatures rising, a hot coat might not be the best choice. Instead, opt for a leather bomber jacket: still on trend, but more weather-friendly.

The 'in color' is ice blue. After being spotted on runways like *Bottega Veneta* and *Ferragamo*, fashion junkies everywhere have been going crazy for this shade of blue. Luckily, the hue can easily be added to any spring outfit, whether you opt for a matching blue set or just accessorize with a handbag in the shade.



Dozens of small mammals and reptiles, including an endangered red panda, were recovered by customs agents in an airport in Bangkok, Thailand last week, in luggage that was bound for India. Six people were arrested for smuggling as a result. Unfortunately, illegal animal trafficking is a common issue in the country.

To view another bonus cartoon, check out The Prowler's website at qohsjournalism.wordpress.com!

The comeback of the movie industry

BY CHASE PASEKOFF
Editor-in-Chief

Over the past several months, it seems as if a new movie is premiering in theaters every other week. For those who are regularly informed about new releases, this somewhat sudden boom in new film content has been quite the shift from the movie scene of the past several years.

Like many industries, movie production was heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and many movies scheduled for release in 2020 were pushed back. Furthermore, many films opted for digital release only, which greatly changed the dynamic of film consumption.

With all of this in mind, it may be safe to say that the culture surrounding movies has changed with the times and will likely not revert to its previous monumental status. However, the evidence has been pointing in the opposite direction. In many ways, it appears as if the movie industry is beginning to regain its strength.

For years, movies dominated the entertainment industry both commercially and culturally. However, once the digital age began to take form, the focus on movies seemingly changed, and it appeared that short-form content was more desired. This was magnified and subsequently popularized by the creation of apps like TikTok, which focused on the idea of producing short, easy-to-understand media. The timing of COVID-19 only helped to cement the current situation, particularly for our generation: TikTok was in, movies were out.

This may seem hyperbolic, but it is important to note that according to *Box Office Mojo*, 2020 was the first

year since 1989 when no American film had a worldwide gross income of over \$500 million. While this may come as no surprise, what also may come as no surprise is that in the same year, 2020, TikTok surpassed 2 billion downloaders, making it one of the most popular apps in the world, and one of the quickest to achieve this feat.

The correlation between the decline in movie popularity and the increase in TikTok popularity can be attributed to the elements surrounding the pandemic. This includes the isolation from public spaces like movie theaters, as well as the seemingly limitless amount of time that could be spent on devices like phones and tablets.

With all of this in mind, the more interesting aspect of the discussion comes from once movies were able to be in production again, and the restrictions regarding the pandemic began to be less and less strict. While in 2020 the largest American movie had made about \$400 million, in December 2021, *Spider-Man: No Way Home* made nearly \$2 billion from box office sales. These jaw-dropping figures continued to be achieved by different films over the next several years, with the top movie of 2022, *Avatar: The Way of Water*, making over \$2.3 billion, and *Barbie*, the top movie of 2023, making over \$1.3 billion.

With movies making a swift comeback, it will surely be interesting to see if new movies from this year such as *Dune: Part Two* and *Bob Marley: One Love* will follow suit of being absolute successes, and whether movies or digital media will ultimately withstand the test of time.

Works of fiction are always political

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"what's the point in trying to make this world better?" This external and internal conflict drives the plot, which illustrates how imperfect every character is, but also highlights the extrinsic motivation they have to keep going and continuously evolve.

However, the conversations around this topic also spotlight the hypocrisy of the authors who write these books. Sarah J. Maas is the bestselling author of the four-book fantasy series "A Court of Thorns and Roses," which follows Feyre Archeron's journey after being brought into the faerie lands of Prythian. The series gives insight into modern-day patriarchal roles, social class, and oppression, just like a dystopian novel as they are both an analogy to the systems of the real world. But, as captivating as her series is, Maas has also recently come under fire for having little to no racial minorities as characters, using the problems that trouble minorities as a plot for the white characters in her books, killing her few characters of color to further the plot of her white characters, and never actually showing support for POC with her platform. As someone who has read most of her books, I believe that the ability to be able to enjoy art and also criticize it is crucial because it is one of the best ways for an author to understand problems and improve through it.

Works of fiction serve as an indirect representation of modern-day society and what we as its inhabitants can do to preserve it. Therefore, being capable of writing these books and having a platform that continues to read them is an immense power, and, when done right, these books can incite change and spotlight injustice. My personal favorite and five-star rated recommendations for such novels (not in any specific order) include "Animal Farm" by George Orwell, "The Trial" by Franz Kafka, "Red Rising" by Pierce Brown, "Severance" by Ling Ma, and "The Power" by Naomi Alderman which is now an Amazon original show.

- Mams Jagha

"Dystopian novels allow us to experience the consequences of harmful human actions through fictional media"
-Arielle Goodluck





Athlete of the Month

BY OLIVIA MAYTIN
Senior Staff Writers

GIRLS LACROSSE - SOPHOMORE MACEY NEWELL

Coach Twine chose Macey as she makes everyone on the team better, including Twine himself. She consistently shows up to work with high energy & a positive attitude. According to Twine, "any team would be lucky to have Macey on their squad."

Q. How did you spend your time this fall/winter preparing for this season?

A. During the offseason, I hit the wall every chance I got and went to preseason workouts, which helped me stay in shape.

Q. What is your go-to meal before games?

A. Gemelli's Chicken Parm and a kiwi guava Celsius [energy drink].

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

A. Outside of lacrosse, I love to hang out with my friends and go shopping.

Q. When did you start playing this sport and why did you start?

A. I started playing lacrosse in 4th grade because my older brother Braden plays, and I always loved watching his games.

Q. What are some of the goals you have for the team?

A. Some goals I have is for our team to have better communication and to beat B-CC again. I also hope for us to make it to the regional finals!

BOYS LACROSSE - SENIOR BRADEN NEWELL

Quince Orchard's new head coach Edward Martin saw many things in Newell, even though lacrosse is only one week into the season. According to Coach Martin, Newell has stepped up on several occasions to provide strong leadership and accountability amongst his teammates and the QO Lacrosse program as a whole.

Q. How did you spend your time this fall/winter preparing for this season?

A. I stayed active playing lacrosse over the summer and I played in a fall lacrosse league.

Q. What is your go-to meal before games?

A. My pre-game meal is Italian food.

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

A. I like going to the gym and hanging out with friends.

Q. When did you start playing this sport and why did you start?

A. I started playing lacrosse when I was in 5th grade.

Q. What are some of the goals you have for the team?

A. My number one goal is to win a regional championship.

BASEBALL - SENIOR GARRETT CAMPBELL

Coach Simko picked pitcher, 3rd baseman and 1st baseman Campbell as Athlete of the Month due to his strength. According to Simko, he will hit in the middle of the order and be relied upon to drive in runs this season. Campbell has been on the varsity team since his freshman year.

Q. How did you spend your time this fall/winter preparing for this season?

A. I spent hours in the gym and in an indoor facility. Starting at 5 in the morning and going until 11 at night on a daily basis, trying to prepare for the last ride with these guys and wanting to make it special.

Q. What is your go-to meal before games?

A. My go-to meal since I was 10 has to be 2 bananas and a granola bar.

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

A. My hobbies and interests outside of sports are hanging out with friends, playing pool and lifting.

Q. When did you start playing this sport and why did you start?

A. I started playing baseball at 4 [years old].

Q. What are some of the goals you have for the team?

A. Some goals I have for the team are to have no more than five losses the entire year. Also, definitely picking the next guy up when the game starts to fall out of our favor. And overall become better people and succeed, not only in baseball but in the classroom.

SOFTBALL - SENIOR MELANIE MAAREC

Coach Adams picked centerfielder Maarec as Athlete of the Month based on her leadership in the outfield. The QO softball team has a very young group in the outfield and Maarec has really stepped up as a role model for the position and for the players.

Q. How did you spend your time this fall/winter preparing for this season?

A. In the off-season I would go to the batting cage with some of my teammates. I would constantly go for walks and spend as much time outside as possible.

Q. What is your go-to meal before games?

A. My go-to meal before a game is a smoothie or protein bar.

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

A. Outside of sports, I love to travel and hang out with my friends.

Q. When did you start playing this sport and why did you start?

A. I started playing softball when I was six years old and have played every year since. I started because my dad grew up playing baseball, and as an adult he plays softball, so he has always been a great coach and role model for me.

Q. What are some of the goals you have for the team?

A. Some of my goals for the team are for everyone to go into every game and practice with a positive attitude in order to get the most out of it. I want everyone to try their hardest and focus while also having fun.



New team, new face, same goals

Football and basketball coach steps up to become varsity girls lacrosse head coach

BY MOTAZ DEIFY
Senior Staff Writer

For the past two years, the girls lacrosse team has seemed to be on track to winning another regional championship, their first since 2021. However, after former Coach Taylor Blenckstone moved to Charleston, South Carolina, there was only one person to turn to—coach and special education paraeducator Alexander Twine.

Twine holds the title as one of QO's most notable alumni. He graduated from QO in 2011, when he was recruited to play Division 1 football at the University of Maryland from 2011 until 2015 on a full scholarship. During his high school career, Twine was known as a triple threat as he had packed schedules during all three seasons: football, basketball, and outdoor track & field, and he has coached all three sports as a staff member at QO. This spring, he is turning the pages as he steps up to be the head coach of the girls varsity lacrosse team.

During his senior year, Twine had a little experience with lacrosse from playing pickup games with his friends to trying out and making the varsity lacrosse team right before he left for College Park. However, the Maryland coaches didn't allow him to play lacrosse that season since he was already committed to play football.

After playing college football, Twine came back to QO to coach his younger brother, Makhi Walker, who was a freshman at the time. Since then, he's been working and coaching here for seven years.

Twine may be relatively new to lacrosse, but he is certainly no stranger to coaching in general.

Throughout the last few years, Twine mentions that he "worked with a lot of these girls individually" even as a spectator. As a head coach, Twine says he wants to "introduce something [differently] to the program, bring in tension, and help the girls get more spotlight on what they're doing," as he emphasizes that all of the players have great potential and he's very excited to show people what they can do.

Over the past few months, the girls were left with no coach. His biggest concern about this circumstance is that the team wouldn't be able to condition during the offseason. "Even if they found somebody by March, they wouldn't have any offseason workouts or lifting sessions done," said Twine. "I kind of waited around [to] see if anyone was going to take the job, and I found out nobody did, so I jumped on it," he added.

According to Twine, conditioning was held four times a week for about two hours.

Stepping up to coach lacrosse also meant stepping down from coaching track. Twine notes the difference between coaching these two sports: lacrosse is "team-oriented" while track has "many different winners, and so many people doing different events," he said.

Every team has to start somewhere, and Twine wants to start building the team by "working on defense and being tough" from the first day of tryouts. Overall, the team wants to play "a hard physical brand of lacrosse," Twine says.

That physical brand may win them another regional championship in May. Come watch the girls' first game at Sherwood on March 22 as they kick off spring break and begin their road to an undefeated season.

New coach to bring a fresh start to the boy's lacrosse program

BY MADELEINE BURKE
Editor-In-Chief

After last year's boys lacrosse head coach Connor Miller moved to Colorado, the head coach position opened up. Fortunately, Edward Martin heard about the opportunity and was selected for the job. With a focus on a positive season and past playing and coaching experience, what will he have in store for the program?

Edward Martin began his lacrosse career in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, and continued it at Bridgewater College playing for the Eagles. He loved playing for the small private school because the team "felt like a family."

Before coming to QO, he coached in North Carolina for a program that was only just starting out. Most of the players had never picked up a stick before, so their season was mainly spent learning the game. "It was difficult to be competitive," Martin added.

When he moved to Maryland, his QO alumnus wife (Elizabeth Parker '14) and close proximity to the school are what informed him of the open position as head coach. Besides coaching for QO this spring, Martin also coaches for the DC Sled Sharks, a youth sled hockey team.

As far as the upcoming lacrosse season goes, Martin is looking forward to promoting a positive attitude throughout the team so they can all work together to win. He likes to think of it as "No JV, no Varsity, just one big program."

Conditioning is one of the major aspects he is focusing on this season. Luckily, special education teacher Billy Fierstein '12, who also played lacrosse at QO, was able to lead the conditioning aspect of preseason to get the team in shape for the first day of tryouts. As far as practices go, Martin will start out going over plays and significant concepts of the game as well as including conditioning into routine drills. One element he will be implementing into the program is the aspect of family he felt when playing for Bridgewater. "I want the team to be as close with each other here as I was there," Martin explains.

With the team being under new leadership, this season is sure to be a memorable one. Fans of the team should clear their schedules for the boys' home opener against their rivals, the Sherwood Warriors, next Friday, March 22 at 7:15 PM.



BREAKING NEWS

Freshman Aubry Spadoni is the first Girls Wrestling State Championship winner in school history.



Junior Harrison Spadoni placed 3rd in the Boys State Tournament.



Sophomore Amirah Abegesah placed 5th in the Girls State Tournament.

Season Previews

Boys Tennis

BY LILY KAPLAN
Senior Staff Writer

Spring sports are officially here. The tryouts took place on March 1, and by now all of the teams are settled.

The highly selective boys' tennis team has a brand new roster, and each player has been training over the course of the year to earn a spot on the team.

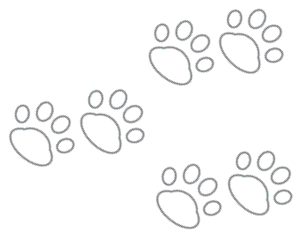
Sophomore Noah Perlman, who has been on the team for two years, positively described tryouts, and stated that they included "drills and playing matches."

The team has great potential to succeed this season. Social studies teacher Matt Marsden has been coaching the varsity team for the past three years. "We have had pretty good success in all of those years, and I'm hoping we keep that trend going this year," he said.

As a coach, Marsden has the responsibility of making sure that he, as well as the members of the team, are prepared for the season. Fortunately, the members of the team are self-sufficient and don't only rely on their coach. "A good number of the players play year-round so they have their own regimens to keep in shape and keep ready," said Marsden.

That said, Marsden is more than qualified for this role. "I have been playing tennis for about 25 years and I was on my high school's varsity tennis team all four years," he said. Similarly, there are a lot of members of QO's team who will end up playing for all four years of high school. As a team, Marsden hopes to "work on the developing young talent we added this year to make sure we're competitive in every match."

As of publication, there haven't been any matches that the team has participated in. However, the first match of theirs is approaching us fast: it will occur on Thursday, March 21 at Whitman High School. Additionally, their first match at home will be against Rockville High School on Tuesday, April 2. Come out and support your boys' tennis team!



Softball

BY NOAH KRAVITZ
Staff Writer

Winter weather is over, which means spring weather is upon us. And you know what that means, another season of Girls Softball here at Quince Orchard high school is now underway!

The team is led by Coach Colleen Adams, who has coached here at QO for a the last few years, and is also the head of the FACTS department. She takes pride in coaching this team, and strives to make sure that her players are having fun throughout the season, and that each and every one her players are supporting one another.

This will be Adams's first year coaching in a while without Jacquelyn Lee '23. She was one of the team's great players the past few years, who stepped up in some big clutch moments that this team is certainly to miss.

But that doesn't mean we aren't going to see production from many other players on this team. One example is sophomore Maevé Daly. She is a returning player on varsity, who found it really special being on this team last season as a freshman.

She likes getting to know players on the team, and relies on team chemistry to bring her and her fellow teammates together.

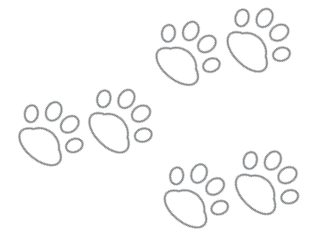
"I feel as though being back on the team gives me a sense of pride for being a part of this program. I would like to achieve many things this season and just overall improve my game," said Daly.

Much like her fellow teammates, Daly praises the job Coach Adams has done leading this team.

"I love Coach Adams! She has supported me from the start of last season and all the way up to now. She brings everyone together and is the best coach I have ever had," she said.

This team is poised for a big season this year. Their first game of the season will begin on March 21 against Whitman high school.

The game will be played here at the Dome. Make sure to show up and cheer on your Cougars!



Girls Tennis

BY DYLAN FLAIM
Staff Writer

All winter sports have officially concluded, meaning it's time for the third and final season of the year. There are many popular spring sports, but one that goes under the radar is tennis. At Quince Orchard, however, the girls tennis team is ready to make some noise this season.

A key to success is confidence, and sophomore Liza Dinits has it. "I have really high expectations for the season because I feel like our team is going to be strong this year," said Dinits.

One thing all these girls want is more attention towards the team. "I feel like girls tennis doesn't get the attention it deserves," said junior Madison Puhl. "We could definitely use the support."

The girls' first home match takes place on Thursday, March 21 at 3:30 PM, so mark your calendars and make it out there to support!

"In the offseason, I have prepared by practicing at least three times a week and playing in numerous tournaments."
-Liza Dinits

"To prepare for the season, I have been practicing with my doubles partner, eating healthy, and going on morning runs to stay fit."
-Sophie Bee



A group photo of the girls tennis team from last school year.

Baseball

BY PRITI MADHAVAN
Staff Writer

Excitement is in the air as Quince Orchard High School's baseball team prepares to hit the diamond for the highly anticipated 2023-2024 season.

Ranked 94th in the state last season, the team worked to climb up, making an impressive jump of 29 places from the previous year. Coach and art teacher Corey Simko, an experienced mentor with several years of coaching and teaching experience under his belt, is thrilled to lead the Cougars into what promises to be an exhilarating and competitive season.

Last year, Simko was promoted from head JV baseball coach to varsity coach in June. He acknowledges that the experience will be different, but with years of baseball coaching experience, the Cougars have no doubt he will lead them to success this year.

"It's exciting. The players are ready to get started and so am I," Simko says.

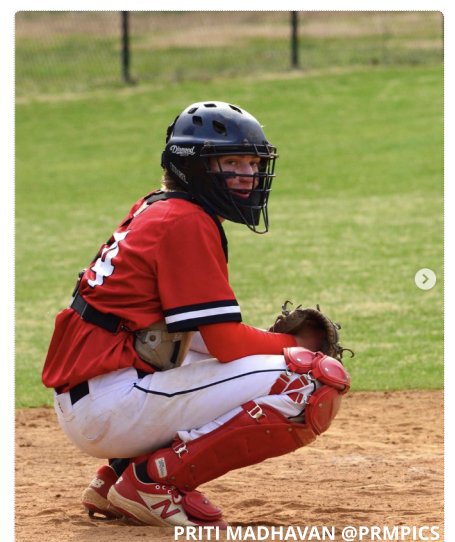
The varsity team's performance last year, with a 10-9 win ratio, showcased their resilience and competitive spirit. Winning 53% of their games, the Cougars have set a solid foundation for the upcoming challenges.

With a mix of players from all grades and JV players from last year that are itching to showcase their talent, the team is determined to keep up their winning streak.

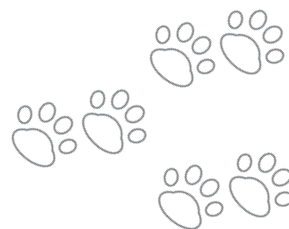
However, the most eagerly awaited moment on the schedule is the intense rivalry game against Northwest. After a triumphant win in 2022, the Cougars faced a tough loss in 2023, intensifying the rivalry. This year's rematch is anxiety-inducing but thrilling as Quince Orchard seeks redemption, fueled by the desire to reclaim their title against their rivals.

The motivation amongst players, Coach Simko's strategic guidance, and the burning determination to overcome last year's setback create a mix for success. As the Quince Orchard High School baseball team steps onto the field, or the "K," as it's affectionately known to the players, we can expect a display of skill, resilience, and commitment.

Their first game is against B-CC will be on Saturday, March 23. Last year, their first game was on March 21 against Poolesville, and they started off their season with a win. Students hope that they will do it again this year and begin their (hopefully) season-long winning streak. Make sure to come support!



Senior Quinn Kessler on the field last year.





Outlook on the NFL offseason

BY DYLAN FLAIM & NOAH KRAVITZ
Staff Writers

The Super Bowl is long gone, which means the NFL offseason is here, filled with discussions about free agency, trades and rumors involving the upcoming NFL Draft.

We are going to cover some of the most pressing topics that are about to gain some steam in the coming weeks.

What will the Bears do with the No. 1 Pick?

Some of the biggest headlines throughout the offseason have been about what the Chicago Bears will do with their first overall selection in the 2024 Draft. The top prospects in the NFL Draft include former Heisman Trophy winning quarterback Caleb Williams, as well as wide receiver Marvin Harrison, Jr. out of Ohio State.

Some of the most recent mock drafts and reports have connected Chicago to Williams multiple times. But where does that leave their current quarterback?

The Bears current starting quarterback is Justin Fields, whom the Bears selected with the 11th overall selection back in the 2021 NFL Draft.

Fields began his collegiate career with Georgia, then eventually transferred to Ohio State where he

threw for over 5,000 yards across two seasons, and completed a whopping 63 touchdown passes. He also recorded 19 rushing touchdowns in college football.

Fields is a very unique quarterback that shows many physical attributes that not a ton of quarterbacks in the NFL show on the field. His elite rushing ability allows him to get outside the pocket and make plays, which can make him a dangerous quarterback for any opponent.

While Fields is a very dynamic runner, there's one specific area that he needs to improve in: turnovers. In his three years as a professional, he's registered 38 total fumbles and thrown 30 interceptions. So if he is to improve, this is one specific area that he could work on.

One of the options the Bears could do at quarterback is to trade Fields for draft compensation, and then draft Caleb Williams with the No. 1 Pick. Some might ask, "Why would you draft another quarterback if you already have Justin Fields?"

But when you look at Williams, he's one of the best quarterback prospects we've seen coming out of the draft. He's also got insane arm talent and great pocket awareness.

But although Fields is a great quarterback, it may be impossible to pass up on a guy like Williams who could be a generational player at the quarterback position for many years to come.

NFL Draft: Quince Orchard is represented

The NFL Draft is a bit over a month away, and there is so much drama and uncertainty surrounding the draft.

The 2nd overall pick is a debate, assuming the Bears go with Caleb Williams at #1, the Washington Commanders will have to choose between Drake Maye, a quarterback out of North Carolina, and Jayden Daniels, a quarterback from LSU who just won the Heisman Trophy, the most prestigious award in college football. Both have incredible talent and have the chance to get picked at #2.

There is also a debate for who will get wide receiver Marvin Harrison, Jr., a generational prospect out of Ohio State. Currently, the betting favorites to land Harrison are the Arizona Cardinals, who hold the 4th pick. Other teams in contention to land Harrison include the Chicago Bears, if they decide to retain Justin Fields, and the New England Patriots.

The position that sparks the most interest in NFL Draft talks is of course quarterback. USC's Caleb Williams is the undisputed best quarterback in the class, as he is regarded as a generational prospect, but there are many other talented quarterbacks expecting their name to be called. Drake Maye out of North Carolina has the physical traits and tools to be the first overall pick, and LSU's heisman winner Jayden Daniels could also be the first overall pick in another draft class.

Quince Orchard's own Demeioun "Chop" Robinson '21 is also an intriguing prospect in this draft. Robinson, a defensive end, played his freshman season at Maryland, and then transferred to Penn State for his sophomore and junior seasons—and thrived. At the NFL Combine, Robinson showed out, running a 4.49 second 40 yard-dash. Most draft analysts see Robinson being taken in the late first round, or early second round. Regardless of who drafts Robinson, it's going to be very thrilling having a recent Quince Orchard alumnus in the NFL.

Other notable prospects in this class include Brock Bowers, who played at Georgia as a tight end; Malik Nabers, a wide receiver from LSU; and Joe Alt, an offensive tackle from Notre Dame. All of these players are expected to be called early on the first night of the NFL Draft, which takes place on Thursday, April 25 in Detroit.

Free Agency & Coaching Hires

A very busy free agency began on March 13, where fans' notifications were filled with NFL news. Many big moves were made, including the Atlanta Falcons signing Minnesota Vikings quarterback Kirk Cousins to a four year deal, worth \$180 million!

Secondly, a whopping eight NFL teams hired new coaches. Most notably, the Washington Commanders hired Cowboys Defensive Coordinator, Dan Quinn, a move that ultimately polarized the fanbase.

QO athletes unlock the next chapter of their lives

BY MADELEINE BURKE & MOTAZ DEIFY
Editor-In-Chief & Senior Staff Writer

It's a no-brainer that QO is filled with gifted and talented athletes. However, out of all of the athletes, very few people are likely to stand out to colleges. According to Scholarship Stats, approximately "a little over 7% of high school athletes go on to play a varsity sport in college," hence making the recruiting process very selective.

This year, however, 18 QO student-athletes have committed to continue their academic and athletic careers at their prospective colleges.

For example, senior **Brady Hahn** has committed to play tennis at Messiah University. Hahn chose to take tennis seriously during his transition to high school because "it's a lot easier to play than a lot of other sports during COVID," he said. Before high school, Hahn had been playing soccer, but "it wasn't really an option during COVID," he said, which is why he switched to tennis.

During Hahn's recruitment process, he "reached out to a lot of coaches, [and he] had to play for some of the coaches and tape recordings to put on my recruiting profile." Luckily, one school that got back to him happened to be his top choice—Messiah University, which he chose because he "wanted to play tennis, a good engineering program, and wanted to be relatively close [to home]," he added.

Hahn started his freshman year in QO tennis playing second doubles and first doubles, and his junior year playing third singles. He continues to "aim as high as [he] can" during his final year.

Taking a dive into another individual sport, senior **Ainsley Taylor** announced her commitment on social media to NYU's swim program this past fall. She has been swimming since the age of four,

beginning on her summer swim team, then moving to a club team once she knew she wanted to get serious.

Colleges began reaching out to Taylor the summer after sophomore year, and once she was able to form relationships with coaches, she narrowed her list down to two contrasting schools: one, a quiet, mid-sized college surrounded by acres of forest land; the other, a busy, large university, located in the middle of a city known to never fall asleep.

When Taylor was making the final decision, it all came down to where she could see herself being the most successful.

"I didn't really know what I wanted, but seeing it in person helped my decision," she added. When touring NYU, the class sizes, athletic facilities, and amenities made the choice easy for her.

Besides swimming for neighborhood and club teams, Taylor has been on QO's swim and dive team for three years. During her sophomore year, she broke the 50 free record and won Divisionals the following year. Once she became a captain her junior and senior years, the team really started to come together and feel like a family to her.

In Maryland, QO is widely known for its elite football program, and within it there are many players who are willing to go above and beyond at the collegiate level, such as senior **Adjatay "DJ" Abegesah**, who has committed to play football at Stonehill College.

Abegesah has been playing football for most of his life. However, what he describes as the "scariest hit ever" forced him to stop playing. Last year, he picked it back up and has been lifting in the summer to get in shape.

For football, it's very common for college coaches to come learn about the players, and assess their skills throughout the season. "It's a

lot of patience and faith because nothing is guaranteed," said Abegesah.

Abegesah's top two choices were a Division III school and Stonehill, a Division I school. He considered this choice as "an easy decision" for that reason. Another factor that drove Abegesah to play at Stonehill was the amount of money offered, covering most of his tuition.

During his time playing football at QO, Abegesah set himself as a good example for the younger players on varsity. "I be disciplined and work hard, and never complain about nothing," he added.

Abegesah would like to acknowledge his dad, who went through the same process. His dad played Division I football at Texas Southern University. "[My dad] helped me keep my head straight and stay focused," he said.

Abegesah believes that the amount of playing time received in college is relatively more difficult than receiving playing time in high school because of how "everyone is good [on the college team]," he said.

One of the many dominant teams here at QO is the girls soccer team, which counted multiple athletic commits this year. One is senior **Arielle Goodluck**, who will be attending Goucher College in the fall.

Goodluck is the oldest of her siblings, so she felt lost throughout the beginning of her recruiting process due to not having someone to turn to for questions. She mentioned getting a late start to the process as a whole, but because Goodluck is such a skilled player, she had multiple offers to choose from.

When picking Goucher, she not only took the soccer program into account, but her education as well. "I propel my future over anything and this has the perfect pathway to allow me to do so," Goodluck said.

During her time with QO girls soccer, Goodluck was a part of the

squad that made it to the state championship her junior year, and went undefeated senior year.

Throughout her soccer career, Goodluck says her parents have been her "sole motivators and helpers through it all."

With regards to committing to play a sport in college, Goodluck urges younger athletes to keep a positive mindset and "work hard and grind to the point that your confidence never falters."

Back in September 2023, senior **Jake Witter** announced on his Instagram that he committed to play baseball at Salisbury University. Witter has been playing baseball since 2nd grade. He credits persistence through adversity as his reason for success. "When I was young, I wasn't necessarily the best," he admitted, "but I stayed persistent and kept working to get to where I am now."

He described Salisbury as having "a great program, great coaching staff, and a winning mentality."

Every year, Salisbury competes for a World Series, which is what strengthened Witter's interest in this school. This season, Salisbury is currently ranked 2nd in the NCAA Division III league for baseball.

Witter described his recruiting process as "tough."

"I had to email a lot of schools," he said. "Sometimes you won't get responses but you have to keep going." He also revealed that he had to attend a lot of showcases.

During Witter's time playing QO baseball, he brought "a great work ethic and tri[e]d to help the younger kids" in the program [to] show them what it takes to be a good varsity player," he said.

Witter would like to thank his parents for supporting him and especially head baseball coach and art teacher Corey Simko, who has helped him throughout his time at QO. "He knows how to bring a team together and has taught me a lot about the game," he said.