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THE

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# THE PROWLER

Quince Orchard High School — 15800 Quince Orchard Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20878 — @qohs\_prowler

## Opinion: Columbia Administration struggles to protect faculty and students during Israel-Palestine protests

BY ISADORA KAUFMAN  
*Editor-in-Chief*

Across the nation, the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict is increasing contention and discourse throughout college campuses. This past week, an increase of protests occurred in response to Israel's past and planned offensive bombardments of the Gaza strip.

Currently, according to the United Nations, "1 million people [since October] have been forced to flee Israel's bombardment." A majority of the displaced peoples have taken refuge in Rafah, an area in the Southern Gaza strip where Israel has a planned ground offensive. According to NBC, this would be an "all-out assault on the city" with the "goal of destroying Hamas' remaining battalions."

Hamas is now reviewing an Israeli proposal for a six-week cease-fire in Gaza that would delay this planned ground offensive. If they approve the proposal, the terms of the agreement would also entail the "release of 40 civilian and sick hostages in exchange for freeing hundreds of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails," according to NBC.

Meanwhile, across the world, in New York City, "administrators and pro-Palestinian students occupying the main quad on campus are in a standoff," according to *The Atlantic*. The students are protesting against the Columbia University administration due to the ties the

university has with Israel. AP News shares the opinion of a current administration due to the ties the university has with Israel. AP News shares the opinion of a current Columbia student participating in the protests: "We will not rest until Columbia divests." This is a common view held by the protestors, who are "demanding that schools cut financial ties to Israel and divest from companies they say are enabling the conflict," according to the Associated Press. The protesting has taken various forms, some protesting peacefully and others participating in an encampment.

However, these protests are not all peaceful. According to AP news, "some Jewish students say the protests have veered into antisemitism and made them afraid to set foot on campus, and safety concerns have prompted some of the heavier-handed approaches."

Not all, but several of the protestors have "expressed explicit support for Hamas terrorism and urged Hamas to commit further violence against Israel," according to ADL, a Jewish pro-Israel anti-hate organization. Jewish students have also been directly confronted by the protestors with "antisemitic rhetoric," according to the organization.

A Jewish professor at the university, Shai Davidai, shares how his campus keycard was deactivated by Columbia administrators. Davidai is an outspoken supporter of Israel "who has been a vocal critic of the administration's response to the

ongoing anti-Israel protests," according to the New York Post. His card was deactivated following his attempt to lead a pro-Jewish rally at Columbia. The New York Post also shares how while banning his access to campus, hundreds of protestors were able to continue their encampments, all of which needed their keycard to enter the university.

After seeing the lack of protection for Jewish students and faculty at Columbia, he requested a police escort to class to ensure his safety. The chief operating officer responded with a counteroffer, "No police detail, and Davidai would be cordoned off on a small lawn far from the students," according to the *Intelligencer*. The university's inability to give him proper protection revealed the lack of involvement from the administration in making the campus a safe space for people from all backgrounds.

After being unable to enter the main campus, Davidai tweeted on X, "You are worried about how the pro-Hamas extremists (and the brainwashed cult they've amassed) will react if you try to disperse them. But being scared is not an excuse for not doing the right thing. Being scared is not an excuse for choosing the pro-Hamas mob and their violent chants over the Jewish professor who believes in co-existence."

There are various groups participating in the protests. Among the protestors include student organizations such as Student for

Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voice for Peace. Promptly following the Hamas attack on Israel, Davidai argued that these two organizations should be banned as these groups "celebrate rape and murder" and "call for the eradication of an entire people from the country". While I am not familiar with all the actions taken by these groups, I don't believe these groups should be banned entirely as that sets a dangerous precedent for Columbia and all college students' right to freedom of speech and assembly.

I personally believe the university should allow for the creation and practice of these groups and their beliefs, as long as they do not engage in any behavior that directly targets, discriminates against, or harms fellow students. Davidai's way of describing these groups reinforces many harmful stereotypes and generalizes those who support the Free Palestine movement as all being violent individuals.

At the same time, there are members of these groups, among others, who have been directly targeting Jewish students and making them uncomfortable and unsafe at Columbia. I believe the administration should be working harder to ensure the safety of Jewish students, and not allow antisemitism to occur under any circumstances. The actions of the Israeli government should not be an excuse for discriminating against Jewish students.

Due to the length of this article, the full version is online on our website.

## Francis Scott Key Bridge Collapses

*How the bridge has created lasting effects on our community*

BY KAYLA PILLOFF  
*Staff Writer*

At approximately 1:30 AM on March 26, a 985 foot-long cargo ship knocked into the 1.6 mile Francis Scott Key Bridge, knocking into one of the support columns and causing the entire bridge to collapse in just eight seconds.

The bridge, located in Baltimore, spans across the Patapsco River, "which massive cargo ships use to reach the Chesapeake Bay and then the Atlantic Ocean," according to ABC News. The bridge itself provides convenient transportation to local and interstate traffic, and "carried more than 12.4 million passenger and commercial vehicles in 2023," according to a Maryland state government report issued last November.

Six workers were killed in the collapse, all doing construction work at the site. Four of the bodies have been found as of publication: Alejandro Hernández Fuentes, 35, of Baltimore; Dorlian Ronial Castillo Cabrera, 26, of Dundalk; Maynor Suazo Sandoval, 38, of Owings Mills; and Carlos Hernandez, 24. Miguel Luna, 49, of Glen Burnie and Jose

Lopez, 35, are still missing. All six of these workers were Latino immigrants, coming from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico.

Although Baltimore is just about an hour away, the collapse still has effects on the QO community. Lauren Carver, an English composition assistant at QO, lives in Pasadena, Maryland, around 10 minutes away from the bridge, which she has a clear view of from her apartment. She recalls waking up and reading the news, then looking out the window to no bridge. "It was an eerie feeling," she said.

Her boyfriend, a mobile mechanic, has to deliver parts to Dundalk and Essex, she mentions what usually is a "10-minute part run is now a 2-hour part run." She highlights how it puts her boyfriend's work behind, "which is just a little impact, so you can imagine the big picture with everyone else and what they are facing."

Similarly, assistant principal Phillip Yarborough has a cousin, Edward Ferrell, who uses the bridge every day for work. Ferrell usually drives over the bridge extremely early, but was supposed to go in late

the day the bridge collapsed. Yarborough describes how, for his cousin, coping with the collapse is no easy task. He mentions how Ferrell "has some emotional anxiety when it comes to leaving and going to work," and that "he has anxiety... just thinking about driving out over any type of bridge."

Ferrell is not the only one experiencing such anxiety post-collapse. According to *Psychology Today*, the psychological consequences of such a disaster could be "general anxiety, fear of crossing bridges, a vague sense of persistent loss, depression, and challenges to assumptions about safety."

The bridge was a local staple, and a huge part of the city's skyline. It had a lot more use outside of just transportation purposes. "My boyfriend's family," said Carver, "we used to always catch rockfishes under the bridge and stuff like that." For many, dealing with the loss of the bridge is a slow and confusing process.

A fix to the collapse is not a simple task. According to AP News, "rebuilding the bridge could take anywhere from 18 months to several

years, experts say, while the cost could be at least \$400 million — or more than twice that."

While Joe Biden promised that the federal government would cover the cost of the rebuilding, according to NPR, it could "potentially [set] up a funding fight with the conservative wing of the House of Representatives."

As of now, the Baltimore City government has released a Key Bridge Response 2024 Action Plan which, as stated in the document, "outlines ongoing efforts being done in partnership with federal, state, and local partners, new support for impacted port workers, and includes lists of resources available for both businesses and workers."





# Partial solar eclipse thrills QO viewers

CHRISTIAN LEE

Staff Writer

On April 8, 2024, a total solar eclipse known as the Great North American Eclipse moved across Mexico, the United States, and Canada, uniting millions of excited viewers and generating countless unforgettable memories.

A solar eclipse occurs when the Moon passes between the Sun and Earth, blocking part (partial eclipse) or all (total eclipse) of the Sun's light from reaching our planet. In other words, the Moon casts a shadow over the Earth, dimming even its brightest afternoons.

Gaithersburg experienced a partial eclipse, meaning that it was not in the path of totality.

Prior to 2024, the latest total solar eclipse that could be viewed from North America was on August 21, 2017. In that year, an estimated 215 million U.S. adults (88% of U.S. adults) viewed the eclipse, either directly or electronically, according to the University of Michigan.

It may seem that there is no noticeable difference between every solar eclipse that passes over North America — however, this is not the case. During the 2017 solar eclipse, the Moon was farther away from the Earth than it was in April, causing the path of totality—where viewers can see the Moon completely block the Sun—to be much skinnier. In 2017, the path ranged roughly 62 to 71

71 miles wide. During the April eclipse, the path over North America ranged about 108 to 122 miles wide, passing over more populated areas and thus creating more viewing locations.

Additionally, the path of totality lasted much longer than it did in 2017. In 2017, the longest period of totality lasted 2 minutes, 42 seconds while in April, the longest period of totality lasted 4 minutes, 28 seconds.

Quince Orchard's eagerness to view the eclipse varied from student to student, according to science teacher Deborah Haase. "Some students were excited — their parents even took them to Ohio, Pennsylvania [to get close to] the path of totality. Roughly forty to fifty students stayed here to watch it. Some just didn't care."

Haase also noted her surroundings during the eclipse. "No one knew what to expect. We were all surprised by the different light quality and the temperature being noticeably cooler. Everything dimmed. We could hear crickets — and all sorts of nocturnal animals — coming out, similar to 2017."

National Science Honors Society student James Lee, who attended the solar eclipse viewing party at QO, was also thrilled to take part in the event. "At this event, I was provided solar eclipse glasses to view the eclipse, able to look at it through a telescope, and take pictures of it."



QO National Science Honors Society students viewing the partial solar eclipse through solar filters, glasses, and telescopes.

Some students and their families were able to view the eclipse from their homes. "My family was excited about the eclipse because it was the first one my little sister experienced and we were excited to show her how cool and amazing our planet is," said National Science Honors Society student Cindy Ding.

Lee also stated that in preparation for the next North American eclipse that will take place in 2044, he will bring more specialized equipment to enhance the viewing experience. "I would bring a camera with a solar eclipse lens so I can take better pictures of the next solar eclipse."

When viewing eclipses, it is always important to watch it through safe solar viewing glasses, which are

thousands of times darker than standard sunglasses. It is also advised to secure solar filters over any camera lens, binoculars, or telescopes in order to reduce the likelihood of severe eye injury from the sun's concentrated rays.

With the next North American solar eclipse set to occur on August 23, 2044, viewers are hoping for an even larger path of totality and thus, a greater spectacle to capture in their lives.



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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.

# Congress passes TikTok ban

BY MAGGIE BRADY  
Staff Writer

Since its creation in 2016, TikTok has been one of the most popular social media platforms for teenagers. Its short-form, personal content attracted the attention of many users across the country, and it's since become a staple in the lives of many.

That may all change, however, with the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passing a bill in early March that could lead to the ban of TikTok in the U.S.

The bill, known as the Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act, was passed by a vote of 352 to 65. The bill could lead to Americans losing "access to TikTok within six months," said CBS News. Once the bill is passed by President Biden, ByteDance will have nine months to sell the app to an American company.

Lawmakers are trying to regulate the app because of its connection to China. They fear the Chinese government could use TikTok to spy on Americans or influence them by promoting certain content.

"A law China implemented in 2017 requires companies to give the government any personal data relevant to the country's national security," according to AP News. While there's no evidence that TikTok has collected such data, some lawmakers are still greatly concerned for the United States' national security.

This isn't the first attempt to remove TikTok from American phones. In August 2020, then-President Donald Trump issued an executive order demanding that the app either be sold to an American owner or be shut down. In 2021, Biden rescinded the order.

However, just last year, The White House gave US federal agencies 30 days to delete TikTok from all government-issued mobile devices.

The same ban has been put in place for government-issued devices in Canada, the European Union, Denmark, and several other countries.

TikTok fought back with the 2022 "Project Texas" initiative, which "is an unprecedented initiative dedicated to making every American on TikTok feel safe, with confidence that their data is secure and the platform is free from outside influence," according to TikTok's website.

**"A law China implemented in 2017 requires companies to give the government any personal data relevant to the country's national security"**  
-AP News

The framework of the initiative contains five main pillars: independent governance, data protection and access control, software assurance, content assurance, and monitoring and compliance. "We want all of our community to have the utmost confidence in the security of TikTok, so they can continue to share, create, learn, and find joy," said the company.

This wasn't enough to ease the

concerns of American lawmakers, some of whom have pushed forward to get the platform off of all American devices. President Biden also put his full support behind the ban, saying that he would sign it if it gets passed by Congress.

The bill was originally passed by the House in March as a standalone bill, but the Senate seemed to be in no rush to pass it. Eventually, the bill was passed in a 79-18 vote by the Senate on April 23rd and was included as part of a larger \$95 billion package that provides foreign aid to Ukraine and Israel. The House decided to include the bill in the passage to "expedite its passage in Congress" according to AP News.

President Biden quickly signed the bill the next day, giving ByteDance 270 days to sell and avoid the app becoming banned. However, Biden could extend the ban by another 90 days if he believes the company has made progress towards a sale.

TikTok is threatening legal action against the sale claiming that the bill violates its users' first amendment rights. A legal battle would push the ban back even further because "while the case is under judicial review, the 'clock' on any ban is effectively paused" according to NBC News. Users of the app will be relieved to hear that it could potentially take years for a TikTok ban to actually go into effect.



**CORRECTION:** In the March 2024 article "Keeping Up with the Kougars" (page 4) about Project Happy Feet, the organization's founding was erroneously attributed to UCLA medical students, who started a different, but similarly named organization. That Project Happy Feet, one chapter of which has been started at QO, was originally started by Winston Churchill High School junior Laura Jablonover.

# Earthquakes rattle the east coast

BY PATRINA PUN  
Senior Staff Writer

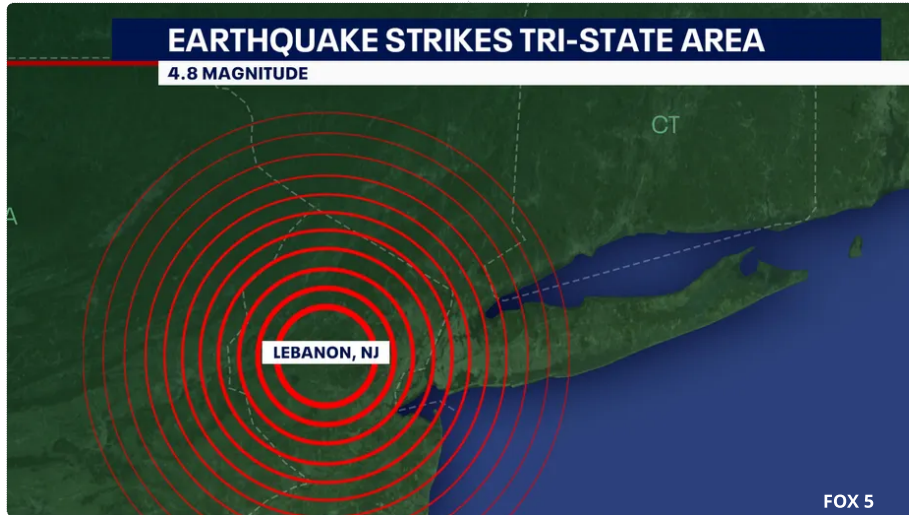
Living on the east coast, you may be familiar with the fact that earthquakes are quite rare to experience around here compared to the west coast. Specifically, according to Forbes, the east coast is 100 times less active than California in terms of earthquakes. The reason for this is that the California coast is right above the boundary of two tectonic plates that make up the earth's crust. Virginia is in the middle of the plate and therefore the DMV area does not experience as much grinding of the tectonic plates.

A magnitude-4.8 earthquake recently rumbled throughout the east coast at 10:23 a.m on April 6 that sent communities in temporary shock. The earthquake's epicenter was near Whitehouse Station, New Jersey, about 40 miles west of New York City, at a depth of 4.7 kilometers. People from Baltimore to Boston felt the aftermath of the earthquake, according to AP news. Luckily, no serious damage was reported, but President Joe Biden offered help from the White House administration, according to the Associated Press.

Further, seismologists believed that New York has been past due for a large earthquake, with the last one being a 5.2 quake in New York Harbor off Brooklyn in 1884. According to ABC, the earthquake was felt from Virginia to Maine.

Though no serious damage was reported, the intensity of the earthquake did topple chimneys over.

No doubt, earthquakes can be extremely unnerving and unexpected. When the next earthquake occurs, make sure to stay indoors in times of danger and call 911 if needed. Avoid any windows and outside doors/walls. If indoors, cover your head and neck with your arms while staying below any sturdy surface. Fortunately, according to the LA times, the lifetime risk of dying in an earthquake is no higher than 1 in 20,000. Continue to make sure to be consistent with the news regarding the latest weather emergency for maximum protection.



"No one can predict the exact time, location, or place of any earthquake."  
-NBC

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# Biden administration revises Title IX rules and regulations

BY NADIA AUNG  
Staff Writer

For more than 50 years, Title IX has ensured an equal opportunity to learn and thrive in our nation's educational institutions, free from facing discrimination based on sex.

On April 19, the Biden administration finalized new Title IX regulations that protect the rights of LGBTQ students and change the way schools can respond to sexual assault allegations and misconduct. The following regulations are expected to go into effect August 1.

The update has broadened the definition of what counts as sexual harassment to include "sexual violence and unwelcome sex-based conduct that creates a hostile environment by limiting or denying a person's ability to participate in or benefit from a school's education program or activity."

The mandate prohibits discrimination "based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics in federally funded education programs," according to a fact sheet shared with CNN.

In person, court-like proceedings for allegations of sexual assault are no longer required, which reverses Trump administration protections for accused students that victims' advocates say retraumatized survivors and discouraged reporting. Schools now have the freedom to question witnesses in live hearings or

separate meetings. If a school decides to hold a live hearing, the alleged victims have the right to attend remotely.

The regulations also require increased accountability, mandating schools to take prompt and effective action to end any sex discrimination in their education programs or activities, prevent its recurrence and address all reports with a "fair, transparent, and reliable process that includes trained, unbiased decisionmakers to evaluate all relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence."

Schools will now be required to train employees "about the school's obligation to address sex discrimination, as well as employees' obligations to notify or provide contact information for the Title IX Coordinator" and enhance standards for schools conducting "reliable and impartial" investigations of all complaints.

The final rule also protects student privacy by "prohibiting schools from making disclosures of personally identifiable information with limited exceptions."

However, a decision on the Department's proposed Title IX athletic regulations, which would prohibit a ban on transgender athletes from participation on teams aligned with their gender identity, is still ongoing.



Students and advocates calling for Biden administration to release a final Title IX rule back in December 2023

"These final regulations build on the legacy of Title IX by clarifying that all our nation's students can access schools that are safe, welcoming, and respect their rights," said U.S Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona.



# 2024-2025 FAFSA DELAYS

BY ISADORA KAUFMAN  
Editor-in-Chief

As the school year comes to a close, seniors committing to colleges have one task left to tackle: FAFSA.

FAFSA, also known as the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, is the form students across the country must complete each year of college to determine their eligibility for financial aid. The form consists of a "series of questions that determine whether you are a dependent or independent student for purposes of applying for federal student aid," according to Federal Student Aid.

This year, "a botched rollout" of the new application has caused many delays in sending the accurate financial information about students to schools. CNN further explained how the delays in informing students of their aid packages is affecting over 1 million students, as previous errors have already been made involving the IRS.

This year's FAFSA form was also delayed in its release, released in January, "about three months later than usual," according to CNN, giving families a very limited time to properly fill out this already complicated form.

According to Bankrate, the average price of college tuition has tripled over the past 58 years, and considering that over 85% of students received some form of financial aid in 2023, the FAFSA delays are a national issue that will hinder a considerable amount of student's abilities to attend a certain college or will threaten their ability to attend college entirely.

As a result of the botched rollout, some universities have moved their commitment deadline, usually on May 1, to May 15 or later, but not all colleges are adjusting. This means that students heavily relying on their FAFSA package may have to change their decision about which school they will attend to fall, as their FAFSA offer is no longer guaranteed to come

before the May 1st deadline.

CNN explained how the FAFSA delayed affected current senior Chase Cunningham, who decided to commit to Morehouse College and pay the deposit without knowing how much his family will have to pay or be awarded in financial aid. He explained how he is relying on faith and still chose Morehouse given that "prestige and respect that comes from being a 'Morehouse Man' is really important to him."

This is the case of many students who have had to choose between committing to an expensive university for its prestige and academics, or attending a college that they don't even feel happy about simply because of its lower cost.

The issues with FAFSA are further revealing the financial burden that attending universities puts on both the students and their families. According to BestColleges, the average college tuition in 2022-2023 was roughly \$36,400. In comparison, the national median household income is \$74,580, only double the average price.

In the United States, attending university, especially prestigious or private universities, is already a privilege limited to those who can either afford it out of pocket or find a way to afford it with merit or need-based scholarships. Many worry that these FAFSA delays further hinder the abilities of financially disadvantaged students to receive a proper higher education and realize their potential in the American workforce.

Over the past few weeks, several major schools have released their financial aid packages to their admitted students. Hopefully the rest will release them prior to the final May 15th commitment deadline, that many schools have set.

To QO Students affected by the botched rollout, wishing you the best of luck with the college process and I hope the FAFSA offers you receive allows you to attend the school of your choice.



FREE PIX

FLICKR



## VIEWPOINT

# It's not all about a 5: How AP classes are more than just a score

BY CHASE PASEKOFF  
Editor-in-Chief

Welcome to AP season, Cougars! For many students, this period is filled with stress and nerves, but for some students, this time may serve as an opportunity that was previously unavailable. Following the monumental news of AP exams now being free for students, QO students as well as students all around the county are about to be entering into "exam mode" for the next several weeks. Whether you're stressed, anxious, or indifferent about these exams, it is important to remember that while they are important, self-worth and accomplishment are not only measured by a score.

Like many MCPS schools, QO places a big emphasis on students to aim to achieve the highest possible scores on standardized tests like AP exams. However, academic achievement is not only obtained through getting the best score on a test.

Similarly to many tests, AP exams are only a snapshot of the knowledge you've retained throughout your time in the course. While it can be an accurate assessment of your true expertise in the subject area, it is not always the only indicator of your

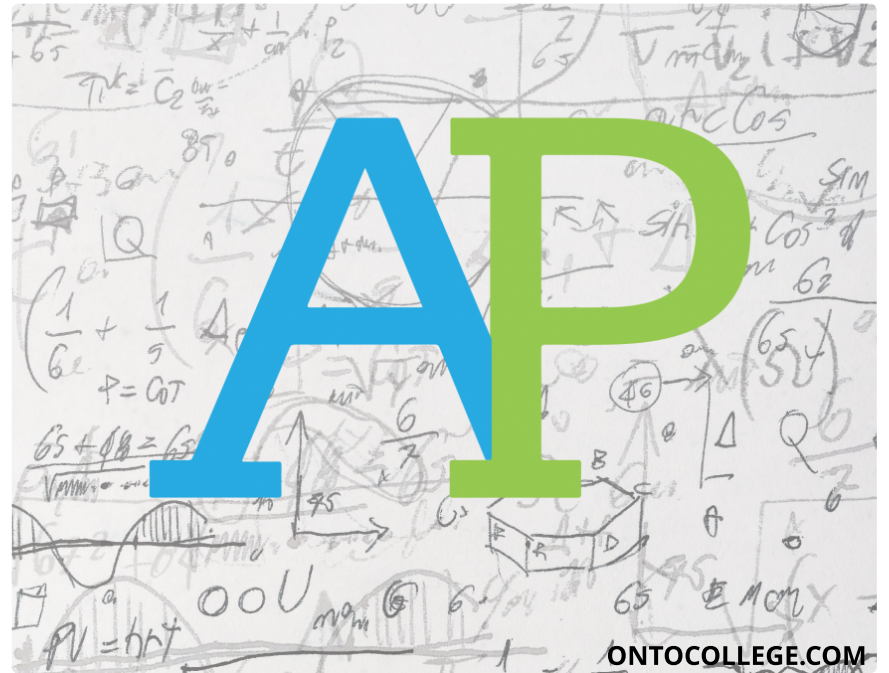
actual knowledge in the subject area. Additionally, AP tests, and AP classes in general, may prove to serve as more of an opportunity for excellence than anything else. This year, the focus in MCPS should not be as much on whether or not students are receiving the highest scores, but rather on whether or not the switch to providing free AP tests indicates that MCPS students are benefiting from having more chances to excel scholastically.

While this may not be as much the case at QO, at other MCPS high schools, students may be enrolling in AP classes to simply challenge themselves academically, not to necessarily impress colleges or boost their weighted GPA. Some students may want to see if they can handle a more demanding workload and keep up with their peers in class. Their focus may be less on the exam and the class itself, but more on its structure and pacing.

Thus, AP exam scores across the county should not be taken as a definitive metric as to whether the transition to free exams was beneficial or not. Regardless of the score distributions by school, allowing students to attempt to challenge themselves in a more rigorous course could prove to be

helpful for them later on in their academic careers.

AP exams are undoubtedly important, and getting a high score is a big achievement that any student should be very proud of, but getting a "5" is not the only way an AP student can feel like they have improved academically.



## Mental Health Awareness Month

### *How does QO address mental health issues?*

BY MOLLY RUBMAN  
Staff Writer

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, bringing light to challenges faced by millions of Americans. The goal of having a month dedicated to mental health is to eliminate the stigma, gather support, advocate for policies, prioritize well-being, and educate people about available services to help support them.

The question now arises as to how to present and spread the message to as many people as possible, especially the youth. According to Everyday Health, "the mental health of America's youth has been declining for over a decade." Schools are a natural choice to provide this information and resources to students, as they are a primary source of knowledge and guidance for them. QO is one school trying to provide this information.

Here is one example: QO aims to have Cougars Connect (CC)—a 40-minute period to share schoolwide information and character education lessons—every Friday after third period. Although CC presents a diverse group of topics, many presentations include slides on well-being and self-care. Junior Sophie Bee, a Cougars Connect leader, participates in making the slides shown during CC.

"When making slides focused on mental health, we always aim to be as inclusive as possible, and make sure that everyone feels accounted for and listened to no matter the issue or circumstances," Bee said.

Not all students have access to resources or information about mental health outside of school, so QO provides this information to its student body.

This allows everyone the opportunity to learn more about themselves and issues they or others might be dealing with.

Addressing mental health issues in CC shows students that not everything is black and white, and not every problem has an easy fix. It allows students to feel heard but also gives them advice on how to cope with various aspects of their mental health," Bee said.

Along with CC raising awareness of mental health issues, QO introduced our Bridge to Wellness Center last school year in the fall of 2022. This center focuses on providing a safe space for students to go to when they need to talk or get immediate support. One of the center's Youth Development Specialists, Cara Salza, works with the engagement of students and providing services and support needed.

When asked if she thinks QO offers enough support to students who might be struggling, Salazar said, "I feel like support can never be enough. I think there's always chances to give more support to students and especially with mental health, I think there's always opportunities to add more."

The Bridge to Wellness center is on the second floor in rooms 241A and 241B. They are open to all students and have many events and after-school activities to participate in.

QO also has our very own school psychologist, Abigail Hernandez, whose office is located on the third floor lobby by the main stairwell.

"As a school psychologist, I support students with their social-emotional, behavioral, and learning needs," Hernandez says, adding, "I also collaborate with families and staff to plan

interventions, provide counseling services, and participate in county-wide initiatives to help all MCPS students."

If you ever need support from our school psychologist, Hernandez stresses that she is always available to students via her email, Abigail\_J\_Hernandez@mcpsmd.org, to schedule appointments or check-ins if needed. She also has an open-door-policy and loves when students pop-in to say 'hi.'

With all (and more) of these resources and support systems available, QO is doing its best to make sure every student's mental health is valued and heard.

So as we settle into May, remember what this month is bringing awareness to, and try tuning into your own emotions and feelings.

"Taking care of your mental health is vital not only to your learning but to your personal development," Hernandez says. "I encourage students to start paying attention to cues you get when you are feeling any emotion. Identifying triggers to certain emotions will increase your self-awareness and allow you to brainstorm what your needs are at that moment. With this awareness, we are able to more appropriately communicate our needs to others as well as seek available support."



FLICKR

# A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR JUNIOR YEAR

By SOPHIA LEE

## 1. Don't be afraid of a challenge

While deciding on your junior year courseload, it would be beneficial to consider taking classes on an AP (Advanced Placement) level. Students at QD are extremely fortunate to have a wide variety of AP classes to choose from. Although classes at this level have a reputation for being challenging, AP teachers at QD have all the tools to allow students to succeed. They frequently offer office hours for help and support, review sessions before tests, and provide notes and videos to further students' understanding of content. Additionally, QD students in honors societies are also available for lunch tutoring. For example, members of the Rho Kappa National Social Studies Honors Society are commonly asked to support students in social studies classes at the AP level. Ultimately, if students use the resources available to them, they can perform very well in these classes. AP classes also can boost your weighted GPA, and most college admissions officers want to see students maximizing their courseload by taking classes at an advanced level, like AP.

## 2. Limit screen time and reduce procrastination

Juniors often complain about the amount of homework they receive and express that they are more stressed out during their junior year than ever before. Consequently, students must stay on top of their work and not fall behind so that they avoid this stress. A major factor in this stress is phones and other media. In this day and age, high school students waste valuable time scrolling through social media and watching their favorite Netflix shows and then complain of having no time for schoolwork. Students shouldn't cut out this downtime completely, but they should be self-aware and limit how much time they are using up instead of completing assignments. Setting "screen time" limits and putting in place other systems to avoid overusing devices can prove to be helpful when trying to complete schoolwork. This may seem easier said than done, however. In junior year, teachers often assign work with a due date a few days to a few weeks later. This leads many students to put off the assignment until its due date. Cramming in assignments last minute, when there is likely other work to complete that night, is only going to reduce the quality of the work and increase the students' stress. Instead, students should start assignments earlier and spread out their work, so they have less to do each night.

## 3. Prepare for the ACT/SAT

Word on the street is that many colleges are reverting to requiring test scores for admission again, a policy that was removed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. While test scores may not decide whether a student is admitted to their preferred college or not, they are a very helpful addition to one's application. It would be smart to first take a diagnostic ACT/SAT test to see which you are more comfortable with, as well as what areas need improvement. From there, there are many options for studying. Depending on students' schedules and flexibility, they can decide between individual tutoring, group sessions, digital (or Zoom) sessions, or even free self-paced online courses. As one-on-one tutoring can get quite expensive, Khan Academy and other online resources offer free study materials for students to use online. Much like schoolwork, students should spread out their ACT/SAT studying so that they aren't stressed out trying to study the week of the test. To have the most opportunities to take the test, students should start this process as early as possible, as there are only certain dates to take the tests. A benefit of taking the ACT/SAT multiple times is that many universities will use a "superscore", or average your best scores from each subject across multiple tests, resulting in a higher ultimate score. Here at QD, there is also an in-school SAT day that is free for juniors during the spring. Consider taking the test on that day if you are looking for another chance to see where your score lies.

## 4. Visit colleges

By junior year, some students may have an idea of what colleges they're interested in applying to. If you are able to, it can be super beneficial to visit some of these colleges to determine your preference in size, campus type, and area. Colleges can range in size from being about as small as a high school population, to as large as tens of thousands. Some students may realize they want a smaller school with smaller class sizes and more individualized focus. Others may not care about that and instead prefer a larger school population with more student life. If you're interested in touring colleges, official campus tours are great, as many schools will feature a spoken information session as well. These information sessions are valuable for providing information on what admissions are looking for in a student, what student life is like at that university, the average class size, housing information, and they can practically answer any questions you may have. If you cannot go to an in-person visit, many colleges also provide free virtual tours and information sessions available for prospective students. These can typically be accessed through the college's website, and are usually offered throughout the college application season. Either way, it is important to have a clear view of what your future plans are as you enter the later years of high school.

## 5. Prioritize your health

Junior year can take a toll on students' mental health if they are not taking care of themselves appropriately. Getting enough sleep each night is crucial so that students don't suffer from sleep deprivation and further struggle with their coursework and stress. QD has a great team of counselors who are always available for students to confide in and get them back on track when students become overwhelmed. Many times, if a student is struggling to meet due dates due to mental health, teachers are willing to lend them some extra time to take some stress off their plate. Throughout junior year, not everything has to be so serious. Junior year is also a time to make friends, join extracurriculars, and participate in any other activities that relieve stress and bring students joy!



# The new digital SAT: mixed reviews

By SOPHIE FAWKNER and KATE BELMAN  
Senior Staff Writers

Making its debut on March 9, the digital SAT officially became the new norm, with a reduced time of two and a half hours, a built-in calculator for both math sections, and an adaptive-based system that scores you based on the level of difficulty per question.

Since the College Board has removed “standardization” and replaced it with adaptive questions and scoring, students tend to have mixed feelings towards the drastic switch from the traditional paper-based exam.

The SAT has a long history, dating back to 1926. Today, its main purpose is “to measure a high school student’s readiness for college and provide colleges with one common data point that can be used to compare all applicants,” according to the Princeton Review.

The digital SAT has two separate sections: Reading/Writing and Math. In each section, you can earn a score between 200-800 points, depending on your number of correctly answered questions. Scores change in 10-point intervals.

In total, your score can range from 400-1600, which also changes on a 10-point interval.

Quince Orchard offered the new digital SAT to students on March 19, advertising it in the earlier weeks.

Every student in the junior class was automatically registered, which was implemented as an attempt to get as many students as possible to take the exam.

Junior class students poured into school that Tuesday, heading to designated testing rooms to take the test.

The digital test is an exciting new format for students.

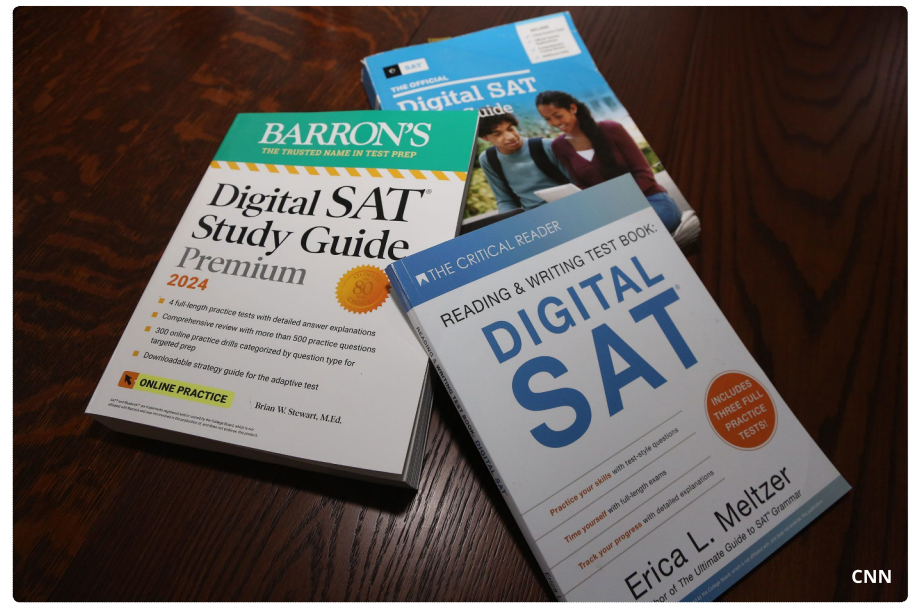
In recent years, many colleges and universities went “test-optional” meaning that “the college allows all applicants to decide for themselves whether to submit test scores,” according to the College Board.

This option was seen as an incredible opportunity for many students across the country as it no longer required them to submit their SAT/ACT scores, a typically stressful process.

However, some schools such as Dartmouth and Brown will be adopting the testing requirement for those applying in the fall.

While some students at Quince Orchard have had experiences with both the digital and paper-based SAT, junior Sofia Bolanos has only taken the digital version of the test.

Even though Bolanos has never taken the official SAT before the March 19 school test date, she claims that her experience was “pretty decent, despite feeling a bit nervous at first.” Thanks to the newer advancements such as a built-in use of a graphing calculator and shortened reading passages, Bolanos felt that “the testing was pretty smooth.”



The SAT exam is now fully digital.

Even though the digital SAT is a lot shorter and provides more tools during testing, junior Marvin Zacarias claims “the new SAT is annoying because it isn’t standardized anymore.”

Essentially, the digital version of the SAT focuses more on adaptive technology.

This means that even if you were to get all of the questions you received correct, you could still get a lower score than the person next to you depending on the difficulty level of those specific questions.

“Even though the paper-based version of the SAT was longer,” Zacarias added, “it was a lot more fair and equal for all test takers.”

Similarly, junior Ishani Maheshwari, who also has experience with both the paper and digital SAT,

thinks that “digital testing is distracting.”

By spending nearly two and a half hours focusing on your screen, some like Maheshwari may feel uncomfortable.

“I prefer the paper-based test because it allows me to feel a bit more comfortable and engaged,” added Maheshwari.

Although students who may have had similar testing experiences as Maheshwari and Zacarias believe the digital SAT was unfair and distracting, the College Board claims that “84% of students and 99% of staff reported a better experience with the Digital SAT.”

## Red 40, Clarified

### Is this common food dye as harmful as it seems? Your questions answered.

By BROOKE LYONS  
Staff Writer

If children constantly ingest Red 40, that may contribute to developing attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms like hyperactivity, according to Medical News Today. Although a lot of the effects are small, it is one of the most popular food dyes present in what we eat.

Red 40 is a synthetic food dye that is most commonly found in dyed and red-colored food such as Hot Cheetos, Skittles, store-packaged juices, and other delicious treats. It has also effectively been banned in countries such as Norway, France, the UK, and more. Even though this has been banned in certain countries, people in America still continue to eat it at high rates. According to The National Institute of Health, 94% of people in the United States over the age of two consume Red 40, and over 40% of foods marketed to children contain this dye.

What goes into Red 40 dye is a specific chemical named Allura Red Ac, according to WebMD. Allura Red Ac is a type of naphthalene sulfonic acid that reacts with a different type of sulfonic acid in order to create the man-made substance. The reason Red 40 also is known for its bright red color is thanks to the dark red powder of this chemical compound.

Between 1977 to 1990, there were multiple efforts to try and ban Red 40, according to Ars Technica, a science and technology news website. Tests were done on rats to investigate if the consumption of Red 40 causing

cancer is true, and even though it isn’t evident, there are other side effects. However, after the FDA promised to take this dye out of foods, 33 years later it has not been followed up, as many of our products still contain it.

But how is this dye strategically marketed to children? The ways products with Red 40 and other chemicals such as Yellow 5 are marketed to children is through colorful characters, cartoons, catchy music and appealing colors. For example, the famous cereal “Fruit Loops” has a mascot named Toucan Sam that has a multicolored beak constantly appearing on cereal box covers and advertisements.

When doing a deeper study of Red 40, according to the Cleveland Health Clinic, this food dye may cause in some people symptoms of watery eyes, sneezing, migraines, and a possible allergic reaction. However, people have stronger variations of Red 40 allergies called anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction to a certain food used causing indigestion, hives, shortness of breath, and more.

Most people are unlikely to have severe allergic reactions to Red 40, but there are still questions if Red 40 can lead to cancer. Although it has a human carcinogen in it (a substance that stimulates cancer), this substance has not been linked with higher rates of cancer, according to Very Well Health. The FDA has continued to approve Red 40, as foods containing it are readily available on the shelves.

Another main side effect of this chemical is the increased risk of developing ADHD-like symptoms.



Roger, a dog who flunked out of a Taiwanese police academy, became a hero after finding the body of a 21-year-old who had been missing after the recent earthquake in that country earlier this month. Roger’s “restless and independent” nature made him a great candidate for a rescue dog, according to Chen Chih-san, captain of the rescue dog unit of the Kaohsiung Fire Department, in an article from Good News Network.

According to Deseret News, the effects described from Red 40 linked with ADHD symptoms are hyperactivity, restlessness, behavioral changes and more. But does this food dye actually cause ADHD? It does not cause ADHD, as Red 40 doesn’t cause the disorder, but it can exacerbate symptoms of it, even in children without this diagnosis.

The most important question

asked about Red 40 is if it’s safe. Fortunately, Red 40 is safe to eat as long as you aren’t allergic to it or eat it in moderation, according to Ped Docs Talk. Red 40 overall is safe for most individuals, but in some cases may increase hyperactivity and behavior issues in children. Our bodies all react differently, as some will experience adverse effects while others will feel nothing.



# What's "in" for summer 2024?

BY MADDIE KING  
Staff Writer

As the temperature rises and the sun starts to come out for good (and not just for the common two-day "fake summers" we've become accustomed to), it comes time to embrace the sizzling trends for the upcoming late spring/summer season, and to dive into the hottest looks and accessories set to dominate the summer scene for this year.

**BIG on the sunglasses:** You can never go wrong with a classic pair of sunglasses — from rounded to rectangular frames and everything in between, "sunnies" have been coined the absolute staple of the summer. In the past, we've seen brands keep it simple with plain frames; however, this summer we'll be seeing much more color completing various looks, such as red angular cat-eyes and oversized sunglasses that look like they've been taken straight out of a 1970s band poster. There are also larger, "chunky" glasses with wavy, oval-like frames and thick temples. If you like to keep it more "Plain Jane," you can still rely on black sunglasses

with rectangular frames, or even opt for a tinted lens to add a pop of color.

**Speaking of color...** Blue skies are certainly ahead—well, according to a plethora of fashion labels, it is. Sky blue is just one color on the rise this summer, whether you're going for a monochromatic set complete with matching shoes, a pop of blue in the form of a handbag, or even sunglasses! Other colors that are making a bold entrance this season include cherry red, porcelain white, pastel lilac, and even liquid gold — as seen on the runways of Ralph Lauren and Gucci this spring.

**Non-basic "basics":** The late Carolyn Bessette-Kennedy, a '90s fashion icon, could usually be found wearing traditionally "simple" clothing pieces. Designers have recently taken Bessette-Kennedy's style and added a twist, and it's not disappointing anyone. Through the streets of New York City, onlookers have been able to spot cuts of plain white tees and jeans. Other '90s staples like collared button-up shirts have made a comeback, this time with differing subtle patterns on either side. Relaxed-fit jeans have



been back in the cycle for a while now, but this year, longer loose-fitting jean shorts are being added to the mix. While she may be named a so-called "ghost influencer" by The New York Times, Carolyn Bessette-Kennedy's style is sure to live on this summer with even more items like mini skirts and longer linen-like trench coats.

**'80s excess is back:** For those who aren't completely sold on the '90s basics, don't worry! This year's spring collection on many runways such as Balmain, Moschino, and Louis Vuitton featured numerous odes to material girls and guys. As stated before, oversized and clunky shades along with tweed sets, cap-toe sandals, and slingbacks are all the rage. These items can add the same over-the-top attitude to your current wardrobe

without breaking the bank, as brands like Zara have added this vibe to their new collections. While it's nice to give your closet a refresh for the season, it definitely does not have to stick to the trends. The '80s showed us that there is always room for self-expression, and that you should always feel comfortable and cool in any style you're rocking this summer!



## REVIEW

# The World of Thrift

BY ELISHA SENGHA  
Staff Writer

Quince Orchard students should embark on a thrifting adventure this summer. The unique thrift finds in Montgomery County, Maryland local thrifts.

The Salvation Army in Gaithersburg had racks of cute clothes and amazing outfits that could be put together. The store's cleanliness and the kindness of its workers set the tone for a pleasant shopping experience. I love 2000s fashion and I found a vintage juicy couture tracksuit for only \$7.99 which was a good steal since vintage items are more pricier now. As more than just a thrift store, The Salvation Army also operates as a religious organization, providing opportunities to shop and donate. Students can not only find joy in outfits but also in contributing to the community by donating clothes to those in need.

Another unique local thrifting store is Goodwill in Germantown, where students can find a delightful thrift shopping experience. With huge donations pouring in, the store gives a diverse selection of accessories and shoe areas I got a bracelet for Mother's Day and a tiny white bag for school supplies. Goodwill offers hidden gems, which make thrifting exciting. From trendy pieces to timeless classics, customers can find quality items at affordable prices. The last adventure students should take is into "My Big Finds" in Kentlands, a vintage wonderland. While the store may be on the pricier side, the exceptional service provided by Quince Orchard students and other staff who work there and the merchandise made it worthwhile. My Big Finds has natural lotions and candles to adorable clothes and kitchen items, My Big Finds offers something for everyone.



The lavender and tangerine soaps and lotions were my favorite and purchased them for my mother and I to enjoy. The owner's dedication to changing the store's theme, which is adapted to each season or holiday, adds excitement to each visit. As Quince Orchard students seek summer adventures, exploring the local thrift stores is a fulfilling experience.

From fashionable finds to hidden treasures, these thrift stores are

waiting to be discovered. These thrift stores offer more than just a shopping experience; they provide an opportunity for students to connect with their community and support local businesses. The Salvation Army, Goodwill, and My Big Finds each offer a unique shopping experience, from religious charities to vintage, making them must-visit destinations for Quince Orchard students this summer.

## VIEWPOINT

# Midwest pop star Chappell Roan relishes situationships in new album

BY MAMS JAGHA  
Editor-in-Chief

With a no-skip debut album, surreal style, and insane vocals, Chappell Roan is a name everyone needs to remember.

After opening for Olivia Rodrigo's "Guts" tour, Roan immediately blew up on TikTok and fully emerged as a pop star with her debut album, *The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess*, released in 2023. Recently crowned as a breakthrough queer pop icon, Roan's unique wordplay, relatable lyrics on 'situationships', and drag-style makeup and outfits has led her into a successful double-life only before seen by Hannah Montana herself (to whom Roan frequently compares herself).

Raised in Missouri and born into a conservative Christian family, Roan took the steering wheel of her own life and moved to L.A in 2022. Although dropped from her original record label in 2020, she was able to sign onto Island Records last summer and shine with producer Dan Nigro.

While fans have put her into the same category as other modern pop stars like Rina Sawayama, Caroline Polachek, and MUNA, the thing that sets Roan apart from these artists is her distinctive, eccentric, and blunt lyrics. Her new single "Good Luck, Babe!" includes the lines "You can kiss a hundred boys in bars / Shoot another shot, try to stop the feeling" and "When you wake up next to him in the middle of the night / With

your head in your hands, you're nothing more than his wife!" As personal as they sound, these lines don't isolate listeners but bring more than many would think, as she twists relatability with catchiness. Roan's theatricality and openness ultimately cultivated her following and acclaimed Coachella and Tiny Desk concert performances.

With a new rise in independent alt-rock artists, many have begun to place Roan in the same category as Kate Bush, Cyndi Lauper, Renee Rapp, Clairo, Steve Lacy, and newer artists The Last Dinner Party. (Give them a listen, too!) As Roan only has a couple of singles and just now released a debut album, the depths to which her sound as an artist has shown are still unseen.

This new class of queer artists opens doors for not only other queer artists but their listeners to be just as free-spoken and unstoppable as they have shown is possible.







# Athlete of the Month

BY OLIVIA MAYTIN  
Senior Staff Writer

## COED VOLLEYBALL - SENIOR EDDIE BEDORE

Eddie is a team captain and has been a member of the team for three years. His position is Outside Hitter and Defensive Specialist. According to Coach Sarah Watson, "Eddie's freshman year, he had a skiing accident and shattered his leg. I have been so impressed by how hard he worked to rehab and come back to volleyball. He is a vocal leader both on and off the court and puts in the work to make his team better."

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

A. I had a shoulder injury last season, so I made sure to stay consistent with my PT exercises so that I could prevent another injury this year. I also got in the gym with my teammate [senior] Sarah Manion to get some reps in before tryouts.

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

A. PB&J, goldfish, and an apple.

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

A. I love to do anything outdoors, especially mountain biking, skiing, or hiking.

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

A. I started playing volleyball in 4th grade for Gaithersburg rec and just stuck with it. My dad always talked about how much fun he had playing it in the Army, so I had him sign me up.

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

A. I love to win, but I always prioritize making fun memories with the team and creating really close bonds with all my teammates.

## TRACK - SOPHOMORE MIKAELA PAK

Pak's victory in two individual events versus Magruder on April 12 — the 100 hurdles and the 300 hurdles — earned her the Athlete of the Month award.

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

A. This fall/winter I did cross country and indoor track to condition my body and prepare myself for the spring season.

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

A. My go-to meal before meets is a sandwich of any kind, and a variety of nuts, fruits, and energy bars.

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

A. Outside of sports, I play piano and love doing art. I also enjoy playing video games with my friends.

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

A. I started track during freshman year in the winter. I started mainly because I wanted to try something new, and wanted to stay active throughout the school year.

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

A. Some goals I have for the team is for everyone to push one another to improve. Hopefully, our team can become stronger that way.

## BOYS TENNIS - SENIOR BRADY HAHN

Hahn is a team co-Captain as well as 3rd singles. According to Coach Matt Marsden, "Hahn is a great leader and role model for the team. His play has been outstanding so far this season."

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

A. I played at least 4 days a week along with tournaments on the weekends.

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

A. My go-to meal is a chicken and cheese quesadilla.

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

A. I enjoy video creation and editing.

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

A. I started playing tennis over soccer during Covid because it was much easier to play while socially distant. From there, I transitioned to playing tennis full time.

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

A. My goal is to win the division.

## GIRLS TENNIS - JUNIOR EVIE MCMASTER

This is McMaster's first season playing QO tennis. According to Coach Karen Jones, "she has worked her way into the starting lineup at 3rd doubles with her hustle and aggressive play. She brings an incredibly positive attitude and is a great teammate."

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

A. I actually decided to pick up tennis [again] a month before tryouts because I really liked it when I was younger. I played QO girls varsity soccer during the fall, so that helped keep me in shape.

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

A. Before a match I usually don't have a chance to eat anything since it's right after school, but if I do, I try to eat some sushi because it's light and it's one of my favorites.

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

A. I'm very invested academically [and] I do a lot of art in my free time, but most of my life is sports and that's the way I like it.

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

A. I started playing this sport in February because I took some lessons when I was young and I remembered how much I liked it. I went out for tennis because this was the first time I wasn't playing soccer in the spring, but it's quickly become one of my favorite things to do.

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

A. Honestly, just to win as many games as possible and to do the best we can. Tennis is a real mental sport and I love how much the team is there for each other.



# Lee Faris Tribute

BY DYLAN FLAIM  
Staff Writer

During spring break, the Quince Orchard community received devastating news. Lee Faris, who served as the Quince Orchard football public address announcer from 1994-2019, had passed away after a two-year battle with ALS at the age of 77.

Faris was beloved in the Quince Orchard community, and was better known as "The Voice of the Cougars." After his retirement from the public address role in 2019, Faris was put into the QO Athletics Hall of Fame.

Faris was born in Richmond, Virginia, and graduated from the University of Richmond in 1968. A decade later, Faris and his wife moved to Gaithersburg, where they raised four daughters. Faris was a very active and well-respected member of the Gaithersburg community. In addition to being the Cougars public address announcer, Faris also worked at the Lowe's in the Kentlands, where he was a kitchen designer.

Faris spent Fridays in the fall at the Cougar Dome, and lots of his Saturdays in the fall were spent at college football stadiums, as Faris loved college football. Faris' daughters attended the University of Tennessee, James Madison University, the University of Mississippi, and the University of Alabama, so Faris would travel out to those campuses a lot in the fall to visit his daughters and watch college football.

According to his obituary, Faris loved to hike, camp, and watch sci-fi movies. On top of that, Faris loved history, and was especially passionate about the Civil War and World War II. Most importantly, however, according to his obituary, Faris was a family man, who took pride in being a husband, father, and grandfather.

Faris had a substantial impact on the Quince Orchard community. On Twitter/X, Adam Gotkin '22, the founder of QO Sports Net, said, "This is heartbreaking. Mr. Faris was the voice of my childhood. Everytime I watch high school football I can hear his voice in the background. My thoughts and prayers are with the Faris family."

Faris had a true passion for Quince Orchard football, and was more than the public address announcer to the team, as Quince Orchard Football strength and defensive line coach Mike Sarni wrote via Twitter/X: "Lee loved QO Football. He would regularly show up for the first day of practice in August. Sit over on the hill and when he thought it was the right time he would make his way over and ask how things were looking for the new season. Always a class act. Rest easy Lee."

Also via Twitter/X, Quince Orchard head football coach John Kelley said, "Very sad to hear about the passing of Mr. Lee Faris. If you have been to a QO football game in the last 2 decades you know the voice. Lee loved the Cougars. Going to miss him and his famous line to start each game. 'Let's play some Cougar football.' RIP."

Whether you had a personal connection with Faris, or just knew him as the "The Voice of Cougar Football," the entirety of the Quince Orchard community will deeply miss Mr. Lee Faris. May he rest in peace.



# Capitals and Wizards anticipate staying in Washington until 2050

BY MOTAZ DEIFY  
Senior Staff Writer

After spring break, fans' worries about having to travel further for DC sporting events have eased.

On March 27, the Wizards and Capitals owner, Ted Leonsis, and DC Mayor Muriel E. Bowser reached a mutual agreement to keep both teams playing in the Capital One Arena until the year 2050—they've been playing in this stadium since 1997.

Additionally, the DC Council has unanimously voted to spend \$515 million over three years to help Leonsis renovate Capital One Arena and "expand his company into some of the surrounding area," according to the Washington Post.

Specifically, the project to renovate the entertaining stadium includes nearly 200,000 square feet, expanding further into Gallery Place, and enhancing the safety and transportation surrounding Chinatown.

Initially, it was set that the two teams were supposed to move home stadiums from Capital One to Potomac Yard in Virginia, but it was struck down along with the project that anticipated improving the area. According to Fox 5 News, the creation of the Potomac Yard stadium would've resulted in

the creation of nearly 30,000 permanent jobs and initiated the economic output by 2.5 times in the state of Virginia. Lawmakers such as Governor Glenn Youngkin were disappointed that the proposal couldn't proceed.

According to Sportsnet.ca, this outcome will have a significantly positive impact on Washington, DC and its sports fans: there will be an impact on Washington, DC and

its sports fans: there will be an impact on economic development, safety, and energy brought to the court/rink from Wizards and Capitals fans. The mayor emphasizes that Washington is "the current home and the future home of the Capitals and Wizards." She added, "We're going to be together for a long time."

Although the Capitals secured a spot in the playoffs this season, as of April 29, the Capitals have been knocked out during the 1st round, losing four consecutive games against the New York Rangers. Many fans have expected the outcome, since "I saw that they were going to play the Rangers, I knew they were gonna lose because they're first seed," said Junior Katherine Stepp.



Pictured above was supposed to be the new stadium located in Potomac Yard, Virginia





ONLINE EXCLUSIVE: Check out a guest viewpoint by QO wrestling coach Rob Wolf, who writes about the recent growth and success of the girls wrestling team. Read more on the Prowler's website at [tinyurl.com/QOwrestlingRW](https://tinyurl.com/QOwrestlingRW)

# Season Updates

## Boys Volleyball

BY DYLAN FLAIM  
Staff Writer

Unfortunately, it has been a rough season for Quince Orchard varsity boys volleyball. As of April 29, the team holds a record of 0-10, with only a few matches remaining in the season.

However, the subpar record does not tell the true story. The team consists of one senior, one junior, six sophomores, and six freshmen this year. This makes Quince Orchard by far the youngest team in the county, therefore putting them at a disadvantage.

The reason for this is that, last season, Quince Orchard Boys Volleyball had eight seniors, all of whom made a big impact on the team. The reality is that almost no team can be capable of turning around to have a successful season after having the majority of the team graduate.

The youth of the team has not stopped Quince Orchard from competing at their best, however, according to freshman Samuel Hong. "Even though we are a young team, we still have the drive to compete and get better every day," said Hong.

Sophomore Hoon Chang offers another reason why Boys Volleyball has had a rough season, saying, "Most of the teams we are facing are the top volleyball teams in the county."

Chang's claim is true, as Quince Orchard has faced teams like Walt Whitman and Winston Churchill this season, who are very talented squads, filled with upperclassmen.

The Cougars have had some good games though. On April 23, the Cougars came close to defeating a much older Watkins Mill team, only losing by one set, 3-2.

**"Although we face a lot of losses, I know that in the future we will be coming back to defeat them."**

*-Hoon Chang*

Despite the challenging season for the Cougars, the players and head coach Jacob Ricker are not to blame, as they have circumstances no other team in the county has had to face this year.

## Lacrosse

BY PRITI MADHAVAN  
Staff Writer

Quince Orchard High School's boys and girls lacrosse teams have displayed remarkable resilience and unity throughout the season. From the boys' consistency on the field to the girls' strength and perseverance, this season has been, as always, a memorable one to every person on the team. As the season draws to a close, the teams reflect on their journey this year, with eyes set on finishing strong.

Sophomore Natalie Goury, goalie for the girls' varsity team, shares insight into their season's highlights. "My favorite part is the people," she says, emphasizing the camaraderie among teammates as a driving force behind her enjoyment of the sport.

Reflecting on the season's challenges, Goury comments on the girls' teamwork. "We had a really tough schedule in the beginning but we were able to hold our own," she remarks.

During practices, Goury finds the "7s" drill particularly beneficial for overall skill improvement. "It allows every position to work and improve," she explains. As for the team's

achievements this year, Goury credits their ability to collaborate on the field. "We have done a really good job working together as a unit," she adds.

Looking ahead, Goury believes the team can focus on maintaining consistency and giving their all in every game. "We can work on staying consistent and giving it our all every time we step out onto the field," she suggests. Coach Twine, the varsity girls lacrosse coach, was contacted, but was unable to comment in time.

The boys team has had a similar experience this year. With a 3-2 record this season, the team has experienced both triumphs and setbacks, but their resilience and teamwork have remained consistent.

Despite a recent setback with a 0-10 loss against Damascus on April 23, the boys remain hopeful and determined as they prepare for their final match. With 11 seniors on the team this year playing their final season, it will be an emotional close to a season that won't be forgotten.

Both teams last game is on Friday, May 3 against Gaithersburg. Make sure to come support your cougars for their last regular season game!



## Coed Volleyball

BY MOTAZ DEIFY  
Senior Staff Writer

After a long and productive winter, the coed volleyball team is back on the court right where the girls have left off in the fall.

As of April 30, the coed team concluded with a 6-4 record for the regular season. With each practice that goes on, the team chemistry becomes stronger, which gives them hope to win against each opponent they face.

Regardless of their initial level of experience playing volleyball, each team member plays like they've been playing their whole life. For example, outside/middle and senior Andrew Chen has been on the team for only one year and he's gained so much skill from only playing for one season.

Over the summer, the coed team did workouts to get ready for

the season. Chen and a couple of his friends "wanted to make the team together," so they "did explosive workouts at the gym, and went to open gyms" to play pickup games of volleyball, he said.

One of Chen's favorite parts of being a part of the team is the team bonding. "After every game, we go out to dinner, whether we win or lose," he said. Chen perceives it as something to remember that having fun is crucial.

Getting more consistent is what the team emphasizes as playoffs have quickly approached. "When we play at our best, we're there," said Chen.

On April 26, the coed volleyball team recognized five seniors who made contributions to the program throughout their four years. They're now ready for the final stretch of playoffs as they wrap up their time playing high school volleyball.



INSTAGRAM/@QUINCEORCHARDVOLLEYBALL

## Track and Field

BY LILY KAPLAN  
Senior Staff Writer

As we near the beginning of May, when seniors in college are committed and AP exams are going on, spring sports are well underway. The track and field team, for one, is filled with both dedicated runners who train during the offseason for countless hours, and multi-sport athletes who are trying to keep in shape for their main sport.

Head coach Seann Pelkey, who is also a social studies teacher here at QO, has been coaching track for 25 years. He didn't just start there, though: "I ran track and field for 3 years at QO and then competed for LaSalle University in Philadelphia," he said.

As we look to the future of this season, Pelkey is enthusiastic about the MCPS Championship Meet, occurring May 15 and 16. "We hope to have both the girls and the boys place in the top 10," he said.

Pelkey has a positive regard for the "year-round running program," or the way the team was training for the outdoor track season.

"The distance team has cross country in the fall, and then much of the team trains and competes during our winter season," he said. "Those who don't do indoor track & field are encouraged to do other sports to prepare."

Among the team of dedicated runners is multi-sport athlete Josiah Teasley. The junior has been running track since he was six years old, and commits himself to the sport right after basketball season in the winter.

A significant meet for Teasley this season was the Trojan Invitational, held at Gaithersburg High School on April 20. Teasley started by running the 110m hurdles event, and won first place. He was second overall going to the finals. After that, he finished off strong by competing in the 300m hurdles event and winning the race again.

While the majority of the track and field meets have already occurred, there is still lots of time for the members of the team to achieve their goals. Their next meet is tomorrow, May 4, at Rockville High School.



ATHLETIC.NET



# Former QO Cougar, now Miami Dolphin

BY MADELEINE BURKE  
Editor-In-Chief

If you watched the 2024 NFL Draft last weekend, you may have done a double take at one of the people mentioned. No, not Sketch, the popular Twitch streamer who announced the 123rd pick, or Cooper DeJean, the defensive back who had a shockingly early pick — it's defensive end Demeioun "Chop" Robinson, QO class of '21 and the 21st pick in the first round, courtesy of the Miami Dolphins.

While playing for QO, Robinson was never known for being the outspoken, cocky player one might have imagined someone in his position to be. Coach John Kelley remembers Robinson not for being vocal, but for leading by example. According to Kelley, Robinson showed up on time to every practice, never missed an off-season workout, and was able to keep himself motivated.

Although Kelley always described Robinson as a "hard worker," he didn't give him any major playing time until week 10 of his sophomore year. But once Robinson stepped on the field, he was a powerhouse, breaking the school's sack record with 85 total tackles. His favorite memory from QO was winning the state championship his sophomore year. By the end of his high school career, he was a four-star recruit,

the top-ranked player of Maryland, and the 35th prospect nationally.

All these accomplishments are even more impressive because Robinson lost a season to Covid. High school fall sports were offered the opportunity to play a shorter version of their season in the spring of 2021. Even though Robinson was already committed to UMD and could begin training that spring, he chose one last season of high school football. "You only get high school once in your life and college is going nowhere," he said in an interview with The Prowler. He's glad he was able to play in his last season because it taught him to cherish the moments "going to practice and playing in games with your teammates." His favorite memory from QO was winning the state championship his sophomore year.

It's hard enough for any regular person to transition from high school to college, but it's especially tough for athletes dealing with a whole new level of skill to compete with. Robinson highlights the biggest struggle was "everybody being good, even the scout team."

Although Robinson ended college at Penn State, he played his freshman year at UMD. Due to Covid, he wasn't able to go on any visits, and he knew the Maryland campus best. Even though he had a great season as a Terp, he thought he would have more success as a Nittany Lion.



2019 © Philip Fabrizio

Chop Robinson, number 44, playing during his high school career.

visits, and he knew the Maryland campus best. Even though he had a great season as a Terp, he thought he would have more success as a Nittany Lion. That sophomore season, he went on to play in 12 games and was named an All-Big Ten honorable mention.

Two years later, Robinson's performance at the NFL Combine was impressive, to say the least. He ran a 4.48 at the 40-yard dash, the fastest time of all the defensive linemen this year. His notable results were key to pushing him ahead to be a top pick in the draft.

When asked before the draft what his ideal team would be, all he said was "somewhere warm." And, lucky for him, the Dolphins were able to make his dream come true.

Robinson credits much of his success to Coach Kelley, whose "determination kept me great", something he says is often hard to find with high school coaches.

"He [Kelley] shaped me into a great player and man. Learning from him got me to where I am today," he said.

Chop's journey has taken him from Gaithersburg, to College Park, to State College, and now Miami— a total of 1,490 miles. His effort and drive has taken him this far, and his future is bright.



# A revamped team as Commanders enter new era of football

BY NOAH KRAVITZ  
Staff Writer

It has been a thrilling offseason for the Commanders, to say the least. They have taken advantage of every opportunity thrown at them this offseason.

After another disappointing season, the team's new ownership—led by Josh Harris and well-known NBA legend Magic Johnson—went right to work. They had a task at hand: to find their new general manager to help put a winning team together. They had many names in mind, but no one better than former 49ers assistant general manager Adam Peters.

Peters, who has nearly 20 years of experience in the NFL, is widely considered as one of the most coveted front office executives in the NFL today. From that perspective, it was a no-brainer to promote Peters to Washington's general manager position. This was a big step towards a new era of Commanders football.

After the hiring of Peters, the team began its search for the head coaching position, after they relieved Ron Rivera of his duties last season. Candidates for the position included former Super Bowl winning head coach Bill Belichick, Mike Macdonald, and Aaron Glenn, among others.

They went with Dan Quinn as their new leader. He was most recently the defensive coordinator for the Cowboys, whose defense allowed the fourth-lowest completion percentage against opponents last year. He was, however, also the head coach for the Atlanta Falcons when they went to the Super Bowl in 2016, and blew the largest lead in history during the big game: 28-3, to be exact.

Despite all that, Quinn is sure to provide a new perspective in Washington, for a team that is desperate to put a winner on the field.

Not to be outdone, Kliff Kingsbury also got hired to the team to oversee the offensive coordinator duties. He formerly coached for the USC Trojans in college football, and was the Arizona Cardinals' head coach for four seasons prior.

The free agency tampering period began back on March 13, and since then, teams have completed lots of moves.

The Atlanta Falcons gave out the richest contract this offseason so far, with Kirk Cousins agreeing to a massive 4-year contract worth up to \$180 million.

Entering the offseason, the Commanders had one of the biggest amounts of salary cap in the NFL. This being due to the NFL announcing that the official salary cap figure for the 2024 season would be set at \$255.4 million, a \$30.6 million increase from last season.

Especially for a team that had a lot of holes to fill on their roster, having a lot of money on hand to spend would be a big benefit.

Their two most expensive signings so far consisted of Dorance Armstrong and Frankie Luvu. Armstrong last played for the Dallas Cowboys as a defensive end, where he recorded 7.5 sacks last season, and received a three-year deal with Washington.

Luvu also signed a three-year deal with the Commanders. He recorded his career highs in sacks and in forced fumbles last season. Luvu could be a very good piece in the middle of that Washington defense in the 2024 season.

On the offensive side of the ball,

*"Washington will get everything outta me, the competitor and the hard worker!"*

*-Jayden Daniels after getting drafted*

Adam Peters had a big task at hand: to improve his offensive line. Last season, their offensive line ranked 30th in all the NFL according to ProFootballTalk. Every offense in the NFL is primarily built off of the offensive line, which makes it such a key component in today's game.

Former Kansas City Chiefs' guard Nick Allegretti and former Dallas Cowboys center Tyler Biadasz filled two big glaring holes on the offensive line.

Another significant move on the offense was the signing of Austin Ekeler, who formerly played running back for the Los Angeles Chargers. Ekeler had a down year last season, only putting up just beyond 600 yards rushing, as well as 5 rushing touchdowns. He'll be given the opportunity to compete for the #1 running back spot on the depth chart, against Brian Robinson.

It's been a 'Free Agency Frenzy,' as some Commanders fans would describe this offseason so far.

A bigger frenzy was arguably the 2024 NFL Draft, which was witnessed last week. The biggest task at hand for Peters, Quinn, and Kingsbury was to draft the team's franchise quarterback for the foreseeable future. They held the 2nd overall selection, behind the Chicago Bears, who took the unanimous #1 quarterback in the draft: Caleb Williams.

Following them, the Commanders had to decide between UNC QB: Drake Maye, and

reigning Heisman Trophy winning QB from LSU: Jayden Daniels.

They ultimately went with the 6'4" dual threat QB, Jayden Daniels at #2. Daniels shows elite athleticism, not only as an experienced passer, but as a very dangerous and speedy runner as well. Daniels is still a work in progress in terms of his footwork and his frame. But if he can gain a few pounds and work on some of the intangibles, he could be a very dominant quarterback in the NFL for years to come.

Following the first round, the Commanders scooped up what many believed to be at least a first round target, in Jer'Zhan Newton. The big D-lineman from Illinois fell all the way to the 40th overall pick where Adam Peters just couldn't pass up a talent in Newton.

Later on, Washington took Michigan corner Mike Sainristil, tight end Ben Stinott, and tackle Brandon Coleman from TCU. One of the more underrated picks of the draft was Luke McCaffrey out of Rice. You may recognize the last name, with his brother Christian McCaffrey playing running back for the 49ers.

Luke was taken at 100th overall. He plays wide receiver, who was a First Team All American in the AAC.

Overall, it's been a really entertaining offseason for the Washington Commanders. They've added a ton of talent on both sides of the ball, and we are sure to see more of that later in the offseason.