

The Student Voice

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A CALL FOR COMMUNITY



Israel, October 2023



Gaza, October 2023

photo courtesy of Kobi Gideon via Creative Commons

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On October 7, 2023, the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas invaded Israel and murdered over 1,400 Israelis and kidnapped over 200 hostages. In response, the Israeli Defense Forces launched airstrikes and a ground invasion of the Gaza Strip, which at the time of publication, has killed more than 10,000 Palestinian civilians and displaced over half of the Gazan population.

As we write this, here in the United States, Jewish and Muslim lives are under threat, violent protests are erupting on college campuses, posters of kidnapped children are being torn down, and fingers are ferociously being pointed in all directions.

When we started writing this article, a sense of caution plagued both our minds. Scared to offend each other, or say the wrong thing, we sat in silence for a long time, trying to find the right words to convey our thoughts. We've been grappling with how to cover this issue since October 7, and because of the passionate and extremely divisive nature of the issues, it's been one of the most significant challenges we've encountered as journalists.

This situation has been even more challenging to write about, since one of us feels a stronger emotional connection to one aspect of the issue while the other is passionate about a different aspect. Despite these difficulties, we knew this was an issue that we had to address together.

At Buckley, over 78% of Upper School students want to talk about what's going on, yet students are apprehensive and afraid to address sensitive topics such as politics and global events. Over two-thirds of students say they're scared to honestly share their political opinions on campus.

This holds especially true when someone has a different opinion from the narrow scope of what's deemed acceptable. This climate stifles open discussion and dialogue, forcing students with contrasting opinions to hide their beliefs out of fear of potentially being ostracized by their peers or the community.

We understand how difficult this situation has been for the entire community and the psychological pain it has caused so many. The reality of the ongoing horrors is only exacerbated by the footage being posted on social media. The conflict is no longer 7,500

miles away – it's right in front of us on our Instagram, TikTok, and X feeds. The ravages of war and the death of civilians are readily accessible through our phones, making it increasingly difficult to shield ourselves from these horrors. This brings us to the question, how can we address this situation within our community?

The Israel-Palestine conflict has long been one of the most-avoided topics on our campus, with no symposiums and very few classroom discussions addressing it. This avoidance is most likely fueled by a combination of intense passion and the fear of backlash. No matter what someone says, there will always be at least one person who takes offense to it.

However, when an event is as significant, monumental, and horrifying as this, there's no escaping the need for discussion. And while there will forever be disagreements, respectful civil discourse is better than one perspective dominating the conversation. At Buckley, it's often the case where one opinion overwhelms the conversation, while those with a differing perspective feel silenced.

In a time of fear, vulnerability, and immense pain, it's more important now than ever to listen. It is beyond crucial and necessary to approach each other with a great deal of empathy and understanding. Being thousands of miles away from the conflict, there isn't much we can physically do to help this situation, but what we can do is support, reach out, and care for one another.

Because there is such a large Jewish community at Buckley, many students are being directly affected by this conflict, and we have to take the time to listen to their stories, thoughts, and feelings. At the same time, we have to recognize that Muslim and Palestinian students are also being directly affected by this conflict and feeling scared and hurt. We must listen to their stories, thoughts and feelings as well.

While we don't know exactly what the conversations should look like, the time for discussion is here. It's easy to dismiss the phrase that used to be said before every symposium, "Be raggedy, ask for clean up," but we don't see any other way forward. Together we have to be vulnerable and compassionate, and allow each other to speak without fear of being canceled or ostracized. These conversations are going to be messy and complicated, but as long as we're willing to work together, we have a chance to heal in this time of darkness.



66%

of students have felt scared to share a political opinion in class



36%

of students have felt attacked for sharing a political opinion at school



55%

of students have had discussions in class or advisory about Israel and Gaza



78%

of students believe school should hold more discussions about Israel and Gaza

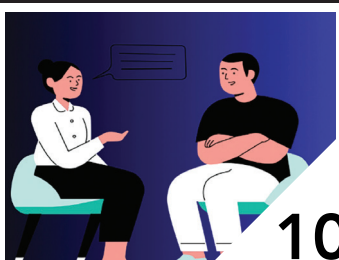
data collected from 79 responses from November 6-7

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Experiencing the Complexities of Israel Firsthand

AlexRamin'25
news reporter

As a student who had the opportunity to travel to Israel this past summer, I can say my journey was filled with awe-inspiring moments and profound experiences. One aspect of my visit that left a deep impact on me was the visible and palpable divide between the Palestinian quarters and Israeli areas. This divide, both physical and symbolic, told a story that is as complex as the region's history itself.

One of the most striking regions I visited during my trip was the Golan Heights, an area of immense historical significance and ongoing geopolitical tension. The Golan Heights is a plateau that stretches along the border between Israel and Syria. The contrast between the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights and the Syrian side is apparent. The Israeli side is flourishing with lush vineyards and thriving agricultural communities called Kibbutz, while the Syrian side remains barren.

This contrast is a testament to the impact of the Six-Day War in 1967, during which Israel captured the Golan Heights. The Israeli government has invested heavily in the region, developing it into a productive and fertile area using Israeli agricultural technology.

Another vivid symbol of the divide that I encountered during my travels was a series of murals and graffiti paintings that featured prominently in Palestinian quarters. One striking image that caught my attention was the painting of eyes. These haunting and intense depictions serve as a powerful

reminder of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

During my trip to Israel, my tour guide had explained these pieces of art as a sense of aggressive resistance, a message that Palestinians are not passive, but ever-vigilant. And that the "watching eyes" are not merely a form of protest but also a powerful symbol that the Palestinians are always watching the Jewish people.

Yet, according to the Los Angeles Times, the meaning of the paintings differs from my tour guide's explanation. "Organizers say the art project aims at drawing attention to the displacements the Palestinians face in this neighborhood near the Old City of Jerusalem," the article reads.

In my opinion, the entire discrepancy between Israelis' definitions of what the eyes mean and what the Palestinians says is the true problem. Within research for this article, I realized that my tour guide had lied to me and my family. I felt a sense of betrayal because my vulnerability and naivens regarding the history of Israel was taken advantage of when she spread this misinformation.

The division between Israeli and Palestinian territories is intensified by the scarcity of space, and the battles over control of this tiny piece of land have had profound global implications.

Israel's geographic size allows tourists to travel the majority of the country in a couple of days. Covering an area of just over 8,000 square miles Israel is about the size of New Jersey. Israel is not only one of the smallest countries in the Middle East but also one of the smallest

nations in the world.

As a student traveling to Israel and witnessing the complex landscape of this nation, one can't help but be struck by just how tiny this country is in terms of its landmass.

One of the most noticeable

consequences of its size is the proximity of diverse landscapes and communities. In just a few hours of travel, one can go from the vibrant and bustling city of Tel Aviv to the historic and culturally rich Jerusalem, and then further on to the serene shores of the Sea of Galilee or the arid beauty of the Negev Desert.

This compactness has allowed for a tremendous blending of cultures, traditions, and experiences within a relatively small area. Israel is home to a diverse population, encompassing Jews, Arabs, Christians, and more, all living in close proximity, especially in Jerusalem. This diversity is both a source of strength and a challenge, as the country strives to balance the needs and identities of its citizens.

Beyond Israel being the sole home for the Jewish people, Jerusalem itself is the home of Islam and Christianity,



photo courtesy of Alex Ramin '25

two other of the world's major religions. Jesus was baptized in the Jordan river, located in Israel. Muhammad, the founder of Islam undertook his miraculous Night Journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, where he prayed with Moses, Jesus, and other prophets, making Israel holy for the Islamic religion.

My visit to Israel left me with a profound appreciation for the intricacies of this multifaceted conflict. It is my hope that, through dialogue, empathy, and understanding, a path to reconciliation and peace can be forged, allowing the people of this region to overcome the divisions and build a better future together.

Buckley Responds to *Jewish Journal's* Damaging Comments

ZacharyKlein'24
editor-in-chief

On October 19, Rabbi Nolan Lebovitz of Temple Valley Beth Shalom, which is very close to Buckley, published an article titled "Universities of Moral Bankruptcy Must Prompt an American Jewish Realignment" in Jewish Journal.

In this article, Lebovitz discusses the "incoherent and plainly stupid" stance that elite universities and their leaders took after the October 7 Hamas invasion of Israel. He goes deeper into how upsetting it was that the schools did not condemn the pro-Hamas rallies that took place on their campuses in the following weeks after the attack.

After spending most of the article discussing how universities are handling the situation, Lebovitz changed the direction towards "prestigious private secular schools." In the print issue of Jewish Journal, Lebovitz writes, "The Buckley School issued a

statement that absolutely portrays moral equivalence between Hamas as the perpetrators and Israel as the victim. Four Buckley heads of school signed on to take credit. Jewish families at Buckley should have enough self-respect to refuse to accept the gesture of its leadership. By next year, there should be absolutely no Jewish families remaining in the Buckley community."

This comment sparked outrage and opened discussion within the Buckley community as Lebovitz wrote this with incorrect information, did not cite where he got his information from, and used no quotes from Buckley's statement to support his claim. "I was disappointed by a critique that felt unwarranted and without full insight into, not only what we had communicated, but also the kind of experience that we had endeavored to create for students," Head of School Alona Scott said.

After seeing this misinformation and attack on Buckley's leadership and the Jewish community, Scott reached out to Lebovitz. "I wrote to him and said, 'I saw your article. I'd love to come with our director of communications to come talk with you.' What I had hoped to do in that conversation was 'Where did you get your information? What information do you have? My intention was to clarify.'"

When Scott got in contact with Lebovitz, she learned that she was not the only one in the Buckley community who had reached out to the rabbi. "We had set a time to

meet on Monday. He was also in conversation with other (Buckley) families," Scott said.

Shortly thereafter, Lebovitz issued a clarifying statement in the online version of the article that states, "I am pleased to learn that The Buckley School released two additional, subsequent statements with greater moral clarity after the first statement, which is the one I read and referenced in my article. Jewish students need to feel safe, secure, and supported at school. While I am a strong proponent of Jewish day school education — especially now — if those in the Jewish community enroll our children in secular schools, then I believe that they deserve assurance that the leadership remains steadfast in its support for Israel and its condemnation against terrorism. With their subsequent statements regarding the horrors of October 7, the leaders of Buckley have shown the proper sensitivity."

Lebovitz also changed the ending of the paragraph that included Buckley to "Jewish families at Buckley should have enough self-respect to refuse to accept the gesture of its leadership."

As the only Jewish head of a large secular school in Los Angeles (to her knowledge), Scott said she has "fundamental beliefs about who we are and what this community stands for. Our mission calls for inclusion. There's no question in my mind that antisemitism has no place at Buckley in Los Angeles or in the world. Antisemitism is counter to everything that Buckley stands for."

Universities of Moral Bankruptcy Must Prompt an American Jewish Realignment

Most of our universities have failed the Jewish community in the wake of October 7.



image courtesy of Zachary Klein '24

Israel-Gaza coverage
continues on page 11

BUCKLEY'S BRIGHTER, BUSIER CAMPUS TOURS

IrisKim'26
deij editor

Touring Buckley is an exciting opportunity for student ambassadors, prospective families, and the admission team. Up until the end of last year, student ambassadors with free periods after lunch were unable to give tours because of the mess caused on campus during lunch hours, but this issue has improved this year allowing more student ambassadors to give tours.

Sophomore Yvette Hettig was unable to give tours last year because her free period was after lunch. She was disappointed to know that the opportunity was taken away because students could not keep the campus clean during lunch. "I think if we kept our campus clean, we would have had more opportunities to give more tours," Hettig said.

The campus conditions after lunch improved this year and Hettig was able to give her first few tours this year.

"(The campus) does seem cleaner," said Assistant Director of Upper School Admission Marie Philman, who took measures in effort to ensure that the campus is presentable for tours. "I had a meeting with plant operations over the summer and we talked about how long it usually takes to make sure that the campus is clean."

Philman appreciates the wider availability of times for tours to happen because

prospective families touring can have a better glimpse of Buckley student life. "The (afternoon) campus tours give a different opportunity. It's a different lens for prospective families to just see our students interact in a more organic way," Wong said.

Director of Enrollment Management Erwin Wong agrees. "It's good for us to provide an opportunity for families to come in during different parts of the day because there is a different lineup of activities, meetings, and classes in the afternoon too," Wong said.

Though campus conditions in the afternoon improved, Wong noted that the campus "is not always perfect, but our philosophy is to really provide the most authentic and genuine experience for every family as they walk on to the Buckley campus."

The admission team also sees more flexibility of having tours not being limited to only morning hours. Having a wide range of times for tours is especially convenient for prospective families.

"I think that families really like the flexibility – especially if the student schedules are a bit harder to navigate through in the morning," Wong said.

"It really depends on



Photo Courtesy of Iris Kim '26

the personal schedule of the prospective families," Philman said. "Some applicants (students) might have tests in the morning, so they'll opt to have campus tours later in the afternoon."

In addition, the availability of times for tours also give student ambassadors more opportunities to give tours and increase

phie Uwins who also gave her first couple tours this year saw them as a valuable opportunity. "I personally love giving tours, and I wish I got assigned them last year. I feel that giving tours fulfills my Buckley experience and I can give back to the Buckley community by showing visitors how great Buckley really is," Uwins said.

Hettig felt that her experience with giving tours is slightly different from the experiences of student ambassadors who already gave tours in the previous year. "I wish

their service hours.

"The student schedule can be a little bit tricky, so (having more time for tours) definitely provides greater avenues for students to participate as ambassadors," Wong said.

"There's a lot more tours happening. Even looking at the schedule now, we have at least three tours happening right after lunch," Philman said as she checked the student ambassador tour schedule.

Sophomore So-

I did more last year to prepare for this year, but I really did enjoy giving (tours)," Hettig said.

Having more time in the day to tour prospective families fulfills the admission team's priority to have as many prospective families explore Buckley.

"The biggest thing for us in the admission office is to bring families onto campus so they can have a foretaste of the Buckley experience," Wong said. "Any time we can provide those opportunities that are convenient, they really provide an opportunity for (prospective families) to discern if Buckley is the right school for them."

Philman reminds us to "keep the campus clean and continue to be kind to our visitors on campus."

New Stream Team Coming to Screens

SebastianSartirana'24
staff reporter

Coming to a screen near you: The Stream Team is a brand new way to watch live sports and events at Buckley. The team consists of students who aim to make Buckley events accessible, even if students and faculty can't attend in person.

"The Stream Team's purpose is to record, live stream, and archive school events. Student support is extremely important, but sometimes a parent, friend, or family member can't make it to these events in person, but they still want to watch their student in action," said sophomore Emma Haronian, a member of the Stream Team.



Photos Courtesy of Sebastian Sartirana '24

The team is supervised by film teacher Ivan Salcedo and aims to give students an experiential role in video operations. "The goal is for students to be the directors of these projects," Salcedo said. "We are a group put together to stream live events. Mainly sporting events, but we're also looking to cover a couple of speakers when they come to school and big events on campus such as the Climate Conference."

The group consists of 20 students, who are working on specialized video techniques.

"The main focus is what we call multi-camera live editing. We have three cameras that shoot simultaneously and a switcher to cut in between cameras," Salcedo said.

"There are many different roles that can be done, such as cameraman or director. I worked on the scoreboard, changing the score every time a point was added," said sophomore James Row. "Most of us have experience with video production, but each time, we learn more about the features and functions of the cameras and systems we use."

The Stream Team has already had success in their initial broadcasts. "So far, we've streamed two volleyball games, and they both went very smoothly," Haronian said.

"Given that we've only done two broadcasts so far, I think we've actually made a lot of progress.



The past streams haven't been perfect, but they were really good given that we're just getting started," said sophomore Sydney Shane.

"We're very lucky that Buckley has a wealth of talented and enthusiastic filmmakers and students who really made a difference in making these shoots so successful," said Haronian.

The streams are also very accessible to students and faculty wanting to tune in to the Buckley games and events. "The link to the live streams is sent out in an email prior to the event. Additionally, after the event has finished the entire video is posted in an archive on the Buckley website," said Haronian.

The Stream Team is planning to have the biggest Buckley events featured online. "We are currently planning on doing on-campus games and events, from the Climate Conference to the basketball season," Salcedo said.

Sophomore Stress Fest

Christopher Ounjian '26
staff reporter

The time you spend in high school helps build your character and connections and determines what college you enter. Despite the opportunities high school provides, meeting expectations is no easy feat. For students, the stress of tenth grade is growing and isn't stopping anytime soon.

The most common reason for stress in tenth grade is due to the more difficult work levels and increased number of weighted classes. While students independently decide to take weighted classes, some feel like these classes are must-haves due to rising expectations from families or colleges.

Sophomore Lochlan McGowan says the pressure "stresses me out more than it would have last year because colleges are going to be looking at our stuff this year."

Sophomore Emma Haronian agrees. "This year, I know colleges are going to be looking at my grades and my extracurriculars so it's still manageable, but it's just a big adjustment," Haronian said.

While tenth graders feel that ninth grade has prepared them for the difficulties this year, some feel they were unprepared when going into weighted class. "I thought I was unprepared. I didn't know

what to expect in a way," said sophomore Yuma Saito.

Upper School Counselor Mara Tapia offered a new approach to help ninth graders understand the requirements of tenth grade.

"Freshman year we could tell you more about the APs, and you could meet the AP teachers and get a better sense of spending time during class meetings where we're educating students on the course," said Tapia.

Instead of allowing students to enroll in AP and honors classes blindly in tenth grade, during advisories at the end of the ninth-grade year, students can have the opportunity to meet with AP and honors teachers to get a breakdown of the curriculum.

Haronian liked this idea. "That would be a great idea. I think that's a really good way to prepare incoming tenth graders for what they're getting into, especially if they're on the fence about a weighted class," Haronian said.

This option would allow students to understand what they will learn and whether they are willing to enroll so that there will be fewer students who feel lost in the stress of school. Since this has not been implemented yet, there are still ways for ninth graders to get ready for their upcoming sophomore year.



Photo Courtesy of Christopher Ounjian '26

Saito says that time management and getting your work done when possible is important. "Manage your time well and utilize your free periods," advises Saito.

Additionally, McGowan recommends not procrastinating and being responsible about your workload. "Try and get your homework done the night that it's assigned because then the next day, you're struggling to catch up. It's less stressful on you and I'd also say

A New Publication in the Works

Josette Estes '24
profiles editor

Have you ever wished there was a place where you could showcase your academic achievements? A new academic journal has recently been created by seniors Katie Ha and Sienna Simantob to "celebrate work related to all subjects," said Simantob.

The journal's supervisor, English teacher Mitch Kohn, realized the necessity for such a journal last year. "Witnessing the great presentations at the Climate Conference and hearing about the continuing success of our robotics team, it became evident that all of that strong work needed to be honored, both now and in the future," said Kohn.

Kohn immediately got to work in seeing that this journal became a reality. "I pitched the idea to Mr. Sacon and Dr. Singer, and I gave them copies of the academic journals I had published at Crossroads. They really liked it and showed it to Ms. Scott, who immediately gave the go-ahead. The department chairs' support also helped a lot," said Kohn.

Kohn expects this journal to have a positive impact on the student body. "By publishing work around campus, teachers will see what their peers are doing, which could encourage even more collaboration than is already happening," said Kohn.

Ha agrees that the journal is a necessary and helpful resource for students.

"Many projects require significant time and effort, and highlighting them can inspire others," said Ha.

While the formatting for the journal is yet to be finalized, "it's likely to be a published website" said Simantob.

As far as the journal's content, Ha also stresses the importance of variety.

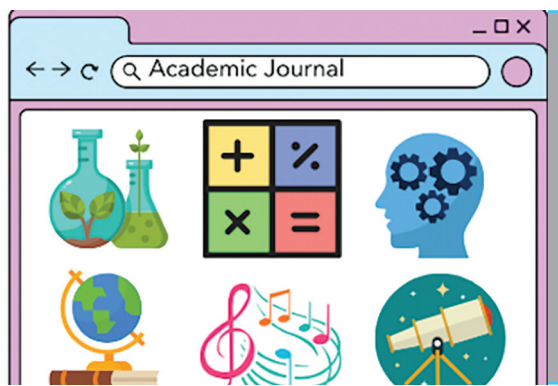
"We are looking for work in all subjects, not leaning towards any in particular. We would also like to highlight the works of different authors so that they represent the Buckley community as a whole," said Ha.

"We're also not limited to one class per department," said Simantob. "We want to have as much diversity within our journal as possible."

Going forward, Simantob and Ha are looking forward to learning about and showcasing students' work. "I'm excited to discover unique works I wouldn't have known about otherwise. Even in our first meeting, although I had already taken the same classes a year before, I learned about new, intriguing projects that I would love to know more about," said Ha. "Even for the same assignment, there are many

perspectives one can take to accomplish their goal, so I'm excited to be able to highlight fresh perspectives in our journal."

Ha also wants students to know "they can contribute to the academic journal by either contacting me, Sienna Simantob, or Mr. Kohn and attending our meeting," said Ha.



Photos Courtesy of Josette Estes '24

Early Apps Off Their Backs

Zoe Biddle '24
sports editor

College applications are a major source of stress for many seniors. However, an added layer of pressure is placed on those who decide to apply early. From early decision (ED) to early action (EA), a number of students have chosen to start applications this fall, and must finish by early November.

"I am applying early to every school I'm applying to, either EA or ED," senior Brandon Sadkin said. "Although this makes my workload a bit heavier now, I know that once I get all my apps in, the rest of the school year is going to be much easier."

Senior Griffin Feller agrees with Sadkin. "It has brought on a lot more stress now awaiting the decision, but hopefully if I get in early, the stress will be far less," Feller said.

Senior Ella Rosenson is applying to film school, so in addition to writing essays,

she must also submit a portfolio. "All my free time has been devoted to applications and preparing my portfolios," Rosenson said. "I filmed a short last weekend and am filming another this weekend, which has been fun but taxing."

For students applying early, it can be difficult to balance both college applications and school work. However, Feller feels that teachers have been understanding. "Teachers and my college counselor especially have helped me a lot through this process, taking off a lot of the stress," Feller said.

Classmate Kaivan Hosseini also thinks that teachers have been accommodating. "I believe they have sympathy for us, and at the end of the day, they are here to help us... Teachers do give some breaks in a sense, and we are all very thankful for it," Hosseini said.

One path in particular, ED, is different from just applying early. If a student chooses to apply to a school in the ED round, the student is binding themselves to that school. This means that if the student gets accepted, they must rescind all other applications that went to other schools. This can add more stress to seniors, as it is difficult to commit to just one college at this stage.

"At first, I was worried that I may regret my

decision of binding to a school and never getting to know what would happen at other schools, but as the application deadline gets closer, I am more confident in my decision," Feller said.

Sadkin is also confident in his decision to apply in the ED round. "I am certain that the school I am applying to ED is my number-one choice, and since ED increases my chances of getting in, I believe this is the best route for me," Sadkin said.

Throughout this process, there have been plenty of surprises for the senior class. "What has surprised me most is how fast the deadlines come up. When something seems so far away, I have found that it comes very fast," Feller said.

"I've been surprised by how supportive my peers have been," Rosenson said. "Even though applications seem very solitary, I've found it to be the opposite. There's been a new layer of comradery with my friends and even people I don't know well due to our shared struggle and high hopes."

Hosseini has been pleasantly surprised by the amount of people applying to similar schools. "Although there is lots of diversity, I definitely think there are a bulk of schools that have a great number of Buckley students applying... lots of people will always have a fellow Griffin with them," Hosseini said.



Image Courtesy of Zoe Biddle '24

New Foyer Mural: Sports Showcase

Zaiya Algee '26
staff reporter

Last month a brand new mural was put up in the foyer, showcasing photographs old and new of Buckley athletes and displaying Buckley's rich and meaningful athletics program, an idea that was years in the making. Sally Sacon, Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications, was the person who made it happen.

Sacon got the idea for the mural after seeing a similar smaller version at Occidental College. She decided she liked the idea and thought she could do something similar for Buckley. "I thought it really provided a great visual history of the school through the eyes of athletics," said Sacon.

To start making this mural, the communications office went through old archival photos and collected them in a folder. They then sent the photos to a graphic designer who then made it into a collage.

"It was a big, undecorated space with a lot of gray paint that felt like it needed some love," Sacon says. She explained how the foyer is one place that is very often exposed to Buckley families as well as kids coming from other schools. She felt it needed something and this mural perfectly displays the amazing sports department at Buckley.

Sacon explained that the biggest struggle was placing the mural, as it was to be placed so high up, and finding the right time to do it. "We initially had scheduled it for during the PSATs. But we couldn't have any noise out in the foyer because students were trying to focus on their test," Sacon said.

Sacon and the team also struggled with finding the right material to use for the mural. They didn't want to paint on the wall but they didn't want any-

thing hanging either. They eventually settled on decal, which is like a big sticker they stick on the wall with adhesive.

Sacon is hoping to make a positive impact on the Buckley community. "I hope that people will feel more inspired when they come in to play a sport or watch a sport," Sacon said. "And I hope that visitors see our rich history and that we have a really long and colorful history of athletics here."

Sacon is always looking to make improvements and is always looking for new ways to showcase the Buckley community and make spaces more interesting. "There's space in the CCA, the big cement wall when you walk down to the classrooms on the lower level, that could use something too," said Sacon.

Students are also loving the new changes. "I think it was a cool surprise," said sophomore Henry Abdo. The foyer has definitely been an amazing new addition to the community.

Sophomore Yvette Hettig agrees. "I think the mural was a great touch to the foyer," said Hettig.

"I thought it was very creative and brought a sense of community," said freshman Mychal-Bella Bowman.



Image Courtesy of Zaiya Algee '25

Shhh... We're Eating Here

Liubov Krugliakova '25
news editor

Clubs have returned this year to Buckley, but with a twist: Each club now must juggle all sorts of things – homework, last-minute studies before tests, and various other commitments – Buckley students have frequently been finding themselves sacrificing their lunchtime to finish their work in a warm and quiet

space: the library, where food has always been prohibited. As the new school year began, new changes within the library helped tackle this challenge. Head Librarian Matthew Wittmer and Library Assistant Alex Schwartz shared the reasons why the new Snackie Zone within the library was implemented.

"The biggest reason is students do not have many indoor places to eat. Upper School students with free periods can use the Snackie Zone to eat without having to leave the library. We noticed that there was a need within space," said Schwartz. "Students were always trying to sneak food into the library. We wanted to lean into that and create a small space within the library that could offer students a place to eat."

In terms of the rules, there have been three main rules implemented: to leave the space clean, for no more than eight students to be in the Snackie Zone, and to only eat in that designated area within the library.

"It benefits what we believe to be the minimal need that we could accommodate – a few students always wanting to snack while working – now they can in a designated area without a consequence," said Wittmer. "This is to help students have a place to eat in one designated area with some students – we are completely

willing to provide that so long as food is not left out."

Junior Jonah Khalifa shared that the Snackie Zone is a "a really great addition to the library." Khalifa said that "I've been using the snack zone just about every day as the library has been the primary spot where me and all my friends hang out during lunch, so now we can eat without having to leave the library."

Senior Alejandra Wills-Margin agrees with Khalifa. "I've always sat in this area before it even became a snacky zone. And, like, I just love the fact that now I could eat in here." Wills-Margin reiterated that "it's nice and also to have a place where I could work in a quiet environment because there are other areas outside of the library where I could eat, but it's noisy."

Khalifa noted, however, that the main con is that "this new addition is bringing a lot more traffic to the library, which can further worsen the already pretty frustrating problem that is the long line in the morning and during lunch."

Senior Anjali Dey shared that she thinks "the new snack zone is lovely because now that people aren't eating during club times, eating spaces are quite full."

Apart from the library traffic, the pros of the Snackie Zone outweigh the cons.

Khalifa shared that the main benefits of the new implementation are that "most of them have to do with the fact that many people use the library as a place to hang out and do work in peace, and now Buckley students can do so without skipping lunch to study for math," said Khalifa.

Junior Maya Delgado agrees with Khalifa. "(Snackie Zone) is very convenient. Now I don't have to go outside of the library, lose studying time, and then come back in."

While everything new comes with its imperfections, Wittmer noted that "They (students) love it (the Snackie Zone)!"

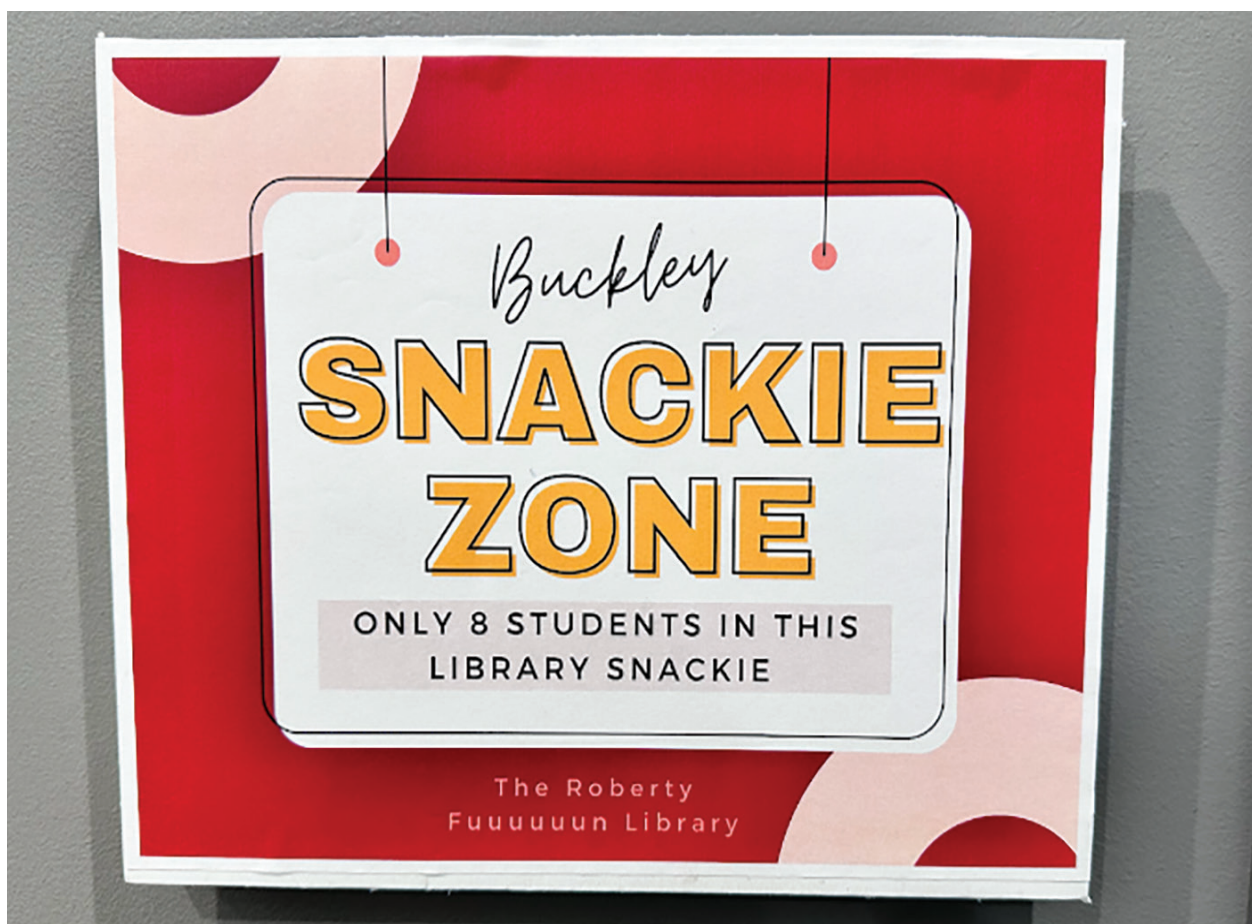


Image Courtesy of Liubov Krugliakova '25

Senior Stress Roadbusters: A Roadmap for High School Success

IzzyUwins'26
opinion editor

"This has definitely been the most stressful year yet," said senior Maxim Sarkar. "I've even started hanging out with friends less to focus on college applications."

Many seniors agree that the start to this school year has been stressful. "This year is definitely really hard, but you just have to go with it and manage the stress that comes with it," said senior Evelyn Lee.

Though it's stressful, senior Karina Guaderrama believes that being organized is the key to a balanced workload and the key to success. "I think as long as you keep all your stuff organized and you have time set aside to work on top of everything, you're going to be fine," said Guaderrama.

Additionally, Sarkar urges students to do activities that make them feel calm. "To manage stress, you should do things that don't take up six hours of time but are useful," said Sarkar. "So if you like going to the gym...that's useful. If you like meditating, that's useful."

Likewise, Guaderrama suggests finding something that students can enjoy that isn't related to school to manage their stress levels. "I really like to crochet. So, for me, to manage my stress, when I have a little bit of free time, I'll put on music or put on a TV show and I'll just crochet for a while because that's how I decompress," said Guaderrama.

Since this is an extremely stressful time, seniors wish teachers were more understanding given that they have to juggle many things. "Sometimes the

teachers don't really take into account the fact that we have applications on top of the work we already have in school, so senior year is about balancing everything because we do not have enough time to do our applications due to the other work we have," said senior Ema Kato.

Guaderrama encourages students to work with



Photo courtesy of Matthew Wittmer

their teachers to help manage their workload as teachers will then be more understanding. "I've managed to make a lot of good connections with my teachers so I'm really able to just talk to them and let them know 'hey, I have a lot of work right now and I'm very stressed', which can be very helpful," said Guaderrama.

Furthermore, seniors share hidden gems that can help students throughout high school. "Students really underestimate how intertwined high school is," said Sarkar. "Especially if you're younger, do well in

your ninth and tenth grade classes because people who do well in them will have a smoother path to the harder classes in junior and senior year."

Guaderrama believes that clubs are undervalued and can help a student who is struggling socially. "Clubs are very underrated and I think that more people should join them. I came from a small school and joined the Latino affinity group here, and before that I never really got to connect with other Latino students of my age. So I think that was really helpful to connect with people like me and make more friends," said Guaderrama.

There are many joys of high school, but Lee loves the social experience the most. "I came here in tenth grade and I moved from another country, so my favorite part of high school was getting to meet new friends," said Lee.

Similarly, Kato enjoyed being able to connect with different students. "My favorite part of high school is definitely being able to connect with my peers through whether that's education or shared interests or just socially," said Kato. "I feel like I found a pretty good group of friends in school that I'll definitely continue to be connected to."

Overall, Kato, Sarkar, Guaderrama, and Lee all believe that the most important advice they have to offer is to find joy despite all the work.

"Have fun because your academics don't define who you are," said Sarkar.

Flipping the Script in Math



ChristopherNg'26
staff reporter

Photo courtesy of Christopher Ng'26

Since 2015, some Buckley teachers have been using flipped classroom methods into their math classrooms by incorporating video lectures into their lessons in hopes of creating a more accommodating environment for students.

In order to understand the concept of flipped classrooms better, I asked math teacher Yvonne Fleury about how she designs pre-class materials such as video lectures and online resources. "I had some lecture notes already planned out from when I taught the lesson in-person, but when I switched to a flipped model, I recorded the videos of those past lessons," Fleury said.

To ensure that students are engaged in the class and are prepared for in-class discussions and activities, Fleury shared some thoughts on how she promotes success in her class. "At the beginning of the period, I will also ask students if there is anything you want to ask about from the video that was unclear since I know some students struggle with the lack of engagement," Fleury said.

"The students do take advantage of asking questions and they'll call me over and I'll help troubleshoot a mistake," Fleury said. "I think it's helpful to nip mistakes in the bud because I'm right there to help and then they're there with a partner who helps as well."

Many students mentioned that the flipped learning method has had an impact on their learning. "I really like that we receive a note packet because it allows me to go and refer to it while also being able to ask questions during class time or office hours," said sophomore Henry Abdo. "So it's kind of the best of both worlds."

For Abdo, at the start of freshman year, he felt that it was best for him to move from an honors accelerated course to a regular class, though he was still ahead of the traditional math curriculum being enrolled in Algebra 2.

"One time, we were learning about difference of squares and completing the squares in Honors Algebra 2, and once I transitioned into a regular flipped classroom, I was able to then have that information ready and be able to refer to

it whenever I needed, allowing me to remember it better," said Abdo.

Some students like sophomore Emmett Sher have neutral opinions about flipped classrooms and say that the biggest help for difficult concepts is office hours. "When I found a concept challenging, it would just be challenging until you understood it, so I would go to office hours a lot for help," Sher said.

When asked about the high schooler's retention levels during video lectures, sophomore Abdo mentioned that he wasn't a huge fan and noticed his engagement dwindling. "Generally, I find myself less engaged with the topic when doing video lectures because I like being able to ask questions, and I can't do that when I'm at home," said Abdo.

For sophomore Langston Jones, he had a similar take on the topic. "I can feel myself just...fading away because when there is a teacher in front of you, you find the reason to look and watch, and you can feel their authority coming down on you," said Jones.

When asked about their opinions on how to improve flipped classroom models for teachers who were considering espousing the method, Abdo and Jones seemed to agree on a conclusion. "I would devote probably the first 10 to 15 minutes of class to questions about the video notes, and unfortunately that's not always the case," said Abdo.

"I would advise them to do the video notes, of course, but when you come to class do a quick summary of the video notes," said Jones. "Not all students learn the same, but I think that it could be a good method of teaching."

Despite receiving varying feedback from many students, there are many reasons that teachers espouse this new method of teaching. "I do this because some students pick things up faster than others, so this allows some of the kids to work faster through the material," math teacher Tami Woldman said. "Another advantage is that in class we get to work on the problems. So I'm walking around and helping them with the hard problems so that they're not struggling at home."

Woldman said that even though students often digress and play on their computer or start watching TV, she still sees lots of positive improvement during class and with homework. "I see a lot more students spending time to really figure out the hard problems because they have their partner with them to help if they need it, and they're more engaged in doing their homework," Woldman said.

Woldman recognizes that the flipped classroom model is not perfect and mentioned that sometimes, students tend to try and finish the assignment without thinking about the concept, focused on finishing it as quickly as they can.

"Unfortunately, sometimes, students skip major parts of the video and just try and do the problems without listening to all the explanations and the steps that I give, so then they don't understand the reason why we're doing what we're doing," Woldman said. "It's pretty evident when they're doing classwork because they don't know how to do a problem that was very similar to the video."

Woldman is brainstorming potential solutions to solve these difficulties that she has with students' self-discipline when completing the video notes. "I'm trying to use Screencastify because they have a new feature where I can embed questions throughout the video, so that they have to answer them to move on," Woldman said.

Seniors Rev Up for Off-Campus Lunch

Ava Goldsmith '25
managing editor

Imagine you've been waiting since Middle School to get your senior privilege of off-campus lunch. For years, you've watched all the seniors before you drive off campus to have a relaxed meal with their friends, but when you finally become a senior... almost half your lunch time is cut off, and you barely have enough time to eat lunch.

The seniors this year have quickly had to adapt to this new change in schedule, limiting themselves to a select choice of restaurants that make food quick enough for them to get it. "My personal favorite is Panda Express; I think it's amazing food, and it's fast—same with Chipotle and Mendocino Farms if you order beforehand. Other than that, food places take forever," senior Max Wainwright said.

However, even if seniors choose to go to a fast-paced restaurant on Ventura Boulevard, it's still challenging to return to school on time. "We went to Chipotle a few times, which is the quickest thing because we only have 30 minutes most days, and even then, we barely got back in time," senior Kaiden Horizon said.

If seniors don't choose to go to a fast-paced restaurant, they always have to

order on their phones while simultaneously trying to rush out of campus. "It's hard to deal with because people will have to order beforehand," senior Anabelle Shamam said.

Ordering online makes travel and planning even more tricky. "It takes way too long. It's hard to get back to class on time, and it just rushes everything," senior Cameron Cohen said. "I feel like we don't have enough time to enjoy or take a break between our classes, but also, during on-campus lunch, it still feels rushed."

Once seniors have grabbed their food, they usually don't have enough time to eat it during lunch. Some students try to eat in the car, but for the most part, the drivers have no time to. So they either have to skip lunch or eat during class.

The issue with eating in class is that some teachers don't allow food inside

their classrooms. "Some teachers don't let you bring food in the classrooms," senior Kaivan Hosseini said.

"I have had to eat food during class, but it depends on the teacher, so sometimes

you can end up missing lunch," senior Brandon Sadkin said.

The worst part of it all is the time crunch. Seniors barely have time to grab a meal in the allotted minutes. "The timing is difficult to deal with. We have 30 minutes to

drive off. It takes 10 minutes alone to assemble everyone, get out of class, put their backpacks back, and then get their wallet with their pass," Hosseini said. "Then, it takes another seven minutes to drive, especially for where you actually want to go, and

that's being generous. Then, once you get there, you don't have time to order food; you would have had to pre-order it and drive back just to get to class on time immediately."

Shamam has had similar experiences. "There's always a line when you return to campus. Everyone's coming in together. You have to show your passes to security and then sign off that you were there. You have less than 20 minutes to eat, get back on campus, and get in your class," Shamam said.

Most of the seniors wish for the time they have for lunch to be extended. "I think the main issue is it needs to be longer because I feel like time can be taken out of flex. Flex is good, in my opinion, but it's a little too long. I think they should cut at least 10 minutes out," Wainwright said.

Horizon agrees. "(Lunch is) just way too short. Everyone's trying to rush to get out of their spots and then get back in their spots. It just doesn't work, so it should definitely be longer. They changed the schedule with no regard for the senior privileges, and so they should put some of flex time in lunch, so we actually get some time to eat."



Photo courtesy of Paulina Joseph '24

PSAT Goes Digital

Andrea Bisellach '26
a&e editor

For the first time since the start of the PSATs, the written version of the PSAT is not available for most sophomores and juniors and instead there is only a digital version. Students now have to bring a computer with the Bluebook app already installed and signed into.

Students have expressed their opinions on how they like this new digital version. "I feel like there are pros and

cons to both," said sophomore Leila Algee.

"I liked the digital one better because it was a lot more precise and did not leave a lot of room for errors."

The online version has many different features that are new this year.

"I liked the online version better because I personally like typing better than actually

writing things... I liked that they are adding new tools like the built-in calculator and the highlighting tools," said sophomore Yvette Hettig.

Sophomore Emma Davis also prefers the online version of this test. "I liked that it shows you what answers you marked as 'come back to' because usually when I am taking a test on paper it

can be really time consuming and hard to check my work by flipping through every page and looking through every individual problem," said Davis.

On the other hand, there are also people who prefer to take the written version of this exam. "I think that I would have preferred the written version because first of all, you can annotate on paper, and then the questions also are not adaptive so you have a better understanding of what the test is going to be. I think that taking the

written version of the test would have been a lot better for my learning style," said sophomore Emma Haronian.

With the test now fully being online, it gets rid of some problems that only happened when taking a written test, but it also creates a few difficulties. "Everyone around me had difficulties like their computers were crashing and nothing was loading for them so people were having a hard time figuring that out," said Haronian.

Photo courtesy of Andrea Bisellach '26

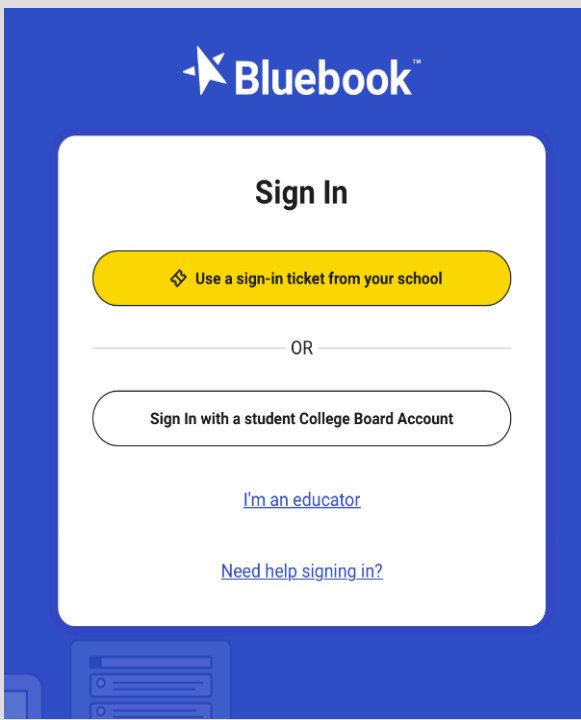


Photo courtesy of Andrea Bisellach '26

Seniors Win Hackathon

Andrea Bisellach '26
a&e editor

On a sunny Saturday in October, seniors Zachary Klein and Max Wainwright spent their day indoors, competing and ultimately winning a hackathon.

The two competed at Canyon Crest Academy in San Diego. "We were in a large school library with couches and tables all around so each group

just found a table and set up there. There were about 50 other people in the room competing against us," said Klein.

The name "hackathon" comes from the words "hack" and "marathon."

"A hackathon is a competition where people code either an app or website or program based on a prompt or theme," said Klein.

Considering that this was their first hackathon, it was a great experience for both of Klein and Wainwright. "I am majoring in computer science," said Wainwright. "I never thought

about doing one until I got asked, and I thought, 'why not, it could be fun.'"

Teamwork is a big component in competing in a hackathon. "With Max, we both used our own computers, and he programmed the back-end of the project while I did the front-end, and integration of the front and back-end," said Klein.

The two seniors

so we made sure everything worked perfectly. We made our video and set up our website, and we presented at the end," said Wainwright.

The way that you win a hackathon can be different depending on the competition you attend. "It differs for all hackathons, but for the one that we participated in, there was both a judge vote and a popular vote," said Klein.

Klein and Wainwright are working to make a hackathon that they will host at Buckley. "I hope to bring together a lot of Sherman Oaks private schools because there are really no hackathons in

Sherman Oaks, let alone Los Angeles," said Wainwright. "There are a lot of really good college preparatory schools nearby that have computer science students, so I think that a lot of them would come to this. It would be a fun bonding experience for other schools to come here."

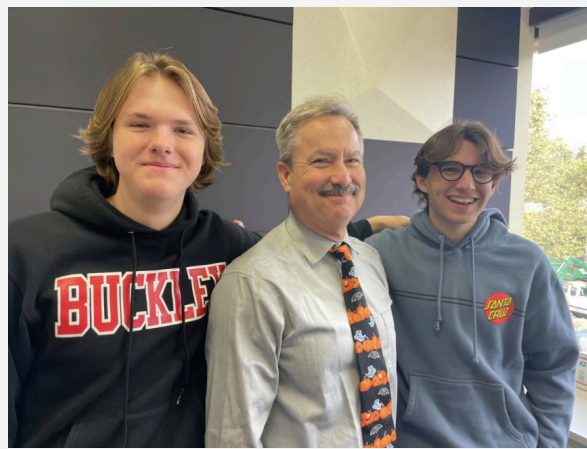


Photo courtesy of Sally Sacon

spent 12 hours competing. "It was not just working for 12 hours straight. We spent about an hour brainstorming and once we chose our idea, it was kind of four or five hours straight of working," Wainwright said. "We took a break to eat, and then we got back to working and then took another break. We finished a few hours early,

Debunking College Myths with Mr. Shin

MendezBerman'25
DEIJ editor

The *Student Voice* sat down with the new Head of College Counseling Anthony Shin to discuss common myths and misconceptions about the college admissions process.

Freshman year doesn't count (grades-wise)

Myth

That myth is untrue; college will see your entire transcript. Your freshman GPA gets tied into your entire application, it is not invisible.

[Freshman year] gets added together with your sophomore junior and senior GPA (grade point average) to make an accumulative GPA.

Half truth

The half-truth is that freshman year has the least amount of importance. Colleges appreciate a student's growth over their high school years. But in the end it's still there, and the colleges see it.

You should take as many APs as possible

Myth

If you're looking at a very selective college, they do want to see students challenge themselves and do well in those challenging classes, so as a student, you have to find the right balance in that. If you make a class schedule for yourself that's all AP and honors classes and that tanks your performance in those classes, then it was all for nothing. If you find the right balance of AP, honors, and regular classes that make you successful or even more successful in everything then that's great.

The classes that you take should align with some schools, majors, or programs that you're interested in. For example, if you're interested in studying something in the sciences, you need to take harder science classes. If you're focused on the humanities you should be taking harder humanities classes. But you should know yourself and your limits.

You have to have straight A's to get into good colleges/colleges only want students with perfect grades

Myth

A college isn't looking for a student with straight A's; they are looking for students who would be a good fit in their school and be successful in their programs.

A lot of schools look at applications holistically, looking at the overall application not just grades, but keep in mind if you're applying to a school that is used to seeing higher grades on applications that bring in a standard for applicants to meet.

Half truth

Some schools are known for being very academically challenging and those schools, in particular, are going to have a higher standard for grades and class-

es. They will be looking for the highest grades and the highest classes.

Have to have a leadership position on your college application

Myth

Just because you have a leadership position doesn't mean you are doing anything with it. If I were to start a fly fishing club at Buckley and be the president of that club, would a college say "Well obviously because he's president he is so much more impressive than others that aren't?" No, of course not.

On the flip side, just because you don't have a leadership position doesn't mean you're not representing the quality of leadership in different ways. It is not so much the position, but the skills and qualities demonstrated through the ex-

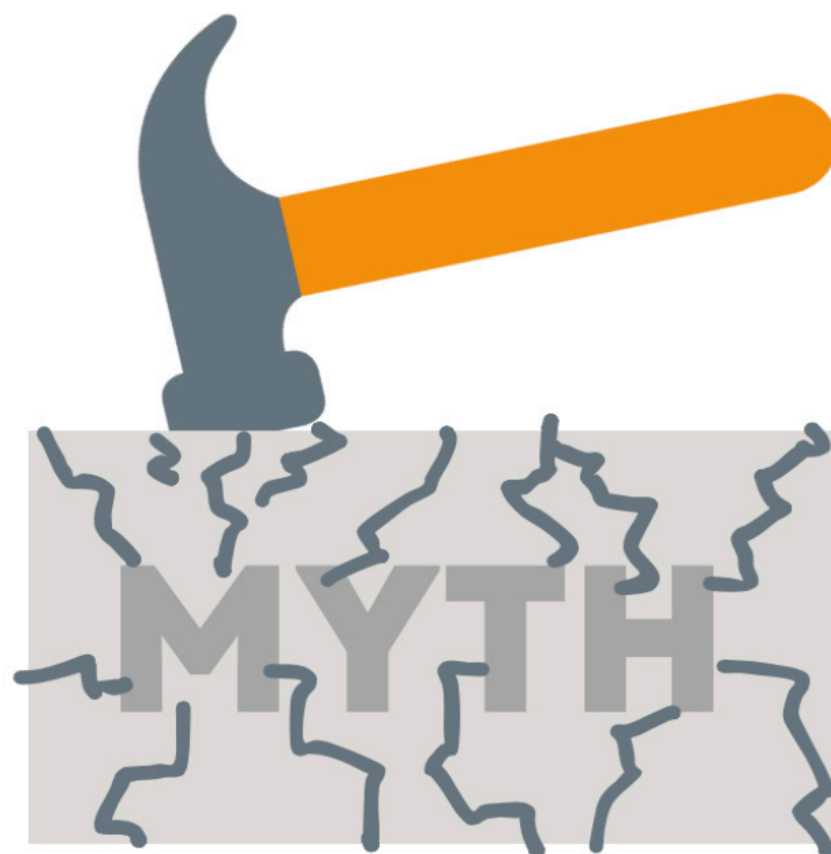


Photo courtesy of Mendez Berman'25

tracurricular or positions itself.

You don't have to submit test scores to be a good applicant

Truth

Test optional is very real – it's not a weird test they're doing for you. If you are applying test optional, they will take everything into account without test scores.

There are a few schools that went back to being test-required, but that's a very small handful. If you know you want to aim for one of those schools, then testing becomes important to you. It might change in two or three years but you can be pretty confident right now that schools will at least remain test-optional.

You should do as many extracurriculars as possible

Myth

Every kid needs to do what's right for themselves– there's not one specific formula that gets you into college. If you have one extracurricular that takes immense time, dedication, and energy then that is your extracurricular. If a college is looking holistically, they're look-

ing at what you are able to demonstrate by doing all of the things - extracurriculars, homelife, academics, personal life, and how all of those are in balance. So, whether you do a lot of little things or a few big things it's really whatever is right for you.

Legacy students have the highest chance of getting into Ivy League schools

Previous truth

It used to be this way. If you were a legacy that meant your parents went to college which meant you were raised in an educational environment. A self-fulfilling prophecy would happen and the cycle would continue. If your legacy extends, and you're an important family to that college, like donors or long-standing community members this would've

guaranteed admission about a decade ago but things are different now.

Myth

However, today after the Supreme Court decision banning the use of race-conscious admissions, many colleges have looked at other practices that do virtually the same thing. A lot of schools are approaching it philosophically. By looking preferentially at legacy they are advancing students unfairly against students who don't have that advantage and they want to make it as equitable a process as possible.

You should ask for a letter of recommendation from the teacher who gave you an A

Myth

Just because you have an A in the class doesn't necessarily mean that the teacher will give you the best recommendation.

If a student is taking a class and they're really good at it and they get an A easily and didn't do anything beyond the minimum they had to do to get that grade, the teacher might not have a lot to say about the student except that they did well. As opposed to a student that got a B or struggled in the class but that

student had to work really hard to earn that grade and the teacher saw that. The teacher could say this student came to every single office hours, after every test we would talk about the problems they didn't understand and throughout that year the growth I saw in that student was exponential. That teacher might have a much richer letter of recommendation.

You have to trauma dump on at least one of your application essays to get into a good school

Myth

You shouldn't do that. Not everyone has trauma. Students come in and say, 'I have nothing to write about in my essay. My life is so boring my parents aren't even divorced.' The only time that you can be upset that your life is good, if you're in that position your parents have succeeded. Colleges aren't looking for trauma, they aren't looking for misery or confessionals. What they are looking for is insight into you and your life, what motivates you, what excites you, how you look at the world, and hopefully the pieces that help them see you as more of a complete person in the application. I don't think anyone would want to only be seen for their trauma.

You should be using your summer to do something productive

Truth

You should do something but not everything. There's not an expectation that you fill every second of every day with something, but you should have at least one thing that you wouldn't be embarrassed to tell a colleague that you did over the summer. If your biggest achievement during the summer was finishing five Netflix shows, maybe you should have done something else with that time. What you do during the summer doesn't have to be one particular thing. Depending on your schedules and your own limitations. Try to fit something in there. Even if it's just reading books, it doesn't have to be formal, it could just be a summer job. That could even be the best thing a student could do at the very least you have a story to tell. As long as it is something that you do that you're excited to do.

Summer programs at top universities help you get into those universities

Myth

If you are enrolled in a summer program thinking it will help you get into that college that's wrong. The summer programs are not affiliated with the university themselves, and if you're enrolled in a program that you're not getting anything out of, then it's just a very expensive summer camp. Now, if it's fun for you to just spend time at that school or in that area then that's what you're getting out of it. Or it's an opportunity to learn more about a subject then you're getting the exposure.

Frosh Frustrated at Lack of Frees

EmilKestenbaum'27
staff reporter

The hillside lockers have been a place of discussion for freshmen this year, due to the rule of proctored study halls only for ninth graders. If you didn't already know, freshmen do not have free periods but instead receive the inferior option of a proctored study hall.

Some of the ninth-graders have issues with the environment study halls take place in. "If I had a free period instead, I would probably spend most of it in the library, where I can work in a quiet environment. Currently, my study hall takes place in one of the English rooms below the CCA. It's always loud and hot in our study hall room, and it's really hard for me to work," said freshman Caroline Henderson.

For Buckley's freshmen athletes, the lack of a free period also comes up as an issue. Yotam Bamani feels that a free period would allow him to utilize his time in many other ways. "I definitely would use a free period some of the time to get shots up with the new shooting machine as a lot of my older teammates do. I could also use this time to focus on the health of my body, in the training room," Bamani said.

Additionally, some students have observed that others aren't nearly as productive during a study hall as an administrator might expect, compared to a free period. "You would think that with a more structured study hall like we have now, people would get more work done, but in reality, they don't. Having a study hall doesn't increase our productivity, it just limits our freedom," Henderson said.

It really is the student's choice since no one can force them to do work during that designated time; nevertheless, they'll have to accept the consequences. "I think people are productive during study hall if they choose to be," ninth-grader Maya Ashkenazy said.

Other freshmen are displeased that students in other grades can have shorter days when a study hall happens earlier or later in the day. "When a free period appears as the first or last class of the day, I would definitely try to sleep in or get off campus early. I remember my older siblings doing that and it was always something I looked forward to in high school," freshman Benicio Abrego said.

Assistant Head of the Upper School George Russo acknowledged that many students wish they could come to school late or leave early with the privilege of a free period, however, he says "they will receive that privilege in tenth grade."

Russo said the rule isn't going to change because he thinks it is essential to building a foundation for new ninth-grade students who have just been integrated into the new challenges of high school. When the rule was implemented, which was about ten years ago, Russo said "we noticed an instant increase in student's focus and organization."

Ninth-grade students are also mandated to take a course called Human Development, which has an emphasis on study skills and habits. So why does the administration feel the need for both study halls and a class with a designated focus on study skills? "We designate that time for you to get homework done, so that you're not up too late, and you can spend some time doing extracurriculars so that you can get to sleep early," Russo said.

Even though the administration says the rule isn't going to change, freshman Ryder Senreich has an idea of a compromise. "It would be nice though if we could turn at least one of our study halls into a free period," said Senreich.

Even though the administration says the rule isn't going to change, freshman Ryder Senreich has an idea of a compromise. "It would be nice though if we could turn at least one of our study halls into a free period," said Senreich.



Image Courtesy of Emil Kestenbaum'27

Image Courtesy of DALLE



BUCKLEY BATTLES BOOK BANS

OliviaToTeras'27
staff reporter

In the past few years, there has been a spike in the number of books being banned across the country, including Buckley's ninth-grade summer reading selection *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Sáenz.

"When students came home to learn on Zoom, and they were in the same house as their parents, their parents knew more about what their kids were doing in school," English chair Jill Dash said. "And then parents freaked out about what their kids are reading."

The American Library Association (ALA) cited 1,269 attempts to ban or restrict library materials in the U.S. in 2022 and 695 attempts to censor library services and materials from January 1, 2023, to August 31, 2023. Parents have brought on 30 percent of these banings.

Book bans aren't new to the United States. There have been several instances of book banning before, such as the ban on James Joyce's *Ulysses* - widely considered to be a masterpiece - which was banned for obscenity in the 1920s. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, which detailed the horrors of slavery, was also the subject of a ban.

In the past few years, however, the bans have increased exponentially. *The Saturday Evening Post* wrote that, across the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years, there were 5,894 instances of books banned. Over 50 percent of those books featured LGBTQ+ themes and/or stories with race or non-white characters at the center of the narrative.

"It's always about control," said Matthew Wittmer, the school librarian. "Why it's happened in the last three years is we have a lot more people who feel like they're empowered to be in control of who can read what. I think more people are empowered to voice their public opinion."

When asked why these book bans are so successful despite a small number of people orchestrating them, Wittmer said, "The dynamic of the internet has really changed the landscape of how people communicate, so small voices can have a larger platform... the bans stem from insecurity and fear, they're very insecure and so they lash out at other people's viewpoints or other worldviews."

According to Pen America, a non-profit organization that works to protect free speech, many educators and administrators feel intimidated and forced to remove books for fear of penalty.

"Really upset people can be really loud," Dash said. "Within a school, if teachers start to see that parents are able to get books out of the curriculum, it can make us feel like our job is that much harder, we feel less supported."

Ninth-graders read the book *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* during summer vacation. The book centers around two boys who develop a close friendship and undertake a journey of self-discovery. It deals with many themes such as mental health, sexuality, drugs, alcohol, and more.

"There are things that Aristotle and Dante do that not every ninth-grader at Buckley's does. Sex, drugs, drinking, exploring

their sexuality. I think some parents feel uncomfortable with something that, to them, feels like it should be a conversation at home rather than in the classroom. So that seems to be the major concern from parents about the book is that they don't want a student going home and thinking that teachers are glorifying sex, drugs, lying to your parents, things like that," said Dash.

According to *Saturday Evening Post*, the book has been found on banned book lists nearly every year since its publication in 2012. Many ninth-grade students were not surprised to learn about this. "I think it was banned mainly because of religious reasons... and parents might think some scenes are not really appropriate for teenagers," freshman Celine Chung said.

Chung found the book very interesting. "Because (Aristotle) is almost our age, he's 16 or 17. And he struggles with his identity, you know? And I think that's what most of the people in our grade struggle with and try to figure out," Chung said.

New student Remy Miller liked the book and was not surprised by the ban. "I think it got restricted because of the LGBTQ+ content. I know some places aren't too fond of that," Miller said.

"What I think is the worst about banning is you're sending a message that to be curious is wrong," Wittmer said. "It's okay to be curious. It shouldn't be demonized to want to read a book."

Trick or Treat and Time to Rest

MatiasGarcia'25
sports editor

Halloween is my favorite time of the year. Everyone dresses up in their favorite characters and costumes, we stuff our faces with candy, and have a memorable night with friends. For many students, the fun that Halloween brings goes late into the night, with many parties ending around one or two in the morning.

But I, alongside many other Buckley students, cannot wrap my head around the reason why we don't have school off the day after Halloween. Not only would having the day off after Halloween benefit students' mental health, but it would also allow students to be more productive when they come back.

Since we don't have school off for Halloween, this might force students to shorten and postpone Holiday festivities. "I planned to go to a party with my friends the day of Halloween, but I've had to cancel all my plans as I have most of my AP classes the day after Halloween," said junior Ryan Lassner.

Being in a world and a school where educators are constantly emphasizing and discussing mental health, students, surprisingly, don't have the day off after Halloween. Having school the day after this holiday fails to recognize students' work-life balance and mental health.

If students were given the day off this would not only allow students to catch up on sleep but also complete assignments allowing students to come back to class energized and ready to learn. This will ultimately drastically

improve students' mental health as they are allowed to enjoy the holiday.

Another reason we should have the day after Halloween off is I believe that teachers and administrators should acknowledge that students are not merely learners but also individuals with their own social lives, interests, and traditions. This understanding can strengthen the student-teacher relationship and create a positive school environment.

By not having the day off, it won't just negatively affect students, but also might negatively affect teachers. Many students I know still stayed out late to enjoy the holiday. However, forcing students to wake up the next day and be in class fails to realize that late-night Halloween activities can disrupt our sleep patterns and affect our overall energy levels.

With students not feeling their 100% this also challenges teachers' lives. It's proven that a lack of sleep can cause students to be irritable and fatigued. This means that teachers won't be able to go through the content they would regularly be able to go through. As well as the lack of sleep increases the chances of disputes and fights in classrooms.

Halloween is a holiday loved by many Buckley students including myself. This holiday allows students to be creative through both their decorations and costumes. However, this fun night often includes staying up late, attending parties, and trick-or-treating.

Because I know I won't be productive at school the next day causing me to fall behind in my classes, I was also forced to change my plans.



Photos Courtesy of SallySacon

the student newspaper
of

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Unsigned editorials reflect the majority opinion of the Board of Editors of The Student Voice and not necessarily the student body's. Signed editorials and columns reflect only the writer's opinion.

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The Urgent Demand for More Mental Health Counselors

SaraMavany'25
staff reporter

In the academic environment, we Buckley students are put into a number of challenges that we have to overcome daily from the moment school starts. From the pressure of classes to assignment deadlines, as well as wanting to be as social as possible before our social battery runs out by the end of the day, we all need someone to go to when the pressure becomes too much.

The recent mental health crisis has gained much attention and allowed students (not just at Buckley) to be able to seek help. Yet there are not enough counselors for a campus this size.

The fact that Buckley has a ratio of 322 Upper School students and only two professionally advised counselors available on campus can be harmful to students.

In contrast, The Brentwood School has a similar number of students on its Upper School campus in relation to ours. According to their website, they have roughly 300 students, yet they have three mental health counselors and one educational counselor.

Furthermore, according to an anonymous Harvard-Westlake student, there are five mental health counselors available on campus who help throughout the year, with a total of 874 Upper School students.

The Harvard Westlake School also has a system called Peer Support, a program that has been in place for over 30 years now. It allows students to become trained leaders and learn how to support others, with confidentiality in mind. It promotes having a safe space for students to gather and tell each other what's on their minds, no matter then importance

A system similar to Peer Support could be helpful to the Buckley community. There

are Buckley students who are committed to helping other teens through programs outside of school such as Teen Line and Teen Talk; but what if students have the option to do the same thing on campus? This is something that should be taken seriously, as every student deserves to get all the support they need, whether it's from a counselor or a trained student.

For example, NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Health) is a club on campus that's designated to educate students on mental health awareness, and they also provide Suicide



Image Courtesy of SaraMavany'25

Awareness Volunteer Training, which could be a key component if students want to get more involved in starting something on campus.

According to an article published by the American School Counselor Association, School Counselor Roles and Ratios, "The ASCA recommends a 250-to-1 ratio of students to school counselors, yet the national average is actually 408-to-1 for the 2021-2022 school year (the most recent year for which data is available)."

Although Buckley is at the recommended number for counselor-to-student ratios, we should never strive for the minimum, and since the discussions of mental health have been more prominent, this should be something of high importance for the school to look at with increasing the amount of support.

Mental health issues can directly impact our academic and athletic performance. I've heard many teachers say things like "always put

yourself first," but when trying to seek help, it might not be available.

A pressing issue that can come after deciding you want to talk to someone, is the time that you have to wait to actually see them. A lot of the time when knocking on Capretta's or Tapia's doors asking if they have time to talk, they're already busy with another student; then who do we go to? This is the reason why we need more counselors on campus.

Buckley has done an amazing job of educating students on mental health awareness through assemblies and discussions, and by providing us with resources to get in touch with what we're going through. However, expanding the availability of therapists/counselors on campus would normalize seeking help. By increasing the number of staff in that department, students will feel more comfortable in seeking help and will be able to thrive in a more supportive environment that prioritizes students' well-being.

An article published by the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, Consequences of Student Mental Health Issues, recounts how mental health issues have a countless number of ways they can interfere with someone's life. Studies show that better mental health can affect students' quality of life, meaning how good their school experience is, the memories they make, and their relationships with friends and family.

In the end, the need for more therapists on campus is not only a matter of convenience for students but also a matter of life and death. Students will feel more comfortable on campus knowing that several resources are available at any given time, and it will enable them to thrive. It's a matter of recognizing how important and effective the role of mental health plays in someone's life.

THE IMPACT OF SPORTS TEAMS ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

IzzyUwins '26
opinion editor

When you first enter high school, it can be very nerve-racking, scary, and unpredictable because you don't know what to expect. But what if I told you that high school doesn't have to be this way?

As fall sports seasons are coming to an end, I think it is necessary to recognize how instrumental being on a team is for students' high school experiences. I believe that it is crucial for high schoolers (especially freshmen) to be on a sports team as it provides students with many benefits that can help them better navigate high school.

In the fall season, you can join sports teams such as girls' tennis, golf, volleyball, and cross country. A few weeks before the season begins, players attend "preseason." This means that players start practicing before their season, so in this case, it is in the summertime.

I know you might be thinking, why would I want to practice for the season when it's in summer? Well, when you practice with your team, you see them almost every day, so you bond and become closer each time you meet. You then build a community of friends, meaning you have a locked in group of friends before school even starts!

Having friends from your sports team not only helps the start of a year be less stressful but also can help someone who might be struggling socially make connections.

In addition to helping socially, being on a sports team can improve your mental health. According to halifaxhealth.org, which is run by a health organization, "physical activity releases endorphins, the body's natural 'happy chemicals' and reduces levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Sports are associated with lower rates of stress, anxiety, and depression." So, being on a sports team increases your mental health through the physical activity that sports provide.

Furthermore, from my experience being on the girls' tennis team, every practice means that I get to be outside and take my mind off my work whether I'm stressed for a test or I have many assignments due

the next day. I am more calm, I get to escape from reality, and I get to have fun with my favorite people. Playing tennis with my team is something that I truly look forward to each day as it is an outlet and passion.

Also, being on a team can tremendously benefit students academically as they will learn new essential skills, gain advice from team members, and be mentored by the coaches.

For instance, crucial values such as teamwork, collaboration, commitment, leadership skills, good habits (such as learning self discipline and patience), confidence, and dealing with losses are learned.

However, in my opinion, the most important skill you can gain is time management. This is an absolutely essential skill to have as when you reach older grade-levels there are classes that are more intense, and it therefore becomes harder to balance everything. This applies heavily towards seniors when they have to balance college applications on top of classes.

Time management is also important beyond high school and college, as it will help you throughout your life. As stated by lhsparker.org, run by a high school in Colorado, "the experience of managing [homework, extracurriculars, family, etc.] in high school helps students better manage time throughout their lives."

As well as learning vital lessons, another benefit of being on a sports team is gaining advice from the older students. This is because there is a mix of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors on a team, and each individual can learn something from the other. In my experience, the seniors on my team have given me advice about time management, study tips, and points about certain classes.

Therefore, I genuinely recommend joining a sports team as it enhances your high school experience whether you want to gain more friends, have an outlet for all your problems, or just learn lessons that will help you succeed in your future. Inevitably, it will help you grow in multiple ways and will help you be a more effective team player or a leader.



Photo Courtesy of Izzy Uwins '26



Photo Courtesy of Jackie Uwins

Israel and Gaza Coverage Continued: Bracelets for Hope

EliGabbay '25
focus editor

Following the terrorist attacks by the group Hamas that took place in Israel on October 7, Buckley students were determined to help the people of Israel in any way they could. A group of four juniors, Alex Ramin, Abraham Morovati, Maya Greene, and Shaina Eghbali, made hand-made bracelets that were blue and white to signify their solidarity with the people of Israel.

Ramin stated the purpose of selling the brace-

lets. "(It was) not only to raise money for donations but to symbolize a strong community that stands together by wearing these bracelets during such a hard time. We want these bracelets to symbolize the strength of the Israeli Jewish community," Ramin said.

Ramin spoke about his connection to the victims in Israel. "Israel and Judaism are deeply rooted in my soul and my life. Seeing my people getting hurt genuinely hurts," Ramin said.

Morovati said that following the attacks, he was "really scared" for the people of Israel.

"I thought that making bracelets was an awesome way to raise money and create a community around other people who might've been hurting from what happened," Morovati said.

Morovati touched on his worries during the massacre. "I have, I think, around 20-30 family members from Israel (with all my second cousins and allat) and they live in Holon, which is north of the 'danger zone' in Israel and east of Tel-Aviv so they are all okay, thank God. It was terrifying to turn on the Israeli news at home and see everything unfold and slowly get more information," Morovati said.

Morovati talked about his and his family's reaction to the news on the day of the terrorist attack. "When it first happened, the news was reporting 50 Israelis killed and 200 Hamas terrorists in Israel. My dad told me the numbers would reach the thousands, and I just couldn't believe him. Then, when more news about what the terrorists were really doing: kill-

ing innocent civilians, burning houses, kidnapping children and the elderly, raping Jewish women, and attacking hundreds of people at a music festival, I began to realize my dad was right," Morovati said.

Eghbali expressed how she was personally affected by the attacks in Israel. "I know someone that was killed, and I also know someone that was about to go to the festival but, at the last minute, decided to stay in Los Angeles," Eghbali said.

Greene reflected on how the attacks personally affected her. "This summer, I had the privilege to spend a month in Israel on a teen tour program," Greene said. "It was the most amazing experience of my life. We toured everywhere and were able to feel more connected to our Jewish religion. This experience, in particular, hits heavy in my heart right now. At this point in time, it was safe for us to visit a kibbutz that sat next to the border. Around two months later, (current) the kibbutz was attacked. Innocent lives were murdered in a place where I had JUST been. I am terrified, honestly. I feel so heavily connected to Israel that it breaks my heart to see what's happening. Let alone, I have family that lives in Israel, and it's horrifying to think about what they're experiencing right now."

Ramin, Greene, Morovati, and Eghbali were able to raise awareness along with \$2,400 that will be donated to Magen David Adom, an organization that provides humanitarian aid in Israel



Photo Courtesy of Alex Ramin '25

ZacharyKlein'24
editor-in-chief

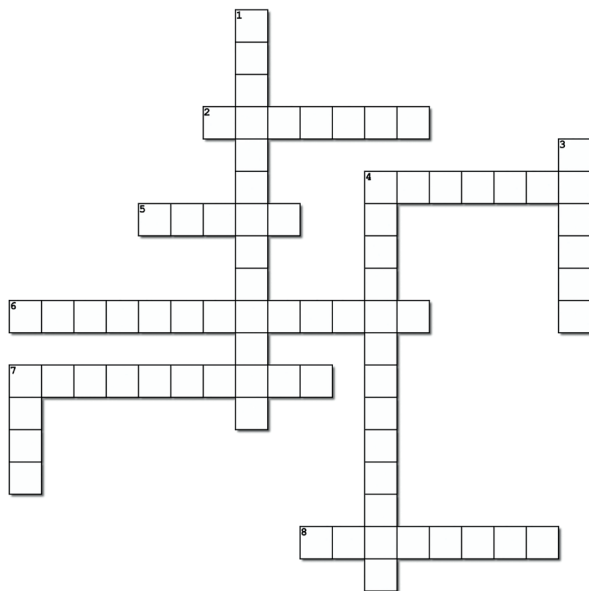
Griffin Games

Who's That Baby???

based on the childhood photo, guess which faculty member it is



THE COMMONS CROSSWORD



Across

2. What is served at the grill on Wednesday?
4. Don't use this in the bathrooms
5. Chicken or _____(in the grill line)?
6. Don't cheat or you'll get sent to the _____
7. Which Buckley alum was in Jurassic Park
8. Mr. Lynch went to the University of _____

Down

1. Which Buckley alum was in Parks and Rec?
3. Which teacher worked for NASA?
4. This class stays lit
7. Lead of the musical, Little Shop of Horrors

Buckley Bingo

MendezBerman'25
DEIJ editor

Had to make the walk up to tech	Joined a club just for the hoodie	Used a library study room	Been at Buckley since Lower School	Cut the line at the grill or been cut
Accidentally came to school with a dead computer :(Eaten a panini for breakfast and lunch	Complained about Cafe prices	Gotten a UV	Been a covid close contact
Become a part of The Ambassador Program	Came to school late because of oversleeping	FREE SPACE	Failed a really easy quiz :(Had phone taken away
Lost more than one G-card	Aced a really hard quiz!	Checked grades more than three times in one day	Signed up for too many clubs!	Left a teacher's email on read
Pulled an all nighter studying	Been at Buckley since Middle School	Forgot advisory snack	Survived a day wearing sweatpants	Seen a Buckley musical, play, or show

The Student Voice Scramble

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Artist of the Month: Reuben Barbarash

Eli Barkon '24
staff reporter**What inspired you and your friends to create a band?**

One of them was because of a school club, we realized we had the same free period, and wanted to keep playing music. Sam Terr was like 'hey let's make a band,' and we all just agreed. The other was boredom and liking similar music, so we'd hang out and end up playing a bit and eventually it became the same consistent group. We had all wanted to form a band for a long time, but when we realized we all were on the same page it just clicked.

What is your role in the band and what do you enjoy most about your part?

I'm a drummer, but I also help write. It's pretty collaborative as everyone's shouting ideas at each other, seeing what works. My favorite part about being a drummer is slowly building the part, at first, it's always messy but once I've worked at enough and it works it's a good feeling. Once you've got it down, improvising over it gets a lot more fun and interesting, and that's probably the best part.

What style of music do you play?

Wednesday in Berlin is sort of pop-rock, boy band kinda music, Misdemeanor is pretty much just hardcore punk and metal.

Where do you get inspiration for songs from?

Usually, the music kind of gives us ideas based on the mood, and we'll build it off that. We also end up writing what's pissing us off, or just something stupid because we find it funny. Sometimes we come up with a title that's so good we

build the song off it.

Are there any bands or individual artists you look up to?

With Wednesday in Berlin, it's probably Oasis, Misdemeanor definitely Minor Threat and Bikini Kill. Personally, as

far as drummers go it's got to be John Bonham, but I'm also a big fan of Jo Jones, D.H Peligro, and Max Roach.

Do you have any advice for younger musicians at Buckley?

Play with people, it makes you a better musician and it's a lot more fun. Be open to all genres and listen to everything, and always steal things you think sound good.

What do you enjoy most about filmmaking?

The little victories. It's such an up-and-down process as you're always switching between loving what you're creating and wanting to burn it. From writing to shooting to editing, it's a constant battle as there are so many moving parts to the process it's never going to end up as what you originally intended, but by the end of everything you love it at least a little bit.

How do you find time for both music and filmmaking?

Music is much less of a time-consuming process for me, but it is constant. I'm constantly playing alone or practicing with people, but it doesn't take up that much time. On the other hand, filmmaking isn't really constant as I'm not always working on projects, but when I do it takes up all of my time. I end up with a lot of missing assignments when I get really into something, but it's worth it.

How is your creative process for music and filmmaking either similar or different?

It's definitely similar in that it's a lot of nothing until something clicks. I'll be working on a script for ages until finally something works, and I end up finishing it right then. But then I'll usually wake up the next day and realize there's more to change, and the cycle repeats until I've finished with something I'm okay with. That applies to every part of making movies. Music is similar because it's a lot of trial and error. It's a process of constantly playing things slightly differently, or changing up structure, notation, etc. until it just feels like it works. Then, again, I'll hear it again and realize it needs more, and go back to throwing things at the wall.

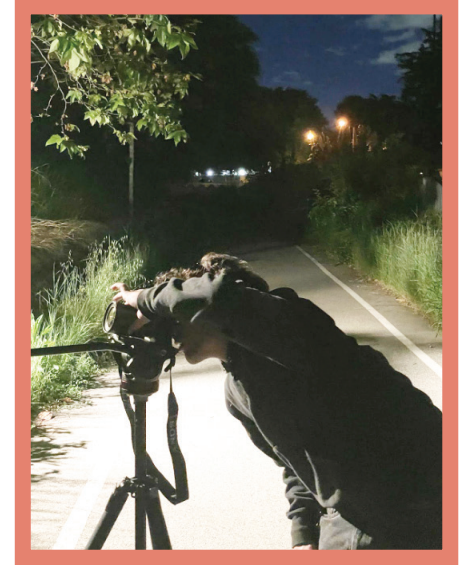


photo courtesy of Reuben Barbarash

Joseph's Gems: *Pearl*Paulina Joseph '24
editor-in-chief

On October 12, the popular film app, Letterboxd, published a list of the top 20 weirdest women in film. Among the top ten winners were Carrie from *Carrie*, Amelie from *Amelie*, and May from *May*. However, the weirdest woman to take the cake was Pearl from *Pearl*.

A prequel to Ti West's picture *X*, *Pearl* tells the harrowing origin story of *X*'s iconic elderly woman villain. Mia Goth (my indie, eyebrow-less icon) delivers an outstanding performance as Pearl, a lonely farmer's daughter yearning for stardom. Isolated on the family farm, she tends to her ailing father while living under the oppressive influence of her mother. Yet, her heart desires to bask in the glamorous world of fame and admiration.

West and Goth co-wrote the film and the meeting of their twisted minds resulted in a glorious homage to both the hacky slasher films of the '80s, as well as the silent picture era of the 1910s. While it employs the aesthetics and tackiness of the past, there's a modern charm that makes the film a wholly new viewing experience of the twenty-first century.

The year is 1918. As the First World War decimates Europe and a deadly flu pandemic claims lives closer to home, even pushing her father to the brink of death, Pearl can't help but daydream about a life beyond her family's depressing farmstead. Even though the film is set 50 years before *X*, *Pearl* still inhabits the same creaky yellow farmhouse with its ginormous barn and its ravenous alligator in the nearby

pond. She plans to dance her way out of Texas and into stardom; however, as a momentary escape, Pearl often sneaks off to the movies while she runs errands in town. These little trips only give her more material to build her ambitious dreams off of.

However, no matter how hard she tries, whether it's her mom, the judges of the dance competition, or even the cute boy from the movie theater, Pearl's dreams always end up being crushed. The desire to break from her life becomes so intense she finds herself mentally detached from reality. Pearl's bizarreness becomes more apparent when she even starts making out with a scarecrow. Her erratic behavior mirrors the enduring Old Hollywood aspiration for fame at any cost, illustrating the all-consuming desire for stardom that was common during that era. In simpler words, she is delulu.

Compared to *X*, *Pearl* lacks the same level of suspense as the killings unfold quickly, and you intimately know the person behind them. Yet, the haziness of the rural setting and the absurdity of the mood, coupled with Goth's bizarre performance infuse it with a distinct intensity. The flashy technicolor aesthetic paired with the frenzied music, makes the film feel like a hallucination. I love *Pearl* for many reasons including the way it confidently embraces its idiosyncrasies. However, my favorite element is the marked tenderness towards its unconventional heroine.

As wild, peculiar, and outlandish as Pearl may appear, she remains surprisingly relatable, embodying the universal desire for escape and recognition. Lines such as "All I want to be is loved;" "The whole world is going to know my name;" "I don't like reality" show that what Pearl says out loud our internal desires and thoughts. Her tearful expressions, the earnestness and desperation in her voice, and her parental issues make her a character who could easily reflect any one of us.

The film ends with a long-running close-up of Pearl's face. As her face contorts into a forceful smile, we share an uncomfortable moment as she gazes into our souls, and together, we contemplate the events of the past hour and a half. In the end, Pearl is just a girl who wants to be loved. Don't we all?





BOO-CKLEY CELEBRATES HALLOWEEN



Q&A With *Little Shop of Horrors* Stars

Zachary Klein '24
editor-in-chief

Q: What's your favorite part about performing/being apart of the cast?

Lochlan McGowan: The family you make in the cast. By the end, it's like one massive family and that's something really, really special.

Maya Bamford: Being part of a group of people who are all willing to give hours of their time every night to work on the same project is such a communal experience, and really makes you feel like you're creating something to be proud of. You end up putting more than one hundred rehearsal hours in over the course of rehearsal season, and then finally getting to perform for an audience is a highlight of everyone's school year. The cast spends all this time fine-tuning details, which take a lot out of you, but then you get onstage and you understand what it was all for.

Lilo Baier: My favorite part is the community and family I gained doing the show. I've become close with so many of my castmates, and every rehearsal is a blast. What I love about performing is the adrenaline that comes with it. I feel alive and present when I'm on stage. It's my favorite place to be. I'm so excited to be able to share this amazing story with the Buckley community.

Q: Can you share a bit about your character and what you find most intriguing about them?

LM: I play the character of Seymour in *Little Shop of Horrors*, and Seymour is the character who finds the crazy out-of-world plant and then ends up feeding it the human body parts. The plant kind of manipulates the character into doing what he wants until the plant eventually takes over the world. In the movie, the plant doesn't win, but in the stage play, the plant was always intended to. And so, the joke of the whole musical itself is that it's just like a PSA about not feeding the plant. The most interesting part for me is playing that conflict and the realization

of when he realizes that he might have been the reason that the world is going to be taken over. He was tricked into feeding this plant, which is now going to destroy the world.

MB: My character, Crystal, is a street urchin who knows everything going on with everybody in the show. I'm always intrigued by the fact that she says what the audience is thinking. It makes it a cool role since it feels like a narrator, but through the voice of a teenager.

LB: My character Audrey works in a flower shop and is a sweet and kind person. She is very loyal and values her flower shop family more than anything. What I find intriguing about her is that she is really determined and will do anything necessary, like date the dentist, to get out of Skid Row.

Q: If you could invite any celebrity to watch the musical, who would it be?

LM: Pedro Pascal.

MB: I'd bring the original Broadway cast of *Little Shop of Horrors* so they could see how the roles they originated look on young performers today.

LB: I would invite Ellen Greene because she was the original Audrey on Broadway and in the movie. I would love to see her reaction to how much Audrey has grown and developed since she originated the role.

Q: If you could have a karaoke night with your character, what song would you choose to perform together?

LM: "Brandy" by Looking Glass.

MB: We'd probably go with some Aretha Franklin or Tina Turner for karaoke since that style of number is Crystal's favorite in the show.

LB: I would sing "Suddenly Seymour," one of my favorite songs in the show.

Rey's Reads: *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*

Reyenne Riordan '24
green editor

Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow by Gabrielle Zevin is a novel mostly about two characters, Sadie Green and Sam Maser, and all of the worlds they create. While they are both smart enough to study computer programming at MIT and Harvard, they are somehow still too stupid to show their mutual love and appreciation for one another.

The novel spans over 30 years, starting when Sadie and Sam were little brainiac elementary schoolers growing up in Los Angeles. Due to Sam's injured leg and Sadie's older sister's illness, they meet for the first time in an empty hospital room, playing games like Super Mario to vault themselves into imaginary worlds. Sadie uses Sam's companionship as a charity project for her Bat Mitzvah, logging how many hours she hangs out with the traumatized boy with an injured leg. Upon finding out, Sam is naturally furious and he cuts her out of his life.

But as they run into each other again and again, the novel covers their transition into their adolescent and adult years. Together they reunite in college, start a successful company, and deal

with the trials and tribulations of love, loss, and growing up.

As for their relationship with one another, nothing is stagnant. Their friendship is strained by factors like the sexism Sadie faces as a female game developer in a male-dominated domain and their friendship with Sam's roommate/best friend Marx.

Sam's low self-esteem and his experience of being discriminated against (due to his disability and Asian identity) causes him to live a fairly private life. Part of him never recovered from the childhood trauma he endured, often taking it out on the people who support him most. Marx and Sadie, however, work hard to get him out of his shell.

Meanwhile, Sadie fails to appreciate Sam's adamant support and unconditional love for her. He saved her when she needed it most, and she constantly fails to communicate her needs. But her wit, intelligence, and familiarity keep Sam tethered to her.

Despite any emotional or geographical distance that comes between them, they always feel naturally connected to one another.

The author Zevin uses video games as a form of escapism for her characters, but also as an interesting approach to

the idea of life and death. Sam does not just love his games, but he creates them because he envies that when a character dies, the individual can just simply restart the game.

He uses video games as a way to own a body he never had, due to his childhood car accident. This natural desire to be able to start over—or respawn—is also influenced by the deaths of people close to him.

This is one of those very rare novels that portrays actual platonic love throughout. Zevin never allows Sadie and Sam to be romantically involved, showcasing a friendship that they can rely on. *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* depicts the beauty of noticing all of the horrible qualities that lies beneath someone's surface, and choosing to love them anyway.

In the words of the controversial Sadie Green, "Lovers are common... True collaborators in this life are rare."



Newman's Own: *The Blueprint*

Luca Newman '24
staff reporter

After weeks of anticipation, students around Buckley have frequently been streaming Drake's rap album *For All the Dogs*.

Senior Sam Terr is only one of many who have been putting his collection of new tracks on his Spotify playlist. "I like *For All the Dogs*. It's a good album, and the songs on it are better than his other more recent stuff," said Terr.

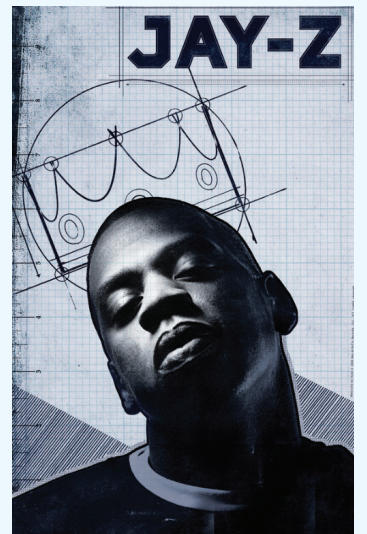
Drake has had many inspirations when it comes to his work, but a name that gets constantly mentioned in these conversations is Jay-Z. Drake is only one artist out of countless others who have been influenced by, arguably, the greatest rapper of the past 30 years. Although he has a variety of critically acclaimed albums, many fans of his consider his magnum opus to be his 2001 album, *The Blueprint*.

The Blueprint has received universal acclaim from music critics and fans alike. Whether it be its soul-inspired sound or proficiently-crafted lyrics, listeners of different music genres tend to agree that this album is one of the best that hip hop has to offer.

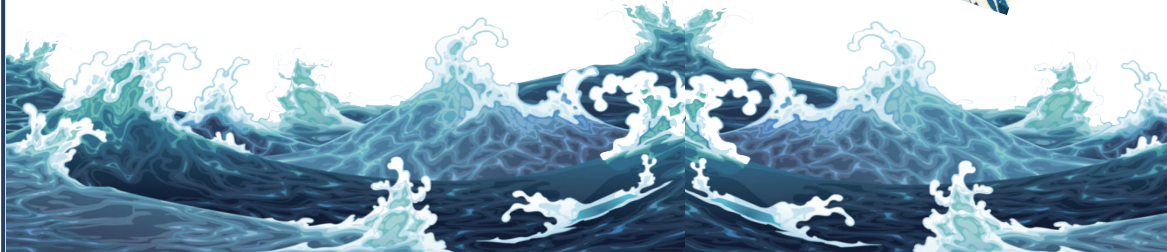
The song "Takeover" displays Jay-Z's lyrical prowess, as it made Jay Z's ongoing personal feuds, specifically with fellow artist Nas, completely public. Despite the fact that they would squash this feud years later, Jay-Z's harsh and ferocious lines relating to Nas' "one hot album every ten year average" would make you think that this would be an eternal battle.

The production on the album is also top-notch, proven by tracks such as "Song Cry" and "Blueprint (Momma Loves Me)" with their lush and soulful instrumentation. The background singers and the wide array of percussion instruments on both of these emotionally heavier tracks about his personal life experiences create a far more personal and intimate experience for the listener.

The Blueprint is an essential album for fans of the hip-hop genre, as it has a little bit of everything for all kinds of listeners. From more intense and fiery diss tracks on how Jay-Z views his own life, it is quite the enjoyable listen.



Rating: 9/10



More Fresh Faces at Buckley

Wes Haas: Interim Band Director

Zoe Biddle '24
sports editor

Band students were stranded without a full-time teacher until last month, when music teacher and Buckley alum, Wes Haas was named Interim Band Director.

Born in Louisville, Kentucky, Haas grew up in the San Fernando Valley and has been a musician since childhood. "I started my professional career as a piano player at the age of 11," Haas said. "Since then, I've played in concert bands, jazz bands, metal bands, indie bands, folk bands, funk bands and woodwind ensembles on guitar, drums, trumpet, keys, vocals, banjo, mandolin, ukulele, bass, saxophone and tambourine."

Haas' passion for music also extends beyond performing. "I've been producing records since 2011, and scoring for short films, TV, and podcasts since 2016," Haas said. "In 2020, I co-founded an indie record label called M.A.D. Witch Farms, which also operates a recording studio in the DTLA Arts District."

Outside of music, Haas pursues many different hobbies. "I love cooking, biking, playing baseball/softball/all kinds

of sports, gardening, starting businesses with my friends, going to concerts, hiking, traveling, longboarding, and going on spontaneous adventures," Haas said.

Haas decided to go into teaching a few years ago, as he was inspired by his own teachers. "I love sharing what I know about music and helping others channel their creative energy into making the world a more beautiful place," Haas said.

Before moving back to LA, Haas lived in San Francisco. "[I] was doing a whole bunch of things, some of them mentioned above. I also used to work for a Member of Congress in LA, but that was several lifetimes ago," Haas said. "Most recently before Buckley, I was teaching music, touring as a drummer, editing podcasts, running a recording studio and producing records."

For Haas, the students are the best part of working at Buckley. "Buckley students are so creative, funny, talented, interesting, curious- it's been so much fun to come to school every day and make music together," Haas said.



Photo Courtesy of Wes Haas

Leah Purvis: Basketball Coach

Sara Mavany '25
staff reporter

Coach Leah Purvis, a Buckley alumni, has returned to campus to help assist coach Marie Philman in leading this year's girls' varsity basketball team.

Purvis' history in playing basketball at Buckley, and the idea of helping Philman is what brought her back. "Coach Philman was an instrumental part into why I came back to Buckley. Before I came back here I would always come back to visit her. She was my coach when I was at Buckley and I always kept a strong connection with her," said Purvis.

Purvis had an early start to playing basketball, "I first started playing when I was eight," she said. "The first time I played was at the Sherman Oaks Park."

As she grew older, she started to get more competitive with playing basketball, "I went to a training camp at Grant High School called High Hoops," she said. "Then I started

to play with a club team called GBL, we had crazy tournaments every weekend and my mom would drive me all over California, but that's what started my passion for basketball."

During her high school career, Philman worked alongside her and helped her get a scholarship to a D1 school. "I had a hard time getting my scholarship, and Coach Philman was really helpful with that," Purvis said. "She



Photo courtesy of Leah Purvis

put me in a good position to succeed. She put us in a lot of tournaments so I got a lot of good film and good numbers. It's definitely a grind, so if you want to play after high school it's

to get where she wanted. "I did get a scholarship to Miami University in Ohio. It was between Miami and Pepperdine and I didn't want to stay close to home. It was the best decision I have ever made," said Purvis.

"I had to play 20 hours on the clock with coaches per week, but on top of that there's extra shooting, extra film, and added team activities, so it ended up being 25-30 hours a week of basketball, on top of that I had a school," Purvis said.

On top of her amazing career at Miami University in Ohio, Purvis went on to play another four years abroad. "I played professionally for four years overseas in Israel. We did tournaments and played in Turkey, Italy, and France. I did little programs like that, but my main league for four years was in Israel, and it was incredible," said Purvis.

very possible but you do definitely have to mentally and physically commit a lot of your time to basketball."

Purvis' hard work and dedication led her

Nancy Argueta: Health Services Assistant



Photo courtesy of Nancy Argueta

Abby Dessner '24
profiles editor

From working as a classroom assistant to becoming the new Health Services Assistant in Buckley's health office all within the first months of the school year, it's safe to say Nancy Argueta is well adjusted to life at Buckley.

The switch from being a classroom assistant to health office assistant has been smooth for Argueta so far. "The change from being a class assistant to a health office assistant has been a great experience," Argueta said.

Argueta's daily life at Buckley is packed, which she enjoys. "My day to day at Buckley looks busy. However, I enjoy being busy because it makes the day go by fast," Argueta said.

Being able to build new relationships with faculty and students is something that Argueta values as well. "My favorite part about Buckley is the community," said Argueta.

Additionally, Argueta looks forward to being further immersed into the community this year. "Something I'm looking

forward to this year is getting to know more about the Buckley community and all the fun activities planned for the school year," said Argueta.

Outside of school, Argueta enjoys various activities from camping to shopping. "I enjoy spending my time with family and friends. I also enjoy going running, camping, hiking, and shopping," Argueta said.

Among her camping trips, Argueta's favorite one was her trip to Big Sur where she made many memories. "What made

this trip fun was the scenic route we took along the coast. It was a beauty. But most importantly, I made great memories with my parents and sister," Argueta said.

One thing that people may not know about Argueta is that she plays not one, but three instruments. "I play three different instruments: tenor saxophone, flute, and the cajon," Argueta said.

Esther Kim: Science Teacher

Tim Gratiot '27
staff reporter

Esther Kim is the new science teacher for Middle and Upper School. She graduated from UC Berkeley and then went to UC Davis for a Masters in Biophysics.

Kim has been tutoring and teaching test prep for 15 years. "I never thought about teaching before I started tutoring. It wasn't something I thought I was going to do," Kim said.

When Kim was in school, she had many teachers who were positive influences for her. She referenced a physics teacher she had who made a rap song about



Photo Courtesy of Esther Kim

momentum. Teachers like that teacher showed Kim that learning should be fun.

When Kim first came to Buckley, she described the science department as "just amazing." She also said that she was impressed by the community's friendliness and that the other teachers and staff were all very nice and welcoming.

Kim has been equally impressed by her students. "I really enjoy the eighth- and ninth-graders I teach," Kim said. "So far, Buckley has been amazing."

Outside of work, Kim loves to write fictional stories and run. She also has a love for Korean food, especially bean sprout soup (콩나물국).

Artistic Advocacy: HeARTS of Maya

Tyler Shuter '24
staff reporter

Junior Maya Delgado started a non-profit foundation that gives students who do not have the financial backing arts scholarships to continue their studies. The Student Voice asked Delgado some questions about how she started her foundation, and what she has done so far.

Q: What is your non-profit?

A: My non-profit is called 'HeARTS of Maya' and through that organization I give scholarship kids to singing, acting, and dance classes who don't have the financial resources to go. To date, we have given scholarships to over 40 students!

Q: Where did you get the idea for your non-profit?

A: When I was younger, I went to different art classes for training. I remember not seeing some of my friends consistently, or some would stop coming altogether. I missed having them in class, and my parents told me they couldn't afford to pay for classes. I believe that everyone deserves a creative outlet, so I asked if there was any way I could help. That's when my dad, who works in business, told me about what a non-profit is and what it means. I then told my parents about my idea, and they helped me with the legal paperwork to make it an official organization.

Q: What is the long-term goal for your project?

A: I want to continue to scholarship kids for the arts and raise awareness for how important arts education is. One of my dreams personally and for the organization is to scholarship someone to an arts program in college, so they can continue their arts education.

Q: How are recipients chosen for your non-profit?

A: Every year we have different programs that recipients can apply for. There is a form students need to fill out that asks for information about why the student needs the scholarship, and why they are passionate about the specific program. I wish I could give everyone a scholarship, but based on the answers I will select the students to attend the programs.

Q: What are the biggest challenges you have faced?

A: Because I was so young, I wanted to show that even youth can make a difference, even if they aren't adults. I want to represent that my generation cares about different issues, and even though we are still learning and navigating our way through the world, we have a voice, and we can use it for good.

Q: What is the most rewarding part of your project?

A: Being able to see how much these classes mean to students, and how it not only builds their talent but their confidence in themselves. I always meet with any recipient to talk to them about their experience and learn about their story, and they are so thankful and happy to take classes and learn about their passion.

Q: How long have you been running this project?

A: I have been running this organization since 2016, and I plan to continue for as long as possible. This organization is my way of expressing what I'm passionate about and making a positive difference with the resources I have.



Photo Courtesy of Maya Delgado

Meet the Young Yearbook Editors



Photo Courtesy of Benj Hewitt

Tyler Shuter '24
staff reporter

The 2023-24 yearbook staff is looking much different than in past years. For the first time, there are four editors that are not seniors. The staff consists of three returning junior editors, a returning sophomore editor, and sixteen new students.

One of the returning junior editors Ellington Meyers has enjoyed this year so far, but found some challenges with taking over the senior's responsibilities. "It's challenging to communicate with the seniors, and get their input on what they want featured in their graduating yearbook as we have none in the class this year," Meyers said. "Because we like to keep many parts of the yearbook secret until its release day, we have to do our best to reflect the grades' interests."

Meyers believes that advice given from seniors last year has prepared her for the challenges of being an editor. "The best advice I got was to trust yourself, and your creative instincts. Even if a page doesn't look how you imagined, you can always revise and ask for an outsider opinion," Meyers said.

Sophomore Zach Shuter has become the youngest editor in chief since student publications advisor Benj Hewitt became the yearbook advisor. Shuter felt that it was nerve-racking being an editor at first, but that he thinks it will be a great year. "I think the year has been going pretty good so far. It was an intimidating task at first to help teach an entire class of new freshmen and sophomores how to create spreads, but I think all of them are amazing designers and we are on pace for a great year," Shuter said.

Shuter also is nervous about perfecting the senior portion of the yearbook. "It is a little scary to do this without any seniors. A third of the book is about them and not having any to make final decisions for them is alarming, but I think we are still doing a good job without them," Shuter said. "Plus we have been communicating with seniors about ideas, and Mr. Hewitt is very helpful at it as well."

Another returning editor, junior Liz Caballeros is pleased with how the yearbook is turning out so far, but recognizes the challenges of pleasing an entire school. "Honestly, I underestimated how complicated designing something from scratch could be. I mean in the yearbook we make everything from scratch so creating something to follow the theme can be really tricky," Caballeros said. "Aside from that, at the end of the year, everyone either has a negative or positive outlook on the yearbook, so constructing something that everyone likes can be very difficult."

Caballeros mentioned that learning from the previous seniors about cooperation has helped her this year. "I think just taking everyone's ideas into consideration has been something that really helped me this year," Caballeros said. "The yearbook is something we all construct as a team and we want it to be a reflection of Buckley, but in order for that to happen we have to take everyone's opinions into consideration."

Caballeros understands that the yearbook is very special to the senior class and still wants their opinions to be heard for the yearbook. "We're looking to get a couple of seniors to weigh in on what they want their section of the yearbook to look like," Caballeros said. "Normally, we have the seniors come in and look at their senior pages, so I think we might have more of that this year concerning superlatives and more."

Mali's Fashionable Fight Against Cancer

ZoeBiddle 24
sports editor

Last month, junior Mali Lord raised over \$8,000 as the first junior ambassador of the Cancer Cartel, an organization that aims to financially support individuals battling cancer.

“My goal was to make a meaningful impact during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which conveniently aligns with Sustainability Month, creating the perfect opportunity to host a fundraiser in collaboration with The Real Real [an online luxury consignment shop],” Lord said. “This event allowed me to combine my passion for fashion with my dedication to community service.”

According to Lord, the fundraiser relied on lots of community engagement. “I maintained a consistent outreach strategy, connecting with family, friends, and our local community through weekly email blasts, text messages, and social media posts,” Lord said. “I extended the reach of this cause to the Buckley community by posting flyers, creating a presentation shown during advisory, and being featured in the Daily Bulletin and Good News Alert.”

This fundraiser was personal for Lord. “Breast cancer has left its mark on my family, and I’ve witnessed the emotional and physical toll it takes on loved ones,” Lord said. “A few of the most influential women in my life – my mom, my aunt, and my grandma, known as Lola – have all faced their battles with breast cancer. Thankfully, my family members have had the means to access the treatment they needed, but I understand that not everyone is as fortunate.”



Image Courtesy of Mali Lord

For Lord, Lola is a role model and symbol of strength and resilience. “She fought against breast cancer for over 30 years, enduring countless rounds of treatment. Her unwavering determination is inspiring,” Lord said. “Not only has Lola demonstrated extraordinary strength, but she’s also been a dedicated philanthropist in her community in Washington state, as well as in her home country, the Philippines, and my grandpa’s native country, Thailand.”

Her grandmother is a large contributor to Lord’s passion for community service. “Her commitment to giving back to the community has always been a guiding light. She’s instilled in me the importance of making a positive impact and encouraged me to follow in her footsteps,” Lord said.

Lord says the fundraiser is just the beginning. “I’m planning to make it an annual tradition, teaming up with The Real Real for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and raising more funds with each passing year,” Lord said. “Beyond that, I have big plans to continue fundraising efforts for the Cancer Cartel, with both large-scale and smaller events in mind. It’s just the tip of the iceberg, and I’m excited to explore more creative ways to contribute and support those fighting the battle against breast cancer.”

Say Cheese: Buckley's New Tasty Club!

JoshMahboubi 26
staff reporter

Have you ever been at school and just wanted to rank cheeses with your friends? Well, Cheese Around the World Club (commonly known as Cheese Club), is the place for you!

Cheese Club, a new club at Buckley, made its debut on campus on October 4, 2023 in room A205.

“Cheese Club is a club that aims to provide a space to educate the Buckley community on cheeses from all around the world, as well as to eat cheeses from all around the world,” said founder of Cheese Club senior Will McClinton. McClinton believes the club is more unique than any other club on campus, which is why people should join. “People should join Cheese Club because it is the only food related club on campus, and it’s a blast every time,” said McClinton.

Senior Reuben Barbarash agrees. “Cheese club is unique because it utilizes a topic like cheese which is unlike other club focuses,” said Barbarash.

“I think at first glance the idea of a cheese club may seem ridiculous, or not really serious, but the actual club is not that at all,” said junior Tucker Collins. “[The club] is an actual discussion about the cheeses, in the sense that we discuss the history and background of the cheeses, and we’re actually doing proper taste tests where we talk about what cheese was bet-

ter and why. It’s a silly idea with a lot of seriousness and effort put behind it.”

McClinton brought the club to Buckley, as the idea was sparked from his college tours. “Last spring, I went on college tours and every single school brought up their cheese club, and I thought it sounded like a really good idea, so I decided to bring it to Buckley,” said McClinton.

“Every meeting two cheeses are brought in, usually from the same area, and I present a slideshow talking about the cheese’s cultural and economic significance, and the history of the cheese,” said McClinton. “After the slideshow we do a tasting and eat the cheese as a group. After we’ve completed our tasting, we vote on which cheese was better and then it moves on in our bracket.”

“[Cheese Club] is a great avenue for trying new cheeses and thus new experiences,” said Collins. “I like the fact that we’re able to learn more about the cheeses beyond just what they taste like.”

Members of the Cheese Club taste and then compare two cheeses to see which one is preferred by the majority, in the first meeting there was a clear favorite.

“For our first meeting, we put two Wisconsin cheeses against each other, one of which being an espresso BellaVitano,” said McClinton. “That’s my favorite. It won by a landslide.”

“I would say the BellaVitano was the better cheese because I think it was more unique,”

said Collins. “I’ve never had BellaVitano before so it stood out to me. If I remember correctly it was an espresso BellaVitano and the flavor combination there was very good.”

“[Espresso] BellaVitano cheese from Wisconsin was by far the favorite that day,” Barbarash said. “It had great flavor and texture and was unlike other cheeses I’ve eaten.”



Image Courtesy of Benj Hewitt

Alum Lizzy Kay Tackles Sustainability in Architecture

LiubovKrugliakova '25
news editor

Q: Please introduce yourself and give some background information of your professional journey since graduating from Buckley.

A: I grew up in Australia and moved to LA in 2014 to attend Buckley for eighth grade. After graduating from Buckley in 2019, I went to Berkeley to study architecture and sustainable design. While at Berkeley, I took a range of classes such as Environmental Design, Social and Psychological Factors in Open Space Design, Climate and Energy Policy (alongside my architecture studios).

My education was impacted by Covid, of course, but the minute I could travel again I could. I interned in London at Syte Architects the summer of 2022 and then also interned during the school year in San Francisco at Page Architects. I recently moved to New York after just graduating from Berkeley this May!

Q: Could you describe your current role and responsibilities in your career or organization? What is your primary focus?

A: I am an Architectural Designer at Hart Howerton. I am part of a team designing amenities for a luxury private community in Nashville. My current focus is within the actual design documents, but I am transitioning to also be the lead coordinator for the construction process.

I am also part of our company's sustainability team, where we are focused on the AIA 2030 Commitment. The built environment is responsible for a large sum of carbon emissions globally, so we can make a great impact by understanding and limiting our emissions through sustainable design. My firm is also a B Corp, which means it is committed to enhancing our company's commitment to sustainability.

Data Collection and Energy Modeling - we use these in our design process to ensure we are making design decisions that enhance our sustainability efforts.

Q: What has been your involvement in environmental sustainability?

A: I am currently studying to gain my WELL accreditation, which is similar to LEED in that WELL aims to enhance experience of space through a sustainability lens.

Q: What sparked your interest in your current field, and how did you decide on this career path?



A: I've always been in the creative sphere. Architecture is the perfect combination of art and technical design. Creating something beautiful digitally and then transforming it into a physical creation is so satisfying.

Q: Are there any experiences or lessons from your time at Buckley that you've found particularly useful in your current career?

A: Taking challenging classes and applying myself to as much as I could set me up for a successful career. I loved hiking up to the art building to develop film, or dragging myself to office hours to make sure I really understood AP Calc, which all created great habits in high school that stuck with me through Berkeley and now today at my architecture firm. I developed meaningful mentorships with my teachers (shout out to Monsieur Dalle and Bam) that showed me how important it is to

believe in yourself and the importance of creating a support system that will uplift you when you may have self doubts.

Q: Can you describe what a typical day looks like for you in your current role?

A: I commute into Midtown from the East Village at 9 a.m. and start the day with our team meeting where we discuss our goals for the day and our current deadline. I will then tackle design elements until lunchtime where I'll meet up with friends and head to Bryant Park for lunch.

In the afternoon, I'll meet with the sustainability committee to discuss our current goals (which was creating a presentation for the Partners and Board Meeting) and then back to my current project to finish up the day.

Q: If you could offer a piece of advice to Buckley students considering a similar path, what would it be? Give everything a shot. You never know if you'll love something if you never try it.

A: Since Buckley didn't have any architecture classes, I decided to take a class at the Pasadena Art Center and then an architecture summer program at SCI-Arc. If you want to try something out, don't be afraid to look for classes after school.

Appreciate those around you and the opportunities you have. Friends you make at Buckley will last you a lifetime. Have fun!

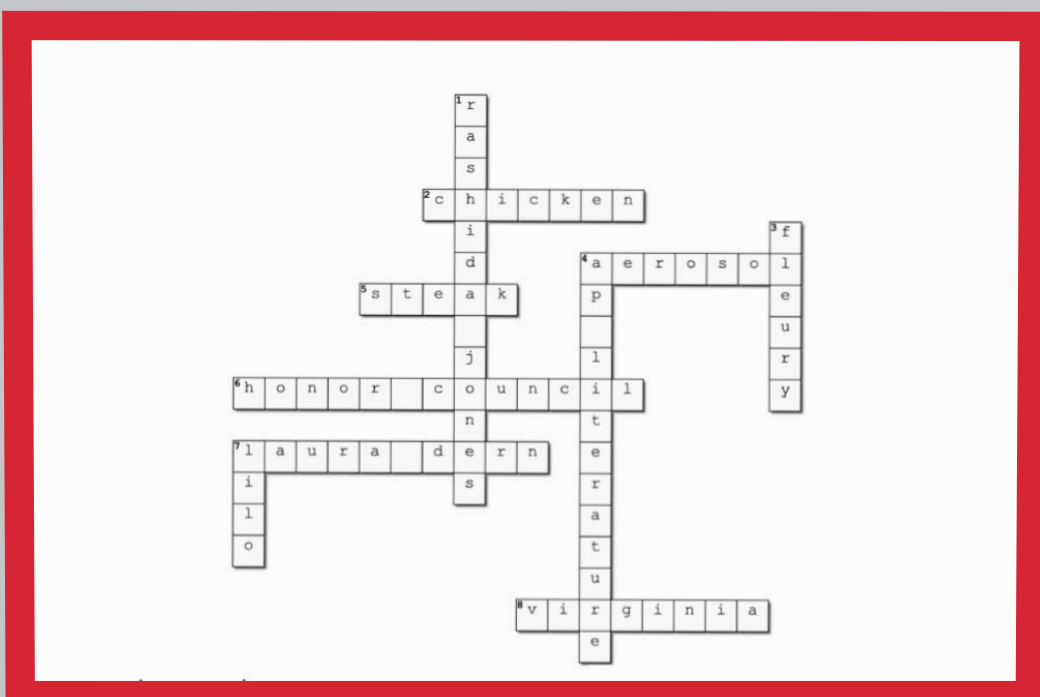


photos courtesy of Lizzy Kay

Griffin Games Answers:

Who's That Baby?:

- 1) Ms. Roche
- 2) Mr. McElwee
- 3) Sra. Salazar
- 4) Mr. Barker



Word Scramble:

- 1) Computer Science
- 2) Center Community and the Arts
- 3) Uniform Violation
- 4) College Applications
- 5) Portrait of a Graduate

Athlete of the Month: Sawyer Stanford-Hill



Photo Courtesy of Caleb Brown

SophiaFotter'25
staff reporter

Q: How did you get into both volleyball and soccer?

A: My mom and both my sisters played soccer, so I started playing when I was about four or five. I've always loved it and playing with my friends. I started playing volleyball at Buckley, and then I joined a club team when I was in eighth grade. I really liked it and I kept playing for Buckley.

Q: What is your favorite part of each sport?

A: In volleyball, I love how much active cheering there is and how many quick plays there are. For soccer, I love having fun with my teammates and getting to create relationships that help to move the game smoothly.

Q: What advice would you give to people involved in multiple sports?

A: I would say to forget about all the other stuff you have going on while you're in practice or at a game. That's how you'll get the best out of your sport. I would also say that stretching and recovery is super important.

Q: How long have you been playing both sports?

A: I have been playing soccer for about 13 years and volleyball for six years.

Q: How do you manage two different sports seasons during the school year?

A: I always love being busy, so I love having practice or games everyday. The only thing that I really have to manage is when the seasons start to overlap, and making time to be able to practice tae kwon do. The only way that I am really able to manage everything is by having super understanding and supportive coaches. The key to managing everything is making sure that you are constantly communicating with your coaches and teammates.

Q: What is your favorite part about tae kwon do?

A: My favorite part about tae kwon do is getting to learn really long traditional forms. I also really like practicing the sword.

Q: Do you plan to continue any of these sports in college?

A: Yes, I might join a club or intramural team of any of these three sports if my college has it.

Volleyball season recap

MatiasGarcia'25
sports editor

One of the most decorated sports teams on campus, the girls volleyball team finished another great season, going 10-2 before losing in the first round of CIF playoffs. The team included six incredible senior athletes, led by captains Sophia Wolfson and Charlotte Reff.

Reff has been on the team since freshman year and said that what she will miss most about being on the team is "the connection with all the girls and being able to see and talk to them everyday."

Wolfson also shared what she'll miss most from the team. "I'm going to miss most of the team dynamic. We had such a great group of girls. We had team sleepovers, dinner, and lunches that allowed us to hang out together even outside of school," Wolfson said.

Sophia Fotter, a junior on the team, touched on her favorite moments this season. "My favorite moment from the season was during the Dig Pink Game as it allowed us to decorate the gym and wear our pink jerseys. It was also incredible to see all the support at the game," Fotter said.

Lauren Park, a junior who finished her first year on the varsity team, spoke on her favorite memories with the seniors on the team. "I am going to miss all the funny moments, and memories we had together with the seniors this year, especially getting ready before media day and the trip to Phoenix Arizona," Park said.

Reff gave her perspective on the team's outcome this

season. "It was a really fun year and even though we didn't go as far as we did in the past in C.I.F. It was still a really great season," Reff said. "I'm happy with how my career went here and more people should join the volleyball team next year."

Assistant coach Rae Basmagian is proud about how the team overcame challenges. "The team did very well this season, and we maximized the talent we had but we faced many challenges throughout the season due to injuries. Adonia (Anene) was out all season as well as Sophia Wolfson and Jordan Bental who were out for parts of the season, which caused us to have to change up the lineup. But ultimately we did the most we could with the talent we had," Basmagian said.

Junior Lindsey Chen is already planning for next season. "We did quite well this year in league despite many challenges on-and-off the court and even though we didn't go as far as we planned to in C.I.F this year. I know we will come back stronger next year," Chen said.

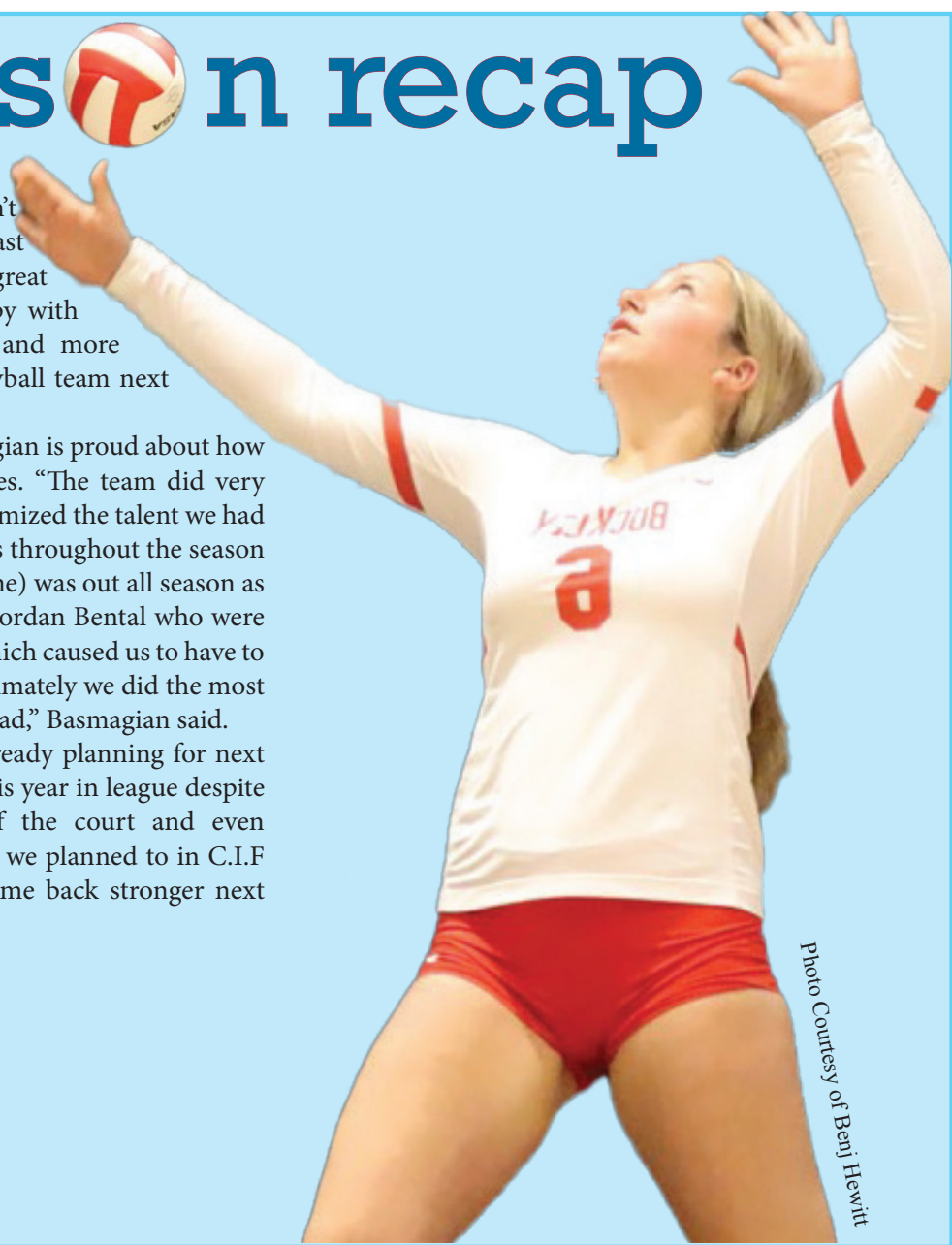


Photo Courtesy of Benji Hewitt

Fall Seasons Close for XC, Tennis and Golf

EmilyLorimer'26
staff reporter

After a season of tremendous improvement and placing second in Liberty League, the cross-country team is moving onto the CIF playoffs under the leadership of new coach, Larry Medina.

"I think Coach has very much helped with strengthening the team. He's really gotten kids into it," senior and co-captain Reuben Barbarash said.

Medina was impressed with the team and their improvement this season and made sure to continuously push his athletes. "The student-athletes this year really bought into the program and every week we've been seeing improvement after improvement ... their progress has been nothing short of extraordinary," Medina said.

Barbarash concluded his last year as team captain after three years and gave a final goodbye to the sport. "You know, everybody this year had good vibes. Always good vibes on the cross country team, but this year was particularly good," Barbarash said.

Not only were the "vibes" unmatched this year, but this season the cross country team "won one of our

league races, which I don't think we've, at least in my career, ever done," co-captain junior Lorelei Barrett said.

The team's success this season has been a reflection of each player's hard work, positive attitude, and dedication to the sport. "The team as a whole is up ... the team that we have is small but the people we do have are very dedicated," Barbarash said.

Barrett agreed. "I've definitely seen the differences between teams, and some teams have been stronger, some teams have been weaker, some teams have cared more, some teams have cared less. I think it's best when the team is stronger, and I think we've really got that this year and I want to continue doing that," Barrett said. "I'm just so incredibly proud of everything our team has been able to do."

Medina takes pride in the team he has cultivated. "This season has shaped up to be a remarkable journey. What truly sets it apart is the commitment shown by our student-athletes, who have wholeheartedly embraced the program. They have taken the reins and are eager to push themselves towards personal growth. It's a testament to their dedication and perseverance,"

Medina said. "I couldn't be prouder of the immense effort they have invested, and the results they have achieved speak volumes about their capabilities."



Photo courtesy of Zac Struber

EloiseMorovati'26
associate editor

The girls varsity tennis team's season finished a very successful season on November 6, reaching the quarterfinals in CIF playoffs.

Co-captain senior Zoe Biddle has been playing on the team since her freshman year and is very happy with how the season went. "It's been really great. I think that initially there was definitely some difficulty...it definitely was not easy



Photo courtesy of Sue Sherman

finding doubles partners and making sure that our lineup was the best that it could be, but I think that the growth over this season has just been truly incredible, and I couldn't be prouder of our team" said Biddle.

One of the team's highlights from the season was the Fresno tournament. "Not only was this a great tennis opportunity, but the team also bonded, and we all got closer to one another. It was so much fun, as we played very competitive matches," said Liberty League MVP player Sophie Uwins, who is now in her second year of playing on the team.

The team's hard work and devotion has paid off. Their success is reflected by scoring second in Liberty League and beating every single team (in Liberty League) but Archer.

"I'm really proud of our team for so many different reasons, but we did come second in Liberty League and defeated many other teams," said sophomore Izzy Uwins.

Freshman Angela Lee shared how one of her favorite parts of being on the team was how she was able to meet people. "I think it was just getting to know my team better because I'm new. It helped me meet a lot of people," said Lee. Additionally, Lee said she's looking forward to meeting "the new people that are going to join the tennis team because I was also new, so I'm excited to meet them."

Despite losing to Oxford Academy in the quarterfinals, senior co-captain Abby Dessner is happy with how her final year went. "It was a really great season, and I'm so proud of everyone," Dessner said.

EliGabbay'25
focus editor

As the fall season comes to an end, we bid farewell to another season of girls' golf. The conclusion of the 2023 season means the final year for seven seniors on the girls' golf team.

Senior Pearly Wong has been on the team since her freshman year and served as co-captain alongside senior Katie Ha. Wong spoke about the camaraderie she will miss on the team. "Katie was a stranger before I joined golf. Four years later, she's my best friend. It's these connections and bonds that I'm going to miss the most. Laughing with my team and eating In-N-Out peppers are memories I'll forever cherish," Wong said.

Katie Ha has also been on the team since her freshman year. She shared the moments she has "cherished" during her final season. "The car rides to practice, the post-practice fries, the funny moments with Coach Lotts, these are all memories that I treasure and know I will miss when I graduate," Ha said.

Senior Robyn Vasquez has been on the team since her junior year. Vasquez touched on her sadness as she concluded her final season. "I'm sad to leave because the team is very bonded despite us being from all age levels. It makes me wish I played before just junior and senior year," Vasquez said.

Even though she's graduating, Wong is optimistic for the future years of girls' golf. "We all improved like crazy, so that was exciting to witness. (Freshman) Kandice Chuang was just named league MVP, so I

can rest assured there's a bright future for girls golf at Buckley," Wong said.

Girls golf coach Andrew Lotts gave his positive impression on the team's season. "We had a great season, finishing second in the Prep League and having the Medal Winner (lowest score) in all matches played," Lotts said.

Lotts also voiced his emotions about saying goodbye to the seniors on the team who have been instrumental to the team's success. "This was a special class and the biggest team we have had. Every senior played a part in making this team successful and special," Lotts said.

Vasquez talked about her favorite moment from the season. "My favorite moment from the season was during our Santa Barbara trip to play San Marcos at Sandpiper golf course. The course was challenging but also super pretty, with the view of the ocean as the sun

set over the horizon. The view was worth climbing the longest course ever," Vasquez said.

Wong revealed what won't be so hard to say goodbye to as she concludes her final season. "I'm elated to finally say goodbye to some of my tan lines," Wong said.

The future of girls' golf is also looking bright. In the SCGA Qualifying Tournament on November 2, freshman Kandice Chuang finished third. The field consisted of the 123 best golfers from San Diego County to LA County to San Bernardino, and she was one of only four golfers to post a score under par.

Next up for Chuang is the Regional State Qualifier on November 9 at Los Serranos Golf Country Club. The top eight players from the field will qualify for the State Championship.



Photo courtesy of Liz Caballeros

Students Welcome New Affinity Fest

SophiaFotter'25
staff reporter

On September 21, 2023, Buckley created Affinity Fest, which is a similar event to Club Fest except it is only for affinity spaces. "I loved affinity fest because it [was] a place on campus where all different cultural groups can be shown together," said junior Lindsay Chen, co-president of Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI). According to Chen, the last few years when affinity fest and club fest happened at the same time, it was easy for the affinity groups to get lost in the midst of everything and not attract as many people as they want.

Co-president of Black Student Union (BSU) senior Khadija Emma Neumann agrees. "I liked having Affinity Fest separate because it made it clear that it was meant for affinity spaces. For example, in our case, BSU would only attract the black students here at Buckley," Neumann said.

Club Fest tends to be crowded because almost every student on campus is involved with a club, whereas Affinity Fest is smaller and "gives a safe space where all kids of color can feel comfortable to sign up for their specific affinity group," said co-president of BSU senior Adonia Anene.

This decision to separate the two events has had a big, positive impact on this smaller part of the Buckley community.

"The reason for separating Affinity Fest was to make it more intentional and more focused. Being part of an affinity group is not like being in a club, it's way more personal," said Head of Upper School Dr. Sherrie Singer.

Many of the discussions in the meetings of these groups involve personal experiences, so students from different affinity groups appreciate Buckley's support for them. "I think Buckley does a great job of appreciating the affinity groups, like letting

us have the altar in the library for Día de los Muertos," said co-president of Latinos Unidos, junior Maya Delgado. This allowed Latinx students to share a part of their culture with the rest of the school, and they had a lot of fun making and decorating the altar.

Students can agree that Buckley could improve on the way they approach Affinity Fest in terms of their advertising. Club Fest was advertised through many emails, reminders from teachers in class, and posters, but none of this was used to inform people about Affinity Fest.

"I feel like there were not a lot of people who showed up to the courtyard during Affinity Fest. We had to go around campus and find people to sign up," Chen said.

Neumann agrees that the overall planning of Affinity Fest was not executed as well as it could have been. "It wasn't established whether BSU was going to have a booth at Affinity Fest or Club Fest, so I think the organization could definitely improve," she said.

Despite the initial issues that came with planning Affinity Fest, students really enjoyed it and look forward to more Affinity Fests in the upcoming years.



Photo courtesy of Sabine Abadou

Ninth-Graders Visit the Museum of Tolerance

AshaJoh'27
staff reporter

On October 11, 2023, the ninth-graders and a handful of faculty attended a field trip to the Museum of Tolerance as a part of the Intersections of Identity class. This trip has been in place for the past eight years, and although the location has changed, the purpose remains the same. "We've been to the Museum of Tolerance, the Holocaust Center, downtown homeless shelters, and over the years, it's evolved into ... exposure to history and Los Angeles," Assistant Head of Upper School and Dean of Students George Russo said.

Minjung Pai, the Assistant Director of DEI and the organizer of the trip, shed light on how important it is to have a positive outlook and find ways to prevent events such as the Holocaust from happening again. "History is doomed to repeat itself.... To me, that's such a hopeless statement rooted in despair. I feel, especially with young folks, it's important to teach the realities of what's happening, but it's also

important to empower them with the tools to make change," Pai said.

Ninth-grader Ruby Greenstone elaborated on Pai's thoughts. "I think places, such as the museum, help prevent history from repeating itself, as it educates us on the truths of these events," Greenstone said.

In the past, this trip has been made mandatory for all ninth graders, but considering the recent events in Israel, the trip was optional this year. "We said to a few families that if you're currently experiencing difficulty with... the war right now in Israel, and if you want to opt out, you can. We want to be mindful that some people might feel this isn't the right time for them," Russo said.

This change was beneficial to many students, including ninth-grader Andrew Ormond who has had a difficult time during these recent weeks. "I was really upset because I have many cousins who are fighting in Israel. So my parents and I thought it would be best for my mental health to not go," Ormond said.

Despite the heartbreaking events the museum explores, many students found it important to further learn about this tragic period

in history. "It was sad to see, but it was important for me to go because I felt I needed to learn about what happened in history and why it's still happening," ninth-grader Mia Cardillo said.

Cardillo explained that one exhibit, which included a cafe scene with people conversing over Hitler's rise to power, stood out to her. "Basically, there were a bunch of tables with people discussing their opinion on Hitler and where they stood. Some discussed leaving the country before it got bad, while others would decide to stay true to their country and stay.

Overall, I liked the cafe scene the most because it showed everyone's opinions were mixed," Cardillo said.

Even though an abundance of despair lingered in the air, so did hope. "I was really happy seeing preserved uniforms, clippings, and artifacts from the Holocaust. It's important for this to never get lost in history ... The museum does a really great job on reinforcing that," Greenstone said.



Freshmen checking out an exhibit
Photo courtesy of Asha Joh'27



Photo Courtesy of @thebuckleyschool on Instagram

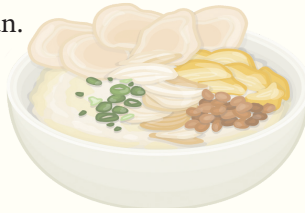
Bring Back Food Fest!

IrisKim'26
DEIJ editor

Rewind back to 2019 – remember the times when authentic food from your culture was shared and savored by many of your classmates and teachers? Do you miss the spirit that was in the air, knowing a delicious aspect of your culture was appreciated and popularized?

“Up until 2019, we would have an international Food Fest day in the courtyard where a bunch of affinity groups would bring different foods from their cultures,” said student body president Reyenne Riordan.

“It was really cool to pay for a ticket, walk around and get every sort of dish from different cultures. It gave students the ability to introduce other students and their peers to foods they enjoy in their cultural environments.”



Riordan, student body vice president Sienna Simantob, and Assistant Head of Upper School George Russo would love to help bring back Buckley’s annual multicultural food-fest.

When COVID-19 struck, Food Fest came to a halt because food could get easily contaminated. “But now, that’s behind us. There’s definitely no harm in bringing [Food Fest] back,” Riordan said.

“I am totally open to bringing it back and would love to connect with any student interested,” Simantob said. “If I can come up with a solution to bring it back, I will propose it to the student council.”

“What I can help with is finding time. It took a lot of family involvement to put it together, so we have to see what we can do,” Russo said.

Assistant Directors of DEI Sabine Abadou and Minjung Pai would also be enthusiastic if Buckley brought back Food Fest.

“Food is a huge part of culture. When I want to share my culture, one of the first things I want to do is share my food,” Pai said. “I love it when other people share their culture through sharing their food with me– it’s beautiful.”

“The Multicultural Food Festival was a wonderful experience for students, parents, and faculty,” Abadou said. “It’s an opportunity for the community to come together, celebrate, and understand the important role food plays in culture.”

Riordan thinks bringing back Food Fest to Buckley would be a great idea. “Food is something that brings people together. It allows others to understand a culture better, so I think bringing Food Fest back to campus would be a great idea.”



Representation is a key component of this Food Fest and it comes in various forms. Sharing food from various cultures can help students

connect on a deeper level. “I know a lot of students have brought up that they don’t feel as if their culture gets enough recognition in the Buckley community,” Simantob said. “Bringing back the Food Fest will create a new avenue for representation.”



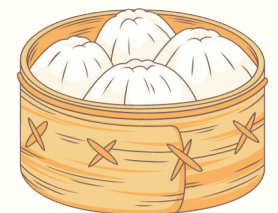
Abadou explains how food is a significant cultural representative. “If the Food Festival provides an opportunity for students to move beyond multiculturalism, which only makes up ten percent of the total picture, then food can tell a story that goes beyond surface culture and towards cultural competence,” Abadou said. “[Food Fest] can tell the story of cooking, preparing, and eating food with loved ones. It can tell the story of migration, immigration, colonization, and enslavement. It moves beyond the single narrative to a deeper understanding of who we are as human beings.”

It is crucial to be aware that knowing certain foods from a specific culture does not equate to knowing the overall culture. Taking the time to learn and savor the dish you are eating requires mindfulness when talking to other people who eat the same cultural dish at home.

“As wonderful as it is, sometimes (food) can also be very limiting. If people are only talking about the food of a culture, it does have a pitfall leading to stereotypes and seeing one culture as a monolith,” Pai said. “As long as it’s done in a holistic way, it’s a beautiful thing.”

Pai reflected deeper on the consequences of stereotypes caused by misunderstanding cultural food. “Food is definitely a fun, immediate way to share one’s culture as long as it’s not just limited to food. There’s this danger of people saying, ‘well, I know that culture because I love this (certain cultural food),’” Pai said. “Oftentimes, when people find out I’m Korean, the first thing they tell me is, ‘I love kalbi and kimchi.’ I understand the intention, but if that’s all they know about my culture, they are limiting me to that. Trying to really avoid that kind of stereotyping is really important.”

While people primarily acknowledge cultural food for its distinct culinary attributes, it is important to remember “food isn’t just about taste and smell. How we eat our food also helps us to understand their cultural stories,” Abadou said. “Recipes are passed down through the generations, the tastes, smells and sights of meals connect us to our ancestral past. Food, and the way we eat, has become synonymous with our respective cultures.”



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Images courtesy of Iris Kim'26

In Loving Memory of Matt Balano



“Mr. Matt Balano was one who could read a room really fast, know almost exactly what to say to calm everyone, and do so in a highly dignified manner. He led with an empathetic heart and was incredibly resourceful. For any DEI related subject, he had high-profile speakers, books, resources and professional development opportunities ready to go that could effectively assuage the need(s). More than just a colleague, Mr. Balano was a dear friend. We spent countless hours on the phone in the evenings building each other up, supporting one another, and laughing heartily as we helped each other manage some of life’s most challenging obstacles. He’ll be remembered for having a dynamic impact on the community in a short period of time, establishing, in concert with other members of the DEI team, a vocabulary and long-lasting approach to equity work. I will miss his perpetual smile, how he was able to call people in instead of out, and the warmth he established through his leadership.” – **Don Smith**

“Into every conversation, Mr. Balano brought wisdom, grace, warmth and, when appropriate, humor. He had a unique way of creating an invitation, so that all in our community felt included in a process of self-discovery and the co-creation of community. When Matt looked at you, you knew he was listening. And when Matt spoke to you, you were more alert than usual because you knew he was full of small phrases that would expand your thinking and open your eyes to the world. He was a teacher’s teacher.”
– **Alona Scott**

“Although I only knew Mr. Balano for a year, I feel like I lost an old friend. The week before his passing, I wrote him a note that started with ‘WWMBD? (What Would Matt Balano Do?).’ I hope to honor his legacy by employing a ‘calling in culture’ and preserving the dignity of every person I encounter because that is what Matt Balano would do.” – **Sherrie Singer**

“We fondly remember Mr. Balano, a remarkable colleague whose impact on our school community will be forever cherished. During his short time as Director of DEI, he made a lasting impact on all members of the DEI Office as well as the school community. His dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion was unwavering, with a strong focus on our students’ well-being. Balano’s commitment to equity, centering marginalized students, and empowering student leadership left an indelible mark on Buckley. His dedication to developing institutional outcomes and promoting Equity Literacy will continue to inspire us to dismantle inequitable practices and uplift marginalized voices. His legacy will forever remind us that, “We are all the diversity, equity, inclusion directors of our own areas of the school.” With empathy as his guiding force, Mr. Balano encouraged our community to acknowledge positions of power and privilege, so we can advocate for all members of our beloved Buckley family. He will be greatly missed.” – **Sabine Abadou**

“Mr. Balano lit up every room he walked in to, touching each person with radical positivity. He was a visionary; the world was blessed to be graced by his voice. We must honor his legacy by addressing issues he was passionate about, and carrying out his vision of creating an equitable world for all.”
– **Zoha Pattanaik’25**

“Mr. Balano was an extraordinary human being. In a very short amount of time, he made a profound impact on our community. Now, when faced with a difficult or challenging issue, we so often find ourselves saying, ‘What would Matt do?’ Mr. Balano had such a clear vision for how we should treat each other. He embraced us all with his kindness, compassion, thoughtfulness, and love of humanity. We were blessed by his presence.” – **Adrienne Parsons**

“Mr. Balano was a warm and inviting person. He always welcomed me into any conversation. We bonded over our mutual love of basketball. He always wanted to raise everyone up, bring people in and include everyone, this is a rare quality that we can all strive to have and empower.” – **George Russo**

“Being in a DEI meeting which was run by Matt Balano was so refreshing. His presence was comforting. There was nothing pretentious about Matt; he would always admit to a “mistake” and that made him real and approachable. He had a wonderful smile, and I always felt that he was an advocate for us and the students. I miss coming into room 005 and seeing Matt there; we would share a classroom. Such a beautiful spirit, I miss him.”
– **Maria O’Driscoll**