



THE VOYAGER

OCTOBER 2019



A NOTE FROM THE NEWSPAPER STAFF

WELCOME BACK TO THE 2019-2020 NEWSPAPER!

LET'S START THE YEAR OFF WITH SOMETHING GREAT - IN THIS ISSUE, WE HAVE AN INTERVIEW WITH OUR NEW PRINCIPAL, SOME MEDITATION, AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!

READ THROUGH TO FIND OUT!

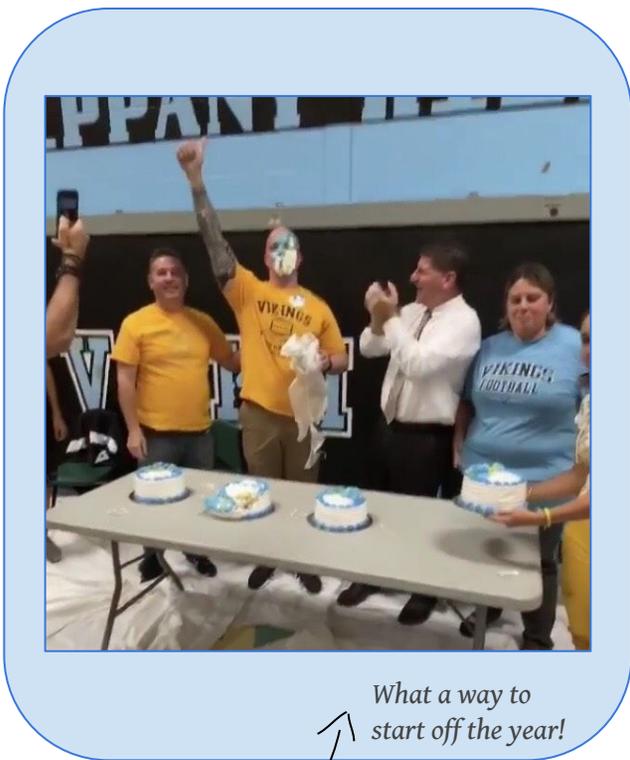
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What a way to start off the year!

on the front cover: the Fall Pep Rally!

DR. THOMPSON - INTERVIEW BY AMY YANG

New school year, new principal! Ever wondered about some basic facts and questions about your own principal? Huge thanks to Dr. Thompson for agreeing to this interview and sharing some interesting and fun facts about himself!

Why did you want to become a principal?

As a vice principal, you start to develop and grow and you get to a point where you want a bigger challenge. Given the school I was at, it was a great community; it was a community I grew up in, so there weren't many schools I was willing to leave for, but when I did my research and went through the interview process, I knew this school was a school I really wanted to become part of.

What do you think of our school so far?

I think the student involvement and how connected the students are to the community and the school is amazing. Seeing the Senior-Freshman Fun Night and watching the seniors help out, I was just thinking how connected the freshmen would feel after going through a fun evening with the seniors and all the activities - laughing, running through the halls, things like that. Honestly, I think the programs we have here to help students stay connected with the community is huge. Also, when I went to my first football game and seeing the turnout there with everyone supporting the accomplishment of all our students and their talent. Then there's the chorus room and the talent that's there as well. There's truly a lot of talented students. It's a smaller school than my last school; my last school was about 3,000 students, and I had a grade level, about 750. I think this school is the perfect size - it's not too big and not too small. And because of that, I think that the connection and belonging here is one of its greatest attributes.

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What are some of your goals for our school?

Personally, I don't like it when administrators come in and they have a preconceived agenda or something that they did in one place, because even if it worked once, it doesn't mean that it will fit in this context. I'm coming in as a learner and I just ask a lot of questions to try and understand the culture and ways around the school. I've highlighted some bright spots, and I'm also hoping to have some Principal Forums where students can sit down and have focus groups to tell me about their experience and just listen during the superintendent forums. I think I would like to follow Dr. Sargent's example of making sure that there is a student voice and let that information guide me into the next step.

How would your principal describe you when you were a student?

When I was a student, I would have to say that I was probably outgoing with a sense of humor. I think I'm in the job that I'm in because there were a lot of adults that could help guide me along the way. So I think the reason why I wanted to get into education was because I had a lot of coaches and a lot of adults that really helped shape who I am, and I saw it as a worthwhile occupation. I would say that I probably really needed the assistance of a lot of adults to get me where I am, and I would just like to pay that forward.

What is one of your hidden talents?

I can juggle a little bit... I haven't done it in a while though. I did it with my kids once and we kinda just taught ourselves how to juggle!

What is your favorite movie?

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, The Godfather, and The Shawshank Redemption are the top three. I don't know if I can really choose one.

How long would you survive a zombie apocalypse? Why?

I don't know... I can be resourceful? I can battle, but I don't know how long I would last. I guess it would depend on the circumstances and how surrounded I was.

PHHS RUNNER'S WORLD: 5TH EDITION BY WASAY NOOR

With the bells ringing every 56 minutes now rather than 44 and EVERYONE having a lunch, this monstrosity of a reality is nothing other than the 2019-2020 school year!! And with that, I welcome any and all readers back to what is about to be another GREAT year here at Parsippany Hills High School! I would personally like to say that I am more than excited to see what pathways this year opens up for each and every single one of us and what adventures we embark on together! However, putting aside everything else, let us get to the epicenter of this thrilled attitude and talk about what really matters: the thought of another action-packed eight months of RUNNING!

For anyone new to the infamous "Runner's World" series, let me begin with some history. Starting off with its first edition last year, the "PHHS Runner's World" series is a collection of newspaper articles published throughout the year in our very own "PHHS Voyager" and is here to do something often times neglected, yet extraordinarily crucial: advertise and commentate on the running life here at PHHS. From unbelievable freshman dominating on the treacherous terrains of Greystone Park during the Cross Country season, to personal and school records being set on our NEW AND IMPROVED black and blue outdoor track, this year is in store for an immeasurable amount of achievements and news coverage!

Being a few weeks into the school year, we are also a few weeks into the Cross Country Season. The PHHS boys and girls XC teams have competed at four meets so far, with the next one being the NJAC Week 3 Conference Meet on September 23rd at Greystone Park! In summary, PHHS XC has competed in two invitations (Roxbury and Bernie Magee) and Week 1 and 2 of their NJAC Conferences Meet Schedule. This edition will be nothing more than a recap, detailing of each one of these past meets.

The Roxbury Invitation was the first official meet of the 2019 Cross Country season for most of Northern New Jersey. With more than fifty schools being present, the races were more than simply extreme, however, Par Hills did not disappoint. Sophomore Sohum Gaitonde came in blazing

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with a 3 minute personal record, leading the boys in the "Fastest 4" race with a 17:28 5K time! Followed by Junior Arnold Nguyen at 17:44 and Senior Captain Wasay Noor at 18:38, the boys started off the season right where they wanted to! With various freshman and JV runners competing that day as well, this meet was split into many categories (Fastest 4, Future 4, JV, and Freshman) in order to maximize the number of athletes that were properly competing at their respective levels. For the Freshman boys (running a shorter race of 1.3 Miles), Freshman Justin Hoffman led PHHS, running a time of 9:41, followed by Yash Patel at 10:07 as well as, Spark Yu, Murad Alim, Zach Leander, and Sebastian Stone all under 10:35! Switching over to the girls team, it is an understatement to say that Freshman Amanda Hoffman made some noise as she debuted her high school XC running talents at the meet! Placing 5th overall with a time of 9:58, this is only the beginning of Amand's incredible high school career - and she already snagged a medal! For the 5K, Junior Chloe Vergel de Dios led the girls running a 23:34, with Senior Captain Emily Moutis being not far behind at 23:44! Overall being a very successful meet, this first Invitational might have resulted in just 1 medal for Amanda, but the way Sohum and Amanda lead the boys and girls illustrated undoubtedly that PHHS is going to be a team to be reckoned with this year!

Moving along to the NJAC Week 1 and Week 2 meets, Freshman Amanda Hoffman was able to lead the girls to a VICTORY over Montville running a 21:23 5K! Similarly, Sophomore Sohum lead the boys with an 18:43, and although they were unfortunately not able to secure any wins over the other two teams, the close races were nothing to dwell over for too long. This being the first meet at Greystone Park (the main course for most of PHHS XC meets) for our runners, it was understandably witnessed that most of them ran approximately a minute slower than their 5K times at the Roxbury Invitational. Definitely shaking up team confidence and morale, it did not stop them AT ALL and they got right back to some hard hills the day after! Under the incredible direction and coaching of Coaches Michelle Perry and Justin Altschul, the Cross Country team is doing more than just grinding this year. With hopes of reaching some very elite meets, the coaches are pushing these runners harder than ever, and the results are bound to make some wild appearances!

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Week 2 was a drastic improvement, with most running running seasonal bests already! Although neither boys nor girls were able to win over the other two teams this week, the competition was, in fact, a lot fiercer, running with schools such as Mendham and Randolph. Regardless, this meet was seen as simply one meet in a season of many. Not affecting the effort these runners put into this sport at all, they are more anxious than ever to get those Greystone 5k times down at the Week 3 and the NJAC Championship meets!

Finally, at the Bernie Magee Invitational, Amanda Hoffman, Audrey Meng, Chloe Vergel de Dios, and Emily Moutis led each grade respectively, and Amanda earned a medal, placing 8th in the Freshman girls race overall! In terms of boys, Justin Hoffman, Sohum Gaitonde, Arnold Nguyen, and Wasay Noor led their grades respectively, and with Sohum finishing 24th, had a boy bring home a medal as well! Two medals and plenty of personal records - this was the team's third encounter with Greystone Park, and most definitely illustrated steady progression.

All in all, the Parsippany Hills XC team has had a rocky, yet amazing start of the season! Although it is undeniable that Greystone Park hit everyone a bit hard, resilience is EXTREMELY visible in every runner, and the fact that commitment levels will never decrease is a sign that the spirit of XC will never die. Coach Perry and Coach Altschul have high hopes for this year, and count on the Senior Captains (Wasay Noor, Darshil Shah, Henry Chen, Shiv Desai, Aman Sinojia, Emily Moutis, Alysha Bailey, Amy Yang, Carolyn Modin, and Preya Singh) to take the XC teams to places they have never gone before. With NJAC Championships, County Championships, State Sectionals, and more meets at locations ranging from Darlington Park to Manhattan, NY, coming up, this season is FAR from over. Additionally, having a Freshman class that is more involved and dedicated to the sport of running than one in a VERY long time, there is great hope for the future of PHHS XC!

As always, stay tuned with the most recent running news and be sure to get as much info as possible on the runners on our team! From Freshman leading the Varsity races and sprinters joining XC, to PHHS teams running all over NJ and NY, "PHHS Runner's World" can't WAIT to keep you updated!

DEPTH OF FIELD BY HYUN-JUNG KIM

Light filtered through the blinds, before melting on the floor like softened butter on warm bread. Maya was sitting on the floor, spellbound at a dusty bottle with no particular value. She could hardly be called an aspiring artist, but she was like her father when she wanted to take a decent picture. The camera hung around her neck with its lenses bowed to the ground, almost lonely. She held up her camera, then having second thoughts, she sighed as she placed it on the table.

Light was beautiful, especially when it reflected through the bottle, but Maya knew that it was a fairly common picture. If there was one thing she hated more than a blurry focus, it was a cliché picture. Every person had a different life and it made no sense of taking a repetitive picture when there should be different experiences. Maya loved photography because it showed the perspectives, because just by looking at the angle or the subject, the mentality of the photographer could be revealed.

Sighing, she grabbed her jacket before she hesitated. Outside scenery could be beautiful when taken correctly, but upon seeing her camera, her resolve crumbled and she just stepped out of the door, her camera now in hand.

The weather was crisp with not a cloud in sight, the blue almost infectious in its pleasurable mood. The leaves were slowly sinking into their sleep of orange and brown, but many photographers took advantage of the fall leaves. A slight breeze made her shove her hands into her pockets. The park was close to her neighborhood, and although it was hardly a Botanical Garden, there was a familiarity in the rusted swings and the dirt ridden slides. As she approached, Maya stopped as she saw the spray paint on the concrete. It was just typical graffiti, with random initials sprayed on it with scribbles that were trying pathetically to be artistic. Maya didn't just stand there, but walked closer to that one section

where the blue and yellows clashed painfully.

Maya paid no attention to the spelling but squatted down. Random initials— random initials that meant a random person in the neighborhood or perhaps a tourist who had nowhere to go. It could be an alien, a girl, a boy, or a person who was trying to say that him or her mattered; that the world shouldn't take them for granted. It could have been a warning for the zombie apocalypse for all she cared. The possibilities were endless in that square of concrete.

Maya could feel her brow knit in concentration as she slipped the camera off her neck and positioned the lense. Her thumb pressed the button, and with a flash, the photo was taken.

THE POWER OF MEDITATION BY MEEKA VARDI

As human beings, we live quite hectic lives. Our schedules are filled with meetings, work, school, or appointments and it may seem daunting at times. All of this can lead to anxiety and with the aforementioned busy schedule it can be incredibly daunting to implement self-care into one's daily routine. One form of self-care that is extremely beneficial is meditation.

Not only does meditation improve your physical well being, but your mental well being as well. Allow me to begin with the former. Meditation lowers your blood pressure, increases your circulation, brings more blood to the prefrontal cortex, and enhances your executive function, working memory, concentration, and visuospatial processing. In addition, it helps you hold images longer, process information better, as well as allow for contemplation, intuition, and creativity to thrive. In a 7-year study at MIT with the Dalai Lama and several of his monks, it was

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established that not only could *meditators* hold images longer, have more blood sent to the prefrontal cortex and have their memory and cognitive function increased, but also *non-meditators* who were instructed to meditate over several months saw the same benefits.

Mentally speaking, meditation calms the amygdala where our fight or flight and emotions live and strengthens impulse control, which allows you to self-manage stress, pain, depression, and drug and alcohol issues. Overall, meditation reduces anxiety and have therefore been implemented in the workplace and some schools. Non-profit meditation programs across the world have come to schools in the past in order to give a seminar on meditation and inform people of its benefits.

From a personal perspective, meditation has completely changed my life. I went from having mood swings and being easily irritable to becoming more easy-going and laid back. Yes, beginning to meditate is difficult and yes, it does take some time to get used to but the outcome is incredible. Growing up with my father being a Buddhist Priest, all I heard was “Meditate, meditate, meditate” and I never gave it a second thought, for I thought it was ridiculous. Yet the moment I began, I could feel all of my worries dissipate. I highly recommend meditation for anyone, even if you feel as though you are not stressed out, and even if it is just for ten minutes every day. If you think this is all absurd, I would like to know why. I would like to hear your input.



PICTURES

From: Camp Doughboy at Governor's Island



big thanks to Emma Pierce for sharing these photos!



Mrs. Pizza at the pep rally!

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