

# THE BAY CURRENT

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## An American Tale: Students Find a New Home at Bay Academy

by Alan Kofman, with additional translation by Anastasia Smelnitsky

In both Russia and Ukraine, an ongoing war is shattering the stability of families and splintering cultures which have been built through decades of national peace. Innocent people have been driven from their homes with many relocating to our Brooklyn communities. According to the Operational Data Patrol statistics, roughly eight million Ukrainian people have been forced out of their homes and scattered all over the world as refugees, with almost 22,000 Russians attempting to enter the US, many of whom are children our own age. It is, of course, our top priority to comfortably host these families. But it is also necessary, even before taking further steps to accommodate these brave students, to acknowledge the difficulty they are experiencing. The Bay Current has interviewed six students who come from not only Ukraine but Russia as well, their responses helping to shed light on what they undergo, and to continue sewing back the rift this war has created.

Hailing from Moscow, Russia, Max Evdokimov explained how his schooling is different here in the U.S. "I came because of the war... My father came with me, as well as my mom and little brother." Max commented upon the rigidness and austerity of his previous school. It was larger than Bay Academy, he said, yet still taking up only four floors. "I truly like this school. Here there is good food, unlike that in Moscow. The teachers are all kind and good. In my last school, everyone was strict and the kids were rather crazy and unnerved." Yet, what he enjoys most about being a student at Bay Academy is the organization of education and the freedom everyone is entitled to.

Kirill Shtykov comes from Belarus. His remarks surprisingly correlate with that of Max's, saying that he most loves the teachers, food, and students. "I like it more at Bay," he declared, "But I left all my friends behind. We still keep in touch, though, through Whatsapp." His interests have also not changed, despite all the recent occurrences. In Russia, his favorite subject was math, and it remains so. He came with his "...cat, mother, and father." But just like Max, his journey came at the cost of long-kept relationships that he hopes to regain once more.

The bombings and recent violence in Ukraine have also driven many to the halls of Bay Academy. Slava Selesko, for one, migrated to America, abandoning his ancestral home, because of nearby danger. "We had a big house, but the

war drove us here. We had a three-story house, but a rocket blew right next to our house. My room got almost completely demolished. But my dad was unable to come because the country needed him."

Anastasiya Grechanyok's family came to New York seeking protection, just in case. She commented, "At first it was hard, but it's getting easier. I am getting better and better at English. When I came, I knew some English, but I'm considerably better now. I understand everything perfectly fine. I like some of the teachers here, and the pace at which I am taught is adaptable."

Yelizaveta Kiashko, from Ivano-Frankivsk in Ukraine, was compelled to move to New York. She comes from a wholly different country and city than Max and Kirill, but their ideals are very much the same. They refuse to let their lives be torn by hardship and instead try to work to adjust to a new land with a foreign tongue, new friends, and with a new life. Yelyavesta said, "At first, my experiences were hard here, but everything is slowly settling down. Bit by bit, I am learning more English. I love Manhattan, I love the crowds, and the city. It's all different." Albina Khabieva agrees that at first, "...especially in fifth grade..." it was hard, but everyone is adjusting.

To put it in the words of Yevhenia Kovalchuk, "I never experienced this kind of schooling before. I feel like it gives you a lot of freedom and support. I can find friends and harvest my talents much easier." But this bright look upon the future is not easy to maintain. Yevhenia also stated, "I really miss Ukraine. At night, in my dreams, I get visions of Ukraine and my streets, and my home. My dad had to stay in Ukraine and fight."

The war has undeniably caused families to be taken from their homes and made to dwell in a lifestyle we have had years to get accustomed to. It is certainly difficult for our new students to battle a sense of overwhelming nostalgia and longing in order to attain an optimistic gaze on what is to come. As we have seen relentlessly through the courage of these students, the world will refuse to succumb. Although these days may bring on difficulty, the people of the world will embrace the challenge they have been entrusted with, and Bay Academy will never cease to provide whatever help or accommodation it can to those in need.

### Living In Silence

by Abigail Estrin

Bright lights, within them is my shadow. People speak to me, I feel like a one way radio. I can hear. Can't understand. Can't respond.

Loud voices inside, quiet on the outside.

I saved my family, we moved to America for a better life, but I could hardly say hello.

Living in silence is hard which makes finding a job harder. I watch people speak, argue, and make fun of me. I can't speak, can't understand, can't argue or respond.

I can't live in silence! Just last month I couldn't stop talking in my motherland, former USSR, But this month I can't communicate. No matter how hard I try.

They took all we owned in return for our hopes of freedom in America.

I can't seem to understand, how did someone so bright and talkative turn into someone so silent, someone who keeps their voice hidden so snug underneath their blanket of feelings.

After around a year I finally uncovered my blanket. I showed people my true self. All I needed to do was look beyond my shadow and see the bright lights hidden so deeply inside. I slowly started to realize what life is really about. Family, friends, love and hope. I feel like a new person, someone who understands, talks and communicate with others. Someone who isn't shy and someone who doesn't keep their thoughts and opinions to themselves.

Thinking back, I thought hope was lost. But now, thirty seven years later, I wouldn't have it any other way. I have my US education, love the English Language all while my whole family along with all of my friends are by my side in America.

My life is better than I ever thought it would be.

Dedicated to my great grandma

## Bay Talents Perform Winter Shows



The Bay Academy Winds, Strings, Vocal and Dance Talents performed at the Winter Concert and Nutcracker, along with a few surprise staff performances.



The Winter Concert was performed under the orchestration of Ms. Comas and Mr. Vernikov, while the dancers were directed by Ms. Stanzone.



## Students Learn About Social and Emotional Health

by Matthew Bragarnik and Alex Aleynikov

SEL or Social Emotional Learning, is a tool that helps kids understand their emotions. You've probably noticed Ms. Colca and Ms. Carlino coming into classrooms and talking to your class. According to Ms. Colca, "SEL allows students to feel that all emotions are normal and allows them to be more mindful of their peers' emotions," with her classes teaching kids about self respect and respect for others. "In order for SEL to work, students must apply the lessons to day to day life." SEL helps students "to handle their emotions and address situations in a more positive manner." The students that actually apply SEL to their day-to-day life will mostly be calm and organized. SEL helps so many students with everyday tasks and everyday emotions, and as long as SEL continues in the Bay Academy, many students will be able to control their behavior and the way they handle other students' emotions. SEL topics that were also discussed were self esteem, "What would you do?" scenarios, consequences, gratitude, and goals. All these topics teach kids to be better people and have better responses to situations.

# To Be Honest... TikTok, TikTok...Boom?

Opinions are the columnists' own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Bay Current or the Bay Academy.

by Alan Kofman

One of the most contentious and controversial topics that amble through the hallways of middle schools nationally is TikTok. TikTok is the prevalent social media platform owned by the Chinese company ByteDance. A global count of TikTok usage determined that the app hosts over 1 billion users. It was released in 2016, and since that year has become so prevalent that it resonates, in one way or another, in the life of every single US citizen. Yet as the number of TikTok fans enlarged, so did suspicion concerning the app. A serious question has now arisen: should TikTok be banned in the US? It is my personal opinion that a national ban on TikTok is rather unnecessary. Instead, the platform should be subjected to extensive reform to eradicate the ample drawbacks. There are several reasons, multiple arguments, and tens of ideas, but only two sides.

However, it is often very difficult to ignore the benefits the app brings, such as spreading awareness of social rights and justice movements and being a platform that allows you to express your individuality and creativity. Reach3 Insights, a research consultancy, conducted many surveys to investigate the alleged advantages of TikTok. The results were astonishing. 75% of the people surveyed, all of whom were TikTok users, said TikTok has aided them in learning more about politics and social justice as a whole. Social activism posts influenced 54% to increase physical interactions with friends and families. 26% even attended nonviolent protests that were for increasing multicultural peace and other types of social justice movements. A publication from the Digital Commons, quoted directly, "TikTok is not only a medium for discussion of popular culture topics but is also being utilized for social justice activism in the wake of a tumultuous year with major events..." Another argument against banning TikTok utilizes the fact that there is a countless quantity of monthly and yearly TikTok users. As a result, positive awareness concerning national and international issues can spread like wildfire. Another general survey from the US, from the platform Study, even found that 25% of people who own TikTok employ it for educational purposes. 69% of those users have even said it actually helps them with their homework and assignments.

But not all views of this app are so positive. Many technological experts have deemed TikTok to be a threat to national security that also offers an abundance of misleading information. According to the Stanford School of Public Policy, "There's very little regulation, companies collect tons of data all the time, whether they're foreign companies or US companies." Both the Cyber Threat Alliance and the US National Security Council affirm that TikTok actually has the potential to "surreptitiously turn on the microphone or the camera of the device without the user being even aware." But most alarming of all is that all this data and information TikTok could access, such as our contact list, IP address, microphone, and camera, will all be in the hands of a foreign country's government. An FBI director, Chris Wray, declared that the risks of TikTok extend to "the possibility that the Chinese government could use TikTok to control data collection on millions of users or control the recommendation algorithm, which could be used for influence operations." But this substantial dilemma already exists. Last December, TikTok was improperly used to spy on three Forbes journalists that were investigating the app. The U.S. Representative McMorris Rodgers even tweeted, "TikTok has placed the safety and privacy of Americans in jeopardy. They have gone on record numerous times claiming that they do not share American data with China. We know that is a lie, and we now know the list has grown to include U.S. journalists." Although sources do show how TikTok can spread awareness, it also can be an origin for misinformation and disinformation that will begin to plague the site. As an example, News Guard analysts shockingly unearthed that when a new TikTok user searched the Ukrainian War, the top 20 results were almost all false.

To conclude, there are undeniable benefits of TikTok. This platform can not only bring light to social justice movements all across the world, lead to education inclines in students, but also allow you to freely speak your mind and be innovative. But we cannot ignore the negatives. Each and every TikTok user may be at risk. Their valued and private information could easily be accessed through this app and given to the governments of foreign countries. TikTok additionally is rampant with false news that can induce political polarization and hatred, creating a rift in our country. Therefore, I believe that both sides cannot be ignored. We cannot ban TikTok because of its promise and advantages, yet our government must implement huge reform and begin effectively regulating TikTok, so we can safely use the app without exposure to the negatives of TikTok. At this point, social media is a huge constituent of our society. We should not take away such a part of our lives, but until TikTok is under US control, we may all be at risk.

## BAY BACK WHEN When Rabbits Ruled



by Shifa Adeel

How Coney Island got its name remains a mystery, with many theories and many explanations throughout history.

One theory states that the island was once inhabited by the Konoh, or Bear tribe, a name that was eventually changed to become "Coney." Another theory traces the name to the arrival of Henry Hudson in New York Harbor in 1609. In this account, Hudson's right-hand man, John Coleman, was killed by Indians, leading to the name Coleman's Island in his honor.

There is also considerable evidence, that the name Coney Island came into use in the first half of the 19th century, after a ferry service was instituted to carry passengers across Coney Island Creek, at the time a waterway separating the island from mainland Brooklyn. According to an article published in the "Sligo Champion," an Irish captain named Peter O'Connor sailed the schooner Arethusa between New York and Ireland in the late 1700s, and named Coney Island after an island that lay a mere mile from his home in Sligo.

Perhaps the cutest theory of how its name came to be is that Coney Island stands for Rabbit Island. Long ago in the year 1624, the Dutch settled in Manhattan. Soon after that, they colonized Coney Island, and due to the large population of rabbits, the Dutch named the place "Coney Island", as the Dutch word for rabbit is "konijn", pronounced "Coney".

Of course, the rabbits no longer run rampant, with the island developed into a resort area in the 1800s with glamorous hotels and even posher vacationers. And today, "America's Playground" is a destination for its wide beaches, Luna Park, the annual Mermaid Parade and the home of the Brooklyn Cyclones. But we like to think back to an earlier time when rabbits ruled the land.

## Bay Academy Shows Respect For All



Top left: Students show off their heritage with flags and traditional clothing.

Top right: Teachers wear rainbows for tolerance.

Bottom left: Cheerleaders perform at an anti-bullying assembly.

Bottom right: Drama talent students perform original skits to demonstrate the importance of kindness.

by Angelina Kobryn

In order to remind and inspire students to see "the beauty in our differences," Bay Academy once again celebrated Respect for All Week. Through events and activities, Bay encouraged the school community to value diversity and stop bullying, intimidation, and harassment while upholding an inclusive school environment. Over the course of the week, students participated in a number of fun theme days including:

Heritage Day! Students and staff wore clothing to reflect their heritage in order to celebrate their culture and the diversity of their beliefs and traditions.

Have a Heart day! Staff and students wore red to express their self-love and compassion for others.

Diversity Day! Pupils and faculty members wore rainbow or tie-dye, and were encouraged to contribute a positive message to Bay Academy's giant LOVE wall. Stomp out Bullying Day! Learners wore blue in solidarity for National Stomp out Bullying Day. The goal of bullying prevention is to decrease the prevalence of bullying and promote a safe, warm environment.

Superhero Day! Superhero-themed attire was encouraged for both students and staff on this day. "HERO" stands for Help, Everyone, Respect, Others in this event.

Respect means accepting someone for who they are, even if they are different from you. It's a lesson to remember all year long!

Scan the QR code to connect to Bay Academy's website. Find dates, news and events happening now!



# Cooking Up Creativity

by Elissa Dasdemir

What's better after a long day of school than a tasty snack? For Bay Academy students, it is where they get to try new skills and have fun.

NIA is hosting cooking with Mr. Ian. Cooking teaches students how to eat healthily and try new foods. Mr. Ian's favorite dish is the eggplant parmigiana. In cooking class, they make chocolate chip cookies, crumble cakes, pizzas, custom-made cookies for Halloween, butter cookies, and cinnamon rolls.

Mr. Ian used to own a bagel store and then started catering to large groups of people. After leaving the bagel business, he started working at a local bistro in Long Island, working all their daily specials.

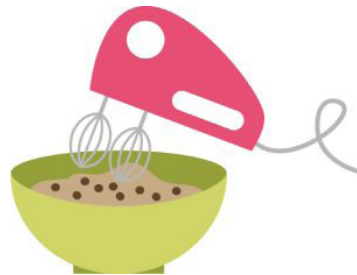
To be able to be a successful cook you have to be organized, have knife skills, and you have to familiarize with the materials. You have to be able to do this in order to be able to cook safely. Mr. Ian has learned that "You can make something taste good with an ingredient that might not taste good by itself." Cooking teaches kids to try new things and get creative.

If you want to join cooking class, you can fill out the paper for NIA clubs and join. Cooking might teach you to love a food you've never even tried before and to use ingredients in a brand new way. Below are two of Mr. Ian's classic recipes if you want to give cooking a try!

## Butter Cookies

### Ingredients

**1/2 cup unsalted butter**  
**3/4 cup granulated sugar**  
**1/4 teaspoon salt**  
**1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract**  
**1 large egg yolk**  
**2 cups all purpose flour**



### Instructions:

Combine the butter, sugar, salt and vanilla together and mix until smooth and creamy.  
 Mix in the egg yolk until well incorporated, scraping down the sides of the bowl.  
 Add the flour and mix.  
 Scrape onto a lightly floured surface and knead a few times.  
 Turn onto a sheet and roll into a log. Wrap and refrigerate it for a few hours.  
 Preheat the oven to 325 degrees.  
 Line your baking sheet with parchment paper.  
 Cut the dough into slices about 1/8" thick and place them on the baking sheet.  
 Bake them until just beginning to turn golden around the edges, about 16-18 minutes.

## Teriyaki Chicken

### Ingredients

**2 pounds of boneless chicken (cut into cubes)**  
**2 tablespoons sesame oil or vegetable oil**  
**1/2 cup soy sauce**  
**2 cups water**  
**1 teaspoon ground ginger**  
**2 garlic cloves (minced)**  
**1/2 cup brown sugar**  
**2-4 tablespoons honey**  
**1/4 cup cornstarch**  
**1/2 cup cold water**  
**Sesame seeds and chopped scallions for garnish**



### Instructions:

Cut the chicken into cubes.  
 In a large skillet or frying pan, heat the oil. Add the chicken cubes and cook for about four minutes on each side, or until the chicken is cooked through.  
 In a medium sized saucepan on medium heat, mix the soy sauce, 2 cups of water, ginger, minced garlic, brown sugar, and honey. Whisk until well blended and heat until it starts to boil, then reduce to low.  
 In a separate bowl stir together the cornstarch and 1/2 cup of cold water until the cornstarch dissolves.  
 Add it to the sauce and stir it until the sauce thickens. If the sauce is too thick add a little more water.  
 Pour the sauce over the chicken in the skillet or frying pan and cook it on low for a few minutes.  
 Serve over rice, stir fried vegetables, or lo-mein and sprinkle with sesame seeds and chopped scallions. You can garnish with steamed broccoli and diced red pepper.

# Teachers' Pets

Meet some of our furriest (and scaliest) friends!

## PEANUT



"She is a princess and diva. She loves to sleep on my clothes." - Ms. Rae

## YOSHI



"Ms. Poon named him." - Dr. Jean Louis

## COCONUT



"His middle name is Bocelli." - Ms. Cerbone

## TEDDY



"Teddy has a conceptual understanding of 'no' which is in frequent conflict with his self-interest." - Ms. Samuelson

## LUCY



"Lucy scoffs at many foods but regularly eats trash!" - Ms. Raudabaugh

## SANDY & ACE



"Sandy is afraid of the vacuum and Ace loves to snuggle." - Mr. Caiati

## TYRION



"Tyrion loves lettuce and American cheese. He is named after Tyrion Lannister from Game of Thrones." - Ms. Stein

## SADIE



"Sadie has a birthday the day after Valentine's Day!" - Ms. Dunbar

## GOJI & ZOOKY



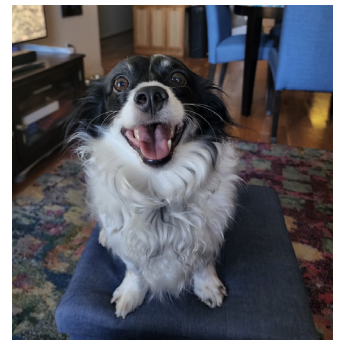
"Goji and Zooky are frenemies." - Ms. McGrath

## CANNOLI



"Cannoli has a perfectly shaped heart on her fur. She is a labradoodle." - Ms. Giambra

## CHICO



"Chico is a rescue superdog who has caught his ball during catch a whopping 73 times in a row without missing!" - Ms. Kadansky

## HANS (POMERANIAN) CINDER ELLA (CAT) DIOR (GECKO)



"In my family we typically like to name our pets after Disney characters!" - Ms. Stromnes

## CAULFIELD



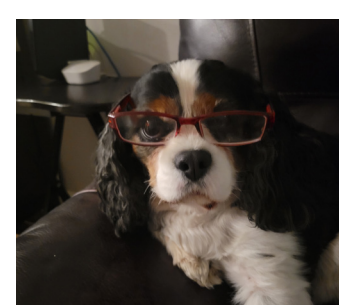
"He is a tripod cat (three legs)." - Mr. Montalvo and Ms. Funk

## DONGGU

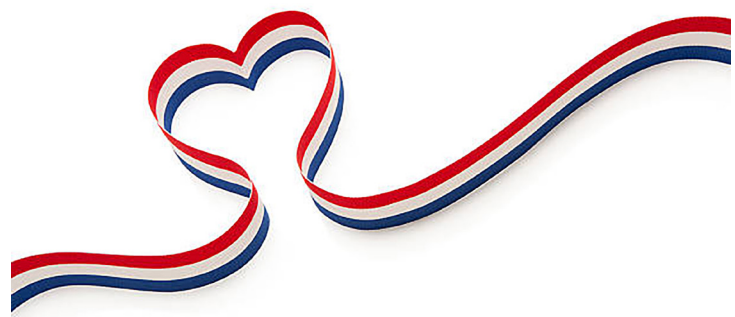


"He dislikes attention from other dogs, but gets upset if they ignore him." - Ms. Poon

## ATTICUS



"We named our Cavalier King Charles after my favorite and famous literary character, Mr. Atticus Finch, from the novel To Kill a Mockingbird. Atticus loves to cuddle every chance he gets, he's very loving, gentle and graceful." - Ms. Pernicone



# Love, Loss, and the New York Rangers

by Mrs. Samuelson, Editor

For a woman who was likely one of the biggest hockey fans on the planet, Nicole Kasbar also carried a laughable amount of ire.

“Generally, the hatred of the opposing players was always the best,” remembers Mr. O’Neill. “Especially Sydney Crosby (I think we both hated that crybaby with the fire of a thousand suns). And of course Martin Brodeur. And pretty much every member of the Flyers, Devils, Penguins, Capitals and Islanders.”

When the game was particularly fierce, Ms. Kasbar would return to school the next day with some telltale signs. “You always knew that she was at the game the night before when she would come to work with a scratchy voice, and if the game was really intense, no voice at all,” said Mr. Goldfarb. But despite the occasional heartache, nothing could keep Ms. Kasbar from her beloved New York Rangers. Not the buzzer-beating losses, not the agonizing trades, not even Sydney Crosby. Because when you love something deeply, the anguish defines the love. Your high is the absolute value of your low.

The loss of Ms. Kasbar is so painful because we adored her. It would be an impossible task to find a staff member or student who didn’t have a personal story of her kindness and generosity. We laughed with her, we learned from her, we relied on her. For many of us, her loss feels gaping.

So how do we process and even move on from loss in our lives? According to clinical social worker Keegan Baker, “There’s no right or wrong way for people to grieve. Some people will want to talk about it constantly. Others won’t want to talk about it at all. Kids may or may not have dealt with grief or loss in their own life. Others might feel like experts.”

“Grief is a natural response to loss,” says Bay Academy guidance counselor Mrs. Colca. “It’s the emotional suffering you feel when something or someone you love is taken away.” And for how long you’ll take to heal, it’s hard to say. “There is no timeline for how long grief lasts, or how you should feel after a particular time,” adds Mrs. Colca. “After 12 months it may still feel as if everything happened yesterday, or it may feel like it all happened a lifetime ago.” “Take these feelings as they come,” suggests Bay Academy guidance counselor Mr. Caiati, “and be patient with them and yourself.”

Ms. Kasbar’s legacy weaves through our school in a thousand ways. She was your gym teacher, she was your orientation teacher, she was the first person who smiled at you as a brand new sixth grader. If you’re a member of Dance Talent, you knew her even more closely, spending hours together in her classroom. For many adults at Bay, she was not just a model coworker but a steadfast friend, some for two decades or even longer. And so your feelings of loss will come expectedly, when you hear the opening bars of the Nutcracker Suite. Or unexpectedly, when you pick up your phone to text her over the latest hockey news and then realize you can’t. “[Grief] comes in waves,” says Mr. Baker. You might feel like you’ve already processed it but it might come up the first time there’s an event in the school or around a holiday.”

And while legacy can be painful, those footprints are a gift to us. Ms. Kasbar taught us to dance. She taught us to be a fan. She taught us to be patient, kind, passionate and generous. And those are qualities, if we’re fortunate, that will stay with us. So while we hurt to remember, we are also lucky to have been a recipient of these gifts.

In the early 1980’s Sesame Street lost Mr. Hooper, one of its original and dearest cast members. The characters on the show mourned alongside the actors in real life, while Sesame Street took on the important job of explaining this loss to its audience of young children.

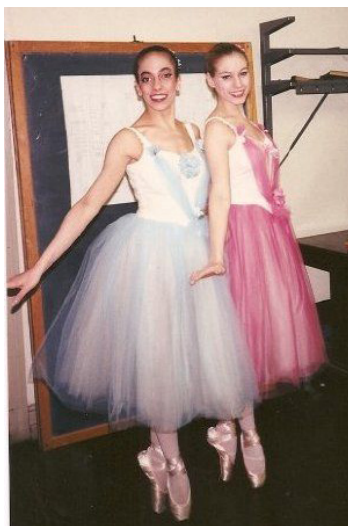
Bob McGrath, who played a music teacher on the show, comforted Big Bird after Big Bird expressed his sadness that things wouldn’t be the same without Mr. Hooper.

“You’re right, Big Bird. It’ll never be the same around here without [Mr. Hooper],” said McGrath through his own real tears. “But you know something? We can all be very happy that we had a chance to be with him and to know him and to love him a lot when he was here.”

We will never be the same at Bay Academy without Nicole Kasbar, just as in the microfibre of the universe, the New York Rangers will never be the same without their number one fan. But we can all be very happy that we had the chance to be with her and to know her and to love her a lot when she was here.



“In memory of a dear friend. Nicole, your positive energy and bright smile will forever be remembered and treasured. ‘Because I knew you, I have been changed for good.’ - Glinda”  
-Ms. Vero-Kipp



“Ms. Kasbar inspired me to dance and taught me how to choreograph dances. If it wasn’t for her, I never would have been a dance major in high school. I’m a freshman in college and still dancing.”  
- Kayla Stromnes

“I remember when I first saw her students perform - I loved it. After that I would always ask her if she could transform me into a ballerina... that became our running joke. She always replied with a smile - “the next show Defreitas I won’t forget you.” - Ms. Defreitas

“I’ll always remember one year the Rangers were in the playoffs (may have been the Conference Finals or even the year they went to the Stanley Cup) and she wasn’t happy that they had a home game the same night as her dance show but instead of asking for it to be rescheduled she gave up her tickets (since she was a season ticket holder for so many years) in order to make sure the show went off. And at the end of the show as the students did their curtain call, she had some of them walk out with a Rangers banner and the entire audience started chanting “Let’s Go Rangers!” Then she briefly met with any alumni or families that came to the show (even though she was dying to get home to watch the game).” - Mr. O’Neill



“Nicole Kasbar is a testament to the indomitable human spirit. Despite surmounting health issues in the wake of the pandemic, she always greeted people with a smile and she never complained. I will miss her terribly as a friend and confidant. I still haven’t fully realized that she’s gone because she was always so present. I can still hear her beautifully loud laugh echoing from the gym. Bay Academy didn’t just lose an exceptional teacher but a tremendously kind and compassionate soul.” - Ms. Savarese



“Ms. Kasbar’s Ranger fandom was second to none. She was a season ticket holder for several years before she got sick and attended every home game. She never sold her tickets. She has watched every game since I have known her. If there was something that she had to do on game night, she would tape the game and watch it later that evening. At her funeral, most of the people in attendance wore Rangers jerseys in her honor. She also wore a Rangers jersey in her casket. She knew every player’s statistics, strengths, and weaknesses. She is the ultimate Ranger fan.” - Mr. Bommarito

The Nutcracker ballet is a yearly winter tradition at the Bay Academy. This performance would have been Nicole Kasbar's last production with her beloved Dance Talent students. Unfortunately, this showing on February 2nd went on without her. The ballet that evening opened under the new direction of Ms. Stanzione, to a large audience that included thirty members of Ms. Kasbar's family and friends. The following address was delivered that evening by our principal, Ms. Timo.

Good Evening,

Welcome to our annual performance of The Nutcracker. This rendition has been a part of the Bay Academy for many years. The inspiration behind this performance was from our very own talented Nicole Kasbar. She wanted to bring this classical piece to our students and stage. Her dream was to allow the many talents of our students to shine. This was who she was. She had this uncanny ability to see the best in everyone. Many times I would ask her why the student who couldn't even complete a fouette turn was front and center and invariably her response was always the same, every dancer needs a chance to shine. How lucky were her students, how lucky was I...

I am humbled by the outpouring of love and support. I'd like to thank Nicole's family and friends who are with us tonight for sharing her with us all these years. Nicole loved all of you fiercely and she balanced that love equally with all of you and all her students. She was truly one of a kind. I can not imagine the pain you are all suffering but please know that we are here to support you and bring you some semblance of peace by honoring her memory for as long as I remain the principal of this school. Nicole will remain in our hearts and minds and her name will be spoken every day. We all know that Nicole hated the spotlight but as I often told her, too bad, you deserve it.

I'd like to thank Ms. Stanzione who graciously agreed to help Nicole fulfill her promise to let the show go on. From her hospital bed she would send me texts that she didn't want to disappoint her dancers so we planned to ask Ms. Stanzione to assist and she wholeheartedly agreed.

Nicole touched the lives of so many people. She was well respected by all and I am proud to say that so many of her former students remained in her life. I used to joke with her that she had a cult following of alumni. She would just laugh it off in her typical Nicole style.

One of my teachers reminded me that today was Optimist Day. She wrote and said, "What better day to celebrate our beloved Nicole than on Optimist Day?" Optimist Day is where we honor those who look to the future with hope, and who share their enthusiasm, skills and talent to make tomorrow brighter. She epitomized all these qualities and so so many more.

So tonight, let's not be sad. Let's celebrate all the happiness and love she gave so freely to all of us. Let's all become Rangers fans in her memory and let's strive to see the good in people. Let's be kind and giving and smile and dream. This is the best testament we can offer. Let's be hopeful and believe that heaven needed a beautiful, kind, caring, compassionate, talented dancer and he chose her to dance among the angels.

Thank you.



"I've known Ms. Kasbar for most of my teaching career. We were colleagues and then we became friends. Her laughter brightened my day. Nothing was too much to ask of Nicole. Her selflessness went beyond common courtesy. She would literally do anything for anybody at any time. She was a force to be reckoned with when it came to technology and if she didn't know how to do it, she would teach herself how by the next time you saw her. She was a great example of grace under pressure as she prepared for the dance shows. There will never be another Nicole. She was my friend and I will miss her greatly." - Ms. Goldberg



"Nicole made my son, Jack, this blanket as a surprise gift for him. She presented it to me here at school. I showed it to Ms. Timo and Ms. Timo made an announcement on the PA system saying 'Nicole Kasbar, you are an amazing person.'" - Mr. Lospinuso

"Having Nicole as a teacher was a true blessing. She helped me through the toughest of middle school times and always motivated me to want to be the best version of myself. I was lucky to have returned to Bay only to have her as my colleague, often commiserating about the height requirement changing for the infamous Rockettes. Working with her during hybrid learning was one of my favorite memories. I remember when we were talking about how she was going to structure the class I asked her if she minded me taking her class. I'll never forget her response, 'are you kidding, it'd be an honor to have you dance with me again.' She was quick to give me shout outs right along with the kids and it made me realize just how lucky these kids were to have her because her impact was long lasting. I was lucky to have her as a teacher and then turned colleague. She will be forever missed and always honored every time the dancers step onto the stage." - Ms. Stanzione



"Ms. Kasbar was such a positive force in Bay Academy. If you were having a bad day and you ran into Nicole Kasbar, she would quickly and effortlessly put your stress and worries into perspective. You'd walk away saying, 'I got this.' I will miss her raspy voice, her quick smile, her loud laugh and her abundant kindness." - Mr. Judge

"Nicole was a great friend and colleague. She was one of the most amazing people and teachers that I ever knew. Her love for dance, and education was one of a kind. She treated her dance students as if they were preparing to dance at Lincoln Center. She was able to get the most out of all of her dancers, no matter what their ability level was. She would have her room available for her dancers to practice for auditions, whenever they needed, and they would get her professional advice. Nicole cared for her students as if they were her own children. Her amazing teaching did not go unnoticed when she received the Big Apple Teaching Award.

She not only had a passion for teaching and dance. She loved the New York Rangers. Nicole got into the Rangers by watching games with her older cousins and brother. Nicole was a season ticket holder for the Rangers. Madison Square Garden was her happy place. She knew everyone in the section she sat in at the Garden. You always knew that she was at the game the night before when she would come to work with a scratchy voice, and if the game was really intense, no voice at all. Over the years some of her favorite players were Troy Mallette, Darren Turcotte, Brendan Shanahan, Sean Avery, Brady Skjei to name a few. She loved to talk about the Rangers. Would text and call fellow fans about them all of the time. Whenever the Rangers would make a trade or sign someone, she would always text me the link to the news and write, "Thoughts?" Those are texts that I will always miss. Her classroom always had Rangers memorabilia hanging up in it. She would wear Rangers gear every chance she got. She was the biggest Rangers fan I have ever met.

It was an honor and a pleasure to work with Nicole on a daily basis. She taught me so much about teaching, and also about life. She was the most selfless person I have ever met. She put everyone else before herself, and always wanted to help. I am also honored to have Nicole as my friend. Not a day goes by or will go by that I do not think about her." - Mr. Goldfarb



# Junior Ambassadors Unite

by Alan Kofman

Now more than ever, it is of utmost importance that society takes action to educate its youth on how to diplomatically resolve conflicts and work collaboratively with other idealistic people. And now Bay Academy, under the direction of Ms. Raudabaugh and Mr. Ruggero, is hosting such an initiative: the NYC Junior Ambassadors program where students will learn to be global citizens.

According to Ms. Raudabaugh, "The Junior Ambassador program is one where 7th and 8th graders go to the United Nations in Manhattan and work to resolve issues both globally and locally. They can work actively with ambassadors and resolve issues of their own." The program, which began in February, will last all the way to June. Currently, there are twenty members in the program.

Although this project has been ongoing for decades, it is the first time Bay Academy has had the honor of running a chapter. Rather exclusive, only twenty-five school applications were accepted as candidates. The official NYC government website further promoted the benefits of the program, saying they include a "curated tour of the United Nations headquarters matched to the class's curricular interests", a "classroom visit from a United Nations diplomat who will provide an overview of their role in New York City and within the international community", a "classroom visit from a senior NYC agency representative who will provide an overview of their role in New York City and the work of their agency", a "private year-end event celebration with the entire cohort of NYC Junior Ambassadors", and a "program certificate acknowledging participation as a NYC Junior Ambassador."

Yet these benefits still prove far inferior to the true purpose of the program. "The goal is to involve young people in the process of decision-making and solve real-world problems. This program enables them to work with people in power in order to achieve something greater than themselves." With meetings once a week during lunch, and every Wednesday after school, the NYC Junior Ambassadors program at Bay Academy hopes to fulfill that purpose. Now, the students of Bay have the opportunity to better attain a mindset that extends their perspective and makes them more conscious of the world around them.

# Capturing The Moment

by Lina Guven

Smile for the camera - NIA photography students are ready to show off their skills! The photography program run by Mr. LeSean has many fun activities throughout the year. The students have learned light painting, stop motion, forced perspective, how to set up a photo shoots, and more. The class learns how to "practice with a DSLR Canon camera in manual mode. In this mode, they discover how the three variables of aperture, shutter speed, and ISO interact to produce high-quality images." An ISO is a camera's sensitivity to light as it pertains to either film or a digital sensor. Pretty impressive!



Mr. LeSean began photographing in college as a hobby and served as the photographer at special events. According to Mr. LeSean, "before a shoot, it's important to know the weather, understand how to operate all of your equipment, and consider the lighting at different times of day." He believes that photography "can foster children's creativity and help them perceive the world from varying perspectives." Mr. LeSean believes that learning photography is something that everyone should do. "You can discover more about yourself in observing the who, what, when, where and why of photo taking. Every photograph is unique because photography is an art. As you perceive the world, you take photos, giving people a glimpse of your point of view."

As a photographer, you can be a journalist, writing about the things you took photos of. Other career opportunities are working as a wedding photographer, photography teacher, or a freelance photographer. A freelance photographer takes photographs as an independent self-employed photographer.

If you are interested in learning how to be a photographer yourself, sign up through NIA and get ready to say cheese!

# LITTLE KNOWN BROOKLYN



Prospect Park is Brooklyn's largest public park consisting of 585 acres. Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert B. Vaux created the park in 1867.

Charles Feltman is said to have invented the hot dog at Coney Island in 1867. A former employee later opened Nathan's.

When it's super cold out, the Brooklyn Bridge rises about three inches. This is because the cables contract and expand.

If the borough of Brooklyn were a city on its own, it would be the fourth largest in the U.S. by population.

Brooklyn may be considered part of New York City but geographically it's actually located on Long Island.

Before Prospect Park was created, farmers in the area let their animals, including goats, pigs and horses, freely graze on the land.

The Brooklyn Dodgers, now the LA Dodgers, was named for when Brooklyn pedestrians had to learn to dodge the many trolleys.

Some celebrities from Brooklyn include Jay Z, Michael Jordan, Nas, Spike Lee, Al Capone and Adam Sandler.

Former President Obama once lived half a block from Prospect Park on the top floor of a brownstone on 2nd Street.

One of the historic brownstones in Brooklyn Heights is just a facade and is actually a hidden subway emergency exit.

The Dutch settled western Long Island calling it Breuckelen after the town of Breuckelen in the Netherlands.

In 2006 a Cold War bomb shelter was found hidden under the Brooklyn Bridge filled with medical and other supplies.

Brooklyn was once its own separate city. It merged with the City of New York which some residents call, "the Great Mistake of 1898."

Since Brooklyn's terrain is mostly flat, it's the fastest borough for runners in the New York City Marathon.

America's first roller coaster debuted in 1884 on Coney Island in Brooklyn. It only traveled six miles per hour.

In 1884, P.T. Barnum marched 21 elephants across the Brooklyn Bridge to a circus show-ground near Bed-Stuy.

# LAB NOTES

## Fungi or Fun Guy?

by Hailey Li

Mushrooms, also known as toadstools, are fleshy fruit bearings of a fungus, typically produced on the ground, or found in its food source. Some species of mushrooms are poisonous, while others are classified as edible and safe to eat. We may not spend very much time thinking about this earthy little side dish, referring to mushrooms merely as a food found on the dinner table or a descendant of Toad from the Mushroom Kingdom. However, mushrooms are arguably one of the most fascinating things appearing in nature. Mushrooms are no stranger to being deceptive, appearing as a simple life formation, when they are actually so much more.

Mushrooms are fungi, a group of spore-producing organisms feeding on organic matter. It is a common misconception that mushrooms are in the same category containing fruits and vegetables. However, this thought is completely false. Mushrooms are actually genetically closer to the animal kingdom than they are to plants! Mushrooms are indeed very much alive, just more cautious with the way they present themselves. Although the birth of fungi may not look as cute as the birth of a tiny kitten or a sweet wrinkly puppy, it is fascinating knowing their beginning cycles as a life form.

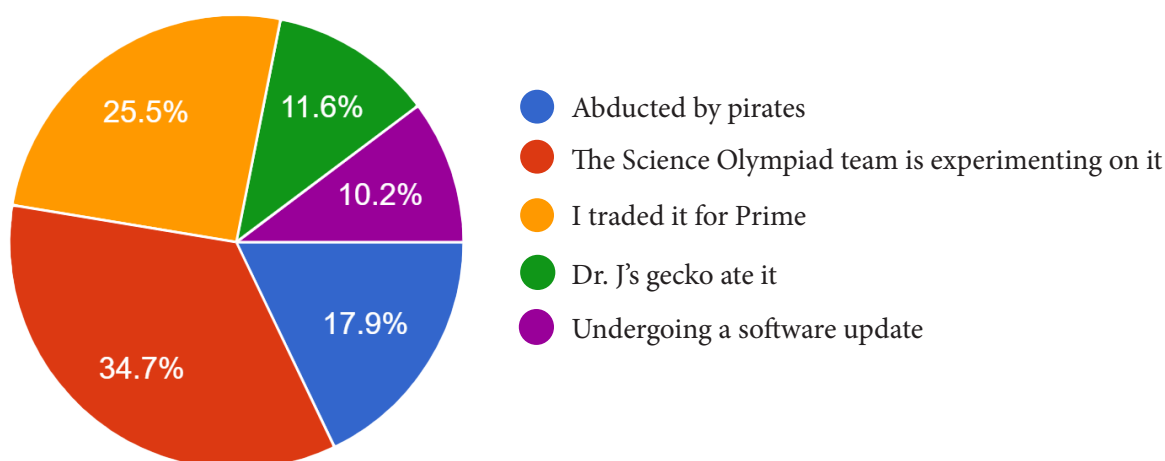
For a new fungi organism to be created, prior species first have to reproduce. In this reproduction phase, a fungal cell called hyphae fuses with another hypha to form a completely new mushroom. When this happens a mushroom will be fully mature after just a few days. Sometimes, mushrooms don't even need to have mycelium cells conjoined to reproduce. This is when a mushroom can reproduce without any phase at all! In this case, a mushroom reproduces mushrooms through shedding, creating a completely new body, and then creating a new replica of its own! Amazingly, mushrooms can clone themselves without much concern.

Hyphae is a fungal cell that is responsible for the reproduction of mushrooms. It is also the name of branching thread-like fibers that make up the vegetation of a fungus. After the hyphae meet and combine, they become a mycelium: a network of fungal threads or hyphae that are to be described as a root-like structure. The mycelium then grows and becomes a hyphal knot, the pinhead and body of a soon-to-be mushroom that is yet to take form. This growth is different from any fruit because no seedling is needed! But did you know that sometimes to make the growth of mushrooms more plentiful, farmers pray for lightning to strike on their crops? That's right! It is scientifically proven that lightning strikes make mushrooms (specifically the tasty shitake), and multiply themselves on a larger scale. Wish that was the natural response when people get struck by lightning: "Hey, Bob, who's that? Why does he look exactly like you?" "Oh hey man. Just got struck by lightning last night. Had to multiply just in case!" After a pinhead has formed, it only takes 3-4 days to turn into a fully grown adult mushroom. Until then, the veil of the mushroom slowly appears over a few days' spans. Once a fully grown mushroom is produced, the cycle continues and that mushroom will also produce spores and create new mushrooms in the future. Those mushrooms (if edible like the species white button), may be picked by mycologists or farmers, and end up on your dinner plate. My, what a delicious experience!

**France has the shortest school year from August to June and also the longest school day. A total school year in France does not exceed 36 weeks while other countries may go over 40 weeks. French children go to school four days a week with off days on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday. They have about two hours each day for lunch and their school day begins around 8:30 a.m. and ends at 4:30 p.m.**

## THE POLL

687 Bay Academy students answered, "Where is Your ID?" Here are the results:



## A Word of Advice

*How do I put up with bullies and people who bring me down?*

A tough part of middle school, and even just life in general, is having to handle and deal with people who talk badly about you. Don't pay any mind to it. There are people at every stage of life who pick on people and try to bring them down. Treat it as an obstacle. Worry about yourself. Manifest the person you want to become and focus on evolving. That's the whole point of our existence. As long as you are better than you were yesterday, you have done your job as a human. You can't change others no matter how hard you try. However, if the bullying continues or keeps getting worse and you cannot stop it, reach out to guidance or ask a trusted adult for advice.

According to stopbullying.gov, experts recommend responding to bullying calmly, or even trying to laugh it off if joking comes easily to you. Walk away and stay away, and don't fight back. Try to stay away from places where bullying tends to happen. And always keep a trusted adult in the loop. Bullying isn't something that you need to handle alone.

Remember to also be an upstander. stompoutbullying.org says it's important as an outsider not to encourage the bully in any way by laughing or participating, and if it's safe for you, to help the target get away from the situation. You may also want to reach out to the victim in private to let them know they have support. It is always worth it to be a good friend.

by Anastasia Smelnitsky

*I didn't do well on the last state test exam. What can I do to improve?*

Plenty of students struggle with exams, so if you didn't do as well as you wanted to last year, don't stress out! For starters, make sure you do some practice tests both in school and out of school and let your parents or older siblings help out instead of just teachers - it might be helpful to change up who you study with. Maybe you didn't do that well because you were worried, so try your best to have a positive outlook instead of assuming you won't do well again. And obviously make sure you eat breakfast and have a good sleep. Check over your work to try and find any careless mistakes. And remember what your teachers have been reminding you of all along.

According to Ms. Stromnes, "Read each passage carefully, break down what the questions are asking, and always follow RAWQEEQEEC when writing your short response."

"As I always say, 'Don't get lucky, GET GOOD!'", added Ms. Yau. "Practice the questions you hate doing, until you love to do them."

Being prepared is the best defense against test anxiety, so start preparing now if you haven't already!

by Justin Tong

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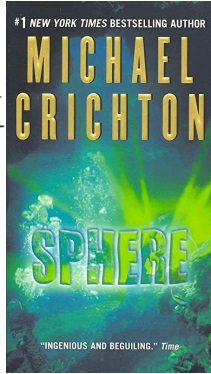
Every Sudoku has a unique solution that can be reached logically. Enter numbers into the blank spaces so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9 without repeats.

## Sphere by Michael Crichton

Reviewed by Alan Kofman

In the year 1987, Michael Crichton succeeded his previous publication, Congo, with the #1 Best Selling hit of the year: Sphere. With the introduction of this book, Crichton began his shift into the world of science fiction techno-thrillers. He riveted his fans with his new controversial, and yet at the same time uniting, novel. Yet why? Sphere struck at the morals and core values of psychology; at the rules governing who should be trusted with power without becoming authoritarian over the world.

In the novel, a team of scientists, each one specializing within a distinct and differentiated field, are openly invited by the military to investigate an under-sea crash site. Yet as Norman Johnson, the leading protagonist, and a renowned psychologist quickly determines, the military has been withholding information from them. The corals growing around the ship are abnormally thick and weathered. This ship, this crash, has been here for over 300 years.



Despite the shocking revelation, the scientists and their military commander decide to proceed with the operation. They are placed into a saturated, controlled environment undersea and occasionally venture into the enormous ship. What they find is perplexing: technology on board was far more advanced than the present day, but the ship was found to be American. And still, it had laid within the sea for hundreds of years. Most alarming of all, however, is the discovery of a polished sphere. Whatever Johnson and the team attempted, it remains stubbornly closed. Even Harry Adams, a brilliant mathematician, succumbed, until one night when he alone walked to the sphere and suddenly it opened. A few

days later, there was a death. A group of jellyfish approached DH-8, the undersea home Johnson was living in. Jane Edmunds, the expedition archivist, went out of the DH-8 to record the jellyfish. All of a sudden, they leeches themselves onto her suit and burned through the material, suffocating her. Only a few days later, the entire capsule was attacked by giant squid and plagued by shrimp. It just so happened that Harry Adams, who had essentially no recollection of his time in the sphere, despised shrimp, jellyfish, and squid.

As Johnson eventually determines, the Sphere gives the average human power. Subconsciously and consciously, they can manifest their thoughts into reality. But time and time again, the readers progressively see that humanity is unfit of holding such strength.

Sphere is a beautifully executed, perfectly paced thriller that will never release a reader from its grip until the last page. It questions the foundation of dominance and power and psychology, and even society as a whole. The notions it presents are still, in 2023, new and idealistic, and more than relatable in a multiplicity of contexts. All of the characters are incredibly deep and nuanced. You can clearly see their strong points, their weaknesses, and their motivations. Every single twist and plot advancement only contributes to delineating how fragile morality can be when staring into the face of utter power. Overall, Sphere is a must-read that has and will challenge concepts society has previously accepted, and reform them.

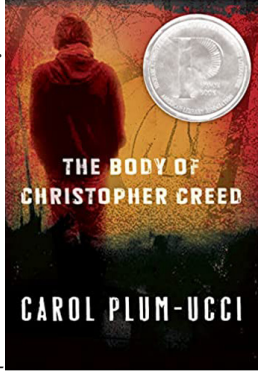
## The Body of Christopher Creed

Reviewed by Angelina Kobryn

The Body of Christopher Creed is a novel written by Carol Plum-Ucci. The plot centers around a high school student whose life becomes brutal-

ly honest- and possibly sinister as he attempts to solve the mystery of a missing classmate. The book explores what hatred, reputation, selfishness and discrimination can do to a person.

In the book's casual setting, Steepleton High School, a boy named Creed doesn't get along with anyone. He's hated. He acts differently, always getting wild ideas, always sticking his nose into conversations, always doing weird things nobody else would have. Such was the result of his mothers strict and controlling upbringing.

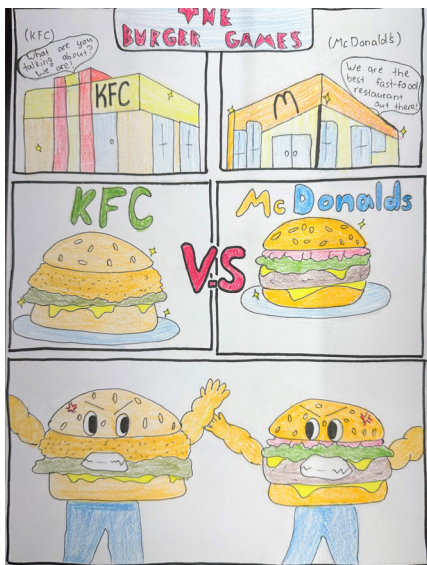


One day, Creed disappears. Even more mysteriously he had sent a confusing note to the principal of the high school signing off with, "I only wish to be gone. Therefore, I AM." The whole school is abuzz with this news. They all seem happy, making up grueling stories about how Creed might have run away or killed himself. No one seems to realize how horrible this situation is. All the students make jokes and point fingers. Even Creed's family members. Not a single person is stopping to think how they too, could have pushed Creed to his limit. Everyone called him names, landed a punch on his face, or laughed about him. They refuse to see the truth, as it would mean facing their own guilt. Lying and pretending is much easier.

This confuses Torey Adams, a classmate of Creed's. He doesn't know how to feel. He once too stood with the kids, making up rumors. Now that he sees all their fangs, he knows they can bite. Torey and his friends begin investigating the disappearance of their classmate, finding out the weirdness behind Creed's mothers perfectionism.

"Things don't have to be sane when they are normal."

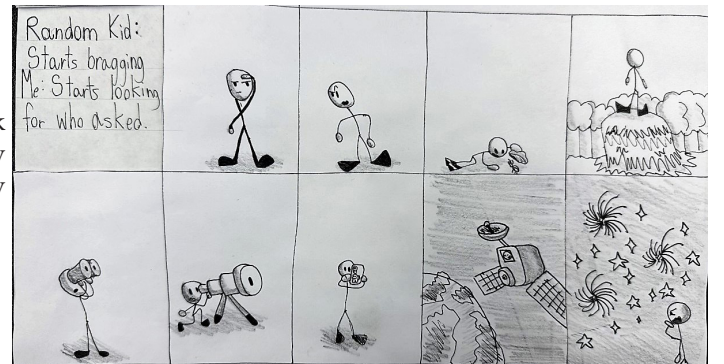
## DRAWN TOGETHER



Above, Alice Verdova  
Right, Sagdiana Kuliyeva



Right, Alex ander Sherbiak  
Below, Simona Zelenkov  
Below right, Olivia Gumerov



## WHAT WE'RE PLAYING...

By Matthew Bragarnik

The 2011 game Portal 2 has had people wanting more, 12 years later. The game has received several awards and reviews from the gaming community. The graphics along with the storyline create an intriguing and addicting game. The stories are displayed by character dialogue or environmental storytelling. I would also like to mention the great voice actors in the game such as, J.K Simmons as "Cave Johnson" and Ellen McLain as "GladOs." The game has mechanics such as portal tech and Chell. The game allows the player to move from place to place inside of the Aperture Science Enrichment Center, where the game takes place. Another mechanic of portal is the weighted Companion Cube - the cube allows the player to open doors if there is a button present. The companion cube is also sentient according to a character known as Doug Rattmann, a scientist from Aperture Science. Through the game GladOs talks about how the cube "Will never threaten to stab you and in fact, cannot speak." This is trying to manipulate the player into falsely believing that the cube is not sentient.

As you play the game you get to see more and more of the story line and hear the voices of different characters as well as see different parts of the Enrichment Center. The game starts with you waking up in an Enrichment Center holding cell, when a robot comes in named 'Wheatley' who was programmed to be dumb. Wheatley tells us that we "May or may not have a minor case of severe brain damage." After a bit of tests Wheatley then proceeds to move the room you were in, very recklessly, the player then ends up in test chamber 1, where we find the portal gun and wake up GladOs.

If you're interested in playing, you can purchase the game through Steam at: [https://store.steampowered.com/app/620/Portal\\_2/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/620/Portal_2/)