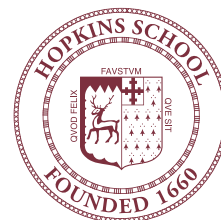




# The Hilltopper



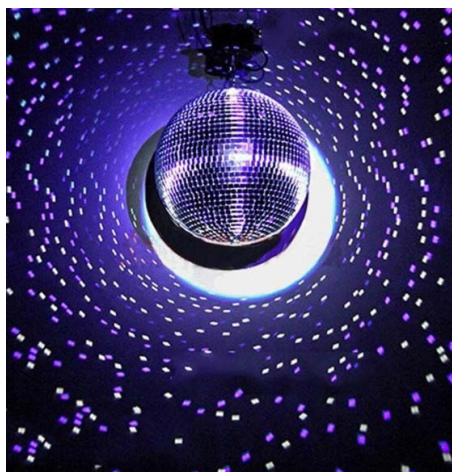
Volume 23, Issue 1

December 2023

## Dance the Night Away

HARPER BEHR

On November 3rd the Junior Schoolers had a fun, casual dance. It took place in Upper Heath from 7 pm to 9 pm. This dance has been around for as long as Ms. Garrity, our director, can remember! The school charges a small fee for the J-School dance. This money that they collect gets donated to CT FoodShare. This is a way for the entire Junior School to contribute to the Student Council's school-wide fundraiser to support the CT Food Bank. Typically, the music that they play is dance-able music and upbeat songs! This year, some of the songs that got the most people on the dance floor were "Love Story" by Taylor Swift and "Fireball" by Pit-bull. The goal is to get the students



## The Best Hopkins Subject

MILAN CHIRAVURI

Hopkins is a beautifully diverse melting pot of different cultures, ideals, and opinions. One thing I notice in my day-to-day life is that everyone always talks about what class and what part of the school is the best. I have tried to find the answer, or at least come close. "I love the independence," said Almanzo Abraham, "It's a lot different from public school, and that's really nice." Elodie Lewis voiced her love for the help students can get. "I really like the hours I can spend speaking to teachers. It can be very helpful for clarification and general help."

However, Miles Betts agreed with Almanzo saying, "I love the freedom because I can meet new people." So this shows that freedom, helpfulness, and friendship make Hopkins the best school.

Classes are an important part of how well your day goes. Many people disagree on the best ones, so I set out to change all of that. Almanzo argued Latin was the best, because the teacher is "really nice." Leehahn Namgoong and Elodie Lewis both said they liked math, but while Leehahn likes it for the teacher, Elodie enjoys math for the

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**DANCE**

out onto the dance floor and enjoy themselves, but if they do not like to dance there are board games in the cafe. Since this is a casual dance, students do not need to spend a lot of money on fancy clothes. This year, we saw the following fashion trends: dresses and sneakers along with collared shirts and dress pants with sneakers. The major rule that the staff wanted the kids to follow is no phones on the dance floor. This means that there are no phones allowed so that the students interact and have fun with each other! When

I interviewed fellow seventh graders about the dance, this is what they had to say:

	What was your favorite snack at the dance?	What was your favorite song?	Did you dance?	What did you wear?	Did you play any games?
Amy	The candy	"Macarena"	Yes	Sandals and a dress	<i>Uno</i>
Lily	Twix bars	No favorite song	No	Pants and a sweatshirt	<i>Uno, Connect 4, Chess, Card games</i>
Elodie	The Doritos	"Macarena"	Yes	Black dress with black boots	<i>Connect 4</i>

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**HOPKINS BEST**

fun she can have with her classmates. Miles Betts thinks English is the best due to all the creativity you can use. Michael Todorovich also likes creativity, but he finds it most in science class saying, "I like being able to do lots of fun experiments." Finally Nate D'Amato, and Alex Pierre both decided study hall was their favorite, until being informed that it wasn't a class. They quickly changed their votes to Spanish for Alex, and English for Nate because he "likes the class discussions." So, once again we can see that Hopkins has something for everyone!

## Should Any Class Be Prioritized More Than Another?

VICTORIA LENG

Some people might believe that math and English are two main classes you are expected to take and excel at. That is probably also why you have embedded study halls during every academic class except for these and that English is mandated every year. But should math and English be at the top of your list, or should students focus on every class to be good all-around? And in general, is it a better strategy to aim to specialize or instead work on strengthening all of your skills?

Let's look at the reasons that these two subjects might rise to the top. First of all, being good at English—both in reading and

writing—is an important skill that will follow you throughout your life both in school and in work. English isn't a subject to argue about not having—whether you like it or not, you need it. As for math, it is the root of many possible future careers for students to take. Math has always been that super important subject. Without it, you won't be able to do anything.

But in addition to math and English, we all take history, science and language. The work in these classes gets graded and even though they don't meet as frequently, they clearly do matter. And just think of all the skills you learn from these

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### PRIORITIZED

classes such as research, listening, logical thinking, and critical reasoning. Given all of the interesting topics and skills you learn in these classes, it would be hard to say that they are less important than anything else. As J-Schoolers, we also play sports and participate in the arts. Some might think that because these classes don't have a lot of assignments, homework, and graded work, and that they feel more "pass/fail," that they are not as important. However, these classes also allow students to learn so much about other life skills. And many students look forward to going to sports and arts and wish there were even more of them. Arts or sports are more of pass-or-fail courses, though. This comes to show that schools find the arts or sports less important than the "academics", in which math and English are at the top.

So now that we can all see the importance of our two main subjects, should they be prioritized over everything else? And most importantly, should any class be prioritized at all?

Everyone will come to a different conclusion, but some of us have grown up with this big idea planted into our heads, that math and English are the suns of our learning foundation and everything else revolves around them. It might not be true, but it's what some have grown to believe. The one question is, can we begin to think independently about prioritizing what matters most to ourselves?



## What Is It Like To Be a Junior School Sports Coach?

LILY LU

You may have been wondering about a few questions having to do with your sports coach. Do they like me? Do they think I am good at my sport? Well I may not be able to answer those questions, but I was able to find out what one of your coaches thinks about coaching in the J-School.

Coach Christina Balsamo has been at Hopkins for 15 years and has coached J-School sports the whole time, while also helping out in the middle school and serving as an Assistant Athletic Trainer and the Assistant Director of Athletics.

Q: "What do you do at Hopkins outside of coaching?"

A: "I am one of the three Athletic Trainers on campus and an Assistant Athletic Director. I

take care of the medical needs of our student athletes throughout the day and after school."

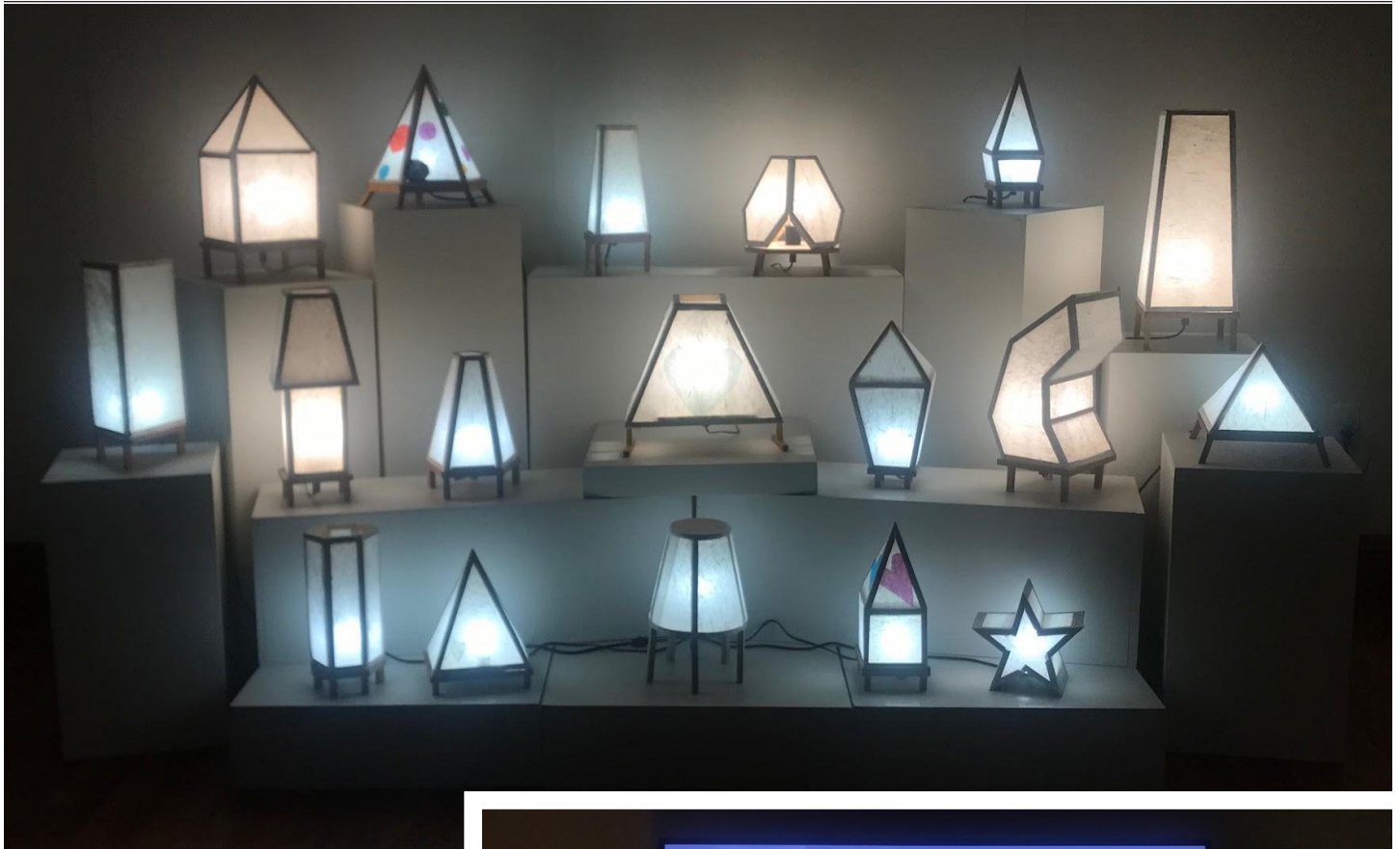
Q: "What is the biggest challenge that you face when coaching Junior Schoolers?"

A: "The same thing that is my favorite can be my biggest challenge. Working with people who have never played a sport is very rewarding but also a challenge."

Q: "What is your favorite sport that you coach?"

A: "I love all the sports I coach, however Soccer has been one that I have grown to be one of my favorites. I played in high school and have continued to appreciate the game for the game itself but also for the off the field skills as well."

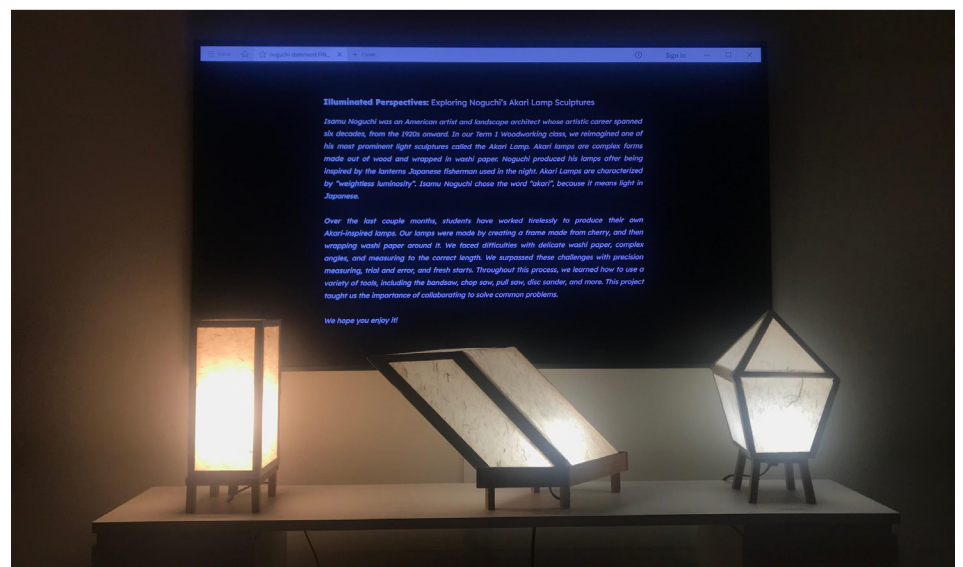
This is an insight from one of our coaches. But all of our coaches are the ones that are helping us learn and improve with our sports so give them a "thank you" the next time you see them!



## Can You See the Light?

SUSIE BECKER & LILO GAUL

The new art show in the Keator Gallery displays lanterns made by the term 1 Wood Art high school students. They are inspired by Isami Noguchi's Akari Lamps, named after the Japanese word "Akari," meaning light, which he created from the 1920s to 1980s, for six decades. The lanterns are inspired by lamps that Japanese fishermen used at night. Students used cherry wood and washi paper to create the lights. The process was very complicated and delicate, and consisted of creating a wooden frame, measuring delicate washi paper, covering the frame,



and lighting it up. Some quotes from students at Hopkins about the light show are :

"It really opened my eyes to the beauty of woodworking."

"It was majestic."

"I can't believe that they made these beautiful lamps in such little time."

"I like lights. Lights are cool."

"The current art show has given a new light to my life. It gives me something to look forward to."

"It was really cool seeing all of the lights that people had made. Great job!"

"It's pretty cool, not gonna lie."

"It brightened my day."

"It was super cool. I want to make something like this someday."

# D-Block's Departure? J-Schoolers Doing Independents

SUSIE BECKER

If you went up to anyone in the J-school and asked them what sport they do, 93% of them would say that they do a J-School sport. J-School sports can be intramural or competitive, and have lots of options. 7% of J-Schoolers do a high school sport. This is a higher commitment, with more practice time and games outside of school. Some J-Schoolers, however, have a larger athletic commitment outside of school and can't come to games. These J-Schoolers may be doing an independent sport.

There are a lot of people who do a sport outside of school, even if they don't do an independent sport. 71% of J-School students do a sport outside of school. Some sports that J-Schoolers do outside of school include basketball, cricket, all kinds of dance, figure skating, frisbee, going to the gym, golf, tennis, fencing, karate, lacrosse, rock climbing, rowing, swimming softball, volleyball, football, squash, and field hockey. J-Schoolers spend anywhere from 1–12 hrs at sports a week.

Everyone knows Hopkins has a ton of homework, so I asked J-Schoolers who did out of school sports how they got their homework done. Some popular answers were: after or before their activity, during study halls, in the car, on days when they don't have a sport, before or

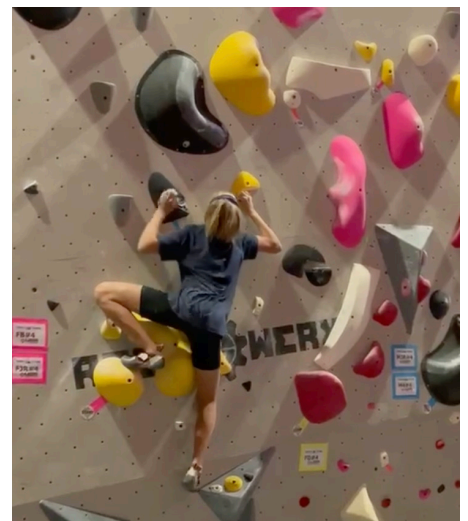
after dinner, when they have time, after school, athletic study halls, and late at night.

People who do an independent sport may be able to substitute that commitment for participating in a team sport at Hopkins. You are eligible for an independent in the winter and spring of 7th grade, and all of 8th grade.

This has some pros and cons. One pro is that if you do an independent, you get a D-block study hall. This is 30 minutes longer than regular embedded study halls and happens three or four times a week. Even so, sometimes you wonder why you do it. Some favorite parts of getting to do an out of school sport are meeting new people, learning the sport better, having fun, being with a team/friends/community, playing in more frequent games, getting to go at your own pace, getting a break from homework in the afternoon, exercising, enjoying an extra study hall, challenging yourself, and staying in shape

Some cons are that you don't have as much time after school to stay and hang out or do work, and you can't come to as many after school events. Some sacrifices J-Schoolers have made are less sleep, less time with family and friends, not doing a modern language, fewer school events, less free time, later homework, and injuries.

Overall, doing an independent sport can be very useful, since you have more time to do homework, get to meet new people, and get to challenge yourself, even though you have to make a few sacrifices.





## Advice on Advisory

SUSIE BECKER

J-School advisory is a nice 15 minutes to relax before class starts on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Usually, advisors have something to do or tell their advisees about. After that though, it's just a free period, and some advisor groups don't know what to do. Here are some of J-Schoolers' ideas. "If you have a whiteboard or a blackboard, then there are a lot of games you can play," says one 8th grader. "You can play Wordle, Hangman, or draw on the board." In the spring, 7th and 8th grade advisories can go outside and play kickball. Many advisors also have games in their rooms. Although some 8th graders like having things to do in advisory, one 8th grader said, "I prefer doing nothing

to having something to do."

A few months ago, we had a J-School assembly where the 7th grade ensemble performed. I asked Mrs. Garrity a few questions about J-School assemblies.

Q: How long have they been going on for?

A: When I first started at Hopkins (a LONG time ago), we had J-School Assemblies every Tuesday and only had adviser group on Thursdays. Back then the focus was on 8th grade speeches. Every 8th grader was asked to write and deliver a short speech to the J-School community on any topic. The original goal was to teach the students public speaking skills but there was no time devoted to helping the 8th graders write and practice, so often the speeches were done last minute and it didn't seem

like a good practice that was about learning skills; it seemed like it was just something they had to do and just get through.

Q: When did they end?

A: I don't remember when exactly they ended, but maybe about 15 years ago would be my best guess.

Q: Why did they end?

A: We ended JS Assemblies because of the reasons above (8th grade speeches didn't feel productive) and more importantly, we wanted more adviser group time like the high school had (two days a week).

Q: What made you want to start doing them again?

A: We started having J-School Assemblies a few years before Covid and shifted them from

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**ADVICE**

what they used to be. We only did them every once and a while, not every week, and we wanted to use them to highlight J-School performers and talents. We wanted to create a space where J-Schoolers could share their musical talents or dance talents or anything else they thought was fun to share with the community. The JS assemblies are really about building our small community and showcasing our kids' talents.

**Q:** What do you think they would look like in the future?

**A:** I would like to continue the recent model as mentioned above. We will have another in December and I hope another in January. And our focus is on showcasing talents, whether that is a music class like Mr. Elligers' class who performed at our first one this year or individuals.

**Q:** How would J-Schoolers be able to perform in assemblies?

**A:** If a student would like to perform at a JS assembly, we ask that they audition with Ms. Schroth or Mr. Elligers or me—whether that is music or dance or some other talent, we want to have a preview to make sure everything runs smoothly and the performers have what they need. If a student needs an accompanist, for example, we can arrange that if we know ahead of time. Mr. Guthrie and I are looking forward to more JS assemblies!

## Instrumental Music at Hopkins For Junior School Students

ELODIE LEWIS

In seventh grade at Hopkins, you can experiment with a variety of arts and musical choices. One quarter of the year you can choose to be part of the instrumental music program of orchestra or band. In the fourth quarter, you get to pick your favorite and continue with that throughout eighth grade. The first quarter wrapped up at the end of October, and seventh graders are now fully immersed into their next artistic option. Through research and a set of interviews, I set out to learn more about what is happening in the instrumental music program for seventh graders!

In the band for seventh grade, there is a small group of 13 people: three trumpets, three clarinets, two flutes, one cello, one piano, and three percussionists. Everyone individually warms up with basic scales and arpeggios before they begin to rehearse as a group. I spoke to Lily Lu and Miles Betts who both have been clarinet for 2 years. They practice the music, talk about music theory, and practice scales and arpeggios. They are currently working on "Colliding Visions" and "Jingle Bells."

The Junior School orchestra is full of talented musicians who have a variety of experience with their instrument. In order to join the orchestra, you do not need prior experience, however, there is a separate orchestra for people who just started their instrument. Everyone gets a chance to play and try new things! I spoke to Aaj who has played the pi-

ano for 5 years and viola for 2 years. In orchestra, they would work on scales and warmups, then practice their songs called "The Abandoned Fun House" and "Gargoyles.. They even held a mini performance of those two songs for the 7th and 8th graders to see!

The instrumental program at Hopkins for Junior School is great because you get to practice with a group of kids who enjoy their instruments. Everyone is welcome to join and learn a new instrument!

## Enough Is Enough

ALMANZO ABRAHAM

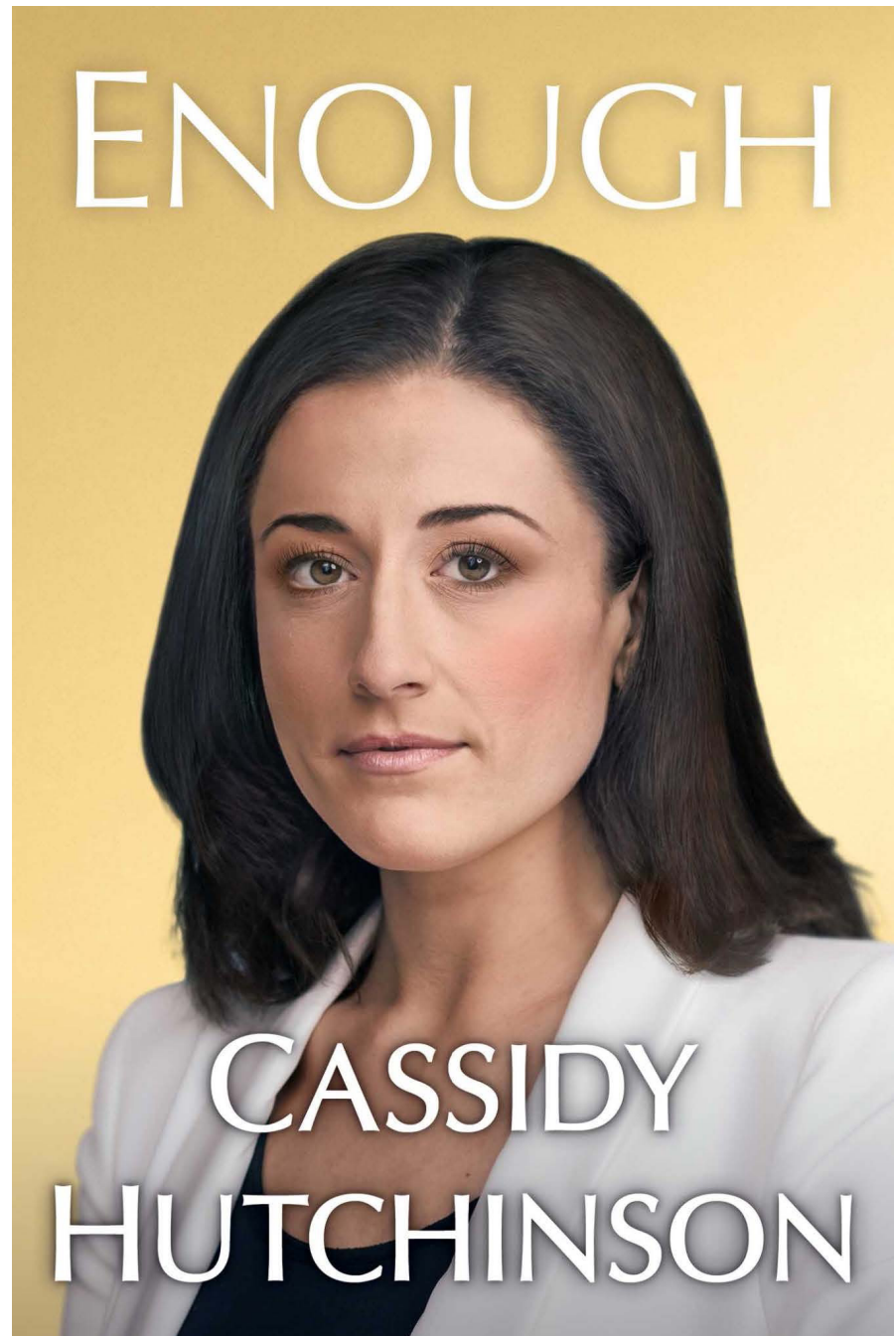
*Enough*, a memoir by Cassidy Hutchinson, came out in September 2023. The book mainly focuses on her experience working in the White House and the way she handled her troubled childhood. The first part of *Enough* is about her family and life as a little girl. Learning about her family is important because her father—who yells at her and calls her names—plays a big role later in shaping her political opinion. When she grows up, an ardent conservative, she starts working for Mark Meadows, the chief of staff hired by then President Donald Trump. Cassidy is given important jobs and ends up being very close to Meadows and Trump. After she has worked for Trump for a short time and is asked by staff members like Meadows if she would take a bullet for him she starts questioning the campaign. Cassidy has people supporting her but then her dad suddenly starts popping up out of nowhere and criticizes Cassidy for not being loyal to Trump and the conservative party. He then abandons her which makes her even more faithful to Trump.

However, things change drastically after Trump loses the election in November and the events of January 6th. Trump will not admit that he has lost the election. On January 6th, after her mother and multiple people tell her to stay home, Cassidy goes to the Capitol and witnesses

everything that happened firsthand. This finally causes her to testify in court against Trump after she gets a lawyer.

I think that this is a very good book but misses some important

examples about what specifically happened in the case. I read the book cover to cover in three days and would recommend it as a political memoir.







## Tiger's New Twist On Golf

LILY LU

Golf headlines are being flooded by the news of the new TGL golf league. Interestingly, it is unclear what the letters “TGL” stand for. We do know that it was formed and created by Tiger Woods himself, along with another popular golfer, Rory McIlroy, and a former sports executive for NBC named Mike McCarley. Though they are making a new league, they aren't retiring from the PGA either.

In the TGL, six teams of three professional golfers will compete in shortened golf rounds during week-

nights between tournaments in the Professional Golf Association. TGL is scheduled to launch in January, 2024, and has already gained lots of popularity among professional golfers.

Here are a few thoughts on the TGL from a few people from the Hopkins community.

“The idea that Rory and Tiger have come up with, for an indoor, team-based golf competition, sounds pretty cool to me. Certainly, it's a made for TV event, but having pro

golfers put their skills on display in a new way could be really fun.”

—Ian Clark, Science Department

“A good idea, but needs improvement.”

—Christopher Myott '29

This new golf league might be something to look forward to whether or not you follow golf. With the TGL's new technology advancements and innovations, they have added a new entertaining twist to the game.

# Are Crocs and Socks Acceptable?

MILES BETTS

Are Crocs and socks acceptable? This is a hot topic with the people at Hopkins who are into fashion. With the outbreak in popularity of Crocs, people have started purchasing pairs faster than Milan when he runs for J-school snack. Crocs are an all-around shoe for relaxing at home, wearing them before a game, or even playing a game in them. But the thing on everybody's mind is how do you wear Crocs: with or without socks? Personally, I think Crocs and socks are acceptable but my opinion might be a bit biased because of how much I hate being barefoot, so we made a poll about this fiery debate and I am here to interview a few people. The first person I interviewed was Nate D'Amato. I started the interview by asking him "Are crocs and socks acceptable?" He replied, "I would say so." When I asked him to specify where they would or would not be acceptable, he responded by saying "Anywhere except a funeral." Next up was Michael; I asked him the same question as I did Nate and he responded, "I think Crocs and socks are acceptable." When I asked him where they should be accepted he said, "Everywhere except the beach so you can't get sand in your Crocs." I asked him if he had ever worn them himself and he said, "I have and I like to wear them." Since I had gotten the same answer from 2 people, I thought that I might



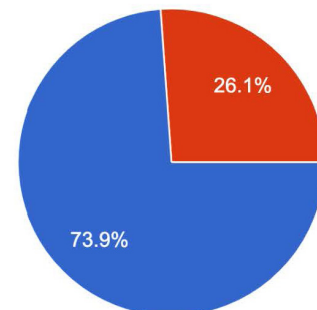
know what the majority thought, but when I interviewed Mr. Guthrie, he made me think I needed more opinions. It started by me asking him if Crocs and socks are acceptable and he responded, "No, I don't think they are." When I asked him why, he said, "They aren't acceptable at school or just in general." That made me think I needed one more person so I asked Jeremy, a senior,

if crocs and socks are acceptable he responded with a firm "Heck No." So it was my head advisor and a senior versus two Sevies, so I thought it was an equal argument. To break the tie, I made a poll and discovered that 73.9% of Junior Schoolers agreed saying Crocs and socks are acceptable. With 88 responses, the results are overwhelming!

## Are Crocs and Socks Acceptable?

88 responses

- Yes
- No



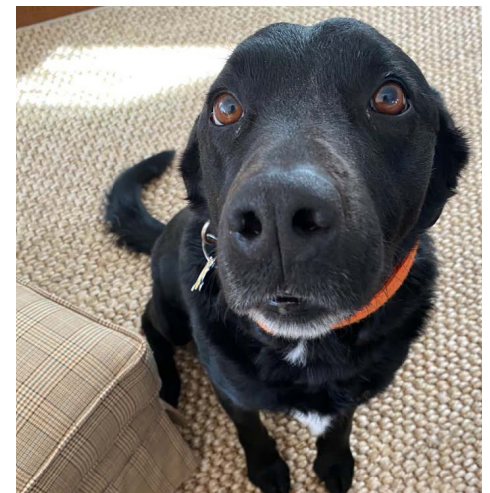
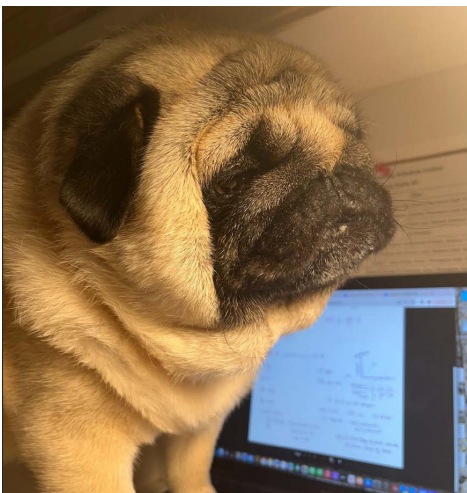
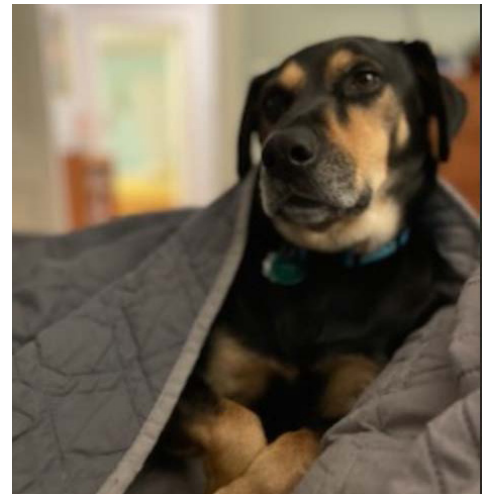
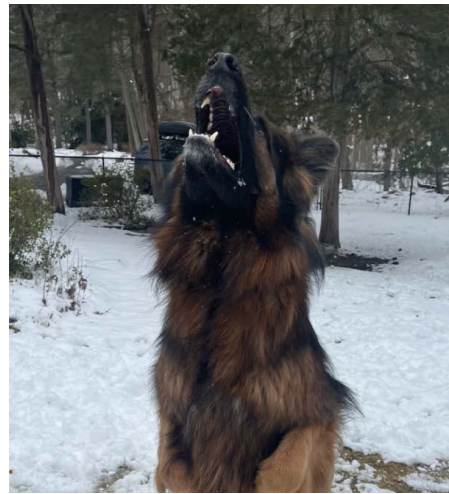
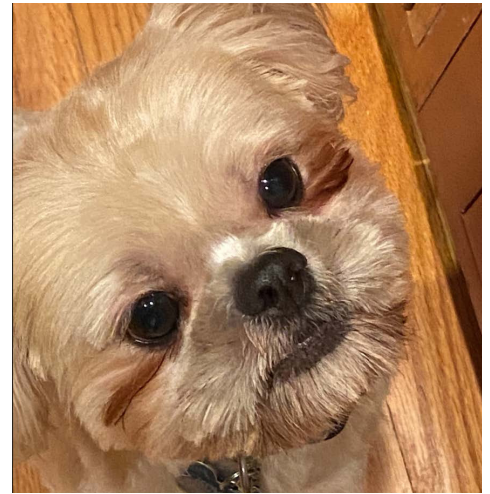
# HOP Pets

HARPER BEHR

In the Junior School community there are many cute and unique animals! 51.3% of our grade likes dogs

better, 35.9% people like cats better and 2.8% love both equally! Our grade also has some unique and cool animals. Some examples of those animals are chickens, guinea pigs, a snake, a hedgehog, an African rose faced lovebird, a winter white dwarf

hamster, bunny, and an African Dwarf frog! Those are some cool pets! Our grade also has gorgeous cats along with stunning dogs. The names that people have named their pets are amazing. Overall, our grade has cute, unique and pretty pets!





## Eating with the Seasons

ELODIE LEWIS

How often do you eat seasonal fruits and vegetables? Eating produce that is in season tends to be fresher and is proven to be better for your health. As autumn is ending and winter approaches, certain fruits and vegetables will not be in season anymore. During mid autumn to late winter, fresh fruits and vegetables in the grocery store are apples, citrus fruits, pomegranates, sweet potato, cranberries, and winter squashes like butternut and acorn squash. As winter approaches, you may not see fruits like strawberries, cherries, watermelon, or mango. These fruits have traveled a long distance to get to your supermarket and have acquired a much bigger carbon footprint along the way. They may also lack the flavor and sweetness that those fruits have in the summer. Fruits that are in season are fresher so they are rich in vitamins and minerals which can protect your immune system. I hope you try some of these fruits and veggies this winter!



## Braided Bread: A Jewish Tradition

LILO GAUL

### Background:

Have you ever tried bread? More specifically, have you ever tried challah? Challah is a traditional Jewish bread, typically braided with four ropes (of dough, not string). It's eaten on Shabbat, the Jewish sabbath, which goes from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. On Friday nights, before the challah is eaten, people chant a prayer thanking God for "the bread of the earth." Making challah is a very time consuming process, taking at least a full work day to complete. Although challah is a traditional Jewish bread, it's eaten often by people as a normal loaf of bread, everyday. Challah can be eaten alone, with jam, as french toast, or for in many other ways.

### Taste test:

During the Fall Hilltopper Session this year, I brought in a slightly chaotic challah, and had people taste it. Although it may not have been the best representation of challah, the reviews were positive. Despite the absence of butter, multiple people said it tasted like a croissant (which uses about 12 tablespoons of butter, so a lot more). Challah, unlike sourdough, rye, or white bread, is usually pulled apart, and has a very "light and fluffy" texture, rather than a block of dough with bubbles. Below is a recipe that my family has used for multiple generations, from the cookbook *Joy of Cooking*, slightly adapted to be more readable.

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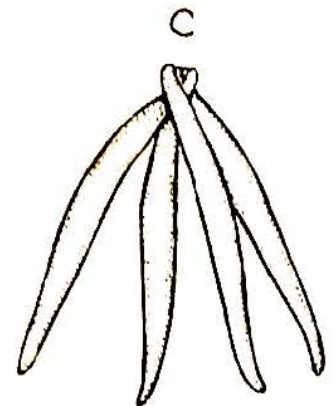
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**BREAD****Ingredients:**

2 ¼ tsp yeast  
 ½ cup warm water  
 ½ cup all purpose flour  
 3 tbsp granulated sugar  
 1 ¼ salt, plus more  
     for egg wash  
 3 eggs  
 2 egg yolks  
 3 tbsp vegetable oil  
 2 ½ cups bread flour

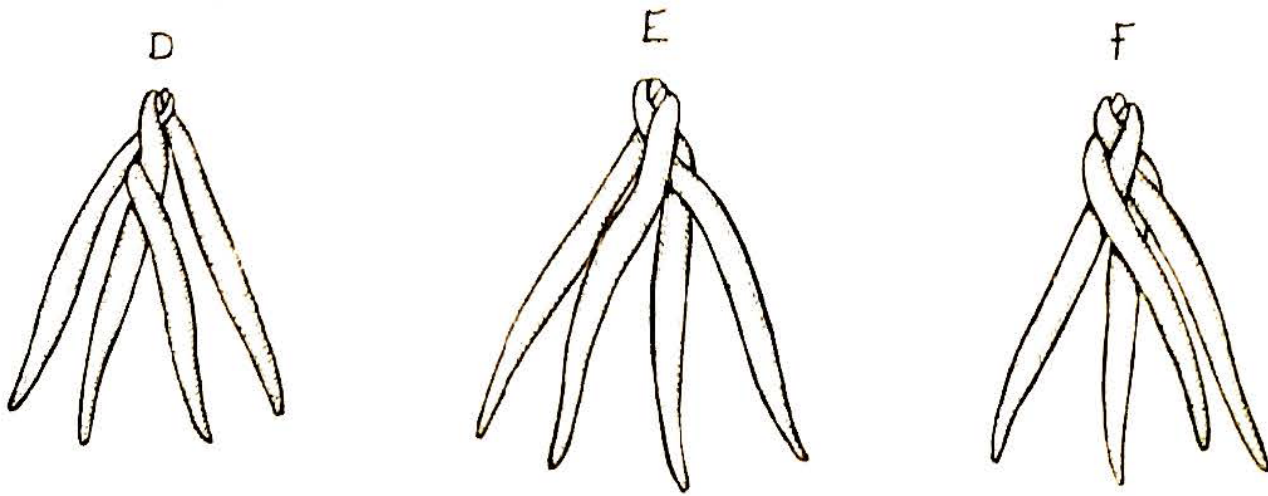
**Dough:**

- 1: Combine 2 ¼ tsp yeast and ½ cup warm water in a bowl.
- 2: Mix and let the yeast dissolve for 5 minutes.
- 3: Add in ½ cup all purpose flour, 3 tbsp granulated sugar or honey, and 1 ¼ tsp salt, and mix until combined.
- 4: Add 2 large eggs and 2 egg yolks, along with 3 tbsp vegetable oil.
- 6: Gradually add in 2 ½ cups of bread flour, while mixing.
- 7: Knead the dough for 8 minutes.
- 8: Let the dough rise in a covered, well oiled, bowl, in a warm place (an oven that's turned off works well) for 1.5 hours.
- 9: Knead the dough again.
- 10: Let the dough rise in a covered bowl in the fridge for 4-12 hours, until almost double in size.
- 11: Split the dough into 4 balls, and cover loosely with plastic wrap, let rise for 10 minutes.
- 12: Roll the balls of dough into long ropes.
- 13: Braid the ropes according to the diagram shown below:

**Braiding four-strand challah**

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**BREAD**

- Baking:**
- 1: Mix together an egg and a pinch of salt.
  - 2: Brush the egg wash that you just made over the top of the dough.
  - 3: Cover the dough with plastic wrap and let it rise in a warm place (an oven works well, but not turned on) for 45 minutes.
  - 4: Take the dough out of a warm place, and preheat the oven to 375°F.
  - 5: Brush the egg wash over the loaf again.
  - 6: Bake at 375°F for 30–35 minutes, until the crust is golden brown.

Once you're done with the challah, it can be eaten plain, with jam, used to make a sandwich, used to make French toast, or for many other delicious recipes and combinations.



## The Perfect Bite

ALMANZO ABRAHAM

What is the perfect bite of food on Thanksgiving? If I could only have one bite of food on Thanksgiving, I would say that turkey would be it. Turkey is a Thanksgiving classic and is often the centerpiece of the table. A bite of a juicy drumstick would definitely be the perfect Thanksgiving bite.