

# THE FANFARE



presents...

***BEHIND THE***

***SCENES***

(Photography Credit: Brooke Besnard)

## **INSIDE TODAY:** ***MEANING OF THE THEME***

How well do you know your peers at school? Did you know that the Berkeley Choir performed in front of Tampa's mayor or that a few of the senior club athletes held their own signing day? This winter, the Fanfare took a peek behind the curtain of the on-campus

lives of students, and our writers found groups and individuals not widely recognized at Berkeley. We brought the behind the scenes up to center stage, and by reading these articles, you will have exclusive content to open the back door of the Berkeley community.



# JUMPING TO PAGE 1: THE SENIOR EQUESTRIANS OF BERKELEY

By Reagan Brown, Co Editor-in-Chief

Sixteen sports, one team. The motto of the Berkeley Athletics department provides a pedestal for athletes who participate in school-sanctioned sports, but what about our peers who are not recognized by our athletic department?



**JUMPING FOR JOY:** Claire Davidson '22 riding her Selle Français gelding Umako de Virginia. (Photography Credit: Victoria Demore Photography)

From gymnastics to spikeball, many student-athletes go under the radar for their accomplishments in nontraditional sports, even though many students are extremely successful in their athletic endeavors outside of school. One of these successful groups is composed of three senior equestrians who spend most of their free time with horses.

Claire Davidson '22, Molly Ryan '22 and Avery Sketch '22 have been riding horses for over five years, and it has completely taken over their lives. Working with horses takes time, so these seniors almost their entire afternoons at the barn with their horses.

**"I TRULY WOULD NOT TRADE ANYTHING FOR RIDING. IT IS THE ONLY THING IN MY LIFE THAT HAS THE ABILITY TO LIFT ANY EXISTING STRESS IN MY LIFE."**

- DAVIDSON '22

Some shows allow the riders to not miss an entire day of school. Splitting up their days into mornings and afternoons leads to more time in the classroom.

"Sometimes, I'll compete in the morning and make it back to school just in time," said Ryan.

For an equestrian, a weekend show starts extremely early and lasts into the late afternoon. Being at the show all day, most of the time without wifi, leads to few chances to complete school work. And being out of town for multiple days can cause the girls to fall behind, but they prioritize their school work.

In contrast with school sports where a practice lasts for around an hour or two, equestrians have to be at the barn before and after their ride time to care for the horses. Spending time with their horses is very important to building a bond with the animal, so the more time they spend better.

"When dealing with an animal, there is no time off, and it is important to try and see them as much as possible," Sketch said. "This may mean having to skip going out with friends sometimes, but I would not trade it for the world."

In addition to afternoons at the barn, the girls participate in horse shows which can be in Tampa or someplace several hours away.

Horse shows can be compared to

"Since riding is both time and mentally consuming, I have to do my part to stay ahead and catch up on schoolwork," said Davidson.



**SENIOR SPOTLIGHT:** Avery Sketch '22 with her twelve-year-old horse, Eagle. (Photography Credit: Victoria Demore Photography)

Although these students have animals to take care of, school is still a priority. Horse shows overall have helped the girls learn very valuable time management skills. Though most of the Berkeley student-athletes are able to learn this through their time with school sports, the equestrians had to learn on their own.



**HORSEPOWER:** Molly Ryan '22 showing her horse Periwinkle at the Bob Thomas Equestrian Center in Tampa. (Photography Credit: Victoria Demore)



## SMALL ACTS, GRAND ENTERTAINMENT: CHRIS MARSHALL BREAKS DOWN SHORTS!

By Meghna Bukkapatnam, Section Editor

Berkeley's ATE (Advanced Theater Ensemble) is well known for putting on a variety of shows, both comedy and drama. But this year, they have gone in a new direction with the Shorts! Festival. Instead of one play with a singular storyline, this production features various excerpts of plays and short films. With both comedy and drama, viewers are sure to be at the edge of their seat throughout.



**AN ACTING ARTIST:** Hadley Ciesla '23 paints a picture of her younger self. (Photography Credit: Chris Woods)

The Fanfare sat down with the Upper Division Theatre Director Chris Marshall to learn more about the process of putting the production together.

**Q: HOW DID YOU GET THE IDEA TO DO THE SHORTS! FESTIVAL INSTEAD OF ONE, LONG PLAY?**

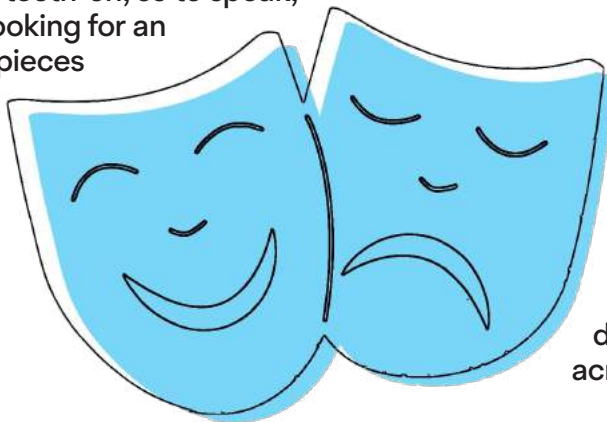
A: The idea came from wanting to find a place in the season to showcase some more student-generated and directed work. Many independent schools have one-act festivals or the like, but I also decided to use the name Shorts! to include short films as well.

**Q: HOW IS THIS PERFORMANCE DIFFERENT FROM PREVIOUS?**

A: Well, since this is the first annual, there is no other to compare it to! Except, of course, other mainstage plays—this is a collection of 10-minute plays and short films from the Film Production class, mostly produced by and directed by students, as opposed to a full-length play directed by me.

**Q: HOW DID YOU PICK OUT WHICH SHORTS TO PERFORM?**

A: I read dozens of plays from 10-minute play books; I was looking for pieces that could be good choices for our young student directors to 'cut their teeth' on, so to speak, as well as looking for an evening of pieces that were balanced between more dramatic or more comedic pieces.



**Q: ARE THE SHORTS ORIGINAL OR ALL EXCERPTS FROM OTHER FILMS/THEATER?**

A: The plays are all published plays, and the films are all made by students as assignments for the Film Production class.

**Q: WHAT WAS IT LIKE PUTTING THE SHORTS TOGETHER, AND HOW HAS THE PROCESS OF BRINGING THE PERFORMANCES TOGETHER BEEN?**

A: It was a lot of fun! It was somewhat challenging with such a short rehearsal process to schedule all of our rehearsals. There are three directors including me, Hadley Ciesla '23 and Jackson Kuhn '24, and we share some of the same actors. So again, that meant for a challenging scheduling. Many of the actors are ninth graders or are otherwise new to the program, and with two new student directors, it was a lot of learning about how the rehearsal process works. The directors met each Monday to go over issues they might be having and to stay on track with the specifics of the rehearsal process, which is quite involved. We had to create an order, and we'll be having to create transitions between the short plays as the films are playing.

**Q: WHAT CAN THE AUDIENCE EXPECT WHEN ATTENDING?**

A: A great evening of theatre and film! They will see a short play, then a film, then a play, etc. Lots of laughs, some thoughtful work, great detail and very talented students across the board!

JOIN NOW!

# MEDICAL SCIENCE CLUB

G222 @ 12:45

EVERY OTHER FRIDAY

HANNAMIR@BERKELEYPREP.ORG

# Senior to Freshman Q AND A

ELLE BONNER '25

What is the hardest part of the collage application process?

BROOKE BESNARD '22

Keeping yourself organized and being knowledgeable about the school you apply to.

MIA DILL '25

How do you stay organized and have good grades with sports?

KAYLA MANG '22

Really using your time during study halls and keeping up to date with your teachers.

MADLINE ZAKARIAN '25

What study tool did you find the most helpful for the SAT and ACT?

REAGAN BROWN '22

The best study tool was reviewing the test prep books!

STELLA RITTER '25

What was the biggest challenge of your senior year, and how did you overcome it?

NICO PAULA '22

Being able to stay focused. Try find something to keep you centered at school.

## KICKING IT TO COLLEGE: SENIORS ATHLETES SIGN OFF-CAMPUS

By Caroline Wehrell, Section Editor

Berkeley's Upper Division watched members of the class of 2022 commit to college athletic programs during the fall signing day on Nov. 10, 2021 and winter signing day on Feb. 2, 2022. But there are a handful of students who play for teams not affiliated with Berkeley, and through their hard work and dedication, have also committed to play at the college level.



Devin Armstrong '22 played varsity soccer for Berkeley, started as a freshman and kept the lowest goals allowed average in the state of Florida. Armstrong also played for Tampa Bay's United Development Academy and MLS Next Program for three years, making his semi-pro debut in the United Soccer League 2. Armstrong trained with the Tampa Bay Rowdies, a professional team in St. Petersburg, many times and played for the Tampa Bay Rowdies Academy. After receiving interest and offers from Georgetown, University of Pennsylvania, Dartmouth, Ohio State and other prestigious universities, Armstrong decided to sign with Wake Forest University.

**“WAKE FOREST HAS BEEN MY DREAM SCHOOL FOR A LONG TIME. BEING ABLE TO PUT PEN TO PAPER AT BERKELEY WAS A DREAM COME TRUE AND I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER TODAY.”**

- ARMSTRONG '22

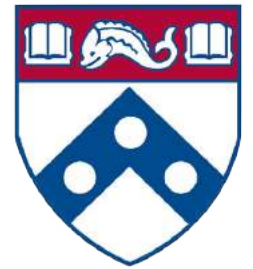


Another Berkeley senior, Josh Caron '22, also excelled as a goalkeeper during his soccer career. Caron plays for the Clearwater Chargers MLS Next Team as well as the Tampa Bay Rowdies Academy team and will be playing with the Tampa Bay Rowdies for preseason later this year. Caron decided

**“I AM EXCITED FOR THE FUTURE AND AM VERY GRATEFUL FOR ALL THE BERKELEY STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS WHO HAVE HELPED ME TO WHERE I AM TODAY. GO PANTHERS.”**

- CARON '22

to continue his athletic endeavors at High Point University, signing to play next year.



Erick Sakalosky '22 has played right-wing, left-wing and center attacking midfielder and scored 41 goals with 48 assists. Sakalosky played on many teams, including the Berkeley Boys Varsity team, Tampa Bay United MLS Next and the Tampa Bay Rowdies MLS Academy. After lots of hard work, Sakalosky signed to play soccer at the University of Pennsylvania.

**“GOING TO UPENN HAS BEEN A DREAM OF MINE SINCE I WAS A KID AND GOING TO BERKELEY HAS HELPED ME ACHIEVE THAT GOAL. I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO CONTINUING WHAT BERKELEY HAS TAUGHT ME INTO THE WORLD.”**

- SAKALOSKY '22

Although they did not get to sign at Berkeley's fall signing day, Caron, Armstrong and Sakalosky participated in a mock signing at the Tech Commons, announced by John Reilly '22 and surrounded by supportive classmates and teachers. All three of their futures look bright, as they continue their athletic careers at some of the nation's top colleges.



**DEVIN DEACON:** Senior Devin Armstrong “signs” his letter of intent at Tech Commons to become a Demon Deacon at Wake Forest University. (Photography Credit: Thalia Fraifer)



# BUCS FLOW TO FIRST: A LOOK INTO THE #1 DEBATE TEAM IN THE NATION

By Kaitlyn Mang, Section Editor

When you hear the word ‘debate’, what comes to your mind first? Debate does not simply mean arguing about mindless topics, like many people may believe. In reality, members of the debate team work hard to research their topics and compete with students from all over the country.

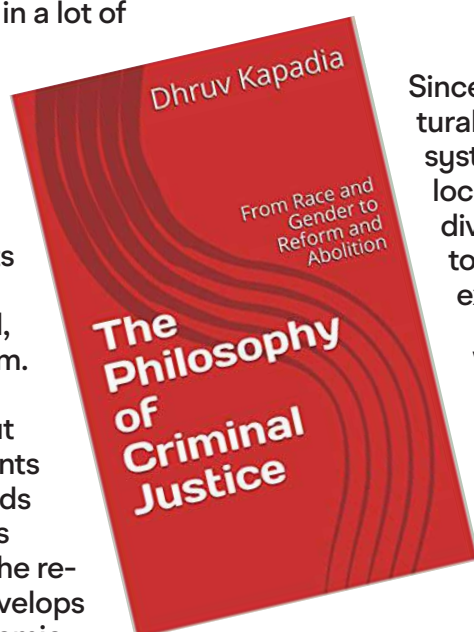
The Berkeley debate team started about 20 years ago under Mike Speer, who is currently the Director of Technology and Economics teacher, but is now led by Dr. Kevin Kuswa, the History and Religious Studies teacher, who took over the team about five years ago. As a team, they collectively conduct research by writing affirmative and negative blocks on the yearly resolution, while also using a combination of their analysis and published material. All of the team’s research is shared amongst the 70+ UD and MD debaters with more experienced members doing roughly the equivalent of a Master’s thesis worth of work each year, according to Kuswa. The team puts in a lot of hard work in preparation for the tournaments that they attend.

“When we attend a tournament, either virtually or in-person, the students will debate in pairs for a two- or three-day period, typically from about 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. each day. A single debate takes about two hours and tournaments range from six to 10 rounds depending on how teams perform,” Kuswa said. “The research skills the team develops often translate into academic work beyond the competitions.”

Previous debaters have published articles stemming from their research, and this past year Zach Zinober ’22 and Dhruv Kapadia ’22, who is currently ranked #1 in the country for debate, co-authored a 25-page paper on the January 6th insurrection that they presented at the National Communication Association Conference in Seattle. In addition, Kapadia used some of his debate research to publish a book called *The Philosophy of Criminal Justice: From Race and Gender to Reform and Abolition*, which includes a powerful interview with a death row inmate.



**DEBATE PROS:** Jarah Williams ’22, Nicole Ubani ’22, Katy Shonka ’22, Kyle Shah ’22, Dhruv Kapadia ’22, Zach Zinober ’22, Rachel Howell ’22, Sundee Win ’22, and Kamora Provine ’22 pose (left to right) for their debate club yearbook photo.



Since Kapadia noticed some structural issues within the criminal justice system, he decided to reach out to local public defenders and other individuals involved in criminal justice to learn more about their personal experiences.

When asked about what inspired him to write his book, he said, “It was after talking with two exonerated death row inmates and their struggles integrating back into society that I got the motivation to write the book. I wrote it to help share their story and many others facing similar issues, hoping to reveal more of the history and philosophy behind the criminal justice system.”

One of the best aspects of the debate program is using academic competition to help all the debaters improve their speaking and advocacy skills to become better critical thinkers. In the future, Kuswa hopes to resume in-person competitions on a consistent basis, as it is “always a lot of fun and an intense challenge to travel to debate tournaments, whether it is trying new foods, seeing new cities, meeting other debaters from around the country, or just joking around with one another.” The team’s hard work is

not left unnoticed, as Kuswa makes sure to send out emails about the team’s success after their weekend tournaments. Join the team if you are interested in learning more! Flow Bucs!

## BPS Bee Club

WHAT	JOIN THE BEE CLUB FOR A DAY FILLED WITH CLASSES & HANDS ON ACTIVITIES W/ MASTER BEEKEEPERS
WHERE	USF (A BERKELEY VAN WILL TAKE STUDENTS TO THE CAMPUS)
WHEN	MARCH 11TH, 2022
COST	\$125

### INTERESTED? EMAIL

[FLITMHAN@BERKELEYPREP.ORG](mailto:FLITMHAN@BERKELEYPREP.ORG) OR  
[JORDAJON@BERKELEYPREP.ORG](mailto:JORDAJON@BERKELEYPREP.ORG) TO  
 SIGN UP!





## CHEERLEADERS OF CHAMPIONS: BUCS FLY TO A FOURTEENTH VICTORY AT HEADMASTERS'

By Aryana Makati, Co Editor-in-Chief

For the 14th time in a row, Berkeley has achieved a decisive win at Headmasters', but who's the driving force behind the school spirit? You've heard them loud and proud and seen them dressed in blue and white—you guessed it—the varsity cheer team.



**LET'S GO BUCS!:** Cheerleaders (left to right) Marily Diaz '25, Dina Kodsí '23, Sophie Adams '24, Lexi Martinez-Monfort '24, Sophie Barrett '23, Kamora Provine '22 and Elyse Gregory '23 show their school spirit. (Photography Credit: Brooke Besnard)

After school on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, the cheerleaders trudge on to the track in the Florida heat where they start their two-hour long practice. They quickly roll out the cheer mats and begin with dynamic stretches, jumps and kicks. For the remainder of time, the girls practice dances specific to their upcoming performances.

"Afterward, I usually run through them a few times a day," Sophie Barrett '23 says. The team receives videos made by the seniors to practice the dances at home since the majority of their time together is spent on perfecting their rhythm and synchrony.

"We start learning the Headmaster's dances in late Nov./Dec., and of course, we practice them at home a few times a week," Madeleine Odom '23 adds, "but I would say that collectively it takes about a week to fully learn the dances in the routines."

In addition to the dances, the team had to prepare for tumbling and stunts, two major components of the routine as a whole. Lexi Martinez-Monfort '24, a sophomore flyer on the team, explains that she'll get with her "stunt group" to learn new tricks. They start with easier stunts to warm up, then Sherrie Weekley, the head coach, teaches them the proper form for harder stunts.

"Stunts are a little bit more complicated," Marily Diaz '25 said, "but we can usually learn one to three new stunts during a one and a half hour practice depending on the difficulty."

Before the Pep Rally, the team practiced for 30 minutes prior by stretching and doing kicks to loosen up before the performance and improve their flexibility for jumps. The tumblers specifically warmed up with simple tricks like back hand-springs and back walkovers before they ran through their tumbling passes for the routine.

"Lastly, we run through the whole routine with the music once and make final touches to it if needed after," Odom said.

On the day of Headmaster's, the stands were packed with rowdy students. The boys varsity basketball team was beating Tampa Prep

at half-time, and Berkeley's student section was more excited than ever. The cheerleaders rolled out the mats and turned on the music remix, created by Audrey Wax '23. Fans watched as they jammed to favorites like Womanizer, Sorry not Sorry and On the Floor.



**SHOW YOUR SPIRIT:** Carolina Barcnas '23 shows her school spirit during the cheer performance at all school convo. (Photography Credit: Vivian Willis)



**STANDING STRONG:** Ellis Weekley '23 shows her strength and stability while performing her "left liberty" stunt to the crowd. (Photography Credit: Kamora Provine)

"I always get a bit nervous," Barrett said, "but once I was up there, the adrenaline kicked in, and it was really fun."

For the seniors and captains, this year's Headmasters' Challenge was a memorable one, as it was one of their last performances.

One of the cheer captains Seana Kelly '22 said, "I am proud of our team and the routine that we put together, so I feel pretty good

about the performance. Though I am sad that it was my last performance ever with this group of people, I am glad that I ended my cheerleading career on a good note."

As their season gradually comes to an end, the cheerleaders reflect on their time together and how much they've grown from the beginning. Each player initially had their own reason for joining the team: for Diaz, cheer was a way to continue her gymnastics career. For Weekley, cheer was a great way to get involved with the Berkeley community. For Kelly, cheer allowed her to combine her two passions: dancing and playing sports. Regardless, all cheerleaders stayed for the same reason: the connections and memories they've made with their teammates.

"I deeply appreciate the community formed within our cheer squad," Kamora Provine '22 said. "We are all unique, yet like-minded. Each year, new girls come and go, but I can truly say I love my close connections with different girls across the Upper Division."

**"WIN OR LOSE, WE ARE AT THE GAMES FROM START TO FINISH, AND WE WILL BE THERE NO MATTER WHAT TO PROVIDE CHEER AND SUPPORT. NO ONE LOVES THE BUCS LIKE THE CHEER TEAM, AND I HOPE OUR PASSION FOR ALL OF THE TALENTED ATHLETES RADIATES THROUGHOUT THE STANDS."**

- KELLEY '22





## INTERVIEW W/ HEAD COACH SHERRIE WEEKLEY

### Q: WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AS A CHEER COACH?

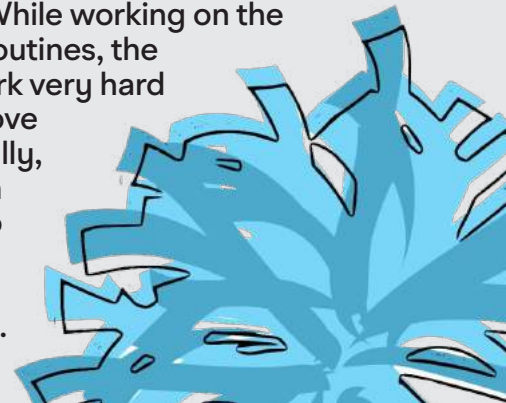
A: My role as cheer coach is to help the cheerleaders improve their cheerleading skills while working together as a team. We create three routines per year to perform for the school.

### Q: WHY DO YOU THINK CHEER IS IMPORTANT TO THE SCHOOL?

A: Cheer is important to the school because the girls enhance school spirit and enthusiasm as they improve their skills as athletes.

### Q: WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF COACHING?

A: My favorite part of working with the cheerleaders is seeing them improve their skills athletically and as a team. While working on the convo routines, the girls work very hard to improve personally, and as a team, to create the final product.



## DASHING THROUGH DOWNTOWN TAMPA: BPS CHOIR BRINGS THE CHRISTMAS CHEER

By Samantha Zophin, Staff Writer

On Dec. 4th, 2021, Berkeley choir director Helen Westerfield and the choir traveled to Curtis Hixon park to accompany other performers; Jennifer Leigh of WFLA, a local news network, and Mayor Jane Castor to name a few; for the annual Christmas Tree Lighting. Berkeley's band and singers performed an arrangement of festive holiday songs to start the Christmas season off early after months of learning and perfecting the songs. Westerfield described the experience as a privilege, especially since she has never had any concerts like the Tree Lighting Concert downtown.

"I was so thrilled to hear Ms. Leigh shout out over the Tampa rooftops 'And let's thank Berkeley Preparatory School!'" Westerfield says. "The concert was such a great experience for our musical performers."



**TOGETHER IN SONG:** Both the Berkeley band and choir come together in performance of their final song of the night 'And Suddenly.' (Photo Credit: Jeremy Canody)

The choir started with the Cantabella group, who sang *Blow Blow Thou Winter Wind* by William Shakespeare. Cantabella singer Yael Huneycutt '25 said, "They were really excited to perform beforehand, but there was definitely an atmosphere of nervousness."



"We just really wanted to do well," Huneycutt said. "We maintained our harmonies well during *Blow Blow*, and *And Suddenly* sounded great with all the different singing groups."

The Beatitones, Berkeley's all male acapella group, then took over with their iconic performances of *You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch* and *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*. After, the all-girls acapella group, the Mello Divas, sang *Breathe* by Anna Nalick, along with a remix of *Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)* and *Underneath the Tree*.

The beautiful singing by the Divas captivated the crowd, who were then introduced to Berkeley's coed singing group the Berkeley Singers. They sang *Love to Light*, *Carol of the Bells* and *Hanerot Halalu* before joining with the Cantabellas to sing a fast paced *Jingle Bells* with festive gear.

Westerfield said, "One moment that stood out to me was having everyone sing 'Jingle Bells' with such joy-filled energy and pizzazz!"



**5, 4, 3, 2, 1...:** Tampa's mayor, Jane Castor, addresses the crowd moments before the lighting of the Christmas tree. (Photography Credit: Jeremy Canody)

After a speech from Mayor Jane Castor, all choir groups performed *And Suddenly* while filmed by WFLA on Channel 8 News. This piece concluded the event, with the tree beautifully lit in the distance.

- **WESTERFIELD** "Somehow that particular gospel song was able to get all the city of Tampa on their feet," Westerfield said, "and it felt like a huge dance party as we celebrated together."

The experience given to all choir students was very special, as the crowd got to see exactly what Berkeley's music program offers.

"I think it's great to have opportunities to reach out and make connections with people throughout our city," Westerfield said.

“THE ARTS TRULY HAVE A SPECIAL WAY OF TOUCHING US ALL!”



# Upper Division POLL RESULTS

## FAVORITE **SHOW** OF 2021

1. OUTER BANKS
2. EUPHORIA
3. SQUID GAME

## FAVORITE ACADEMIC **SUBJECT**

1. SCIENCE
2. HISTORY
3. MATH

## FAVORITE **SCHOOL EVENT** SO FAR

1. HOCO DANCE/GAME
2. HEADMASTERS' CHALLENGE
3. HALLOWEEN PARADE

## FAVORITE **SAGE MEAL**

1. PASTA
2. PIZZA
3. SALAD BAR

## THAT'S DUSTY: A LOOK INTO NAHS'S ANNUAL CHALK WALK COMPETITION

By Grace Dorion, Staff Writer

During the first week of the second semester, you might have noticed the chalk drawings done by Berkeley's very own talented art students. Hosted by the National Art Honor Society (NAHS) club, the annual chalk-walk contest brings in many students, faculty and staff, all eager to catch a glimpse of the artists' working. This year's theme was children's stories, with drawings ranging from popular books to lesser known works. When asked how they came up with their designs, many of the student artists stated that they had chosen a book from their childhood.

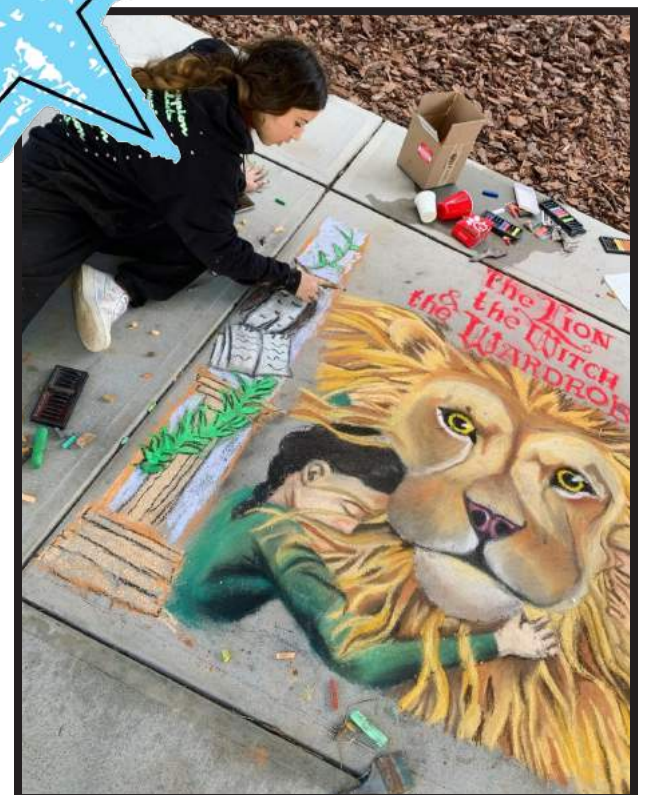
Jessica Agran '23 said, "Baby Mouse was a comic book series that was a favorite of mine. I remember reading it over and over. It wasn't a very well known book so I wanted to share it with others and validate any other Baby Mouse enjoyers!"

Before the contest, artists were given an opportunity to practice drawing on chalk before they sat down for a couple hours to create their art. Even so, the artists ran into some problems on contest day.

Audrey Wax '23 shared that the chalk created large amounts of dust, with little of the pigment rubbing off on the ground. This made it

difficult to cover the dark grey of the concrete underneath. To combat this problem, they used a plethora of techniques. The most prominent one was crushing up the chalk and mixing it with water. After this, they would take a paintbrush and brush the pigmented mixture on top of the concrete. This chalky paste made it much easier for most artists to work with, helping with the creation of their pieces.

Alexis McKeever '24 said, "I liked using it because I could fade the colors together and I could also use water to change the way it looked on the sidewalk."



**AND WE HAVE A WINNER!:** Katy Shonka '22 with her *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* chalk art. (Photography Credit: Jarah Williams)

After careful deliberation by the faculty, Katy Shonka '22 and her piece on *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe* won the 2022 annual chalk drawing contest.

Shonka said, "There was some really good competition this year so I was excited that I won! Nonetheless, it was a super fun experience, I love drawing and seeing everyone's work."

By the end of the chalk contest many students, teachers and faculty members had come out to watch the student artists create their work. The patio outside the Gries was transformed into a gallery that attracted many people in the Berkeley community.



**PRETTY IN PINK:** Jessica Agran '23 works on her *Baby Mouse* chalk drawing. (Photography Credit: Sienna Caldwell)



# BEHIND THE APP: THE NOT SO COMMON THINGS OF COMMON APP

By Kamora Provine, Head Photo Editor

Upon every cycle of seniors that come through Berkeley, there is a primary shared experience: the college admissions process.

For me, this meant many long nights working on supplements and equally long, restless nights waiting to receive decisions. And by May 1, 2022, National College Decision Day, we will make a choice that changes our entire futures—well, to some extent. I think we overcomplicate this process from time to time and forget the idea that ‘everything will be okay’. Although it’s a cliché, I’ve realized the gravity of these words in many different moments within this process.

The pure heartbreak from rejection and deferral that people experience is unmatched and unlike anything we’ve experienced before; I myself can corroborate this experience after an agonizing experience with rejection last semester with my Early Action application. On the other hand, this experience has been truly beautiful for so many of my peers. Nearly twenty exceptional student-athletes have already committed to their dream schools with unique opportunities to pursue their athletic and academic careers.

Undoubtedly, this experience varies from person to person. Many of us are like-minded in our Berkeley community, but we differ in our goals; whether it’s the desire to stay in-state, become an international student, commit for sports and everything in between. To get an understanding of the Berkeley community holistically, we must observe various individuals.



In my perspective, Nico Paula '22 is unquestionably a hallmark for men's volleyball both on and off campus. He has been playing at Berkeley since

6th grade and also spends a great deal of his time playing club volleyball. To get into his admissions process, take a look at his answer to the following question about the college application process:

## Q: WHAT HAS THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS BEEN LIKE FOR YOU?

A: The college application process was definitely different than what I expected it to be like. I knew I wanted to play [volleyball] in college, but I was told by a lot of coaches that the main thing to focus



**SIGN AWAY!:** After the grueling college application process, Nico Paula signs to play volleyball at Lewis University. (Photography Credit: Chris Woods)

on is grades, as it can help out a lot with scholarship money. The way collegiate men's volleyball works is that players are only given four and a half scholarships, so the best thing to lean back on is to get academic money. I committed before senior year, so the overall process wasn't as stressful as my peers were. I had one essay, and that was it. I'm grateful for the situation I was placed in and how I knew that all the hard work had finally paid off. Ms. Hoversten (Associate Director of the Upper Division and Co-Director of College Counseling) had already finished my college recommendation, since she had the feeling I would commit earlier in my senior year. Overall, all the college application processes are different and I'm just thankful that after all of these years of both being dedicated to my school work and on the court has granted me the opportunity to attend a college next year.

Sophia Simoes '22 is a senior who has had an academic and athletic career at Berkeley since freshman year. Like many, Sophia had her eyes set on what school she wanted to go to early on and decided to apply early via Restrictive Early Action. Let's take a look into her story to give us some insight.

## Q: WHAT HAS THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS BEEN LIKE FOR YOU?

A: The college application process has been slightly overwhelming to be honest.

When someone submits Early Decision or Restrictive Early Action to a school and receives a deferral, you then have to submit all of your other applications. I ended up adding more schools and ended up having to do many essays. The process varies between people's experiences, but for me personally, I'm glad it's over.

Undoubtedly, Adam Bennett '22 embodies the nature of our Berkeley community. He is a lifer who has practically grown up at BPS. He shared his process:



## Q: WHAT HAS THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS BEEN LIKE FOR YOU?

A: The college application process is a nuanced one for sure. There is no right answer to this process, and while I did end up very happy in the end, I completely recognize those who don't. For me, I was really caught up in whether or not I saw myself at my college of choice. But to be honest, it is the places that we don't expect ourselves to be that offer us the sweetest fruits.

When I opened my UPenn decision letter on Dec. 17, 2021 at 7:00 pm, a billion possibilities roamed through my head. When the letter was a yes, I was elated, and I cannot wait to spend the next

four years at the University of Pennsylvania. But looking back on the process, I wish I hadn't stressed about it as much. We often get so caught up in the hierarchal aspects that arise from elitist colleges, that we forget that it is a personal journey. The most important thing I learned from the college application process is that being open to different possibilities is the greatest thing you can do for yourself. Always know that the best things can and will happen to you if you simply lower your expectations.

All in all, the college application process is transformative regardless of who you are and what you want. To an extent, we learn more about ourselves with every application. It almost serves as a summary of our past: our last three and a half years as Berkeley high schoolers; however, it's also a glimpse into our futures that will bring us much success.

\*Portraits from 2020-2021 Buccaneer Yearbook



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: OUR FAVORITE MOMENTS



seniors | ✕

send-off

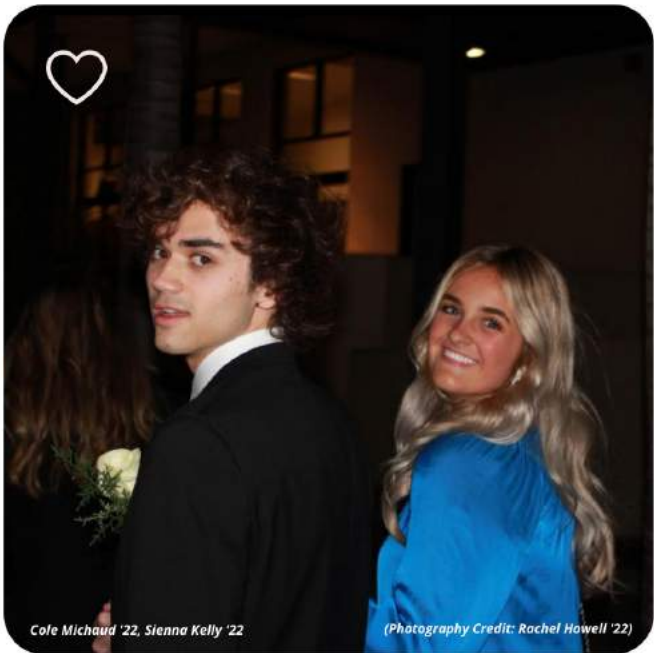
buccaneers

class of '22

farewell





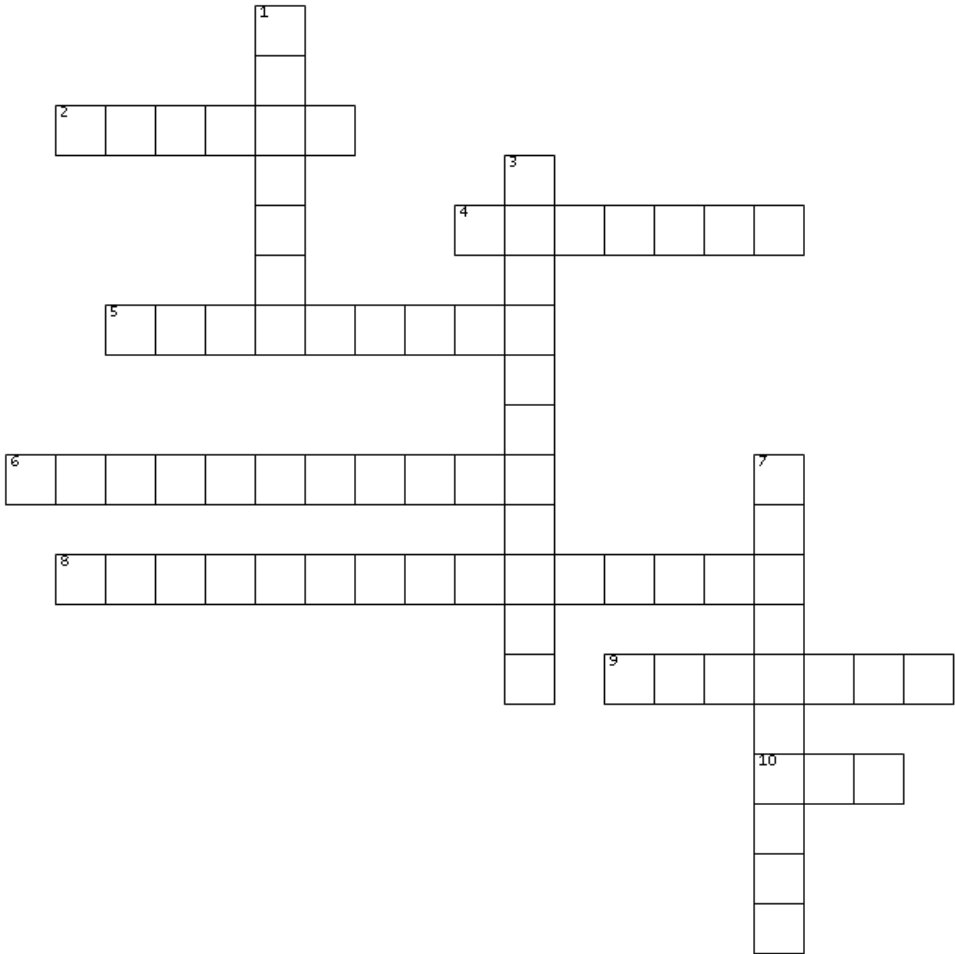


ACROSS

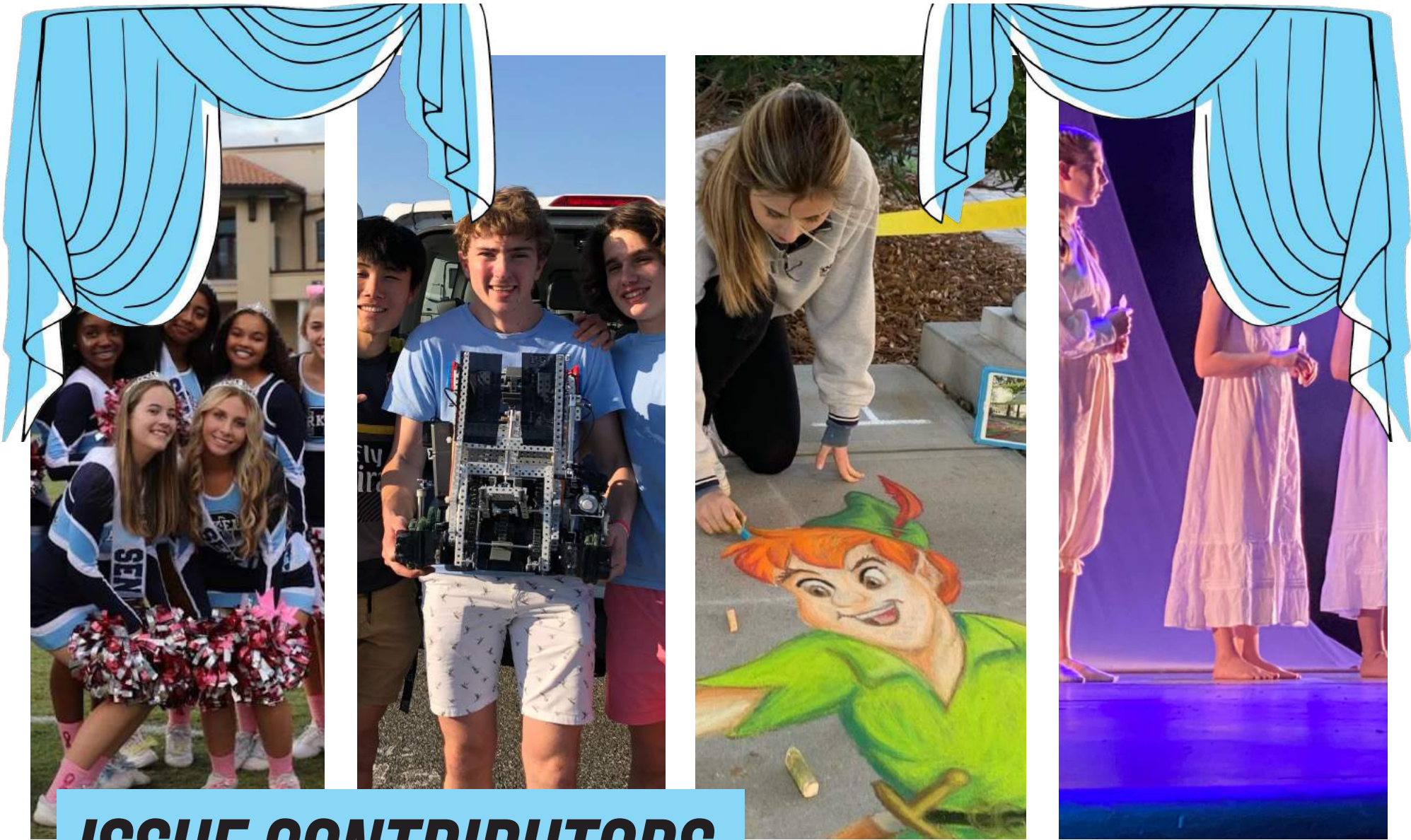
- 2. A popular word game
- 4. Class of '22
- 5. The headmaster
- 6. You can find the seniors here
- 8. A new Berkeley sport
- 9. This year's play
- 10. The Jean \_\_\_\_ Cone Library

DOWN

- 1. After high school comes...
- 3. An annual Berkeley sporting event
- 7. A sweet senior privilege







ISSUE CONTRIBUTORS



**ARYANA MAKATI**  
Co Editor-in-Chief & Layout Designer



**KAITLYN MANG**  
Section Editor



**REAGAN BROWN**  
Co Editor-in-Chief



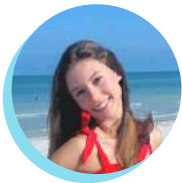
**MEGHNA BUKKAPATNAM**  
Section Editor



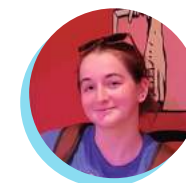
**KAMORA PROVINE**  
Head Photo Editor



**SAMANTHA ZOPHIN**  
Staff Writer



**CAROLINE WEHRELL**  
Section Editor



**GRACE DORION**  
Staff Writer