

New Year, New You

PVA New Years Resolutions brought to you by Mikey Harper and PVA Productions!

Santa is bringing
some New Year’s
Resolutions!



There’s a good chance that we’ve all had a New Year’s resolution at least once – and there’s an even better chance that it never actually got done. That’s kind of the novelty of it, though; even if you’re the most cynical person to touch 790 Austin, it’s fun to have a little make-believe “new year, new me” moment (even if that’s definitely not how it works).

But as we inch closer and closer to 2023, I haven’t heard anyone talking about a New Year’s resolution. I even asked my yearbook class while writing this, and there was a resounding no (sorry Tea, Evelyn, and Olivia. I can’t say I support your resolution-free lifestyle, but we’re still cool). So, what’s up this year at PVA? Have we all grown out of New Year’s resolutions? Am I the only one still pretending I’m going to keep my room clean and never miss an assignment? (P.S. If you actually do those things, don’t tell me. I will feel bad about myself.)

So, I decided to take matters into my own hands. I figured there have to be some resolutions floating around the student body this year, I would just have to stake them out myself. I asked some friends, and I put up a question sticker on my story... but I didn’t feel like I was hearing from enough departments and grades (apologies in advance for all the Creative Writing kids in here). So, I reached out to my friend Sydney Gibson to partner up with PVA Productions and get some answers from their audience on Instagram (@pvaproductions). Needless to say, I got some... interesting answers. While I can’t put them all here because they’ll get me in trouble and I have a fear of authority, I can display some favorites – maybe they’ll inspire you to set your own New Year’s resolution!

Tobi Carr: To get a girlfriend.
You heard it here first, ladies.

Natalia Alarcon-Castro: To be more present for my family. I’m always busy and I’d like to dedicate more time to them!
This one is really sweet. I’d show Sr. Alarcon, but I haven’t taken his class since sophomore year. Miss you, king.

Kai Bascon: GAINZ
As long as you lay off steroids!

Cayenne Souknary: I want to learn to drive this year.
My driver’s ed modules have sat untouched for weeks but I can kinda parallel park, so basically, I’m a professional, and maybe I can give you lessons.

Abby Tobey: To do something active for at least 20 minutes a day.
This is a good one! My personal favorite way to stay active is biking.

Scout Brooks: To go to bed by 10:30 PM every night.
Hearing from a PVA student who respects their sleep schedule is refreshing.

Ryder Tayrien: To be gayer.
Not sure if that’s possible, but I respect your enthusiasm. Love you! (Disclaimer: I’m not being homophobic, I swear I’m gay.)

Hazel BrittonDansby: To not fail Pre-Cal.
You and me both. I swear I’m trying my hardest, Mrs. Garza!

Mia Desalos: To not get broken up with.
Me too, to be honest.

Kristyn Leroy: To turn my situationship into a relationship.
We’ve all been there. Good luck!

Troy Liman: To use chapstick.
I can’t attest to the fact that you need chapstick because I’ve never been close enough to tell, but I hope this works for you? I like the Strawberry Ice Pop flavor, so there’s somewhere to start. Baby steps.

Izzy Issakhan: To resume journaling.
Me too! This was also my ‘22 resolution, but I only journaled four or five times. I’m sure you’ll have more luck than me.

A Definitive Ranking of Christmas Traditions

It’s that time of year again! Capitalism is at its peak. Everyone you know is scrambling to get some last-minute gift that their recipients won’t even like. Mariah Carey’s crooning is utterly inescapable. The Christmas season can be a turbulent one, but what really makes the holiday are the traditions people celebrate. I’ve picked five random Christmas traditions to definitively rank before you take off for winter break.

- 1. The Tree!**
Real or fake, there’s nothing like hauling it home and slapping tinsel, ornaments, and string lights on it for the sake of festivity. The best part is that, on Christmas morning, there are a bunch of presents under it. Its only pitfall is that if the tree happens to be real, you have to watch it rot until the garbage man picks it up, which is a bit depressing.
- 2. The Gifts!**
Let’s be honest. Christmas would be just another holiday without the gift-giving—or, more importantly, the gift-receiving. Shopping for suitable presents, getting them wrapped, and seeing your loved ones open them is a tradition

- in itself. Generosity is always a good thing. Unless, of course, you still believe in Santa. If so, ignore everything I just said and set out cookies for the elderly man diving down your chimney.
- 3. The Movies.**
Christmas movies are an... interesting genre of film. My four-year-old self had nightmares after watching the live-action Grinch. Nevertheless, many families find themselves on the couch on Christmas Eve, settling into A Christmas Story or It’s A Wonderful Life. And yes, Die Hard is a Christmas flick, and anyone who disagrees is simply incorrect.
- 4. The Ugly Sweaters.**
These are a so-bad-it’s-good type of tradition.

by Grace Duncan

For some reason, it became common practice to nab the most garishly over-decorated Christmas sweater in existence and show it off. My only complaint is that they get sticky after a while, so you end up being baked alive. It’s like you’re inside a Hot Pocket.

5. Building a Snowman.
Please. This is Houston. You can’t build a snowman if there is no snow. On the rare occasions when it does snow, it doesn’t pack well, making it difficult to actually assemble a snowman. The kids up north may treat themselves to this tradition, but down here, it’s practically nonexistent.

Keep in mind that there are many traditions I did not list—some that are just as classic as these and some that are unique to certain cultures. All in all, though, these small practices are what make Christmas truly special. Happy holidays, PVA!



No, Hanukkah Is Not The Jewish Version Of Christmas

Not even close. Both fall under the umbrella of “winter holidays”, but we all know Christmas dominates this category by a long shot. I don’t say this passive-aggressively, or as an insult, mind you. Not only is Christmas more widely celebrated (by about 85% of people!) but it’s also more widely marketed and anticipated. I’m not here to talk about that, though. I’m here to talk about Hanukkah.



Little Emery, her older brother, and twin sister.

First of all, there are about sixteen ways to spell Hanukkah. I’m not exaggerating. If you can think of it, it’s probably right. Boiled down to its most fundamental meaning, Hanukkah celebrates a miracle. Some oil was supposed to last one night but somehow managed eight. Throw in some war and persecution (very common themes in Jewish holidays), and you’ve got what many Jews consider to be their favorite holiday. It’s a happy time for family, gratitude, and light. It’s a time for celebration in its purest form.

Still, I feel pity for Jewish parents. It is not easy to instill a love of Hanukkah and its meaning when Christmas stands, objectively bigger and brighter. It’s what their friends are celebrating. It’s what the radio and stores count down to

by Emery Goldstein

meticulously. Most children don’t understand or take into account the spiritual meanings of the things they celebrate. They take things into account at the surface level. Hanukkah is no longer its own word completely separate from Christmas; they are two entities pitted against each other.

So, I say now, don’t do that. I can’t speak for any other winter holiday, but I can talk for this one. The only thing Hanukkah has in common with Christmas is that they both hold a lot of meaning for those who celebrate them. And that they happen in winter. That’s it. So if you want to do a favor for both parties involved, separate them in your mind. As equals. And, wish your Jewish friends a ‘Happy Hanukkah’. It will mean the world to them.

In Defense of Holiday Car Decorations

I’m just like you: I love the holidays, I love the Christmas spirit, and, above all, I love seeing funky little reindeer antlers and red noses on people’s cars. If you have a car and it’s not decorated this holiday season, let me try to convince you otherwise.

1. Santa has it right! If it’s the holiday season and you haven’t decorated your car with all the fixings, you’re wasting a valuable source of fuel: holiday spirit. He knew what he was doing with that pack of reindeer!

2. Take Tex Dinoco of the Cars movie franchise. He is the CEO of Dinoco, one of the Cars universe’s most popular and highest consumed products! He knows how to decorate himself and take himself seriously—look at his majestic horns. I’m sure he would support some antlers if the occasion was appropriate.

3. They’re cheap! For only \$13 on Amazon, you can show the world what a respectable and community-oriented person you are! There’s not much else that’ll do that for that kind of money.



In the end, there’s really nothing to lose: it’s a fun thing to do, and it’ll give you a good laugh at the very least. And, obviously, your ornaments don’t have to be Christmas-themed. Add whatever celebratory decals or decorations that you want onto your car, and enjoy your holiday break in a slightly more stylish way!

An Investigative-Opinion Deep Dive on The Diversity Series Move

by Mar Bradley

Saying a lot of things have happened the past few years at HSPVA would be an understatement. While we haven't experienced high school football, the highs and lows have certainly been extreme, containing but not limited to: moving fully to the new building in 2019, COVID arriving in 2020, a huge change in administration, and the loss and gain of many teachers. What has persisted thus far through it have been the Diversity Series, now reaching their 5th year of existence in our school. The Diversity Series, designed to celebrate different groups within the school, are a huge part of what defines and connects the PVA student body. This school year would've been the first opportunity since 2020 for the Series to run at full capacity within the Austin building, taking full advantage of the Denney Theatre.



However, close to the end of last year, rumors began to spread that the Denney would no longer be available for any Diversity Series, but instead, hosted in the smaller Studio Theatre. The reasons for this move remained unclear, and when the new restriction would take effect was up in the air as well. Was it because the tech kids were overworked? Was the space too expensive to run constantly? What the hell even was happening?

This year, we received a definitive answer: all Diversity Series would be in the Studio Theatre. This was not new for Venus or Alphabet Soup, which had both previously worked in the smaller space, but it was a drastic change for the general larger events of Koffee House, 790 Night Market, and Carnaval. Though I had not been a part of any Diversity Series previously, I had attended several and enjoyed them deeply. The performances were always incredibly put together, and there was always such an energy before and after them as you got to see your classmates perform.

Naturally, when I learned of the change, I wanted to know why, and so I reached out. Over a week or so, I met with several of this year's Diversity Series leaders as well as Dr. Rivas so I could answer the questions of: huh? why? And what does it all mean?

One of the reasons repeated as a heavy pro of the use of the Studio Theatre is that it's a much more intimate setting. The smaller space leads to a closer atmosphere, spread out across one afternoon and one evening show. For some Diversity Series, such as Venus and Alphabet Soup, this seems to work better and encourages a closer connection. However, for the recent Carnaval and upcoming Koffee House and Night Market, that same intimacy serves as a hindrance. Between managing how performers and leaders were supposed to move, the technical restraints and acoustics, and the limited ticket sales due to reduced seating, Carnaval in particular had some trouble with the move, though they were able to produce an amazing performance. At the end of last year, the Diversity Series leaders had been told of the official location change, and throughout the summer, Carnaval leaders had tried to advocate for the Denney but were not able to establish a clear line of communication. When fall semester started, they searched for an outside venue, but costs would have been far too high, so they stayed in the Studio Theatre. A pressing issue became that many family members of the performers wanted to come to the show and had bought tickets, meaning fewer students were able to attend the show. For Carnaval, this

was especially upsetting as this year's freshman class has the highest number of Hispanic students yet most were unable to attend the event. Instead of encouraging student connection, the Studio Theatre setting stifled it in its fundraising sheer outreach potential.

That's not saying the move to the Studio Theatre is without justification. What Dr. Rivas was able to shine light on during our interview was the strain of running the Denney. Between mandatory performances from most art areas and the fall and spring All School Musical, the Denney is already booked almost year round. It was rough on the tech students and select members of staff as well, who have to work long hours to pull together show after show. The administration ultimately prioritized circular shows over the Diversity Series. This is an understandable choice. HSPVA is, at its core, a busy school: something is always going on, and more often, everything seems to happen at once. Trying to alleviate that load isn't a bad decision, but it seems to be a decision that was made largely without direct input from or communication with the students.

Part of what makes the Diversity Series so important, as we all seem to agree on, is the connection between students. From Library Desk Concerts to other club events, the nature of students creating for other students is key to the culture of the school. Tellez, our dearly missed former assistant principal, would oversee the Diversity Series, and a variety of teachers would assist in production, but largely they were student-run. Many of the issues with keeping the Diversity Series in the Denney were directly student issues as well: the overwork, the tight schedules, the having to choose what to prioritize—curricular performances or this “extracurricular” event.

The Diversity Series are now in the Studio Theatre, not the Denney. This is a fact, but it's not unchangeable. Right now, as HSPVA continues to shift and try to settle into a new norm, there is room for changes and self-advocacy. Whether in relation to the Diversity Series or any other minutia of this school, it's in your hands, ultimately. So go wild.

POLITICAL PARTAY: Post-Election Depression

by Mia El-Yafi

Greg Abbott won! I do not know how political I am allowed to be on here, but I do know that sucks! I am not looking forward to the increase of restrictions on abortions and the simultaneous decrease of restrictions on guns. I am not looking forward to the hypocrisy and fear-mongering. I am not looking forward to any of it. And although we saw this coming, it hurts to see Gregory win by a nearly 10 percent margin.

But I have to remind myself this is a partay column. In the spirit of partay-ing, I've listed 7 fun things you can do instead of doom-scrolling, punching a wall, or crying.

Rich Hydrating Face Sheet Mask, \$2- You can't doom-scroll if you have a hydrating mask from Trader Joe's over your eyes. P.S. I have sensitive skin, and this one is not irritating.

Break Life Houston, 10 minutes for \$50- I can't think of anything more therapeutic than throwing plates at a wall. I suggest buying some plates from Ikea instead and save some cash.

Roll down the hill at Hermann Park, \$0- Return to a childlike state and pretend you're six years old again.

Texas Sheet Cake, \$0, homemade- Even though Texas has failed us in some aspects, it gave us this moist, delicious, beautiful cake.

Do nothing, \$0- I've discovered this recently. I just sit and do nothing. It's amazing. I forget I have free will and can just stop for 1 minute .

Doodle, \$0- Put on an album you've been meaning to listen to and doodle.

Hammocks at Rice University, \$0- If you walk through the main entrance of Rice then walk forward until you hit the Library, on your left there will be a little alcove with about 7 hammocks. Bring a book or your headphones and swing under the canopy of trees. A few steps away there's even a see-saw.

What We Expect From Our Winter Ball as Freshmen

With the Student Council and student body hyping up the winter ball, it’s only natural that we as freshmen build some sort of expectation. Here are some of the features that we anticipate the most:

The Extravagant Costumes

It wouldn’t be an art school ball without at least one elaborate gown. The theme for this year really leaves it up to interpretation, so to us, custom-styled dresses and suits are a sight we can’t wait to experience.

Decorations

Student council has been giving their all on the planning of the winter ball, and having a

by Yuechee Zhang and Andrew Hernandez, Enjoyer of Balls

masquerade ball gives a lot of room for the decor committee to make stylistic decoration choices. This can bring up a lot of creative ideas to work with; we look forward to seeing the theme brought to life by our hardworking StuCo members!

Good Food

Thanks to dedicating a hundred hours of my life for the all school musical, I know how amazing PVA catering could be. I have very high hopes for the food at the ball. Heck, I’d be happy with some H-E-B cookies.

Fun Activities

We are expecting the event to last for a few



hours, and during which the students will need something to keep them occupied—it’s hard to keep conversations going for so long, and activities would serve as an amazing opportunity for people within different departments and grades to get to know each other.

5 Steps to Survive Cuffing Season

December is the worst month of the year. It’s cold, the year is ending, midterms are here, and you have to witness all of your friends with significant others go out and do cute couple things as you stay home all break rotting away. Fear not! I have created a simple guide to help single people combat this Christmas Cuffing Season.

Step 1: Block all of your taken friends

If you block all of your friends who are taken, you won’t be reminded of relationships. Will they get upset? Maybe. But that’s their problem! Always put yourself first. #SelfLove

CUFFING SEASON SCHEDULE	
Scouting	(look for a partner online): Aug 1- 31
Drafting	(pick your top candidates): Sept 1-30
Tryouts	(go on many first dates): Oct 1-31
Pre-Season	(get more serious with one or two prospects) Nov 1-30
Cuffing season	(pick your best match and be exclusive for the holidays): Dec 1-Jan 15
Playoffs	(survive the holidays & consider long-term potential): Jan 16-Feb 13
Championship Game	(offer official BF/GF status & celebrate Valentine’s Day): February 14

Step 2: Stop watching any media with couples in it
I’m pretty sure this is every single piece of media with the exception of some war movies and horror movies. I hope you are ready to brush up on your historical war knowledge and you aren’t a piss baby.

Step 3: Get a hobby

While yes, it is true that the world does revolve around you, unfortunately not everyone wants to dedicate all of their time to you. That is okay! As you wait for that somebody who will, pick up something fun to do as you wait. This could perhaps be pottery, filing lawsuits, badminton, or whatever your heart contents! Just, whatever you do, do not take up rock climbing...

Step 4: Pretend to like yourself

I know, it’s hard to convince yourself you are worthy of someone liking you, or if anyone would even like you at all, or whatever insecurity you got from a TikTok comment section. The number one piece of advice that always works is “Fake it till you make it!” which I hold dear to my heart. So, apply these words of wisdom and just pretend to not be miserable. Eventually, you actually will not be miserable and love life.

by Rafael Valdes

This will 100% work.

Step 5 (for advanced students): Try talking to real people in real life
Now, this is a challenging step only a select few can successfully complete.If you have carefully perfected steps 1-4, you may attempt this step. However, there are 3 D’s you must ask yourself before this step. “*Does* this person seem boring?” You cannot put yourself through all of this misery and self-work to end up dating someone who has the personality of a cardboard box, a felony I’ve seen many women commit at this school. “*Do* they want to dedicate themselves to me?” As I said before, you are the literal center of the universe that upholds the entire solar system. If they cannot acknowledge this, they are not worth it. “Am I being *deceived*?” If this certain someone is your ex who swears they will not break up with you again after the 18th break-up... I’m gonna need you to take the hint, best friend...

Now that you have these steps ready to use thanks to me, you can survive the miserable winter cuffing season.

This Election Showed Me My Responsibility as a Voter

We live in paradoxes. And always will. They are the thickly woven fibers of the world we live in, and the realities we create. A nation is composed of all different political perspectives occurring simultaneously. Based on these ideologies and political perspectives, we select a small group of people who make executive decisions to govern us. We place our trust in this delicate yet resilient system. To fortify our governing bodies we must challenge the paradoxical nature of these principles and practices for mutual advancement.

In the wake of the recent midterm elections, we must acknowledge and celebrate the turn-

out of BIPOC, women, and young voters alike. Their efforts galvanized in response to the Dobbs decision and threats to democracy writ large. The repudiation of conspiracy theories, election deniers and distrust was a necessary and monumental step in dodging authoritarianism. As a Gen Z who is reminded daily by their Gen X parents about the importance of voting, the significance of the events that transpired on January 6th and abortion access being overturned I look forward to the day that I can exercise my right to vote.

What I learned from this election cycle is that no election is small or insignificant. If we want

by Lucia Maynard

to continue to stave off authoritarianism we must continue to engage every voter in every election. Our futures depend on fair and accessible election processes that do not discriminate and on politicians who believe in democracy and the will of the people.

My hope is that these issues which are so critical to our shared humanity and progress will cause us to continue to actively participate in this important process. We have a shared responsibility as a new and growing block of voters to shape the world and our futures. It is up to our generation.

Wynton Marsalis’s Visit to PVA

by Luka Neal, Sofia Fontenot, and Lila Mankad

On November 1st, Wynton Marsalis visited HSPVA’s Denney Theatre and gave a musical performance, intertwining conversation about jazz, life, and music as an instrument for empathy. Now, read the experiences of three Creative Writers at a modern jazz legend’s concert, their insights, and their takeaways.

Sofia’s Takeaways:

I walked into the Denney alongside a parade of field-tripping second graders, whose newness to the jazz world rivaled my own. Lucky for me (and the second graders), Wynton Marsalis was the best teacher for the job. My fellow creative writers and I sat on the mezzanine, looking down on the stage washed in a blue light. Hearing the band, they seemed to be a single organism, completely in control of each limb: the rhythm, the woodwind, and the brass.

After an opening song, Marsalis demonstrated a call and response: he would play a melody on the trumpet and the drummer in the rhythm section would carry on his own melody, like a funny little conversation. Listening, not just hearing, made the conversation work, Marsalis explained to the second graders. The kids chorused back the word *listening*, though perhaps not as seamlessly as the drummer had responded to Marsalis (some voices piped up a good few seconds after everyone else). As the band picked up from solos to tutti, Marsalis taught us accountability and responsibility; every member must be present and working to make the whole organism function.

With every cross-department event I attend, the art, whether jazz or theater (I have yet to see a vocal or dance show!) unfolds itself into more parts than I thought possible. I know I’ll never be able to understand the subtleties of every art, but I am happy to at least experience the talent that goes into each performance.

Luka’s Takeaways:

Getting to see a modern great in our own Denney Theatre was extremely surreal, and Marsalis’ philosophical way of speaking made the band’s music hold incredible substance and weight. The presentation described musical concepts, such as counterpoint melodies or the form of a twelve-bar blues, applied it to larger concepts in life, and then demonstrated these principles in its narrative musical form.

“Jazz musicians are all custodians of this basic form, as all citizens should be custodians of their constitution,” stated Marsalis to the Denney full of students.

Another great theme of the presentation was empathy and its application to music. When two brass musicians took the stage and played a solo together, one following the other, it greatly demonstrated how musical conversations are formed, and the way they involve just as much listening as they do playing.

Witnessing this kind of speech showed me just how much it means to adapt to the musical context being presented to you, being able to respond to the call shouted out by any other member of the band.



Lila’s Takeaways:

Despite his fame and talent, throughout the performance, Marsalis seemed to sidestep the spotlight with a casual assurance in his skills, instead sharing it with younger, emerging musicians. After his speech on life and music, he let alto saxophonist Alexa Tarantino, a 30-year-old who was nominated as a “Rising Star” in 2022 by Downbeat Magazine, take the reins. And then, the ball bounced to an older man in the trombone section. It is remarkable how the orchestra before us spans generationally, and upon examination, it seems intentional. Wynton Marsalis is dedicated to cultivating the future of jazz, and that includes skilled musicians of varied ages and experiences.

It also includes the talented jazz students at HSPVA. “I thought it was an excellent opportunity for jazz students to see some celebrated musicians that we idolize,” said Astrid Allen, a junior bassist. “Jazz is a dying art form, and education is our music’s lifeline. I thought that the way the show was structured was perfect because it enraptured a diverse audience that included very young elementary students, high school students, jazz kids, teachers, and administration. I am inspired by such a commitment to informing and captivating the next generation with our music.”

Since he co-founded Jazz at Lincoln Center in 1987, Marsalis has made educating children and nourishing young talent a priority. Watching him teach the oddball group of elementary schoolers, HSPVA Jazz musicians, and a few lucky other students like us, Wynton Marsalis’ passion for his music blossoms through the Denney. Repeat after me. *Soul!* he says. Our chorus of voices repeats: *Soul!*

The Mystery Roof Smoker

by Natalia Alarcon-Castro and Dillon Hillard

Every morning, there is a man on the roof of the Houston Center Garage across the street from PVA. A smoker.

Unbeknownst to him, the Creative Writing students and teachers have been watching him, imagining what it’s like to live a day in the life of The CW Roof Smoker. Who is he? Are these smoke sessions the only minutes he has to himself? With every drag he takes on his cigarette, we worry for his lungs, but he looks so blissful that we can’t help but watch in awe. His presence alone causes an infectious, silent pause within many Creative Writing classes.

We cannot help but wonder about every aspect of his life. He was last seen with a yellow shirt, blue jeans, and tan Timberland boots. We speculate whether he is a construction worker

or an employee at the garage itself. Is he using his break time to escape from terrible customers and horrible parking?

With such little information to draw on, the rest is up to our speculation and imagination. “What kind of car does he drive?” “Do you think he gets free parking since he works there?” “Is he an obsessive Astros fan?” Questions like these are commonplace in our everyday conversations. Our teachers make sarcastic comments like “He’s too old for you,” which always results in raucous laughter and people having to explain to Ms. Apte that they aren’t into the mysterious old man who smokes.

Filled with suspicion, our conversations spiral out of control whenever we spot him. With no way to have him acknowledge our existence,

we can only speculate. The CW Smoker will forever be a mysterious “friend” of the PVA Creative Writers. Regardless of his true identity, we feel some strange connection with him. He’s as mysterious to us as we are to the rest of the school. For now, we will continue to dwell upon his elusivity with affection.

Now, we have a question for you: is there a stranger you often see near PVA? Does he change the course of your classes? Let paper* know.



This movie was an absolute tearjerker. I saw it the day after premiere day and cried about 6 times. The emotion in this movie starts RIGHT away, so please be prepared for the tissues to come out. The post-credit scene in this film was by far one of the better ones, and it triggered my emotions. This might be controversial, but this movie was the best marvel phase 4 project. (yes, surpassing *Spider-Man: No Way Home*.) This movie expands on everything that made the first Black Panther so amazing. “The Black Panther Lives!!”

Top Movies to Watch this Christmas Break

by Eva Rami

Rudolph, The Red-Nosed Reindeer (1964): Christmas stop-motions!! I’ll be honest, these movies creeped me out as a kid. Rudolph was a thing in my nightmares. Don’t worry, I have long since mastered my fear of furry, red-nosed reindeer. Just, turn down the volume when “Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer, had a very shiny nose…” comes on. Please. Back to the movie! This was the original. It set the stage for what a Christmas movie should be. If you want to conquer your fear of Hermey the Elf this holiday season, this is your movie!

Elf: For the longest time, my sister managed to convince me not to watch Elf because it was a “horror movie.” It’s really not, I promise. Elf is a Christmas classic. In fact, I hope all of you have already watched Elf, and are nodding along like “Oh, yeah. This is a Christmas classic.” If you haven’t, grab some hot cocoa and go enjoy two hours of Will Ferrell walking around New York in full elf costume.

Frosty the Snowman (1969): This is the classic. We’ve all seen this movie at some point, so why not watch it again and cry while you remember watching it as a three-year-old who didn’t know what midterms were? Sorry. Veered a little off topic there. Anyways, this should be a top movie choice for anyone who’s longing for some nostalgia (and a chance to scream the lyrics to “Frosty the Snowman”) this Christmas.

The Nightmare Before Christmas: Okay, so this one’s debatable. Is it Christmas or Halloween? Technically, it’s both, so let’s just call it Thanksgiving. This one’s for anyone who enjoys horror-ish films. This is the Christmas horror film, not Elf. If you’re in the mood for a creepy, animated, Halloween/Christmas (Thanksgiving) movie, The Nightmare Before Christmas should be your pick this holiday season.

Home Alone :C’mon. If you haven’t watched this movie yet, please get a blanket, sit on your couch, and flip Home Alone on. Let me make it clear, I’m not advocating for Home Alone 2 or

3, but the original is timeless. I guarantee this movie will leave you laughing. It’ll also leave you with more appreciation for your parents, because they’ve never forgotten you on a trip to Paris (hopefully).

A Charlie Brown Christmas: I shouldn’t even have to tell you to watch this. It should already have been on your Winter Break to-do list. A Charlie Brown Christmas is my personal favorite movie here. It’s also the most adorable. It’s perfect for a sweet, nostalgic yet timeless watch. So, go grab a blanket and brace yourself for half an hour of cutesy, animated Charlie Brown, Lucy, and of course, Snoopy! This movie is super short too, so if your Winter Break is super busy, A Charlie Brown Christmas should be your pick.



MUSIC

Frida’s Rhythm and Beats

by Frida Ruiz Berman

December - the month of holidays, Christmas lights, and perpetual longing for just a little snow. As we approach December it reminds us that it somehow manages to have the potential to be either the best or worst month yet - the fine line between happiness and complete disillusionment. The New Year lurks in the horizon - what could happen next?

Portrait of An Angel - Robert Glasper
Portrait of an Angel is truly a pure testament to Robert Glasper’s genius. A PVA alum, Glasper’s sweeping style and musicianship really stand out, even in the first of his albums. Within this solemn sort of composition, Glasper uses his effective and clear phrasing to paint a picture of a cold winter morning. The resounding sound on this album is somehow cold, making it perfect for the season.

Here I Stand - Shira Small
Here I Stand by Shira Small is the just perfect enough strange little song for this next month. Its steady and nicely flowing rhythm is the perfect mixture of relaxing and invigorating. Small’s voice and phrasing are very straightforward and self-explanatory, leaving the song with a very crisp, smooth finish. This is really just a strange little song, and maybe I’ll be the only one to entertain it, but something about it is so familiar and sweet - it feels like just a little snowfall on the ground, like walking into a warm room with people you enjoy after being out in the harsh cold. A really odd little gem, Shira Small’s Here I Stand will certainly stand the test of this cold winter.

Girl From the North Country - Bob Dylan
Right off the bat, December is the best month to walk outside in - perfectly frosty and just overclouded enough. The next logical step is Bob Dylan. There is really nothing like walking down the cold street in your winter coat, feeling the warmth of your mouth leave and turn into mist, and just taking in the bleak winter while listening to Bob Dylan. Girl from the North Country is the perfect song for that - filled with a nostalgic feel, just gentle enough on the ears,

while still having that slightly twangy country-influenced sound, Girl from the North Country evokes all of the feels for this December month.

Only The Lonely - Lucy Yeghiazaryan
Lucy Yeghiazaryan’s latest single, Only The Lonely, truly shines a light on her artistry and incredible talent. A melancholy composition, the song chronicles a romance long gone, and the submerging feeling of dread after a great love story. Lucy’s voice, always rich, composed, and masterfully controlled is heard with true woe in its dark coloring, and helps the image come to fruition in a vivid way. Truly my favorite modern jazz singer, Lucy always manages to bring older tunes to life in a way that is incredibly acute and felt deep in the soul with the craft of the old masters. All of this said, despite its sad lyrics and mood, Only The Lonely is a wonderful option to put into your rotation this heartfelt December.

Please Come Home For Christmas - Charles Brown
No doubt indisputably the best Christmas song, Please Come Home for Christmas By Charles Brown gives you all of the warm fuzzy feelings of Christmas time and simultaneously the sad sort of melancholy feeling that’s so familiar. Please Come Home for Christmas invokes the idea of having a little Christmas tree lined with tinsel and little twinkling lights. Although I personally am of the Jewish people, I can still appreciate the idea and sentiment of the birth of Jesus, and no song makes me more automatically and fervently Christian as Charles Brown’s Please Be Home for Christmas.



Flowers In December - Mazzy Star
Flowers In December by Mazzy Star is the quintessential winter song - cold, hazy, just ambient enough, and the obvious named reference, Flowers In December is a wonderful option to add to your rotation this month. Mazzy Star is a no-fail option for the upcoming winter months - they never fail to encapsulate what it’s like to simply be a person. Flowers in December, although deceptive with its harmonica at the beginning, is no exception - perfect for walking, reading, and living this December month.

Tears Dry On Their Own - Amy Winehouse
December - Yippee!!!! Tears Dry On Their Own by the one and only Amy Winehouse is a perfect option for those bright December mornings when the frost is prevalent and you feel the excitement of wearing a sweater. I think I can speak on behalf of a lot of people in saying that the time leading into the holidays has been a little rough - planets are shifting, and things are all karmically aligning for a kind of dire time. In these tumultuous times, Tears Dry On Their Own serves as a gentle reminder to brush things off your shoulder and just keep movin’ along.

Are you following us on Instagram at @hspvapaper?

Are you emailing us your overheards to hspvapaper@gmail.com?

Are you performing your civic duties as a PVA citizen?

**Circle your answer:
Yes / Of course / I don’t even go here.**

Little Known, Embarrassing Facts about PVA People

compiled by Kate-Yeonjae Jeong

1. “I wore pull-up diapers to bed until I was 10 years old.”
-Mikey Harper



2. “In middle school, I had a crush on this guy, and instead of shushing him, my finger went up his nose.”
-Mia Williams

3. “I stepped off the bus and fell on my knees and stayed there because I twisted my ankle and everyone was staring at me, and then my Hydroflask started rolling down the street onto the incoming traffic. No one helped me until a police officer came. And he was hot.”
-Ms. Llano

4. “I drove my dad’s car into my mom’s and then paid him to tell her it was him.”
-Toby Wheatley

5. “When I was little I pissed on my brother’s toy because I got mad at him and wanted re-venge.” -Zeil Saldivar

6. “I found out I was lactose intolerant the hard way at a wine and cheese party and got violently ill at an all-white restaurant.”
-Mr. Jauregui

7. “During the fire drill, I was trying to find Ms. Manchac, and I thought I found her so I tapped on her shoulder, but it was a homeless man, and Ms. Manchac was like, ‘So you think I dress like a homeless man?’” -Faith Lopez

What Christmas Song Are You Based On Your Zodiac Sign?

by Catie Giesen

Aries- You’re a spontaneous, fun-loving, jump into action feet first type of person. As the life of the party, it makes sense that your Christmas song would be “Jingle Bell Rock.”

Taurus- You’re a comfort-loving person. It’s not hard to imagine a Taurus getting cozy with a glass of hot chocolate in front of the blazing fireplace. The perfect song for you is “It’s Beginning To Look a Lot Like Christmas.”

Gemini- Peppy and clever, you have a fun vibe about you, so the Christmas song best fitting you should reflect that: “Grandma Got Run Over By A Reindeer.”

Cancer- You’re a very mellow and deep person, so a Christmas song representing you would be reflective and somewhat melancholy. I give you, “Last Christmas.”

Leo- Leos, you’re high-spirited and love being the center of attention. You embody the energy of any smash hit Christmas song, which

is why your song is “All I Want For Christmas Is You.”

Virgo- Purist and practical, you’re as benevolent as you are precise. Your diligence and elegant aura make you “Carol of the Bells.”

Libra- The biggest romantic out of the zodiacs. You lean towards the finer things in life and are charming and sociable. The song fitting your optimism and exquisite taste is “Let It Snow! Let it Snow! Let it Snow!”

Scorpio- You are risk-takers, love controversy, and are both passionate and assertive. The Christmas song best befitting a Scorpio would need to be as complex as them, “Baby It’s Cold Outside.”

Sagittarius- You love a good adventure, which makes the Christmas season perfect for you. All of the outdoorsy winter activities allow your free spirit to run wild, and the Christmas song that represents you is “Winter Wonderland.”

Capricorn- You embody ambition, endurance, and strength. You are the traditionalist of the zodiacs and appreciate the things in life that are as reliable and dependable as you are. Your Christmas song would need a resolve just as strong as yours, “The 12 Days Of Christmas.”

Aquarius- The progressive zodiac. You love all things new and unique. You’re very intelligent and have a good sense of humor, so the Christmas Song for you is “The Chipmunk Song (Christmas Don’t Be Late)”



8 Gifts That Will Leave Your Friends Speechless

by Andrew Hernandez, Holiday Hustler

Empty travel size bottles for liquids and creams- because actual lotion would have been a little too flashy.

Cracker Barrel Coupon- fried chicken salad and meatloaf combo deal!



A hungry goldfish in a plastic bag- a friend to guide you when you’re lost at sea.

Novelty Tourist Keychain from Ohio- Things to do in Ohio: leave.

A Youtube Kids subscription- for your seventeen-year-old sticky iPad kid.

Popeyes Chicken Sandwich- the powdery stuff adds texture!

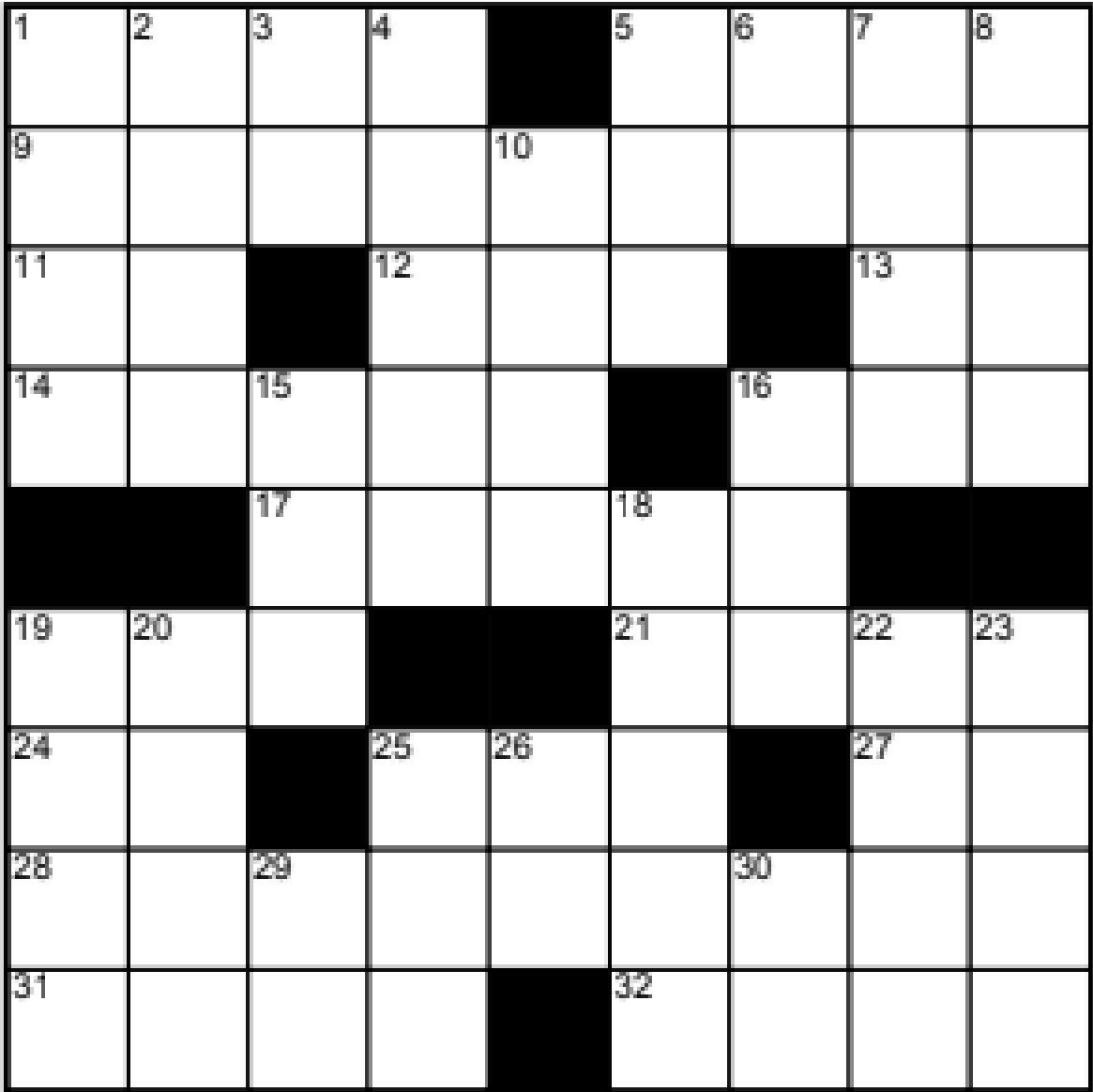
Valentine’s Day Sweethearts candy from last year- a gentle reminder that they’re not worth it.

A phone call from their long lost dad- ”So how’s your new wife? Yeah, that’s good...”



Crossword: Three Little Pigs

by Sofia Fontenot



ACROSS

- 1 An old woman lived in one, according to a nursery rhyme
- 5 He blew down the houses of 19- and 25-Across
- 9 paper*, for one
- 11 Either partner
- 12 Boston Red ___
- 13 The Peach State, briefly
- 14 Green suited elephant of French kid's lit

16 Like microwaved pockets

- 17 With an ___ (considering)
- 19 *One built his house out of straw
- 21 Giant that isn't gentle
- 24 It keeps you cool
- 25 *One built his house out of sticks
- 27 Urgent care dept.
- 28 Proposes for candidate
- 31 Like a bug in a rug
- 32 Like room-temp butter

DOWN

- 1 Pompous sort of person
- 2 Queen of Mount Olympus
- 3 "That hurts!"
- 4 Dreaded college application component
- 5 Crayon or candle material
- 6 __-ed: article for a 9-Across
- 7 To step on one is a terrible fate
- 8 Site of many a college party
- 10 Hole in the largest organ of the body
- 15 Make puppy dog eyes, perhaps
- 16 Keep selfishly
- 18 Garments for Julius Caesar
- 19 Woks and skillets
- 20 Tiny image on a computer desktop
- 22 Place to see clownfish and brain coral
- 23 Once, of yore
- 25 *One built his house out of bricks
- 26 Fashionable
- 29 μ
- 30 __ and fro

Notice something wrong with the November crossword?

Scan for a corrected puzzle, or pick up copies by the library!



Just scan above! Thanks for being a fan, and apologies for the snafu!



Happy Holidays from our paper* team!

We all love our fans and are thrilled to share cheer with our prints.

Keep on sharing overheard-

Have a wonderful winter break and a Happy New Year!

November Horoscopes

ARIES
I know you have been trying your hardest, this month will unfortunately take a bit more out of you. However it is imperative to push through, there will be lots of new opportunities in the new year because of your dedication.
Listen to: “Diablo” - Mac Miller

TAURUS
You are known to be impatient, this season will test your patience even further. Don’t let instigation get the best of you, stay organized, present, and grounded.
Listen to: “Happiness is a butterfly” - Lana Del Rey

GEMINI
Everything in moderation, Gemini. Too much of anything can be overbearing. A fresh start to something is on the horizon for you this season.
Listen to: “Yes I’m Changing” - Tame Impala

CANCER
You may find yourself feeling isolated, have faith that everything will work out. Cancer, you are resilient, don’t let the winter blues get you down.
Listen to: “Take Care” - Beach House

LEO
This will be a creative season for you, Leo. Listen to your intuition and let your unfinished endeavors manifest into a new passion project.
Listen to: “Prom” - SZA

VIRGO
Things in your life seem to be like dead roots on a plant, attached but just dead weight, CUT THAT OFF! Take time to grow in the ways that would make you feel successful and proud of yourself.
Listen to: “It Gets Better (With Time)” - The Internet

LIBRA
Take action! Have something that has been piling up? Just finish it up, the best feeling is to be done.
Listen to: “Linger” - The Cranberries

SCORPIO
Ask for help Scorpio, you have been taking on too much alone and you are stretching yourself too thin. This is the time to delegate responsibilities.
Listen to: “Scorpio Rising” - Soccer Mommy

by Gabby Iaroslavitz
SAGITTARIUS
This will be a beautiful month for you Sagittarius. Bask in your creativity, peace, and stability this season.
Listen to: “Lemon Glow” - Beach House

CAPRICORN
This will be a season of reflection for you Capricorn. You will find things out about yourself and how to use these traits to help you grow as an individual.
Listen to: “Jinx” - Crumb

AQUARIUS
The holidays are a busy time, try to fight your selflessness this month and take a beat when you need it. Empathy without boundaries is self destruction.
Listen to: “Noid” - Yves Tumor

PISCES
You are taking on too much, trying to do everything will only degrade your work quality and make you lose sleep. Let go of some responsibility, it’s okay to look out for yourself.
Listen to: “I Heard Love Is Blind” - Amy Winehouse

‘Twas The Night Before Break

by Hannah Horwath

‘Twas the night before break and all through the school
not a student was stirring, and hallways were cool.

The finals were graded by teachers with care
In hopes that 4.0 scores would be there

Students caught up on sleep all while gone
visions of a school where they didn’t arrive at dawn

Vocal’s voices on rest, dancer’s hair out of buns
Visual art sighed relief, final portfolios done.

Suddenly at 790 Austin arose such a clatter
Dr Rivas sensed something must be a matter

Away to school she rushed in a flash
she unlocked the doors, to the Denny she dashed

A single spotlight shone, a mic on the stage
Illuminated the teachers in rows backstage

Dr Rivas, perplexed, imagined excuses they’d bring
when suddenly Mr Bingham began to sing

A medley of Mariah, the chorus swayed and rocked
And Dr Rivas stood still, utterly shocked

Señor Alarcon rose a guitar in his hand
he played accompanied by the his own teacher band

Mr Pham on drums, Ms. S played the bass
Dr Rivas watched the pure joy on their face

Teachers too loved art and wanted to preform
So they’d made nighttime happenings the winter break norm

The principal sat, ready for the act that came third
Ms Rosales’s arose, and performed spoken word

Mr Landry was next and interpretive danced
Dr Rivas moved to tears, the teachers glanced

Their eyes met hers and with a look of terror
Mr Lozano stepped forwards, “Sorry to break and enter but

While everyone was gone, doors locked and shut
Us teachers wanted a chance in the spotlight.”

Dr Rivas’ smiled, “It’s quite alright,
and happy holidays to you all and to all a goodnight.”



Teacher Talk!

by Mr. Landry and Ms. Manchac

The holidays can have so many meanings...but when it comes right down to it, we ALL know it is about one thing...PRESENTS! (Right?) We asked the STEM and Humanities teachers to share their holiday wishes and/or best gifts.

Ms. Manchac: Mr. Landry, what do YOU want for Christmas this year?

Mr. Landry: From students? Perhaps I am a softie...but a kind note with genuine insight into how my class has made an impact means so much. It means even more when there is a gift card taped to the back! (I joke...the nice note is what I remember and save for years to come!)

Ms. Manchac: I agree, nothing makes me feel warm and fuzzier than sweet notes from students... except maybe Taylor Swift tickets. Those would also make me feel warm and fuzzy!

Mr. Bingham: I want my students to like me, and for my family to love me. My best gift I ever received was two weeks in Hawaii! For sure.

Ms. Chase: I want all the Seniors to get into the college of their dreams with full scholarships.

Mr. Diosomito: I want world peace, economic and climate justice for all. My favorite gifts are the surprise thoughtful gifts from the heart, something unexpected that speaks of their feelings.

Ms. Llano: The best gift I have ever received was when I was in college, I had to stay in Huntsville for school on Christmas break. I was feeling homesick and getting major FOMO of everyone being together. The morning of Christmas my mom called me and told me she was outside with my sister. I was so happy to not be alone on Christmas and see my mom after three months!

Mrs. Melone: I want to finish “One Piece”. The best gift I ever received was SSX on Tour for the PS3 and Mario Superstar Baseball for the GameCube from my brothers.

Ms. Rosales: I want 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep or no emails over the holidays. My best gift has to be when I was 14, I got my first Nikon SLR camera.

Ms. Saunders: All I want for Christmas is no late work! My best gift was when a longtime friend of mine printed out a picture of us and sent it up on a Blue Origin space shuttle run. He had the opportunity to send something small and lightweight, so he sent the picture and then gave it to me as a present with official documentation that it had flown in space.

Ms. Williams: I want lots of time with family, time to be creative, relax, and for self-care. I see much yoga during my break! As an adult, it was probably my shop vac. It made me feel so powerful how it could suck up all the screws and nails. Nothing could stand in its path!

The PVA Files: Vol. 1

by Erick Arakelian

Welcome to the inaugural article of The PVA Files, where I will take you down the untrod-den path into the land of the various legends, myths, and oddities that make up HSPVA’s history. Today’s topic: The Rabbi. What better time than the holiday season to discuss PVA’s most infamous ghost story? To do the tale of the Rabbi justice, however, a history lesson is due.

Allow me to paint a picture for you: The year is 1971, the Vietnam War is in full force, Watergate is slowly coming to the surface. In Houston, Texas, Kinder HSPVA is opening its doors for the first time at the former Beth Israel Temple, bought by HISD in 1966 as the Houston Jewish community moved to Meyerland. Although no longer a place of worship, the HSPVA campus did not hide from its roots as a synagogue. A stained glass star of David lay unbothered on

the main hall ceiling, and the temple’s Bema served as a stage for the theatre department. Left behind from the building’s complicated past was a spirit, the ghost of the Rabbi who inhabited the synagogue years prior.

“But who is the Rabbi?”, I hear you asking. The truth is, riveted reader, nobody knows. Rumors say it may be the apparition of Rabbi Hyman Judah Schachtel, but the timeline doesn’t entirely fit. The identity of the Rabbi, however, is irrelevant. What matters is his hold on every HSPVA campus he has haunted and the traditions we have built to please him.

The Rabbi has, according to legend, placed a curse on the Denney Theatre. Any school performance in the Denney is cursed to go horrifically wrong unless the cast pays respect to the Rabbi and the former synagogue by passing around a bagel that every cast member must take a bite of. There is more to this bagel tradition, however, than what first meets the eye.

At first, the Rabbi only inhabited the campus that had previously been a Beth Israel Temple, eternally trapped at the campus. “How did the Rabbi make it to the downtown campus in that case?”, you say. Well, impatient reader, it all has to do with the former HSPVA’s occult club. Years prior, when HSPVA first moved campus-es, PVA’s infamous occult club didn’t want to leave the Rabbi all on his own, and thus a ritual was planned. They bought a bagel and per-formed a supernatural ritual to infuse the spirit of the Rabbi into it. When the campus change occurred, they brought the bagel with them and, in a similar ritual, broke it in half to release his spirit to his new haunting grounds.

When asked about the Rabbi, local Jewish resident Rebecca Bloome said “I think it’s kinda funny.” Riveting. Despite the lack of information, the mystery of the Rabbi has solidified itself as HSPVA’s most infamous legend, per-haps never to be solved.



Answers for your crossword!

Tag us @hspvapaper and tell us what you think about the crossword! Are you a whiz kid or do you have a harder time? What’s your best time?

T	F	O	S		G	U	N	S	
S	E	T	A	N	I	M	O	N	
R	E		G	I	P		C	A	
E	R	G	O			G	I	P	
		O	T	E	Y	E			
T	O	H		R	A	B	A	B	
A	G		X	O	S		R	O	
R	E	P	A	P	S	W	E	N	
F	L	O	W		E	O	H	S	

Overheard@PVA

“Yesterday, I was wearing really baggy jeans, and I was doing jumping jacks, but my pants fell down as Ms. Hall walked out of the elevator, and she emailed Mr. Sneed, so now I have a bad grade in jazz.”

-Liam Mathus

“Mary Poppins is a distinctly unsexy musical.”

-Mar Bradley

“He doesn’t have friends, he just flirts with people.”

-Jasmine Lin

“I take pictures of everything I see, so I always have blackmail.”
- Comfort Azagidi

“What kind of aesthetic was I during high school? I was the kid eating lunch alone doing homework. *[sympathetic class noises]* Don’t be sad, I was the one going to Rice! How are you gonna do that? Especially after that exam, huh?”

-Mr. Landry

“Have you ever knocked on love’s door?”

-Quentin Pham

“Like, it’s true. If you were good at softball as a kid, you’re gay now.”

-Mikey Harper

“You guys want to watch John Green in his earlier days? He was kind of annoying then.”

-Ms. Chase

“I was gossiping in Science Bowl, and then I got a fortune cookie that said ‘restrain yourself from intruding into others’ businesses.’”

-Elliot Stravato

“One of the most beautiful things about IHOP is the many stages of addiction you can see. There’s people at rock bottom and people recovering and some of them are working or customers.”

-Brendan the Consultant

“Senor Herrera, no twerking or you’ll be deported.”

-Sr. Alarcon

“I think I was meant to stay a baby.”

-Nola Nelson

“Hebrew is a sexuality?”

-Lauryn Palmer (serious)

“The downtown pigeons are too bold. They need to be humbled. That’s why I kicked one.”

-Callisto Lim

“Learned helplessness, that’s what this is. Let me give you some neurofeedback!”

-Ms. Apte

“Balls! Balls! All I hear is balls!”

- Mr. Denning

“Legal to do whatever!”

-Sean Graul

“Weren’t you doing whatever before?”

-Layla Crear

“He has a lot of masculine energy, and I don’t like masculine energy. But he’s also a cat, so I can’t really blame him.”

-Lakshmi Sunder

“Sometimes I take things away from my son just to see him cry.”

-Mrs. Garza