Here’s the 10th and final issue of the 2018-2019 school newspaper!

It’s been a wild ride. In this issue, we cover a variety of topics: sloths, cats, dogs, and even PHHS track!

There’s much to explore in this issue - read through to find out!

Shoutout to our seniors in the Newspaper club!
KATHERINE GRYTSAYENKO
OLIVIA TERRELL
Thank you for your hard work!

On the front cover:
the PHHS flag at PHS for Spike Night
THE (INTERESTING) HISTORY OF SLOTHS
AND AVOCADOS BY MEEKA VARDI

What do you think of when you hear “sloths”? Slow? Three-toed? Tree-dwelling? How about great beast?

In the Cenozoic Era 65.5 million years ago, a xenarthran known as *megatherium americanum* (meaning great beast from America) roamed the lands of modern-day South America. It was able to stand and walk on its hind legs, making it the largest bipedal mammal of all time. Aside from its large size, *Megatherium’s* skeleton was extremely robust in its construction. The lower bones of the short hind legs were similar to that of humans in diameter and force. *Megatherium* had a short but thick tail, a broad pelvis, and a remarkably powerful lower body, as it had to carry the weight of the four-ton mammal. The massive creature, approximately the size of a bull elephant, had sharp claws and menacing teeth. All for a diet consisting of leaves and shrubbery. The competition for food between giant ground sloths like *Megatherium* and other herbivores was comparatively low and is one of the reasons why these sloths were able to spread upwards into North America when it became connected to South America during the Pliocene Epoch. However, *Megatherium’s* enormous build continues to be beneficial, for if it were not for these large sloths, the avocado would cease to exist.

Avocados were not always the perfect size to make guacamole with. Millions of years ago, when the avocado was much too large for the average omnivore or herbivore to consume, the fate of this fruit would have been marginally different. *Megatherium* was large enough to swallow the massive pits whole, which, after going through the digestive tract, led to the planting (along with fertilization) of the pit. This, in turn, created more avocado trees.

Today, the beast remains only through its ancestors, as it has been extinct since the late Pleistocene era. The Sloth, scientifically known as *Folivora*, has been (quite accurately) equated to being lazy. This is so relevant, in fact, that the name “sloth” comes from the word “slow”. While the Brown-throated sloth is only 17-31 inches (compared to *Megatherium’s* height of 20 feet), the modern-day Sloth is the closest living relative to the majestic *Megatherium*.

WHY YOU SHOULD GET A CAT BY MEEKA VARDI

According to the American Veterinary Medical Foundation, more households in the U.S. have cats than dogs. Well, at least that is what most people expect, a resentment towards cats if you like dogs. However, I do not have a preference, and I can appreciate the many wonderful attributes of cats. Their inspired playfulness and independent spirit are the secret envy of some humans, many of whom wish they could spend their own days batting at a catnip mouse and napping in the sun rather than tapping a computer keyboard. Cats, unlike dogs, enjoy playing “hard to get”. Rather than jumping up at you as soon as the door opens, they will simply adjust the direction of their heads, barely acknowledging your presence. At least that is what my cat Zoe does. While she spends most of the day curled up in a secluded corner, sometimes, at her convenience, she will cuddle up next to us and beg for attention. This does not mean that cats do not love their families as much as dogs, it simply means they show their affection differently. Similar to siblings, you may not always like each other, but you will always love each other.

Admittedly, walking my dog every day can get quite bothersome, especially when the weather grows colder. Indoor cats live their lives within the safety of their owners’ homes and seem perfectly content with that. I must say, this alternative comes to my mind considerably often as the icy rain pours onto my dog and me while I walk her. Throughout an ever-changing world with constant development, there is one thing that is for certain: the argument over cats and dogs shall persist.
Commonly referred to as *man's best friend*, dogs have the reputation of being the best companions out there and, based on the following information, that is no surprise. According to the U.S. Library of Medicine, consistently spending time with a dog lowers blood pressure, which in turn decreases the chance of cardiovascular disease. In addition, patients who have undergone surgery have been found to recover more quickly with a dog than those without.

Dogs are amazing. While I love all animals, my parents were not too keen on getting me my dream pet (a cow). So, we agreed on a dog, after much debate, that is. While I could sit here and lay down the (many) facts proving that dogs are absolutely wonderful creatures that humans, quite frankly, do not deserve, I will simply relay my personal experience.

Knowing there is a four-legged creature full of love waiting to share it brings me great comfort. My dog, Lily, always seems to know how I am feeling and while she is still very young and does not yet know how to help, it is evident that she is trying her hardest. She gives me a reason to leave the house on weekends when all I want to do is stay in bed, and if it were not for the fact that she needs to be walked I would likely resemble a potato at this point. Watching her finally understand a new command makes me so unbelievably proud, and, while she is a different species, I think of her as part of my family.

The unconditional love given by dogs is unlike any other relationship. Even if you leave your house for five minutes, they make it seem like you have been gone for an eternity and greet you as such. Cuddling up with a dog on a rainy day, or any day for that matter, is one of the greatest feelings in the world. Their constant happiness is contagious and watching Lily be content under any circumstance has given me a completely different perspective on life. Now if you will excuse me, I have a dog to pet.

Welcome back to what is the FINAL Parsippany Hills High School Runner’s World Edition of the 2019-2020 school year! With AP testing coming to a close and hundreds of high schoolers embarking into the final month of school, the Spring Track season as well, sadly, comes to an end.

Having started the season back in April with a Dual Meet (a Track meet open to all athletes and with only one rival school) against Randolph High School, we are now in the final stages of the Track & Field meet calendar - with State Sectionals occurring on May 24th and 25th and only State Groups and the NJ Meet of Champions remaining afterwards. Under the guidance of new Head Coach Mr. James Kennedy, along with the assistance of coaches Altschul, Brzezinski, Smith, Fulton, and Perry, this was quite a promising season. Countless personal records, medals, and victories among the many runners, jumpers, and throwers took place and no one disappointed even a bit.

The Junior Varsity season concluded on May 3rd with a Dual Meet against Roxbury High School, and since then, only the Top 3 individuals in each respective event have been attending Championship meets such as the New Jersey Athletic Conference Championships (NJACs), Morris County Championships and the North II Group II State Sectional Championships, with qualifiers going to Groups, and soon, the Meet of Champions. Event leaders such as Alwin Kurian, Brett Berry, Jake Newell, Nick Levytsky, Wasay Noor, Tyler Gurth, Jessica Cerrato, Kristin Hardy, Angelica Padi, Amy Yang, and Amanda Gurth, have performed extraordinarily at these Varsity meets and the coaches were eager to see how far each and every single one of them went this season. With runners breaking the 11-minute 2 mile barrier and NEW SCHOOL RECORD HOLDERS prevailing at the end of the season, there is unimaginable potential in each of these Track Athletes for years to come.

(cont on pg. 7)
With State Sectionals and Groups having passed a week or so ago, the season has come to a pleasant end and practices (that have been optional for non-“top 3” athletes since May 3rd) have ended as well. Additionally, we will very soon be saying farewell to many of our seniors as well, and although some of them, such as Conner Fox and Sarah Costanza, may not be pursuing Track in college, other such as Jake Newell, Kristin Hardy, and Amanda Gurth, will be running/throwing for NCAA Division I and III Track & Field universities! Congratulations!!

That being said, there simply is not much left to report on in terms of Track & Field. As expressed, a maximum of the Top 3 Athletes per event competed at the State Sectionals meet on May 24th and 25th and a few even qualified for State Groups meet and NJ M.O.Cs to represent Parsippany Hills! With Brett Berry setting a new Boys 400 Meter School record with a time of 49.97 and Kristin Hardy setting the Girls 400 Meter record with 59.7, this sectionals meet was one for the books! Those two along with Brandon Perot, and Amanda and Tyler Gurth competed at Groups where Amanda Gurth qualified for the M.O.Cs! The end-of-season Pizza Party will be in a week or so to thank and award all new, returning, and four year Varsity Athletes, as well as the coaches!! Thank you!!

But on that note, the summer is kicking off and our distance runners cannot be more excited! With three months of pre-season training waiting up ahead in the summer heat, the CROSS COUNTRY grind is already starting! The days of 5Ks are most definitely back! With runners such as Wasay Noor already going out and placing at countless local 5Ks over the past month, there is no doubt in anyone’s mind that many of our Outdoor Track athletes simply cannot wait for the fall to arrive and to be back on some 3.1 mile courses, medalling at and dominating all meets!

This year was a very eventful one and quite remarkable to say the least. With a new Head Coach and many PRs, it was also an unforgettable one. Keep on the lookout for announcement and information on fall Cross Country! Summer practices will be starting up in August and 5K runners

WHY DO WE LIKE EVEN NUMBERS? BY LAUREN GEIGER

Two, four, eighteen, twenty, one hundred. What do all of these numbers have in common? That’s easy, they’re even numbers. Our brain can process and analyze these numbers within a matter of seconds. Four divided by two is two, eighteen divided by two is nine and by three is six, and one hundred is a perfect square. What about numbers like 101, though? Why is this number given such a bad reputation? Why does it matter that it ends in a one and not a zero?

It has been proven time and time again that even numbers appeal more to the human race than odd numbers. Why? Even numbers are generally easier to handle. We can add and subtract, multiply and divide these numbers with little to no effort. They are comforting, welcoming, and inclusive of all, as every even number can be perfectly divided in half. We also subconsciously associate these numbers with favorable and tangible items in our own lives. Take the number ten for example. We each have ten fingers, five on one hand and five on the other. Sixteen is
remembered as being a year full of fun and excitement because you can finally learn how to drive. At eighteen years of age, you can now contribute your vote at a polling booth. Each of these even numbers are connected to very personal and memorable moments and things, which our brains both enjoy and appreciate.

Even though we generally prefer even over odd numbers, why then are some of our favorite numbers odd? Why do we consider seven, three, and thirteen to be lucky? People tend to like the number seven, because like even numbers, it has many meaningful ties to the real world. Religiously, seven is the number of sins and the number of days it took to create the world. In regards to the surrounding world, seven is the number of colors in a rainbow and the number of continents are on our very planet.

Overall, we pick numbers that we can easily associate with, numbers that are comforting and have direct meaning. For me, my favorite number is twenty-one, and yet whenever I’m watching t.v. or listening to the radio, the volume has to be set to an even number, a number that isn’t too loud or too quiet. Numbers are what we make of them, they are each unique to us. After all, aren’t we all just another number in the human population?

**Writer’s block.** /ˈrɪdərz ˈblæk/ the condition of being unable to think of what to write or how to proceed with writing.

In my (rather short) fifteen years of life, I have grown quite accustomed to this phenomenon. The blank-mindedness that consumes your mind while staring at a blank document, the cursor illuminating then darkening once more. When the only word you can think of is “nothing”. The pressure put on students to pump out well-written pieces, whether it be articles or essays is similar to a machine pumping out mass amounts of product. Quite frankly, I am going through a bit of writer’s block myself at the moment. Based on personal experience, I tend to be burdened with this figurative wall when my desires conflict with one another. Mainly, the want to be finished as soon as possible and the want to produce the best work that I can. A paradox of sorts. This struggle usually leads me to my last resorts: changing the font size, the font itself, or adding in nonsense to fill in the empty space (did you know that the national animal of Scotland is a unicorn?). About here is the point where I change my lettering from single-spaced to double spaced, in hope of having written at least one page... unfortunately, I have yet to do so (write one page, that is). After unsuccessfully writing one page, I attempt to find my muse, or at least a bit of inspiration. This consists of me staring at my phone for about an hour and a half or perhaps even the wall. I do not have a minimum word requirement per se, it is more of a small goal I set for myself. This standard is very easy to meet at times, however, when I am completely out of ideas, it seems rather impossible.

Thus concludes my tirade. If you can take anything from this, I hope it be that even if it seems like your brain is completely empty, you can persist even in the face of hardship. Or, in less cheesy terms, that paper is not going to write itself so just google how to overcome writer’s block... good luck!
Above: PHHS softball team

Left: IPLE debates 2019

A WARM CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING FACULTY FOR THEIR RETIREMENT:

MR. GREENBERG
MR. SODEN
MS. MCCLUSKY

And let’s not forget

MR. M. DISANTO

Who will be leaving PHHS and taking on a new leadership role within the district.

THANK YOU MR. DISANTO, AND TO THE ENTIRE FACULTY AT PHHS FOR A WONDERFUL YEAR!

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SCHOOL AND MRS. CAROL SMITH!!