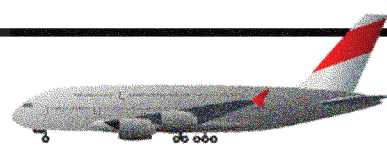




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Graphic by Carol Lee

# The Poolesville Pulse

Volume 16 Issue 1 - Poolesville High School - 17501 West Willard Road Poolesville, MD 20837 - March 19, 2018

## Clarksburg student faces charges for bringing weapon to school *Police find “disturbing” content in student’s journal*

By Erica Guthrie  
Editor

Just one day after a gunman took 17 lives at a high school in Parkland, Florida on Feb. 14, a School Resource Officer at Clarksburg High School (CHS) discovered a student who was carrying a loaded Glock handgun in his backpack. Alwin Chen, 18, was arrested on multiple charges related to possessing a handgun on school property.

*The Washington Post* reported that the student who alerted Officer Troy Melott about the gun said that Chen was “always talking about bringing guns to

“Every student at Clarksburg High School was placed in danger and [Chen] continues to present a danger to the public today.”

school and saying how he would kill anyone,” according to prosecutor’s filings.

Melott and other members of the school security force at CHS removed Chen from his AP Psychology class on Feb. 15 at 2:10 pm. The School Resource Officer told reporters on Feb. 28 that Chen informed security about the



Photo courtesy of The Germantown Pulse  
School Resource Officer Troy Melott speaks to reporters on Feb. 28 regarding the incident at Clarksburg High School.

loaded weapon. Upon a search of his possessions, officers recovered the gun, a knife, and a two-page personal document in which Chen wrote “I believe I am mentally insane... and anti-social.”

A search of Chen’s home in Germantown revealed a personal journal and more weapons, including several guns and replica grenades. In an interview with detectives, the high school senior said

that he learned how to use a gun by frequenting shooting ranges with his father. Court documents state that Chen told a detective that he had the weapon, a semi-automatic handgun made from parts ordered online, because he was concerned about a school shooting and wanted to protect himself and others.

Police believe that Chen carried the gun on him regularly between

Dec. 2017 and Feb. 2018, either in his backpack or in a holster underneath an untucked shirt. A witness said they also saw Chen wearing body armor in the school on several occasions.

In an emergency bond hearing on Feb. 27, attorneys representing Chen argued that the Montgomery County District Judge John C. Moffett had been prejudiced in his initial decision to hold the 18 year old without bond because of false information, such as the existence of a “list of grievances,” that was “profoundly incorrect,” according to court files.

Defense attorneys requested that Chen be released to home detention. Prosecutors, including Assistant State’s Attorney Frank Lazzaro, requested that the court rule that Chen should continue to be held without bond due to the nature of his journal entries, which discussed death and his mental health.

“Every student at Clarksburg High School was placed in danger and [Chen] continues to present a danger to the public today,” Lazzaro told the court, according to court files.

According to WTOP, Moffett told the court that he believed that the defendant posed a risk to society due to the nature of the journal entries and his knowledge of crafting guns. Chen will remain behind bars until his trial, which is scheduled for Mar. 29 at Montgomery County District Court in Silver Spring.

## Parkland students visit Montgomery Blair to advocate for school safety, gun control reform

By Julia Rich  
Editor-in-Chief

Congressman Jamie Raskin made a phone call to Montgomery Blair High School principal Renay Johnson. In a span of 24 hours, survivors of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas (MSD) High School shooting united with over 600 Montgomery County students.

Raskin, the Democratic U.S. Representative of Maryland’s 8th dis-

trict, had 10 students from Parkland, Florida, visit Blair High School on Feb. 26. Five days prior to this event, approximately 1,000 MCPS students staged a walkout from the U.S. Capitol to show their support for stronger gun control laws. The schools that participated included Blair, Richard Montgomery High School, Bethesda Chevy Chase High School, Albert Einstein High School and Winston Churchill High School.

The night began with a performance from Blair’s choir group of

the songs “Rise Up” by Andra Day and “Blowing in the Wind” by Bob Dylan, in honor of the students who passed away in the recent MSD shooting. Following the performance, Johnson invited eight MCPS students up on stage. The student panel consisted of four students from Blair, along with one representative from Rockville High School, Ein-

“We are teenagers, we have a voice, we can speak out, and you’re going to listen.”

stein, Richard Montgomery and B-CC. Shortly after, Raskin introduced the 10 students from MSD High School that came up on stage. They were joined by their Congressman, Ted Deutch, who represents the 22nd district in Palm Beach County, Florida.

“These students, and their classmates, and their families... all stood up together and said the time to have the conversation... is right now,” stated Congressman Deutch. “This is the generation that will insist upon change.”

Raskin made a statement regarding the students from MSD, “You’ve shown America what patriotism really means. You’ve shown us how to speak out forcefully for change. You’ve show

us what civility really means. You’ve show us what democracy looks like. You have shown us in our own time, in 2018, what a movement for non-violence looks like in the United States of America.”

The MSD students introduced themselves and emphasized the need for students to vote in every election and to attend the March for our Lives rally in Washington, D.C. on March 24.

MSD alumni Matthew Deitsch shared that earlier in the day, Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) had informed the students that first time voters show up ½ times. Deitsch credited his brother, MSD senior Ryan Deitsch, who replied, “Why don’t we flip that, make it ¾ and change the world?”

Ryan Deitsch stated “We are teenagers, we have a voice, we can speak out, and you’re going to listen.” MSD students had been meeting with Congressman on Capitol Hill all day to rally for stronger gun control laws. They also spoke with civil rights activist John Lewis and Congressman Steve Scalise, a victim of last year’s Alexandria ballpark shooting. The following day, they were scheduled to meet with Paul Ryan, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The event at Blair was the first school event that Parkland shooting victims had participated in since the attack on Feb. 14. The event was closed to parents, community members and the press.



Photo courtesy of Chaminda Hanglipola and the Silver Chips  
Congressman Jamie Raskin introduces students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School at Blair on Feb. 26.





The 2018 Miss Poolsville candidates pose after finishing up their introductory dance at rehearsal. Photo by Julia Rich

# Senior girls compete for Miss Poolsville title

By Nina Todd  
Staff Writer

The Miss Poolsville pageant, and its accompanying Mr. Poolsville, is a time honored tradition at PHS, starting in 1998. The 2018 Miss Poolsville went off with a BANG! BOOM! POW! as the girls from the class of 2018 tackled the theme “Heroes vs. Villains.” Ten girls from the class of 2018 participated, including Humanities seniors Camille Awono and Laurel Kim, and Global seniors Haley Harkins, Bridgette Hammett, Jirah Villajuan, Kelliann Lee, Iris Yu, Joyce Ma, Sapna Bagalkotkar, and Juanita Jaramillo. The girls were all escorted by their mothers, a first in Miss Poolsville history.

The event began with a showing of the student produced intro video, where the girls dressed up as characters in accordance with this year’s theme- Maleficent (Kim) and Sleeping Beauty (Awono), Glinda (Harkins) and the Wicked Witch of the West (Hammett), Luke Skywalker (Lee) and Darth Vader (Villajuan), Kim Possible (Ma) and Shogo (Yu), and Tom (Bagalkotkar) and Jerry (Jaramillo).

The group then showcased outfits they’d typically go to school in, for the “casual” wear portion, and assorted extracurricular gear for the “active” wear portion.

Kim says of the experience: “It was a lot more stressful for me than most people. I wasn’t used to the walking around on stage! But I had a lot of fun.”

For the talent section, Awono performed a hip hop dance routine with several of her teammates from the county championship winning PHS

Poms team. Bagalkotkar presented a synchronized swimming skit with nine of her closest friends.

Global senior Loren Fernandes said of the skit, “It meant a lot to me that I could support Sapna. I stayed after school multiple times to help out.”

Jaramillo played “Blackbird” by The Beatles on the guitar, followed by Kim with her Korean fan dance. Ma and Yu played the Howl’s Moving Castle theme together, Ma on piano and Yu on violin.

Ma says, “At first I was stressed out and nervous about it because we had to put in a lot of work to get ready in time, but the actual show went by faster than I expected and I ended up having a really good time. I don’t regret doing it. It was a good senior year experience.”

Throughout the course of the night, members of the senior class SGA, Amy Lu, Nahbama Gana, Julia Rich, and Donald Vogel, kept the crowd amused with jokes and trivia.

The five finalists, Awono, Harkins, Villajuan, Kim and Jaramillo, were asked in the final question who their biggest heroes were. Awono, Villajuan, and Jaramillo all answered their mothers, Kim stated that hers was PHS English teacher Stephanie Gomer, while Harkins said her hero was her father.

At the end of the night, Jaramillo was crowned Miss Poolsville 2018.

“It was a very unique experience for me,” she said. “But the girls were all great so it ended up being fun! I was really surprised to have won, definitely was not expecting it, so I very humbled and flattered.”

# Veteran Midnight Players director resigns

New director brings years of experience

By Minjee Jung  
Staff Writer

Ever since the fall of 2014, the Midnight Players, PHS’s drama club, was directed by Nathaniel Gordon. However, Gordon has decided not to be a part of the Midnight Players for this year’s spring musical, causing a new director to take control. Although he is not directing, Gordon will still be helping to choreograph the show and will be an active member of the Midnight Players. Gordon has chosen not to comment regarding his absence in the spring musical.

The new director, Shelly Horn, has been focused on nonprofit fundraising organizations for most of her career and has always been directing on the side. However, a few years ago, she made the decision to get involved in theatre more. Currently, she has multiple part-time jobs, many of which are theatre-oriented. Other than the Midnight Players, Horn is also a director for the Fun and Fancy group at Leisureworld and the House Manager at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre.

John Foster, a junior in Global Ecology, is helping to choreograph the show and has expressed that he is excited to work with Shelly.

“Of course I will miss Nathaniel, but I also look forward to working with Shelly as she is very experienced in drama production and would be a big help to our team.”

Horn has chosen to come to PHS because she is very fond of the area.

Horn has also stated that “I know that the Poolsville High School Midnight Players have a good reputation in the county and I want to be a part of it! I have been directing theatre for many years and I wanted to share that expertise with students. Everyone has been very welcoming and kind and I am quickly getting up to speed. We have a truly wonderful group of actors, orchestra and tech crew who are working hard.”

The Midnight Players will be showcasing their spring musical, *Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, from Apr. 19-21 in the PHS auditorium.

# Superintendent visits town hall, discusses improvement plan

By Angela Wang  
Staff Writer

On Jan. 22, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jack Smith paid a visit to the Poolsville Town Hall to discuss and answer questions on Poolsville’s status in the new Capital Improvements Plan. The meeting came after the Board of Education passed FY 2019 Capital Budget and FY 2019-2024 Capital Improvements Program earlier this school year, Superintendent Smith, along with Chief Operating Officer Dr. Andrew Zuckerman, and Executive Director of the Office of the Chief Operating Officer, Essie McGuire, provided a presentation explaining new themes of the Capital Improvements Program, specifically the focus on alleviating overcrowding issues.

Whereas previously, there was a static model consisting of one score that determined placement on the queue for projects, with the new plan, school officials are looking to change up the way they rank expansion and rehabilitation projects in line for funding.

“[Since] the old scores were decades old, [perhaps] the new fresh numbers would show that [the condition]’s worse than they thought it was,” says teacher advocate Dan Savino.

There are five revitalization and expansion projects that have funding and are currently underway. PHS is one of many schools in need of refurbishment that has been identified but no specific timeline has been announced for the construction.

“We’re getting to the point where we can’t put lipstick on a pig,” expressed one community member.

Despite testifying and showing out in large numbers at the November 2017 budget hearing at the Board of Education, Poolsville was not granted funding for renovation within the next six years. The county’s new capital budget includes an additional \$86 million to the current plan and includes 30 capacity projects system-wide. These capacity projects are new schools and additions to existing schools.

Based on the MCPS executives’ presentation, PHS has not been considered or granted funding for building renovations because the current criterion prioritizes overcrowding. Presently, PHS does not face a capacity issue, nor are there any capacity issues projected in the near future.

One of the topics brought up at the meeting was the idea of constructing a multi-purpose building that would function as not only a high school but also a



MCPS Superintendent Dr. Jack R. Smith, Chief Operating Officer Andrew Zuckerman, Executive Director in the Office of the Chief Operating Officer Essie McGuire, and Director of the Office of Construction Seth Adams in the Poolsville Town Hall on Jan. 22. Photo courtesy of The Monocacy Monacle

community center, in hopes that such a project would better warrant funding and county attention and better serve the town.

Other concerns raised at the meeting regarded the PHS magnet programs. In contrast to previous speculation that the Superintendent was considering making cuts to the magnet programs, Dr. Smith stated that the magnet programs at PHS will remain unchanged.



# North, South Korea unify for Olympic games

## North Korea is “willing to have talks” with US officials, South Korea says

By Vincent Chim  
Staff Writer

Despite tensions between the split territories, North Korea and South Korea united as one to send athletic teams to Pyeongchang for the Winter Olympic Games. North Korea’s recent propagation of nuclear weapons and threats against South Korea and the United States have kept the global community on edge for the past few years. However, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un released a statement prior to the Olympics announcing a united delegation of alpine and cross country skiers, figure and speed skaters, and hockey players which will be joining the South Korean Women’s Hockey Team. In addition, North Korea sent a delegation of 370 members including journalists, a strong arts troupe, taekwondo exhibitionists and cheerleaders. For the first time in Olympic history the Koreas have joined to form a team representing a unified Korea. Prior to the games, North Korea agreed to send a delegation to their southern neighbors to begin the first high level talks to occur in two years. Following 11 hours of negotiations, the two nations released a joint statement in which they addressed the need to ease tensions along the peninsula, plans for future military talks as well as announcing plans to begin have the two Koreas march under a unified flag during the opening ceremonies. North Korean

representatives avoided questions regarding leader Kim Jong Un’s nuclear weapons program stating that they are unimportant to relations between the Koreas. “All our weapons including atomic bombs, hydrogen bombs and ballistic missiles are only aimed at the United States, not our brethren, nor China and Russia,” North Korean Negotiator Ri Son Gwon said in a statement. China, Russia, and the U.N have all praised the recent breakthroughs in relations. As the Olympics opening ceremonies began on Feb. 9, all eyes on were the North Korean leader’s sister, Kim Yo Jong. United States Vice President Mike Pence was noticeably taken aback by the presence of the foreign dignitary, having previously voiced his suspicions and reservations against North Korea, calling the country a “murderous regime”. Kim Yo Jong used her stay to officially invite the South Korean President, Moon Jae-In, to North Korea. Moon responded calling for further diplomatic relations along the Korean Peninsula and expressed the necessity for meetings between the US and North Korea. The women’s hockey team, representing a joint Korea, entered their first and only game on Jan. 7. A company of 229 North Korean women, each chosen for their beauty, age and ideology, cheered at their backs; they sang of a unified Korea in spite of the 8-0 loss. The women, known as “the army of beauties” continued to mes-



North Korean cheerleaders sing while displaying the the two countries’ unified Korea flag at the 2018 Winter Olympics. Photo by James Hill/Contact Press Images, courtesy of the artist

merize the crowds for the duration of the Olympic Games, dancing to various songs from the K-Pop group BTS as well as Bruno Mars’ “Uptown Funk.” The cheerleading team has captivated many; however critics, such as Japan’s foreign minister, have warned against North Korea’s use of “smile diplomacy.” During the closing ceremony on Feb. 25, South Korean officials said that North Korea would be “willing to have talks” with the United States.

**Korean Olympic History**

<b>North Korea</b>
First appeared in 1964 at Innsbruck
Best Sports:
Weightlifting, Wrestling, Boxing
Total Medal Count: 56
<b>South Korea</b>
First appeared in 1948 at London
Best Sports:
Archery, Tae Kwon Do, Speed Skating
Total Medal Count: 337

# Duckworth first senator to give birth while holding public office

By Brooke Mengistu  
Staff Writer

Tammy Duckworth is a 49-year-old Democratic senator currently serving the state of Illinois. She’s about to accomplish something no other senator has ever done: give birth to a child while in office. As a retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel, Duckworth lost both of her legs in the Iraq War piloting a Blackhawk helicopter and was the first female double amputee of the war. After tweeting about her “exciting personal news,” her colleagues have responded positively. Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois said in a statement to NBC, “I couldn’t be happier for her. I have learned to never underestimate Tammy Duckworth.” Aside from Duckworth’s news, this situation brings about a conversation about maternity leave. Duckworth gave birth to her daughter, Abigail O’Kalani Bowsbey, in Nov. 2014. At the time, she was serving in the House of Representatives and received twelve weeks of paid maternity leave. However, most American mothers are less fortunate, some receiving 12 weeks of unpaid leave, but few qualifying for paid leave. According to the Pew Research Center, the United States is the only developed country that does not mandate paid leave for employers to bestow upon new mothers and fathers. Humanities freshman Joann Cho

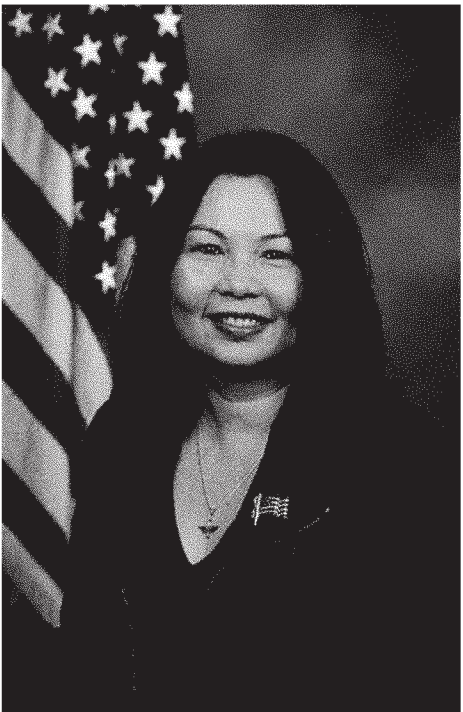


Photo courtesy of United States Congress  
Duckworth’s pregnancy announcement has spurred talks about maternity leave.

also commented on maternity leave: “I think all companies should [give paid leave] or at least, I would if I owned them.” Duckworth’s unborn child will be the first baby born to a mother in the Senate, while ten children have already been born to mothers serving on Congress. Senator Duckworth admits that being a mother affects her legislation on certain issues. Since becoming a parent, she has show her support towards legislation for childcare for student parents, breastfeeding facilities in airports, and parental leave for members of the military. Duckworth expressed her experience with pregnancy in politics: “You’ve got to keep working,” she said in a statement to the *Chicago Tribune*. “But I’m healthy. I’m well-monitored, and the doctors say I’m doing just fine.” Duckworth is expected to give birth in April.

# Former whistleblower announces candidacy for upcoming Senate race

## Manning challenges incumbent Ben Cardin

By Andrew Sojka  
Staff Writer

On Jan. 11, the Federal Election Commission received Chelsea Manning’s filing for senator of the state of Maryland. Manning, a former military analyst who was widely recognized for leaking over 700,000 classified government documents and videos, was released from prison in May 2017 after her original 35 year sentence was commuted by former President Barack Obama. With the recent election of a billionaire businessman as president and talks of Oprah Winfrey’s possible decision to run in the next national election, a door has been opened for more unconventional candidates running for office. Manning’s decision to run further solidifies this trend, as it would cement her as one a select few in the world to run for a branch of government as current or former whistleblower, or person involved in illicit activity. “I think a lot more people are running for office in general, leading to more diverse candidates,” states Morgan Bliss, senior Global student and President of Poolsville High School’s Gay-Straight Alliance. “However, it is difficult to say more on Chelsea Manning herself as she hasn’t released much by way of a platform or policy goals.” Manning’s success would also serve as a stepping stone for the LG-BTQ community, as her election would

bring to the United States the first openly trans-person to serve in a Congressional House. While Manning would not be the first openly transgender public official to serve in the United States, she’d be adding her name to a small list of those who have served before her. “Openly trans people being elected to the Senate would set a positive precedent for more trans people to be politically active,” comments Bliss. “I definitely think that more diverse people in politics would benefit the country as they represent more diverse goals and ideas that have been absent from mainstream politics.” Manning challenges Democratic incumbent Ben Cardin, who was re-elected to the Senate by a 30 point margin and is not expected to face a competitive primary challenger in the next race. It’s unknown how much political and financial support Manning currently poses. AP Government teacher Jonathan Leong commented on this challenge. “Money is a big thing in politics. Though the LGBT community might definitely rally around her, we don’t know how much money she’s going to get or what she’s going to be known for. Currently, not many people know where she stands politically, as opposed to Cardin, a long-standing and electibly-reliable senator.”





**E-Gaming - League of Legends (Cloud9)**  
**Bobby Huang, 12th grade, SMCS**

"I have been playing League of Legends since it came out in 2009, and I started more seriously starting in 2016. Since then, I have decided to finish high school before pursuing a career in eSports, so my only responsibility is to practice and stay in shape in order to perform when I finish school. This has impacted my life because it has changed my perspective and what I plan on doing in the future. I expected to go to college but now that this is an option, I feel like I should pursue it since college is something I can always go back to. Playing video games is a possible future for many kids and it has taught me that pursuing something you love to do is more important than pursuing what is expected of you from your parents or others in society."

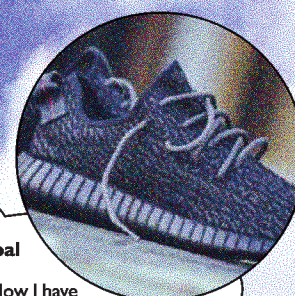
**Drag Racing**  
**Charlotte Mallow, 12th grade, ISP**

"I have been dragracing since I was 8 years old. This memorial weekend will mark 10 years of me racing! To prepare for my races, I have to make sure to fill up the gas, clean the car, and keep all my equipment organized. Dragracing has had a huge impact on my life, since it is basically a job. I've have learned how to manage school, racing, having a job, and doing sports. My sister and I are women in a sport where it's male dominated. Sometimes we will show up to a race and we will be the only girls competing. Many people have said that we inspire young people and women to race since we are able to succeed at the level we do."



**Shoe-preneuer**  
**Kaushik Elangovan, 11th grade, Global**

"I've been selling shoes since 6th grade. Now I have accumulated enough money to the point where I can go out and buy any shoe I want to sell. I usually spend 4-6 hours a week to keep up with all the sales and shipments. With the all money I make, I try to donate at least 25 percent of my yearly profits to orphanages back home in India. The rest I am saving for my college tuition. Overall, this has been a great way for me to learn to communicate with strangers and learn marketing tactics."



**World Travel**  
**Mr. Eugene Stanton**  
**Social Studies Teacher**

"I started traveling at the age of 17, taking trips with friends to New York and other points on the east coast. At 19, I took my first international trip to the Bahamas. I started traveling extensively when I was 26, when I got a management job with Pan American World Airlines. Ever since, I have averaged two to three trips per year. Travel has significantly impacted my life! My view of the world was confined to what I was taught by my parents and teachers. My perceptions changed once I started seeing the world for myself. People are kinder and more loving than we perceive. The world is amazingly beautiful and every corner of the earth has something interesting to experience."



# Life Outside the Classroom

PHS students get involved in unique activities outside of school in their spare time.

**Beauty Blogging**  
**Carol Lee, 12th grade, Humanities**

"I run a beauty and fashion blog called *The Primary Edit* that I started in October 2017. I've focus on interviewing people on their various beauty and fashion routines, as well as their inspiring stories. I also hope to start making video content when I get a little more free time, so stay tuned, folks!  
 I've always been into beauty and fashion, so having an outlet for my interests has been fantastic. I have to dedicate lots of time into it, but it's so much fun. Working on my blog has taught me that I shouldn't be so afraid to share what I create. When I first started, I was terrified that people wouldn't enjoy it, or that nobody would want to share their routines, or that it would just be plain bad. Much to my surprise, it was met with a lot more enthusiasm than I had expected."  
**Blog:** [theprimaryedit.blogspot.com](http://theprimaryedit.blogspot.com)  
**Instagram:** @theprimaryedit



**Vaulting**  
**Lizzie Phelps, 10th grade, Humanities**

"I've participated in vaulting for ten years. My team has practice once a week in the morning, and in the afternoon I help coach our younger vaulters. At competitions, I'm in charge of doing everyone's hair, helping with horse chores, and helping to coach the younger kids. Through the sport, I have made friends that come from all over the country and the world. It's competitive, but it's also a tightly knit community. Vaulting has taught me about teamwork, dedication, and sportsmanship but, has also taught me about failure. When you fall off in vaulting, you learn how to get back up and try again."

**Delivering Baby Pigs**  
**Mackenzie Magaha, 9th grade, ISP**

"We've always had mother pigs giving birth, but I didn't help out until two years ago. I actually have to go up inside the moms and pull the baby pigs out and give the mothers shots, and then two days after the babies are born I give all the babies shots and help notch their ears. I learned that I really loved working with animals, and I want to be a vet now because I feel like I have a lot of experience with it. I've learned valuable lessons about responsibility because if I can't get the babies out in time, they won't make it."



**Fencing**  
**Amanda Hu, 11th grade, Global**

"I've been fencing for eight years. I go to practice and lessons every week in Baltimore about an hour away. Fencing has made me appreciate other athletes and the time, persistence, and dedication they put into their respective sports. I've learned dedication and time management through fencing. Especially since my club is so far, I've learned to manage my after school homework situation pretty well."



**Synchronized Skating**  
**Jane Liu, 9th grade, SMCS**

"The main discipline of figure skating I skate is synchronized skating. I began when I was ten, but I've only been competing for two years. It's a lot of fun, skating on a team, you tend to get very close to the people you're entrusting your safety to. The biggest lesson I learned from skating is probably to stay 'chill' and to keep pushing my limits. No matter how scary a particular element looks, or how painful the last fall is, if I get up and keep practicing (rather than letting the fear scare me from improving), I'm going to get better."



## Lack of airport efficiency makes traveling a hassle

By Naomi Cocker  
Staff Writer



Graphic by Julia Pavlick

Travel, at the best of times, is an awesome way to explore new places and cultures, meet new people and create happy memories. Travel, at its worst, is absolutely awful. I have not had many (if any) “good” experiences with traveling, especially with airports. From getting through security, to waiting in the terminal, and to being on the actual airplane, flying is a long slew of nightmares for everyone involved.

Recently, I visited family in Georgia. My family and I took a plane from Ronald Reagan National Airport in D.C. to the Jacksonville Airport in Florida.

To start out, Reagan Airport is one of the most inaccessible places in D.C. Even though we were on the road at 5:30 to catch our 9:15 flight, we got caught up in traffic and it took us longer than planned to get to the airport. The signage was confusing as well. However, security was the worst part. I blundered through the lines like an uncertain and panicky bull in a china shop. I stepped through the security scanner and was immediately told to do it again, as I had stepped in too early. I was then patted down regardless. But, TSA is almost useless.

According to a leaked report from TSA, “investigators from the Department of Homeland Security managed to sneak weapons and fake bombs past airport screeners in 95% of their attempts to beat the system.”

All that expensive machinery and the screenings are almost all for nothing.

When we got on the plane, the immediate problems were the seat size. Over the course of a few decades, seats have gotten a lot smaller. In 1985, the average seat size on American Airlines was 33 inches wide. Now, the average is 31. When you consider that the average hip size of a woman is 36 inches, and the average in a man is 38, it doesn’t sound very roomy. The idea is that airliners can cram more passengers into smaller aircraft by reducing seat size, and leg space, but it just makes travel more of a nightmare for the average person.

Many of these travel nightmares can be avoided or fixed quite easily. The seat size can easily be enlarged, at the cost of a slight uptick in airplane prices. TSA can be revamped, and TSA agents can be given more rigorous courses in streamlining security and catching prohibited and dangerous items faster.

Freshman Humanities student Jaida Barksdale also shares, “I would like them to make planes bigger so that you don’t have to sit super squished together and [airlines must] widen the aisles.”

## Government shutdowns are terrible for the economy

By Joe Dwyer  
Staff Writer

As 2018 begun, the United States government narrowly escaped a second government shutdown on February 9th. Not two months have gone by this year, and the US government has nearly shut down twice over a budget resolution that was meant to be completed in June of last year. President Donald Trump, among with multiple Republican congressmen, have endorsed the idea of a shutdown as a way to punish the Democrats in Congress who oppose them.

Although this may be considered to be an unsurprising act in the realm of modern American politics, the members of the Republican party fail to realize what they are doing to their government’s economy, as well as how those who work for the federal government feel about going without pay at Congress’s gain.

Trump has been advocating the idea for a “good” shutdown since December. During the shutdown in late January, his son and confidant Eric Trump claimed that the shutdown was “good for us,” after his father was criticized for applauding the fact that the government was shutting down. After the government reopened and Senator Chuck Schumer (D) was the last to sign the continuing resolution into February, an abundance of both Republican congressmen and members of the Trump administration commented that the shutdown had done something along the lines of “teaching the Democrats a lesson.”

The day before the resolution’s expiration on February 9th, Trump made comments that seemed like a shutdown was the best option possible.

In addition, Senator Rand Paul

(R) willingly became the sole supporter of the shutdown hours before the agreement was reached. Support for a shutdown seemed to emanate from the Republicans’ camp as they refused to hear the Democrats’ negotiations.

The issue with supporting shutdowns lies in economic spending. The 2013 government shutdown cost the country \$24 billion.

Experts from Forbes and Business insider projected a government shutdown in February to negatively impact the GDP. Shortly after Trump signed off on the continuing resolution, Paul tweeted that Republicans must “stand for less spending.”

While the United States wasted roughly a billion dollars by shutting down the government in January, members of the Republican party rejoiced over the event.

While President Trump continues to praise the concept of a shutdown to set the Democrats straight, he damages his country’s GDP by having no issue with flushing billions of dollars worth of government funding go down the drain. If anything is to be said, it is that the Trump administration is willing to damage the economy that they promised they would nurture. The other important thing to consider is the 900,000 people who were not permitted to work during January’s shutdown.

The flow of the government is derailed in far greater ways than one might think. It also must be mentioned that, despite the desire of Trump and the congressional Republicans to boost the economy to return jobs to the United States, they are willing to cut the pay of nearly a million Americans as leverage over the Democrats.

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# Hogan calls for monitoring of education fraud

By Ryan Chernosky  
Staff Writer

Amidst several allegations of corruption levied against regional school districts in Maryland, Governor Larry Hogan has called for the implementation of a Education Inspection General with the function of monitoring the schools. The suggestion from the governor comes after several controversies including Baltimore County failing to disclose that its leaders were part of a contracting company that supplied schools and alleged grade fraud in Prince George’s County. This was only a part of a much larger proposal Hogan called for: the Accountability in Education Act, which included several of these watchdog programs.

Already Governor Hogan has experienced opposition to his proposal, and the argument seems to be largely partisan in nature. The majority of the state legislator has condemned the governor for overreach, saying that the schools should deal with the matter internally. They also argue that rather than trying to solve problems that have already been dealt with, the money is better off being spent trying to improve the schools and the curriculum. Those officials in the governor’s party argue that such a measure will be able to protect against further problems in the school boards and will provide a better channel of communication between the state and the public.

Another group of dissidents of Governor Hogan’s proposal are the school boards themselves, who Hogan directly targeted. The Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) released a short memo after Governor Hogan’s announcement.

The memo states that while it “supports strong accountability for school systems regarding student achievement and success” it “questions the need for an ‘Investigator General’ as proposed by the governor’s recently announced Accountability in Education Act.” The Association cites its concern with the act in both its necessity and in its monetary cost.

The MABE maintained that problems in the school districts were not large enough to warrant the strong suggestions called for by governor Hogan. It also voices concern with how the legislation will affect the taxpayers, saying in the memo that the MABE’s priority is, “managing taxpayer dollars in the best interests of the students.” In order for Hogan to be allowed to create this new position, a vote must be held by the Maryland General Assembly.



Photo courtesy of Ananya Tadikonda  
Nima Nayel, MCR President Michael Yin, Ananya Tadikonda and current SMOB Matthew Post pose for a picture after the SMOB nominating convention on February 21 at Watkins Mill High School.

## First time in nine years female candidates dominate competition in SMOB election 41st election includes two Richard Montgomery juniors

By Angela Wang  
Staff Writer

This year, a total of 16 students from nine different MCPS high schools filed for candidacy to become the 2018-2019 Student Member on the Board of Education (SMOB). The SMOB is an elected official who can vote on issues, such as administrative appointments (including hiring of the Superintendent of Schools), various policies, and the Board of Education’s legislative platform. Recent SMOBs include Matt Post of Sherwood High School, Eric Guerri of Bethesda Chevy Chase High School, and Dahlia Huh of Clarksburg High School.

On Feb. 21st, the 16 candidates gathered at Watkins Mill High School for the Nominating Convention, where the pool was narrowed down to the final two.

Ultimately, after delivering speeches to student representatives from MCPS high schools and middle schools, two juniors from Richard Montgomery High School, Ananya Tadikonda and Nima Nayel, prevailed as the final two candidates. This is the first SMOB election since 2006 in which both candidates are female.

Throughout the month of January, candidates filed paperwork to officially declare their candidacy, with many launching social media based campaigns, along with websites, and videos. Many candidates cited issues such as fund-

ing for ESOL programs, mental health, and lunch quality as key policy issues to be addressed.

Tadikonda’s campaign centers around the slogan #empoweringyou. Her advocacy includes increasing equitable resource access, including access to school counselors, combatting school infrastructure issues, and expanding career and vocational opportunities. More about her candidacy and platform can be found at AnanyaForSMOB.com.

Nayel’s platform includes revising curriculum to reflect project based learning and a diversified literature selection in English class to include authentic representations of minority groups as well as bridging the achievement gap. More about her candidacy can be found at nimah4smob.weebly.com.

The countywide SMOB election will be conducted on April 25, on which all 84,504 MCPS high school and middle school students will vote for the 41st SMOB.

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### The Poolesville Pulse

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Our Mission:

The Poolesville Pulse is a student-run and written publication, dedicated to the pursuit of scholastic journalistic truth, which presents the news and opinions that are most relevant to the Poolesville High School community.

Editor-in-Chief

Julia Rich

Editors

Erica Guthrie  
Melody Zhang

Photographer

Jocelyn Alvarez  
Jhasper Paul

Contributing Staff Writers

Ryan Chernosky  
Vincent Chim  
Naomi Cocker  
Joe Dwyer  
Minjee Jung  
Brooke Mengistu  
Rachel Ryan  
Andrew Sokja  
Nina Todd  
Angela Wang

Poolesville High School

17501 West Willard Road Poolesville, MD 20837  
(301) 972-7900 ~ thepoolesvillepulse@gmail.com

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Poms win first Division I championship

By Rachel Ryan  
Staff Writer

On Saturday, Feb. 3rd, the PHS varsity Poms took home first place at the Division I County Championship at Montgomery Blair High School. They competed against fellow Division I teams Colonel Zadok Magruder High School, Walter Johnson High School, Quince Orchard High School, Sherwood High School, Damascus High School, and Rockville High School.

When asked how she felt about the win, senior captain Camille Awono stated, “Despite how much I dreamed for this moment, I never re-

“Despite how much I dreamed for this moment, I never really thought I’d get to live it. It was amazing.”

ally thought I’d get to live it. It was amazing.” After winning in Division II for three consecutive years, PHS Poms were moved up to Division I in 2015. The team placed 2nd at the Watkins Mill High School, Northwest High School and Blake High School invitational competitions this season. During the competition season, the girls practice six times a week for two and a half hours each day.



Photo by Neil Rubino - MCPS Communications  
PHS poms celebrate their victory at Montgomery Blair High School on Feb. 3, 2018.

Sophomore Pom Aly Gotlewski stated that “Starting with tryouts in June, we work so incredibly hard for months. It was just such a reward to win counties; not just for ourselves but for our school, our town, and all the Poms that have come before us.” Awono credited the morale of the team to her coach, Tanya Ventura, saying that she constantly pushed them and inspired them to perform at their best. Awono shared a quote from Coach Ventura: “You earn the trophy at practice. You collect the trophy at competition.” Awono says she attributes the team’s success to their eagerness to win after receiving second place at all the invitionals this year, and their unwavering dedication to getting that trophy. “We all truly realized that we had what it took to take home the trophy, we just had to keep pushing through the week and giving it all we got,” Awono explained. Gotlewski added “We’ve always been the under-dogs and to be able to come out on top was so amazing.”

Camille Awono is a Sports Writer for the Poolsville Pulse.

Wrestlers rank at regionals, states

Savage, Carbonell place 3rd in the state

By Erica Guthrie  
Editor

On Feb. 24, eight members of PHS’s varsity wrestling team competed at the Class 2A West Regional Finals at Boonsboro High School after qualifying at counties. ISP sophomores Xavier Kresslein (3rd) and Colin Savage (2nd), and SMCS junior Alex Carbonell (3rd) placed. These three wrestlers went on to compete at the 1A/2A Maryland State Wrestling Championships over the weekend of Mar. 4. Carbonell, one of the team’s captains, expressed that “Going to states was a great experience this year. We only qualified three wrestlers, but we beat a lot of teams that had more than three wrestlers there.” The team placed 14th out of the 71 teams competing. During the winter athletic season, the team practiced six days a week. During each of the practices, the team worked on advancing their skills and prepared to meet opponents. By the end of the regular season, varsity wrestling had a 10-4 record. Carbonell hit his 100th career win at this year’s Dorsey Duals, held annually at PHS. The team placed 2nd overall. “This season was definitely a pretty strong season for us,” shared Carbonell. “In the middle of the season, we hit a bit of a tough patch, we lost a few close matches, but we pulled it together for the end.”

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