

The NewsBreaker

Interviewing School Board Candidates

Volume 4 No. 4

7 November 2022

Interviewing Candidates for Upcoming School Board Election



By Owen Pesenhofer, Class of 2023

With the upcoming election on Tuesday, November 8, *The NewsBreaker* staff decided to reach out to the Pacific Grove School Board candidates. Since students are greatly impacted by the decisions of the school board, we wanted to make sure that the voices and questions of the PGHS student body were heard. Accordingly, the staff generated some simple yet important questions to ask the candidates running for the school board, and ever so kindly, we received responses from Frank Rivera and Elliot Hazen:

In July 2022, would you have voted to keep or eliminate the mask mandate in PGUSD schools?

Rivera: “The board voted to remove the mandate. I voted to keep it. My reasoning for this was that I felt it was worth waiting for the first regularly scheduled meeting to see if the return to school initiated a surge of cases. I try to base my decisions on data whenever possible. I was happy to see that there was no surge and we were safely able to keep classes/schools open.”

Hazen: “I would have voted to keep a transmission rate-based trigger for masks in the schools. This would have been a really difficult vote because we were all and still are tired of COVID. Looking back on it, the masks would have only been worn for a few weeks before the transmission rates dropped below the transmission level that would have triggered mask wearing. My workplace has had a similar transmission-rate based rule in place and it has worked well for us in reducing COVID reaching the most vulnerable populations.”

Do you believe that advanced (AP and Honors) classes should be offered at PGHS, even if a smaller number of students has signed up for the class?

Rivera: “I absolutely feel that we need to keep AP and honors classes at PGHS whenever possible. In addition, I am trying to increase the number of dual-enrollment offerings on campus. The only way students can reach their full potential is to be intellectually challenged and mentored every day that they step on campus.”

Hazen: “Yes, I think having a student or even a few students miss out on an Honors or AP course in a given year because there were not enough students is not a good outcome. When I was in high school (way too many years ago), we had too few students sign up for AP Physics so my Physics teacher

had me enrolled in the Physics class but he worked with me as an independent study on preparing throughout the year with AP materials (I got a 4). I think creative approaches like that can help small school districts like ours still offer as many opportunities for the kids as possible.”

As a member of the PGUSD school board, what would your priorities be?

Rivera: “These are my priorities, as found on my website frank4pgusd.com:
Offering more pathways to vocational careers.
Continue building our relationship with MPC and offer more dual enrollment courses on the PGHS campus.
Increasing diversity among our staff.
Seek better health insurance options for district employees.
Better communication between the district, our community, and families.

Building community and trust within the district.”
Hazen: “Right now I would say two of my biggest priorities are (1) providing more social and emotional health services to students and (2) also making sure that kids are given the tools to graduate PGHS both career and college ready. All kids missed out on critical components of their lives not just education during COVID, and I think we need to provide opportunities for supporting all children who need it not just the most extreme cases. Second, I do not want any PGHS graduate to feel that the school system held them back from achieving their goals whether it’s college or a trade. Strengthening the ties with MPC is just one example of a way we can do this. I also know some kids did really well in distance learning from an educational standpoint so I want us to learn from our response to COVID to explore new ways to teach to all learning styles. Most importantly I am here to learn so I want to know what the students and community feel are the greatest priorities for the district.”

How do you ensure that every student receives the equal amount of treatment and education that they all deserve?

Rivera: “It is important to remember that equity is not necessarily equality. Different students need different types of support. We need to make sure that each student receives what they need to succeed. This is done by empowering our teachers and providing them with the resources that they have determined is needed for their students. Students must also feel empowered to make the changes they feel they need to succeed. The student voice is the most important voice in our district.”

Hazen: “As I said above, opportunities (e.g. ESL, Honors, AP, Wood shop) for our small community is one of the most important things we can do. If we don’t have the curriculum

that allows PGMS or PGHS students to be successful in choosing their own path we aren't serving the community the best we can. For a small district I realize this is more of a challenge but I am eager to look for creative approaches on how best to do this."

Is there any way we could change our schedule? Students have had many complaints about this year's schedule, but is there no way we could change it because of state law?

Rivera: "The state dictates a minimum number of instructional hours each student must have. It does not dictate how a district schedule is set. Students have a voice through their student government. Students also have a voice on the board through the student trustee (Rey Avila). The students can use these entities to voice their opinions and to set in motion change they would like to see. We want and need to hear from our students."

Hazen: "I would be glad to explore opportunities for more flexibility in the schedule such as having electives available both before and after school. Some people do well in the morning and some don't and it does not make sense to force everyone into the same box if we can avoid it."

Could the bathrooms be updated to better suit the needs of students (dividers for urinals)?

Rivera: "The community of Pacific Grove has passed Measure D for the purpose of updating facilities. The students can and should use student government to bring any grievances to administration. The administration wants to hear from you. Your voice matters!"

Hazen: "I am all ears here and would definitely be interested in helping the bathrooms be more comfortable for students. I would be happy to look into prioritizing this and I think making sure that your voices reach the principal and then also the school board via the student representative helps us know which tasks the students want prioritized."

What is the decision-making process for implementing new policies for the district?

Rivera: "Simply put, present your suggestions to the board. If the board, the community, or the student body feel that a policy must be changed, or a new policy set, then it is presented to the board with a valid reason and supporting evidence (if available). The board can then place it on our list of future agenda items. The policy is then prepared by the district for the board to view, edit if necessary, and approve."

Hazen: "As someone who has attended board meetings but not yet served on the board, the decision-making process is consensus based. Specifically that we as a board discuss an issue and look for the common ground across the various board members' positions. No policy is made lightly as there is a lot of research by district staff and the board members themselves that goes into any decision made. I encourage you all to talk to your student representative about any concerns, successes, or policies you'd like to see implemented because that is one of the quickest ways to get information to the board and to the public."

How would you choose to allocate funds to different classes?

Rivera: "The allocation of funds to classes is not done by the board; we let the schools do this. The administration (e.g., Principal and/or Vice Principal, site council, etc.) at each site knows their school better than any trustee. If students feel that a class is underfunded, then let Principal Garcia know."

Hazen: "As a school board member, my role would be supporting the PGHS community in choosing the allocation and voting on it. I do not feel it is the role of the board to manage decisions like class budgets at the individual school level. I think any decisions like this should be made with the voice of the students and teachers heard loud and clear."

In what ways could teachers implement the importance of reducing waste?

Rivera: "If students have suggestions on reducing waste in their classrooms or school, then student government is a great place to start. An environmental club, or subcommittee of the student government, can take various forms of action. Students should be part of a solution since YOU are our future. I encourage you to speak with your teacher and see if your class can think of creative ways to make a positive impact."

Hazen: "I think this is a job for everyone in Pacific Grove not just the teachers at PGHS. Regarding the high school specifically, I would love to see the Go Green Club develop a plan that could be brought to the high school and the board for approval on reducing waste in daily activities because it's an ongoing challenge for all involved."

The NewsBreaker Riddle
(Vol. 2, No. 4)



By Elliot Powley, Class of 2023

PREFACE: Ok, so I think this concept of getting student input is working out pretty well. Remember that the answer to the riddle is at the bottom of the last page of the newspaper. Congrats to sophomore Graham Smith, freshman Amy Kim, and senior Owen Pesenhofer for their suggestions being chosen. Graham wants this riddle to occur in Mr. Grate's dungeon. Amy wants the protagonist to be a freshman. Owen wants me to mention rapper Jack Harlow. Let's see how this goes....

Zane Boyd nervously approached the O-2 classroom after school. His geography teacher recommended that he apply for the AP World History class. He had heard of the legendary Mr. Grate, who was rumored to be a zero-dimensional being tasked with organizing young humans to revolt against their leaders. It was also rumored that Mr. Grate had a dungeon mazing under the high school. Zane believed the rumors, inciting his fear as he knocked on the door.

The O-2 door was unlocked, Zane discovered. He opened the door and walked inside. He gulped. "Mr. Grate?" he called with a trembling voice. No answer. Zane was about to turn and leave when he felt a cold, dank breeze from the corner of the room. He shivered, but turned to the corner. An opening at the floor led to a ladder. Zane walked to the opening and climbed down the ladder. He found himself in a cold, damp stone catacomb. Torches illuminated the walls.

"The rumors are true! The dungeon is real!" he said to himself. He couldn't help it. He was excited and terrified at the same time. Whatever lies ahead could be his demise.

Zane then heard a faint sound. An unmistakable sound. Music? He wasn't sure. Then he heard a voice amidst the possible music. It was the voice of Jack Harlow, American rapper and producer! Zane followed the music with anticipation. As he walked, he found graffiti text on the walls of the dungeon. One phrase said, "The lotus people are after me." Another said, "F! You all get Fs!" A third said, "They'll never get my Packet-o-Stuff!" Zane was disturbed by these sayings as he followed the music and Jack Harlow's singing.

Finally, Zane reached a central room where the music was blaring through an old plug-in stereo on a wooden stool.

A hooded figure was facing the stereo with his back to Zane. The figure stretched his finger and pressed a button on the stereo. The music changed to “Colonel Bogey’s March.” The figure laughed and said, “Now this is music, unlike those wretched sounds.”

Zane began whistling to the music when the figure turned to face him. He removed his hood. It was Mr. Grate! He pointed at Zane and said, “I am Justus Von Grate! And you, my friend, will choose the mode of your demise!” Zane stopped whistling and his face went pale with fear.

“Now then,” Justus Von Grate said, “I have two pills. One will paralyze you for 5 minutes and the other is normal. I take one and you take the other. If I am paralyzed, you have time to escape. If you are paralyzed, I have time to trap you here! If you don’t agree to play, you will die via electrocution!”

What is the best option for Zane to survive?

See answer at the bottom of the last page of this issue.

PGHS Hosts Homecoming Dance, Experiences Incendiary Interruption



By Graham Smith, Class of 2025

Saturday, October 29 marked the occasion of the 2022 Homecoming dance, which was held in the breezeway and dance room from 7-10 PM. As the first dance of the year, it is always highly anticipated, and it serves as an opportunity for students to embrace the social side of being a Breaker while spending an evening with friends. The dance featured snacks, a place to take photos, and a DJ cranking sick beats. A Nintendo Wii was also present, for those who preferred Super Mario as opposed to busting a move.

Homecoming was also accompanied by a preceding spirit week. Monday was USA Day, and students introduced a dash of patriotic spirit to their wardrobes. On Tuesday, students were encouraged to get creative by bringing “anything but a backpack” to school. Many rose to the challenge, and PGHS was met with such innovative alternatives as suitcases, shopping carts, pizza boxes, and more. On Wednesday, students adorned themselves in pink. On Thursday, each class was given an opportunity to represent themselves as a color, with freshmen wearing yellow, sophomores red, juniors white, and seniors black. Finally, on Friday, students were instructed to “dress like their type.” While this provocative prompt was embraced by some more than others, it certainly sparked a great deal of excitement around the campus.

Unfortunately, the dance itself experienced an unexpected disruption which came in the form of a fire alarm. The alarm occurred roughly around 8:50 PM, and while it luckily proved to be a false alarm, it did cause the dance to be interrupted for a time, resulting in some dance-goers choosing to return home rather than wait out the non-existent fire. The identity of the brave student who heroically alerted the dance to this imaginary fire is, and will likely remain, unknown, but we can only speculate they must not have been satisfied with the Homecoming festivities.



Election Aftermath: Brazil Descends Into Chaos

World News Series



By Nathan Jennings, Class of 2023

On October 30, Brazil’s 2022 presidential election results came in, with former president Luiz Inacio Lula de Silva, called “Lula,” defeating incumbent president Jair Bolsonaro. Lula had been the president of Brazil from 2003-2011 and was a member of the left-wing Workers’ Party. In 2016, Lula was tried for allegations of corruption and thus suspended from running in presidential campaigns for the time being. He was sentenced to nine years in prison, which was then extended to twelve years for his involvement in Operation Car Wash, a corrupt and criminal pact between state-run oil and the oil company Petrobras, which contributed secret campaign funds to a number of politicians. He was convicted in July 2017 and began his sentence in April 2018. In 2021, the Supreme Federal Court of Brazil terminated Lula’s sentence and ended the investigation on grounds that the judge was not impartial in his ruling. Lula was a friend of Obama, and Bolsonaro was a friend of Trump.

Jair Bolsonaro has been called “Tropical Trump” for his right-wing attitudes and populist approach to politics. Jair Bolsonaro is socially conservative, pro-gun, and anti-welfare. He became unpopular among his opponents and many moderates for his poor handling of the coronavirus pandemic in Brazil, as well as his offensive and sometimes antisemitic comments. His silent support for deforestation efforts in the Amazon Rainforest and the high number of Covid deaths in Brazil caused critics to resort to more extreme positions on the left during Bolsonaro’s presidency. A “pink tide” is speculated to arrive in Latin America with a series of victories for leftist and center-left candidates in Peru, Mexico, Argentina, and now Brazil. These leftist victories are viewed as a reaction to right-wing leaders such as Bolsonaro.

During the week after the election results were solidified, Bolsonaro’s supporters flocked to the capitol, the streets, and government buildings declaring that the election had been stolen, reflecting the Capitol Hill riots on January 6, 2021 after Trump’s election defeat. The primary justification used by Bolsonaro’s supporters was that because Lula was involved in past scandals and alleged corruption, he could have easily rigged the election as well. Although Lula’s Workers’ Party has been involved in many scandals over the last 10 years, Brazilian leftists argue that Bolsonaro’s right-wing advocates are just upset that he lost to a leftist candidate who was very popular during his past presidency for economic reforms and a war against poverty. Protests by Bolsonaro proponents continue, especially in the right-wing majority city of Sao Paulo. Protesters have called out “election fraud” due to

the slim victory of Lula with 50.9% of the vote compared to Bolsonaro’s 49.1%. Lula earned more votes, popularity, and traction in the North of Brazil, while Bolsonaro’s base is concentrated more in the South and agricultural areas. Road blockings by tractors, burning of oil in defiance of Lula’s corruption with oil, and demonstrations are evident in all of the major cities in Brazil, including Rio de Janeiro, where the phrase “the unfloppable has flopped” has been displayed. This statement means that the undefeatable Bolsonaro has been defeated. Truckers in support of Bolsonaro have blocked major highways. Thus Brazil has devolved into political turmoil.

Football Falls to Saint Francis in Homecoming Game



By Mason Pick, Class of 2024

On October 28, PGHS played its Homecoming football game against Saint Francis of Watsonville. The game doubled as senior night. The Breakers lost to a then-undefeated Saint Francis team by a score of 35 to 14.

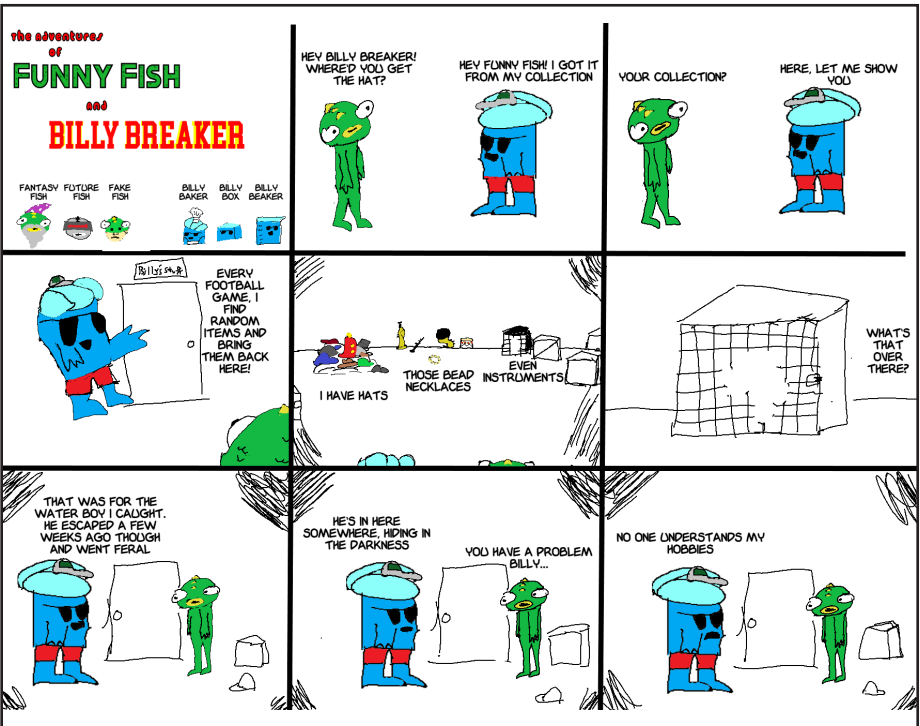
Although the Breakers lost, the energy in the stands and on the field remained high. Saint Francis entered the game with an 8-0 record, while the Breakers had a record of 5-3. Saint Francis scored right out of the gate, taking a 7-0 lead. Pacific Grove fired back with a touchdown to tie the game at 7-7. By the end of the first half, the game was tied at 14-14. In the second half, the Breakers couldn’t keep up with Saint Francis and quickly fell behind. The game became out of reach when Saint Francis took a 28-14 lead.

Since it was senior night, there was a banner up for each senior on the football team, as well as for each senior Breaker Girl. The Breaker Band’s seniors were also recognized. The game was a great kickoff for the next day’s Homecoming dance.

The NewsBreaker Comic



By Gavin Hunter, Class of 2023



Left: The Breaker Band in Lodi.

Cross Country Finishes Season, Gabrik Earns All-League Honors



By Valeriia Boiko, Class of 2023

On Saturday, October 29, the cross country team ran at the PCAL Championships at Palo Corona in Carmel Valley, and we ran through grass, sand, and hills and down-hills. Val Boiko ran through the course. There were different schools that ran with us, and we cheered them on. The Breakers did a great job cheering on the schools. All our cross country athletes did an awesome job. You did amazing, and I know we are proud of each other. At every single cross country meet, we cheered PGHS and the other schools on. At every single practice, we pushed through it all, and I could not be more proud. Head coach Peter Jordan and assistant coach Jenna Hall, thank you all for a fantastic cross country season. You were awesome, great coaches. On Wednesday, November 2, we had a cross country banquet at the PGHS student union. All the students received certificates, and Val gave a speech. At the banquet all the seniors gave speeches and everyone enjoyed it. There were parents too, and also we had a presentation with all of the pictures that our amazing photographer took of us when we were running cross country. We thank all of our coaches and athletes for a great season. We showed great sportsmanship and the season was very fun. We ran around three miles at each race during the season. All of it was really fun. Nice job to everyone on a great season.

Freshman Tony Gabrik took ninth place in the Mission Division at the PCAL Championships, earning first-team all-league honors. He covered the 3.1-mile loop in 18:32. Gabrik and senior Will Coen qualified as individuals to compete at the CCS Championships, which will be held on Saturday, November 12 at the Crystal Springs Cross Country Course in Belmont, CA.



Left: Tony Gabrik approaches the finish line at Palo Corona.

Marching and Jazz Bands Compete in Lodi



By Will Coen, Class of 2023

The Breaker Band and Jazz Band traveled to Lodi, CA (near Stockton) on Saturday, November 5 to compete in the annual Grape Bowl Classic Band Review. The bands met at the high school at 3:15 AM in the morning to take a bus to Lodi. The Jazz Band performed in front of judges at 8 AM. Senior Jose Romero conducted the band while also playing trombone. Featured soloists were seniors Toby Grief, Alexis Rodas-Mendoza, Samantha Barragan, and Tanner Downing-McAdams. The band earned first place in its division. Led by drum major William Coen and drum captain Gabby Kaatz, the Breaker Band marched in front of judges at 10 AM. The Breaker Band and Jazz Band will attend a band review in Fairfield, CA on Saturday, November 19.

Our Staff

The NewsBreaker is made possible by the dedication of journalists and editors from the Pacific Grove High School student body.

Will Coen



Class of 2023

Will is a senior at PGHS. He is in his fourth year on *The NewsBreaker* staff and second year as an editor. He enjoys learning math at school and running for the cross country and track teams. Outside of school, Will likes to spend as much time as possible biking and skiing.

Gabriel Garzaniti



Class of 2023

Gabriel is a senior at PGHS. He works a job every Saturday from 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM and plays lacrosse. He owns a Canon digital camera that has two batteries and one SD card. He has only recently learned how to export photos from the camera to his computer. He is looking forward to working with *The NewsBreaker*.

Nathan Jennings



Class of 2023

Nathan is a senior at PGHS. For *The NewsBreaker*, he will be writing about world news and relevant global or national events. His interests include weightlifting, swimming, journaling, self-improvement, and philosophy. Nathan has been fascinated with creative writing and journalism ever since he was young. Now, Nathan utilizes his strengths and excellent research skills to write for the school newspaper.

Owen Pesenhofer



Class of 2023

Owen is a senior, and this is his first year on *The NewsBreaker*. He is a member of both the Breaker Band and the Jazz Band as a trumpet player. In his free time, he enjoys watching football and playing ping pong.

Gavin Hunter



Class of 2023

Gavin is a senior at PGHS and is a second-year member of *The NewsBreaker* staff. Gavin is a part of the water polo and swimming teams and enjoys other swimming activities.

Mason Pick



Class of 2024

Mason is a junior at PGHS, and he loves to surf and ski. He runs cross country and competes in track and field as well. He enjoys being involved with the school and is new to PG this year.

Elliot Powley



Class of 2023

Elliot is a senior at PGHS. He likes chemistry, history, and calculus. Outside of school, he does 3-D Rendering, Virtual Reality, and piano. Check out his riddles!

Graham Smith



Class of 2025

Graham is a sophomore at PGHS, and he is in his second year of writing for *The NewsBreaker*. He loves writing both in and out of school, and he hopes to use his time on the staff of The Newsbreaker as an opportunity to develop his skills. He also plays on the boys' tennis team, and when he is not at school he enjoys drawing, skiing, playing video games, and spending time with friends.

Valeriia Boiko



Class of 2023

Valeriia is currently a senior at PGHS. She is in her first year on *The NewsBreaker* staff. She runs on the cross country and track teams. She really enjoys her government and music appreciation courses at school. She enjoys running and playing video games as much as possible.

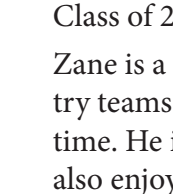
Thomas Coen



Class of 2025

Thomas is a sophomore at PGHS. He really enjoys being on the BreakerBots, running cross country, and playing tennis. He also enjoys playing in the Breaker Band.

Zane Coutts



Class of 2023

Zane is a senior at PGHS. He runs on both the track and cross country teams. Zane enjoys reading and playing the bass guitar in his free time. He is entering his second year on *The NewsBreaker* staff. He also enjoyed writing this bio. Farewell.

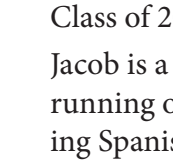
Conor O'Brien



Class of 2026

Conor is a freshman. He plays the saxophone and enjoys tennis, biking, and baseball. He is super excited to be a part of *The NewsBreaker* this year and in years to come.

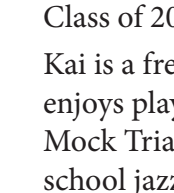
Jacob Birkett



Class of 2023

Jacob is a senior at PGHS. Outside of *The NewsBreaker*, he enjoys running on the cross country and track teams. He also enjoys learning Spanish and French.

Kai Bishop



Class of 2026

Kai is a freshman, and along with writing for *The NewsBreaker*, he enjoys playing the trombone in the Breaker Band. He also is on the Mock Trial team. Outside of school, he volunteers at the middle school jazz band and likes hanging out with friends.

Riddle Answer: Though Mr. Grate's dungeon is illuminated by torches, the stereo is plugged in, meaning that the dungeon has electric power, so Zane will certainly die via electrocution. This means that Zane should choose to take the pill for a 50% chance to escape.