

The NewsBreaker

PGHS SPRINGS FORWARD!

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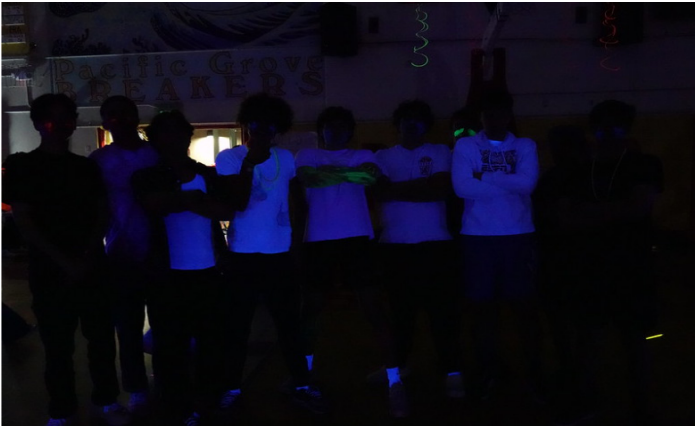
Pacific Grove Dodgeball



By Kai Bishop, Class of 2026

The first ever dodgeball tournament was captivating. The dodgeball tournament was a new idea by our leadership that incorporated four of our nearby schools: Pacific Grove, Seaside, Carmel and Monterey High School. Students were invited to play dodgeball at Pacific Grove High School and compete against each other to see which school is the best at dodgeball. This year was the first and was hosted in the PGHS gym. The theme of the game was neon, so many students showed their school spirit by wearing neon clothing and facepaint. In addition to the students, the actual dodgeball was coated in neon, which illuminated the balls in the dark. Although one school did not show up, people who did had a lively and competitive time.

In the tournament, Monterey High School ultimately took home the champion title. However, there were many inclusive rounds, with some rounds only having girls so that everyone had a chance to participate, in addition to a massive co-ed game at the end of the night with everyone playing. Overall, the dodgeball tournament was a fun and new experience for everyone that showed up, and I hope to see more events like this at different schools.



The event featured a cool black-light effect to highlight participants' neon gear.



Post-tournament picture of all the teams decked out in neon!

Breaker Jazz Band and Vocal Compete At Cabrillo College



By Conor O'Brien, Class of 2026

Last Tuesday, the Breaker Jazz Band, Concert Band, and Orchestra had their late winter/early spring concert, featuring the music they've been learning since break. The Jazz Band also featured vocalists performing with the big band, such as Hailie Atkinson, Serra Arkan, Conor O'Brien, Aaliyah Medina, Amber Hoffman, and Dayci Dishny.

This past Saturday, March 16, 2024, the Breaker Jazz band and Jazz Choir competed at the Santa Cruz Jazz festival. The festival consists of a performance for three judges and then a clinic and sight-reading test afterwards, where the group is rated on how well they can perform a piece they have never seen. If a group receives all superior ratings for the performance, they are invited back that night to perform.

The band performed first, with a set consisting of "Celia," a hip-hop swing tune; "Hickory and Twine," a funk piece; "Stolen Moments"; and a vocal tune, "Saint Louis Blues." The band received all superiors in their performance, but a lower score in sight-reading. The band was sadly not invited back for a command performance that night, but was still satisfied with the performance. Andrew Murray, Johnny Klevan, and Dayci Dishny all received honor certificates for their performances.

The vocal jazz choir performed later in the day. Their set featured "Come Fly With Me," arranged by Kirby Shaw; "It's You Or No One," by Kerry Marsh; and "Willow Weep For Me," also by Kerry Marsh. Singers Hailie Atkinson, Serra Arkan, and Aaliyah Medina received honors certificates after the performance. The choir received all superiors for their performance and were invited to perform again that night.

Culinary Team Excels at First Competition!



By Thomas Coen, Class of 2025

Our school recently showcased its culinary prowess and entrepreneurial spirit through various competitions, leaving a mark of excellence and innovation. In the heart of intense culinary battles, our school’s team achieved an impressive 5th place out of 31 teams in the Culinary Competition. The requirements of the competition are as follows: six plates of food—a three-course meal with two identical plates each—prepared in just one hour, using only two camping burners without electricity. Despite the challenges, the team delivered outstanding dishes that wowed both judges and peers alike. Matias De La Garza wowed with a tantalizing appetizer featuring a seared sea scallop on celery root puree, galangal cream, fried cordyceps (orange mushrooms), and microgreens, dressed with a chili vinaigrette. George Hatfield’s expertise shined in the entree—a Hoisin glazed pan-fried duck breast with duck-fat-fried sweet potatoes, a harmony of flavors and textures. Yeva Yevdash’s foundation for the entree, with maple 5-spice carrot puree, Japanese eggplant, sautéed mushrooms and scallions, and a savory-sweet-and-spicy sauce, perfectly complemented the dish. Destiny Craft’s twist on a classic Chinese dessert, filling sesame balls with mascarpone cream and pairing them with tangerine curd, fresh kumquats, blackberries, and yuzu chocolate snow, was a symphony of flavors.

Our school’s entrepreneurial spirit shined bright in the Management Cup, securing a commendable 3rd place. The challenge was to develop a comprehensive business plan, design a menu, and deliver a compelling pitch to 18 business professionals. “Hippie Hash,” the team’s ’70s-themed food truck concept, impressed judges, who expressed readiness to invest and enjoy the food immediately.

George excelled in the Baked Potato Competition, while Caitlyn Botes contributed to crafting delectable hot dogs. These two had so much fun and the culinary team cheered the whole time. Their ideas were delicious and fun! Overall the Culinary Team excelled at their first competition and plans to continue to excel in future competitions.

Culinary Team Excels at First Competition!



By Matthew An, Class of 2027

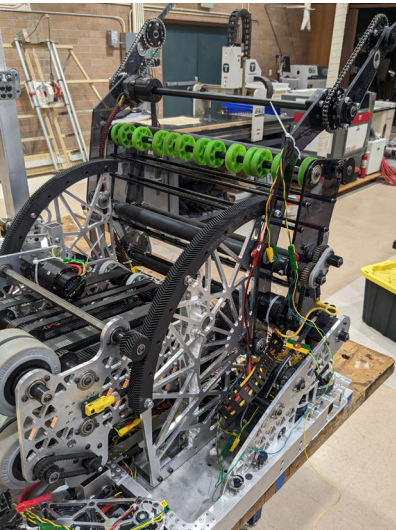
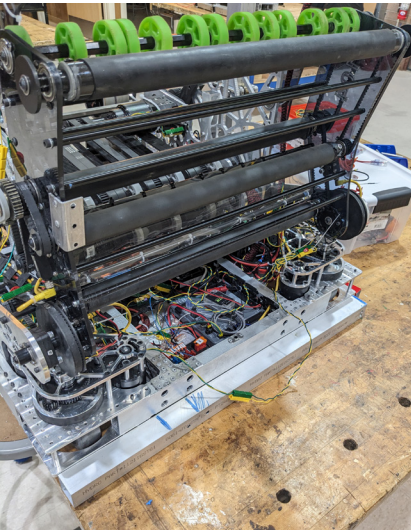
The robotics competition season is moving along and our team, The BreakerBots, is in preparation for the final upcoming competition at the Monterey Bay Regional. The majority of the eight-week build season was devoted to the construction of the club’s two most recent robots, *Hurricane* and *Typhoon*. The *Hurricane* bot was primarily built as a prototype while *Typhoon* is intended to be the finalized, competition-ready version.

Earlier in the season, the BreakerBots team attended the Silicon Valley Regional from February 29 to March 3, and fought strong. We are now adjusting the design of *Typhoon* and improving some of its functions based on its prior performance at Silicon Valley.

Some design errors were noted concerning the accuracy of the design. *Typhoon* uses a system that basically sucks up a note from the group using two rods beside each other with plastic wheels on each one. Then, using a treadmill system, *Typhoon* will aim the note at an angle while continuously spinning the treadmill faster, eventually shooting it at the desired target.

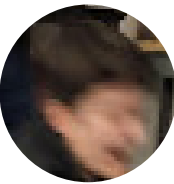
Another design aspect of *Typhoon* involves curving the note to put it in the smaller target that is level with the robot’s height. One design concern noted for the projectile was that of angular variance, which only allowed the note to hit the target at its dead center sometimes, while on other occasions it would miss. Another design error concerned the bending mechanism, where the note would end up not curving enough, resulting in it falling off and not going into the hole.

The BreakerBots have corrected these design flaws and have continued to improve upon *Typhoon* using methods including CAD (Computer-Aided Design) to have a better, more accurate robot for the Monterey Bay Regional. Our team aims to improve our performance and hopes to see you there at Seaside High School from March 27 to March 30!



Shots of the BreakerBots’ current project

Mean Girls (High School Version) is Coming to a Theater Near You!



By Warren Frasenyak, Class of 2025

The PGHS after-school theater department is proud to announce that its spring musical will be *Mean Girls (High School Version)*. The musical was voted on by students earlier this year, and rehearsals began in late February. Meeting up to six times a week, the cast has been working hard to put the show together. Making use of their precious little free time, I was lucky enough to ask two cast members some questions:

W: What are you most excited about, when it comes to staging *Mean Girls*, specifically?

Olivia E (Rachel H): It’s...Regina George. It’s about female empowerment? And learning to be yourself.

Dayci D (Karen): To see how the songs and the on-stage chemistry come together. I’m really looking forward to seeing all the people happy on stage.

W: You’re playing...Taylor W?

O: I’m playing Rachel Hamilton, excuse you.

W: Okay. Anything you’re particularly enjoying about Rachel Hamilton?

O: Well, I’m most excited because in most musicals, actors have to act like adults, but with *Mean Girls*, most of us get to be high schoolers. It’s more accurate.

W: You’re going to accurately express yourself through *Mean Girls*?

O: Yes. My artistic vision is to be myself. Fearless, whoa-oh!

W: You’re playing Karen. Is there anything you’re particularly enjoying about the role?

D: Well, I’m having fun. I remember watching *Mean Girls* and Karen being a dream role when I was younger. I’m really looking forward to singing her songs, especially “Sexy,” it’s really fun, and Karen’s a babe.

W: Anything else you’d like to add? Any comments?

O: The show is a kinda-fresh take on the 2000s movie. See it.

D: I really hope you guys come and see the show and support the theater department!

Mean Girls will run April 19-21 and April 25-28. The shows on April 19-20 and April 25-26 will begin at 5:30pm; the shows on April 21 and April 27-28 will begin at 12:30pm. Admission, as always, is free. Pacific Grove High School is lucky to have such an expansive, talented, and hardworking theater department. It takes a great deal of student effort to put a show together, and all support will be appreciated.

Swim Season Kickoff: PG Dives In



By Tony Gabrik, Class of 2026

With the official start of spring sports this past month, the PGHS swim team has returned to the pool deck for another year of exciting meets, breaking records, and flattering uniforms. If you pass by the pool on your way home from school, you’ve likely seen the swim team hard at work putting in the laps and hours. Well, there is no doubt that this hard work has been producing results in their first few meets. Despite still being early in the season, these meets have hosted some of the best performances Pacific Grove has seen in years.

On Wednesday, March 13th, PG faced off against Carmel @ Home. Notable finishes include first places from Zachary Pechan, Lilikoi Wright, and our relay teams, but one stands out above the rest. A new school record in the Varsity Boys 200 Freestyle Relay was set by John Stegge, Kenji Gonzalez, Zachary Pechan, and Kyle Thompson with a time of 1:37.71. The previous record of 1:38.73 (also featuring Gonzalez and Pechan) only stood for a year before being taken down this past month.

Only two days later, Friday, March 15th, PG went head-to-head with Monterey @ Home. With warm weather and fantastic conditions prevailing, PG received fierce competition from their competitors leading to a spectacular event to watch. Friday marked the first major win for the boys swim team of the season, with likely more to follow.



Members of the PGHS Varsity Swim Team at the start of an exciting race!

March: Unpredictable Events



By Daren Light, Class of 2027

March has plenty of stories to tell. Starting off, the United SSupreme Court has ruled that Donald Trump can stay on the voting ballot for the 2024 presidential election. It is now official with the delegates selected: the 2024 election will have the same candidates as 2020, Donald Trump and Joe Biden.

The Minneapolis City Council overrode a veto from the mayor, lowering the minimum wage for rideshare drivers. As a result, both Uber and Lyft will discontinue operations in Minneapolis.

Five terrorists attacked a hotel very close to the presidential capital in Mogadishu, Somalia. Three people were killed with 27 more injured in and around the hotel. The terrorists were all shot and killed on-site soon after.

With very low competition, President Vladimir Putin has won another six-year term. He won with an 87% majority vote. In addition, Putin referenced opposition leader Navalny, who was killed in prison recently. Putin says, “It happens. There is nothing you can do about it. It’s life.”

Putin also has other plans, such as opening up space projects. He wants a nuclear power station in space, and says that it must be a “priority.” He would like to join with China and build a power unit on the moon in the near future.

Lastly, on a fruitier note, in Australia, the world’s heaviest blueberry has been grown, weighing 0.7 ounces, and measuring about the size of a ping-pong ball. Horticulturist Brad Hocking mentions that there were around 20 other blueberries of a similar size grown there, too.

These stories will continue to escalate the anticipation of the coming months.

Justice for Justus



By Graham Smith, Class of 2025

On February 26th, PGHS was shocked to discover that 10th grade world history teacher and Billy Joel superfan Justus Grate had been suspended based on parent complaints. While the suspension was initially rumored to be only two weeks, its length has now been confirmed to be for an indefinite amount of time, and many believe it will last for the duration of the 2023-2024 school year. In his absence, a substitute teacher, Mr. Shane McCloud, has been assigned to fill Mr. Grate’s solid color polos.

Mr. Grate’s teaching personality is undeniably eccentric. Those who have taken his class can attest to his many antics and animated demeanor. However, what is equally undeniable is his love of world history, and his skill for teaching it. The impressive scores his students are annually awarded on the AP World History Exam is proof of this fact. As such, his sudden removal has not sat well with many of both his current and former students. These students have rallied together under the tagline “Justice for Justus” to support their favorite world history teacher.

One such student is Coben Dreisbach. Coben is a PGHS sophomore and AP World History student who has been organizing a petition to have Mr. Grate reinstated. We spoke to him to hear his opinion on the matter.

Coben described the impact of Mr. Grate’s absence on his class as “quite negative.” He cites the complete cessation of many hallmarks of Grate’s class such as daily lectures, quizzes, and supplemental reading packets intended to enhance students’ understanding of the material. Additionally, Coben stated that his class has been “completely left alone” in regards to preparation for the AP test, which is arguably one of the most important facets of an AP class and necessary to earn college credit.

He went on to reiterate his experience with Mr. Grate during the school year as being very positive. “I love Mr. Grate,” he said, “I love his personality and the way he teaches history. He gets you into the moment and really makes you feel like you’re there - it’s very captivating.” He also stated that this was an opinion shared by many of his classmates. In fact, his petition to lift Mr. Grate’s suspension had already collected over 140 signatures at the time of being interviewed. Finally, Coben stated that like-minded students can make their voice heard by signing petitions, emailing the school administration, and spreading the word to as many as possible.

However, protest over Mr. Grate’s suspension has not been limited only to students. Since the suspension, the school has been flooded with emails from parents voicing their concerns and asking to have him reinstated. In fact, Coben’s mother Janna has organized a parent-led email petition on Mr. Grate’s behalf. We reached out to ask what motivated her to join the Justice for Justus movement.

Janna stated the importance of hearing all perspectives on a person, and not only the complaints. “People are complicated creatures,” she said, “and we should not only focus on what we don’t like about someone. It’s important to remember the positive things as well.” She is uncertain if the school will be willing to listen, but declared the importance of speaking up for one’s views, saying “We learn and grow from questioning things that don’t feel right.” She also repeated Coben’s message, reminding students that those who want to speak up for Mr. Grate can do so by emailing school administration or the district’s Human Resource Department.

Mr. Grate is a beloved figure among many of PGHS’ students. While it is unknown at this time what further actions, if any, the school will take in regards to his suspension, it is clear that students and their families will not be going quiet any time soon.

Calling All Writers and Artists!



By Emily Keller, Class of 2024

Many of you may be familiar with the Young Writers’ Club’s annually-published Literary Magazine. The magazine offers students at PGHS the opportunity to submit creative writing pieces in any form or genre - be it short stories, novel excerpts, or poetry - as well as other forms of art, from painting to photography. In this way, the Young Writers’ Club aims to champion the voices and talents of students with a passion for various forms of the arts, and to highlight the way they complement each other.

For some, the Literary Magazine might be their first opportunity to publish their original work in a public format. It takes courage for an artist to share their work with others, so the Young Writers’ Club hopes to show students that their voices and talents are worth sharing and to give them a platform to do so. Stories can be told in many ways and people find inspiration in many different places. So for all you aspiring novelists, poets, photographers, and more, be on the lookout for more information in the coming months on how to submit your original work. Your talents deserve to be known!



Student Voice



By Mayday Follen, Class of 2026

Every year, the students here at PGHS have the chance to audition for and perform in the Student Voices show and rally. However, in recent years the acts have gone down in variety. In previous shows, we’ve seen dancing, singing, and stand-up comedy, but this last show has gone from many different arts to just one: singing.

Now, we here at *The Eggplant* enjoy our fair share of music, but we cannot stand for the lacking show of many voices. In fact, we don’t think there were multiple voices at all.

This last Student Voices show, there was only one voice. Sahren Ghulfeng, the local morpher, auditioned with more than her fair share of voices (and faces). Although Ghulfeng is a beloved member of the wider community, she has taken far too much of our attention away from the diverse student population.

We all appreciate the effort Ghulfeng puts into each performance, but we cannot stand by as a single morpher takes away the opportunities of the school’s population. Why doesn’t anyone ask about the ONSes of our school? Or the D’iamondians? The aestimia coercitors?

“Yeah, that Ghulfeng thing’s cool an’ all, but sometimes you want a little variety, y’know?” said concerned Pagrovian, Jack Hanaway, “I mean, where’s all those fire jugglers and sword swallows and that kinda thing? One time I was at a talent show and I saw a guy jugglin’ flaming bowling pins. He set his hair on fire! Now that was cool.”

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We are facing an uphill battle for the unrepresented in this school. It is unfair that only one voice can take the whole stage, even if she has many ways to use it. The people want justice!

If you believe in our cause, you can sign our petition at change.org/studentsagainstthestudentvoicesmorpher.

Stay safe. Stay loud. Keep your voices, folks. Make the change. Follen, signing out.

Our Staff

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



Emily Keller



Class of 2024
Emily is a senior at PGHS. This is her first year writing and co-editing for *The NewsBreaker*. She enjoys creatively delivering news to and about the student body, and aspires to be a professional writer one day. She is on the Breaker Girls dance team, and she enjoys reading, writing, and being with friends in her free time.

Graham Smith



Class of 2025
Graham is a junior at PGHS. He is currently in his first year as co-editor of *The NewsBreaker*, and hopes to be able to make the paper the best it has ever been. His hobbies outside of school include writing short stories, playing video games, playing tennis, and spending time with friends whenever possible.

William Powley



Class of 2025
William is a junior at PGHS. He is writing for *The NewsBreaker* for his second year now. He enjoys playing for the Varsity boys' basketball and tennis teams. His favorite subjects in school are History and English and he also enjoys leading the Video Bulletin committee. He enjoys serving and getting done what needs to be done.

Thomas Coen



Class of 2025
Thomas Coen is a Junior at PGHS, and he is in his third year of writing for *The NewsBreaker*. Thomas hopes to spread knowledge about interesting and important school news with his fellow students via *The NewsBreaker*. In his free time Thomas enjoys running, robotics, skiing, and tennis.

Warren Frasenyak



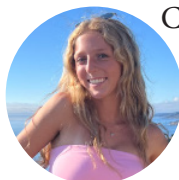
Class of 2025
Warren Frasenyak is a junior at PGHS and a first year member of *The NewsBreaker* who joined to try something new. He plays in the marching and jazz bands, is on the Mock Trial team, and has participated in C-Wing Theater shows. During his free time, he enjoys hiking, listening to music, and spending time with people.

Brooke Domalaog



Class of 2025
Local BreakerBots co-captain and PGHS junior, Brooke joined *The NewsBreaker* crew this year. Between knowing most of the staff and the ins-and-outs of PGHS, she knew it was about time to join in. She's been a writer for a while, also having joined the Young Writers' Club to help hone her skills. In her spare time, she draws, plays video games, and spends time with friends.

Meredith Evans



Class of 2025
Meredith Evans is a junior at Pacific Grove High School. She loves being a part of the PGHS community and joined *The NewsBreaker* in hope of growing her writing skills and creating more connections through the school. She hopes to continue to keep writing in her future as she wants to be a sports journalist. She is thrilled and lucky to have this great opportunity to be a part of something special at PGHS and is very excited to see what she will write about this year!

Daniel Ostovar



Class of 2025
Danny is a junior at PGHS, and an avid member of the Robotics team, the BreakerBots. He enjoys drawing and playing music in his free time. His goal with writing for *The NewsBreaker* is to become a stronger writer and be more involved with the school.

Kai Bishop



Class of 2026
Kai is a sophomore at PGHS and in his second year on *The NewsBreaker*. He plays for the PGHS track team as well as the Breaker Band. Outside of school he enjoys jazz, chemistry, and chess.

Tony Gabrik



Class of 2026
Tony, a sophomore at PGHS, is a first year *NewsBreaker* writer. He hopes that his time on *The NewsBreaker* will allow him to get more involved with school activities. When not writing, Tony is most likely running, or sleeping. He is a second year cross country and track athlete, and volunteers at the aquarium in the off-season.

Conor O'Brien



Class of 2026
Conor is a sophomore this year at PGHS and wrote for *The NewsBreaker* last year. He enjoys playing tennis, singing, and playing saxophone in and out of school.

Andrew Atanous



Class of 2026
Andrew is a sophomore at PGHS and it is his first year on *The NewsBreaker*. He is a multi-instrumentalist who plays in numerous bands in and out of school. He plays on the school water polo and varsity golf teams, and is also a member of the BreakerBots. During the summer, you are sure to find him volunteering at the aquarium.

Mayday Follen



Class of 2026
May is the local gossip center of PGHS - no secret stays hidden from her. New recruit to *The NewsBreaker*, nobody knows how she gets her information. Outside of the school day, she researches the staff and students of PGHS. She also likes to play golf with her parents and ski with her uncle.

Lachlan Whitson



Class of 2027
Lachlan is a freshman at PGHS, and this is his first year writing for *The NewsBreaker*. He likes to journal and write about interesting things. He wishes to learn more about writing for *The NewsBreaker*. He is also going to join track and field in the spring. He likes to swim, bike, spend time with friends, and play Pokemon Go in his free time.

Daren Light



Class of 2027
Daren is a freshman at PGHS. This is his first year being part of *The NewsBreaker*. Daren likes surfing, biking, tennis, skiing, photography, playing music, and hanging out with friends. He enjoys keeping up with what's going on in the world.

Lilah Del Castillo



Class of 2027
Lilah is a freshman at PGHS, and this is her first year working on *The NewsBreaker*. She enjoys running on the cross country and track teams and hanging out with her friends in her free time. She is excited to use *The NewsBreaker* to develop her skills and become a better writer.

Matthew An



Class of 2027
Matthew is a freshman at PGHS. This is his first year writing for *The NewsBreaker*. He hopes that *The NewsBreaker* will improve his writing skills and at the same time share information with his fellow classmates. Matthew enjoys robotics, Mock Trial, football, and directing his own movies in his free time.