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# BASIS SCOTTSDALE GAZETTE

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## *Dance, Dance, Pants: Colin Hastings' Award-Winning Memoir*

By: Aarush Ravichand

Writing had always felt like an impossible hurdle for Colin Hastings. “Until this year, I had an acute dislike of it,” he admits. “I saw it as a challenge, a brick wall I could never overcome.” However, something shifted when he enrolled in Mr. Witz’s Art of the Personal Essay capstone. Step by step, he discovered that writing was more than just structured essays—it was an outlet for Colin’s creativity and self-expression.

So, under Mr. Witz’s guidance, Colin entered The New York Times’ Tiny Memoir Contest, a competition that challenges writers to craft a compelling story in just a hundred words. Of more than twelve thousand submissions, Colin’s memoir, *Dance, Dance, Pants*, earned him a runner-up spot. “This award inspired me to keep going,” he says. “If I had never taken this class, I never would have thought I had it in me.”

His winning piece captures a hilarious yet heartfelt moment from his early high school years. “The first idea I had was pretty bad,” he admits, laughing. “I brought in a draft for peer editing, and everyone was like, ‘This is boring as hell.’” That’s when he realized he had to take a different approach. “You might as well do something interesting.” He ended up writing about his first Sadie’s dance at BASIS Scottsdale, where he quite literally danced his pants off in an unfortunate yet comedic twist.

### **SAVE THE DATE**

St. Patrick’s Day: 3/17

Spring Break: 3/10- 3/14

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Colin notes that the biggest challenge was fitting such a memorable story in only a hundred words. “I started at like five hundred words,” he says. “But thanks to Mr. Witz—the proclaimed Master Cutter—we got it down to one hundred.” The process, he explains, was about cutting everything unnecessary. “If it’s not important, if it’s not necessary, it just has to go. But if I like how it sounds, if it adds to the vibe, I leave it in.”

The Art of the Personal Essay inspired Colin. “I used to think of writing as this structured thing—five-paragraph essays, the same analysis repeatedly. But creative writing? It’s completely different. Everyone brings their perspective and their voice. No one writes the same thing.”

He also believes the best stories come from introspection. “It’s always more interesting to read what’s hard to write. If something’s embarrassing to me, people will likely want to read about it. You don’t want to hear something easy to talk about—everyone can say that. What makes that special? What makes you? The personal, nitty-gritty stuff—that’s what’s worth sharing.”

With newfound confidence and determination, Colin’s ready to keep going. “I told Mr. Witz that when I go to whatever university I end up at, I’ll take creative writing courses, maybe even join a club.” But before that? “Right now, in the summer—well, I’m a senior, it’s summer for me—after I finish my senior project, I’m gonna start on some creative writing projects.”

Here is Colin Hastings’s award-winning memoir:

## Dance, Dance, Pants

The dimmed lights, swirling smoke, and perfect playlist set the stage for an unforgettable dance. I was busting out all the moves until my pants busted, too.

“Pop!” Every stitch gave way. Embarrassed, my face turned as red as the strobe lights, and I sprinted to the bathroom.

Seconds later, my friend appeared with a smirk. “What did you think would happen?” he teased, handing me his coat. It wasn’t just a coat; it was a lifeline. With my dignity back, I walked into the gym, side by side with friends that had my back and pants that didn’t.



Source: Colin Hastings

# SSBTR: Students on the News

by: Mintra Waram

Recently, two students from our school, junior Nithish Prakash and senior Braydon Kim, appeared on the news to promote Students Supporting Brain Tumor Research (SSBTR), the largest student-run nonprofit in Arizona dedicated to raising awareness and funding for brain tumor research, for their biggest annual event, the Cure-a-thon. "We went on the news to talk about and advertise our annual event, the Cure-a-thon," Nithish explained.

The Cure-a-thon is a large-scale fundraising event where students, families, and community members unite to raise money through activities, sponsorships, and donations. The event helps direct resources to institutions like Barrow Neurological, Phoenix Children's Hospital, TGen, Mayo Clinic, and the National Brain Tumor Society.

SSBTR's mission is also to provide students with firsthand experiences in neuroscience. Nithish first got involved after attending one of SSBTR's live brain surgeries. "When you see the great work that the organization is doing, it's really easy to get sucked into it," he said. Now serving as a co-chair, he works alongside a team of students to lead the organization.

Raising awareness about brain tumors is a key part of SSBTR's mission. Nithish points out that, indeed, brain tumors are now the leading cause of teen deaths from cancer. It's a severe thing to take to heart, which is why this is super important for everyone to consider seriously. He noted that even if someone hasn't been directly affected, they are likely only a few connections away from knowing someone who has.

Students looking to get involved with SSBTR can start by joining the club at school. "There's a little competition to see which school can raise the most money, and I know that with the talent we have at Scottsdale, we could give Mesa a run for their money," Nithish said.

SSBTR also offers leadership roles, including co-chair positions that help run the organization, as well as school ambassadors who focus on outreach and community building. While traditional volunteer opportunities are limited, students can earn service hours by organizing fundraising events and raising money for the cause.

For Nithish, the most meaningful part of working with SSBTR has been seeing the impact of the organization firsthand. "When I went to the Cure-a-thon and saw all these people there supporting such a great cause—it's special," he shared.

Looking ahead, he hopes to expand SSBTR's presence to college campuses and envisions Cure-a-thons happening in multiple states. In the meantime, the focus remains on growing the organization and spreading awareness.

Anyone interested in joining can reach out to Nithish Prakash at [nithishpk08@gmail.com](mailto:nithishpk08@gmail.com) or (480)-258-4146. Donations can be made at [https://www.ssbtr.org/help\\_our\\_cause/donate.html](https://www.ssbtr.org/help_our_cause/donate.html).



Source: Nithish Prakash

# Teen Voice: Students Spotlight Mental Health on the News

by: Melissa Cheng

On Sunday, February 23, at 8:25 a.m., Manasa N, Mehreen D, Neha N, and Jasmine K appeared on a six-minute segment for the AZFamily news! Naturally, I had to interview them to learn how they ended up on the news.

The four lead the in school club BringChange2Mind and head the community-based organization Teen Voice. According to Mehreen, they are "trying to advocate and start the conversation about mental health issues from the teen perspective." Their main goal is to "bridge the gap between teens and their adults, especially within the mental health field." A major factor that leads to mental health issues getting stigmatized is parents. Many parents, especially those from Eastern cultures, don't like having children they see as "having problems." Understandably, this generational divide can make it difficult for parents to relate to the struggles teens face.. This makes it crucial to show the teen perspective of mental health issues. So, they're "trying to form a connection and become a resource for the community to start more conversation."

How do they plan to work toward their goal? Jasmine said they plan to hold more seminars, news appearances, a podcast, and possibly host events at hospitals to "get [their] mission out there" because the more awareness there is, the more people take action.

Now, the part you've been waiting for: How did they even get on the news? First, they conducted research to identify media outlets that aligned with their mission. After narrowing down their options, they drafted and sent emails to those outlets. Mehreen shared some helpful advice: "A lot of people will tell you that you can't get a certain opportunity just by cold-emailing, but, honestly, the biggest lesson I've learned from being on the board for this organization is you can get a lot of things with just an email."

In their news segment, they introduced Teen Voice to a wider audience and shared information about their recent events, including an anxiety seminar in August and a Teen Suicide Prevention seminar held three weeks ago.

Building community support has been key to their growth. Teen Voice offers "a wide range of student-led events to encourage more community involvement," which has helped them connect with families who attend their seminars and engage with their social media. Shortly after their news appearance, they gained hundreds of comments and new followers on Instagram (@teenvoice.official).

Looking ahead, Teen Voice aims to become a nonprofit organization. They hope to continue expanding their impact through media appearances and by diversifying their community outreach beyond educational campaigns and seminars.

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# Drastic Changes to BASIS Curriculum

By: Poorvi Kushwaha

Every year, schools thrive by continuing to improve their curriculum and programs to benefit the students and BASIS is no different. But for the next school year, there seems to be more significant changes in the school, not just at the Scottsdale campus, but at every BASIS school across America. The changes for the future of our school are sorted into 3 categories: first, the changes universal to students, regardless of grade; second, the changes that are restricted for children in the elementary grades only (K-4 or K-5). Third, the changes that only apply for students in middle/high school grades (5-12/6-12). After looking at all these changes and processing them, I know for a matter of fact, they will absolutely *blow your mind*.

The first set of policy changes for all students in every grade include changes to SPORK. There will be no more SPORK usage in BASIS teaching. There is a transition in the curriculum management platform from SPORK to PowerSchool Learning Cloud that includes two components: (a) Curriculum & Instruction, which provides the tools and resources to meet the standards of the curriculum, and (b) Schoology, a management system that enhances “classroom instruction, collaboration, and resource sharing”. These new systems will come out over the spring. As for the summer packets that are required for the students that don’t pass the final tests, they are now due 30 days before the first day of school, and students will also have to take a test to see if they can pass to the next grade.

The second set of changes are for the younger students in the primary grades, and these changes include math content and grading scale for writing courses. Due to the transition away from SPORK, for the next year there will be a platform called enVision Math. According to the summary of changes in the Basis policy document, “enVision Math will support teachers with more resources, including assessment tools, and comprehensive lesson plans, making it easier to deliver engaging, interactive lessons”. Saxon Math will still be used as math homework for K-3, though it is unclear if enVision Math will provide homework as well as lessons. Along with this, there is also news that the grading scales for writing courses, that are specifically for fourth grade, will be changing from SPNU to A-F. The document says that this will better align the grade 1-3 literacy courses along with the grade 5 writing courses.

The third set of policy changes for students in the higher grades include changes in classes and credits/diplomas. There are a number of class changes, some of which apply to our school and some of which don’t. These changes include taking 2 sciences a year for 5th-8th graders (this doesn’t apply to our school), the 11th grade AP foreign language elective courses not being required, students being able to take AP Seminar instead of AP English in 11th grade given that they take an AP English class and test in 10th, AP Economics class becoming a required 11th grade course and no longer being offered in 8th grade, and writing courses replacing linguistics in grades 6-7 in most schools.



# I'm Just a Bill

by: Claire Hong

Every year, BASIS students are filed into an empty gymnasium and forced to sit in perfectly aligned rows of desks as they anxiously try to decipher questions created by the all-knowing college board, hoping to get the golden prize: a 5. What am I talking about? Advanced Placement or AP exams! If you don't already know, AP exams are tests high school students can take to get college credit. The BASIS network is known for its high scores on APs, and one of the most critical factors in getting these results is the teachers who are responsible for preparing the students for the test. Shouldn't these teachers be rewarded for their hard work? For the months spent pushing students to a college level of understanding? Well, many of the teachers at our school seem to think so.

If you have Mr. Klugman in either AP US Government & Politics or AP Comparative Government, you have most definitely heard him talk about some legislation he has been trying to push in the Arizona state legislature. Bill HB2420 Appropriates \$4,214,700 from the state General Fund in Fiscal Year 2026 to the Arizona Department of Education for the College Credit by Examination Incentive Program (CCEIP). In human words, the bill is trying to get more money for a program that gives teachers and schools money when students pass an AP exam.

But as a lowly student with little understanding of the impacts of state legislation, I decided to interrogate two of our very own BASIS teachers, Mr. Klugman and Ms. Antal, to better understand the bill.

## Why do you support this bill?

Antal: It's another compensation line for hard-working teachers who produce results in partnership with their students.

Klugman: As part of the program, some of your score money gets sent to other teachers. So I make money from my US Gov kids, but I also make a portion of the money from, like, let's say, AP US History...we scored a lot higher as a state, and we cut the program in half. Those two things combined have led to me losing about \$10,000.

## Why do you think students should care about it?

Antal: Schools should retain the most talented, highest-performing teachers for the benefit of students. Sometimes, having tenured, experienced, and results-driven teachers is harder to achieve for schools unless they can pay them a competitive salary.

Klugman: most students know when a teacher calls it in or doesn't care. Anything that can motivate a teacher will make them try harder, and a BASIS student, in particular, wants a really high AP score, right?... The teacher is incentivized to get you that 4 or 5, so it pushes them to teach to the test and get a good high score, right? So that you benefit, and we help.

## Has the cut impacted your teaching specifically?

Klugman: I don't think I will try less because of it. I think the more significant issue is if it continues, does it financially make sense to stay as a teacher? It's not about the motivation for me. For me, it's more if my base salary is too low. Staying as a teacher will be difficult when I could make more if I moved to a private school.

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### **Does this incentive encourage teachers to teach to the test?**

Klugman: For sure, absolutely, right? The issue I have with that is that all teachers are given a curriculum they must teach to, right? Some mess around with it and make it their own, right? But you have a set of things that kids need to learn. An AP class, yes, it's teaching to the test. But if you've taken an AP class, you know that the content is more complex than most college courses. So, what you learn in an AP US government class is more than you'd learn in a US GOV 101 course at ASU.

Antal: I would argue that that's very hard to do for AP exams, which are very much critical thinking-based exams that students take. You can't memorize your way through those exams. Think about the types of FRQs that you write for different content areas..... You have to sustain that argument with evidence. So it's very intensively critical thinking based, and I would argue while teachers can prepare you with a skill set, it's hard to teach to that test.

### **Does this bill have a long-term benefit to Arizona and students as well?**

Antal: I do. Anytime we invest in well-educated community members, I think that gives back dividends to our economy and the type of communities we want to live in. It benefits everyone to have well-educated communities. It's the backbone of democracy.

We can all agree that teachers in this state aren't paid enough (we spend the least amount in education per pupil compared to the other states), and the results reflect that as we continually rank in the bottom ten states in public education no matter what website you look at. The truth is this bill is not perfect, as no legislation is.

The money given to the states doesn't guarantee pay for K-8 teachers who helped with the development of the kids, but, as both teachers proposed, it can be used as a model for future programs that help teachers of younger grades as well. Whether Mr. Klugman has propagandized you to support this bill or not, there is no doubt Arizona needs to invest more in our education system, and maybe this can be one step forward to a much bigger problem.

Spoiler alert: the bill failed in the House of Appropriations earlier this February, but not all hope is lost. The point was to bring attention to the program being cut, and it looks like that mission was successful, with some very passionate representatives on its side but also some very passionate representatives against it. We'll just have to wait and see what the future holds. So next time you lose the motivation to study for your AP class, think of all the money you could be costing your hard-working teachers significantly since it's already been cut in half.



Source: 02/12/2025 House  
Appropriations Video Player, AZLeg

# The Angel in Prada

By: Tyler Lin and Kaya Baygood

Walking through the school's crowded hallways, children screaming, students gossiping, and maniacal laughter fills the air. Yet, when most would find it all a disruption, one figure stands out: Ms. Lau, the substitute teacher who turns the halls into her runway, also known as the Angel in Prada. Draped in Prada, Dior, Louis Vuitton, Gucci, and sometimes Chanel, she exudes an effortless elegance that has earned her a reputation as the school's ultimate style icon. If given the chance, we would hold a runway for her every day, not just for her divine taste in fashion but for her continuous and devoted passion for the craft.

Ms. Lau is an icon, a legend, the moment; she defines fashion-forward. She doesn't just pick the most expensive pieces or chase every trend. To her, prices, brands, and big names don't matter. To her, what matters most is the passion she feels behind it, not just the physical connection from skin to fabric but the psychological connection between the soul and the fabric. Her ability to blend textures, colors, and accessories creates sophisticated and unique looks, making her stand out in school fashion. Every piece she wears fits together like a perfectly constructed puzzle, each element playing a role in the bigger picture of her signature style.

During our interview with Ms. Lau, we discovered that her love for fashion has deep roots. She shared that she used to shop in Hong Kong, a "shopping paradise" where countless brands thrived in a less monopolized market.

She said she looked for clothes that "look good on myself" instead of trying to stay on top of the ever-changing trends. She adapts her wardrobe based on location—wearing longer, water-resistant clothing in London, for example—but always maintains her signature polished look.



Source: Tyler Lin



Source: Ms. Lau



## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Her style philosophy is built around classic, timeless pieces. She adores “classic cutting,” particularly the clean lines and structured shapes often found in Dior designs. Durability is also key—she values clothing that lasts for years, allowing her to make the most of each item.

When asked about her favorite color palette, she quickly named black and white as her go-to shades, praising their versatility and elegance. Her must-have item? A high-quality white shirt, which she loves for its ability to pair effortlessly with almost anything.

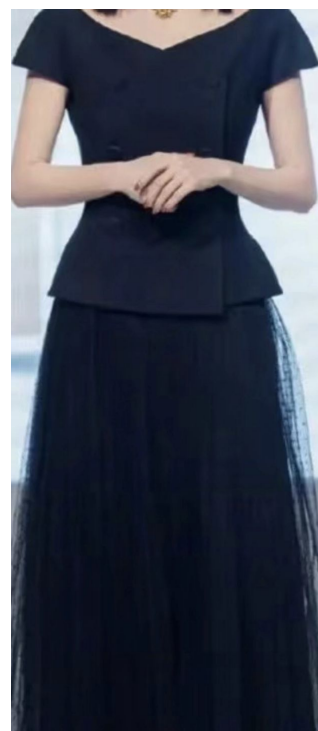
Accessories play a crucial role in Mrs. Lau’s wardrobe, with scarves, hats, and necklaces adding the perfect finishing touches to her ensembles. She appreciates how accessories can transform an outfit, allowing for fresh styles with limited clothing pieces.

Her favorite season for fashion is winter, thanks to the endless layering opportunities, but she also embraces the unique style possibilities of each season. With spring approaching, she has started incorporating pastel pinks, blues, and yellows into her wardrobe to reflect the changing weather.

Mrs. Lau’s fashion sense is more than just clothing—it’s an art form, a statement, and an inspiration to those around her. She would undoubtedly earn five stars if she was in a round of Dress to Impress (DTI). So, next time you see her in the hallway, be sure to appreciate the effortlessly chic presence of our very own fashion queen.



Source: Ms. Lau



# 2024YR4

By: Aydin Daniel

What is 2024YR4? Well, it's an asteroid like any other. But what makes this asteroid unique is its potential risk of collision with Earth.

It all began in December 2024, when the object came to the attention of astronomers when it rose on the United States Space Agency's Sentry Impact Risk Table. At this point, the chances for this asteroid to impact the earth were at 1%—a small number, yet still incredibly significant, considering it was the highest chance of out of more than 37,000 other known near-Earth asteroids. From then until February 18, the odds for an impact steadily climbed until an all-time high of 3.1% was reached. Although collision still seemed very unlikely, the increase caused astronomers to pay close attention, leading to talks about planetary defense for averting 2024YR4's projected collision in 2032.

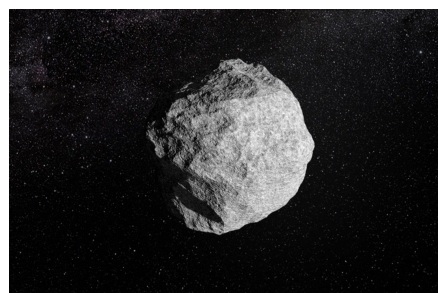
2024YR4 had a huge reason to be concerned: not only was the impact corridor, marked as a curved line, above some very densely populated areas, but the asteroid itself would have done quite some damage. Even though 2024YR4 is small among asteroids, with a diameter between 40 to 90 meters, it would pack quite the punch, with its impact releasing 7.8 megatonnes of TNT, equivalent to 370 times the energy of the nuclear weapon dropped on Hiroshima. Thankfully, on February 24, NASA released new information, lowering the risk to just 0.0017%. However, even with this negligible likelihood of a collision, 2024YR4 still catalyzed talks regarding planetary defense.



Source: theguardian.com

But what exactly is planetary defense? In short, it's the protection of the Earth from dangerous objects in space. This began with NASA's Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART), where the DART spacecraft was launched from Earth towards the asteroid Dimorphos, impacting on 26 November 2022, causing both Dimorphos' orbit time to shorten, along with its shape to change. This continued with talks for deflecting 2024YR4, with two main proposals for deflection. These were the use of a nuclear weapon to ablate material off of the asteroid and the use of a kinetic impactor to eject material. However, neither of these plans has come to fruition, with 2024YR4 being predicted to be just a close flyby of the Earth.

So even if 2024YR4 never hits the Earth, let us remember this chunk of rock in space for giving humanity a good scare.



Source: European Space Agency

# MEDIA

## March Book Review: *James* by Percival Everett

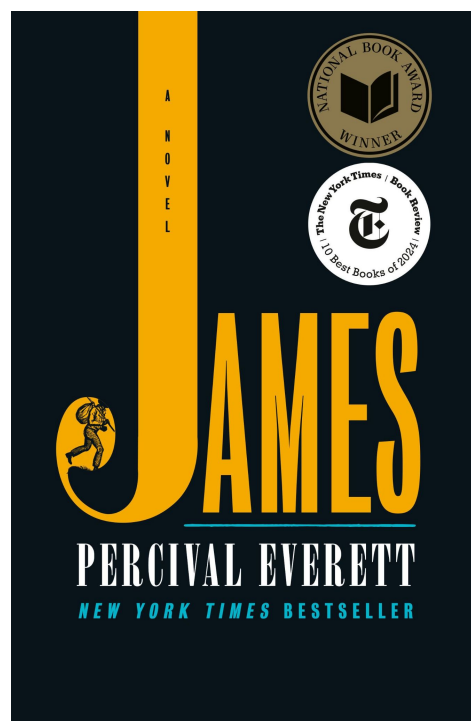
by: Valerie Polukhtin

Retellings have a much higher bar than novels, especially for renowned books. To justify telling the same story twice, it has to differentiate itself well in some way—either through perspective, style or otherwise.

Percival Everett's most recent novel, published in 2024, called *James*, is a retelling of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* from Jim's perspective. At the story's beginning, Jim learns that his owner plans to sell him, separating him from his wife and daughter. Refusing to accept this fate, he escapes at night to a nearby island, where he meets and joins up with Huck, who is fleeing his abusive father. The book closely follows the original Mark Twain book for about the first one hundred pages. Still, from there, Everett takes certain liberties in changing the plot, including the characters Jim encounters when separated from Huck.

However, one of the most significant differences between this story and the classic is Jim's supposed intelligence. Everett creates a world in which the way the enslaved people talk and interact with white people is all an act. There are two languages: the one they speak with their owners, dumbing down their speech, and the one they speak with each other that sounds well-articulated and educated. In this book, Jim secretly reads the works of John Locke and Voltaire, debating them in his dreams, and through this, transforms into James. The enslaved people hide their good English behind a mask of stupidity to protect themselves from abuse.

This reverse code-switching provides an interesting backdrop for Everett's discussion on the erasure of black voices. In addition to adding a humorous note, with scenes like James teaching his kids the "correct incorrect grammar" to speak around white folks, this detail also helps explore the tension between private and public selves and the nature of one's identity. James knows himself, he knows his intelligence, and yet, repeatedly, he must deny his true identity to fit the image of what others want to see, aka Jim.



Source: Percival Everett



## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

However, it somewhat subverted Everett's initial ideas. By showing how enslaved people spoke a separate, "better" English, he almost suggests that their original dialect lacked intelligence and they could only achieve more when they sounded educated. It privileges language in an antithetical way to the book's point.

It's essential to enter this book to realize it's meant not as a piece of historical fiction but rather a combination of satire and magical realism. While writings like *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* provide evidence that some enslaved people not only knew English but surpassed the levels of many white people, Everett does stray from reality in his imaginings of this time. Amongst other smaller details, like the sheer ease with which Jim's escape is described, it becomes clear that this book isn't an expose on American slavery or colonial or pre-Civil War America but rather a commentary on contemporary racism. Read through that lens, Everett's novel is sharp and insightful, using the various characters James encounters during his journey, like the "Virginia Minstrels" who don't support slavery but perform exaggerated, untrue songs in blackface, mirroring some of the attitudes toward black people in modern society. Combined with Everett's use of irony, the story is a quick, compelling read.

Furthermore, James's narration is witty and compelling. I only wished that Everett had leaned more into it. For a story with an already famous plot (albeit one that differs somewhat), the voice helps set it apart, and I felt the story would have benefitted from more of James's thoughts and remarks. When I finished the book, I felt something was missing, not quite wrapped up, and I think more of James's commentary

would have filled the gap.

Overall, the book was an interesting satirical take on many themes crucial to today's world, including identity and language. Although not exactly like the original story, *James* provides an interesting retelling.



Source: The Financial Times



Source: The Berkeley Library University of California

# Burn the Witch, Ban the Book

By: Sesha Kuttalingam

*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, 1984 by George Orwell, *Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou: what do these books have in common?

They've all been banned.

So, what exactly does it mean to ban a book? Typically, it looks like stripping the book from public libraries and/or schools, erasing access for students and communities. It is important to note that book banning is not a federal action but a state or local decision that can spread like wildfire. Why would a book get banned in the first place? Usually, they are considered too explicit, politically provocative, or socially controversial. And how does a book get banned? A group or individual (usually a parent), formally or informally, can propose a challenge to ban a book. If it holds merit, it can turn into a ban- a challenge is only an attempt to remove the book, while a ban is the actual removal of it.

Some books banned during the 2023-2024 school year include *Nineteen Minutes* by Jodi Picoult (South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Florida, Texas, Utah), *Looking for Alaska* by John Green (Utah, Florida, South Carolina, North Dakota, Texas), *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher (Florida, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Carolina), *Milk and Honey* by Rupi Kaur (Texas, Utah, Florida, Missouri, South Carolina), *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky (Utah, Virginia, North Dakota, South Carolina, Texas, Florida, Michigan), and *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood (Utah, Texas, Missouri, Florida, South

Carolina). Go to PEN America's Index of Book Bans for the complete list.

Now, why does this matter? Well, book banning is a form of censorship, and whenever we discuss cracking down on freedom of speech, we enter a gray area. It makes sense that a parent would want to protect their child from explicit content, a school would want to keep politically controversial or vulgar content out, or a library would carefully choose what gets on its shelves. However, we can't understate the gravity of banning books and its implications for future government involvement and overreach in our literature. While protecting our students is important, sheltering them from real-world issues is just as dangerous. Banning a book silences an author's voice and diminishes their message.

Literature should be messy and chaotic because it parallels our real world. From Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (a book that has been challenged multiple times), "Fiction gives us empathy: it puts us inside the minds of other people, gives us the gift of seeing the world through their eyes. Fiction is a lie that tells us true things, over and over."

The list of banned books is growing too long too quickly. We must read those books.



Source: LA Times



# New Summer Releases

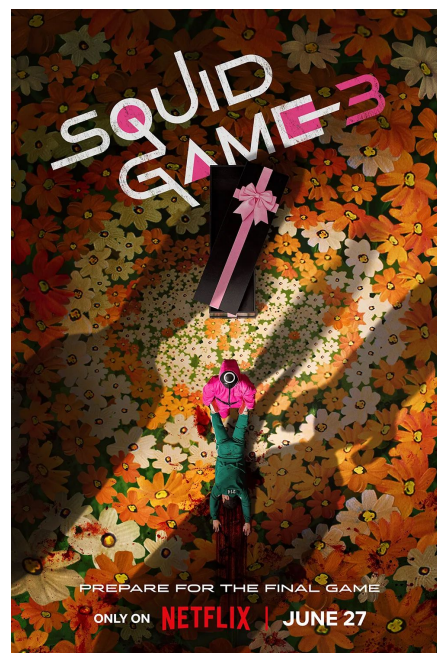
By: Ethan Kim

We all have our favorite shows that have been procrastinating the release of the final season that we have been dying to watch. Watching until 3 a.m. trying to finish the season finale just to end with a cliff-hanger is a universal experience that many binge-watchers have experienced before. Luckily, new seasons such as *Stranger Things* Season 5, *Squid Game* Season 3, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* Season 2 are going to be released in the future, but when? Are they going to leave us on another cliffhanger in order to make another season?

*Stranger Things* will release their season finale in the summer of 2025. As a brief summary, *Stranger Things* is a series featuring our main cast, Eleven, Mike, Lucas, Will, and Dustin facing monsters based on the monsters from *Dungeons and Dragons* from an alternate dimension, the Upside Down, and in each season they fight a new threat such as the Demogorgon and the Mind Flayer. The last thing that we saw from the show was Vecna, the antagonist of season four, terrorizing Hawkins and causing a catastrophic earthquake. To top off of that, Max got severely injured by Vecna and barely survived to make it to the next season. In Season 5, it's expected to see a time jump from the previous season, possibly some new and old monsters from the Upside Down, and most importantly, the deaths of some side characters, and perhaps even some main characters.

After cliffhanger from the second season of *Squid Games*, many people are anticipating the 3rd season which wraps up the series. If you already didn't know, *Squid Games* is a Korean show where people in debt play a series of common

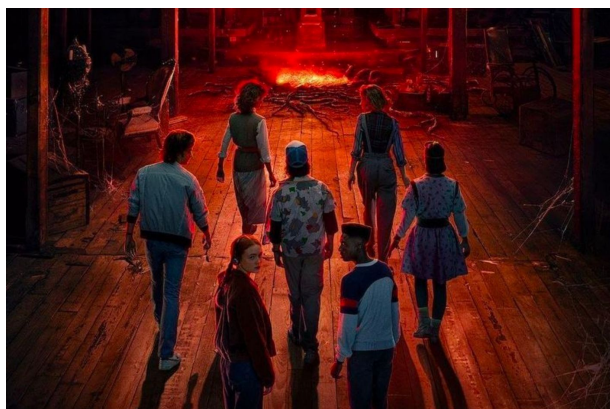
childhood games for the chance to win 456 billion Korean won or 30 million dollars. However, they risk their life because if they lose a game, they die. In the first season, Gi-hun, the story's protagonist, decided to play in order to pay off his insane debt from gambling. Unfortunately, though, Gi-hun had to watch his friends, fellow players such as Sang-woo and Sae-byeok, lose the game's rounds and die. As a result, in Season 2, Gi-hun decides to figure out who is running these sadistic and heartless games and stop it all together. However, ironically enough, the Frontman, the primary antagonist who actually runs the *Squid Games*, is disguised as one of the players of the games that Gi-hun obliviously trusted. The second season ended on a cliffhanger of being halfway done with the games and with a failed overthrow led by Gi-hun. In the final season, we have questions as to what the last games will be and who out of the main cast will survive until the end.



## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Adapted from the original book series, *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* is a live-action series. The first season was released in Winter, 2023. As a recap, Percy Jackson found out he's a demigod and goes to Camp Half-Blood to hang out with fellow demigods (teenage children of the ancient Olympians). Grover, a satyr, a humanoid creature that is half-goat from the waist down, is Percy's friend from his normal, mortal school. Percy also meets Annabeth, daughter of Athena, and they go on the adventure of In season two, if the series is following *The Sea of Monsters*, we can expect Percy Jackson and Annabeth to go back to save Grover, his sidekick, and hopefully save Camp Half-Blood. However, there is a chance that the show does make some changes or adaptations, so it's really up to the producers.

As fans eagerly await these upcoming seasons, the big question remains: will these shows finally give us the closure we crave, or will we be left hanging once again? Regardless, the excitement is palpable, and these new releases are sure to keep us glued to our screens. The countdown to these anticipated premieres has officially begun!



Source: The Express Tribune



Source: Disney+



Source: Reddit

# March Horoscope

March 2025 is a wild month for astrology- and it's possibly the craziest month of the year with Venus and Mercury both going into retrograde; creating potential for miscommunications, delays, and relationship reevaluations. While the retrogrades call for slowing down and reflecting, the spring equinox also paves the way for growth and reflection. This month is all about introspection, re-evaluating, and making peace with the past.

**Aries (March 21st - April 19th):** The fire that usually drives you forward flickers uncertainty this month. Venus retrograde forces you to reconsider your relationships, while Mercury muddles your words. Let this be a lesson in patience—sit with your thoughts before you act.

**Taurus (April 20th - May 20th):** The foundation you stand on feels less steady as Mercury's retrograde disturbs career matters. Venus urges you to reexamine your connections. Someone from your past may resurface, but before you welcome them back, ask yourself: is this reunion a blessing or a lesson?

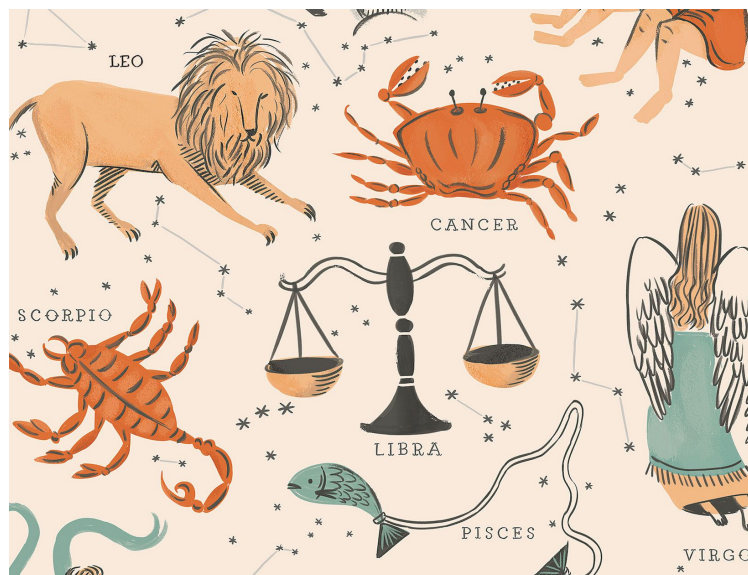
**Gemini (May 21st - June 21st):** Your words, usually as quick as the wind, now catch on invisible threads. Mercury retrograde clouds your communication, and Venus tugs at old wounds. This is not a time for fast decisions—pause, reflect, and allow clarity to return in its own time.

**Cancer (June 22nd - July 22nd):** The past comes knocking in unexpected ways. Family matters long buried resurface under Mercury's gaze, while Venus urges you to reevaluate your emotional bonds. Let honesty be your guiding star—avoid running from conversations that need to be had.

By: Riya Bangalore and  
Mintra Waram

**Leo (July 23rd - Aug. 22nd):** The stage dims, and you find yourself in a quieter role this month. Mercury slows your usual confidence in speech, while Venus turns your gaze inward, toward past passions and abandoned dreams. It's time to dust off an old love—whether it be a person or a forgotten creative spark.

**Virgo (Aug. 23rd - Sept. 22nd):** Perfection is unattainable, and this month, Venus retrograde reminds you of just that. Relationships, friendships, and even your self-image demand reassessment. Mercury stirs up minor chaos—organization is your ally, but flexibility is your salvation.



Source: Goop



## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

**Libra (Sept. 23rd - Oct. 23rd):** The balance you hold so dear wavers under Venus retrograde's touch. Love and friendships feel uncertain, while Mercury retrograde brings hesitation in personal plans. Let this be a season of quiet contemplation rather than rushed decisions.

**Scorpio (Oct. 24th - Nov. 21st):** Shadows from the past creep forward as Venus retrograde unearths old emotions. Mercury turns your focus toward health—both physical and mental. There is power in cleaning out what no longer serves you. That cluttered room? It mirrors the clutter in your mind.

**Sagittarius (Nov. 22nd - Dec. 21st):** The usual thrill of the unknown is dampened this month as Venus retrograde sends your heart backward rather than forward. An old creative pursuit calls your name, and past relationships may resurface. Before you leap, ask yourself—what is worth reclaiming?

**Capricorn (Dec. 22nd - Jan. 19th):** The road ahead is fogged, urging you to slow down. Venus and Mercury retrograde demand reflection, particularly in career and home life. Past projects whisper for your attention, but March is a time to think, not act. When the fog lifts, you'll know your next step.

**Aquarius (Jan. 20th - Feb. 18th):** Mercury retrograde pulls old words back into the air—conversations you thought were over may find their way to you again. Venus stirs memories of love, past or present. This is not a time to chase answers, but to sit with the questions.

**Pisces (Feb. 19th - March 20th):** Your waters grow murky under Mercury's spell, making everyday routines feel uncertain. Venus retrograde

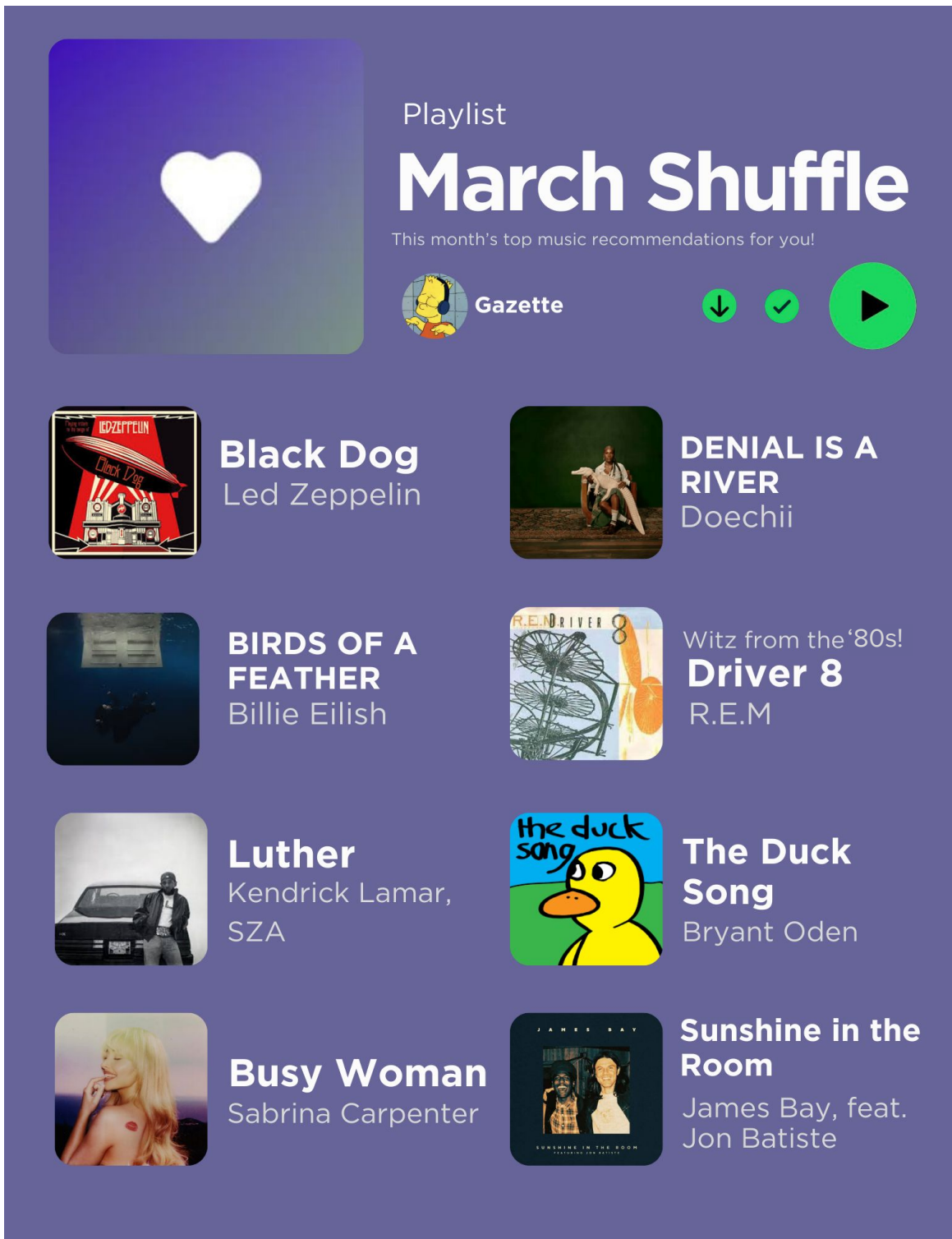
turns your gaze inward, urging you to redefine what truly matters. This month is a mirror—what do you see, and what do you wish to change?

ASTROLOGY DATES		
ARIES	MAR 21 - APR 19	♈
TAURUS	APR 20 - MAY 20	♉
GEMINI	MAY 21 - JUN 20	♊
CANCER	JUN 21 - JUL 22	♋
LEO	JUL 23 - AUG 22	♌
VIRGO	AUG 23 - SEP 22	♍
LIBRA	SEP 23 - OCT 22	♎
SCORPIO	OCT 23 - NOV 21	♏
SAGITTARIUS	NOV 22 - DEC 21	♐
CAPRICORN	DEC 22 - JAN 19	♑
AQUARIUS	JAN 20 - FEB 18	♒
PISCES	FEB 19 - MAR 20	♓




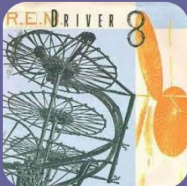




Source: MamaWunderbear

# March Music Shuffle

By: Claire Hong



A digital graphic for a Spotify-style playlist titled "March Shuffle". The background is a solid purple. At the top left is a square album cover with a white heart on a purple-to-blue gradient. To its right, the word "Playlist" is in small white text, followed by the title "March Shuffle" in large, bold white text. Below the title is the subtitle "This month's top music recommendations for you!". To the left of the subtitle is a circular profile picture of a yellow cartoon character with a blue grid background, with the name "Gazette" in white text to its right. To the right of the profile picture are three green circular icons: a download arrow, a checkmark, and a play button.

	<b>Black Dog</b> Led Zeppelin		<b>DENIAL IS A RIVER</b> Doechii
	<b>BIRDS OF A FEATHER</b> Billie Eilish		Witz from the '80s! <b>Driver 8</b> R.E.M
	<b>Luther</b> Kendrick Lamar, SZA		<b>The Duck Song</b> Bryant Oden
	<b>Busy Woman</b> Sabrina Carpenter		<b>Sunshine in the Room</b> James Bay, feat. Jon Batiste



# DIFFERENT TYPES OF BASIS STUDENTS HOLDING THEIR BELONGINGS

By Grace Z.





Source: irisharoundtheworld.com

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