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the SCRIBE

NEWSLETTER OF THE THOMAS JEFFERSON
LATIN HONOR SOCIETY



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A Deep Dive into TJ Certamen

February 25th, 2023, was a bustling day full of *festinantes* from place to place, event to event, round to round! According to *rex Certaminis* Gabriel “Chrysaor” Ascoli, a total of around 50 teams participated in the TJ Certamen tournament that day. TJ Certamen is an event hosted by the TJ Latin Club every year at our school. The weeks leading up to it are filled with writing questions for the rounds, registering the visiting teams, and making lots of Costco runs. Gabriel and fellow officer Lucy “Thalia” Watts agree that this year's event ran smoothly, and Lucy, who worked on TJ Certamen for the first time this year, commented that “everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves!”

Many students, parents, and teachers from various other schools volunteered their time to make TJ Certamen happen. For instance, senior Rishi “Quintus” Sripathi worked as a scorekeeper during the tournament. “I think a good Certamen scorekeeper has to be able to keep track of the points for the different teams quickly and accurately,” says Rishi. “Additionally, I had to make a note anytime there was confusion over whether an answer could be accepted or not, so we could take it to the officers for clarification. Finally, being a Certamen scorekeeper is also about supporting both the spotter and the moderator. It's really about doing what's necessary to run the game,” he concludes. Despite not having prior experience with volunteering for or playing Certamen, Rishi states that “volunteering at TJ Certamen was really fun.”



Above: Students play a round at TJ Certamen
Right: TJ student volunteers hang out in the German classroom before the tournament rounds begin, enjoying a breakfast of donuts and snacks



Another type of role at Certamen tournaments is being a “filler.” When a tournament does not have enough teams registered for a particular level of competition, the host school might provide filler teams, who intentionally try not to win. Filler teams at TJ Certamen this year had amusing names such as “Jhomas Tefferson.” Freshman Sophia “Eris” Tzvetanov, who represented a filler team from the “Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry” with her *socius* Will “Grumio” Depew, says, “Being a Certamen filler entails a lot of improvisation.” The two of them “had to adapt how we were playing based on how well the other teams were doing... and sometimes when we were thinking we needed to get more points, a couple questions would come up where we didn't know the answer.”

One benefit of participating in a Certamen tournament as a filler is the emphasis on relaxation and learning rather than stress and victory. According to Sophia, “it was great to participate in Certamen while feeling relaxed and not stressed to win. A couple of times, [Will and I] even came up with some funny answers for write-down questions.”

Additionally, Sophia points out that she liked being on the “hosting end as opposed to the guest end.” Indeed, Gabriel declares, “I think everyone had a lot of fun geeking out about Latin for a morning with hundreds of other students.” It is evident that everyone’s dedication as the host school resulted in a fun, engaging, and successful TJ Certamen.



From top to bottom: officers announce and present awards while closing the tournament; a mass of students participants gather in the cafeteria; thank you to our lovely parent volunteers!

Upholding Tradition, Making New Waves

Let's have an update on some recent events in the TJ Latin community!

Lupercalia. Our celebration of this ancient Roman holiday this year was, once again, filled with love and fun. Many officers and students, led by Nina Garces and Avery Park, spent lunch periods preparing *mittendamanti* ("goat grams," colloquially). In English, *mittendamanti* can be translated as "things to be sent to a lover," and they are our version of candy grams! The sale of *mittendamanti* raised around \$400 for TJ Latin—thank you all! We concluded our celebration of this ancient Roman holiday with two games of Lupercus during 8th period on February 17th. The winners were presented with cakes kindly provided by Ellen "Harmonia" Zeng.

Ides of March. During lunchtime on March 15th, we upheld our annual tradition of terrifying and inspiring students and staff. TJ Latin students donned their black Latin shirts and met up at the Latin classrooms to begin our march around the school, chanting, "Beware the Ides of March!" The celebration was concluded by a dramatic performance by the senior officers of an excerpt from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and the consumption of "Caesar's blood" (red candy)!



Left: students prepare to set out for the march. Top right: senior officers perform the assassination of Caesar. Bottom right: students march up the stairs



recent latin events V

National Latin Exam (NLE). The National Latin Exam was administered on March 15th (yes, the same day as the Ides!) to all TJ Latin students except those in Latin V, who took their exam a day earlier (on Pi(e) Day!). Congratulations to all for completing the NLE and for your hard work in Latin all year!

Recent exams. As is usual in TJ Latin, many students participated in extracurricular exams. The National Junior Classical League (NJCL) Vocabulary and Hellenic Civilization Exams were administered on February 10th, and the Classical Association of Virginia (CAV) Exam a month later on March 10th. The National Greek Exam was taken on March 17th. In late March, we also received news of distinctions for the Vergilian Exam taken by the seniors: among many honors, Derek "Ovidius" Li won *magna cum laude* and Lauren "Electra" Fisher and Amit "Cataline" Erraguntla won *summa cum laude*. *Congratulationes omnibus!*



Left: The Ides of March celebration receives coverage from TJTV

Right: A mass of chanting marchers fill up TJ's hallways

And now, for an exciting update to our publication...

We're going (semi)digital!

One novel and notable update has been made to *The Scribe* itself: this issue has a digital extension! With the extra space the *auctor* was able to offer a guest-writing opportunity to students of various Latin levels. Visit the [TJ Latin website](#) to view articles written by your own friends and classmates, Elisabet "Nike" Cabrera-Caballero, Annie "Carmina" Chiu, Avery "Caelia" Park, Medha "Venturia" Pappula, Aditi "Bellona" Saravanan, and Sarah "Iris" Trainer, about various aspects of the TJ Latin experience, as well as a collection of extra photos from various Latin events! (One lucky article is featured in the physical copy!)

Time To Dance!

Conflict brews in the air. Furies snarl and brace to attack. Swords slash and swing.

Every year, Latin Club's act for TJ's International Night (iNite) portrays a Greco-Roman myth: previous years have presented tales such as Echo and Narcissus. This year's story is that of Hades and Persephone, which Latin iNite coordinator and choreographer Clarissa "Andromeda" Ding refers to as her "favorite myth."

The act itself is split into two dances: "traditional" and modern." The music accompanying the traditional dance is Celtic music, and Taylor Swift's "Bad Blood" blares in the background as students perform the modern dance. In addition to coordinators and choreographers Clarissa and Nivika "Sappho" Gandhi, Prithvi "Castor" Seri, who plays Hades in the act, coordinates the sword fight, and Vivian "Delia" Xue is in charge of props and costumes. About the process of preparing for iNite, Nivika says, "It's been very fun to see our ideas and visions for steps and formations come to life, and I can't wait to see their effect when we put it all together!"



Clarissa and Nivika teach the modern dance steps



Friends participate in Latin iNite together

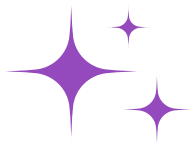


Throughout the past few months, these ideas and visions have been put together by the efforts of many Latin students. Annie "Carmina" Chiu, a participant in the Latin iNite act, says, "[Latin iNite] is one of the things I look forward to during Wednesday 8th periods. My favorite parts are all the funny movements and meeting all the upperclassmen." Students Anna "Psyche" Kim, Anna "Daphne" Park, and Medha "Venturia" Pappula agree with Annie about the social aspect of Latin iNite. The three of them describe participating as a "workout, but very worth it." Medha comments that "it's low stress—it's funny to mess up!"

All this practice and preparation culminated in a successful and enjoyable Latin iNite performance on March 30th. With enthusiasm, Clarissa declares, "Above all, I just hope everyone has fun, enjoys dancing, and continues next year!"



Costume rehearsals of traditional and modern dances in the gym



Latin Lunches

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Sarah "Iris" Trainer scripsit

For most students, lunch at TJ is a much-needed break from the stress of classes. But for some Latin students, the learning doesn't stop when it's time to eat. The Latin rooms can almost always be found hopping with activity, whether it's a student holding a lunch lecture or an informal lunchtime Certamen practice. During lunch lectures, students teach each other about important moments in Roman history and mythology, as well as holding grammar lectures for help with both Certamen and class. "I think it's a really important and underutilized resource in Latin," says sophomore Alex "Marius" Bakalov. "After I started attending grammar lectures last year, I've gone from barely keeping up in class to feeling really comfortable with it. It, of course, helps with Certamen a lot too if you pay attention, and the mnemonics that I've heard during lectures have helped me remember a lot of the things that [other students] teach us about."

Other students praise the format, including freshman Sydney "Sappho" Buhler. "The way it's taught, student to student, makes it a much more casual vibe and helps us connect with each other a lot more, which is perfect for lunch." When asked what she would say to someone who was thinking about coming to lunch lectures, but was unsure, Sydney responded, "If you're not sure about it, just come and give it a try! The core group that comes pretty much every day is really fun to hang around, and there are lectures on pretty much everything Latin, so you never leave without at least learning something new. I'd recommend starting with a lecture on a topic you're interested in, because those are always more interesting."



Sophomore Alex Bakalov giving a history lecture

Lunch lectures are held in the Latin rooms, with mythology and history being taught on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, respectively, in Room 64, and grammar being taught on Thursdays in Room 62.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN MYTH/ADVENTURE

Congratulations/I am so sorry! You are now a character in your very own Greco-Roman myth. Write your story and happy/devastating ending through a fun, Choose Your Own Adventure-style quiz!

1. You are a poor shepherd who lives in a dilapidated cottage on the outskirts of a bustling city. One day, an old woman comes to your cottage. She is hungry... for sheep soup! She points out your favorite sheep and asks you to kill it and serve it to her. You think:
 - a. What if my guest is a god in disguise? I kill my sheep. Go to question 2.
 - b. No way! That sheep is my best friend. I refuse. Go to question 3.
2. You were correct! Your guest was a god in disguise! Unfortunately, your guest is Pan/Faunus, the god of the wild, shepherds, and music, who is very offended by your lack of care for your sheep. After he reveals himself, you:
 - a. Apologize profusely. What have I done? Go to question 4.
 - b. Spit in his face. Who cares about sheep? Go to question 5.
3. Turns out your guest was a god in disguise! He is Pan/Faunus, the god of the wild, shepherds, and music, and he is very impressed by your dedication to your sheep! He offers to give your sheep magical powers.
 - a. I refuse. Ending E.
 - b. I accept. Ending A.
4. Pan/Faunus decides to give you a second chance. He brings your sheep back to life and offers to give one of you magical powers: either you or your sheep. The choice is yours.
 - a. I choose myself. Ending C.
 - b. I choose my sheep. Ending D.
5. Pan/Faunus is infuriated. He brings your sheep back to life and asks if you have anything you'd like to say to your sheep.
 - a. I'm sorry! Please forgive me. Ending B.
 - b. Shame I didn't get to eat you. Would've been delicious. Ending G.

Ending A: Your sheep is blessed with the ability to talk and the thickest, best-quality wool. You use its wool to spin bedsheets, which you sell to rich urban clients. You and your sheep become rich, and the tale of your legendary friendship becomes more lasting than bronze.

Ending B: Pan/Faunus blesses your sheep with the ability to talk and curses you to obey every one of its commands. The two of you live like this for the rest of your lives.

Ending C: You die promptly and end up in the Fields of Punishment. Your punishment is to be suffocated by sheep wool for eternity. Be better. (Your sheep lives happily ever after.)

Ending D: The sheep is blessed with wings. It flies away, to a better place without you.

Ending E: Your sheep is a bit miffed that it missed out on magical powers, but it still loves you. Your lives carry on as usual, and you die with your sheep by your side.

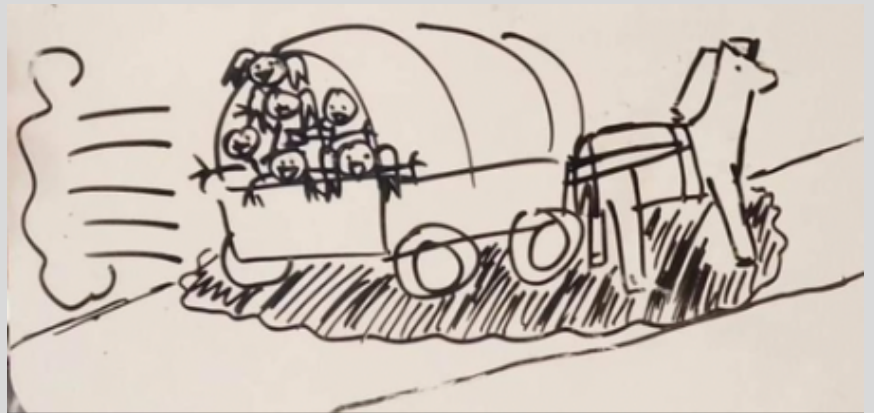
WONDERS OF LATIN I



Between the hours of 8:40 to 10:15, when other language students still haven't even gained full consciousness yet, they busied themselves with learning phrases to help them in the workplace; while Latin I students were translating a family traveling to Rome while one of their workers ran away for dear life. After a while they were also given an impromptu sentence by Dr. Donohue.

Students were told to write their translations on a whiteboard and as a class correct them. One student who never fails to awaken the most sleep deprived of the class, chose a visual of what was happening rather than mere words.

Psyche, real name Anna Kim, made pictures such as the Cornelius family packed in a carriage to the point of almost falling off.



The anger of American public school teachers when she summoned fire from the depths of Tartarus and Ray-Ban's from Pluto himself.

And the unjust treatment of the family's workers while Cornelius is away. Leading to one of them running away.



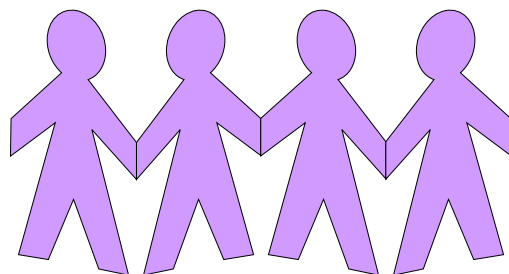
By: Elisabet Cabrera- Caballero



Otium cum dignitate

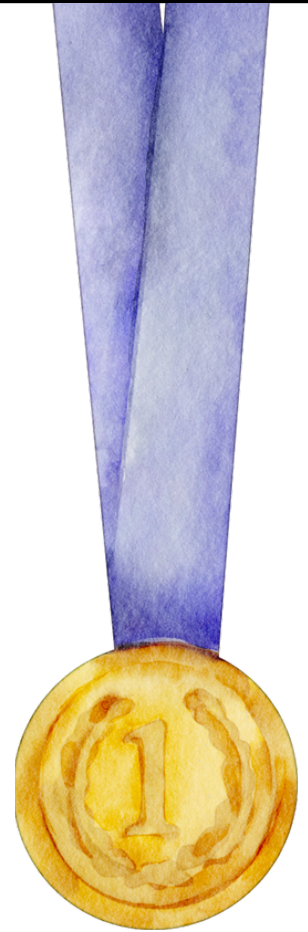
Aditi "Bellona" Saravaran scripsit

Starting at a new school is hard enough, with a new building, new friends, and new teachers. Most people want to find a place where they can be themselves, and what better place than one of the many great clans TJ has to offer! As a freshman, coming into TJ was overwhelming, but being a part of all the amazing events Latin has to offer made me feel like a part of something bigger. Convention, Certamen, and Lupercalia are just a few examples. By taking part in the activities that Latin has to offer, I branched out and made new friends, made a place for myself in the Latin community. Fellow freshman Annie "Carmina" Chiu says that "Latin events such as iNite practice have allowed me to talk to other Latin students not from my level and connect with them. They're very willing to help me out." If you haven't tried any of the celebrations, it's never too late! There's always something for everyone--join us at these fabulous fiestas so that we can make the Latin family the biggest, loudest, and proudest one TJ has ever seen!



Testing the Arena

Annie "Carmina" Chiu scripsit



Here we go again! On February 10th, students from all Latin levels had the option to take NJCL's Vocabulary Exam and/or the Hellenic Civ Exam. Each exam had around 50 questions and each student had a single 8th period block to finish. Thankfully, the NJCL provides resources on their website for these tests specifically! I was a student taking part in the NJCL vocab test and it wasn't as bad as I thought. Dr. Donohue willingly printed out the vocabulary packet for all of the Latin 1s, and in class we're learning the vocabulary. As a Latin 1, I learned that Whitaker's Words is **actually** your best friend. I used it to fill out some words in my packet and I also use it to help me translate time and time again (*tempus et tempus iterum*). Also having friends to push you to do better really helps, too. In Latin, I've learned that there are so many cool upperclassmen in general, and if you find the right people that have been in your level or people that are currently in your level you'll be good to go for many things. We all say we could have studied harder or prepared more, but just know, *Nec scire fas est omnia*.



Latin Buddies

Avery "Caelia" Park scripsit

Latin students new to the language and to TJ may sometimes feel disconnected from their peers or intimidated by the “cult”-ishness of Latin club. To help with getting to know people, LHS created a Latin Buddies program specifically to address these concerns. Similar to TJ’s BigSibs program, Latin Buddies matches upperclassmen with underclassmen and provides plenty of fun opportunities for engaging and meeting other students.

With this being my first year as a “Big Buddy” in the program and my third year in the Latin family at TJ, my experience with Latin Buddies has only been positive. My buddy and I have gotten closer through attending LHS 8th periods and joining Latin iNite. As the older buddy, I am available to answer questions about school and class and offer advice about various TJ traditions. There are fun events like cookie decorating and iNite, and plenty of other LHS-sponsored activities to participate in. Latin Buddies helps students feel more connected and allows them to meet people in different grades to form a stronger community within LHS.

For such a valuable part of the Latin community at TJ, not many people know of the program or actively participate. Those deterred by the assumption that Latin Buddies takes up your time or requires a lot of effort should know it only takes a second to send a friendly message to your buddy. The friendships I’ve made this year thanks to joining Latin Buddies and being a part of a program dedicated to its students’ participation in our community are invaluable.



Big and Little Buddies participate in the cookie-decorating activity at the Latin Buddies Holiday Party



Welcome To *Ecce*: How Students Are Adjusting To A Different Latin Program



Medha "Venturia" Pappula scripsit

TJ Latin is composed of students from many Latin backgrounds, which is especially apparent in Latin 2 classes, as students come from different programs and teachers. Latin knowledge can vary from person to person, creating a difficult situation not only for the teacher, but for the student as well. These students have to adjust to the *Ecce Romani* program, which isn't an easy feat. I myself am someone in this boat, and am slowly improving every day, along with others in my class. I wanted to highlight our struggles and our learning strategies, so I interviewed and compiled their responses.

One of the first things everyone mentioned was the difference in learning speed between the curriculums and, as a result, the knowledge they gained. The difference also led some to retake Latin 2, regardless of their previous performance. This became problematic because the class would move on by the time someone finally understood a topic, which is to be expected in classes of this size. No teacher can cater to the needs of all the students. However, this does make it harder for us to learn important topics that will become the base to new ones.

Another big difference is our knowledge bases. Many of us were expected to know things we didn't. For example, some of us had only learned three verb tenses or hadn't memorized all the declensions. Some learned other topics instead, such as the passive tenses or the locative case. This has made it continuously difficult to learn new topics based on the old ones, and means that we need to spend more time outside of class, which we might not always have, to catch up.

As a result of these struggles, we have all found our own ways to try and catch up. One strategy is sitting down and translating the story word by word. However, this takes a lot of time that many of us don't have. Another strategy is reviewing topics using Latin Tutorial videos and quizzing ourselves using online quiz programs. Upperclassmen tutoring was also a beneficial resource. We all had our own ways of studying, but we recommend that everyone find a buddy for whenever you need help, even if it isn't Latin related.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends Sophia "Eris" Tzvetanov, Will "Grumio" Depew, and Neil "Caecilius" Ramarapu for letting me interview them. Our goal for this article was to educate others about our struggles, inspire someone who is struggling to speak up, and to share how we are coping, to hopefully help others do the same.



Photo Dump: Ides of March



Photo Dump: Latin iNite



iNite performance photos courtesy of Seoyoung Jun

Photo Dump: More Latin iNite



iNite performance photos courtesy of Seoyoung Jun

Photo Dump: TJ Certamen, Vergilian Translation Exam, Lupercalia



2023 Vergilian Society Keely Lake Memorial Translation Exam Results

Thank you to the 254 entrants from 20 schools participating in this year's exam. Results below are listed in descending order of performance. Special thanks go to this year's team of scorers: Claire Bishop (Charlotte Christian School); Tom Garvey (The Meadows School, Las Vegas, NV); Amy Leonard (Midtown High School, Atlanta, GA); and Patrick Yaggy (BASIS Tucson North).

Summa Cum Laude - \$50 prize & membership in the Society

| Student | School | Teacher |
|----------------------|---|-------------------|
| Benjamin Krietemeyer | Walnut Hills High School | Michelle Martinez |
| Lauren Fisher | Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology | Patty Lister |
| Sidney Woolley | Walnut Hills High School | Michelle Martinez |
| Conan Ugaz | Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology | Patty Lister |
| Amit Erraguntla | Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology | Patty Lister |

Magna Cum Laude - \$25 prize & membership in the Society

| Student | School | Teacher |
|------------------|---|--------------------|
| Benjamin Wolcott | Classical Cottage School | Andrew Beer |
| Adelaide Waldman | Master's Academy | Sherri Cox |
| Jimmy Li | Flint Hill School | Brad Savage |
| Luke Collins | Harvard Westlake | Alexis Whalen-Muse |
| Derek Li | Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology | Patty Lister |

Cum Laude - Certificates of Commendation

| Student | School | Teacher |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| Lise Bejtich | Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology | Patty Lister |
| Ellie Chen | Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology | Patty Lister |
| Lucy Watts | Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology | Patty Lister |
| Noah Cha | Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology | Patty Lister |
| Charles Scheuermann | Regis High School | Dave Bonagura |
| Prithvi Seri | Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology | Patty Lister |
| Gabriel Galdo | Classical Cottage School | Andrew Beer |
| Grace Ko | Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology | Patty Lister |
| Sabine Johns | Walnut Hills High School | Michelle Martinez |
| Sravya Patibandla | Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology | Patty Lister |
| Johnny Yu | BASIS Tucson North | Patrick Yaggy |
| Daphne Feigin | Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology | Patty Lister |
| Ana Leyendecker | Summit Country Day School | Larry Dean |
| Leslie Gimbert | Walnut Hills High School | Michelle Martinez |
| Max Engelbracht | BASIS Tucson North | Patrick Yaggy |
| Emily Knapp | Master's Academy | Sherri Cox |
| Juliette Duncan | BASIS Tucson North | Patrick Yaggy |
| Zachary Miller | BASIS Tucson North | Patrick Yaggy |
| Christopher Reuter | Summit Country Day School | Larry Dean |
| Devin Panalal | ʻIolani School | Jeffrey Pearson |

