

# CHRONICLE

## NEW COURSES OFFERED

by Alexander Michaels

Averill Park is introducing a variety of new courses next year for students. Among the already-rich wealth of electives at APHS, there is a course for everyone.



"Next year is my senior year and the Current Events course being offered at the high school seems right up my alley," said junior Lilly Kronau. "I'm hoping it will help me to better understand what's happening in our world because I find it very important."

Other students are more intrigued by the new math courses being offered.

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## SCHOOL CONSIDERS ADDING A TURF FIELD

by Kyle Reasor

Averill Park School District has begun exploring the possibilities of constructing a turf field for students and the community to use in the future. While the construction of this field is still many years away, it takes numerous years of planning in order for a project such as this to come to fruition. The only discussion occurring currently is preliminary, and there is a great deal of time and effort that must go into this work before the construction is even considered.

Athletic Director Mr. Bubniak and Superintendent Dr. Franchini are both involved in the possible implementation of the turf field,

and are currently gathering information about the logistics of adding this field to the grounds of APHS. This field



would be constructed in the future with the hope that the next generations of students to be able to take advantage of new and improved athletic grounds.

The reasons. Fran-

chini and Bubniak cited for implementing a turf field are numerous. They mainly cite the benefits it can bring to the

Averill Park community as a whole. While there are other options on where to put this turf field, they hope that it can come onto the APHS campus, further establishing the high school as a "community center" in Averill Park. By becoming the center of the community, the athletic department hopes that students and Averill Park residents will begin to consider APHS a focal point within our area.

There is a hope such a view would increase the pride of both the school and

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## APHS IS NO PLACE FOR HATE SCHOOL-WIDE CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY

by Sonja Kaye

Students making fun of or picking on other students for their differences can be a big problem in America's high schools. In Averill Park, the administration as well as the vast majority of the student body is working to end this. Along with many other schools across the country, APHS will be taking part in this year's Anti Defamation League campaign against bullying.

Beginning on February 4, members of the A World of Difference Club will



come into advisories to tell everyone what the No Place for Hate Campaign is about.

Students will learn about the ripple effect that a single act of kindness can have, and also be encouraged to sign a pledge stating that Averill Park High School is no place for hate. Mrs. Yost, a club advisor for A World of Difference, said that by signing this pledge, students are working to make Averill Park "a community of acceptance and kindness."

Many members of

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## TURF FIELD (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

community members. By giving our students and athletes more opportunities to be outside, PE classes and our school sports will have more access to physical activities. The turf field could be used by any gym class or sports team, such as baseball, softball, football, and soccer.

For those who are unsure of what a turf field is, it can be summarized as an artificial playing surface that is made to look like a normal field. Since the turf field doesn't require as much maintenance, the community can use it more often than the present regular fields, mainly because of potential weather issues. Sports cancellations and indoor practices due to this weather are two potential problems that are hoped to be solved because of the turf field. Also, the decrease in maintenance time can be a long-term financial benefit for the district. The field could also be a positive for athletic safety, as well as a plus in limiting all the time and effort spent keeping the fields in usable conditions.

Bubniak and Franchini feel that there is an "obligation to serve the community." By adding this field, their goal is that the community will get more opportunities to use the school facilities, given the

extra time and room for activities that this new field would open up.

With such a large scale project, there are always two sides. While there are many who are in favor of the implementation of a turf



field, many are against it. Franchini stated that he has heard a lot of "questions" about the field, and he is hoping to assist residents in becoming more educated on the matter. He has heard questions or concerns regarding the potential cost, the budget process, and the main question: "Do we need it?"

Comments such as "Don't fix what isn't broken" have been voiced, and there are many opinions throughout the community which show opposition of the possibility of a turf field. Franchini and Bubniak encourage those with comments to voice their opinions, and welcome anyone with these potential ques-

tions or concerns to discuss this matter to find out the true facts of such a project. A goal of the project is to "get it right rather than get it done." It is important to ensure everything flows smoothly throughout the community.

Another concern lies with the possible need to move other sports fields at APHS. Bubniak and Franchini feel it important to assure residents that if something were to be moved, it would be accounted for and no opportunities to play any particular sport would be lost.

Other districts such as Shenendehowa, East Greenbush, Troy, Lansingburgh, Watervliet, Saratoga, and most recently LaSalle have constructed turf fields with great success. In fact, last November the Averill Park Pop Warner Junior Pee Wee Football Team won their first ever Super Bowl on the new La Salle Turf Field. La Salle's Athletic Director Andrew San-

tandera is very supportive of the turf field that was brought into his school. "One of the major benefits that I enjoy most is being able to allow youth groups and nonprofit organizations use our field," said Santandera. "It is part of La Salle's mission to give back to the community, and in a small way the turf field is allowing us to do that."

This goal is very similar to what Bubniak and Franchini expressed, both relating heavily to giving back to the community. Santandera also stated, "To date, I have not seen any disadvantages of having the turf field. It has been nothing but a positive for our school and our school community."

While Santandera is very vocal and positive regarding the turf field, he also understands that it is a long as well as difficult process. He began working on designing the La Salle field in May of 2015, before it was eventually approved in Fall 2017. After approval, work began on the field in May of 2018, and it was completed in September 2018. Along with all this time and effort, Santandera also recognized that getting everyone to support the project was very important. He cited that "the biggest obstacle was getting all the shareholders on the same page." He had to work continuously to ensure the budget and design were

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## NO PLACE FOR HATE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

the student body look forward to this campaign and think it will help our community decrease its prejudices. Sophomore Kevin Bryant said "bullying hasn't been handled well in this school in the past, and this program might be a great change." With this cam-

paign, students believe APHS can learn how to stop bullying, and even prevent it in the first place.

For two weeks, the pledge will be brought to the advisory classes with the intention of getting everyone in the school to sign it. A World

of Difference members will be making paper chains of the names of every student who signs the pledge and hanging these chains throughout our hallways. As an exciting bonus, every advisory that has all their members sign the pledge will get entered in a

raffle to win a pizza party.

There will also be a No Hate "Blue-Out" day on February 28. On this day, A World of Difference members will be handing out candy to students as they enter the building, so don't forget to wear blue...and stay kind.

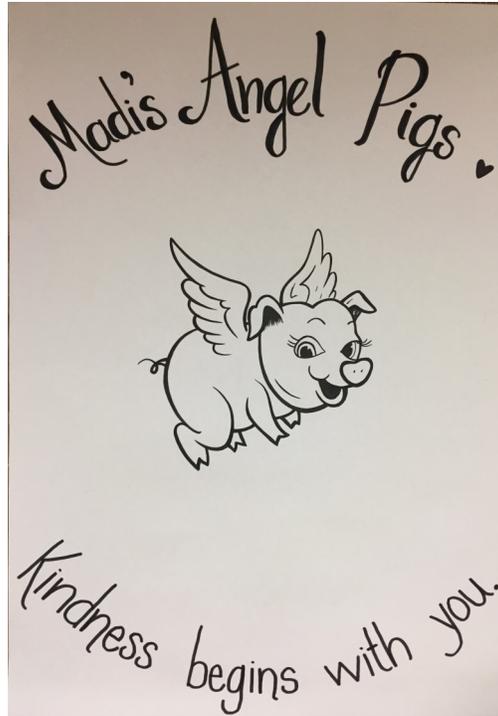
# TRANSFORMING APHS WITH ACTS OF KINDNESS INITIATIVE IN HONOR OF FORMER APHS STUDENT

by Lauren Harland

The Student Government at Averill Park High School is constantly creating projects and events that greatly benefit the school. Over the past year, student leaders have created the Madi Stern Kindness Project, a project that includes small acts of kindness meant to bring joy into the everyday lives of the community, in memory of Madi Stern, a former APHS student.

Junior Delaney Burton, a student leader in charge of this project, explained, "Madi was a very kind soul and put everyone else before her. We wanted to find the perfect way to use her memory to affect the school community."

The project has already begun its purpose – to bring joy to students and staff. On the day before Christmas break, members of the Student Government could be found in the main



foyer of the high school passing out free hot chocolate to anyone who wanted it.

"It was so great to see people's faces light up

when they realized what was going on," said Alyssa Lindheimer, a junior. "It was exactly what we aimed to accomplish." The line for hot chocolate reached far throughout the school on that day, filled with excited students. Carley Salerno, a junior at Averill Park, explained, "Everyone was thrilled when they heard that students were handing out free hot chocolate in the hallways. It's not something that anyone expected and it definitely brought joy throughout the high school."

The idea for the kindness project began at a

Suburban Council Leadership Conference at Columbia High School. Student leaders listened to a group of motivational speakers and the lessons they learned, but ultimately got the idea from papers that were hung around the school. They had tear-off slips at the bottom with positive messages for students to take.

"I proposed the idea to do something like this in our school, and (advisors) Mrs. Daviero and Mrs. Ferlito agreed," said Burton, "After talking it over we came to the conclusion it should be in memory of Madi because of how kind she was and the impact she made on the community by constantly paying it forward."

Student Government is looking forward to bringing more random acts of kindness to the high school and continuing the joy that Madi Stern brought into the lives of many people.

# A TRUE TEST OF LANGUAGE SKILLS STUDENTS WORKING TOWARD SEAL OF BILITERACY

by Adam Limoges

The Seal of Biliteracy is a momentous achievement for those pursuing languages in high school. Students go above and beyond in their senior year to show their mastery of the language they take and receive recognition for it.

To receive this award, a student must complete both an English and foreign language proficiency section. For the section in English, students must pre-



sent a paper written about a social issue currently affecting a country that uses the

foreign language widely. The student will also participate in a question-and-answer session related to the issue put forth.

For the foreign language portion, the students must provide one of the following: a video or theatrical production of a creative interpretation of a Spanish Telenovela or a French fable, or an analysis of at least three characters studied in either history, film, literature, or contemporary music in order to demonstrate how those

characters reacted to challenges and to show how they overcame them. Both sections will be presented to a panel of native/near-native speakers of the given foreign language. They will evaluate both parts and determine if the seal will be awarded to the student.

One of those working toward the Seal of Biliteracy, Sophia Morone, said, "It will help me in college where I plan to pursue a minor in

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# SENDING GOODWILL ABROAD

## ADOPT-A-CHILD PROGRAM A SUCCESS

by Hannah Ryan

The New Horizons Club organizes several fundraisers a year to raise money for Averill Park's sister school in the Dominican Republic. This year, the club introduced an Adopt-a-Child program during the end of December through January.

The Averill Park sister school educates over 70 students, all of whom were adopted by a class or club. New Horizons collected

shoeboxes to assign to each student. Each box was filled with hygiene supplies, school materials, and small toys.

The language department played a huge role in adopting many of the children. Almost every Spanish class had over two students they adopted. Some kids even included letters in Spanish for the students to read.

Other clubs, such as Student Government and Key Club, took on several

students as well. The collective effort by the Spanish classes and other clubs allowed for every student to have their own box of goodies.

This fundraiser was wildly successful for the first year. The idea came from the president of the club who had done a similar project with her soccer team. "We didn't really know what to expect from it for the first year. We thought we would have to do a lot more work

than we did but the other clubs and classes took on most of the workload," said vice president Adam Limoges.

The director of the school in the Dominican Republic, Jean Michele, was impressed by the idea as well. New Horizons usually only hosts fundraisers to send money down to the school instead of physical objects or supplies. This new change of pace for the club is a great addition this year.

## TURF FIELD (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

presented properly, and to make sure that everyone was on board with the direction of creating the turf field. Understanding the complexity of the process is very important, considering all the time and effort it requires in order for just one of the many steps to be completed. Creating a turf field is a long process and will take many years to complete the end goal.

Bubniak as well as

Franchini both currently hope that "shovels are in the ground" by June 2022. This is of course contingent on everything going according to plan, and that the capital project is approved. In order for approval, there would first need to be a district vote that is set to take place in October of this year. In addition, the State Education Department would need to approve the project as well. It would have several guide-

lines that would need to be met prior to construction and approval as well.

With regards to the financial logistics of the project, not much has been revealed yet, due to the process still being very early in development. In order to pay for the field, portions of it would be funded by both state aid and taxpayer money. However, nothing regarding the financial matters is finalized, and there is still a

long way to go before those decisions will be made.

Both Bubniak and Franchini stress whether you agree or disagree with the construction of turf fields, it is important for our school to make an informed decision that will assist our district and our community in years to come. This is a long process, and although we are just in the early proposal stages, it still merits open-minded conversation.

## NEW COURSES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

"I'm interested in the logic course because it combines the building blocks of math with every situation you could find yourself in," said junior Adam Limoges. "It will encourage me to think outside the box and analyze arguments better." Similarly, some might be interested in the new Statistical Reasoning in Sports course as it offers a way to connect the real life application of sports to what we learn in class.

However, Logic and Statistical Reasoning are not

the only courses being offered in the math department next year. Math teacher Mrs Freeman discussed two new math classes, STEM Computing and AP Statistics. The STEM Computing course is "computer science education that focuses on practical problem solving in STEM fields," she said. In order to take this course you must have taken or be taking Algebra II, as some of the math required for the STEM Computing is taught in that course. For AP Statistics, Freeman described it as

"more about understanding mathematical reasoning rather than intense computation." This course would be ideal for a student who prefers a mathematical understanding in comparison to the large formulas that are involved in Calculus.

Clearly there are courses for everyone this upcoming year. In just the math department alone, five new courses are being offered. Be sure to keep these new courses in mind when you make your course selec-

tion for next year.

The courses include: Intro to Theater Arts, Writing for Social Media, Writers' Workshop, Horror History, Biotechnology Laboratory Internship, Introduction to Criminal Justice, Current Events, Global Cinema Studies, Latin American History Culture and Politics, Music Theory, Statistical Reasoning in Sports, AP Statistics, Project-Based Math, Logic, STEM Computing, Video Gaming, Digital Art, Video Art (in 2020-2021), PLTW: Civil Engineering and Architecture.

# EDITORIAL PAGES

## STOP IT NOW

by Alexandra Gaboury

We all have a very set mindset on bullying. We hold these images of physical fights and verbal abuse-blattant bullying. What is not realized is that "teasing" a student is still bullying. This isn't when you're sitting at lunch and poke a little fun at your best friend since pre-K that entirely knows you're kidding, it's when you're sitting in class and poking fun at someone for their interests-someone who doesn't know you're "teasing". That is bullying.

Since Kindergarten, we have been taking classes on how to prevent bullying, how to be an up-stander. We've all heard the statistics, but let me remind you of the sheer intensity of the situation you are in



now. Twenty percent of U.S. students have been bullied. If you had all the students in the

U.S. congregate, 1 out of every 5 would have been bullied. 11,106 students in New York State were bullied on school grounds between 2016-17. 11,188 students were "electronically bullied" between 2016-17. 70.6% of students say they've seen bullying in their schools. "Research indicates that persistent bullying can lead to or worsen feelings of isolation, rejection, exclusion, and despair, as well as depression and anxiety, which can contribute to suicidal behavior" (stopbullying.gov).

This is by no means a light matter or something that you should shrug off. Words and actions impact everyone around you. It doesn't matter what the intention was, when you

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- Lilly Kronau (Profiles)
- Kyle Reasor (Sports)
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## THANKS, MR. QUILES

by Emily Armlin

Each new school year brings many changes — from new classes and teachers, to a different group of students starting; there can be a lot to adjust to. This year, Averill Park welcomed a new principal to our school, which is also a big change, though this has seemed to be a fairly seamless transition for Mr. Quiles, who has already had a significant positive impact on our school. Although some of the changes may be slight, Mr. Quiles has successfully created a positive school environment that make students

enjoy their time at school. From the start, Mr. Quiles has made a positive impact and has taken every



effort to find what's best for our school community. This summer, even before APHS started the school year with

our new principal, he was already planning and asking for feedback to ensure that he made the necessary changes and efforts to benefit our school. He started by holding sessions open to students, faculty, and community members in order to receive input on what they thought was already working well, as well as what they wanted to see changed. Quiles asked for the community's view on APHS so he could learn about our school and what we value as

a community to ensure that the changes he would make would help our school overall.

Continuing into the school year, Mr. Quiles asks for more feedback from the school community and always wishes to make sure that the students are heard.

"The biggest thing that stands out to me about him is that he cares," said senior Noora Ahmed. "He cares about how we are doing, how our day is going, and is willing to listen to us when we have something to

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# EDITORIAL PAGES

## ONLINE HOMEWORK NOT SO GREAT

by Mackenzie Julien

Google Classroom, Castle Learning, and Edmodo are just a few of the learning resources teachers use here at Averill Park High School. Teachers are able to assign, collect and even give digital copies of assignments through these websites. As these technologies continue to become more advanced and easier to access, are they really what the students want?

Almost every teacher and student has used Google Classroom at least once. Although it's a great way to get word of an assignment out without physically being in class, it usually isn't that great of a resource. Students on snow days or after class are getting notified of new homework assigned. If a student isn't able to access Google Classroom they might

not see the assignment and could potentially get a zero in the grade book. This new ability to give assignments to



students without talking to them in person could jeopardize the grades of some high schoolers.

Castle Learning, another resource used by many teachers, is a website where quizzes and tests can be given electronically. It allows teachers to give the as-

signments in a variety of different ways. It can be timed to cut off the test at a certain point, and if students

can't finish before time is up, they get a zero. Teachers are allowed to reassign the test after this but it can be extremely discouraging to students.

Castle Learning lets students try again on questions they get wrong, and it gives hints and explanations.

While this seems like a helpful feature for learning, if a student is being timed they won't have time to read the explanations and usually don't learn from their mistakes. This form of testing is not the most effective as many students find it harder to learn material online. The only true benefit students gain from online assignments such as Castle Learning is the immediate feedback given by the website.

All in all, online homework and resources are not effective or helpful for all students. Teachers should reconsider using these sites before giving homework without telling the students in person. If a test has to be timed, it should be taken in class, not online where the constant countdown stresses students out, making them more likely to make mistakes on their answers.

### STOP IT NOW (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

speak or act, your words and actions speak for themselves. If you say something that hurts, it doesn't matter if you didn't mean to. Once it's done, you have to own up to it.

A situation with the phrase "laughing with them,

not at them" is never a good one. That meaningless six word phrase now turns my blood cold. If you need justification for your actions by using that slippery phrase, then you're bullying.

This is the time for action. This is the time to not

be afraid and to stand up. It's terrifying to stand up against bullying, but it's even more terrifying to be bullied.

Bring attention and awareness, do not expect situations to die out without interference.

Respect. Respect

people's privacy, interests, and ideas. We all celebrate the idea of individuality, but then bully people for not conforming.

As Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The time is always right to do what is right,"

### SEAL OF BILITERACY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

French. I've also been working on French since sixth grade and it has been a lot of work. I feel that the Seal of Biliteracy is a kind of capstone project to it all and round out and finalize my

learning."

Overall, this intensive language endeavor is for students who are passionate about foreign language and want to show their skill and gain recogni-

tion for it. They will be working hard to perfect their projects and prepare for questions from the panelists for their presentation in May.

The seniors working toward earning a Seal Of

Biliteracy this year include Noora Ahmed, Ruthann Flick, Sophia Morone, Isabella Maddalone and Rebekah Zimmerman. Good luck to all the students participating in this opportunity.

# EDITORIAL PAGES

## DON'T DO IT: A NEAR DROP-OUTS CAUTIONARY TALE

by Dakota Price

Picture yourself sitting through the long hours of the school day, generally sleeping and not really benefiting from the classes. No one wants to be here, but we all have to up to a certain point. I almost got out too early.

School has always been seen as a waste of time to me, even early on in elementary school. But even though I saw it as a waste of time. I've always been able to stay on Honor Roll and occasionally on the Merit Roll. And though I never did too much in school activity-wise, I did wrestle my freshmen and sophomore years.

By my junior year though, I didn't have a care in the world because I was going to be dropping out in a couple of months. I almost dropped out last year because school didn't really help me much. I'm able to sleep through classes and still able to get 80's and 90's on tests and quizzes. Most subjects just come easy to me. I don't need to put effort in them to do well in them, so instead of wasting my time sitting in a building I wanted to drop out and get to work full time.

On average, 1.2 million students drop out of high school each year in the

United States. About 20% of students drop out in New York State, including New York City. The numbers are much lower at Averill Park. According to our school principal, Mr. Quiles, "over the past five or six years the graduation rate

freaked out and asked me why I was dropping out. Then every day after that she yelled at me, telling me that I shouldn't drop out.

She had always seen me as a star student. And when she found out that I

I shouldn't drop out, but they would support any decision I made.

They just helped to convince me to power it out and stay in school for the rest of my junior year and then graduate in January my senior year.

In the end I decided not to drop out, because without that diploma and just a GED it closes so many doors of opportunities, and it's hard to find work without at least a high school diploma. Sometime around May I decided to stay in school and get my diploma.

My choices in the end have ultimately led to me fulfilling my dreams that I've have had since I

was eight years old: to become a United States Marine. I have to take and pass the English Regents on January 22. Then I will be leaving January 28 to go to Parris Island, South Carolina where I will go through the 13 weeks of recruit training.

*Postnote: Price graduated this past January and is presently undergoing recruit training with the U.S. Marines in South Carolina.*

consistently remains around 92%. This is very strong as compared to other schools around the region."

If I had dropped out, my plans to work full-time would have led to me working with my father in the family business, which is installing flooring.

It was a big thanks to three of my teachers last year, Mr. Zender, Mr. Smith and Mrs. Boulay, as well my guidance counselor Mrs. Arsenault, that I'm still here.

When I told (science teacher) Mrs. Boulay that I was dropping out she kind of

had plans to drop out she knew that she needed to do everything in her power to convince me otherwise. And what she did was, she just talked to me as well as worked with Mrs. Arsenault to get me a schedule for my senior year where I graduate in January, and only had to come to school on A-days. That availability to have a shortened schedule like that is what convinced me to stay.

Also, Mr. Zender and Mr. Smith helped to convince me that I shouldn't drop out. They kind of just told me how I was a good student and that



# EDITORIAL PAGES

## ACADEMICS OR SPORTS?

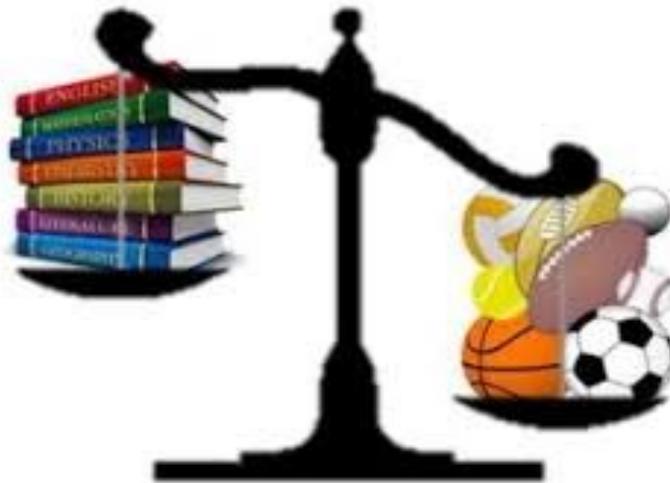
by Gabi Mohos

Does Averill Park Central School District value sports over academics? At first it may seem like we do, because sports are considered such a big deal here. We have football games every other week at the beginning of the school year, and most of our extra-curricular activities revolve around physical activity.

On the other hand, the high school provides a lot of academic opportunities, such as advanced classes, electives that will give you college credits, and academic clubs. If sports were valued more than education, teachers would give less homework on nights where there is a sports game, or allow student athletes to get away with

missing a homework assignment if they had a practice or a game the night before. But

if they are not, they face punishment from their coaches. Most students are involved in



that is not the case. Student athletes are expected to be passing all their classes, and

at least one sport, and it is more common for an average high schooler at Averill Park to

be in sports than in advanced classes and non-athletic activities. Sports are hard work, and require a lot of commitment and determination. Academics put a lot of pressure on students to be at the top of their class.

It is not realistic for a high schooler to be both at the top of their class, and to excel in sports, since these both require lots of dedication. Usually, students just choose to do what makes them happiest, which is more commonly doing sports. Averill Park does not value sports over academics, or academics over sports. Students choose what they value more, making it different for each student.

## QUILES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

say. I feel heard. Mr. Quiles listens to what we have to say as students, and if there is an issue, he is willing to do anything and everything to help."

Mr. Quiles spreads positive energy throughout the school during the day. As he passes students and faculty in the hall, he always says "Hi" and wishes us a great day. He always asks how we are or how our day is going, and I think I can speak for many when I say it is really nice to know that he really cares about and supports the students and staff at APHS.

"Mr. Quiles has made Averill Park a more positive environment in many ways," said junior Sarah Fara-

gon. "For instance, Mr. Quiles always makes an effort to greet students and make conversation with them whenever possible. Although this may not seem like a big deal, I speak for myself and my peers when I say that it makes a huge difference. It is also comforting to know that our principal respects the students of Averill Park High School."

As we return to school from a break or even just from the weekend, Mr. Quiles is always there, smiling and welcoming us back, which really makes our school a place I am happy to come to each day.

Mr. Quiles's visibility throughout the day is some-

thing that has really made a big difference at APHS. Throughout our day, we see Mr. Quiles in the hallways, stopping into classrooms to see how things are going, as well as at many performances and games. Through this, he has made a huge effort to get to know the students and what is important to us. He has proved that he supports us in school as well as in our extracurricular activities. This makes such a big difference for us and for our school community.

"His positive energy and contagious smile is seen and felt throughout the whole building," added Ahmed. "I am so incredibly grateful to have had Mr. Quiles as my

principal my last year here. Mr. Quiles is an amazing principal, an outstanding role model and the best representation of APHS that anyone could ever ask for."

Mr. Quiles has made such a positive impact at APHS already, and it has only been two semesters so far. He has spread positive energy and created an environment that so many of us are happy to come to each day. His hard work and efforts are noticed by so many of us, and we can all thank him for making APHS such a wonderful place to learn and spend each day.

# EDITORIAL PAGES

## VALENTINE'S DAY—IT'S ALL IN THE MIND

by Sydney Ferguson

If you feel like Christmas was just yesterday, you're not alone. But here we are in February, and, whether you like it or not, Valentine's Day is right around the corner. There are a variety of different emotions floating around on this holiday, ranging all the way from delighted to gloomy.

Some people are single and loving every minute of Valentine's Day, looking forward to eating their own share of chocolate while watching rom-coms curled up in their room. Some single people just don't care, while other loners are going for the whole "watching *Titanic* while sobbing into a bowl of ice cream in the dark" scene. Some are having the time of

their lives with their friends... and there are a few lucky ones that get to share Valen-

— how are they feeling about this special day of love? A few APHS students, both



tine's Day with a significant other.

As for the lucky ones

single and taken, were asked for their feelings about Valentine's Day this year.

"I don't care much about it, I don't really have feelings about it" said Dani Lapiere, a freshman. Zach Ryan, a freshman who has a date, explained, "I don't really think it's a waste of time or money, because it's about appreciating the people you love." Freshman Dayna Densmore, who is also taken, said, "It's nice going into Valentine's Day having a date. But it falls on a Thursday this year, so it's not a huge deal because I wouldn't be able to do anything big."

Whether you're single or taken, and whether you care or don't, enjoy Valentine's Day this year. There are always people in your life to show love and appreciation to, especially on this holiday. The homework can wait.

## SCHOOL UNIFORMS FOR APHS?

by Paige Graham

Whenever the topic of dress code is brought up, the thought of mandating uniforms is questioned as well. Many people say that uniforms don't let students express themselves. While in some cases this may be true, there are plenty of other ways for someone to express themselves. In addition, there are many benefits to having uniforms in school.

Most of the students I interviewed said that uniforms do more harm than good due to restricting self-expression. When kids are



told what to wear, they don't like it. They also don't like

wearing the same clothes as everyone else.

Personally, this issue does not concern me much. I do agree that uniforms could hinder people from expressing themselves in the ways they're used to, but they could also bring about a lot of positive change.

When students go school shopping, most go for

the "in" clothes. Those outfits can be so pricey students can only buy a few pieces. For students who can't afford trendy clothing, uniforms would be easier and less stressful. They would also be cheaper and a lot easier to find.

While there should be limitations to the uniform dress code, uniforms are a great idea for schools. As long as these restrictions still allow students to express themselves through means other than their clothing, bringing uniforms to high schools is more helpful than it is harmful.

# REVIEWS

## THE WINTER ONE-ACTS WRITING, DIRECTING AND ACTING SKILLS ON DISPLAY

by Makayla Kielely

During the months of December and January, students in Averill Park's Off Broadway Players wrote and directed their own short story plays. Students worked very hard, including staying after school every day for the month of January, and their efforts culminated in the Winter One-Acts, which were held on January 11-12.



Freshman Alex Gaboury wrote and directed a play entitled *Starving Artist*, a play about two people, Casey K.B. and Kasey Rodriguez, examining their thoughts about becoming the stereotypical starving artist. Gaboury said, "My first day of art at the night school, we were asked if we needed justification for picking this class,

and...this got me thinking of the mentality society has toward artists, and has had in the past, how we try to pre-

vent 'starving artists' but really are preventing art. From that, this One-Act was written".

Another favorite One-Act this year was *Helen vs. the Hipster Agenda* by Kate Happy. This show was about a New England mother who adores Joe Biden

and ABBA with all her heart, while her husband and daughter are footnotes in her relatively ordinary life. Her security was forever altered when hipsters begin to populate her town, and chaos ensued when her daughter brings home a new boyfriend that is the perfect picture of her worst nightmare. Happy enjoyed working on



this show and with her wonderful cast.

*The Wyoming Project* by Wolfgang Balga and Delaney Long was a hilarious representation of our school projects. It portrays two students who are complete opposites. Alice is known as the nicest girl in school, while Logan doesn't care much about anything. The two, much to their dismay, are forced to do a school project together...and it does not go as planned. Both Balga and Long are dedicated to OBP and were very happy with the final show. Every member of Off Broadway Players put a huge effort into this year's production and this was evident in the end with very successful shows.

## THE ULTIMATE START-UP THE PROCESS TO START A NEW CLUB IS SIMPLE

by Belle Klimek

Are you interested in starting a club but don't know how? If so, this is the article for you.

In consultation with Averill Park High School's assistant principal Brian Bishop, what follows is a compiled list of things to do in order to start the club you want.

First of all, develop a general idea of what the club



would be about (as long as it remains within the school

code of conduct).

Then it would be smart to see how it appeals to the student body by asking friends or teachers. Put up some flyers even; get your idea out there. There should be at least a dozen or so people who want to participate for it to be seen as a club.

After that, find a teacher who is willing to be an advisor of your club. To do that, you should look for teachers who might enjoy the type of club you are proposing.

Once you find someone to advise your club, you must apply for a stipend. If you are officially recognized as a club you may then receive funding from the school

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# REVIEWS

## A NIGHT OF WINNERS AT LIP SYNC STUDENTS SHOW THEIR STUFF WHILE FACULTY REVISIT THE PAST

by Gabe Hildebrandt

The 10th World International Lip Sync held on February 8 was a success! Run as a fundraiser for the seniors of Averill Park High School, over \$1,200 was raised this year to put toward scholarships for the senior class.

Level 4 and 5 French and Spanish students prepared and performed creative dance routines for the duration of the night. Ms. Apellaniz's Spanish 5 students won the award for Best Costumes for their interpretation of a mash-up of "Un Poco Loco" and "El Latido de mi Corazón" from the Disney movie Coco. There was no doubt they had the best costumes of Lip Sync. I would argue that they also had the best overall Lip Sync, in addition to that. Maybe that's just be-

cause I am a sucker for the guitar.

However, one performance cannot win two awards, so that leads us onto the actual recipients of the

tice they put into their dance routine. All in all, I felt they deserved the award for the Best Choreography, which was instead awarded to yet another

In prior years of lip sync, the teachers had done a musical performance similar to that of their students. However, this year the teachers paid homage to the past by performing a comedic skit and recollecting on years past by showing videos of the past dances. It was a very entertaining skit overall and further heightened the hype for next year's teacher performance.

All in all, it is always a great idea to attend the school's fundraisers as they are always interesting, highly entertaining and fuel for conversation: the 2019 Lip Sync was by no means an exception.



Best Overall lip sync award. This award was received by the Spanish 4 Block 1 class for their performance of "Waka Waka" by Shakira.

All of this group's costumes were made completely by hand, and it was abundantly clear from their performance how much prac-

er class! The Best Choreography award was given to Mr. Brown's French 5 class for their performance to the song "Ego". They in my opinion deserved the Best Lip Syncing award, as I felt they were the only ones to actually focus on moving their lips.

### START-UP (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

budget.

Of course there are restrictions when forming a club. You must find, "a group of like-minded people who

support each other," said Bishop. The club must also abide by the school district rules.

That's all you need

to know in order to start a club. If you have an idea that you think people would like, go ahead and make it come true.

**Look for issues of *The Chronicle* on-line!**

**Go to the APHS webpage on the APHS District website at [averillpark.k12.ny.us/aphs](http://averillpark.k12.ny.us/aphs) and click on "Student Parent Resources." Then click on "Newsletters."**

# PLAYING THE WAITING GAME

## THE STRESS OF WAITING TO HEAR FROM COLLEGES

by Katie Armlin

From now until May, seniors at APHS and schools all over the country are reaching the same momentous occasion: applying and waiting to hear back from colleges. As only a sophomore I haven't begun a college search and selection process myself, but slowly, starting at the end of my eighth grade year, I began to go through the process vicariously through my sister.

I used to believe that potential students would fill out an application, write an essay, and then the answer was just a "yes" or "no". But even for people knowing more than I, there is so much more to this process than what meets the eye.

Students are told that you just need to prove you are "well rounded." Just get good grades, participate in multiple extracurriculars and do some volunteering. But what they don't mention is your luck of the odds. Turns out that it doesn't matter if your SATs and class ranks are higher than those of an accepted student, you can still be denied to that school simply because more people applied to your program than to the programs of accepted students.

The answer may also be different than just a yes or a no; you could be deferred or waitlisted, or a college could even push the date you should be expecting your answer back. In other cases, students may be accepted to their dream school but still, after all that waiting, don't know if they can attend since they haven't received financial packages or scholarships yet, which means more waiting.

And that brings me to the biggest issue of the whole topic of applying to

colleges. When asked what they thought the hardest part of applying to college was, multiple seniors all gave the exact same answer: not knowing!

Many factors play into the decision for a college to decide which students are just the right ones to accept,



deny, waitlist, or defer, including SAT scores, extracurriculars, honors/AP classes, grades, and personal essays. But what piece is most important? There is no exact answer to this question since it completely varies between schools. While your personal essay may have gotten you into a higher level school, your SAT scores may have been the cause of your denial at a lower status school.

When waiting and being stuck in that hard period of uncertainty, it can be tough for students to know what to expect when their letter comes, since they can't base their expectations on what schools they've been accepted or denied to.

Another important decision students need to make in this process is when to apply: either early decision, early action, or regular decision, and for which schools. For many schools, applying early action gives you an advantage. "Personally I applied all early action because... it

definitely makes the school know that you are very interested in them and didn't want to wait to apply," said senior Emma Crawley. For most colleges this does give early action applicants the upper hand, but in some cases schools unexpectedly receiving mass amount of

more intimidating.

During all that time of waiting and not knowing, it can be very hard for applicants to distract themselves from the anxiety and nerves growing over waiting to hear back from colleges to begin with, but mail/email and the internet do not make this any easier. Each day students receive letters and emails regarding colleges that bring their minds right back to the topic. "It's stressful when you're waiting to hear from certain school or schools and you keep getting mail from other schools you have no interest in instead," said Crawley.

Also, while waiting to hear from colleges, sites such as College Confidential give students an idea of who have heard from what schools, what scores got denied and what scores got accepted, as well as when deadlines are being reached. Although helpful for information, sites like these only add to the stress and worrying by giving them a place and reason to bring their minds back to all their stress. Due to these details, and most likely many more, the wait to know seems to drag on forever.

Planning for college can be extremely exciting, but no student can deny the amount of stress it can take out on them. There are so many factors playing into this process, and in the end it can all go down to just pure circumstance. The wait to hear back from schools can drag on for months and not hearing back from all schools at once can extend this wait even longer. Seniors should remember to hang in there and be reassured that the uncertainty is going to end at some point, it may be even be closer than they think.

early action applicants can cause deferrals and waitlists due to mere lack of time for admission counselors to review all the applications. Each of these factors make the entire process ten times more complicated and only add to the factor of uncertainty.

For music students, this process is much longer and much more stressful due to in-person auditions. College auditions call for lots of preparation and hard work to make that one performance good enough to call for your acceptance. "The auditions stressed me out more than the actual applications did," said senior Emily Jaworski. "I'm not super confident in my playing so I kept doubting myself. Highly do not recommend that! It caused lots of stress."

The pressure for auditions can also be based on the varying difficulty levels at different schools and can make the process much

**THE HEALTH BEAT:**

# STICKING WITH A GYM MEMBERSHIP

by Gabe Hildebrandt

As the ball dropped for the new year, many saw it as an opportunity for change. One of the most common New Year's resolutions is to get fit. Consequently, gym memberships seem to spike around the New Year. The unfortunate thing is that studies have shown people give up on their resolutions as early as fourteen days after they make them. According to Gold's Gym, their traffic increases by 40 percent between December and January. Then, the number of memberships dips back down significant-

ly in February.

The majority of the time, what appears to happen is that people seem to think

goals and spikes of motivation that lead to overworking oneself. This can lead to over-exertion, which could

be followed by injuries such as sprained ankles, torn muscles, and most importantly, bruised egos. Getting into exercise can be quite discouraging when you only come at it with the mentality that it will be easy to pick up after not having a part in it. So no matter your age, if you ever get the resilience of mind to pick up exercising more, remember the acronym P.A.S.T.! This stands for: P-Plan, A-Arrange a healthy environment, S-Stick to it, and finally, T-don't make it Too easy to fail. Remember, Rome wasn't built in a day. Don't expect your body to be that of an Olympian without the patience and perseverance necessary.



making exercising as their resolution will be easier to keep than they come to find. The resolutions are often accompanied by unrealistic

be followed by injuries such as sprained ankles, torn muscles, and most importantly, bruised egos. Getting into exer-

## TOO LARGE A BURDEN HEAVY BACKPACKS LEAD TO PROBLEMS

by Jeana Monaco

When backpacks are worn correctly, the weight is evenly distributed across the shoulders and the back. This reduces the shoulder or neck strain that can sometimes result from carrying other bags on just one side of the body. However, if worn incorrectly or filled with too many things, backpacks can be a significant cause of back and muscle pain.

When a backpack that is too heavy is worn incorrectly on the shoulders, the force from the weight can actually pull the body



backwards, pushing it in an unnatural and extremely uncomfortable position. In order to maintain a comfortable standing or walking position, individuals might arch their back or bend forward in an effort to compensate, which can cause the spine to com-

press. Due to this unnatural compression, the muscles surrounding the spine are stretched out while trying to balance the weight. This can lead to back, neck and shoulder pain.

My backpack has weighed up to 30 pounds, which isn't a suitable choice to carry every single weekday.

The pressure on the spine from leaning back and forth while wearing a large backpack also affects pos-

ture. When spinal muscles become used to being moved in this specific way, they tend to stay in this position. By doing so, it creates lousy posture. This can be a reoccurring event when strolling along with faulty posture, causing more back pain. As a result, this posture can prevent the weight of your bag to be distributed equally.

Likewise, back and muscle pain can both be affected by the difference in backpack straps.

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# SPECIAL EDUCATION IS... EDUCATION AND STUDENTS ARE STUDENTS

by Mara Little

The dictionary defines the term "special education" as a form of learning provided to students with exceptional needs, such as learning disabilities or mental challenges.

"It's a service we provide," said APHS Director of Special Ed Ms. Dorgan, "as opposed to a program."

Children with these types of differences often need additional assistance or time completing much of the same work others could do quickly. They have to give double or even triple the amount of dedication, patience, and focus into their assignments in order to learn at the same pace teachers are instructing students today.

However, special education teachers believe that helping students with learning complications and mental or physical disabilities is about much more than teaching them how to succeed in a classroom setting. Teaching these students how to succeed at life is the lesson they are focused on ingraining. Mrs.

Ryan, a ninth and tenth grade special education teacher at Averill Park High School, stated, "Special Education is ensuring all students have the opportunity to succeed in the classroom and in the community. It's all about finding a

gage with other kids, adults, and teachers. A determining factor in order for these students to find their strengths is interacting with others and finding activities in and out of school that benefit them and their self esteem.

in the choir alongside Story, plays violin in the school orchestra, is a second year member of OBP, and is starring as Herald in OBP's production of *Brothers Grimm Spectaculathon*.

Both Story and Dooley are members of the high schools newest club, Best Buddies. The Best Buddies program is designated for students with intellectual disabilities or I.D.D's to be able to explore their differences with students in standardized learning classes. Special education pathways are seen as as "helpful for students with disabilities (by putting them) in certain classrooms," said Best Buddies club vice president Jeana Monaco, a freshman. "It's important because it ensures students can have one on one time with the teacher or an aide. It's certainly beneficial for learning purposes."

Monaco added that "it seems rather degrading to call the class 'Special Education'." After giving this statement some thought, I could not help but to agree with her perspective. Students with difficulty walking, talking, behaving, and learning at the

(continued on page 19)



student's strengths." If you have a disability or road block to a quick success, no matter how hard you have to dig to uncover it, Averill Park works to find that special talent that will take you there.

Connection to the community is an important phrase to the Averill Park student body and staff. It also serves as a great way for students with disabilities to en-

Tenth grader Katie Story said she found her passion in sports. She enjoys playing in basketball and softball games outside of school. She also loves being a part of the school choir and making popcorn for the faculty, staff, and students at APHS.

Gio Dooley, another sophomore at Averill Park, said she found her strengths in the music department. She sings

## BACKPACKS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13)

The backpacks with narrower straps and with less padding can dig into shoulders, causing potential pain as well. This pressure is then put on the nerves and will interfere with circulation. When your nerves are this compressed, you feel a tingling sensation, causing nerves to be numbed and shoulders can grow weak.

Even though incorrectly wearing a backpack is

linked to problems with posture, loading on heavier backpacks doesn't cause scoliosis. Scoliosis is a spinal abnormality with an unknown cause. Scoliosis makes the spine curve sideways instead of forward and backwards. Most of scoliosis cases are noticed early on in life, coincidentally around the same time young children begin to carry heavier bags to school. Current re-

search shows that a heavy backpack can't make any structural changes to a growing child's spine. The idea that backpacks can result in scoliosis is a widespread belief among some, but rest assured, this is merely a myth.

When you look for a backpack, make sure you choose one that is appropriately sized, and it is of your best interest to have two wide

padded straps. Finding a backpack with many different compartment spaces is a good idea as well. The hefty load of school materials can be evenly distributed inside of the bag this way. A backpack shouldn't weigh more than 5 to 10 percent of the wearer's weight. This is especially important for children, who can be affected by the large weight of their backpacks.

# BEFORE THEY WERE IN EDUCATION...

## THE EARLY JOBS WORKED BY AVERILL PARK STAFF

by Bridget Mulligan, Zephryn Noble, Samantha Schroeder, Laura Williams

Are you working a part time job while attending high school? Some of your teachers did the same when they were young. We interviewed some of them and found out what their favorite jobs were while in high school.

S.A.G.E.S teacher Mrs. Ryan babysat. She liked this job because she was able to sleep late, go to work and then went to school to hang out with her friends. Her favorite part was working with kids, her least favorite part was crying babies. Art teacher Mrs. Bailey worked at Demby's in Colonie Center. She was the manager of the accessories dept. (socks, pocketbooks and jewelry). Her favorite part was working with people. She liked every part of the job.

School psychologist Ms. Williams was a lifeguard at a Six Flags amusement park. She loved being outside and pushing people down the water slides. Her favorite part of the job was having a break every hour to go down the water slides herself. Her least favorite part of the job was having to work in the rain and cold and jumping in the cold water.

Math teacher Mr. Miller was a newspaper boy. When asked what a typical day looked like, he said, "After I left school, there was a bundle of newspapers waiting for me, and I delivered them." As for his favorite part of the job, "It was a piece of cake." His least favorite part of the job was "delivering the Sunday newspaper."

Teaching Assistant Mrs. Sector worked at a restaurant named Clinton Alexander Hamilton. She had to make sure all of the tables were set up, and she would seat people and clean up. Her favorite part of

the job was meeting new people that came in and "paychecks. Her least favorite part was cleaning up after people left. According to her, it took a LONG time.



Economics teacher Mr. Blais worked in a hospital washing dishes. On a typical day he would have to put on his uniform, get the trays ready and bring the food up to the patients. His

favorite part was caring for the animals, helping clean up the farm. Her least favorite part was being around the animals. Her least favorite part was getting up early. Daviero loves riding

horses.

Our school nurse Mrs. Miller was, a carhop at Sonic Drive in. "When customers would order food from their car, I would deliver their food on rollerskates." Her

favorite part was being outside and being paid to play. Her least favorite part was when kids were homesick.

Earth Science teacher Mr. Minkler worked at a Jamesway Department store. His favorite part of the job was to dress up as Bobo the clown and Santa Claus. His least favorite parts were "short breaks and mean customers."

Auto Mechanics teacher Mr. Dutcher had two jobs: lawn mowing and working at Gould's Apple Orchard. A typical day at the orchard was packing apples, weighing apples and making fresh cider donuts. His favorite parts of his job were getting a paycheck and making fresh cider donuts. His least favorite part of the job was cleaning up.

Technology teacher Mr. Duff's favorite job was being a concert security guard. He worked at Woodstock '98 and Woodstock '99. A typical day was doing pat downs, watching unruly media people and keeping people down from the stage. His favorite part of the job was listening to the music while working. His least favorite part was pat downs and NOT listening to the music.

And lastly, assistant principal Mrs. Mein's favorite job was babysitting three kids. A typical day for her was to go to school all day, get picked up by the kids and their mother and then babysit all night. The mother was a nurse and worked evenings and their father was in the military. Her favorite part was reading bedtime stories to the kids. Her least favorite part was when the baby wouldn't sleep.



favorite part was in between breakfast, lunch and dinner, he would hang out and play jokes with his coworkers. His least favorite part was working longer than he was supposed to.

Special Education teacher Mrs. Daviero's favorite job was working on a farm with horses. A typical day consisted of getting up early,

favorite part of that job was one time her till was over by \$250.00, and she got to keep it! Her least favorite part was cleaning the grease off of the grill.

Math teacher Ms. Freeman loved being a camp counselor at a sleepover camp. A typical day was waking up the kids, breakfast, and activities for the day. Her

# TIME TO SAY GOODBYE

## LONGTIME FIXTURES AT AVERILL PARK RETIRE

by Abby Bergerson

Here in Averill Park we have an army of staff and administrators keeping the school running properly, each as crucial as the other. Two of the more important members of this army are retiring soon.

Both assistant superintendent Mrs. Lawrence and her secretary Mrs. Wachtel are leaving the district after twenty-three and twenty-four years each of working here.

Both also have long histories at the Averill Park School District, having attended Averill Park together as students and have long been friends.

Lawrence came to Averill Park in 1996 as principal of George Washington. She soon added the principalship at Poestenkill (leading

both at the same time), before taking sole duties as Poestenkill principal in 1998.

and is set to retire on March 31.

"I am most grateful

Lawrence. "I will miss those connections and relationships the most. Some of my co-workers have been my friends since childhood and it is fitting that we get to 'graduate' into retirement from AP together. I have considered it a privilege and a gift to spend most of my career working in the community where I reside. AP has been my district as an alumni, a parent, a teacher, a principal and a district administrator. As much as I look forward to new adventures in a new place, I will always treasure my collection of memories of teaching and



She has been the Averill Park's Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction since July of 2006,

to have had the opportunity to be part of a team doing work that I enjoy with people I respect and admire," said

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# BACK IN THE CLASSROOM

## NEW TEACHER AIDE TOOK A ROUNDABOUT WAY TO APHS

by Jessica Beskid

Over the first half of the year, you may have seen some new faces at Averill Park. One of them, Deborah McKeough, is a new teacher's aide here at APHS.

McKeough attended Shaker High School as a student, and then went to SUNY at Cobleskill for college.

McKeough initially pursued a different type of career than education. She said that, "Early in my career I was a stay at home mom and raised four children. Then, my husband and I owned and ran a successful hardware store (McKeough's Farm and Home Center) for the last 17 years, which we recently sold March of 2018." McKeough



explained that what she learned in college allowed her to be successful. "When I was in school they offered

business classes; I feel they really helped me when we owned our business."

Aside from her career, McKeough has a lot of hobbies she enjoys. When she was in high school, she was on the soccer and volleyball teams. Currently, McKeough said, "I really enjoy making things, getting ideas from Pinterest. I like to sew, make jewelry, re-purpose things, etc... I also like cars and going to car shows."

When asked why she wanted to be a teacher

aide, McKeough said, "I enjoy being around children, seeing them explore and learn new things."

So far, McKeough has enjoyed her time at APHS. She says, "I feel very lucky to be working here. I think that all of the students that I have met so far have been very respectful and helpful to me. I feel the same way about the staff; they have been very welcoming to me."

Some advice McKeough would like to pass on to the students of APHS is to, "figure out what your passions are now. The sooner you do, the sooner you can start working towards them. Remember that a few good friends are better than a ton of just acquaintances."

# ON PATROL WITH OFFICER NIKLES

## SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER OUTLINES HIS DUTIES

by Dani LaPier

If you attend Averill Park High School, you've most likely seen Deputy Brian Nikles walking around the halls. Since last October, he has worked as the Averill Park school resource officer, a job that, as he says, consists of two different parts.

The first part is all about the law enforcement aspect of his job. "With the law enforcement piece comes the safety. Making sure that we have the exterior of the building as secure as we can, making sure to update people on the newest lockdown protocols and procedures, and trying to find areas to improve our safety, that's where I like to bring the law enforcement part in."

Along with the safety part of his job, Nikles is involved in arrests when necessary. As of now, he hasn't had to make any arrests at the school so far this year (and doesn't plan to), but if it ever got to that point, it would be an important part of his job.

The second part of his job, which Nikles much

prefers to do over the law enforcement part, is educating and mentoring the students and teachers. In this



part of the job, he sees himself as "being able to become another person in the building that students can talk to and ask questions and turn to if they don't feel comfortable with somebody else." Alt-

hough he has the title of officer, Nikles wants students to know that he is just another guy, and wishes to break down the stereotype that he "is here to make arrests because that's not my goal — my goal is to help people."

According to Nikles, there aren't too many bad aspects to his job, but one of the worst things is "seeing some of our students who have a lot of problems, who have a lot going on, which unfortunately affects them in a bad way." The tough part of the job is getting to know these students who have lots struggles at

home, that you normally wouldn't be able to see.

As for specific cases that he deals with, Nikles revealed that last year, a former student was being stalked by older men and he had to make

an arrest. That case and an incident involving a bullet found in the high school gym (for which a district email was sent home to all parents) are examples of what Nikles does for the school. On a lighter note, just last week he helped arrange for the animal control officer to help assist when a teacher found some stray dogs.

In his free time, Nikles loves to hunt. "My favorite hobby right now is hunting. So, I put a lot of time and effort into hunting season. I'm already thinking about next season." Another thing Nikles is a fan of is concerts. He revealed that he attended about 35 concerts last year. He claims, "I'm still stuck in the 80s," because his favorite bands are Poison, Def Leppard and Guns and Roses.

Officer Nikles has many jobs here at Averill Park, many of which help to keep us safe. He is an important part of our school and we are lucky to have him.

## RETIREMENT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16)

learning here in Averill Park.

"For 23 years, Mrs. Lawrence has served the students, staff, and families of our school district with a passion and dedication that is unmatched," said school superintendent Dr. Franchini. "She has successfully combined knowledge and expertise with compassion and empathy like nobody else I have ever seen."

Wachtel started in 1995 as a snack window food server in the high school before moving to the kitchen, and then soon after was asked

to provide summer help for former superintendent Wayne Johnson. She has been working with assistant superintendents since 1998, and plans on retiring on Feb 22.

"It is hard to believe my time with APCSD is coming to a close," said Wachtel. "Over the years I have served in a variety of roles and have had the pleasure of working with some very special people. I enjoy helping our staff, teachers, and parents any way I can. My daughter was

a teacher and my son worked as a technology specialist at Averill Park - and now both are parents. I always approach working with those who called our office as if I was helping one of my kids with something they needed. While I look forward to enjoying my retirement, it is certainly bittersweet as I will miss what I do and, more importantly, the people I have come to know as friends."

"It has been a pleasure working with Mrs. Wachtel. She embodies professionalism and has a work ethic that is off

the charts," said Franchini. "She is truly an unsung hero in our District."

Both women are staples in the AP community and very much loved and appreciated for all that they've done and the amount of time and energy they have put into Averill Park High School. As Franchini said, "AP will simply not be the same without these two outstanding people." Thank you to both Lawrence and Wachtel.

## GETTING INTO JOURNALISM JOURNALISM CLUB OFFERS MANY BENEFITS

by Lilly Kronau

Freedom to investigate. Freedom to voice your opinion. Freedom of the press. If you want to find the hard-hitting truth, and go beyond the surface, and be heard, I have the perfect place for you: Journalism Club.

Journalism Club is a wonderful asset to the Averill Park community because of the student writers we have, our advisor Mr. Strich, and the wide variety of stories we cover. From investigative profiles to opinionated editorials and all the way to Averill Park's most prominent news, Journalism Club covers it all plus even more.

Fellow editor and junior Carley Salerno said,

"I've been a member of this club for three years now and I've loved every minute of it. The best part is that we have grown so much since I first started, and every year, we

likely can.

Writers are given at least a month to write each article, which gives them plenty of time to make their article perfect.



get a fresh new pick of writers. It really makes our paper unique and diverse." Salerno couldn't be more right. In Journalism Club, you can write one article or several, and we always welcome new topics. If there is something you're passionate about and want to write it, you most

Junior Lauren Harland, also an editor, agreed. "I always have plenty of time to write my articles and it's such a great feeling to see something I produced in a newspaper everyone reads. I love knowing my opinions and thoughts are being heard."

Journalism Club meets the first Wednesday of every month, so there is no major commitment. You can come once, twice, or to every meeting. If you do come, however, you'll always leave laughing, in good spirits, and without hunger. Every meeting we have a wide selection of donuts, a favorite to many of our writers.

So, if you want to know a little more about your teachers and peers, want to seek the truth, and want a good donut, Journalism Club is the place for you. With our wide variety of stories, abundance of writers, and strong opinions, you are bound to love Journalism Club. Come to our next meeting - there is a story waiting for you to write.

## DOING BATTLE WITH WORDS NEW DEBATE CLUB FORMED

by Sophia Minich

This year two students, sophomores Nick Youngstein and Maddox Ruschmeyer, started Debate Club with their advisor Mr. Quinn.

"It's a good way for people to format their opinions in a healthy way," said Youngstein. "We live in a very turbulent time in terms of politics and people being very divided, so I think it's important for people to be able to develop their skills and have conversations with people with opposing views."

In Debate Club, participants discuss controversial topics in a positive and open environment. They do not go by the formal rules of debate and it isn't a very formal club in general. Every other Wednesday, they meet to



discuss a topic that was assigned the meeting before. All kinds of students join Debate Club and all you have to do to join is show up.

The discussions are very interesting and even

when they only have a few people show up for a meeting the discussions can be great.

"We have had some great discussions on important topics," said Quinn. "For example, when the group

debated the question: "should teachers in public schools be allowed to carry firearms?" I expected a lot of heated rhetoric and boy, was I wrong. The two sides listened to each other. Their arguments were based on real concerns yet they approached the topic with open minds."

Ruschmeyer described the club as "conversations on two opposing topics trying to find a common ground."

"I am very encouraged when I see that civil discourse can be achieved even by people who disagree," said Quinn about the club. "We would encourage anyone interested to stop by after school on Wednesdays."

If you're interested in voicing your opinion on different topics, debate club is the right place for you.

# STUDENTS GAIN EXPERIENCE AS LEGISLATORS

## YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT CLUB WRITES STATE POLICY

by Carley Salerno

Averill Park's ever-expanding array of extracurriculars has grown since the beginning of the school year, with the addition of the Youth and Government Club. Known affectionately as YAG by its members, the club's purpose is to educate members of the APCSD community about state government and law, by allowing them to become legislators for a weekend.

The Youth and Government Club is based around the State Conference, which is a weekend-long field trip to Albany, along with all of New York State's other YAG members. There, club members act as real-life legislators and present a bill of their own creation to other youth legislators. Their bills follow a very similar path to bills that pass through the New York State government. If the bill passes the house, an elected "Youth Governor" will either sign or veto the motion. If the bill clears this level, it is presented to the actual New York Legislature. Several widely-known bills have been passed into law through the Youth and Government program.

One of the most notable is New York's "right-on-red" policy.

Though this is the program's first year at Averill Park, it has existed in the community for decades. The

addition to Averill Park's Youth and Government Club.

Michaels emphasizes that the club is not only meant for aspiring law students, but is open to anyone who would like to join. "Every

past couple of months, I really can't wait to see it all pay off at State Conference." Kronau's group is working to make driving while under the influence of inhalants punishable by a DWAI. She strongly recommends looking into the program if it interests you, stating that the club is very rewarding and accepting.

Another club member, Bella LaFreniere, also encourages students to join. "YAG has been an amazing experience so far. The entire YAG community is so close, it's just an awesome thing to be a part of." LaFreniere and her bill partner are working to establish mandatory mental health screening once a year for middle school and high school students. "Also," LaFreniere added, "Our advisor is fantastic."

The club would like to extend a warm 'thank-you' to high school principal Mr. Quiles, who has been very supportive of the program since its introduction at Averill Park. "We are all very thankful to him for providing the means to have this great experience," Michaels said. The entire club is looking forward to their presentations at State Conference, and to the coming years of the YAG program at AP.



club's founder, Alan Michaels, was actually a member of the program while he was in high school.

"I loved my time in the program - it helped me prepare for college, as well as law school," he said. Michaels urges all students at Averill Park to look into the program. Any student who is able to identify an issue within their community, and who is willing to work to resolve this issue, would be a strong

profession works with communications, so I think it's important for anyone."

Though the program is only in its inaugural year at Averill Park, it has already developed a strong base among the students here. There are three separate bill groups presenting at the State Conference, each of which is composed of 2-4 students. About her bill group, club member Lilly Kronau said, "We've all been working so hard over the

### SPECIAL EDUCATION (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14)

normal rate should not have to be referred to as "special." Everyone is made uniquely; obtaining a disability at birth is not something these students can control. Alex Gaboury, a freshman and the sibling of a current special ed student at Algonquin Middle School, agreed. "Special Education students don't need to

be spoken to in that high pitched, slowed down version," she said. The way in which you process information should not determine whether or not you are considered special. The strengths and differences students with disabilities have are what makes them unique.

Everyone between

the ages of five to eighteen is required to receive an education, yet the way students may receive their education varies based on how each child learns. Students within the "special education" learning environment are pushed to embrace their differences and weaknesses and focus on their capabilities. This is a

tactic many standard learning students are in great necessity of today. Learning to accept both the upsetting and the good qualities in themselves, students in the special education program are inheriting a much more highly valued message than any textbook could teach them.

# Wrestling With...Academics

## APHS Wrestlers Attend Mandated Study Hall

by Cylie VanDeWal

Practice times are different for every sport. Some say that the students who do sports are usually more tired because they're up late doing their homework after they had practice. Now, imagine if those students had a mandatory study hall after school, where all the students have to either sit down and do homework, or go see their teachers before practice. This is an every day occurrence for members of the wrestling team.

"I think it helps us keep our grades up and get our work done before practice, so we don't go home and ignore it and just go to sleep," said sophomore Chad Rist. "We have time to go see teachers if we need to, so I

think it's pretty helpful to both myself and the team."

Junior Dominick Denué added, "I think it's

the team.

Head coach Mr. Malenfant said he started it "many years ago" to

the time slot," Malenfant said. He stipulates during the study hall the wrestlers "need to be accountable for their time, and need to return to practice with a signed pass."

Since wrestling is one of those sports where everybody can make the team, every student who wrestles also has the mandatory study hall. This gives each of them time before practice to do their homework. When others go home from practice or a rehearsal, students are tired and just want to go to sleep. But, if the study hall helps the students, then why don't other extracurricular activities do the same? Maybe grades would go up more than they are already? It works for the wrestling team.



good to have for the kids that need it" Both wrestlers seem to find the time beneficial to both themselves and

"emphasize academics."

"I think it works well, because most of them would not stay after unless they had

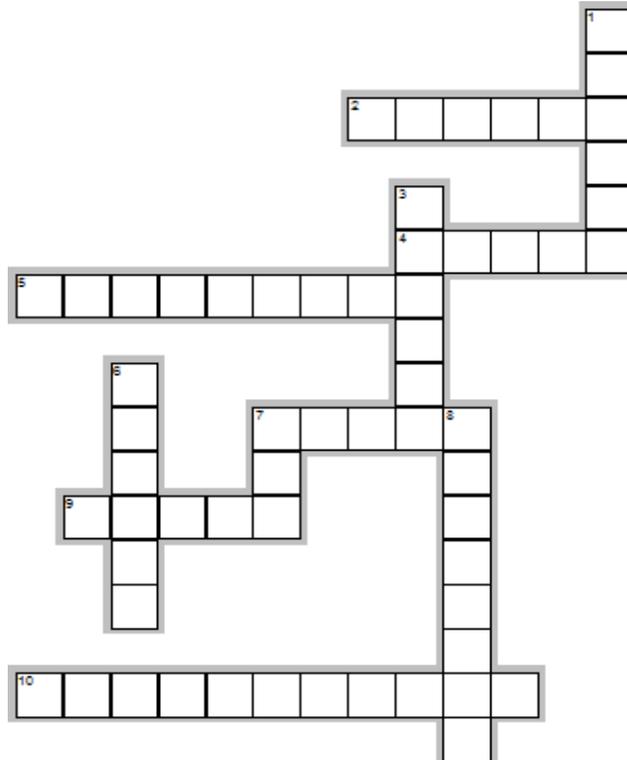
### ASTROLOGICAL

#### SIGNS

#### CROSSWORD

Match the STAFF MEMBERS with their ASTROLOGICAL SIGN

- AQUARIUS
- ARIES
- CANCER
- CAPRICORN
- GEMINI
- LEO
- LIBRA
- PISCES
- SAGITTARIUS
- TAURUS
- VIRGO



### Down

1. Marrufo, Nikles, Schmidt
3. Engel B., Heilmann, Quinn, Sorriento, Welliver
6. Berner, Brown
7. Mein
8. Bishop, Hall, Malenfant, Miller

### Across

2. Favro, Quesnel, Strich
4. Ford, Gerke, Perry, Williams
5. Shupe
7. Burger, Hale, Medici, Yost
9. Bailey
10. Blostein, Gaboury, Ott, Quiles