

CHRONICLE

EDUCATION FOUNDATION GALA HELD

by Sophia Maddalone

The 15th Annual Averill Park Education Foundation Fundraiser Gala took place on November 19, 2021. The gala was held at the Old Daley Inn on Crooked Lake, a beautiful venue right here in Averill Park. The evening was



filled with great food, auctions and raffles, with many members from the Averill Park School District community in

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'TIS THE SEASON...FOR GIVING HELPING DURING THE HOLIDAYS

by Lindsay Agro

The holiday season always highlights the needs of people in our community who may be less fortunate than others. As a result, there are always several projects aimed at helping these people during this "season of giving." Listed below are some of these projects, all of which do immense good in our community and bring joy and necessities to those in need!

Food Drive

Averill Park High School's Student Government, Key Club, and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) are sponsoring this year's food drive, which will be collecting food to give to families in our community this holiday

season. There are boxes located in the main foyer, the bus atrium foyer, Room 223, and outside the counseling center. They are accepting non-perishable food items. Some



suggested items to donate include: rice, pasta, sauces, gravy, cereals, canned foods like ravioli or chili, as well as snack foods like granola bars, fruit snacks, cookies, and crackers.

The Holiday Adopt-A-Student

This year, Mrs. Arsenault and Mrs. Bailey are teaming up to put together a holiday adopt-a-student program. Averill Park High School staff are being offered the opportunity to provide gifts for students in need, in hopes of bringing them some joy this holiday season. There will be a tree located in the staff room with stars listing items that these students may need or want. Before the holidays, all gifts collected will be delivered to these students.

Toys for Tots

This year, Averill Park High School may not be participating in Toys for Tots due to COVID, but in the past, there

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MAKING ART MORE VISIBLE NEW DISPLAYS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

by Alex Gaboury

Imagine working for hours on a charcoal piece, only to see it ruined. You carefully mapped out the proportions, shaded it, worked on the value, revised again and again and again. And then during a lunch block, the tape you carefully folded and placed on the back of your piece gave out and the piece fluttered to the ground under a passing foot. Despite the

protective spray you applied over it, a grey footprint with whorls and textures now con-



trasts with the night sky you carefully drew months ago,

breaking your heart.

"Hanging art in the halls is such an integral part of the visual arts program," said senior Liam Rounds, who has taken art classes throughout his time at AHS and plans on attending art school next year. "Although we are making art for ourselves, we make art because we want people to see it and to feel something...and that requires

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ART DISPLAY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

putting ourselves out there and letting the school see the beautiful and profound things we make.”

In an effort to highlight and protect the work of Averill Park’s artists, and through the awarding of a monetary grant, the Averill Park art department has acquired new displays, displays which are now going up in the art hallway.

The displays are made of Homasote — a material used in professional artists’ studios. The displays act like corkboard and will make hanging pieces a significantly easier process. The Homasote can also be painted — the plan is for a neutral grey, to emphasize the work more — and to finalize it, wood will be

stained to frame the art.

“The art department realized we needed the ability to showcase work safely,” art teacher Ms. Gregory said.

The project was intended to be started during this past summer, but due to the school-wide flood, the work was halted. After carefully calculating the square footage needed, the order was placed. Now, the Homasote is going up with “maintenance working overtime to have it come to fruition,” Gregory explained.

These cases will present the work of Averill Park’s own artists in a way that feels more honored. No longer will the art department have to rely on the walls, which once painted became

nearly impossible to stick things to, and which during the humid months became unthinkable.

Gregory said she hopes one day to expand the displays to exhibit work of alumni, like a wall of fame.

“It’s just such a cool and unique way to express our talents and passions in a not so obviously academic way,” Rounds explained. “Theater, music, visual arts, performances, galleries — they are all ways in which we can display the drive and success of students in a non-traditionally academic manner. I think it’s a bright and needed star in our high school sky.”

While they may just seem like displays, the

intention and meaning runs deep. “I’m excited that now work will end up being viewed because of how hard our students work. It’s been a challenge to truly showcase the students to the degree they work for and deserve,” Gregory said. “And I’m happy it will ultimately increase the students’ audience.”

The displays will be finished over the next few months, with plans for four to five more to be installed in the front of the school and heading towards the counseling center.

Even through COVID, the art department has worked to keep art in the hallways, and now they are working even harder to make sure it stays safe and gets the audience it deserves.

GIVING (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

has been a lot of success in collecting gifts for kids. In previous years, APHS would compete with Algonquin Middle School to see which could collect the most gifts. Although this may not happen this year, it’s important that we remember why Averill Park High School began collecting gifts for Toys for Tots in the first place. This initiative began in 2012 in honor of Abigail Elizabeth Dutcher, an APHS senior who passed away that year after battling a year-long illness. She was a kind and giving student who loved helping out with Toys-for-Tots, and this tradition was started in memory of her.

Helping out with any of these amazing projects will certainly help a lot of people in our school and local community. Please consider helping out or donating!

GALA (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

attendance.

The Averill Park Education Foundation has been supporting the Averill Park School District for over 15 years by donating crucial resources and programming to enhance learning experiences for all students. The foundation has been able to continue their mission over the years with the support of local businesses and the Averill Park community.

Over the course of the night, the symbol of a flame was referenced many times, signifying the flame that keeps our community and education departments alive. The flame also symbolized the opportunity to rejoin our community

at the gala after a year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To hold this year’s event, some safety protocols were implemented to create a safe environment, such as

guests was limited, the night was still filled with joy.

Every year, the Education Foundation selects two outstanding members from the Averill Park community and presents them with the Community Award and the Educator Award. The awards honor individuals who continuously make our school district a better place. Mr. Chris Foster was the recipient of the Community Award and Mrs. Tracy Sten Hacker was the recipient of the 2021 Educator Award. Both awardees attended the gala with their families.

To continue the theme of the flame, all guests were given a candle. The evening was an amazing celebration and recognition of students, community volunteers, and educators.



required proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test within 72 hours of attending the event. The event capacity was also capped at 200 guests. Although the amount of

TRYING TO KEEP SCHOOL SPIRIT SOARING

STUDENTS BOUNCE BACK AFTER PANDEMIC HARDSHIPS

by Tyler Michaels

During the week leading up to Halloween, students at Averill Park High School avidly participated in a spirit week held at the school. Each day had a different theme that students dressed for, including a “country vs. country club” day, a “teacher impersonation” day, and finally a costume contest on Halloween day. While there were undeniably many students not participating in the spirit week, some students feel that school spirit is higher this year than it was in the past.

Every year, schools around the country hold different events to raise their school spirit. This helps make students feel involved and united with students from other classes. Junior class president David Mooradian explained, “School spirit is really important because it allows us to unite. It is a big school, we have a lot of students that are certainly unique, and school spirit allows us to come together and have some pride in Averill Park.”

“I think school spirit is important because it keeps people wanting to come to school,” said Jacob Crupi, a co-representative for the class of 2023. “School shouldn’t just be about learning, but about making relationships and having fun, and school spirit helps improve that.”

With student leaders knowing the importance of school spirit, it is concerning to hear that some students at

Averill Park have felt that school spirit is lower this year than it has been in the past.

Many of the worries of low school spirit stems from the irregularity of the current school year. Averill Park has managed to hold many events while keeping students safe, yet it is inevita-

ble that some events are canceled due to their impossibility to run with COVID-19 safety guidelines. While Averill Park managed to have a pep rally, it was different from what upperclassmen had experienced two years ago. The adaptation to new guidelines and a drastically different educational experience from prior years can make some students feel less united with their classmates, yet this does not necessarily indicate a truly lower school spirit. Mooradian explained, “In comparison to last year school spirit is not lower, but I think in comparison to a normal year it probably is lower. But I think a lot of that has to do with how last year was abnormal.”

With every student readjusting to a school year riddled with new rules, it is expected that they will be less

focused on school spirit than they have been in previous years. While school spirit may be lower than a normal year, students have been jumping into this year with fervor; creating packed student sections at athletic events and dressing up for

love to find their favorite teachers dressing up in the same ways they are.

With students showing their eagerness to demonstrate school spirit, Student Council is finding new ways to give them a chance to do so. Mooradian noted that giving students the opportunity to think of theme day ideas makes them more excited to participate when those days arrive. Mooradian cited the “country vs. country club” day as an example of students coming up with an idea, and then widely participating in that day. A high social media presence is also important to keep students informed and willing to participate.

Despite the irregularities of the past few years, Averill Park is certainly showing a readiness to bounce back from the pandemic and embrace school spirit. “I think in general, school spirit is trending in the right direction,” Mooradian said. “We are making a comeback from last year when it was virtually impossible to get together. I believe that our students will continue to improve our school spirit as the year progresses.” Seeing the school spirit present this early in the school year, there’s a good chance Averill Park will only continue to show more school spirit as we return to normalcy. Even now it is difficult to argue that school spirit is lower than it normally is after standing at a packed football game or seeing all of the different outfits on a theme day.



WORKING TOWARD A RETURN TO NORMALCY

DISTRICT STRESSES SAFETY AND PATIENCE AS COVID CONTINUES

by Owen Perala

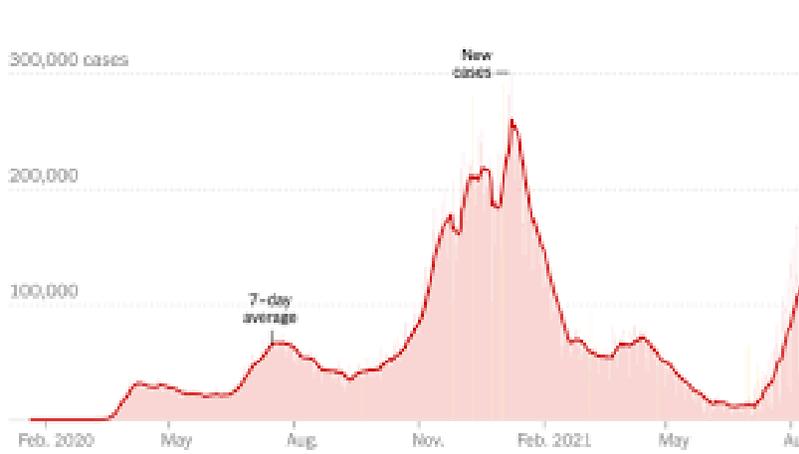
No one will object to the statement that we are all tired of COVID. The virus's second birthday will be on December 12, the day patients in Wuhan began to start feeling symptoms of the virus. COVID has affected nearly every aspect of our lives since it arrived here in the US, and clearly our education has been no exception. Rather than focusing on the past, why don't we look to the future? Everybody would like to return to a "normal" school setting, it's just a matter of when this should happen. What will the rest of our school year look like, and how is the situation looking right now?

While COVID may not be as much of a threat as it was, it is still important to be safe. "Anyone is at risk, Rensselaer does have a relatively high positivity rate and the long term effects of the virus are still not known," said Mrs. Miller, a co-director of nursing for the district, and high school nurse.

"While students

may not seem to be as threatened by the virus, there are families and adults that we need to think about as well who are more susceptible; it's more than just

United States Coronavirus Cases



the school," said high school principal Mr. Quiles.

COVID is still something that we need to be mindful of. The restrictions that are in place are there to serve a purpose. "We are in a tight and enclosed area," said Quiles, "As of right now the Department of Health says that all things we are

doing are still important and are very much necessary."

"Each restriction is a layer of protection, it all helps," said Miller. "Whether it's wearing masks, opening

windows, or quarantines, they all help to keep everyone safe."

The restrictions are tough to put up with sometimes, especially after how long it has been. However, we should remind ourselves that they are there to ensure everyone's safety, and are still important.

This does not mean that the district is not trying to alleviate these restrictions. "We want to return to as normal of a school year as possible. We are taking things one step at a time in order to avoid a crisis," said Quiles. "We've said no to nothing, and are encouraging activity, we just have to do it safely. Everything the district does is done with advice from the Department of Health to ensure everyone's safety." The Averill Park School District has the intention of returning things to as normal as possible, understanding how important a normal school year is to the students, and are seeking out ways to achieve that safely. For example, many

have noticed that open gym in advisory has begun once again, and that bathrooms no longer require sign-ins. Both of these things the district did to take small steps toward normal. According to Quiles, they are also attempting to reopen the

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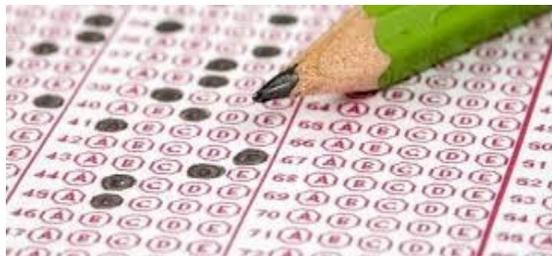
PSAT SCORES RELEASED TO JUNIORS

SORTING OUT THE RESULTS

by Caroline Nero

PSAT scores were released by the College Board on December 7 to juniors across the country. The College Board notified students by email when scores were ready to be viewed.

If students haven't done so already, make sure



to create a College Board account so your scores are

accessible. Receiving these scores can be very stressful, but remember that what you earn does not define you.

It's only a practice for the real SAT; if you don't do

well, you have plenty of time to practice in order to improve for the real one. Also, both PSAT and SAT scores always reflect your highest score on either the math or English section.

Good luck to all the students who took the PSAT. We wish you the best of luck when receiving your scores!

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

NEW COMMUNITY CENTER GROWS IN POPULARITY

by Elizabeth Hansen

Do you want a local facility that is family friendly and you can enjoy? The new SKYHIGH Community Center is located on 27 Lake Ave in Averill Park. The goal of the SKYHIGH Community Center, also known as the SHAC Center, is to facilitate and support the growth and development of active lifestyles for people of all ages in Averill Park and its surrounding communities.

The Community Center was merely a thought until the summer of 2020. COVID-19 had brought a summer full of kids who needed to get outside. The attendance at the SKYHIGH Adventure Camp exploded and the camp had the highest numbers of athletes they have ever seen.

The Community Center is located at the former Catholic School and Lake Avenue Community Church. John Slyer, the founder and owner of SKYHIGH Adventure Camp and SKYHIGH Community

Center, shared his experience with developing the site. "I looked for other sites so that we could expand into the time ahead and ensure that our programs would go on into the future. The timing was right and we found 27

and other educational programs and events." He believes that the center will also be offering an after-school program in the spring of 2022. They will provide a mountain bike club for elementary and high school-age

go from having major leaks and major neglect into a place where people can come and do things with others." Slyer explained these emotions and stated his gratitude for the time and thought that citizens in our community have given to him towards the Community Center, becoming a unifying project for many.

Slyer shared that the most difficult part of the construction of the Community Center is the timeline. "I can't make things happen as fast as I would like to. Fundraising takes a lot of



Lake Ave," he said.

There is lots of space for outdoor activities, with nine acres of land and 14,000 feet of space indoors. "The Community Center will help our community by offering services for senior citizens, families, school-age children, and preschool children," Slyer commented. "We will be a place where people can engage in fitness

children starting in January. In the future, the center plans on getting improvements like a fieldhouse with an indoor swimming pool.

"The best part of my journey so far with the Community Center is that many, many people have stepped forward and volunteered to make it happen," he added. "It's been very rewarding to see a building

effort and time." Slyer has consumed most of his time with developing the Community Center, dedicating it to create a project that will benefit citizens of all ages in Averill Park.

If you'd like to support SKYHIGH Community Center and their goals, you can learn more about these at their website: shac-center.org

NORMALCY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

snack bar during lunch periods. As long as numbers continue to stay low the district will most likely continue to re-open more and more.

The school district fully intends to return to a normal schooling environment. It just all depends on whether or not the situation seems safe enough to do

so. However, for the time being students and staff have to continue to look out for each other when we are in the building. If everyone continues to be responsible and the district stays healthy, more and more restrictions will be removed. Only time will tell how the rest of the year will play out, but we can all be hopeful

for a more normal schooling experience in the future.

"I am proud of the students so far this year," said Miller. "With how political everything is surrounding the virus, the students have handled the situation well and everyone has been really thoughtful and caring."

We Want Your IDEAS

The Averill Park Chronicle wants your story ideas. Send them to any Journalism Club member, or to Mr. Strich, The Chronicle's advisor.

WINTER WEATHER FORETOLD

ONE METEOROLOGIST’S EXPERT OPINION

by Lily Wohlleber

Are you someone who likes to be wrapped up in a fuzzy blanket sitting near the fireplace drinking hot chocolate? Or are you someone who likes to be outside all the time in the warm weather? No matter what type of person you are, weather this winter will either be great or awful.

According to Spectrum News Meteorologist Heather Morrison, this winter is predicted to have warmer temperatures than previous ones, but we can expect a lot of wet weather as well. It's expected that the temperature will be towards the warmer side... no 25 below days, sadly. However, with a wetter atmosphere it is also likely that we could get a lot of snow.

So if you are hoping to go skiing, snowboarding, or sledding, this will be a



perfect winter for you. Not too cold so your fingers completely fall off, but cold enough for it to be enjoyable. As for snow, we should have enough to build huge snowmen.

When asked when she thinks our first snow day will be, Morrison said, "We could get a snow day in late

December or by mid-January this year."

When asked how she sees global warming affecting our weather, the East Greenbush native said, "What I see is how our winters can bring extreme temperature swings, rather than consistency. We could have some really

big snowstorms in short order and then we could turn warm and wet during the heart of the season." She also said that our winter temperatures are 5 to 6 degrees higher than they were around 50 years ago.

Morrison relies heavily on technology when forming an opinion about the weather. For example, "Teleconnections (information on climate anomalies being related to each other at large distances) are known as the signalers for how atmospheric conditions like temperatures and precipitation may impact our part of the world," she said.

She also foretold our long-range forecast. "In a nutshell, we could see a snowier than average start and a colder kick off to winter this year." She believes we could have a chilly start to our winter and some snow, which is great for snowman building.

UPHOLDING THE SNOW DAY

by Cooper Smith



The snow day is a long and beloved tradition across America, Canada, and other countries with intense winters. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent rise of virtual learning, we are in danger of losing this cherished tradition. Many school districts are replacing school closures with virtual learning days, where students attend virtual calls and complete assignments from home. Nearby South Colonie Central School District, for example, had considered implementing such a policy. Many wondered if APCSD would have the same outlook.

It's with great joy that we report to you that our school district has decided that snow days will continue as a beloved winter tradition, keeping with the decision they made last year.

As you could tell by my tone, I'm thankful for the district's decision. Many classmates also share my opinion. Matt Frost, a junior at APHS, is one of these students. "I think it's great. It really gives us a chance to recap without having to stress about virtual meetings," he said.

Many teachers share this approval of the policy as well. "I like it... when there's a snow day, we deserve a break," said Mr. Goodnow, an APHS social studies teacher. "It gives teachers and kids time to catch up. Everyone gets a break."

We here at *The Chronicle* look forward to keeping the tradition of snow days alive. So when the next blizzard shuts school down, sleep in late, make some hot chocolate, and enjoy your time off.

We Want **Your** **IDEAS**

The Averill Park Chronicle wants your story ideas. Send them to any Journalism Club member, or to Mr. Strich, *The Chronicle's* advisor.

EDITORIAL PAGES

LET STUDENT ATHLETES DECIDE ABOUT PHYS ED

Simone SchwarzEise

If student athletes already participate in physical activity after school, should they still have to participate in gym class? Let's think of some pros to student athletes no longer taking a gym class.

First off, students could replace gym class with a forty minute study hall and get some work done. This in turn would raise student athletes' grades, lower homework stress for the busy athletes, and give them time to do work and talk to their teachers. Student ath-

letes have said that they like this idea as it will help with time management.

In addition, some of the school's athletes also

which only takes up more time.

An argument against replacing gym class is that physical activity has psychological benefits during the school day. Physical activity increases self-esteem and reduces stress. Studies have shown that physical activity during the school day improves the overall behavior of students. Student athletes enjoy having time



participate in out-of-school sports for their club teams,

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The Averill Park Chronicle and its staff are protected by, and bound to, the principles of the First Amendment and other protections and limitations afforded by the Constitution and the various court decisions implementing those principles.

While *The Averill Park Chronicle* does accept outside article submissions, each submitted piece must be reviewed by the newspaper advisor and club editors. *The Averill Park Chronicle* will also accept signed letters to the editor and guest editorials.

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The content of *The Averill Park Chronicle* represents the views of the students and editors and not school officials.

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Paula DeAndres (Reviews)

Julie Hale (Profiles)

Emma Hanlon (News)

Tyler Michaels (Editorials)

Owen Perala (Sports/Features)

Advisor: Mr. Strich

THE FIGHT FOR A FREE PRESS

by Sam Hart

In 1964, *The New York Times* published an editorial criticizing the police handling of the Civil Rights Movement in Montgomery, Alabama. L.B. Sullivan, the Police Chief in Montgomery, sued *The Times* for libel, meaning that the statements made were intentionally false with the intent to harm Sullivan. *The Times* fought back, claiming that they had no reason to believe that the statements were false, never intended to harm Sullivan, and they never even mentioned his name. Sullivan

won in the state of Alabama courts, and *The Times* was ordered to pay \$500,000 in



damages.

Cases like this show the issues and pressures facing journalists. Of course, in

the case mentioned above, *The Times* appealed to the United States Supreme Court. In a unanimous 9-0 decision, it was decided that the free press guaranteed in the Constitution means that in order to prove libel, a public official must prove actual malice, defined as "with knowledge that it was false or with reckless disregard of whether it was false or not." As

Paula DeAndres, a sophomore editor for *The Chronicle* simply put it, "I agree with it, it touches on the First

Amendment — it's all right to publish whatever." This is an important right, because as Averill Park social studies teacher Mr. Goodnow said, "Without this ruling, it would make it possible for public officials to go after newspapers and effectively silence them."

Silencing journalists would, of course, be a terrible thing for newspapers and the consumer. It would remove important news sources if, whenever a news outlet had a small inaccuracy, they were put out of busi-

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EDITORIAL PAGES

WHICH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IS...

WSL

by Paula DeAndres

Do you ever want to go back to elementary school? When life was simple and report cards only meant “satisfactory” and “excellent” instead of scores on a test? Well, allow me to transport you back to your grade school days and show you why West Sand Lake Elementary shaped the lives of its students in a way no other school could.

Your core memories are derived from your childhood. The bulk of your childhood was spent in elementary school. It's the longest you will ever have spent at one school. As such, you develop a sense of “schoolism”, if you will. You gain a sense of belonging and identity to that one school and feel as if your school was better suited to you than any other school.

It all began in kindergarten, when you met your first-ever grade school teacher. The excitement and nervousness of the first day soon vanished as your teacher introduced herself and began to play games with the class. From there, you had recess, math, social studies, and science. It became one of the best times of your life. The core of those memories is West Sand Lake. The school itself. It's not just a school building. It was a tight knit community where the teachers cherished their students

and the students respected their teachers. For most kids, it was a nurturing and healthy community to grow up and



learn in.

Having Mr. Riccomini in music class, you learned songs you still remember today, and as a treat (or nightmare if you were easily scared) you watched *Peter and the Wolf* once a year. Former WSL student Cece Colton shared, “I think I’d have to say the songs and Mr. Riccomini were my favorite. The “Mr. King” song was a bop.”

In the library, Ms. Yost, who now works at the high school, made all of us fall in love with books. She read to us all as we sat on the rug in her cozy library. We were sad to see her leave, but Ms. Bush filled the role in her own special way as well. The library shaped us all.

Although all the teachers at WSL were memorable and extremely caring, one stood out to almost all its graduates. Mr. Linden-

Darrow seems to be a student favorite of all the teachers at the school, as is his beloved snake, Floyd.

Named after the band Pink Floyd, he was taken care of by all the students in Mr. LD's class. Students got to feed him and hold him. The other class pets like the cockroaches and the turtle made science class exciting. 5th grade science with Mr. LD was everyone's favorite class.

Former WSL student Caroline Nero mentioned, “My favorite memory from West Sand Lake is literally all of 5th grade science because we did so many fun activities.”

The various activities that Mr. LD planned for the 5th grade class made everyone's elementary experience unforgettable. When asked about her favorite part of the school, Zareena Ansari said, “I think it was the different events like Cavan's dad's animal shows and feeding Floyd.” When asked the same thing, another former student, Cavan Hicks said, “I'd have to say rocket day and we just had a better learning environment with teachers that went above and beyond (specifically Mr. LD),” said Hicks. Everyone seemed to agree.

Another WSL student shared, “I think my favorite memory was collectively chasing the geese when Mr. LD told us to, and we were better than other schools because of Mr. LD and Floyd.” Mr. LD didn't only

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MHSL

by Rachael Strickland

Many high schools have a rival that they play football games with or will vandalize their mascots on important game days, but elementary students can't participate in these types of rivalries. Instead, we were rivals with each other. The ongoing battle of which school was the best, Miller Hill Sand Lake (MHSL), West Sand Lake (WSL) or Poestenkill (PES) has divided students of Averill Park High School for years. Each school obviously thought that it was best, but during the middle school and high school years some students changed their mind and said that other schools were better. However, to this day I have not heard any student that went to Miller Hill say that Poestenkill or West Sand Lake was better.

Let's start with the basics, the mascot. Aside from being placed on t-shirts and PowerPoints, the mascot didn't have any real purpose. Still, Miller Hill kids wore a fearsome tiger, while students at West Sand Lake wore a racoon. Racoons scavenge through trash! A tiger would eat up the racoon for breakfast, but let's not forget about the mascot at Poestenkill. A cheerful penguin. I can't say anything awful about penguins, but pretty soon global warming is going to have a large impact on penguin population sizes, leaving the tiger to prevail.

Next up, location. West Sand Lake is located across Route 43 from the

EDITORIAL PAGES

...THE BEST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?

Walgreens and across the road from Hannaford, which seems like it would be nice, but kids crossing a busy road doesn't seem practical to me. Poesten-



kill is the polar opposite, located on Snyders Corners Road, isolated from the center of the town. Miller Hill on the other hand is the perfect mix of both being located on a semi-busy road which can be crossed to get to the local library where students took trips to learn about the importance of reading. It is also conveniently located next to a Cumberland Farms where parents can get gas before picking up their children from school or aftercare.

Miller Hill recently created a Student Council to voice the opinions of students. When asked about the new development, Mrs. Gatus said, "Mrs. Russell, who works with 4th and 5th graders, thought that Miller Hill would benefit from having a Student Council this year. She discussed the idea with the staff and Mr. Sibson, and everyone agreed that a Student Council was a great idea. Mrs. Russell, Mrs. Gatus,

and Mrs. McKenna are the Student Council advisors. Mr. Sibson is also very involved. He takes the time out of his busy days to come to the meetings to listen to members' concerns and ideas." While the Student Council is new this year, it is a great addition to the school, so keep up the good work!

Each year, teachers retire from schools or move on to another job in a different district, but one of the most important jobs is the principal. Mr. Sibson is the current principal at MHSL and has been the principal for 21 years. Principal Kyer retired recently but had worked at WSL since 2005. Mr. Gela took over as principal from Dr. Rhode, who according to the district website was appointed in April of 2020. No criticism is shown to those who decided to move on to the next chapter of their life, but it's clear that being the principal at Miller Hill is a pretty great job.

No matter what school you started at, we all ended up here at the high school, but the kids who went to MHSL will forever remember the ridiculous and amazing things that happened there, from the Zucchini Brothers giving a concert in the gym to riding sleds down the hill. But none of that would have happened if you went somewhere else.

Whether you went to Miller Hill, West Sand Lake or Poestenkill, the next time you see the school and think of the bad memories of getting in trouble, remember the good ones too.

PES

by Carly Antolick



As high school students, we tend to debate things pretty often. Whether we're trying to convince our teachers not to give us homework or telling our friends off for supporting the wrong sports team, debate is an important (and healthy!) part of high school life. It's also the reason I'm writing this article.

This whole "best elementary school" argument all started a month ago, when the lovely Rachael Strickland approached Paula DeAndres and me about having a friendly three-way debate. It then became my month-long mission to take the two of them down- in a friendly way, of course.

I graduated from Poestenkill Elementary School in 2016, and I can hands-down say that it was better than any other elementary school out there. It may be the smallest of the three Averill Park elementary schools,

but PES has always had incredible teachers who make learning fun for their students.

"The faculty and staff are dedicated, hard-working, and willing to go above and beyond on a daily basis," said Poestenkill principal Mr. Gela. "I enjoy being a part of this great group of professionals."

The Poestenkill staff have definitely made a lasting impact on their students. One teacher in particular, Dr. Brian Rhode, seems to have been a special favorite. Rhode taught fourth and fifth grade social studies before becoming the Algonquin Middle School assistant principal. "Poestenkill was the best school because we had Mr. Rhode," said junior Gwen Jamison. "He had a giraffe puppet named Edward, and I actually learned so much!"

Another favorite teacher of many students was Mrs. Katherine Eagan, who teaches fourth grade English. When asked about how her class and school prepares her students for life and future learning, Eagan replied, "They truly experience the challenges of being a student and learn to not be afraid of the unknown, but rather seek to understand through mistakes, successes and most importantly their efforts." Well said, Mrs. Eagan!

Other teachers that students named as their favorites were Mrs. Cherise Anadio (first grade),

(continued on page 11)

EDITORIAL PAGES

ONE LETTER MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

by Makenna Carter

What if I told you that one letter, only one letter could change your life forever? We all learn letters as soon as we can open our eyes when we are babies. You would never think a letter could make or break growing up. The letter "S" is just a random letter you add to words to make it plural. Kids growing up never realize what that letter can do to them. Ever realize when you type certain words without or with an "S" it says you spelled it wrong? Words like parent, or houses. When I type parent, without "S" it says I spelled it wrong. I didn't spell it wrong.

When talking about parents without the "S" I don't mean I only have one. I'm thankful for having two amazing parents. I was only seven years old when my mom started sleeping in the guest bedroom. Being so young I didn't know what that meant. I knew that when I was mad at my brothers I wouldn't want to share a room with them. But the guest bedroom turned into living with my grandparents. Of course I didn't know everything about life and relationships and marriage at the time but the only thing I knew was it was my fault. Along

with many other kids I thought that I was the reason why. What did I do wrong? How could I have been better?



Now sixteen years old, I know the answer. Nothing.

Parents assure you you did nothing wrong but no one believes them. My brothers being older than me and the oldest being seventeen, they knew what was happening. I was lost. None of my other friends had to switch houses, no one else had to go through this. In my eyes my parents were the only ones in the world who had broken up. But growing up with two separate parents, my mom and dad are the best. That's when the "S" leaves. When I talk

about my mom and dad they aren't a group anymore, they are each a parent, they are not labeled as "the parents".

I don't want to say they raised me together being my parents. But having my mom as my parent and my dad as my parent is the best thing in the world.

Don't get me wrong, I do love having divorced parents. But not so much when house become houses. I took the "S" off but what happens when you put on an "S"? I wish I could say I have two houses because I'm rich, but that's not the case. In my life I have lived in not one or two houses, but six different houses. Moving

around from place to place twice a week is really difficult as a junior in high school who doesn't have her license yet. Worried about what clothes are at what house and where my school bag and volleyball bag is. Losing everything, not knowing where anything is. It is very tough. I really wished I just had one house. Being asked, "are you at your mom's or dad's" and you give them a curve ball by saying, "neither I'm at this other house" is getting tiring. Having an amazing mom and dad and step parents and grandparents really make it work. I'm happy in my houses, with the "S".

Saying a letter can change your life sounds crazy. Just one single scribble in the alphabet flips it around. Take off an "S", add on an "S", who cares? It's how you overcome that letter. It's how you change when your life changes with you. Anything is possible and anything can happen, you just have to keep up. To the little girl who thought living in two houses was her fault, it isn't. It never was and still isn't. That stupid scribble that looks like a little snake changed my everything, but I'm so glad that it did.

STUDENT ATHLETES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

during their day to get some exercise. Some consider it a warm-up for their practice after school.

At APHS we offer strength and conditioning

training where students get a half block in the weight room. Student athletes can further improve their strength and agility during this time. Personally, I would miss having

gym class during the day because I enjoy lifting, and Phys Ed. class is a stress reliever I look forward to. It is a break from the rest of the day, which is more sedentary.

I believe APHS should allow student athletes to decide to participate in gym or not. This allows them to get the best option for them and their overall well being.

EDITORIAL PAGES

FREE PRESS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

ness.

Sullivan vs. *The New York Times* remains an important Supreme Court decision today. This past summer, the Supreme Court refused to hear a case brought up about the book, *Arms and the Dudes: How Three Stoners From Miami Beach Became the Most Unlikely Gunrunners in History*, the book that the film *War Dogs* was based on. The son of the former Albanian prime minister, Shkelzen Berisha, sued the book's author, Guy Lawson. Berisha claimed Lawson linked him to the Albanian Mafia, even though he had no part in the organization.

Citing the precedent set in Sullivan vs. *New York Times*, the courts dismissed the case. They said Berisha lacked the evidence of actual malice necessary for a public figure to prove libel.

Recently, Justices Clarence Thomas and Neil Gorsuch have stated that the Court should have taken Berisha's *War Dogs* case to reassess the original case's decision. The modern news media seems to be the reason for their thinking on the matter. Gorsuch wrote, "What started in 1964 with a decision to tolerate the occasional falsehood to ensure robust report-

ing by a comparative handful of print and broadcast outlets has evolved into an ironclad subsidy for the publication of falsehoods by means and on a scale previously unimaginable."



With the rise of social media, the justices feel that more false information is being spread than ever before, and thus something must be done to mitigate the rampant disinformation.

Thomas cited the rise of conspiracy theories as one major reason for his opinion. He discussed the 2016 shooting in DC that resulted from false reports of a pedophilia dungeon located in the

basement run by top democrats such as Hillary Clinton. Thomas thinks we should strip away our interpretation of the First Amendment to the bare minimum, stating, "Instead of continuing to insulate those who perpetrate lies from traditional remedies like libel suits, we should give them only the protection the First Amendment requires."

The current era of the internet and social media hasn't changed much for the reasoning behind the original case's decision, and being guaranteed greater freedom of press still creates more robust reporting. Mr. Antonopolous, a student teacher in Goodnow's classroom, said, "The Constitution never changes, but the judges do."

In reality, falsehoods have always been present in reporting, and for the most part they don't create huge problems. There is of course the occasional blow up, like the 2016 "pizzagate" shooting, but those happened in the past too. One of the more famous examples is from 1898: the USS Maine, a Navy ship, exploded and sank in Havana Harbor on February

15. The cause of the explosion was determined to be a submerged mine. The papers of the day expressed only the possibility that it was a Spanish mine, despite having no evidence whose mine it was. Only two months later, the US went to war with Spain. The journalism promoted helped convince the public that Spain blew up a US ship, and that got the public riled up and enthusiastic to go to war, heavily influencing Congress' decision to declare war.

Unfortunately, false reporting sometimes causes tragedies, but limiting free press certainly doesn't help make more reliable news.

The precedent set in 1964 still holds today, and for good reason; it wouldn't be good for public figures to have the ability to silence news outlets for small accidental inaccuracies. That would just make news unreliable, which is the opposite of the goal of changing that precedent. Tragic things sometimes happen, but the only things we can do about that are to not believe or spread false information ourselves.

POESTENKILL (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

Mrs. Patricia Breen (who has since retired), Mrs. Caroline Rudd (fourth grade), Mrs. Dorothy Ryan (fifth grade), and Mrs. Michelle Smead (third grade).

In addition to the quality education that PES students receive, they're

also forming strong friendships. I still have many fond memories of my friends at PES— as do many others! As junior Isla Multunas said, "I have many lifelong friends that I met there, and I will cherish the memories I made!"

In short, Poestenkill Elementary School is the best out of the three elementary schools within Averill Park Central School District because of the wonderful teachers and classmates that students have there.

Junior Grace

LaLiberte summed it up well: "I met so many of my friends that I am still very close with to this day," she said. "I always left the school with a smile on my face."

REVIEWS

STAYING IN SYNC

WORLD LANGUAGES COMPETITION SHOWCASES TALENTS

by Olivia Maddalone

After last year's annual lip sync competition was put on hold, the LOTE department was able to safely put on a show in the auditorium this year. The event took place on Monday, November 22 with all junior and senior level World Language classes participating in the competition.

Due to safety concerns, every student participating was only allowed to bring one person to watch. There were many parents there to support, and there was a lot of energy in the crowd.

This year's lip sync performance was unique compared to years past. Due to those COVID-19 precautions, students were required to keep their masks on the entire time on stage, with the exception of a 30 second mask removal for the students to showcase their lip syncing ability to the judges and the audience. While this was a challenge for this year's judges to evaluate their lip syncing abilities, the event

was still a success.

The World Language

teachers from the middle school comprised the judges

of the lip sync competition.

At the end of the night, the middle school World Language teachers announced the winners of the 5 awards. Spanish 4, block 5, "Animal" by Alvaro Soler won the honorable mention award. French 4, "Cosmo" by Soprano won best costumes. Spanish 5, "Vivir Mi Vida" by Marc Anthony won best lip sync. French 5, "Petit `a petit" by Arcadian won best choreography. Spanish 4, block 1, "Sofia" by Alvaro Soler won best overall performance.

The audience was pleased to see their classmates stepping out on stage and getting out of their comfort zones. At the end of the show, the language teachers also surprised the audience with a filmed performance which left the crowd impressed and ecstatic.

Although this year's lip sync competition was a little different, the crowd and performers had a great time.



REVIEWS

10:01 - THE PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR STUDENT BAND TEAMS UP FOR A SUCCESSFUL CLASS FUNDRAISER

by Julie Hale

It was a dark and cold night. The lights were set and the crowd grew anxious as they waited for the show to begin. People had been talking about this show from the very beginning of school, since it was the first time the band 10:01 would be playing at our high school. That definitely got everyone excited to buy tickets.

On cue, the show began promptly at 7:00 pm, raging on until 8:30, which gave their fans plenty of music to enjoy. They performed many oldies' covers, as well as performing an original piece.

Have you ever been curious to know what kind of music 10:01 has played? "We are a rock and roll band." Band member Zach Ryan summed up nicely. "More specifically, we cover classic rock songs. Artists like Led Zepelin, The Rolling Stones, and The Allman Brothers Band."

As the concert went on, many people's fingers began to freeze, so they quickly flocked to the snack-

table for some cocoa, as well as some popcorn for a snack. The snack table was an added plus to the night and a bonus income to the junior class's fundraiser.



were the tickets a major selling point, but that warm hot cocoa probably helped raise the total



come together when necessary to raise the money needed to celebrate that wonderful night at the end of the year. However, it wouldn't have been possible without all those who showed up at the show and bought tickets, so on behalf of the junior class, thank you!

The idea for the event was originally brought up during a Stu-



dent Leadership meeting, as members were discussing fundraiser ideas for the junior prom. This was suggested, accepted gladly, and things were quickly set into motion. Juniors in student leadership positions had a major role in getting the event up and running, and it probably wouldn't have gone as smoothly as it did without advisor Mrs. Yost being the driving force behind it all.

While there were many volunteers working ticket sales, we can't forget about the band members themselves serving as a spotlight to the whole event. The junior class sends a big thank you to the band 10:01 for coming out and performing to help support the fundraiser. It was an amazing night to experience.

The ticket sales only started the week before the show, but still managed to raise much needed funds for the junior class prom. Not only

a bit. All in all, the total amount raised was over \$2,500 for this student-run event.

The night showed that clearly the junior class can

REVIEWS

WHEN YOU NEED TO FIND A PLACE TO SIT... A DETAILED LOOK INTO APHS CHAIR OFFERINGS

by Bella Bernstein and Ava Ferriero

Have you ever been sitting so long that your gluteus maximus becomes numb? The school has been gatekeeping chairs in the top lounges of the library, and we guarantee they will make your rear end feel as if you are floating on a cloud.

We interviewed Averill Park students and asked them their opinions on Averill Park High School's current chairs. The first person we talked to was 5'10" (all participants' names have been withheld, due to the "delicate" matter at hand), as we wanted to get her perspective on if it's hard to focus in class when sitting in such a small chair. We started the interview off with a simple question, "How do you feel about the current chair you are sitting in? Does it hurt your back or butt?" She replied, "The chair hurts my butt. It's too hard. I have to slump down to get comfortable which affects my back, leading it to be aching all day."

We ended the interview asking her, "What are your ideal chairs in a classroom setting?" She stated, "Something comfortable, not just plastic. Rolley (rolling) would be preferred, anything that's not plastic and hard." We strongly believe Chair #3 (see chart on opposing page) would be a great option for taller students.

Next, we interviewed a 5'6" student. When asked the same question, he replied, "It's a fine chair, it's not an exceptional chair, but I don't find myself aching from it." He continued, "My pre-



ferred chair would be a softer material, and having wheels would be a bonus point."

We also interviewed a 5'2" student. They said, "I get back pain from the chairs in school. Also, neck issues." They went on, "My ideal chair would be none, I like standing desks."

Along with this, a 6'1" student said, "The chairs are uncomfortable, but my ideal chair would be a bean bag chair. I would be more comfortable and able to focus."

There are many types



of chairs at Averill Park that we critiqued. After intensely trying out each chair and listing the pros and cons for each, we think that Chair #1 is the best option. It is on wheels, has a comfortable seat, a desk, and doesn't hurt your back when sitting in it. Unlike the chairs currently in our classrooms, the

new chairs in the library allow us to roll quickly into groups if necessary, rather than taking at least 5 minutes to form into groups by moving all the desks and chairs.

Excluding all the other chairs, Chair #1 made us the most comfortable, as we were able to slightly lean back on the soft chair, not causing back, butt, or neck pain. Additionally, the small desk on Chair #1 makes it efficient and helps you stay on task. It's easy to get notes down, all while staying in comfort. The other chairs were exceptional as well, but Chair #1 is the one you want in your classrooms.

To conclude, the new chairs are the best way to go. Our old chairs are hard and too small for students of various heights. This causes trouble learning and focusing, as their backs and necks are aching. Not only will the improved chairs make learning easier and more comfortable, it will also make it faster. Every student we talked to, no matter the height, made an obvious point that they wanted a more comfortable chair to help them focus better. If we want the children we love to learn, we need to make the environment they are learning in more comfortable. We need to take a risk in the classrooms and bring in new chairs.

REVIEWS

| Chair | #1 | #2 | #3 | #4 |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Picture |  |  |  |  |
| Pros | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Very comfortable -Is on wheels, so efficient for group work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Movable desk -Good back support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Wider seat -Taller (better for taller students) | IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE |
| Cons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Easy to fall asleep in -Desk could whack into students -Could be used violently | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Small chair -Cluttered -Could feel claustrophobic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Uncomfortable -No back support -Not movable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Not on wheels -Hard seat -Boring -Back pain is mandatory |
| Votes (asked 12 random students what they would prefer) | 11 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

REVIEWS

SHE KILLS MONSTERS CONNECTS

by Izzy Kieley

The fall production for Off Broadway Players this year was *She Kills Monsters* by Qui Nguyen. The play was about two sisters that usually didn't get along and didn't have much in common. One day, the oldest sister, Agnes, wishes for her life to be "less boring," which is promptly followed by a tragic car crash that kills the rest of her family.

After hearing this devastating news, she realizes how little she knew about her own sister, Tilly, and finds that she really wants to feel more connected to her and learn how she lived. When she takes her sister's old book to a Dungeons & Dragons Dungeon Master named Chuck, he explains to her that Tilly created a particular part of the game.

Agnes, Chuck, and their party set out to learn more about Tilly and end up fighting monsters and breaking down barriers to truly understand who she was.

The main roles in this play were Chuck Biggs, played by senior Wolfgang Balga, Tilly Evans played by junior Kadi Palmer, Agnes Evans played by senior Ashley Bayer, and the student director, senior Alex Bipat.

This production had a great cast who had many different opinions on the play. Bipat had some interesting thoughts on the piece and what it was like being the student director for the first time. Bipat said that being director of the show was difficult for him because he need-

ed to be an authoritative figure while also being fun and having good relationships with the people in the play. He also discussed how his favor-

put together as a team."

Bayer, who played one of the lead roles, also had her own thoughts about the performance. Throughout the show there were a lot of fight scenes and choreography. Bayer said that this was one of her favorite roles,

(freshman Payton Santacroce) had a very vocal death that really added to the play and made it feel more real. The hardest part of the show, Bayer said, was getting to the point where she was off-book and couldn't read from the script anymore, simply because of the amount of lines she had. In some of her scenes, she and Palmer had very similar lines so it was difficult to remember whose lines were whose at some points.

Bayer felt like she really related to her character in the sense that Agnes had always been stuck in her hometown and it was very difficult for both of them to step outside their comfort zone. Bayer's important message to everyone is to join OBP!

Finally, I spoke to Palmer, who played Tilly in the show. Palmer's favorite part of the show was getting to work with and bounce off of other people. One of the harder parts for her was having to play an angry and tough character when that's not her personality in real life. She really had to dig deep to be able to play that role. But besides that, she felt that she and her character had some similarities, like the fact that they both are their own person and don't change for others.

Palmer felt that she and her cast mates had good chemistry and were really able to bounce ideas off one another to connect in a positive way. That not only made the show look better, but it made it more fun.

Overall, the fall production was a huge success. Good job OBP!

ite part of being the director was how he got to meet and bond with so many new people, as well as spread his knowledge of acting to help people grow and become better actors.

Lastly, he said his favorite part of the show was the balance of humor and serious messages. "Through directing the show, it really grew on me." He also told me that, "no matter what, it will always be the show that we

even though it could be the most stressful at times. The actors had to remember very strict instructions or people could really get hurt. It may also look unnatural.

Bayer expressed how her favorite part of the show was one of the fight scenes where the actor who played the character Lillith



HUMOR

CANADA - WELCOME TO STATEHOOD!

by Cooper Smith

Many territories and breakaways have been proposed for the title of the 51st state of America, but statehood has thus far proved elusive. In this article, I will show you 10 reasons why the nation of Canada should hold this title.

Reason #10: To Troll Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico has been seeking statehood for a while now. According to a 2020 referendum, over 52% of Puerto Ricans wished for the American territory in the Caribbean to achieve statehood. So wouldn't it be really funny to see their reaction when a foreign country achieves statehood before they do? I think so.

Reason #9: It's Small Enough To Be One

While Canada is massive geographically speaking, the country's population is surprisingly small. Canada is home to only 38 million people, which would not even make it the most populated U.S. state (California will still retain that title, albeit perhaps not for long). Therefore, administratively, the governing of Canada as a single state would be feasible.

Reason #8: Canada & The US Are Very Culturally Similar

Canada and America have their differences, but the two countries are very similar culturally. Any-

body who's travelled there can attest to this. We share similar ideals, cuisines, languages (if you exclude Québec), pastimes, and climates. Even if Canada still seems very culturally different to you, let me remind you that we've admitted very culturally different states in the past (like Hawaii).



Reason #7: We Gain A Lot Of Territory

Canada is over 3.8 million square miles in size. That's over 1.86 billion football fields! Since the U.S. as it stands is slightly smaller than Canada, we can expect our land area to double and for us to become the world's largest country if we admit our neighbors to the north as the 51st state.

Reason #6: We Gain Positive Stereotypes

In the international community, Canada is a land of many stereotypes. But we must not forget the most important of them all: that Canadians are nice people. If Can-

ada were to become a state of America, we Americans would likely earn this positive characteristic as well.

Reason #5: It Probably Wouldn't Be Too Hard

For a long time, Canada and the U.S. have been close allies. We've fought on the same side in several wars and practically grew up as nations together. Thus, I believe that it wouldn't be difficult to persuade Canada to become a U.S. state. This is as long as we ask politely, because we all know that's the Canadian way.

Reason #4: It Would Be Easier To Do This

Again

If this plan succeeds and Canada joins the U.S., then something special happens: a precedent is formed. Then if we were to try to convince another country (like Mexico, for example) to become a state, it would probably happen even easier than it did with Canada. Who knows, Canada might be the first step to the formation of an American empire.

Reason #3: Improved Quality Of Life

Canada outranks the U.S. in many quality of life statistics, such as life expectancy. Canadians, on average, live 3 years longer than

an average American. Clearly, we can learn a thing or two from them. This learning process would be even more seamless and efficient if Canada were a state of the U.S.

Reason #2: Oil

Canada is the 4th largest oil producing country in the world, producing about 4.2 million barrels of oil a day. That's nearly the size of 270 Olympic swimming pools filled with oil! Such a sought-after resource would highly benefit the U.S. and its economy, but perhaps not as much as reason number 1.

Reason #1: Maple Syrup

Sure, we all love maple syrup for our waffles, pancakes, and French toast, but the benefits of maple syrup go deeper than that. Maple syrup is over 10 times more valuable than crude oil, making it a surprisingly valuable commodity. In addition, Canada produces 77% of the world's supply of maple syrup, with almost all of the rest coming from America. Thus, Canada's statehood would mean a monopoly on a very valuable product for the U.S.

In conclusion, Canada has much to offer the United States. It's a land not only vast, nor only of good people, but also of bountiful natural resources. If admitted to the Union, the U.S. would be driven into an age of unimaginable prosperity and opportunity. And if you still think that there should only be 50 states, we can just kick Florida out. It would be for the greater good.

MUST-HAVE GIFTS FOR THIS HOLIDAY

IT'S A SEASON FOR GIVING...AND RECEIVING!

by Katie Doran

After a crazy few years, the holidays are almost back to normal. While COVID-19 is still a risk, this holiday season will be a great time to see family and friends again— of course, after the proper safety precautions are taken.

With that said, more people coming to town means the potential for more gifts. So answer the question of what you want for these holidays with these gift ideas!

For the girls, fuzzy socks go a long way. Trust me ladies, the soft and versatile crew socks from American Eagle will save your feet when the snow falls and you need a warm sock that can still fit



into your boots or your sneakers (while looking cute at the same time)! They come in multiple different colors and patterns, so you can choose your favorites!

For the guys, you can't go wrong with sports gear. What's the best way to support your favorite team? By wearing outfits that make it clear who you



support. Fanatics has team certified gear online.

If sports aren't your thing, then I'd recommend going for simple t-shirts from Nike or Adidas. These shirts



are durable and can be worn to school and

while working out.

Onto the fun stuff— looking for a new phone? Well, the iPhone 13 is a great option, with Apple's



new colors and gadgets that you can purchase alongside the phone. However, those items do add up in price fairly quickly.

Looking for something on the less expensive side? Target offers great Apple product alternatives.

For the stocking stuffers, you can't go wrong with getting a variety of candy. Chocolate is always a great gift, but of course there's always other options

for those people on your list who prefer something a little different. And then— of course— a toothbrush to help after all that sugar.

I hope this has helped your shopping for even the pickiest on your list! Happy shopping and happy holidays!

TIME TO RECALL YOUR WINTER MEMORIES

EVERYONE HAS THEIR FAVORITE

by Veronica Cardillo

Maybe you're looking at twinkling stars in the night sky awaiting the first snowfall of the season. Maybe you're walking outside when the snow is falling, or drinking hot cocoa, or dreaming for a snow day while it's snowing hard, or dozens of other things that could create your favorite winter memory. But the key word here is *your*. It's your favorite memory, and we all have our own unique and special memories for different reasons. Here are a few favorite winter memories from APHS students.



Freshman Keirsten Bonner has a favorite memory of playing with her puppy and

building snow tunnels in the backyard. So many memories can be made with snow, but whatever the memory, it doesn't have to include snow to be special!

For freshman Sophia Bushey, her birthday is a

favorite winter memory. "I like it because my whole family gets together and celebrates, which we haven't gotten to do for a while because of COVID," she said.

Memories are a great way to connect moments in the past and wish for more in the days, weeks, and months ahead — and birthdays do just that every year! This can be something magical. Sometimes the details that make lasting memories come from unexpected events— like when Sophia once celebrated her birthday with a cousin, when their birthdays are actually on different days!

"My favorite winter memory is when my neighbors and friends would go sledding

on a snow day," shared freshman Corey Basle. "We would go down the hill like a train, make jumps, and build snowmen... then hang out until dinner." Sometimes parents even get a snow day, and Corey remembered fun days when his mom stayed home, too!

Then I asked my sister, APHS senior Isabella Cardillo, what her favorite winter memory was, she said, "My favorite winter memory comes from when I used to do ballet. Around December, my ballet studio would put on a production of the Nutcracker. We'd sometimes have a dress rehearsal late at night and go

(continued on page 22)

A VARIETY OF HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES STAFF AND STUDENTS SHARE THEIR PLANS

by Zareena Ansari

Holiday cheer is the face of the holiday season. There are new drinks at Starbucks, the classic "Sprite Cranberry" commercial, and of course, Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas is You." This year, Averill Park's students and teachers are all about the "buzz," especially because of COVID's impact on last year's Christmas.

Regarding teachers, many were willing to share their holiday plans. Mrs. Oldendorf in room 629 plans to have the best of both worlds, celebrating both Hanukkah and Christmas. "Since Hanukkah is very early this year, it will have already passed by the time break hits, but we usually do a little Hanukkah party with friends," she

said. To celebrate Hanukkah, mouthwatering foods like latkes paired with applesauce

When Christmas rolls around, it's clear that nobody does Christmas like the Oldendorfs. With the pur-

est board, their holiday spirit flows flawlessly. During the holidays her vegetarian parents even eat meat! (a delicious tenderloin, might I add). With music, Oldendorf and her dad sing holiday songs with a guitar and a piano, harmonizing on songs like "Let it Snow" and "Jingle Bells."

Regarding holiday movies, a family favorite seems to be *Home Alone* and a few versions of *A Christmas Carol*. Despite all the merry madness, Oldendorf is looking forward most to spending time with her kids, who are eighteen months and five years old.

Mr. Brooks will be home for the holidays. His idea of the perfect Christmas is spreading as many smiles across his family's faces as possible. "My parents and in-laws will visit during break. This will give my three kids opportunities to open gifts...It also brings smiles to my parents and in-laws' faces to see all of the kids' smiles!" Visiting his grandmother "Gigi" always brings joy and delight to Brooks and his family. "Traditionally, we go to my parents, my in-laws, or Gigi's, but under the circumstances we will stick to smaller gatherings over the course of the break."

Over the break, the Brooks family looks forward to sledding outdoors, playing with toys, watching Jim Carey's *Grinch*, and singing "Heat Miser vs Snow Miser" from the Christmas classic *A Year Without Santa*.

Averill Park's students are also planning to make the most out of this year's break. Expecting hugs warmer than her grandma's best stuffing, sophomore Mikayla Malenfant seems to have her routine down. "Yes I am expecting guests; I'm going to be able to



or sour cream, and sufganiyote (jelly-filled donuts) are shared.

chase of at least two or three Christmas trees, and a house resembling the perfect Pinter-

THE ELF ON THE SHELF: A CREATIVE STORY

by Sydney Davey



Hi, my name is Twinkle! I was named Twinkle because I am like a twinkle in the sky at night- that's what Santa says, anyway.

My friends at Santa's workshop make toys for Christmas. I guess you could call them Santa's little helpers! I have the privilege, though, of being a Scout Elf. I get to fly to homes all around the world! But I can only fly late at night, because I can't risk anyone seeing me. If someone saw me flying, I wouldn't be able to be a Scout Elf anymore! I would have to travel back to the North Pole and work at Santa's workshop- which, don't get me wrong, would still be fun, but then I wouldn't be able to see Grace.

I have the pleasure of being able to travel to her house every day from Thanksgiving all the way to Christmas. Grace is always so happy to see me- and she spoils me rotten! Last year, Grace got me a cute little skirt, which is very fashionable! I wear it every time I'm at her house. The skirt is white, with a black belt around it and a little red gem on the side.

If Grace touches me by accident, I need to get cinnamon put on me right away or I'll lose all of my powers and then Santa would have to send a new elf! Grace

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(continued on page 21)

WEST SAND LAKE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

raise chicks in his classroom or set up trail cams in the woods behind the school. He made all of us cry at 5th grade graduation with his heartfelt video that showed us all throughout the years. Bella Bernstein recognized the video as her favorite, saying, "The best part was probably the video that Mr. LD made for 5th grade graduation. I just thought it was so cool."

There seemed to be a general consensus that Mr. LD and the teachers at WSL brought everyone together. "The teachers (especially Mr. LD) made it so every class collided with the other, forming a family-like environment," said another WSL student, Ava Ferriero. "We had rocket day, hot air balloons, our Boston field trip, and more exciting things as one big class rather than individual classes."

Mr. LD is so passionate about science and teaching, that it really left an impact on his students. You can see that even today in the students I inter-



viewed as most of them mentioned that Mr. LD made their WSL adventure even better.

Apart from all the other joys and memories made at West Sand Lake, the teachers and the influence they had on their students was a major factor in making WSL go above and beyond. Even events that didn't involve Mr. LD were a success.

Every year there was a flag day march around the school with music and red white and blue everywhere. Many students mentioned this was their favorite event. There were also peace groups which would meet once a month to discuss the theme of the month. Brady Battista mentioned, "I like when we had the big assemblies with the whole school and each grade had a color. I also enjoyed peace groups." These school events boosted morale and taught valuable lessons about being kind that most students still carry with them today. In addition, the grade level colors unified the school and made us all – to quote

a song Mr. Riccomini showed us – "a family under one sky."

The playground at West Sand Lake topped all playgrounds. We had two. The younger kids were allowed on the smaller playground. It had your typical monkey bars, which were full everyday with competitive kids trying to get all the way through. The fire pole was another hit, and it was so popular you had to wait in line to go down it. On the blacktop adjacent, there was four-square and hopscotch that kids ran to get in line for. On the older kid playground, there were daily kickball games that anyone could participate in. The "spiny thing" was a popular piece of equipment that you could ride, and the "spinners" who spun everyone around were very well-liked.

The tunnels in the back listened in on all the drama and secrets of our elementary school years. Those tunnels heard everything. They sheltered us during cold winter days at recess and cooled us down during the hot June days when school was almost out. There were also plenty of slides and the classic swing set.

Something unique to WSL was the tree top jungle gym in the middle of the playground. Kay Tichy enjoyed it most about WSL. "My favorite thing was the playground because it was very unique and I made so many amazing memories there," she said.

The school events were planned by the helpful parents and were on another level. During Halloween, there was the iconic Monster Mash complete with a haunted house walkthrough and everything! In January, there was the Snowball Bash, another fun event. The best of all, though, was the WSL Carnival.

The whole school was filled with carnival games and prizes.

On a completely different note, the school is a dynamic place, constantly changing after each class of students moves on to middle school. However, there is one thing overall that has stayed the same throughout the years, no matter how many new desks were added or how many walls were repainted. The comforting sense of community that exists at that school and is still present in its students today sets West Sand Lake apart from any other school. The togetherness of everyone at the school meant everyone made good friends with everyone else and there was no bullying or disrespect. There were even "buddy benches" created to help people find friends at recess. Even now, most of the WSL group are still friends. Ferriero pointed it out, saying, "My favorite thing about West Sand Lake had to be the fact that we were all friends with each other...everyone knew everyone at West Sand Lake and shared similar heartwarming memories that other schools didn't experience. I miss our West Sand Lake family." She wasn't the only one who noticed the family-like dynamic that WSL alumni seem to have. Bernstein added, "I think we're superior because honestly if you look at it, all the friends have kind of stayed together. Everyone has stayed in a group. And everyone still kind of helps each other. We're all still in classes together." Caroline Nero agreed, mentioning that, "I feel like all of us have more of a bond with one another. We're friends with almost all the WSL kids and I don't know if that's the same with the other schools or not."

We all had our ups and downs during our elementary school years, but being at West Sand Lake made it all the more happy. The memories and fun we had there truly made it the best school a kindergarten could ask for.

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

**Go to the high
school webpage
on the APHS District
website and
click on the
"News" link to see
this and past issues
of The
Chronicle.**

-In Color-

CHRISTMAS PLANS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19)

see my sister and her girlfriend who is like another sister to me," she said.

The Malenfant household is the go-to place where everyone in the family gets together. Due to COVID-19 last year, many loved ones couldn't come, which only adds to the excitement of seeing them this year. "It's funny how we don't talk all year and then click like we were kids again" said Malenfant. Traditions in her house include eating all of Grandma's food (her stuffing is the best) and then going into a long food coma.

Malenfant's favorite thing about Christmas is the holiday cheer. "I love the warm and colorful lights and how happy everything feels," she said. Blasting Mariah Carey's "All I Want For Christmas is You" is the only way to kick off the holiday mood for Malenfant, considering she's already

listening to Christmas music. She loves everything cliché



about the holidays. Whether it is Hallmark movies, gingerbread houses, going ice skating, or taking cute pictures in the snow, she is sure this year's Christmas will be one of her favorites.

Sophomore Ava Ferriero, one of the most outgoing students here at APHS, tends to have a very eventful Christmas break. "Normally, the day before Christmas we go up to my

grandparent's house in Massachusetts with my cousins, ex-

change gifts and eat dinner there." The next day, Ferriero and her family usually open presents in the morning before heading to her other grandparent's house in Rensselaer, along with her other cousins. "My grandpa has this red sack he puts all the children's presents in," she said. A fun family tradition is to receive gifts one by one from the big man himself, which is a unanimous favorite.

Having a grandparent who is also a chef tends to come in really handy around the holidays, considering whatever he cooks is amazing. Ferriero's idea of the perfect Christmas break is spending quality time with loved ones and playing Mariah Carey's "All I Want For Christmas is You."

This year's holiday break will definitely be one to remember here in Averill Park. While it is shorter than the past, neither students nor staff are letting that get in their way from having the perfect holiday break. Jam-packed with Hanukkah, Christmas, and New Years, this year's festivities will make the best memories, guaranteed. Having the ideal holiday blend of excitement and Mariah Carey, students and teachers are ready to spend their breaks with loved ones and spread holiday joy.

ELF ON A SHELF (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19)

is very good about that though. If she touches me at any point throughout the day, she puts cinnamon on me right away. Then I can travel back to the North Pole to tell the jolly old man— Santa himself— if she was good or not. After that, I travel back to Grace's house and find a new place to hide. By morning, Grace is searching everywhere to find me, and that makes us both smile!

I'm on Christmas break from Thanksgiving all the way till after January 1 to help where I'm needed. Yes, I have over a month break from school— but I fill my days off with working. My school is called "Star of the North," and we learn



how to do everything Santa will need us to do when we graduate after 12th grade!

I'm in 10th grade now, so I get to start to venture out. Last year I learned how to make toys, take care of the reindeer, how to make

cookies (which is maybe the best job), how to make candy, how to prepare Santa's sleigh, and how to assist Santa with other tasks. In the coming years, we'll learn to multi-task. Then we'll graduate from school and start work. My favorite parts of my job are drinking hot cocoa every day and seeing the smiles we put on

kids' faces.

Grace is a really good kid when I am there, and I always report to Santa about her good behavior. Good behavior leads to the best presents— that's what Grace says, anyway! When Santa comes

and delivers the presents at Grace's house, I go back to the North Pole with him and get ready for the next year. We repeat this every year.

Yes, I know that when she gets older I won't be needed anymore, because she won't believe in magic. Once she has kids though, I will be their elf— and once those kids have children of their own, I will be the elf for them. I don't age, so that makes my job pretty easy.

My friends at the North Pole will be so happy to learn that I've taught you about our lives. One last thing to remember— it is always the Christmas season. By the time you'll read this, Grace, I will be at your house until Christmas. I cannot wait!!

A GREAT ADDITION TO APHS SPED

NEW TEACHER APPRECIATES WORKING WITH STUDENTS

by Mara Little

With hundreds of students to keep track of and even more assignments to grade, teachers have had a really difficult time managing their course loads this year. Thankfully, administrators at Averill Park High School saw this coming and hired additional educators to help our current teachers out. Carly Desiderio, a ninth-grade Special Ed teacher is one of these new hires.

Ms. Desiderio was hired in the spring of 2021 and currently works as a teacher consultant in two English classes, both of which are taught by Mrs. Gaboury, and also one Algebra class, taught by Ms. Glunk. Desiderio has expressed her genuine appreciation for both women and states that she has loved getting to work with them. However, while her fellow educators are lovely, Desiderio says that her favorite part of her job is "interacting with the students every day. Each day they all show up ready to work and mostly with smiles on their faces. They make me laugh and never cease to surprise me with what they are capable of doing."

Desiderio added in her interview that her job is "never dull and every day is

a new day. The students really drive my instruction so you have to be ready to pivot to meet the students where they currently are and what they need on any given day! They always keep it interesting and we're always laughing in my classroom."



Desiderio's love for her students has made her a great fit for the APHS community. In fact, Desiderio sensed that she would blend well into our school district as early as the interview process. "I chose to join the APHS community

because I really enjoyed meeting with and talking to the people who interviewed me," she said. "We shared similar values, priorities, and ideas when it comes to education. Since then, every other teacher has been so nice, welcoming, and helpful."

Previous to working at Averill Park, Desiderio was an educator at Wellesley High School in Wellesley MA, located just outside of Boston for the previous ten years.

Since being at Averill Park, Desiderio has noticed some distinct differences between our school district and her previous one. These differences primarily fall under "the size of the school and the demographic." She continued, saying that her "previous school was much

larger and to be honest, a lot more diverse ethnically, racially, and culturally. This could be because it was very close to a major city." This being said, she stated that she "loves that APHS feels a little smaller, because it's

easy to get to know everyone." She also loves "the sense of community that APHS has!"

While it's been a while, Desiderio is familiar with Upstate New York camaraderie. Desiderio actually grew up in Niskayuna, and is a graduate of Niskayuna High School. Following her high school career, Desiderio attended Sacred Heart University to obtain her undergraduate degree. She then attended Union College to receive her graduate degree. She said that she did not originally intend on going to school to be a special educator. She was a history major and got her graduate degree in historical education at the secondary level. "I was a middle school/high school history teacher for years before working as a special educator," she added. "Now it's all I could ever imagine doing."

Desiderio seems to have a genuine passion for her career and cares for the students and staff of Averill Park High School greatly. She would like the student body to know how thankful she is that everyone has been so welcoming and willing to help her out. From all of us here at APHS, we welcome Desiderio (officially) to Averill Park High School and wish her the best of luck.

WINTER MEMORIES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18)

through the entire performance – we got to see all of the set; we got to see all the costumes! Sometimes we got to sneak and watch bits of the performance. If the rehearsal was in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, you might have to drive home in the snow. And you'd have that

feeling that it's going to be a snow day the next day. Those nights and all those different emotions I experienced in just a couple of hours made for the most whirlwind, magical experience." Well said, Isabella!

A lifetime is made of memories. They are the

winters, springs, summers, and autumns of our lives. Simple things can be special. You don't always need to get a photo to preserve the moment. And you don't have to be thinking about creating a great memory. All you have to do is be in the moment – really be in the

moment. Enjoy what's happening around you and let yourself be free and happy.

This winter, try to create many meaningful experiences. And in the years to come, they may be among some of your most memorable!

GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

STAFF MEMBER TACKLES TWO JOBS AT ONCE

Note - This article was written as a collaborative effort during a 30 minute Journalism Club meeting on November 3.

by Emma Hanlon

If you've ever had the pleasure of meeting Kyle Radley, you would know that he possesses the skill to do a variety of things – including the ability to make a group of exhausted high school journalists burst into laughter. Radley is a vital member of APHS's custodial staff, a humble, smiling face to greet students around our school community.

"14 years later here I am," commented Radley. He graduated from Averill Park in 2007, then returned years later to join the district custodial staff. Radley began working for Averill Park in June of 2020, where he quickly picked up the skills necessary for the job.

Journalists were notably curious on what the student body can do to make his job easier. Radley noted that if students clean up even the smallest of their messes, it would make his experience more tolerable. "If you go to throw something out and miss and just leave it there" he shared, "they'll call me to come down and pick it up." So, the next time you think about leaving your trash at the lunch table, decide to take the extra five steps to throw it away.

Radley particularly enjoys the environment of his job with his coworkers. They collectively laugh about hearing "Yeah, go ahead" on their radios, a phrase so commonly used it becomes hilarious. They also share hobbies like playing video games; as Radley said, "I used to rock the Nintendo 64." Of course, he eventually moved onto

more modern games with his friends.

Contributing to his enjoyable character, he has two dogs who he named after his favorite hockey franchise (The Boston Bruins) and the coveted Stanley Cup. Stanley,

School. After his shift from 6 am to 2 pm at the high school, he often prepares to work an additional 4-6 hours each day to help out at Doby's while the owner recovers from medical treatment.



a dog who possesses twice the energy of a normal dog, is a Jack Russell and terrier mix. His second dog, Bruin, is a Catahoula Leopard who can run insanely fast.

As said by assistant principal Mrs. Mein, Radley is truly a jack of all trades. Before returning to APHS, he worked at Doby's, a local family-owned business that serves a variety of family-friendly foods. Radley first joined Doby's for their unique family environment, rather than that of the fast-paced commercial restaurant industry. He still works there today, fulfilling his passion for cooking while simultaneously working at Averill Park High

ask yourself the question, "How could anyone possibly eat that?"

Regardless of Radley's passion for cooking, he shared that baking is a completely different ballgame. "Baking requires patience," he said. "I have that, but not for baking!"

In the future, Radley hopes to buy Doby's from its current owner, who ultimately wishes for someone like Radley to carry on the business. Unfortunately, Radley shared that his boss is battling an aggressive illness and it is unlikely that his daughters will run the restaurant. Radley has gained approval to buy Doby's when it is time, but at the moment the exact timeline has not been determined.

From the excitement in Radley's voice when speaking about his jobs, it is evident that he is thankful for the opportunity he has to work at both places. He mentioned the importance of happiness in your life, and shared, "Whatever you do in life, do what you love. If you work, and it's something you have passion for, it won't feel like work."

GET INVOLVED

Join the Averill Park Journalism Club!

The Averill Park Chronicle is looking for writers, editors and photographers. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at 2:20 pm in room 209.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT IN PLACE

SEL WORKS FOR EVERYONE'S WELL BEING

by Chava Thiell

Averill Park created several new positions this fall as part of the district's efforts to focus on the social and emotional needs of students. This included hiring Ms. Elizabeth Young as a School Counselor for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and changing Mrs. Tracy Hacker's title to School Psychologist for SEL. Hacker (pictured) and Young recently spoke about themselves, their new titles and their important duties.

Young began at APCSD in September, but previously worked in Berlin Central School District, Hudson City Schools, and at The Hawthorne Valley School. She attended Skidmore College and Tufts University for her Masters. Majoring in dance, she shifted her focus professionally when teaching at a bilingual preschool in Boston's Chinatown, where she developed relationships with families. Young added that it "changed my life," and jokingly mentioned that this experience was also how she knew teaching was not for her.

Young is also an equestrian, showing Morgan horses at the national level. She began her horse show career at age 13, adding that it is "where I'm happiest."

Hacker notes how special their relationship is, not only because of their collaboration at Averill Park, but because they previously worked together. Hacker has a devotion to the district, beginning in 1999, having held many positions including high school psychologist and chairperson to the Committee on Special Education for every building. She attended school at Emmanuel College, the University at Albany, and the College of Saint Rose. Her children attended Averill Park

and one of her favorite pastimes is cheering on her son in basketball at the Wentworth Institute of Technology.

In her spare time, she watches professional basketball, endorsing the



Celtics and Warriors as her respective teams.

Young and Hacker describe their jobs as a way to implement skills and provide appropriate resources to teachers on addressing the needs of students. Hacker compares her role to a Google search, as there is much information and millions of resources readily available; her job is to sift through and provide quality information to educators. At the end of the day, what they want is to provide, "a really organized closet full of resources."

Hacker and Young "work as a team," and one of their shared focuses is coordinating a district-wide "Warrior Wellness Day." Students in grades 7-12 experienced this event last year, but both are taking on larger

roles organizing for grades K-12. They noted the return to in-person learning will "present different challenges," but expect a positive response similar to last year's event.

For this year's Wellness Day, they plan to meet with the high school's student government to coordinate other SEL-focused activities. Their message is clear: "We really want student input."

What they want most is to engage with students, particularly those at the high school. Hacker says they "want to know everything," including what students find helpful or lacking, and what adults should know. They

activities, and mention they are working on a website with resources for students.

Both explain that a large part of their job is finding a developmentally appropriate way to get students engaged. They emphasize that SEL often goes unnoticed, and it's highly effective in creating a supportive learning environment. Young spoke about the effect of the pandemic on teenagers and how it has altered the district's approach to SEL. Noting she cannot attest to the district's priorities prior to her hiring, she knew the district, "was committed to providing this education, wants to support students more."

Young, who has a private practice, notes how the pandemic has resulted in the rise of anxiety disorder diagnoses, especially in teens. She notes that earlier in the pandemic, while some had issues with isolation and anxiety, those with stronger SEL skills were supported, and that providing education will only improve these responses.

Young says teaching SEL will support this, as "the stronger we are before something like a pandemic happens, the better the response will be."



emphasize that student engagement will help them provide teachers with quality resources; there are numerous ways to get involved through clubs and

FUNDRAISING FOR A GOOD CAUSE

STUDENT WORKS TO PROMOTE DIABETES AWARENESS

by Faith Rescott

On March 1, 2018, I was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes. Throughout the past few years, my support system from friends and family has been incredible. Several years ago, I decided to help give back some of that support.

Around March of every year there is a walk held by the Juvenile Diabetes Research Fund (JDRF). Before the walk, everyone raises money towards the research. Throughout the past three years, we have sold t-shirts, sweatshirts and long sleeved shirts as a fundraiser, raising roughly \$3,000 for the cause.

Prizes are awarded, and the more money you raise, the higher the level of prizes you earn. When I started raising money, I felt uncomfortable just asking people to donate. I wanted to do it in a more unique

way, so I decided to sell t-shirts and sweatshirts that I designed myself.

"I bought the shirt to support one of my best friends," said junior Ally Bennett. "Throughout all her

struggles she is so strong and I want to support her."

"The shirts are for a great cause in supporting such a good friend going through such a difficult condition; we all 'gotta' have

faith'," said Makenna Carter, also a junior.

Every time I sell the shirts, the number sold amazes me. I'm grateful for the amount of support that I have received. I plan to continue doing this for the next couple of years, as it brings me so much joy.

"Diabetes is a condition that many people live with," said junior Max O'Connor. "I feel it's important to not only give money to the cause but also raise awareness."

This past November 23, I asked if everyone who bought a sweatshirt could wear it to school. I couldn't ever express how grateful I am for everyone who's been by my side through this journey, and hope you will consider donating in the future to a good cause.



ADVISORY SIGN-OUT ISSUES A CONCERN

STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM

by Matthew Frost

Advisory is a great privilege that students have at the high school, and is an extremely important and versatile time period that one can use to work on homework, see teachers for extra help, or to socialize with friends. However, since the pandemic began, Averill Park High School has had to make restrictions on where students can go and what they can do during advisory.

The school has required pre-signed passes in

order for students to leave the room. With this rule instituted, many students find it difficult to



get help from teachers. Griffin Sleicher, a sophomore, mentioned the difficulty of reaching out and getting help from teachers because of the presigned passes. "Advisory is all right for

the most part, but having to get pre-signed passes from my teachers is a pain," he said.

Other students have resorted to going to the teacher that they need to see without checking into their assigned advisory. They claim to do this because they find it to be quite a hassle to get pre-signed passes before they may realize that they need help with something.

Junior Matthew DeJulio said that he is not a big fan of the pre-signed passes. "I feel like when I need help with homework I shouldn't have to

go to my teacher and then back to advisory," he stated. "I feel like I should just be able to go and get help without a pass."

Even with the negative feedback of the pre-signed passes, advisory still provides numerous benefits for the students. When asked about advisory, principal Mr. Quiles said that this is the fourth year of advisory. He said that he "originally wanted to give kids an opportunity

(continued on page 26)

LOCKED OUT OF BASEBALL, AND INTO HISTORY

BASEBALL LOCKOUT FIRST OF ITS KIND IN 27 YEARS

by Wyatt Thorsen

The Players v. The League, the only rivalry in sports bigger than Giants v. Cowboys and Yankees v. Red Sox. At 12:01 am on Thursday, December 2, Major League Baseball officially entered a lockout. This lockout marks the ninth work stoppage in the history of the sport and the first since 1994.

The Players Association and the League make deals that outline how the league is formatted. These deals include season length, and treatment of teams for away games, as well as economic deals. The last deal between the two sides was signed in 2016 and that contract expired at midnight on December 1. The leaders of each side failed to come to terms with each other, and as a result

Rob Manfred, the voice of the league's owners, locked out the players until a new agreement could be reached.



So what is the result of this? No contact between coaches/management and players, no usage of any major league baseball facilities, and all transactions within the league are halted until the issue is settled and a new deal is signed by both sides. Multiple months remain until the regular season begins, so

it is quite unlikely that parts of the season are lost, but everything is still within the realm of possibility.

With little activity during December and January, Manfred and the owners have approximately a two month worry-free window to reach an agreement with the Players Union. The executive board of the union will work with the owners to reach said deal. The executive board consists of eight current stars, including Max Scherzer, Marcus Semien, Gerrit Cole, and Francisco Lindor. Each team has a team representative who hears from the executive board and represents their team.

So what are the terms being discussed? The

league wants a fourteen-team playoff and a playoff in which the two, three, and four seeds get to choose their wild card opponent of the bottom three playoff teams. That's a pretty dramatic change but hey, maybe the Yanks really do have a shot this year if this happens. On top of this, a pitch clock is also being considered. On the other hand, the union wants a quicker route to free agency, a National League designated hitter, and an increase in spending money along with other things.

These are a lot of supposed changes and while both sides would love to have it all go their way, it is unrealistic to think that everything will be implemented. That said, with more stress on the league itself, the Players Union will probably emerge as "winners" when the dust settles.

ADVISORY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25)

to decompress during the middle of the school day and connect with something that they need or want to do." Some of these things include getting help from teachers, going to a club or activity, going to the gym, relaxing, and before COVID, frequenting an open snack bar.

According to Quiles, the biggest challenge Averill Park has today is the need to continue contact tracing in certain situations if there is a positive COVID case. However, the bathrooms have been reopened during advisory due to the state health department stopping contact tracing in them. The gym also reopened around two weeks ago, and even

though there is only a set amount of people allowed in the gym at one time, the school is working to increase that number of students. The school even hopes to reopen the snack bar in January, but this depends on the amount of COVID cases and the labor shortages that may occur.

Even though pre-signed passes have made it difficult to see friends during advisory, student socialization is extremely important to our principal. "It was one of the primary reasons that we started advisory," he said.

Social Emotional Learning (or SEL) is also very important to Quiles, and he wants to be able to contribute to the social and emotional learning needs of the student body. Also, even

though it may seem like the student body is not being heard with the dislikes regarding the pre-signed passes, the teachers are very aware of the fact that the pre-signed passes are an inconvenience, hard to manage, and make it difficult to get things done. The school has to be accountable about people's whereabouts for contact tracing purposes.

As the year continues, administration plans to continue to look at what is happening with COVID and possibly loosen up the restrictions. Quiles and the Student Council are also in the process of an E-hall pass, or in other words, a digital pass system as a way to replace pre-signed passes. This digital pass would allow stu-

dents to go into an app on a school device and have their teacher make a pass for students online and automatically send it to them. The school may be implementing this in the next couple of months.

Teachers and student representatives seem to be supportive of these ideas, and the digital pass should make the process much more streamlined and easier for everyone.

Overall, advisory is a great time for both students and teachers with students to socialize, see teachers, and get more work done, while teachers may soon be able to make a streamlined process to help their students socially and emotionally with their learning.

THE RETURN OF STUDENT SECTIONS

SPORTING EVENTS HAVE A DIFFERENT FEEL WITH FANS PRESENT

by Elizabeth Aiossa

As sport seasons start up again it is an exciting sight to see students back in the stands to support their teams. Last year due to the pandemic students were not allowed to attend school sports games. For most of the indoor sports, spectators were not allowed, but games were live-streamed. Not having a student section took away a lot of energy and spirit from the games.

“The crowd without a doubt brings a tremendous amount of energy,” said senior Micheliina Lombardi. “Players had to create their own

energy in an empty gym... it was tough.”

The energy in a gym can be a deal breaker in

those big games. When you have a huge section cheering for you it changes everything, but when it's just the sound of

the ball hitting the floor, the gym feels dull and empty. Creating your own energy is an entire team effort, especially in an empty gym.

“Having the student sections back definitely helped with the energy in the gym,” junior Nickolas Galuski said, “However, the section is behind the hoop which can be distracting for us.”

The return of student sections will definitely change the pace and feel of the games this year, something that a lot of players are excited to have back.



SWIMMING (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28)

single swimmer went the fastest they ever had, setting personal records across the board. Eight girls made it back to finals for the next night, all eight in at least one relay, and three in individual events.

The next day at 6:30 pm the finals began. The noise on the pool deck was deafening – over 400 spectators had filled the stands, and twelve teams had filed onto the pool deck, all cheering their loudest.

The night began with the 200-yard medley relay, made up of senior Tiffany Riddle (Troy), junior Carly Antolick (Averill Park), sophomore Raegan O'Brien (Averill Park), and senior Eloise Ring (Tamarac). This relay ended up placing sixth overall, and finished with a time of 1:54.15.

Next was the 200-yard freestyle, which was swum by O'Brien. She recorded an impressive 1:59.19, shaving seven tenths of a second off of her preliminary swim and placing her fourth overall in the section.

The next event that TAP had swimmers in was the 200-yard freestyle relay. This team was made up of junior Maeve McDermott (Troy), sophomore Cora Thompson (Troy), freshman Lindsay Agro (Averill Park), and seventh-grader Angelina MacLeod (Troy), which ended up finishing eighth overall with a time of 1:49.08.

The second to last event at Sectionals was the 100-yard breaststroke, which was swum by Carly Antolick. Antolick finished with a time of 1:11.09, plac-

ing her tenth overall in the event. This time also broke a team record (previously 1:12.18), which had stood since 2000.

Before the 100 breaststroke, two TAP swimmers competed in the 100 backstroke. The swimmers were Riddle, who placed eleventh with a time of 1:02.11, and O'Brien, who placed second with a record-setting time of 58.61. O'Brien broke the team record that she herself set earlier this season by an impressive three seconds, as well as qualifying for the New York State Meet, which took place on November 19 and 20 at Ithaca college.

“I feel like my races [at Sectionals] went pretty well,” said O'Brien before the State meet. “Going into states, I'm definitely a little

nervous, but I'm excited to meet some new people and to have this experience!”

At State finals, O'Brien swam a 59.35, an impressive time considering the short two-week span separating Sectionals and States. O'Brien ended up finishing 18th overall for the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHAA), and 24th in the New York State Federation!

TAP ended up finishing 9th overall, an impressive figure for a team that had never actually competed at Sectionals before.

“I think that this is a very important milestone,” said TAP assistant coach Emily Caboot. “We went out to compete and that showed in our times!”

Girls Team Shines At Sectionals

O'Brien Qualifies For States, Two School Records Set

by Carly Antolick

While the majority of Averill Park students enjoyed their day off on Friday, November 5, the Troy-Averill Park-Tamarac (TAP) swim team was preparing for their sectional meet. This was their last meet of the season — and their first Sectionals as a merged team.

While the meet didn't officially start until 4 pm, preparing for the meet took all day. Swimmers had to make sure they got enough sleep, ate healthy breakfasts and lunches, stretched, and got excited to race. Many listened to music, watched inspirational movies, and visualized their races to get themselves psyched up and feeling ready to swim quickly.

Once everyone had

arrived for the meet (and had squeezed themselves into their racing suits), warmups began. This part is essential to meet preparation — for

one, it gets your body moving and raises your heart rate. Perhaps more importantly, it helps you get excited for your races. Nothing is better than feeling

fast during warm up; you know you're going to race well if you have your feel for the water.

Then the meet kicked off. It's difficult to adequately describe the atmosphere to someone who wasn't there. Swimming at Sectionals is truly a unique experience — the team camaraderie, cheers, and overall excitement make it a favorite of many swimmers across multiple teams. As eighth grader Ellen Antolick remarked, "Having such a hype atmosphere really helps swimming fast!"

Thirteen of the 16 swimmers on the TAP swim team qualified for and swam in the preliminary session — but the entire team was on deck to cheer. Almost every



(continued on page 27)

FAVORITE

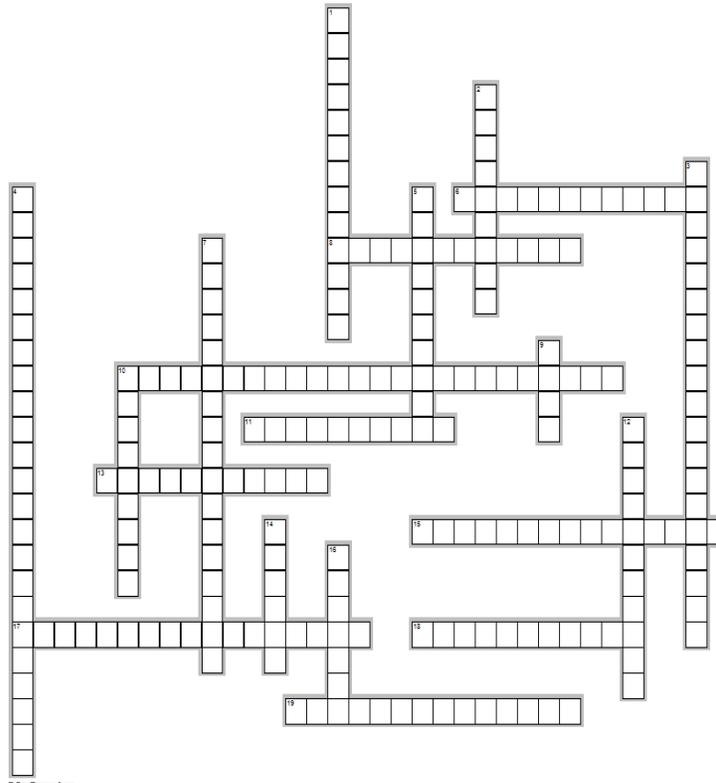
ICE CREAM

CROSSWORD

Match the STAFF MEMBERS
with their
FAVORITE ICE CREAM

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| BUTTER PECAN | CAKE BATTER |
| CHERRY GARCIA | CHOCOLATE |
| CHUNKY MONKEY | CHOCOLATE CHIP |
| COFFEE | COOKIE DOUGH |
| FUDGE SWIRL | MAPLE WALNUT |
| OREO | PHISH FOOD |
| CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTERCUP | |
| MINT CHOCOLATE CHIP | |
| MINT COOKIE CRUMBLE | |
| PEANUT BUTTER CUP | |
| PEANUT BUTTER PANDEMONIUM | |
| SEA SALT CARAMEL | |
| VANILLA PEANUT BUTTER | |
| VANILLA | |

NOTE—Don't skip spaces in puzzle



Down

1. Ford
2. Emmons
3. Minkler
4. Perry
5. Fox
7. Engel (both).
9. Dutcher M.
10. Brown R., Miller V., Porter, and Quiles
12. Pollock
14. Quesnel
16. Malenfant

Across

6. Miller T.
8. Strich
10. Keegan
11. Panzanaro
13. Gierthy, Hunter, Rees
15. Schmidt
17. Bailey, Fink, Glunk, Mouzakes, and Shupe
18. Fairchild
19. Oldendorf