

CHRONICLE

CAR SHOW SATURDAY

by Luke LaChance

The Averill Park World Languages department will be hosting an import and domestic car show at Averill Park High School on Saturday, June 4. The show will run from 9 am to 2 pm in the



school parking lot. All proceeds from this event will go towards senior scholarships for the World Languages department.

The car show is a great opportunity to check out various types of cars at the high school. Spectators have free admission, while car registration for the event is on the day of the show, and costs \$10. The event has a rain date

(continued on page 2)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Odyssey of the Mind</i>	2
<i>Trip to France</i>	5
<i>Senior Farewell</i>	6-7
<i>Editorial Pages</i>	11-15
<i>Humor</i>	16
<i>Profiles</i>	18-20
<i>Sports</i>	22-26

TWO SET TO RETIRE REPRESENTING 35 YEARS OF SERVICE

It's the time of year when Averill Park High School says goodbye to staff who are retiring. This year, two members of the APHS community are leaving, Mrs. Klepsch and Mr. Strich. Both are English teachers, who will be greatly missed.

Nancy Klepsch has worked at Averill Park High School for 16 of her 22 years as a teacher. While at AP, she taught a multitude of courses, including English 9 and 10, ILP, Poetry, Writer's

Workshop, Death as a Force in Literature, Social Media, and the CTE (English compo-

and a privilege to be a teacher here," said Klepsch. "The caliber of students and amazing quality of my colleagues made this a teaching dream job."

When asked about her retirement plans, Klepsch said, "I want to pick up my creative life, finish

my second book of poetry and get more involved in the Troy



nents) for both the Auto Tech II and the Construction classes.

"It was a real honor

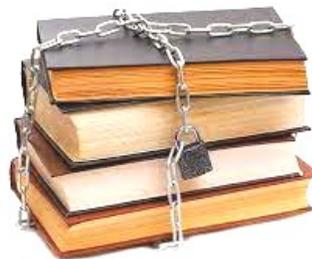
(continued on page 2)

BLACKLISTED AT APHS CENSORSHIP EFFORTS ON THE RISE

by Chava Thiehl

Nationwide efforts to ban books have risen to their greatest height in the last twenty years. In a time of increasing polarization, school districts across the country are bracing themselves for censorship challenges. From Florida to Pennsylvania, it is apparent that certain authors and narratives are being targeted; the Holocaust graphic memoir *Maus* was removed in Tennessee over concerns of

nudity. In Florida, textbooks were rejected from schools



due to arguments that they taught critical race theory. And in Texas, state legislators

are leading the charge for book removals, as it leads the country with 713 bans. In a move to address the concerns of community members, Averill Park joins the tally as one of many districts that has recently removed titles from its library.

In response to a complaint raised by a community member, two titles were taken from the high school library. The autobiographical

(continued on page 8)

CAR SHOW (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

of June 11.

For those showing their cars, there will be a total of 21 trophies handed out to 21 vehicles. Each trophy will be sponsored by a local business. The judges are comprised of APHS students who are being coached by two editors from the esteemed auto publication *Hemmings Motor News* from Bennington, Vermont.



School principal Mr. Quiles will also be at the coaching session, as he will be selecting a car for the Principal's Choice Award. Spectators will also be able to buy a ballot for \$1 for the People's Choice Award.

To add to the atmosphere, about 80 car-themed songs from world language teacher Mr. Brown's playlist will be playing thanks to English teacher Mr. Engel's sound system. Vendors will be on-hand selling crafts, makeup, jewelry, skin care products and many other things, and pizza will be sold by Brad's Pizza.

And if that weren't enough, car washes will also be available for \$5.

The World Language department is hoping the show brings people together while attracting many different types of cars.

RETIREES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

community. If students want to see me, they should stop by the Troy Farmer's Market and I'll say 'Howdy'."

In addition to teaching English, Klepsch has been a co-advisor to the SAGA (formerly GSA) club for many years, was formerly the freshman class advisor, and prior to the pandemic hosted open mic sessions during April's Poetry Month festivities.

It should be noted that in addition, Klepsch had her first book published while teaching in 2018.

"Having watched *My Fair Lady* only last night, I'm humming the song, 'I've grown accustomed to her face.' This is how it will be without Ms Klepsch," said fellow English teacher Mr. Fairchild. "I have become accustomed to her coming to see me on so many issues from department issues to national news or a new song she was working on, or to check up on my well being."

"It will be strange not to have my inquisitive and loquacious friend popping in next year," Fairchild continued. "We have grown accustomed to her face and her strong voice for justice and compassion."

"Nancy has always been so dedicated to providing meaningful opportunities to experience the creativity of expression she so thoroughly embodies," said science teacher Mrs. Sorriento, "and to supporting the growth and wellness of all of her students."

"She is not only a creative English teacher, but was my teaching neighbor," said Strich. "She brings a perspective to her classroom that is so valuable for our students, and no one has a bigger heart."

"Mrs. Klepsch has been a dynamic and engaging member of the APHS

school community for quite a while," said principal Mr. Quiles. "Her passion for her content, and dedication to making a place for EVERY student in our building is incomparable! We will miss her greatly, but we wish her all the best in her retirement."

Michael Strich has taught at Averill Park for 19 of his 34 years as an educator.

"I always felt fortunate to get hired at Averill Park," he said, "and will leave with many great memories of students and staff who made my time here worthwhile."

While at Averill Park, Strich taught English 9, 10 and 11, as well as many electives including Public Speaking, Journalism and Video Production, Social Media, Women's Literature, and Detective Fiction.

Additionally, during the 2007-2008 school year, Strich was awarded a U.S. Fulbright Exchange, which allowed him to teach in Turkey for the year, while a Turkish teacher took his place in Averill Park. Strich was also the advisor for the high school newspaper, *The Chronicle*, which he hopes continues to be published next year.

As for future plans, Strich said everyone is asking that, but, "I first need to recover, as I do every summer. The last few years with the pandemic have been especially difficult." Some of Strich's plans include traveling, ramping up his musical exploits (he plays electric bass in several bands), and spending more time at his Adirondack cabin.

"I've always appreciated Mr. Strich's witty sense of humor and his musical talent! I'll definitely miss the laughs," said English teacher Ms. Mouzakes.

"Over the years, Mike has blessed us with some of the best and most biting satire, from April Fools jokes to his version of the Borowitz report," said Fairchild. "Every once in awhile, I'd think, 'Wow - that's gonna leave a mark.' But because Mike is a kind and considerate human being in every interaction I've ever had with him, I understood why he got away with so much."

"His kindness and honesty was most on display when we became 'Government Cheese' or whatever name of the year we had for our teacher band," continued Fairchild. "He welcomed everyone, herded us like cats toward a goal, handing out copies of 'Moondance' or 'Me and Julio.' I could see him occasionally getting a little frustrated with our lack of focus and our tendency to play songs we weren't going to perform... but he always kept his cool, never lashed out irrationally, and got us where we needed to go. Our very own Jack Bruce."

"Mr. Strich has very high standards for his students while at the same time, having the heart of a caring mentor," said counselor Mr. Gildersleeve. "He's quirky, funny and he loves the best things in life - friends, family and fast cars. This is why we've gotten along so well throughout the years!"

"Mr. Strich has given so much to all of us over his many years at APHS, that I am honestly not sure how anyone can fill his shoes. His humor, passion, and energy is beyond anything I have experienced, and the impact that he has had on our students is simply incredible," said Quiles. "Mr. Strich is a class act, a consummate professional, and I know he will jump into many great new adventures in retirement. I wish him the best!"

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE ODYSSEY OF THE MIND TEAM PLACE SIXTH AT WORLDS

by Tyler Michaels

On Tuesday, May 24, seven Averill Park High School students jumped in the back of a van to begin their 17-hour long journey to Ames, Iowa for the World Finals of Odyssey of the Mind. Juniors Jacob Crupi, Katie Doran, Tyler Michaels, Isla Multunas, Christian Romer, Tyler Strock, and sophomore Cecelia Colton made up the team that placed in the New York State finals earlier in the school year to earn a spot at this final competition of the year.

Odyssey of the Mind is a creative problem-solving competition where teams are given a choice of problems and must prepare an eight minute skit that features several necessary elements. Each problem

also has something unique to it, whether it be more theatrical or mechanical. Averill Park's chosen problem required them

performing a skit. The twist for the structure this year was that it had to contain smaller copies of the structure nested

tiny character at the center of them all. The character had to be revealed from the center of the structure before weights could be placed, and had to be represented by a team member in their performance. The skit had a required theme of "storage" this year, and the Averill Park team decided to create a performance based on technological storage. The aforementioned tiny character was a virus disguised as an antiviral software to destroy the iPad that a young protagonist just received. The virus also downloaded parodies of popular apps onto the device to try and scam the kid, including Algebra Dash, Instapound, and Happy Birds. The balsa wood structure



to build a balsa wood structure that held as much weight as possible while simultaneously

within it (like a set of Matryoshka dolls), and the set of structures had to contain a

SIX HEADED TO BOYS' AND GIRLS' STATE AMERICAN LEGION POST 1021 WINNERS ANNOUNCED

by Carly Antolick

This school year, the American Legion was able to sponsor three male and three female students to attend their Boys' and Girls' State program held during the summer. After completing an application and interview process, juniors Timothy Elliott, Matthew Frost, and Tyler Michaels were selected to attend Boys' State. Kathleen Doran, Emma Hanlon, and



Saeryn Sawyer were chosen for Girls' State.

Through their selection, these students have

shown the extent of their leadership skills, moral character, and academic abilities. This educational program aims to teach its participants

about the inner workings of the United States government. It does this through a "model state," or mock-government, including different governmental bodies and elected officials.

As the official Boys' State brochure states, "By teaching youth to understand and appreciate our democratic republic, America can remain strong and ensure our

(continue on page 10)

ODYSSEY OF THE MIND (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

weighed in at 14.9 grams (with a maximum weight of 15 grams and a minimum height of 8 inches) and held 650 pounds, only failing due to a faulty piece of wood in one of the columns.

In addition to the skit and the structure, Odyssey of the Mind teams must also be ready for a spontaneous problem. True to its name, the spontaneous is a problem that the team does not know ahead of time; they only know that it will be either a verbal, hands-on, or hybrid problem, but do not know which they will encounter, or what the specific problem will be.

As the team steps into a room with four judges, they are told what the problem is and are given only a few minutes to think before having to give a total of 35 responses for the problem. The score for spontaneous is curved, with the highest scoring team getting 100 points and every other team earning a fraction of points based on how they performed. After only giving one less creative response than the leading team, Averill Park earned a curved score of 99.28 /100.

In order to be able to make their journey, the Averill Park team needed fundraising to lower the cost of room and board, along with gas prices to travel halfway across the country. The students decided to host a variety of fundraising efforts, including a presentation on what the program is, a fundraising night at Recovery Room, and a 16 Handles' fundraiser. Many Averill Park

residents also gave generous donations to a team Venmo, allowing the team to travel for a reduced price.

The students on the Odyssey of the Mind team would like to thank everyone who donated and helped the fundraising efforts; with-



out all of your help, it would not have been possible for the team to travel and compete.

After their long travels, the team spent four days at Iowa State University enjoying what the competition had to offer. Every state has a unique set of pins, and trading pins is a unique activity that is widely advertised throughout the

competition.

Students also met teams from other



countries, making friends with a three-person team from Michigan and enjoying meals with their friends and family.

The team watched schools with other problems perform, seeing Hamilton-esque musicals and circus shenanigans contained within eight minute skits. On Saturday night

to see how they fared. The Averill Park team was ecstatic to hear that they placed sixth at the competition, giving them a spotlight and a moment of recognition before the 600 other teams in the crowd.

After announcing the rest of the winners, a video was played showing a trailer for next year's problems, exciting members from every team as new ideas began

to form. The next morning, the Averill Park team packed their bags and left Iowa State University for their long trek back to New York.

Averill Park's team returned from where they left on Monday afternoon, nearly a full week since their departure. They were greeted by family supporting their success as the team returned to take a well deserved nap. The Averill Park team is now waiting in eager anticipation for next year's problems to be released so they can get a head start on the competi-



tion, and are trying to help the district be more involved in the program.

If you are interested in joining the club, feel free to reach out

the closing ceremony began, where teams from four different countries (sadly, lower than previous years due to lingering travel restrictions) and many different states anxiously awaited

to any of the team members; there are levels of competition for every grade level and the team would love to help everyone interested get involved.

TRIP TO FRANCE HELD, FINALLY PARTICIPANTS DO HAVE SOME COMPLICATIONS, THOUGH

by Sophia Maddalone

In the fall of 2018, World Language teacher Mr. Brown began planning his sixth school trip to France. The trip was set to go during April break of 2020, but a global pandemic had other plans. Originally, 15 students signed up to attend the trip, but since then many students have graduated or had to drop the trip. This year during spring break Brown and six of his French students finally experienced their seven day tour of France.

Once Brown and the students arrived in France, they visited five cities: Chartres, Tours, St. Brieuç, Caen and finally Paris. The touring group of APHS French students, joined by a partner school from Holyoke, Massachusetts, also traveled to many small cities throughout the trip. In the city of St. Brieuç, they were able to meet the teacher who taught student recipients of APHS French pen pal letters.

While COVID-19 restrictions are still prevalent in some countries, Brown said, "We didn't experience many COVID re-

strictions. We wore masks when required or when it was advised. For example, the Louvre museum in Paris (where the Mona Lisa is lo-

cated) was so overcrowded that I felt more comfortable wearing a mask." Maggie Finerty, an APHS senior who attended the trip, said, "There

positive." Another APHS student tested positive once they arrived home.

While it might have been nice to be quarantined in France, Brown said, "I would have been frustrated not being able to hang out in cafés and walk around the city." Brown also mentioned that he was able to safely send in work for his students at school thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Gaboury and Mrs. Burger.

Although COVID-19 did make its way to impact Brown's French



weren't really any COVID restrictions besides the mandate on the metro."

In order to return to the United States, a negative COVID test was required. "Nobody from our school or our partner school from Holyoke Massachusetts tested positive before our return to the U.S.," Brown shared. "The day I got back to my house I felt a little weird but thought it was jet lag. The next day I felt like I had caught a cold and my wife suggested I take a COVID test. It turns out I tested

(continued on page 9)

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.

FAREWELL AND BEST WISHES TO SENIORS FACULTY AND STAFF SHARE SOME FOND MEMORIES

by Veronica Cardillo

The Averill Park senior class had a unique experience, as over half of its high school years were affected by COVID-19. Even through all the Google meets, virtual learning, hybrid classes, and quarantining, there have still been great and unforgettable memories.

Every senior has had their unique journey and their own special memories. Now, instead of the seniors talking about their favorite memories of each other, their experiences, and what they'll miss about high school, we'll hear from some of the senior teachers about their favorite memories about the class of 2022.

One of the teachers that shared some experiences from this year is English teacher Mr. Fairchild. When asked what he'll miss most from this year's seniors, he said, "I would say in general their humor." I also asked what his favorite memory was and he replied, "I don't know. My third block class, when they applauded when I came back from my accident."

Fairchild also shared some advice for the seniors going forward. "I would say, watch the world closely." To end it off, he shared what the class of '22 taught him, which he said was, "Empathy."

Another teacher that I heard from was math teacher Ms. Freeman. She started off with some advice for the seniors. "Keep in touch with your friends and classmates. You will always have the bond of being through the same experiences and navigating the high school experience together. They will always have these memories to talk about. Look out for each other and make sure your classmates know you care. You never know when someone really needs a friend."

She continued with more advice, saying, "There's

are not all from one friend group. New friendships are

formed and people realize the benefits of supporting your peers, even though it's technically a competition. Like Avery Kittleson said during the show, 'I have worked with some people that I would have never talked to if I was not in Mr. AP this year, which has also given me the ability to form new connections and friendships.'

World language teacher Mr. Brown also decided to share his favorite part about the students from



a lot of the senior year left! Make the most of the last events you have as the class of 2022. Senior Picnic, Senior Dinner Dance, Graduation, Senior Arts Gala, Spring Music



the class of '22, saying, "What I will miss from this year's seniors is their involvement in everything from

(continued on page 7)

Concerts, Volleyball Tournament, Line Dancing."

Ms. Freeman added that her favorite memory from this year was Mr. AP. She said, "Mr. AP is always my favorite event of the senior year. I love seeing people come together and work on a huge project specifically because the contestants, esports, and everyone involved



SENIORS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

academics, to volunteering and leadership in school clubs like Key Club and Best Buddies. I remember many of the seniors from when Mrs. Gaboury and I co-directed the OBP production of *The Grimms Brothers Spectaculathon*. The students I am familiar with in French 5 have been especially engaged in the nutty things we do in class and outside of class such as the SUNY Albany Immersion Day and the spring vacation trip to France. I am lucky that so many continued in French and that they are game for the things I promote."

His favorite memory from this year's senior was, "actually from when they were sophomores and the COVID remote instruction had just begun. As a teacher, I was nervous and concerned about how the new kind of teaching would be received. I remember clearly one of my early remote classes was attended by several students who acted almost like nothing had changed. Their ability to transition from in-school to out-of-school instruction was impressive and refreshing. I knew from that point on that I was dealing with some pretty special people who, despite having a pandemic thrown at them, rebounded in such a positive way that I was both relieved and humbled."

In the spirit of the season, Brown gave some advice for the departing seniors, "If I were to offer advice to seniors, I would encourage them to try to find a purpose in their professional life that is the reason to get out of bed in the morning. I love my job and can't imagine what it would be like to have a



career that wasn't the source of happiness, joy, and satisfaction."

He shared a heartwarming message about how the senior class



inspired him, adding, "The COVID pandemic will most likely be the defining part of the seniors' high school memory. The class of 2022 taught me that with the right people and the right attitude, even a worldwide pandemic can't stop people from learn-

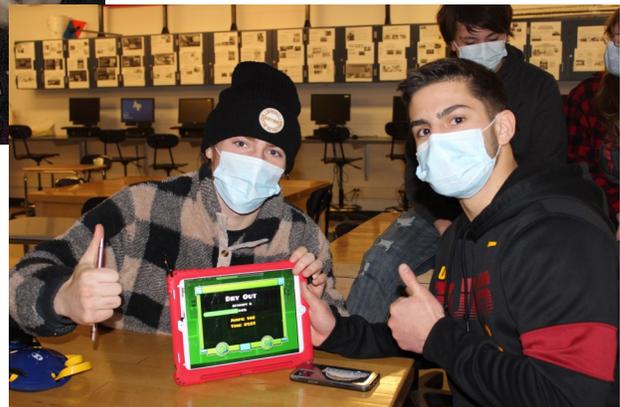
I honestly knew things were going to be okay because as sophomores, they were fully capable of making a horrible situation less bad and that they could actually continue to thrive. The seniors taught me that perseverance was possible."

So all seniors, continue your dreams and don't worry about what's ahead because it'll all work out. Like Carol Burnett said, "When you have a dream, you've got to



ing from each other, appreciating each other, and valuing each other. As I mentioned above, from early on in remote teaching the class of 2022,

grab it and never let go." Remember that, as you go forward, spread your wings, and don't be afraid to fly. Good luck seniors, have a great future and continue to make great memories. Enjoy your unique journeys!



BANNED BOOKS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

graphic novel *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe and *Lawn Boy* by Jonathan Evison were removed, while Jeanette Walls' *The Glass Castle* was challenged but allowed to stay. In the removed titles, the main characters identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community and identify this way through sexual experiences. Concerned parents have argued that certain pictures in the graphic novel are potentially pornographic.

Research has found that the majority of titles pulled from libraries throughout the country focus on storylines including Black, LGBTQ+, and marginalized groups of people. *Gender Queer* and *Lawn Boy* are the two most challenged books of the year nationwide, which suggests that these challenges are part of a larger cultural movement dedicated to censoring certain voices.

Book challenges aren't the only trend the area is adapting to - across the country, school board elections are being used to push larger legislation.

As school board elections have become more politicized, candidates are focused on parental rights and the removal of potential "pornographic" material from classrooms. Social emotional learning can be described as a way to provide students with skills to further their emotional and mental maturity, though some propose that it is indoctrinating children with sexuality, or schools are teaching critical race theory (a concept taught to law students), discriminating based on vaccination status, and are converting childrens' sexuality. Online,

candidates are defending the removal of these titles and are focused on parental involvement.

In the Averill Park School District's "Meet the

and at least know what their school curriculums are, and to go through the books as they're given to their children."

The Board of

she "seen" any of these complaints, and during her 13 years as a school board member, the group has yet to mediate any conflicts. The same can be said for high school principal Mr. Quiles, who in his 16+ years as an administrator has never dealt with challenges to reading material until now.

School librarian Mrs. Yost stated that the books were scrutinized and well-received by independent organizations. While it is ultimately the decision of the school board to decide what is available, the school media specialist (the new term for librarian) is to be entrusted with these duties and must refer to several resources before making a final decision. One such district policy stated, "reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared aids... shall be consulted as guides," and cited the American Library Association (ALA) as an example. Yost shared that she referred to *The New York Times* and *School Library Journal* along with the ALA, and mentioned that all reviews were starred.

In talking with Yost, she detailed the process for filing complaints regarding reading material. She stated that the first step is to file with the principal, though in this case the complaint went to the superintendent, who then called a meeting with Yost and Quiles. Quiles stated that the complaints were not raised in opposition to the themes of the books, but certain scenes and images the complainant found to be troubling (the scenes



Candidates" night, one candidate invoked these issues into their opening statement: "I am pro parental rights, I want to see parents involved in decision making on certain possibly sensitive subjects

Education was asked to comment on their involvement. In an email, president Mrs. Zweig wrote that the complaint was handled "informally" and the Board was not aware, nor had



(continued on page 9)

BANNED BOOKS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

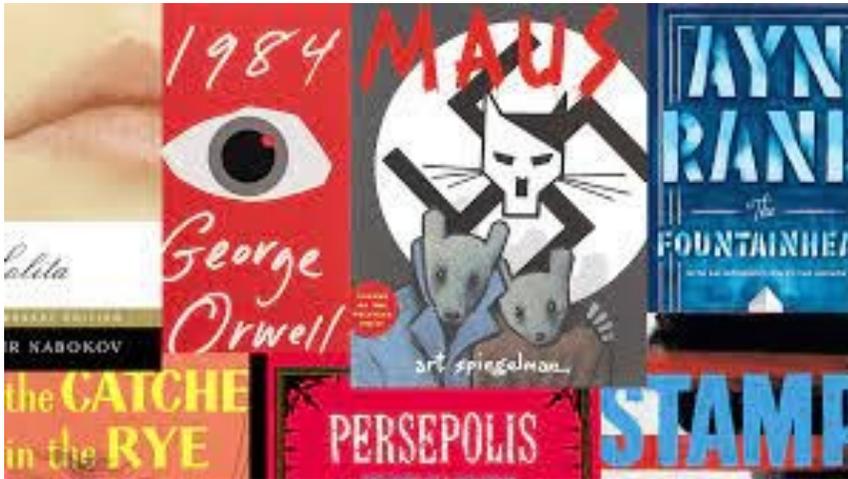
he is referring to depict sexual encounters and abuse).

The two removed titles were strictly found in the library, but the third was being taught, which forced a meeting between Quiles, the complainant, and the teacher. When asked about his role in the process, Quiles said that his job was to “facilitate the conversation”, and similarly to Yost, follow school board-outlined policies regarding reading material. He felt that the board had established an excellent policy for dealing with these concerns, and both he and Yost said the meetings were successful.

According to Quiles, they were “really productive,” and he has not received any further comments regarding the decisions.

For the majority of their careers, Quiles and Yost have been extremely committed to diversity and providing students with reputable and accurate resources to affirm their identities. When asked about how these actions may take away from the

work he has done, especially since the two removed titles emphasize themes of gender expression, sexuality, and racial identity, Quiles was firm in saying that limiting the number of resources availa-



ble to students would do harm. He also placed emphasis on how beneficial a resource the library can be, especially since “diversity comes in a lot of unseen circumstances,” and reading is an extremely effective method of feeling affirmed in a school environment. He believes that Yost has done an “excellent job” of providing resources to the community, and she shared that she has already begun the search for books with similar themes.

When asked about how the Averill Park School District was preparing to deal with this nationwide trend, Quiles shared that there were a “handful” of people across the district

that same day participating in professional development workshops through BOCES on how to best respond to the increase in book challenges.

In a heartfelt moment speaking to Yost, she mentioned that two students had previously checked out *Gender Queer* before its removal. Following these complaints, she discussed the book with them. Not only did they find nothing objectionable, but she said that

one of them “really needed it” as a student grappling with matters of identity. This was significant, as Yost is set to retire this fall and is ending her time at Averill Park having to remove titles. She disclosed that she had only ever received challenges to books nearly 20 years ago at Poestenkill Elementary School where a picture book was challenged for its portrayal of a “non-traditional family structure,” depicting a same-sex couple. This seemed more upsetting for Mrs. Yost, as she has always seen her job as a way to be unbiased and simply provide resources to students. As she prepares for the end of her career and the school district braces for all that is to come, Yost summarized her job with one statement: in her words, she is to “provide materials for a diverse population, not just one person,” and she simply wishes to promote the district’s “Every Student, Every Day” motto through her work.

QUARANTINED (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

trip, it was not until the end. Finnerty said, “I had a great experience overall and it was a lot of fun. I would definitely recommend going on a school trip, but be prepared to walk a ton every day.”

“I was really grateful to those six students who stayed on board so we could travel together,” said



Brown. “It was the smallest group I had ever taken to France but being such a small group we did most things together, which made it fun.”



NEW ENGLISH HIRES ANNOUNCED

TWO REPLACEMENTS COMING TO APHS NEXT YEAR

by Emma Hanlon

Averill Park High School was in search of one probationary English Language Arts teacher, which was then increased to two, beginning in the upcoming 2022-2023 school year. This recruitment proposal was met with seven candidates, each of whom wished to fill the vacant position. Candidates had to go through a series of steps to determine if they would be eligible for interviewing, which began in late April and continued through the month of May.

A selection committee, made up of three English teachers from across the high school building, had a large role in choosing the candidates who would be the best fit for the two English positions. Ms. DiGrigoli, Mrs. Gaboury, and Ms. Mouzakes gracefully took on these roles. They began their task early, on April 27. The trio met after school to review resumes and select who would be interviewed. Candidates presented a variety of

different experience levels; some were recent college graduates, while others had taught before, even at the Advanced Placement level.

A week later, applicants faced their first set of

committee, along with administrators Mr. Quiles and Ms. Leach.

After the English AP exam, my classmates and I were able to participate as a classroom for one of the mod-

front of the room, and a panel of staff overlooking us. We were able to absorb a new style of teaching, and meet a charismatic applicant.

Ultimately, it was enjoyable to be a small part of another's potential teaching career and wish them luck in the remainder of their application timeline.

Leach and Quiles proceeded to reference check successful candidates, each of which were chosen by the committee. The next day, May 6, finalists with positive reference checks were invited to their final interview with Human Resources and the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning.

On May 20, Quiles sent an email to the faculty and staff stating he decisions had been made. Brandon Porter (who was a long-term replacement last year) and Nicole Monroe will be appointed to their new roles at the June 13 BOE meeting. We welcome them to Averill Park, and wish them the best of luck in their new positions.



interviews, conducted by the selection committee. Gaboury, Mouzakes, and DiGrigoli then left their own classrooms to meet in another —this time as spectators. Candidates were responsible for creating their own lesson plan, which they taught to a classroom of students. Each lesson was overlooked by the

el lessons in the interview process. For one period, we talked about the importance of literary elements and structure in poetry — a topic we were well versed in for the Advanced Placement Literature and Composition exam. Our class, like many, overcame the initial confusion of seeing a different face at the

BOYS' AND GIRLS' STATE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

freedom for future generations." Both of these programs emphasize the importance of respecting and understanding the U.S. governmental process, and teach about it through each respective model state program. Participation in these model states is intended to foster an appreciation for and interest in the study of government, and has led many delegates to pursue public service and political studies in their futures.

"I am really excited to learn more about my gov-

ernment, especially during the 4th of July," said Doran, who will be attending Girls State



during the week of Independence Day.

The Girls' State brochure states that "the knowledge, memories, and friendships they [the participants] take home last a lifetime." Both the Boys' and Girls' State programs are intended to be experiences that delegates will remember for the rest of their lives. They emphasize the formation of friendships just as much as they do education, and they hope that each participant is able to gain something valuable from

their experience.

"I'm so excited to meet girls from around the state who have the same interests as I do," said Hanlon. Her compatriots shared her sentiment.

Each of the selected APHS representatives has demonstrated their aptitude and enthusiasm for American politics and government. They are already strong leaders, but we hope they will be able to expand their skills at their respective American Legion programs this summer.

EDITORIAL PAGES

WHY NOT WEIGHTED GRADES?

by Rachael Strickland

Every year, high schools across the nation publish a list of the top students in the graduating class, called the class ranking. Usually these rankings are weighted, which means that harder classes are worth more. For example, taking an honors class would give you a higher grade point average (GPA), and thus a stronger class ranking, than a student taking regular level courses.

Averill Park High School has refrained from using the weighted average system in the class ranking and has instead used an unweighted system. This system, while

intended to not punish students for taking average level classes, has ended up punish-



ing students for striving to achieve academic excellence. Students are more likely to take average classes as opposed to taking accelerated

or honors, which gains them next to nothing aside from a challenge and a line on a college application.

Being a valedictorian of your high school means something. It shows academic excellence as well as drive and passion for learning and education. It is a remarkable achievement that proves you are the top of your class and can be something to be proud of.

With an unweighted system, however, students can glide through classes and do the bare minimum to graduate while still receiving stellar grades and become valedictorian, instead of being an extremely hard working, advan-

(continued on page 12)

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.

Photos are used by permission, or are fair use from the internet. All are expressly for educational purposes.

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

Editors:

- Carly Antolick (Features)
- Paula DeAndres (Reviews)
- Julie Hale (Profiles)
- Emma Hanlon (News)
- Tyler Michaels (Editorials)
- Owen Perala (Sports/Features)

Advisor: Mr. Strich

MEDIA MISREPRESENTS HIGH SCHOOL

by Abigail Juneau

Every year, incoming high school freshmen have many unrealistic expectations and fears about starting high school. Trust me, as a current student wrapping up their freshman year, it was a few short months ago that this was all racing through my head.

The typical student will worry about things like getting lost in the new, much bigger building, and not being considered "cool" in the eyes of the other students. But as



soon as we start watching movies and reading books about high school, this list becomes much more extensive. The idea of getting locker stuffed, or having your lunch money stolen just doesn't happen. I'm not oblivious, I know that there are fights, school drama, and everything that happens in high schools across the world, but these are not what we see in the media.

Many of these movies that people enjoy, films

(continued on page 14)

EDITORIAL PAGES

THE LIFE OF A REDHEAD

by Paige Franklin

Growing up with red hair means you get a lifetime of people either loving or hating your hair color. The amount of myths made up about redheads is actually insane. We've all heard that gingers "have no soul;" obviously that's not true, but did you know people think redheads are witches and are cursed to a lifetime of bad luck?

I never really enjoyed being a redhead until I got a little older, and then suddenly it seemed like everyone wanted their hair

the same color as mine. Only 2% of the population are natural redheads, which is very interesting because it feels like I see gingers all over the

gray with age — kinda' crazy, huh?

The gene found in redheads (MC1R) has been proven to make us look

duce their own vitamin D when exposed to low levels of light. Redheads' pain tolerance is also higher than for the average person.

Honestly, being a redhead is really a m a z i n g ; you'll always stand out in a crowd, people will wish they could have your hair color and it's always something about yourself that is a conversation starter.

So the next time you go to tell a ginger they have no soul, just remember who will have the gray hair and wrinkly skin

30 years down the line...not them.



place now. Studies even show that redheads' hair doesn't go

younger...haha. It's even proven that redheads pro-

WEIGHTED GRADES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

ced, honors-level student who has worked their tail off to do their best at any given subject. An accelerated student can put in twice the time and yet still be beaten by someone who has put in half the work.

Even though it is a valid concern that students carrying a regular course load are putting in just as

much work as an honors student, Averill Park High School has made a mission of helping students achieve academic excellence. The unweighted system which discourages honors level classes is actively providing students a reason to not attempt to take honors courses and enabling the student body to ignore the

honors options offered.

Even average students would benefit from this change, because it would encourage them to put in more effort in their classes. It creates a challenge for students to tackle and does not have any foreseeable downsides. Many colleges use a weighted grading system, and for

Averill Park to not use it is putting our students at a disadvantage, especially those looking to attend top colleges in the nation.

There is a certain amount of respect and pride that comes with being in the top of your class, and it should be given to those that deserve it.

EDITORIAL PAGES

CENSORSHIP OF BOOKS IS A PROBLEM

by Ryan Therrien

Words can have a lot of power and can leave a lasting impression on people, whether that be positive or negative. Every person deserves the right to share their thoughts and ideas. However, the increase in book banning in the last decade is slowly taking our rights away.

The First Amendment states that, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. Restrictions on free speech are permissible only

when the speech at issue is likely to produce a clear and present danger of a serious substantive evil that rises far

above public inconvenience, annoyance, or unrest." This excerpt from the United States Constitution states (in somewhat complicated terms



banning books for the purpose of race, lifestyle choices, political bias and religious affiliations is illegal.

In life, if you don't

agree with someone else's ideas, you would probably ignore them or just walk away, right? You most likely wouldn't put them in jail. Why should books be any different? If you don't see eye to eye with the author, don't believe in their way of life, or don't agree with their sexuality, then move on and ignore it, or simply don't read the book.

Over 1,000 books are currently banned in the United States for a multitude of reasons. I hope throughout this next decade we can see the numbers lower significantly. I hope to see the next generations having the freedom to choose from all kinds of books, not just the ones we believe are okay.

TOP SONGS OF THE UPCOMING SUMMER

by Katie Doran

This summer is finally free from most COVID restrictions, and the best way to celebrate is with a bopping playlist to blast as you drive with the windows down.

There are plenty of amazing artists that are tried and true when it comes to their music. Harry Styles releasing "As It Was" leads to a great opportunity for more songs, and if not, his last album *Fine Line* has must-play songs such as "Golden" and "Watermelon Sugar."

For all the Swifties,

1989 (hopefully soon to be Taylor's Version) has the best vibes for the playlist. But if you are not into Taylor, Wal-

rock and have a slight British sound. Their album *Tell Me That It's Over* has songs that are too good not to be men-

metal music is incorporated in Willow's music. Being Will Smith's daughter, she has made a name of her own that deserves to follow in Drake and Beyonce's footsteps - even joining them in going by a single name. Her collaboration on "Transparent Soul" with Travis Barker was one of a kind, and the music video is definitely worth checking out.

I can't wait for summer to officially begin and to blast these songs without a care in the world.



lows is an up-and-coming band that has incredible music. Their albums are light

tioned, such as "At the End of the Day" and "Marvelous." More rock and slight

GUEST EDITORIAL

THINGS THAT GO BUMP OVERNIGHT: THE STRANGE THINGS THAT HAPPEN AT NIGHT AT AVERILL PARK SCHOOLS

by Garry Stone

Do you know the top three things that are haunted in this country are graveyards, hospitals, and...the hallways of schools? Years ago, I used to work the "overnight" shift from 10 pm until 5:30 am at the high school and Algonquin Middle School. Some of the things that would happen overnight were not only strange, but to this day cannot be explained. Here are two out of many examples.

My job on overnights was to sweep all hallways, "Zamboni" them (a large ride-on floor-washing machine) and buff them.

So, one night I was sweeping the halls, getting ready to drive the Zamboni around. I forget where I started to Zamboni, but when I got to the elevator hallway, the elevator door started opening.

Now remember, it's like 2:30 in the morning and the building is empty. I hopped off that machine so fast and prayed nobody would come out of that elevator. Nobody did, and nobody

was in it, either.

Months later I met up with the elevator specialist and asked him if the elevator would just open on its

quin. I had just got done sweeping the hallways, had gotten on the Zamboni, and started riding up the hallways. I heard "Bang, Bang,

"Are you sure you're the only one here?" My response was I certainly hoped so.

He didn't look like he believed me. I watched him get in his car and he then very slowly drove around the parking lot - a few times. I became very concerned, so I went into a classroom and got on the phone and activated the "All Call" intercom and said, "Hi, this is Garry. I'm probably talking to myself, but if there's anybody still in the building, please call room 106."

I then waited like five or ten minutes, and went to leave the room and THE PHONE RANG.

Immediately after that I went around and shut off all the hallway lights VERY, VERY quickly and left sick for the night.

It still makes me wonder what that policeman saw, because he saw something.

So, in closing, I am not saying these school buildings are haunted, as that would be ridiculous. Or would it?



own. He told me, "No, not unless you called for it down from the first floor." Calling it down required a key, and I had NOT called for it. Hmmm...

This next story is much more strange. This particular night I was at Algon-

Bang" coming from the receiving area. I went to see who it was, and it was a policeman.

I said, "Yes sir?" and he said, "Are you the only one here?" I looked at my watch; it said 1:30 am.

"Yes, I am," I replied, and he then asked me again,

MEDIA MISREPRESENTS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11)

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

-In Color-

like *Mean Girls* or *High School Musical*, aren't what we actually see in the halls of Averill Park High School on a daily basis. In most cases, at least, high schools don't have students who have a list of

wardrobe rules like "on Wednesdays we wear pink," and most star basketball players don't break out in song when they feel their heart is conflicted.

Just like many things in our world, the life

of an average high school student is not realistically portrayed in the media, and these expectations and fears are not what students need to think about leading up to their first day of ninth grade.

REVIEWS

COMPARING SCHOOL DANCES

by Sydney Davey

Which grade level has the best school dance? That's the question I set out to answer. I asked people from every grade in order to find out.

My personal experience was at the Sophomore Soirée this year. I felt that there was an assortment of different dances at the event, ranging from slow dances to fast-paced ones. My favorite part would have to be dancing with my friends and letting loose to the music.

At first, there weren't many people on the dance floor, but the DJ made us all get on our feet and have fun. There was a mixture of different dances. I think there are very high standards for couples to dance, especially during the slow dances. However, some people aren't always comfortable with dancing to slow songs.

I feel that high school dances are important because in high school you can create memories that will last for a lifetime. I don't know how high school dances have changed since the pandemic because I've only been to one high school dance. But high school dances are certainly different from middle school dances. I don't know if it's different for past Algonquin students, but it was different from the Gardner Dickinson (GD) dances.

The music selection was one of those differences. No country songs were played

at GD dances, whereas at the Sophomore Soirée, country songs were played. The location of the dance was much nicer than a middle school gym. At my middle school, it was either in the gym or the cafeteria.

After some time, there was a lot of dancing.

and boys dancing, though he mentioned that it was mostly the girls who danced. Biette feels that high school dances are so important because it is important for everyone to have fun outside of school.

Besides the dance being put on hold during the peak of COVID-19, Biette

that the issue for ninth graders is that they don't have a boyfriend or girlfriend.

When I asked him why he thinks high school dances are important, he said, "I think that high school dances are important because we haven't had time to hang and talk with friends." Brad's one piece of advice is to "Just be yourself."

The Senior Prom took place in October. I had the pleasure of asking senior Emily Walsh about her experience. She has been to other high school dances such as the Holly Ball, Prom, and in the future - Senior Dinner Dance. Walsh told me that, "as a dancer myself I'd say no dancing occurs - just bopping around. But overall

the "Cupid Shuffle," "Cotton-Eyed Joe," and "Single Ladies" get the most dancing to occur, I'd say." As a dancer myself, I personally can agree.

Walsh thought a mix of boys and girls dance. She thought that the freshmen don't always know what to expect at a school dance. In her opinion, high school dances are much more popular than middle school dances. Walsh has never gone to a dance with a date; she goes to have fun with her friends.

My final recommendation is to ask someone to dance or go with you. Even if it's just a friend, you can always have fun.



Everyone was on the dance floor having a good time! I do remember that I asked a boy to dance in middle school, and my advice to everyone is to simply risk it and ask! What's the worst they could say? No? That isn't such a big deal. You'll live.

I asked other sophomores about their experiences at the soirée. The first student I asked was Tommy Biette, a sophomore class officer. He has only been to the Sophomore Soirée at the high school. He feels that mostly popular songs were played at the dance, but that his personal favorite was the dance that goes along with the song, "Watch Me," which is called the whip and nae nae. Biette thought there were both girls

thought the Sophomore Soirée was relatively normal. There was a ton of dancing and everyone had a fun time. He added that if anyone wants to dance with someone, they should just ask them. As for going with a date, Biette said that you don't need someone to go with in order to have a good time.

According to sophomore Brad Fitzgerald, there was a mix of music at the dance between country and rap. His favorite song that played would be "Broadway Girls" by Lil Durk feat. Morgan Wallen. He felt that the girls and boys danced equally, but he also thought that there was pressure for couples to dance at the event. He thinks

HUMOR

MY FELLOW GRADUATES...

What follows is the graduation speech I submitted, and which was rejected by the Averill Park administration. Fortunately, the staff at The Chronicle has agreed to publish it.

by Earl Potash

It is my honor to welcome all the students, families and faculty to this very special day at Averill Park. For those of you graduating, and that includes me (thank you credit recovery and social promotion), you have made it. And for everyone else, know that you made an impact on the graduates who sit here today. Some of us even may appreciate what you've done.

Usually at this point, a graduation speech devolves into a long-winded anecdote of perseverance and success, or a misguided metaphor equating school to shopping at Hannaford, but I don't have any of those. Instead, I want to get a few things off my chest; gripes and observations that I've been storing up since 2019.

First, I am so sick of sitting at wobbly desks on hard little seats purchased in 1968. We students were basically put on "the rack" from the Spanish Inquisition every day over these past four years. Even the poor faculty have to put up with this; remember when teachers were "allowed" to enter a raffle to win new chairs and desks, with only ten winners, leading to that bloody fistfight in the math department? To make matters worse, when called

into the assistant principal's offices (not that I ever was there – this is from hearsay only), they have all new luxurious furniture, including freakin' electric desks (for real – it's like you're watching the deck of an aircraft carrier rise up). My first purchase after

lent of the Bubonic plague. They told us to be safe, then encouraged group work? They also tried to keep our spirits up in useless ways. I never could figure out how to unsubscribe from those electronic "Daily Acts of Kind-

ness" blasts. The one that finally led to my personal hospital stay (and it wasn't for COVID) was an email suggestion to "deliver some wonton soup to someone when they're down." What the...?

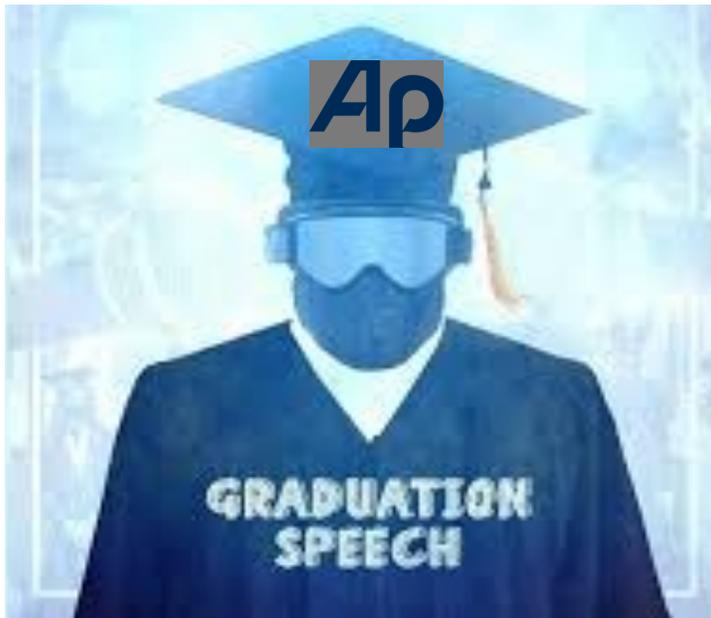
to school, the pandemic led to a loosening of rules around here. COVID changed a lot; I would say it even changed things for the better. It gave me a somewhat reasonable excuse to cover up my acne-ridden face. And who needs to bother brushing their teeth when you have a mask on all day? The best was, if I ever needed a "break," I'd just say I was exposed to someone. "Voila," instant quarantine mini-vacation.

Heck, I even used to get detention for wearing a hat indoors. Some nonsense about manners, or something.

As for my future, things are looking rosy. The "pass/fail" semesters allowed me to graduate on time, and though I don't have a job or college lined up, New York legalized both gambling and marijuana in the past year, so I'll have plenty to do. It also helps that my parents failed to rent out my basement room to anyone (believe me, they tried). I'll probably turn into one of those former students who hangs out in the junior parking lot around release time.

Your own future should be a piece of cake as well, after what you've had to put up with. I mean, after figuring out how to manage the alternate A/B attendance during COVID, a roadside DWI stop will seem like child's play.

So, take all of your collected knowledge and leave Averill Park knowing you survived the four most difficult years of your life...so far



today is going to be an overstuffed LazyBoy.

Something else I won't miss - asking permission to go to the bathroom. My own cat doesn't have to do that. And now, thanks to technology, students are *timed* doing it! Got to love data collection.

And how about the fire alarms? After walking by those, not only won't I hear my own children when I'm older, I don't even think I'm going to be *able* to have children.

That leads to Averill Park during the pandemic, when the kid sitting next to you could have been carrying the equiva-

lent of the Bubonic plague. They told us to be safe, then encouraged group work? They also tried to keep our spirits up in useless ways. I never could figure out how to unsubscribe from those electronic "Daily Acts of Kind-

ness" blasts. The one that finally led to my personal hospital stay (and it wasn't for COVID) was an email suggestion to "deliver some wonton soup to someone when they're down." What the...?

COVID wasn't all bad, though. Learning from home was a hoot. I had a refrigerator handy at all times, I wasn't assigned homework, and my teachers had no way of knowing when my volume was all the way off during class.

And lest you forget, even when we finally returned

SO...YOUR PARENT IS A TEACHER? A TEACHER AT HOME MAKES THINGS INTERESTING

by Cooper Smith

You've had a busy day at school. Between a test in one subject and a group project in another, you're ready to get home and relax, far from anything school related. But once you open your front door you find inside your home... another teacher?

This is how many of my fellow students imagine the lives of those among their peers with teachers as parents. While not an everyday scenario, it's not uncommon for a student to have a teacher as a parent, as it is relatively common among teachers to have families. Despite its commonality, this scenario raises many questions: Can the parent/teacher help their children with schoolwork? What if a student is assigned to their parent's class? How does this job affect family life?

Yours truly, in fact, has a teacher as a parent. My mother has been teaching middle school, high school, and college-level Spanish since 1999. I've known about her profession

since I was very young, but it hasn't made much of a difference in my life during the school year; I haven't taken

summer is obvious: since my mother was out of school with us, we would have more time to do things. Because of this, I

my mother take care of us when both she and dad were at work? This problem was solved when my mother decided to bring me (and sometimes my little sister) to school with her. I would sit in the back of the classroom drawing and sometimes doing Spanish worksheets (with the help of my mom). I would also go into the staff room and play on the computer. Frankly, it was a pretty sweet deal!

So in the end, while it's interesting to imagine how it'd be to have a teacher as a parent, in reality, it doesn't make much of a difference in a student's day-to-day life. Although you'd get more time with your parents on weekends and summers, the school year would be mostly normal. And so there's no need to worry about your peers in this scenario; when we go home, it's not just another class to us.



her subject until this year and haven't been assigned to my mother's class, as she teaches in a different district (and even if she didn't, districts have systems to avoid assigning a student and their parent together). The only time my mother's career has affected me is during the end of the school year and summer.

The effect of her job on my (and my siblings')

always fondly remember summers as a time where my siblings and I would go daily to the playground or lake or some other fun place.

More interestingly, though, is the effect on the end of the school year. When I was in elementary school, school would end for the summer a few days before my mother's workplace at the middle school did. This presented a dilemma: how would

HEY, ISN'T THAT...? RUNNING INTO STUDENTS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

by Laylah Hodgson

The school day is over, which means no more classes, Chromebook screens, or teachers...what a relief! Except...wait...why is your teacher at the grocery store? Most of us know that dreadful feeling of seeing a teacher outside of school, but have you ever thought of how the teacher must feel to see you, a student?

I asked a few teachers how it feels seeing a student outside of school. "Usually it

takes a moment to figure out who they are because I don't see them in their



'normal context,'" said Mr. Strich, an English teacher. "I usually say hi, and if they are with their parents I'll introduce myself."

Mrs. Yost, the APHS librarian, said she is "happy" and "excited" when she sees one of her students out and about.

But how do you, a student, feel when you see a teacher outside of school? One student said, "I back away and pretend I don't see them. It depends on what teacher it is."

Another student said, "I feel a little weird seeing my teacher, but I know they're just people and it's

weird for them to see me too."

Sometimes we can forget that our teachers have lives outside of teaching us. They want to go and play arcade games at Dave and Busters or shop at the mall with their families and friends, too!

I asked some teachers where they go after school. "I go to Han-naford," science teacher Mrs. Oldendorf said. Strich said, "Sometimes I'll stop

ART TEACHER TO PUBLISH BOOK

MR. KLINE'S EFFORTS AND TALENTS LEAD TO

by Braelen Kline

The Averill Park High School art department has its first Children's Picture Book author/illustrator, art teacher Mr. Kline. Kline has been working tirelessly to deliver this new work of art, entitled *Finding Fire*, which is set to be released this September.

Finding Fire is a nearly wordless picture book about a young prehistoric boy who must find fire somewhere in the wilds for his tribe, as they have not discovered the secret to making fire. The boy faces off against dangers ranging from raging rivers to snarling, vicious, saber-tooth cats to deliver fire to his tribe.

When asked how he developed, designed, and created this book, Kline said "It starts off with traditional media like graphite, Ink and oil paint, then those images are scanned, assembled and altered digitally."

His inspiration for creating this book came from a few things. "I was interested in human evolution and the migration out of Africa, and I have been

With the idea for the story roughed out, Kline started on the road to getting a publisher. Mind you, this is no easy feat. He had previously tried to

"dummy book," which basically is a really rough draft that you send to a company to be looked at.

"The dummy book took about two years," said Kline.

When he got the call that his favorite company, Candlewick Press, had agreed to publish it, Kline was ecstatic. "It was my dream come true. The fact that it was even being published was exciting, and I would have been happy with anybody. Before we saw any numbers I was ready to go with it."

The entire book took around five years, from the first sketch of the boy, all through design, writing, and illustrating. "It took much longer than I thought it would" said Kline, who had originally planned for a shorter, faster paced, less detailed version of the book. Since some of the illustrations needed to be more realistic and detailed, in the spirit of consistency everything was made highly detailed.

When asked what themes he would like to be taken away from his work, Kline said that he wanted it to be an adventure story, with all the elements of courage, self-reliance, and the power of friendship.

The book will be published near the start of the next school year, so anyone with younger siblings, or parents who want to read to you again, or anyone just wanting to read a good adventure story, watch your local bookstores for *Finding Fire* by Mr. Kline.



like that since I was a kid—in the fifth grade I did a science project on human evolution. So that's been with me for a long time," said Kline. Additionally, "I was fascinated by fire making, and even practiced primitive fire making." Finally, he says: "I'm a children's illustrator, so that naturally coalesced into a sketch of a Paleolithic boy, and I thought because of my sort of causal knowledge of human history, I knew there was a time when we were using fire, but did not know how to make it, and I thought what a great adventure that would be to send this vulnerable, skinny, little boy into a prehistoric environment with mammoths and saber-tooth cats with all sorts of dangers in big, epic landscapes,"

make a children's book, but all the publishers he went to turned it down. Another thing to keep in mind is, you have to create something called a



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

**Go to the APHS
webpage, click on
the high school
link, and then
click on the news
link found on the
right side.**

-In Color-

YOU'LL BE MISSED

LONG-TIME NEWSPAPER ADVISOR GETS INTERVIEWED

Note — Student writers from the journalism club interviewed Mr. Strich at their April 6 meeting and created an article showcasing the new discoveries.

by Members of the Averill Park Journalism Club

Mr. Strich of the English department is set to retire this year, leaving his 19 year position at Averill Park after 34 years of teaching in total.

In his many years of teaching, Strich has not only taught in Averill Park and the United States, but he has also taught abroad - two additional countries in total. His first year abroad he decided that he didn't want to go somewhere too foreign and wanted to speak English. These guidelines brought him to Norway, which he finds is similar to northern New York. His second time abroad, Strich wanted to go to the most exotic place he could get to, unlike his first time. This brought him to Turkey. These opportunities were afforded to Strich through the U.S. Fulbright Program, and he is very grateful for the experiences he had abroad. You can even find some of them on his blog!

As for his time spent in Averill Park, Strich said his favorite lessons to teach are group projects, but only if, "people are invested and actually apply themselves." He noted that not having to grade essays will be a much-anticipated perk of retirement.

For Strich, his philosophy is that a teaching unit is only as successful as student engagement, and shares that he purposely tries to teach stories that students find intriguing. He

says that a student's continued interest in a particular subject outside of class time has been one of the most rewarding experiences in his teaching. As for his personal preferences in the curriculum, he says that his favorite book to teach has been a



"collection of short stories," and that there is not one book that he's found to be his favorite.

However, in regard to Strich's favorites, going back to his high school days, *Lord of the Rings* was a book he held in high regard, as well as *Siddhartha*. On the other hand, Strich did not enjoy Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* in ninth grade (but understands it better now).

Throughout his life, Strich has always had an interest in English. "I always liked English." As a kid he was an avid reader, and through his many college major changes, English remained a constant. He began as a double major of physics and English,

changed. Strich found assurance in his occupation; "I'm glad I was a teacher, I couldn't imagine doing anything else."

In retirement, Strich says he may finally take the plunge and purchase a cellphone (something students have been pushing for a long time) but he has yet to do it. He also plans on spending more time focused on music, as he plays bass in a few bands. Drawing on inspiration from 60s style groups, he plans to continue with this hobby and relax following the intensity of constant grading he has had to maintain throughout his career. He will also be leaving his position as advisor of the Journalism Club, and says about his successor that he has no specific preference as to who takes the spot, but he expects a decision to be made before the end of the school year.

In heading the group, Strich said the load of work assumed in a small period of time can be the most challenging, and controversial articles can occasionally cause issues, but he's going to miss, "the interaction with students and seeing them grow and learn."

Then there's Strich and his juice — the dynamic duo that his students know all too well. Strich is commonly spotted with his water bottle or a juice carton of his colorful beverage, but no one has ever known exactly what it is. So the question still stands: what is his favorite juice? Well, upon his retirement, Strich has decided to release the highly coveted information. His favorite juice, of all time, is Juicy Juice Kiwi Strawberry.

then changed to English and philosophy and then economics, but ultimately stuck with English.

Though English has always been his vocation, there were some doubts along the way. As a teacher, he observed other occupations making more money and having more free time, which made him doubt if teaching was really what he wanted to do for the rest of his life. Over time, that

BUSY, BUSY, BUSY

OWNER OF JUNE FARMS SHOWS THE "CAN-DO" SPIRIT

Note – This article was written as a collaborative effort during a 30 minute in-person Journalism Club meeting on May 18.

by Members of the Averill Park Journalism Club

Some people sit back and let life pass them by. Others are doers. And then there's Matt Baumgartner. "Take all the opportunities and chances you can," he said at a recent Journalism Club meeting, "you'll get a fun life for doing so."

Baumgartner certainly has lived his life to the fullest. After growing up in Utica, attending Union college (where he was good friends with Ms. Mouzakes), and earning a bachelor's degree in economics, he went to work for G.E., but realized after just a few years that the typical 9 to 5 job schedule wasn't for him.

"I used to feel like I was drowning," he said. Even before quitting at G.E., an opportunity presented itself when Baumgartner won money in a casino and used it to open a burrito takeout restaurant - Bomber's Burrito Bar. That was just the start. He opened numerous additional restaurants and business from there, including four Wolff's Biergarten's, The Olde English Pub, The Little Rice Ball, and most recently, June Farms in West Sand Lake.

"I really swing the bat as often as I could, and I have no regrets for doing so," he said of his life choices.

Asked how he ended up in West Sand Lake, Baumgartner said "I rented a cabin on Burden Lake and really enjoyed it out here...I love it out here"

As for June Farms, "It is the crown jewel of my professional life," said Baumgartner. "It makes me happy because it makes other people happy." He admitted that

shared. "I think that being an entrepreneur is in my spirit, it's just something I enjoy doing; I enjoy the challenge." The challenge led to some of the more popular

would say that the restaurants I own are very fun...they all have a specific theme, but they don't feel generic."

Baumgartner also admits to pushing himself quite a bit. "I don't think I'm a workaholic," he said, and then thought for a moment, before adding, "...I guess maybe I am a workaholic." The running of many businesses at once would demand a lot of attention, but Baumgartner has been up to the task. "I am working quite a lot - I'll answer a phone call at any hour," he said. "I don't have set hours off."

Perhaps due to this, in recent years, Baumgartner has sold off many of his businesses, including his first - Bomber's. "I actually thought that it would be more sad to me, but it actually felt really exhilarating to me. I felt lighter not having as many responsibilities."

According to Baumgartner, some businesses didn't make it, though most he decided to sell off. He said he'd gone through many types of jobs, from a clothing store, to a newspaper, to a restaurant, and now a farm. He had "moved past" college bars, and advocates getting "rid of it (a business holding) if it feels overwhelming...I want to keep it light and fun, so I want to get rid of what isn't fun in my life."

"After this summer, I won't have any more bars and restaurants except for June Farms...I don't want things that add stress to my life," he said, claiming "the greatest challenge of my career has been managing the stress." Busy as he's been, relaxation has been hard to come by over the years. "Taking time off even if it's just watching *Real House-*



running June Farms has been challenging and forces him to be "constantly moving, but that is what makes it enjoyable, it's a lot of good things going on all the time...there's always something fun to make it exciting."

Baumgartner's upbringing may have influenced him turning into such an entrepreneur. "My dad was a plumbing supply salesman, but didn't seem to love his job...and I didn't want to do that 9-5 routine...and mom ran a daycare business out of our house, so there were a bunch of kids running in and out."

"I am a serial entrepreneur at heart," he

establishments in the area.

"I think people have fun in those places, and that is the goal," Baumgartner said. His formula for success was not what you might expect. "I didn't do much marketing researching, I kinda' just went for it," he said. For example, he had played soccer through high school, college and beyond, and living in New York City "there was a soccer bar around the corner...it seemed like an easy bar to run." When it came time to start Wolff's Biergarten, "I don't do market research, but it seemed like a good idea at the time." Importantly to Baumgartner, "I

(continued on page 21)

FACULTY AND STAFF BREAKFAST RETURNS APCSD FAMILIES SHOW TEACHER APPRECIATION

The annual Faculty and Staff Appreciation Breakfast, which was not held the last two years thanks to the pandemic, was held on the morning of May 11 due to the generosity and efforts of some dedicated APHS parents.

Mr. Quiles, the principal of the high school, said administration spent some of their time on April 29, when school was cancelled due to a lack of bus drivers, to reach out “to activate our current parents to continue the tradition of the annual May Teacher and Staff Appreciation Breakfast.”

Quiles said before the breakfast that “We are happy to share that the idea

has taken off with gusto among a pretty large group of parents.”



A group of parents led and organized by Mrs. Geraci and Mrs. Nero, along with parents who meet at the Facebook Averill Park Parent Place. The breakfast itself was held in the high school cafeteria before school.

“It’s been a long year, and certainly a challenging few years overall, so we are very happy to see this event back on the table,” said Quiles. To the faculty and staff, he added, “You are an amazing group of professionals, at every level, and it’s wonderful to see, once again, that our

BAUMGARTNER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20)

wives, whatever I can do, to turn my brain off and escape.” When asked about his hobbies, he responded “What’re my hobbies? I have no idea...I have no hobbies.”

Though it’s another service industry business, Baumgartner doesn’t plan on selling June Farms, saying that even if he had the money from selling, he values the happiness he gets from the farm.

“I think because it’s seasonal,” he said. Baumgartner said seasonal restaurants are “the dream job” for many people because they don’t have to be there 365 days a year. While May through December is incredibly busy at June Farms, he can go to Miami for the rest of the year. It’s this type of business, one that allows him to have a fun personal life as well as a fun working life, that now makes him the happiest.

Along the way, Baumgartner has not shied

from controversy. There was the full billboard ad he posted on I-787 targeting those in government to support gay marriage. “It felt really disrespectful to me,” said Baumgartner about the inability at the time for those of the same sex to legally marry. “I thought it was important to call people out for their votes.”

The pandemic also garnered Baumgartner some attention, this time unwanted, all due to his decision to admit only vaccinated individuals to the Berlin Lounge in Troy during the height of the pandemic.

“The Berlin is teeny inside,” he said. “Having only people who were vaccinated felt like the best choice. He said that a church in the south found out about his decision and “it spread from there,” leading to an influx of phone calls, emails and more. “I had a couple death threats; it was crazy,” he said.

Now that he has sold off most of his businesses and the pandemic is wan-

ing, Baumgartner said his daily life is different from last year. His routine seems more manageable, consisting of waking, going to a gym in Latham, going to June Farms, dealing with airbnb guests and weddings, feeding the animals, and answering phone calls; it all depends on where the day takes him, but generally the things he has to do dictate the course of his day.

There’s a possibility this will all change for Baumgartner and June Farms, as a pilot was created for a reality show based on the location. Previously, the idea was to create a television show about Baumgartner and a friend (about the various businesses he owned, etc.), but his friend backed out. Baumgartner was then introduced to a producer in Los Angeles who filmed a short teaser of what a June Farm’s show would be about (called a “sizzle reel”) and pitched it to a panel. June Farms was filmed for a television spot and a channel agreed to host the show,

which if successful, will have another 10 episodes added to the series.

Baumgartner said the idea of being in a TV series makes him “anxious, but also excited for it.” He agreed to do it (“because, why not?”) and is slightly nervous about what it could do to the farm in terms of bad press, and what the exposure could do to his personal life.

June Farms seems to be his priority right now, though, whether it becomes a television series or not. When asked if he plans on remaining at June Farms, Baumgartner said, “Yeah... I mean definitely,” and couldn’t think of “anything that would make me any close to as happy as I am there.”

He’s not done working on it, though. “My goal ultimately is to expand the cabins there, and only do events.”

Lastly, when asked for advice he’d give, Baum-

(continued on page 22)

JUST THE BEGINNING

MANY SENIORS PLANNING TO CONTINUE IN SPORTS AFTER APHS

by Emily Prest and Riley O'Brien

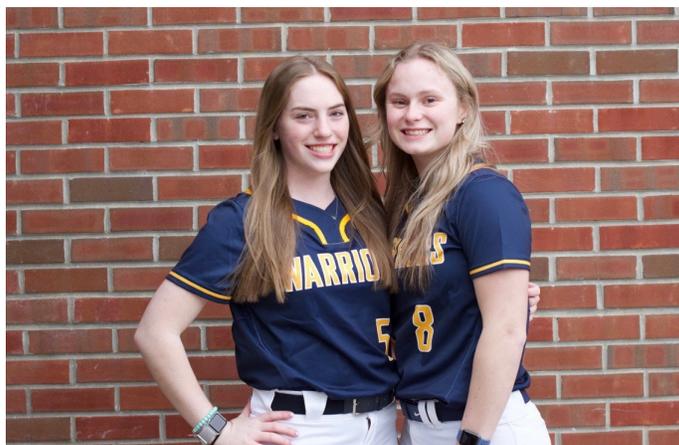
Just over 7% of high school athletes go on to play sports in college. Seniors Abbey Nagel and Bella Mahar are just two out of the twelve athletes at Averill Park who are choosing to continue their athletic career in college. Nagel and Mahar allowed us to ask them some questions to discuss their college decision process and what impact their sport and Averill Park had on it. Nagel is a 5-year varsity player on the AP softball team and Mahar has been a part of the varsity volleyball team since her sophomore year. They are both the definition of student athletes; they show many strengths not only on the court and the field but also in the classroom.

Out of the 7% of student athletes that continue on in college, only 1.8% of them play Division 1. Nagel will be a part of that 1.8%. She plans on attending The University of Buffalo in the fall of 2022 and is undecided on her major.

There were many reasons why Nagel chose to go to Buffalo, "I love the Buffalo area and have been going there since I was little. My family lives there and I wanted to be closer to them."

Nagel has been a part of the AP varsity softball team since she was in

eighth grade. She grew up playing softball with many of her teammates that now play with her in high school. If she wasn't playing with them out-



side of school, she would be in the classroom learning with them. "I will miss the teammates that I grew up playing with when I was younger," she told us when asked what she will miss the most about the softball program.

Nagel also had the rare opportunity to win a New York State Championship with her team in 2015. "My favorite moment of my AP softball career was winning Sectionals and being able to be a part of the team that went all the way to win the state final," Nagel said.

As Nagel's high school days wound down, she was looking to bring home another Sectional Championship for the 2022 season, but the team came up short.

Mahar is a two-

sport athlete at Averill Park, playing softball and volleyball. She plans on majoring in nursing at St. John Fisher College, while also playing

both sports. "Fisher has an amazing nursing program, and the class size is perfect for me. Best of all, the sports teams were a perfect fit," she said when asked why she chose Fisher.

Mahar was a team captain during the 2021 volleyball season and wanted to leave an impact on the program after she left. We asked what she would miss most about home and Averill Park sports. "I will miss my friends and family the most and all of the amazing memories I have made here. AP Volleyball was a huge part of my life and I am going to miss meeting new people every year and expanding my comfort zone," she said.

In the 2021 season, Mahar had a total of 113

digs (this is when a defensive move is made to prevent the other team from scoring), with a personal record of 22 against Shaker. Out of the five awards given out at this year's banquet, Mahar earned the MVP award, which shows just how committed she was to bringing the team together, even when it didn't result in success on the court, "My favorite moments were team bonding and getting to know each and every one of my teammates. As much as I love winning, nothing beats team bonding."

Mahar has also been a part of the National Honor Society in her senior year and joined the Student Athletic Advisory Council (SAAC) in her junior year. Bella hopes that she left a lasting impact on her younger teammates so that the AP volleyball team is constantly improving in sight of a hopeful Sectional championship in the future.

Something unique about Averill Park sports is the sense of community that each team shares. With AP being a smaller school, it provides opportunities for everyone to encourage each other in sports and academics. Mahar and Nagel have both shown their commitment and leadership to their respective teams, which allows for community members to come together and show support for all Averill Park athletics. Their contributions to our school have set the bar high for incoming seniors and their impact will last for those following in their footsteps.

BAUMGARTNER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21)

gartner offered a quick list: "Buy property as soon as you can; travel; don't feel pressure to go to college as soon as you can; don't do drugs; enjoy as much of life as you

can until real life problems catch up to you...In a blink of an eye, you're forty...then fifty...then sixty..."

While Baumgartner is not near there yet, he cer-

tainly has put in as much work it would take most of us sixty or more years to accomplish. Hopefully, June Farms can bring him the relaxation he desires. Though this may be

hard for someone who has lived this motto, openly stating, "I really don't like sitting still...I enjoy the challenges of opening businesses."

MENTAL HEALTH AND COLLEGE SPORTS

PRESSURE TO DO WELL TAKES ITS TOLL

by Simone Schwarz-Eise

How many lives of student athletes will it take until the NCAA acknowledges the mental health crisis happening within their own franchise? NCAA athletes face extreme pressures and high expectations they must meet on and off the field. In the classroom, they must be as focused as every other student that attends their university. On the field, some must maintain a starting position, and others work just to make the list of players who are rostered for away games. For the 2% of high school athletes who make it to the Division I level, their status does not come at a cheap price.

Most people who are not closely affiliated with Division I athletics aren't aware of the struggles these athletes face. They understand the detrimental impact a physical injury can have on an athlete, but they don't see the psychological struggle a lot of these athletes face. Not only does it affect their ability to perform on the field, but it impacts their everyday lives. It has taken lives ending for this crisis to become a headline. You may recognize names such as Katie Meyer, Jayden Hill, Robert Martin, Sarah Shulze and Lauren Bernett. All of them are Division I athletes who died by suicide over recent months. All five student athletes were known as star students and beloved athletes at their very respectable universities.

Sarah Shulze was a Cross Country and Track and Field runner for The University of Wisconsin. "In the classroom, Sarah was a top-notch student. On the track, Sarah was a fierce competitor who was absolutely electric and

continually pushed herself to be great. Off the track, Sarah was a gentle and kind soul, a loving daughter, sister, friend and human who will be dearly missed by those who knew her and loved her," said University of Wisconsin athletic director Tim Chevalier in a

had a lot going on, but she was happy. She was in great spirits."

On average, a Division I student-athlete spends 20 hours a week practicing, lifting, conditioning, getting treatment, and watching film. This is about 2–4 hours a day



statement to *USA Today*.

Katie Meyer, who passed away on March 1, 2022, helped the Stanford Women's soccer team win the National Championship in 2019. Meyer made two key penalty saves in the penalty shootout which made Stanford the national champions. Meyer was known as the "face of Stanford athletics" and was a "strong, outgoing and confident young woman and role model," said her mother Gina Meyer in an interview with the *Today Show*, days after Katie's passing. "There is anxiety and there is stress to be perfect, to be the best, to be number one. She had a lot on her plate, she

depending on the sport the athlete plays and whether they are in season or in the off-season. Being a student athlete at a top level Division I university is a strenuous, high stakes job. On top of spending 20 hours a week focusing on sports, there is the need to study as well. The average college student spends 10-13 hours a week studying outside of class. There is also the time students spend in class, taking exams, and attending various other school events. This leaves little time for a student athlete to focus on something other than school and sports.

What does the NCAA do for this? At this point, the

NCAA has left it up to the schools themselves, or the conference the school participates in, to have programs to help student athletes cope with daily mental health struggles. I believe the NCAA should do more. At a minimum, a platform should be made available to every NCAA athlete that gives them confidential and free remote or in-person 24/7 support to help them manage the stressful life of being a student athlete.

The NCAA has not reacted since the recent passing of these five student athletes this spring. In 2021 the NCAA released a statement saying, "The NCAA can initiate its own programs, while also mandating that individual schools incorporate mental health days into their training programs. If coaches can somehow fit a 40-hour week into the 20-hour rule, they can fit in a mental health day for their team." Based upon the recent suicides and heightened levels of mental distress amongst college students overall, more guidance should be called for.

There are universities that have begun to take this crisis into their own hands. Schools such as USC, University of Pennsylvania, Oregon State University and The University of Wisconsin have begun showing their support for their student athletes through social media, in person discussions, and programs available on campus for their athletes. Oregon State University's SAAC program (Student-Athlete-Advisory-Council) began the #DAMWorthIt campaign.

(continued on page 24)

GOING THE DISTANCE

THE TIES THAT BIND THE GIRLS' DISTANCE TEAM

by Paula De Andres

Anticipation. The gun fires. You first hear a shuffling of feet on the track, and then see the runners competing for the prize - a medal, or in most cases, a personal record.

The Averill Park girls distance track team is an extraordinary group of people, - and a small one at that. There are a mere 9 girls who compete as distance runners. On top of their limited numbers, two runners, Taylor South and Logan Barsalow, have been out with injuries. This left the team extremely short-handed

and required the able-runners to work twice as hard.

However, with Coach Gobel and ambition running high, the team pulled through with several wins. They placed second in the section behind Burnt Hills, a huge accomplishment for the Averill Park team.

Due to their small numbers, the team is looking to recruit, and gave several pieces of insight as to why distance is the side of track you should join. If joining track enters your thoughts, you are faced with two main options: distance or sprints. While sprinting is an acceptable route, distance is an even better way to go.

The first thing most people look for in a sport is a physical challenge. People regard distance running as a more difficult sport, but after tough workouts, you end up feeling satisfied and willing to challenge yourself even more

next time. From workouts like 400 repeats to fast-

sounds, here at AP, this could not ring more true.



There are several "traditions" that the team participates in. Most long runs start out with a so-called "tea session," which involves sharing the interesting news of the day. Problem solving and advice giv-

paced tempo runs, you are never left searching for a more demanding way to spend your time. Additionally, especially in cross country, you have the opportunity to see the beautiful environment around you on the more calm, nature-filled distance runs.

While the track team excels at running, their true strength lies in the friendships. The sport of running is often referred to as a way of bringing people together and as cheesy as it



ing (apparently even when not asked for) is a critical part of this process. When there is nothing to share from the day, they often discuss future plans or running techniques. As mundane as that sounds, for the members of the distance team this is the most

important part of their day. Distance running is so crucial for the mental health of the runners and as relayed to me, when left without it for too long, the members of the team often get upset. Luckily, distance can be a year-long sport so the necessary runs live on.

The distance team has morphed from a small group of friends to a tight knit family. Team bonding is a vital part of the distance experience and one they take very seriously. The team is always supporting each other and you will often find yourself surrounded by friends. From having brunch in a diner booth, to (on a more odd note) lying on the ground together after a hard workout, the friendships you will create will no doubt last a lifetime. Putting others down or excluding someone is simply something that is not accepted by the team.

In an attempt to be unbiased, the girl's team wished to express that the sprinting team also has a lot to offer, as well as the field events in track such as throwing and jumps.

An extra thank you to the girls' distance track team for happily contributing to this article.

To close off, the distance team left a statement for APHS students: "We encourage everyone to try out this incredible sport. If you are interested, please join the Cross Country team and run with us to experience these joys." However, the team told me in a joking manner, "...only if we like you."

The Averill Park Chronicle

The Best In New York State

Wood Garners Player Of The Year, Becomes APHS Leading Scorer

by Elizabeth Aiossa

Amelia Wood has been a prominent player on the Girls' Varsity Basketball team for the past five years, and her senior season was nothing short of incredible. She was a senior captain that pushed every player on the team to be their best and helped to lead the team through an amazing season, winning the class A New York State title and ending the season with a 25-2 record. In the state final game she dropped 20 points and gathered 20 rebounds, which not only led the team to victory, but also broke the previous Averill Park all-time leading scorer's record of 1537.

Wood is now the all-time leading scorer with a total of 1544 points in her



five-year varsity career.

Earlier in the season, Wood was the first pick for the News Channel 13 All-Star Team. She was also named Athlete of the Year for the *Times Union*, as 2nd team All American, and New York State Class A Player of the Year.

Wood has been around basketball since she was a toddler; she's been going to her sister's practices for as long as she can remember. "Basketball has always been the sport I loved since day one. My dad played basketball, so he would constantly make me go out in the driveway to shoot and play with my older sisters," Wood stated. This season, she played all over

(continued on page 24)

LOWEST GRADE

IN SCHOOL

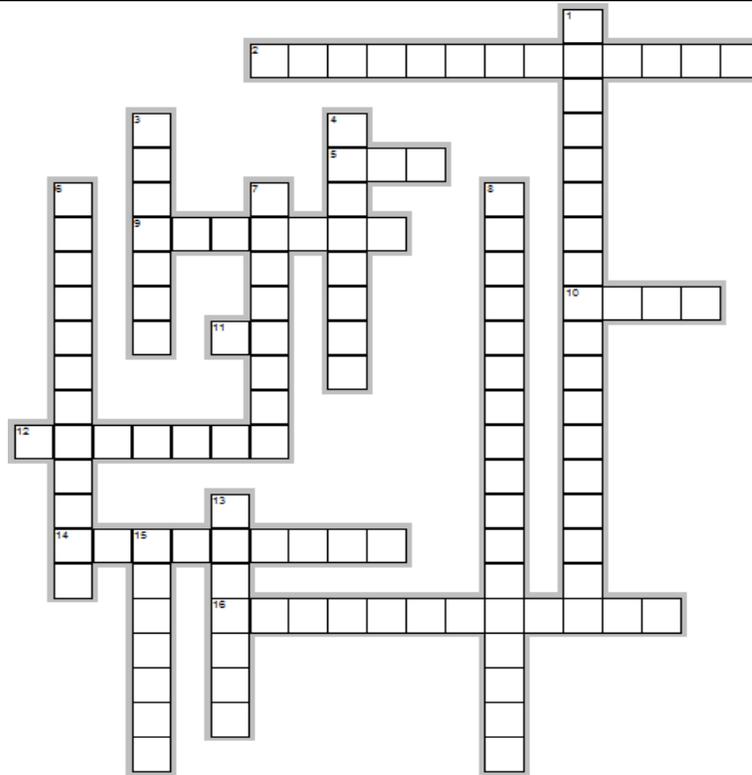
CROSSWORD

Match the STAFF MEMBERS with their

LOWEST GRADE IN SCHOOL

- ART
- BIOLOGY
- BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
- CALCULUS
- CHEMISTRY
- EARTH SCIENCE
- ENGLISH
- GEOMETRY
- HISTORY
- MATH
- PASCAL PROGRAMMING
- PE
- PHYSICS
- SCIENCE
- SOCIAL STUDIES
- TRIGONOMETRY

NOTE—Don't skip spaces in puzzle



Down

1. Dutcher M.
3. Gierthy
4. Hunter
6. Fox, Keegan
7. Bailey
8. Engel B.
13. Oldendorf
15. Malenfant, Miller V., Rees

Across

2. Emmons, Panzaro
5. Fairchild
9. Glunk
10. Engel S., Fink, Minkler, Pollock, Porter
11. Miller T.
12. Quesnell
14. Strich
16. Perry, Quiles, Schmidt