

# PULSE

## NEW COURSE OFFERINGS

Want to learn about how to predict the weather? Draw fashion designs or create videos art? Live a longer, healthier life? You may be able to study these and other subjects next year. When students go to sign up for their course selections this spring, they'll have many new choices to pick from. Twelve new courses have been approved by the Averill Park administration for the 2017-18 school year.

The following half-year semester courses have been approved: Advanced Photography, Exploring Longevity through Health and Nutrition, Fashion Design Illustration, Global Cinema Studies, Public Speaking and Scientific Illustration.

The following are full year courses being offered: AP Statistics, Career Exploration

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## CHANGING OF THE GUARD DR. HOFFMAN TO RETIRE AT YEAR'S END; NEW SUPERINTENDENT NAMED



by Abby Vandenberg

Think change. Starting next school year, there will be a new captain at the helm of Averill Park Central School District. School Superintendent Dr. James Hoffman has announced his retirement, making way for Dr. James



Franchini, someone who has previous experience with the ins and outs of Averill Park. Most staff members will fondly remember Dr. Hoffman; they might even recall his very first day here at Averill Park back in 2012 when, in the first minutes of a meeting in the auditorium, he intro-

duced himself to his new colleagues with a song performed on the piano by none other than himself.

Growing up, Hoffman had dreamed of becoming a rock and roll star. Although his plans may have been diverted along the way, we here at Aver-

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## AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION STATE MANDATED TESTS SHOW EVIDENCE OF LEAD IN SOME WATER SOURCES

by Arlyss Herzig

Averill Park Central School District recently had its water tested for lead contamination, and the results have just become available, showing there are traces of lead in some high school water sources.

In the high school, 36 sources have tested above the legal limit of 15 parts per billion (ppb). However,

“District-wide only three to four drinking sources [out of



over 700 that were tested] tested above the legal limit of

15 parts per billion, which is more stringent than the Federal level of 20 parts per billion,” explained district superintendent Dr. Hoffman.

Families will be receiving notification of any further advances in the situation. For further information and more specific details on the situation of the water at the high school, as well as

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## NHS INDUCTS LATEST MEMBERS

by Alex Van Der Kar

Averill Park High School's highest achieving students were recently recognized for their accomplishments at this year's National Honor Society Conference Induction Ceremony, held on October 26.

Despite what the name implies, the students who were awarded the title of a National Honor Society member are not only high



honor students, but are leaders and active members of their community.

"It was nice to be honored for all of my hard work throughout high school and to be recognized alongside my fellow classmates who worked just as hard as me," said new inductee senior Emily Haworth.

In order to be inducted into the NHS you must be nominated by a teacher who believes that you follow the

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## THE PLAY'S THE THING! UPCOMING WINTER ONE ACTS ANNOUNCED

by Isabella LaFreniere

The Off Broadway Players are proud to present their next production, Winter One Acts. One Acts are short, ten minute plays that can be about a multitude of topics. Winter One Acts are an opportunity for students to direct, act, and work backstage on their own plays.

"It's tradition! We do it every year!" said stage manager Rachel Koch. "It's really great because it's entirely student run. Students write the plays, they cast them, they direct them, and they're in them."

This year's production contains many plays, ranging from a murder mystery to teen dramas and many comedies. The cast and crew

of these one acts are excited to give life to these plays.

Currently, OBP needs people who are willing to sing or play instruments in between acts. Those interest-



ed should stop by the auditorium after school. Winter One acts will be held January 13 and 14 at 7 p.m. They look forward to seeing you there!

The Off Broadway Players are also preparing for this year's spring play, Char-

lotte's Web. For this production, elementary students will be coming up to partake in the fun. They will be playing little baby ducks and baby spiders and even sing a song

at the end.

"We thought the play would be really fun for everyone and we want to get the elementary school kids involved so they'll be comfortable in the high school when they get here," said Koch. The play is sure to bring lots of laughter and joy, and the cast and crew are already off to a hardworking start, wanting to put on the best version of the play possible.

The play is set to be performed on March 31 at 7 p.m. and April 1 at both 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

## WATER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

other schools in our district, visit <http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Does-your-child-s-school-have-lead-in-water-10154382.php>. For information about the implications of lead in water, visit <http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2508/>. As information comes in, it will be posted on the district website.

Aaron Heffner, APCSD's Director of Building and Grounds, said the water issues were "in areas never used, or very rarely." These areas include science lab sinks and bathroom faucets, where water is not ingested and therefore its risk is greatly diminished.

The high school kitchen did yield one area that failed the test, a "kettle" source in the school's kitchen

that was found to test above legal limits. This three-foot tall stationary kettle is essentially an "extremely large, two-layered kettle heated by steam," explained Karen Andriano, the APCSD Food Service Manager.

Students and staff were initially to be notified of the exact parts per billion numbers on December 9, but a discrepancy was found between information provided by two different testing companies, so the school district had the exact numbers verified before releasing them to the public on December 15.

Steps are already being taken to rectify this problem. Any water source that is found with contaminated water will have a specific, labeling sticker placed on it. According to the website pro-

vided above, any source with above the mandated 15 ppb must be shut off. Once the specific sources above the limit are verified, there are New York State guidelines to fix water issues. Heffner explained that an architect and engineer must formulate a remediation program, and all of the work must be "signed off and stamped by an engineer." He went on to explain that they must follow state guidelines, which could involve replacing faucets, fixtures, and piping, depending on the need.

"Though not required, we also tested to ensure that our levels of copper were within the legal limit as well," Hoffman mentioned. The results show "one drink-

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## CHANGES IN ATTENDANCE SYSTEM NEW APPROACH DESIGNED TO REACH PARENTS EARLIER

by Lilly Kronau

Think you can get out of class and get away with it? Think again. Averill Park High School has changed how it uses Synrevoice, the system that lets your parent know when you're absent from school.

The original version sent out calls at 6:00 p.m. in the evening, but it was flawed. It made parents uneasy because they did not know that their child was absent until they got home from work. Immediately the parent feared where their child was all day.

With this new version of Synrevoice, which the school began using on Halloween, parents are put more at ease. The system now notifies a household at 10:00

a.m. The program works simply by having a computer pull unexcused absences out (which means no notice from



the parent/guardian was sent in), and then parents get a call saying their student was not in school. Mrs. Pollock, the APHS attendance clerk,

said, "It's nice to know your child missed school earlier rather than 6:00 at night."

The early morning

lunch, so parents were aware their kids were not in school before 10:00 a.m. It also made room for late arrival students and it gave teachers more time to get attendance in efficiently.

When asked about who Synrevoice helps more, parents or students, Pollock says she thinks it helps the parents out more to know where their kids are. In the past two weeks at least three parents have called saying their kids are coming in.

As much as the new Synrevoice helps the parents and teachers, it also aides the students. For those students that skip, now their parents find out earlier before the day is over, so hopefully parents will be on top of the wherea-

time was suggested by Averill Park High School's principal, Mrs. Tsao. She thought 10:00 a.m. would be a good time because it is before

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## IMMERSE YOURSELF IN SPANISH: STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN DAY-LONG EXPERIENCE

by Rachel Gates

The Averill Park Spanish Department recently took ten students on a trip to an immersion day experience, where students had an opportunity to practice speaking Spanish through a variety of activities. The trip, which occurred on December 2, was held at the Carey Institute For Global Good in Rensselaerville.

When we arrived, all of the students, along with students from Coxsackie-Athens and Voorheesville, got split up into groups. Each group had someone from their school in it, which we liked because this way we



could all meet new people. "Some of my favorite parts were making new friends from different schools," said sophomore

Angela Thomas.

During the day we moved around to different rooms and did different activities that were Spanish-

themed. The first activity was where you had to translate a song and then afterwards sing it. The second activity involved dancing - you would learn Spanish dances and try them. The third was a game where your team had to write as much as you could in Spanish about a given topic. You would play three rounds. The group that didn't win had to do a "punishment" provided by the winning team. For the team I was on, we had to dance.

The last activity in the morning was a skit. Everyone got into a group of three and you had to use puppets and speak in Spanish. We

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# VISITING WASHINGTON...ON A MISSION

## THREE APHS STUDENTS ATTEND NATIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP MISSION

by Hannah Brisee

As part of an eight-member Albany delegation, three Averill Park juniors were involved in a prestigious event that will allow them to apply lessons from the Holocaust to modern-day issues of anti-Semitism, bigotry and hate. Hannah Brisee, Catherine Hannigan and Sarah Hemmerle attended the National Youth Leadership Mission held on November 13-16 in Washington D.C.

Once they arrived, the participants, who stayed at the Doubletree Hotel in Arlington, Virginia, had a large-group icebreaker to get to know one another. All three of them said how nice, welcoming, and accepting everyone was. There were also many one-hour to three-hour breakout sessions. Each delegate had a name tag with a certain color heart which assigned what breakout session room they were in. The colors consisted of blue, orange, green, yellow, and purple.

The second day, the delegates met Nesse Godin, who is a Holocaust survivor. She came to the mission to share her powerful story about her life and how she survived the Holocaust, and

she made it her big point that these students are the ones who will change the world. There was also a Washington,

there was an ADL Concert Against Hate at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts. The concert was well known

their feet and shared for what they believed in. Following each story there was a song played by the symphony orchestra relating to the story. The stories consisted of a woman who lost her leg when the bomb went off during the Boston Marathon, and after all of her hard dedication of being able to get a prosthetic leg she ran the marathon again. This was followed by a granddaughter whose grandfather got shot at a place of worship, a mother whose son got murdered at a gay club, and a police officer who went into an ongoing hostage crime without any backup or weapons.

Tuesday was the most emotional event and the focus point of the whole trip. It was the day for a trip to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. The museum consisted of four floors and served as a powerful message about before, during, and after the Holocaust. The feelings and sights that were seen are indescribable.

Later on that day, the students met a Rwandan genocide survivor named Eugenie Mukeshimana. Eugenie is a lot younger than Holocaust survivors, and she came

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D.C. walking tour where delegates were able to view all of the memorials and statues.

Later that night,

for people telling the stories of others who went through tough and unthinkable things, but who got right back up on

### **We Want Your IDEAS**

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

### ATTENDANCE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

bouts of his/her child and the student will realize they cannot get away with skipping school anymore.

"Synrevoice has gotten more good reviews than bad," said Pollock. One parent, Maureen Kronau says, "I like the comfort of knowing where my child is."

There are a few

problems with the new Synrevoice. When students come in to their first block class late, the teacher is required to mark them absent. Then the parents get the call saying their child is absent when they really aren't. This is bad for two reasons: 1) The parents get upset and 2) It does not

reflect well on the school system because, "We should know where every student is", said Pollock.

Most of these problems are working on being revised and changed, but it takes some time. For the most part the new Synrevoice is "very well organized," said Pollock.

## SUPERINTENDENT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

ill Park know that only a true rock star could have improved our school and community so much over the past five years. "I will miss working with the staff and students the most," said Hoffman. He said one thing is for sure, "Education is a team sport."

Going into retirement, Hoffman feels comfortable passing down his role to the very capable hands of

Franchini. Dr. Hoffman had just a few words of advice for the new superintendent: "Trust the staff" and, by all means, "Always put the kids first."

Mr. Messia, the current principal at Algonquin, is particularly excited about Franchini's return to Averill Park; he worked alongside Franchini as his assistant principal for two years at AMS

and confidently stated that "At Algonquin he was known for bringing a positive, can-do attitude to everything he did."

Just who is our new superintendent? For starters, his favorite color is blue. Also, Franchini has quite the passion for sports and athletics, be it watching, coaching his children's teams or simply keeping up to date or following teams. Throughout the

duration of his six years at AMS, Dr. Franchini recalled what a "great experience" it was and what a "supportive community" we have here at Averill Park.

Franchini said "Dr. Hoffman has already been extremely helpful" to him in preparation of his transition. Both men are ready for Franchini to "hit the ground running" come July.

## IMMERSION (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

used some old children's books to get our ideas for the skit. My group used *When You Give A Mouse A Cookie* the other group used *When You Take A Mouse To School*.

Then we got to eat lunch! We got to try various Spanish food; we had enchiladas, salad, rice, and churros for dessert.

After lunch, we were given name tags listing our name and a type of genre; there was romance, comedy, mystery, action, etc. Then we all got put in groups



and got to make a play. We got to use props and we reenacted it in front of the group. The play was all in Spanish

I was in the m y s t e r y group. Overall, our favorite was the action-themed play, done entirely

in Spanish.

After that, all the students were just spread out talking to the people we'd met and then we started doing Spanish dances, like the salsa (but we also did American dances). "My favorite part was the dancing and meeting new people," said sophomore Alyssa Jacon.

Overall the trip was a lot of fun as well as a great learning experience, and all of us would go again.

## WASHINGTON (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

to share her story how if ordinary people had not offered a hand to help, she wouldn't be where she is today. The centerpiece of her whole speech was "see something, do something."

During meals, delegations would sit together; however there were some mix-it-up dinners where each delegate would sit at a different table to meet all new people and network.

Wednesday was

mostly an action-planning day where they talked about their leadership roles and their goal making process. Brisee is planning on having a Walking Tour in March where the school and the public will be able to view her Children's Point of View on the Holocaust and be able to hear the regular lifestyles that turned into horrors, all from a child's point of view. Hannigan is planning on going into the Freshman Seminar classes to

discuss discrimination and bias, and especially the Pyramid of Hate. Hemmerle is working on a PowerPoint called Harmony she will discuss at a future PAC meeting about her experience in Washington D.C., as well as discuss how to focus on the bullies before the bullying takes place.

Together, they are all working on having Holocaust genocide survivors visit, and having peer training for

teachers and staff, as well as presenting at a school board meeting on January 9.

The National Youth Leadership Mission was an amazing experience and the participants would like to personally thank World Of Difference club advisor Mrs. Mouzakes-Viola for pushing them to become the best people they can be.

# WHAT A RACE!

## PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAUSED MUCH CONSTERNATION

by Kyle Reasor

The 2016 Election not only gave us our 45th President, but it also brought excitement and the passion of politics back to Americans all around the country. With the nation practically split into two sides, mass debate of whether Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, or neither of the two should become the next U.S. President became the biggest debate on everyone's minds. It seemed as if every person in America had a strong opinion on what the outcome of the election should be regardless of how much they knew or cared about politics.

In the months leading up to the election, Hillary Clinton was favored to win the Presidency. Daily scandals and accusations surfaced about the two candidates, but early polls did not seem to change much based on each new assertion. Both candidates were scrutinized and chastised for the mistakes they had made. As the election approached, the citizens of the U.S. seemed to become further divided. Many Republicans and Democrats even chose not to support their respective candidates due to actions and behaviors of the candidates.

Just days before the election, Clinton was projected to win very easily over Trump, as she had been winning polls in many areas in-

cluding the swing states. No one seemed to be talking about anything besides the election and many were anxiously awaiting Election Day.

Finally, Election Day

came. Throughout the day, Americans would take time out of their day to vote for their pick to be our next President. Fear, anxiousness, and excitement struck as the results came in as the polls closed. Throughout the election, Trump's chances of winning slowly but surely started to increase. Clinton won the normal Democratic majority states like New York and California which drastically helped her with her electoral vote count, while Trump won many southern states. It was neck and neck, and the voters in the remaining swing states would decide who was to become President. Even with Trump taking a few unex-

pected states, Clinton was still the favorite. Unexpectedly, Trump went on to win Ohio, Pennsylvania, Florida, North Carolina, Michigan, and Wis-



consin. The winner of Ohio has proved to win the majority of elections, as the people of Ohio had only voted for the losing candidate once since 1944. The majority of these states were expected to go to Clinton, but the people of America had spoken. With Trump taking a huge lead, Clinton would be forced to play catch-up for the rest of the night. In the end, the deficit was too much. Hillary was forced to concede the election, making Donald Trump the 45th President of the United States.

Following the election, people of the United States seemed more divided than they had been pre-

election. There was outcry by the public in many places around the country. Many were and remain very disappointed with the outcome. To make matters more complicated, Clinton won the popular vote by over 2 million votes. This was only the fifth time in our country's history that the popular vote winner did not win the presidency. This has caused some Americans to question the use of the Electoral College.

Once the surprise of the election results was over, many Americans decided it was important that we become unified as a country. It has been argued that America isn't meant to be split; it is meant for us all to be united as one. Many believe that one of Trump's biggest endeavors will be to reunite a divided nation. Some assert that if our President fails, that we fail too as a country. Regardless of personal beliefs, this election rejuvenated an interest in government with U.S. citizens learning, reading, and discussing politics.

The 2016 Election was about more than naming our president, it was about paving a pathway for our future. It will be interesting to see where the new administration leads our country in the next four years.

## NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

NHS criteria (scholarship, character, leadership, and service). This is followed by an application which takes time and consideration. Main-

taining an NHS-worthy grade point average and resume is not an easy task; it takes four years of hard work and dedication, which these students

did not lack.

Averill Park's newest inductees deserve to be recognized for their academic excellence and ability to per-

severe through high school as successful students and people. Congratulations to these seniors for their success!

# EDITORIAL PAGES

## CARRY THAT WEIGHT!

by Lilly Kronau and  
Carley Salerno

Recently the class ranks for our graduating class were revealed, and many students were unhappy with the results. These students were upset because our current grading system prevents advanced students from getting the recognition which they deserve. Averill Park High School is in the minority of establishments which do not participate in a weighted average grading system.

A weighted average system is one which allows the students who

choose to take advanced courses to be rewarded for their strong work ethic, compared to those students who choose to take Regents level



classes. In essence, advanced students are being punished for taking harder courses. The topics that they

cover are more in-depth and complicated than those in regular Regents classes. With the unweighted grading system, advanced students' grades do not reflect their true intelligence.

One student, senior Abby Kronau, said, "I have always taken honors classes and have succeeded in them and I do not think it is fair when I am not recognized for taking harder classes when other students get the same recognition for Regents classes." Many students agree with Kronau that the system is, in a sense, taking advantage of them, and that it unfairly benefits stu-

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Advisor: Mr. Strich

## CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING...

by Christian Capone

Recently I've become fascinated with David Foster Wallace, a very famous author who's been known for many critically acclaimed books such as Consider the Lobster and Infinite Jest. A lot of his ideas have really opened my eyes towards how high-school is.

His speech "This is Water" really emphasized the idea that the individual isn't as important if you make it that way. And there's a lot of truth behind the idea that no matter what problems you have in your life, other people in life really could have it worse. But you don't know; it's your decision whether it

could or it could not be. And this age of focusing on the individual is no more prevalent than in high-school.

The individual is emphasized because they want to fit into the social hierarchy. Whether the hierarchy plays sports or is avid in music depends on the interests of the individual. But among all of these individuals, all of them share insecurities. Insecurities that may or may not exist or even be rational.

But with these insecurities, a lot of people have grown to make jokes out of them. They use irony as a sort of coping device because they believe that their own perceived problem is supposedly true, and joking about them

really eases the pain. But irony was brought up by Wallace in an interview that really peaked my interest; the sole reason I started writing this.

In the video, Will Schoder, whose video this is partially inspired by, and Wallace talked about the post-modern ideas in television, and how irony has been sort of a dangerous thing. Wallace explained how in the late 90's to early 2000's, all of these shows were coming out with these ideas of cynicism, irony, and meta-humor in mind. And with these TV shows, he explained how these shows really were not that intelligent because they didn't have any moral lessons, all they did were belittle

themselves to a joke.

To some extent I feel like that has applied to my high school career. All of these self-deprecating jokes show a sort of melancholy in this age group; and teens resort to those sort of jokes because they believe they are somewhat intelligent. Teens have this fascination at being perceived as intelligent. But being intelligent doesn't mean being constantly mean-spirited, or at least it shouldn't be. Being intelligent is being fresh and creative, having new ideas to throw on the table, not constantly using the same garbage over and over again.

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# EDITORIAL PAGES

## LAST-MINUTE GIFT IDEAS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

by Dominick Carnevale, Anna Fiske, Katelynn Flick, Brendan Garrow, Zephryn Noble, Samantha Schroeder, Kyle Snyder, and Olesya Webb

Time's running out, and the pressure is building. If you haven't gotten gifts for Christmas and Hanukkah, don't worry. Want to know what to get for Christmas? Here is a holiday gift list for you.

If you're shopping for a family and you're not sure what to get, then a game is a good idea. Games are the best present to give as a family gift. A game is a form of competitive play with rules. These are some okay games that you can choose from - cards, dominoes, chess, checkers, and Twister. Remember, there are no bad games, just old and worn out, but they are still okay. Classic board games like Monopoly, Risk, and Battleship are still great fun, but the number of new

games for 2016 has exploded. Some new games are Scythe, which is an action game, Quadropolis, which is a silent game building a city, and Stronghold, which is a two-player game battling over castles. But I think the best choice would be Mysterium, where players are guided using beautifully drawn cards to solve a mystery.

There are a lot of different sports presents to



get for Christmas or Hanukkah. Sports presents could include different balls, clothes, and equipment, from

mouth guards to socks to shoes. But the best sports present would be soccer ball flip flops because they look



cool. A Brazuca soccer ball would also be great because it looks fun, or a soccer ball alarm clock that tells the time or even a speed rope, which is like a jump rope. Finally, Nike Elites are sneakers that would make a great gift because they look cool to wear.

Nobody likes to get underwear and socks for the holidays, but some people do like to get clothes. Some examples of clothing

that people would get for Christmas or Hanukkah are sweatshirts with zippers, jackets with style, sweatpants with the name brand, and T-shirts with a logo on it. Most teenagers like Abercrombie, North Face, Forever 21, Aeropostale, American Eagle, and Hollister brands. The best clothing gifts would include fashion boots, such as Uggs, Bear Paw, or Converse and Guess footwear.

Toys are under Christmas trees all over the world. A toy is an object for a child or adult to play with. Some toys are just okay, for example Minion Pops, which are okay but they don't do anything but sit on your shelf and collect dust. However, the WWE Elite Ring Play Set Raw is an awesome toy because it's spring loaded, full of action, and lots of fun. Tonka trucks are timeless; we used to play

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## WEIGHTED GRADES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

dents who choose not to challenge themselves academically.

Many seniors fear that the class ranks that they have received will affect which colleges will accept them. If Averill Park were to change to a weighted grading system, these students would get the ranks that they deserve, which would then better their chances of being

accepted into a highly ranked college, which in turn would portray Averill Park as an intellectually advanced school.

As advanced students, we worry about what an unweighted grading system could mean for our futures. As Mackenzie Julien, a freshman, said, "This could



really mess up my future plans of going to MIT and becoming an engineer. They only accept the most prestigious students with a high class rank and this really worries me." Clearly our current system poses serious concerns to many students', like Julien's, futures.

Averill Park's current

grading system is extremely unfair to the hardworking individuals in advanced placement classes. As one anonymous senior, who would wish to remain in honors classes, said, "I've taken five AP classes, and done all the extra hours of work that come along with them. It's not fair that by challenging myself, I'm essentially hurting my class rank."

# REVIEWS

## ARRIVING JUST IN TIME... A STRONG SCI-FI FLICK THAT WILL KEEP YOU INTERESTED

by Dylan Weaver

In the film industry, making a strong and outstanding sci-fi film is very difficult. I think this year the movie Arrival shows a fantastic point of view of first contact with aliens, as well being filled with emotion. Both cast and story stand strong, but those looking for an Independence Day-type of film should be prepared to be disappointed.

The movie's cast does a fantastic job in this film, but I think the main character of Dr. Louise, played by Amy Adams, is the most powerful. Adams does a great job making her character, who is filled with emotions due to her lost daughter, come to life. She then moves on to her life as a



college professor who focuses on language.

As the film continues you meet Forest Whitaker's character, and some interesting things come into play.

The cinematography is fantastic in this movie and

keeps you guessing what kind of alien spacecraft is on earth. A positive aspect of the story is the story moves; as the movie goes on, the story keeps the audience guessing as to what's going on. The characters, and you as well, will be thinking about

why the aliens are here in the first place.

The movie does have some flaws; the aliens were dull, and have a non-creative design to them, and most camera angles when inside the spacecraft kept getting me nauseated.

Still, they did a great job making the environment come to life, as the special effects were spot-on when it came to the aliens and the spacecraft.

As tension built and the allies cut off from one another, things get interesting. The ending of the film is sad but also hopeful. Adams had a strong performance, so along with a mysterious story...I give this film an 8.5/10.

## HOLIDAY GIFTS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

with them when we were kids, and they're also collector items.

People like electronics for Christmas or Hanukkah. Electronics are devices used for entertainment. These gifts are not cheap, and don't forget they use batteries and cords. An iPod, wireless speakers, a drone, an original PlayStation and PlayStation 3 are okay. But, the best electronic gifts for the holidays would be a PlayStation 4, Samsung Gear VR, Xbox One, PlayStation VR, and Samsung Galaxy S7 Edge.

The best gifts to give are for people who like to read in various ways, such as on a Kindle, or a Chromebook, or as simple as reading

a hardcover book. The latest books such as End Of Watch and children's books like, Fantastic Beasts and James Patterson's new Alex Cross series, Cross The Line. Also, some books that are popular at Barnes And Noble are The Wrong Side To Say Goodbye by Michael Connelly and a new edition of a Harry Potter book and books in that genre. There are many categories such as children's books, autobiographies, memoirs, and mysteries as well as fiction and many more that are fit for different ages and genres. Some suggestions for books are Rouge One: A Star Wars Story and Harry Potter And The Cursed Child, both children's books. As for

adults, some titles such as Jack Reacher: Night School by Lee Child. Another adult book parents may like is Alexander Hamilton by Author Ron Chernow for those who like history.

Also, book accessories for Amazon Fire, Kindle Fire, and books themselves, like night lights, case covers for protection and/or design, and also accessories such as chargers, speakers, adapters, headphones and car chargers.

Lastly, everyone wants the latest and greatest presents for Christmas or Hanukkah. These are the best presents you could give someone. The okay presents could be new shoes, a new tablet or a new basketball. The most

excellent present you could give someone who doesn't have a bike would be a new bicycle. You definitely need a new helmet to go with the bike. You can give someone new headphones, a computer, or a new lawnmower because they are cool gifts that a person could use. The latest trending gift is a Hatchimal, a hatching animal. A Minecraft Exploding Creeper is also an awesome gift to give. Anklcozmo is like a little robot thing that moves; that would be a good gift to give because you can put stuff on it and send it to someone.

And if you still can't think of something to give, there's always money or a gift card!

# REVIEWS

## THE BAD SEED IS ANYTHING BUT: OFF BROADWAY PLAYERS PERFORMANCE ACHIEVES PERFECTION

by Jasmine Sager

For their fall production, Averill Park's "Off Broadway Players" chose to perform The Bad Seed, a dark and entertaining thriller/murder mystery written by Maxwell Anderson. This production was directed by theatre teachers Mr. McKeeby and Mrs. Mouzakes-Viola, along with student director Gareth Kaedy.

The Bad Seed is set in the 1950's suburban south. The plot follows Christine Penmark (played by junior Nora Collins), mother to eight year old Rhoda Penmark (played by junior Samantha Dunham), who has been displaying some disturbing behaviors that are brought to light after one of Rhoda's classmates drowns during a picnic.

Collins and Dunham are both very talented young actors, respectively. I cannot say enough great things about this play, every scene was perfect and I really felt unsettled at the actions of the not-so-sweet Rhoda. The stage manager, Rachel Koch, and the set designers did a fantastic job at portraying a typical, high class 1950s home with pastel colored furniture and wallpaper, as well as pushing

the realism of the set by fashioning doors, windows, multiple picture frames and hung artwork. The setting and the

effort put into the set design were crucial to the production because it provided a contrast to the evil events that

happened within the lovely walls of the Penmark home.

Some other notable performances I saw were those of Jeanna DiPaolo, who portrayed the heartbroken "Mrs. Daigle," Christina Burgazoli, a perfect, quirky "Aunt Monica," and Tyler Petell, the best comic relief character who made the audience laugh every time he shouted "LEROY!" and opened the door. All the acting was at professional level, as well as the crew with sound and lights.

The plot was filled with twists and turns, as well as foreshadowing that makes it a complex story. My favorite part was probably

the intellectual humor and cultural references throughout; they added to the authenticity. Overall I gave it a 9/10 because it was so good, I saw it twice!

I definitely recommend this play to anyone that loves a little dark humor and a smart, intriguing story. Great job OBP; I am looking forward to the upcoming one-act student written plays and the spring production of Charlotte's Web.



# REVIEWS

## LOOK INTO MY EYES...:

### A POSITIVELY HILARIOUS EVENING WITH THE COMIC HYPNOTIST

by Kate Happy

On November 10, APHS was graced with the possibility of seeing a bunch of people get thrown around a room of their own volition—in their sleep. Comic hypnotist Michael Ray, who has visited many colleges and schools throughout our area, came and performed his acts as a fundraiser for the Averill Park senior class, using his pure power as a hypnotist.

Overall, the show was very interesting and positively hilarious. At the beginning, Mr. Ray performed two tests on the audi-

ence to show us the power of hypnotism. During the first, he asked us to clasp our hands together and hold them over our heads, and then spoke to us in a quick monotone, saying that we were starting to feel our hands fuse together and could no longer pull them apart.

In the second, he asked us to visualize a rubber band looping itself around our thumb and forefinger and slowly getting tighter and tighter until the rubber band prevented any movement between these fingers at all.

After these tests were conducted, Ray asked twenty people to come up onto the stage, and then told the audience that these people would be our "entertainment." All of these people were students, span-

ning all four grades, and Ray started the fun by putting all of them to sleep using his voice and a recording of the ocean. Then, he told them to do various things, such as getting up and moving around, or convincing them

thirty feet behind her—and then releasing it onto her face, after which she fell back into a deep sleep.

After an hour and forty-five minutes, Ray put all of his subjects back to sleep upright in their chairs on the

stage when he snapped his fingers, they realized that they were wrong, and apologized immediately, ashamed, before going back to their seats one last time.

If Michael Ray, the comic hypnotist, returns next year, I'll definitely attend the show. I think that it's worth the money and time, and it is very funny

— if you need laughs, just watch people get hypnotized to dance with cleaning tools.

that they were being pulled upward by a helium balloon—all while they were asleep.

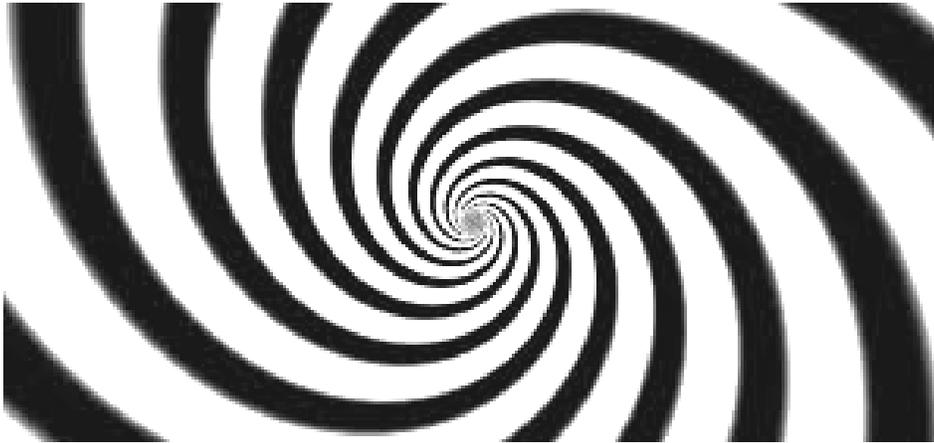
When he woke them up simply by telling them to, he made them do a variety of even more amusing individual things, like dancing with a mop, hopping around the aisle acting like hamsters, or chasing after the hypnotist himself for some reason or other.

As the show went on, Ray started to use individual people as his subjects, often in scenarios of embarrassment or even pain. The people sitting in the front row of chairs on the stage were proven unable to pronounce their own first names, even though they could speak perfectly coherently. One girl was led to believe that Ray had stretched her nose at least

stage. He told them that after the show was over, they would remember what had happened to them, but that they would think of it with pride rather than being ashamed. They would carry no effects of hypnotism with them that could be harmful, and they would not have any problems with motor skills or narcolepsy later on that had been shown during the production.

His final act was to tell them that when they woke up and went back to their seats, and heard his name, they would be convinced that by his performance he was stealing money from the school and try to stop him, because the hypnotism was all fake.

This did happen — about half of the people that



### **GET INVOLVED** **Join the Averill** **Park Journalism** **Club!**

*The Averill Park Pulse* is looking for writers, editors and photographers. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at 2:20 pm in room 127.

# VENI, VIDI, AMAVI

## NEW COURSE SHOWS LATIN IS ALIVE AND WELL

by Carley Salerno

With the addition of Latin to the selection of electives offered at Averill Park this year, many students have raised a very important question to their peers who have chosen to take the course: *Why would you bother learning a dead language?*

The first and foremost answer to this question is very simple – the language is by no means dead. Latin is alive in almost every language spoken throughout the world today. It appears in law, medical, and scientific studies. It is spoken by many important religious officials during ceremonies and hymns. And perhaps most importantly, it is the root of the language that we speak today. Without Latin, the English language would not exist as we know it.

While each student took the course for differing reasons, each has found themselves completely enraptured in the Latin language and culture, regardless

of their original intent in taking the class. Brigid Clark, a freshman in the class, said, “It’s helped me a lot in my other language classes, and honestly, it’s just really fun to do overall.” Most of the students agree with Clark that no

matter the subject we’re covering, our ‘magistra’ (or teacher) always finds a way to make the lesson enjoyable.



matter the subject we’re covering, our ‘magistra’ (or teacher) always finds a way to make the lesson enjoyable. As is true with most classes, having a teacher

who is truly passionate about their subject can change the way a student sees the subject entirely. The most obvious thing that we’ve learned this year in Latin is that our teacher, Ms. Witte, is truly passionate about the language. “I love Latin because

I love the ancient world,” Witte said. It’s apparent in the way that she talks about the culture, the history, and the language itself that she really does enjoy teaching Latin, and because of this, her students enjoy learning Latin as well.

Witte is a teacher in Saratoga High School, so the course taken by Averill Park students is via Distance Learning utilizing video cameras and large projection screens. Aside from the static when a cell phone is placed too close to the equipment, or the occasional day when the system simply does not want to work (which usually results in a pop quiz or a painstakingly long review sheet), Distance Learning is an amazing program. It promotes communication between districts, and allows students to partake in new and exciting courses,

# ENRICHMENT IN THE BIG APPLE

## FRENCH AND SPANISH STUDENTS TOUR NEW YORK CITY

by Keating Zelenke

The foreign language trip for French and Spanish students started the same way most horror movies do: with the group splitting up. Luckily for us, though, the streets of New York City are not a decrepit haunted mansion, and a trip that could’ve easily gone awry ended up fun, and with just as many kids as it started with.

The trip began early (really early) last Friday, December 9, with a long bus ride south to the city. We arrived with much of the day left, and set out for different locations. The Spanish students, all

fourteen of them, started with the American Museum of Natural History, specifically



the Hispanic sections, like the Hall of Mexico and Central America (perfect for a lover of gold jewelry or figurines, or

really gold anything) and the Hall of South American peoples (really cool, with earrings

made of emerald beetles and hats with dead birds hanging off the front).

Most people think museums are boring, but those are people who don’t care about the sick beats Paresi people used to drop on their bamboo panpipes, the largest dinosaur fossil in the world, and the drugs South American natives

used to snort before Columbus crashed the party.

We couldn’t stay at the museum forever, though, because lunch was fast-approaching and we were all starving. That meant a brief stop across the street to a milkshake and burger place before finally rejoining the French students for a stop at the Cloisters museum.

The thing about the Met Cloisters is that, instead of having artifacts in display cases like most other museums, the building itself is basically made of artifacts, which meant two things: one,

(continued on page 21)

# WHAT I DID FOR SUMMER VACATION...

## AXEL LIVES TO TELL THE TALE

by Jessica Beskid

An axolotl is a neotenic salamander commonly known as a "walking fish" although it is in fact an amphibian. Our resident axolotl, Axel, had an eventful summer break, with enough suspense to fill a full-length movie.

Biology teacher Mrs. Boulay brought Axel home to care for him during the summer. An axolotl has very specific needs when it comes to its living conditions. The water it inhabits must have a temperature range between 60°F - 68°F. Also, the chemicals in the water must remain at a certain ratio. In the classroom Boulay used a chiller to maintain the optimal water temperature. She had bought a new 50 gallon tank to keep at her house, and brought the chiller home with her.

Shortly after Axel became adjusted to his new home, the chiller broke. This past summer was awfully hot, making this a ma-

ajor problem. Boulay recalled that at the time "it was about 98°F" in her home. In order to keep Axel alive she had devised a temporary plan.

him alive for that week." Thinking quickly, she spoke to a friend who lent Boulay her air conditioner. They turned it on in the room Axel was resid-

weeks he seemed to be almost back to normal, although not all of his toes have fully grown back yet. Boulay and her students are thrilled he is doing

better, for he has truly become a special part of Boulay's classroom.

And as for the old chiller that broke down over the summer, rumor has it Mrs. Sorriento's class may be interested in getting an axolotl of their own and setting it up in the library. Boulay has donated the old chiller to them in the hopes that they will find a way to repair it.



Boulay said that she "froze lots and lots of bottles of water and put those frozen bottles of water in his tank to try to keep the temperature in the optimal range." Unfortunately, Boulay was unable to lower the temperature of the water enough for it to be suitable for Axel. She had attempted to fix the chiller herself, but was unsuccessful. Having no other clear option, Boulay ordered a chiller online for \$450, even though the delivery would take a week.

Boulay said "I didn't know how I was going to keep

ing in and lowered the temperature of the entire room to around 60°F. Boulay was successful, and when the chiller arrived she set it up right away, assuring Axel would survive the summer.

Boulay brought Axel back to APHS for the new school year, but his troubles weren't over yet. He had a poor time adjusting back to his old tank. He had begun to develop white fungal spots, and he even lost some of his toes. Boulay lowered the temperature by about 10°F after reading about Axel's condition online. In a mere couple of

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

**-In Color-**

### NEW COURSES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Internship Program, Introduction to Computer Science and Programming, Introduction to Meteorology, Project Based

Mathematics and Video Art.

As long as these classes meet minimum enrollment numbers, they will be

taught next year, so be sure to consider adding one of these new courses to your schedule.

# ADD A LITTLE PEP TO YOUR LIFE

## STUDENT-RUN PEP BAND ENTERTAINS AT GAMES

by Adam Limoges

You may have seen them at an Averill Park home game. The Pep Band is a student run club that is led and conducted by junior, Allie Film. Emily Jordan, a sophomore, is their treasurer. They currently have 17 members and are looking for more.

According to Film, "Pep Band is a group of students who are encouraging liveliness at games. We are responsible and want to encourage music." The group has a variety of instruments ranging from percussion, to saxophones, to trumpets, and oboes. Some songs you might hear are "Let's Go

Blue", "Hey Song", "Anchors Aweigh", "Seven Nation Army", "When Mom's Not

The Averill Park Pep Band plays at some football games in the fall, basketball

spring. They played at their first basketball game this year on December 2 and their next game is on December 16. You can see them at the basketball games most Fridays.

They rehearse in the Band Room, with Mr. Blostein's permission, on Tuesday mornings at 7 a.m. until school starts. They also practice Friday mornings on game days.

They are currently looking for trombone, flute, saxophone, and trumpet players. But anyone of any musical ability within the Averill Park music program is welcome to join.



Home", "Merry Christmas", and more.

games in the winter, and unified basketball games in the

### Come Visit The APHS School Store!

Were you wondering what the blue cart with students standing near it in the cafeteria was...?

Well, it is a school store for buying items such as: APHS Ornaments, Lanyards, Gum, Pens and Pencils, and many more items to choose from.

You will find it located in the cafeteria near the snack bar every Tuesday and Wednesday from 10:45 to 11:45. Come visit, and don't forget your money!

**Coming Soon: Famous popcorn made by the students in room 227!**



### WATER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

ing source in the district looks like it is above the level there," he said.

The testing at APCSD came after a string of other schools found lead contamination in their water sources. Voorhesville Central School District was one of the first to be checked. According to a *Times Union* article, "a kitchen faucet (at Voorhesville) used to fill water jugs in the cafeteria and jugs for after-school programs" was found to have been tested as reading 1,800 ppb, a number far above the legal limit of 15 parts per billion. When retested, the results came back showing 822 ppb, still greatly exceeding accepted values.

Voorhesville is not the only school with complications, though. The website

listed above shows results from neighboring schools, with the highest incidents of lead found at Saratoga, reporting 166 contaminated water sources in their high school, four of which were drinking sources, and Burnt Hills High School, with 178 sources over the state limit.

New York is the first state in the country to mandate the water testing, and Heffner said the school district does test their water every year (all district buildings use well water except Poestenkill, which gets its water from the City of Troy). As student safety is the first priority, "It's a good thing that this [testing] has been mandated," advocated Hoffman, "as we should know that the water in our schools is safe."

# THE KEY TO A STRONG COMMUNITY

## KEY CLUB STUDENTS MAKE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

by Hannah Katz

What is Key Club? Why is it important? For senior Rebecca Re, it is her way of making a difference and being active in her local and global community. Advisor Mr. Brown said, "Key Club is important because it offers a way for high school students to contribute to their school community and their larger community."



This school year alone, the members the Averill Park of Key Club have organized and volunteered at the school blood drive, helped elderly community members by stacking wood, made dog toys to donate to the Humane Society, volunteered at Joseph's House, collected jeans for the homeless shelter in Albany and mailed holiday cards to active military members and veterans.

In the past they have been in charge of running Powder Puff, "Kiss a Senior Good-bye," the Pulsera project, volunteered at the Ronald McDonald House, worked with elementary and middle schoolers, cleaned up trash, and many other projects.



"From helping with the blood drive to fundraising and more, everything we do aims to help," Sarah Gar-

ziona, a senior, said. "I think so far we've helped a lot of different groups within our community and beyond."

Key Club was founded by its parent organization Kiwanis in 1925 to help high schoolers become engaged in their community. Since then, more than 5,000 local chapters have been established in more than 30 countries worldwide, making it the largest high school service organization in the world. Each year, members of Key Club across the world

log more than 12 million community service hours and work with numerous

charity organizations. This organization is primarily student-run, which exposes members to the responsibilities of putting together and advertising events. Kiwanis hopes that this will enable high school students to continue being active in the community after they graduate.

The main goals of

with after high school."

Many alumni of Key Club are involved with their local Kiwanis branch or community service groups and working with current Key Club members. It is important to instill a sense of community and giving back in high school students, because they are the ones who are going to shape our community and our world in



Key Club are to organize activities, get students involved, and inspire lifelong volunteer work. Rebecca Kelly, a senior, said "Knowing that I'm giving back to the community is a great feeling. Key Club has shown me some great organizations that I hope to stay involved

the future. Many students don't get involved simply because they don't know about the activities happening. Olivia Novak, a senior, said, "I never knew how easy it was to get involved and how much was going on all the time. Key Club has allowed me

(continued on page 19)

# SUPPORTING STUDENTS ABROAD

## FUNDRAISING TO SUPPORT AP'S SISTER SCHOOL

by Ryan Gutheil

The New Horizons Club is working diligently to spread awareness about Averill Park High School's sister school, The New Horizons School, in the Dominican Republic. Located near Montelano, the school works to provide meals and education to students in its impoverished community.

The New Horizons School was approved as the sister school to Averill Park about a year ago. In the time since, members of the New Horizons Club have contributed to many fundraising activities. This school year alone, the club held a bottle drive and several bake sales. Every Thursday volunteers have helped sell pizza by the slice in the cafeteria. Additionally, the club volunteered before the Troy Turkey Trot and was able to earn a significant sum for its cause.

The members of the New Horizons Club are among the hardest working people to be found in the Averill Park

community. Their passion and dedication towards this cause may be the only reason that our sister school continues to feed and educate children today. It is very common to

truly are leaders and their efforts have done a lot to improve life in the Dominican Republic.

Our sister school is always in need of more mon-



**Proceeds from a recent bottle drive benefited The New Horizons School in the Dominican Republic**

find club members making posters to hang around school, brainstorming creative new fundraising ideas, or spreading awareness in the community by speaking to local business owners. They

ey and supplies. As a student at Averill Park High School, there are many ways you personally can make a difference. You can donate items to the box in Room 220, all of which will be shipped to

the Dominican Republic. Some of the items needed are shoes, pencils and colored pencils, underwear, toys or stuffed animals, feminine hygiene products, and other toiletries like toothbrushes, toothpaste, and deodorant. Reusable and biodegradable items are best because their garbage piles up when it cannot be reused or broken down naturally.

If you would like to help out financially, you can buy several slices of pizza on Thursdays. In the future, you will be able to purchase candy through a fundraiser. Additionally, the club is announcing a Talent Show on March 25, in which all proceeds will benefit our sister school. If you are interested in participating in the show, auditions will take place after school on January 31 and February 3.

The New Horizons Club would like to ask for your full support of our sister school. Every student, by doing just a little, can improve the lives of many.

# THE SAGA ~~CONTINUES~~ STARTS

## GSA CHANGES NAME TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE

by Anella Olsen

The Averill Park High School's Gay Straight Alliance (commonly known as the GSA) has retired its former name to become known as "Sexuality Acceptance and Gender Acceptance" (or in short, SAGA). The change occurred the first few meetings of the 2016-2017 school year.

Club co-advisor Mrs. Klepsch said, "The students

and staff made a decision to change the name to be really more inclusive of all students. Especially students who are transgender; that's been a big push in society and in our school."

In recent years, there has been activists pushing for LGBTQ+ rights all around the world, and most prominently in the US, want-

ing to end all discrimination toward minorities. Not only does the LGBTQ+ minority include adults, but it also includes teenagers and young adults, which is why US schools - mainly high schools - are forming safe spaces and clubs for LGBTQ+ youth.

The student presi-

dents of the club, Jordan Kennedy and Breanne Agan, explained the possible effect this may hold on the Averill Park student body: "We believe it will open up the club to people who were unsure that their identity was being represented in the club, as well as educate others about different identities. We want everyone to know there is more to being LGBTQ+ than just being gay." This name change is

(continued on page 20)



# STUDENT GOVERNMENT'S BEEN BUSY MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN MANY WAYS

by Abby Vandenberg

Your favorite school club has been up to some good things over the past month! We love what we do in our club, especially around the holidays. For this holiday season, our members led by Mrs. Daviero and Mrs. Ferlito "adopted" a family for Thanksgiving. As a club each member brought in an item of food to donate to the family. Items ranged from green beans to a whole turkey. We didn't end there, for Christmas we also "adopted" a less fortunate family. On our own time, 10 dedicated students from Student Gov shopped for gifts for the family, which were paid for with the clubs fund.

In November, ten members from Student Gov



attended the annual Suburban Council Leadership Conference at the State Capitol in Albany. These students got the chance to see the mechanics behind the NYS political machine with presentations from various assemblymen and women, and other



local politicians. The Conference brought together the student governments from many schools in our area and even included a tour of the capitol!

Recently Student Government completed their canned food drive: The Hun-



ger Games. Through the month of October Averill Park High School and multiple other schools in the capital region collected food for local food pantries, and participated in a little friendly competition on the way: to see which school could collect the most

food. Overall 14,000 pounds of food was collected and 1,200 pounds of that total amount came from APHS! Bishop Miggins ultimately won the contest which was hosted by the WGNA 107.7 radio station. This was our first year participating in the Hunger Games, and we know that in years to come, we will only collect more food items with the help of Averill Park High School and the community.

We encourage new students to join our family and be a part of what we do. Stop by room 609 after school on Thursdays.

# SADD ATTENDS LOCAL YOUTH SUMMIT

by Amber Chamberlain

Averill Park's Students Against Destructive Decisions Club (SADD) went on an exciting field trip this past November held at the Rensselaer Central School District. Called Youth Summit, the trip focused on opioid abuse and explored the risks involved in both prescription pain medication and heroin use/abuse.

"Students take this opportunity to explore healthy alternatives to sub-



stance use and how to promote social change in their home districts," said SADD advisor

Mrs. Favro. "The peer support that exists at the summit motivates our AP students to bring forth new ideas."

The summit, complete with guest speakers, allowed students to interact with other kids to spread awareness of the dangers of substance use. It is important to tell people not to do it; not only may they hurt themselves, but they could hurt someone else. The trip gave the students a better under-

standing about this important topic,.

"It was really fun and I think everyone enjoyed it," said Jasmine Chamberlain, a freshman.

"As the advisor for SADD, I cannot tell you how impressed I am with the group of young people that are involved in this club — they are truly inspiring," said Favro.

SADD meets the second Wednesday of every month in the counseling center and is always looking for new members.

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: MEGAN HALE

## NAVIGATING THE HALLS AT APHS

by Gabrielle Skiba

Imagine having to walk blindfolded on a daily basis. You may be thinking that this would be incredibly difficult, but visually impaired students at Averill Park High School have to get around school in a different way than others. Inspirational sophomore Megan Hale shared how she has to learn to navigate in different ways than most students

Hale was born visually impaired and therefore is used to the challenges that this brings. She says she can see images, and although the images may not be very clear to her, she still manages to navigate by using those blurry images.

"I sometimes think about what class I'm going to and how many rooms away it is from a certain landmark that I have," said Hale. Landmarks that help her navigate include things that other stu-

dents might not think about, such as water fountains or even the corner of a hallway.



Hale often uses a technique called "shorelining," which involves swinging the cane along the edge of something (a wall, grass along the sidewalk, etc.) to give her a straight direction to travel in. Difficulties arise

"when people walk down the wrong side of the hall," said Hale. She also said some students make an extra effort to not get near her in their attempt to "avoid the cane."

As to if Averill Park was well equipped for visually impaired people, Hale said, "Yes, it is." Megan also shared that the school has been very helpful to her and the challenges that she faces. On the first day of school she had a mobility instructor that helps her with her schedule and finding her way around. The main difference coming from Algonquin two years ago was getting used to the larger sized building. But for the most part, she stated, she is now on her own and uses her white cane for help. In her own words, navigates around,

"very carefully."

Along with school, Hale also shared stories about her running track. She is on the track team for Averill Park and loves the challenge. She also throws shot put and discus. When throwing the discus, there is someone in the field holding a beeper, so she knows where to throw. When she runs, there is either a guide wire running along the track, which she is tethered to, or she has someone that runs with her.

Hale's story is incredibly interesting and inspiring. Megan does not allow her impairment to stop her from doing anything she wants to do. It's amazing how she uses her other senses, such as hearing, and even smell, in place of her sight. She learns very differently than most people on how to navigate around, but is very confident and easily learns new ways.

### Look for issues of *The Pulse* on-line!

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

**-In Color-**

### FOOTBALL (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22)

thrown for 2,428 yards and has rushed for 847 yards. He has scored 33 total touchdowns. Running back Curtis Samuel has been huge for Ohio State. He has gotten over 1,500 scrimmage yards and 15 touchdowns this year. On defense, Tyquan Lewis has contributed with 7.5 sacks and 3 forced fumbles. Malik Hooker has been great too, taking away 6 passes this year for interceptions. The head coach of Ohio State is coached by Urban Meyer.

Their opponent is No. 3 seed Clemson. Clemson has had a great season this year, going 12-1 and

coming in first in the ACC Atlantic Division. Quarterback Deshaun Watson has thrown for 3,914 yards and 37 touchdowns. He has also been good on the ground, with 524 yards and 6 more touchdowns. Wayne Gallman has also been great, rushing for 1,002 yards and 15 touchdowns this season. On the receiving end, Mike Williams has been the main target. He has caught 84 passes for 1,171 yards and 10 touchdowns. On defense, Carlos Watkins leads the way with 8.5 sacks and Jadar Johnson has 5 interceptions. The Tigers are coached by Dabo

Swinney.

This should be a very tight game, but I think Clemson will get the victory by 7 points or less.

Overall, it should be a very close competition for the NCAA football title. All four teams have had unbelievable seasons just to make it to the playoffs. It will come down to whoever fights hardest and puts in the work needed to defeat the other side. With the way Deshaun Watson has been playing, I think Clemson could pull off an upset over Alabama in the finals in a very close game.

# A PERFECT FIT!

## MRS. WILSON LOVES BEING IN THE LIBRARY

by Lilly Kronau

Fiction books have been around for hundreds of years, hooking people on a riveting mystery or taking one away from reality for an hour or two. Mrs. Wilson, Averill Park High School's library aide, happens to be one of those people who loves to read. Wilson's favorite genres are mystery and suspense-filled books with terrifying cliff hangers, especially those by Harlan Coben. Hard cover books are an all-time best because she can relax and let the story unfold in her hands. "I can make a movie of a book in my head," she said.

"She's really nice and intelligent," said freshman Carley Salerno about Wilson. "She always has some sort of comment on the book that you're getting and it makes you feel all fuzzy inside."

Wilson has been working in the Averill Park Central School District for 19

years. She went to college for two years at SUNY Potsdam and then a year of secretarial school in Long Island before landing her first job as a li-



brary aide at West Sand Lake Elementary. Wilson decided to be a library aide simply because she loves to be around students. She loves how smart they are and that they want to learn. She says, "It's their thirst for knowledge."

Wilson could have been a library aide anywhere, but she chose schools in Averill Park. Originally she was a stay-at-home mother with two kids, so a school librarian aide made the most

sense; she could have the same hours as them.

Wilson says Averill Park High School seems to be always renovating and improving the library itself and its technology. Wilson wants every student that enters to feel welcomed at all times, to use the new Chromebooks for research, or to just come in and relax for a bit. "She's a really sweet lady and she signs my pass for me to come down to the library every



day," said freshman, Lauren Meyers.

Another freshman, Lauren Harland, says, "She is a bomb librarian."

As much as she enjoys reading and being with the students, Wilson has several other hobbies as well. She loves to cook and calls herself a true "foodie". She enjoys hanging out and relaxing at the beach, but one of her favorite things to do is make jewelry. You might see her wearing some of it the next time you check out a book.

Wilson is a very kind-hearted person who truly loves her job. "I love coming to work every day and working with the students," said Wilson. Next time you are checking out a book remember to say thanks, because without her, Averill Park wouldn't be able to read.

## KEY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15)

to find out about projects that I never would have known about otherwise."

Volunteering as a group can make it easier to be active in your community, and it makes events more fun.

Brown, co-advisor with Mrs. Gaboury, said, "Key Club is important because it brings young people together who are interested in doing good things for others. Sometimes that's difficult to



do by oneself, so finding a group of like-minded students can be the catalyst needed for things to get accomplished."

If you are interested in helping to make your school and community a better place and making a difference, join Key Club. Meetings are held every Wednesday after school until 3 p.m. in Mrs. Gaboury's room, 223. Hope to see you there!

### TRACK (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23)

(continued on page 20) forming the things I enjoy," Limoges continued.

Overall, joining the indoor track team is a wonderful idea for anyone looking to get in shape, make new friends or just wanting something to do after school. Everyone can easily find an event they enjoy. Many athletes are



surprised by how much they enjoy certain events. "I'd never even thought I'd be pole vaulting and enjoying it, but I love it," said Meyers.

Don't be discouraged by the hard work; you never know what new passions and great experience you could gain by joining indoor track.



**We Want Your IDEAS**

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

### SAGA (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16)

not as exclusive as the previous name, which is another reason Kennedy and Agan gave for the change.

Upon asking if there were other plans in store for SAGA, it seems that SAGA has a lot that's coming up this year. "SAGA is planning so much in the near future!" said Klepsch. "We



are sending eight of our members to an anti-

prejudice conference in January, we are planning a mural, informational videos and much more."

The club meets every third Thursday of the month, with their next meeting on December 15. SAGA invites everyone to come check it out.

# LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

## HOW TO BE YOUR OWN FILMMAKER

by Xander Michaels

Have you ever wondered how a TV show is able to do a scene in a car? Maybe you've asked how a movie makes it seem as if the characters are in space? These are all made possible by a green screen, which allows filmmakers to put anything or anyone into a photo or video. Now you can try this technology for yourself with the new green screen at Averill Park High School.

You may read this and ask yourself "Averill Park High School has a green screen?" Then, you would be surprised to find out that APHS obtained a green screen this year. The green screen was purchased by Averill Park through a grant, at no cost to the school.

The green screen lies in its own room, located in the mezzanine. This room is called the Digital Media Lab, which is where you'll also find Mrs. Weatherwax who, in addition to being the AP K-12



Instructional Technology Integration Specialist, is also in charge of the green screen.

Weatherwax said that "anybody can use the green screen." All that you need to do is "show up." If you have a study hall or any extra time, you can get your

friends and make a video. And making a video does not "take long at all," according to Weatherwax. "It takes less than five minutes to make a video. But, a longer video may take more time."

The only additional thing you would need to make

a green screen video is a background. Finding a background on an Apple device is helpful because "you can airdrop your background from an Apple device straight into the video," she said.

As of right now, the most people you can fit on the screen is five at one time, and even that gets a little cramped. Weatherwax suggests to have four people at most in the video, though she is looking into ways to get more people on the green screen at one time.

Weatherwax enjoys the green screen because of "the creativity of it." And it is creative. You can take a video or image and be a part of it; you can do anything imaginable. More and more people are using the green screen, as Weatherwax says that it is "catching on."

What are you waiting for? Now is a great time to make an amazing video.

## NEW YORK CITY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12)

you were always looking at some exhibit, and two, please don't touch the walls. The stars of the show at Cloisters were these gigantic tapestries of unicorns, because unlike today, medieval people be-

lieved they existed. It told the story of a unicorn hunted by humans who is misled by a false lover and killed for its horn. It's the Cloister claim to fame.

We could only see a

little more of the medieval Europe exhibits before the museum closed. Exhausted, we all climbed onto the bus. It was 20-questions and those girls in the middle of

the bus singing really loudly until our dinner stop, and then quickly, we were pulling back into the parking lot of Averill Park High School, the trip coming to a close.

## CONSIDER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

I think it's more dangerous than anything else having "intelligent" being accepted as "angry." Now sure there's a difference between demeaning oneself for

a joke and accepting criticism, but the intention is what matters the most. So what moral lesson am I trying to get across? Well for one, I'm going to be a hypocrite. By this

point in my life, it's basically a tick for me to make a self-deprecating joke. But what I'm going to tell you is that I'm trying not to, and you should too. Try to make jokes more

positive, try to keep the mood light. The world that we're in right now has its own problems; there's no need to focus on your problems too.

# THERE'S NO NEED TO WATCH... WE'VE GOT YOUR YEAR-END NCAA FOOTBALL PICKS HERE

by Eric Schuman

The NCAA football playoffs should be interesting this year, with Alabama, Clemson, Washington and Ohio State fighting to take home the NCAA championship. And even before the playoffs start, the final selections are being questioned.

There has been big controversy over the fact that Penn State, which defeated Wisconsin to win the Big Ten Championship, did not make the playoffs. Ohio State was also in the Big Ten, so some critics believe that Penn State should have made the playoffs over them. Others think that Penn State should have been selected over Washington, as Washington had a much easier-rated schedule than Penn State. It came down to the fact that Penn State had two losses throughout the season while the other finalists had only

one or fewer losses.

The selection committee made its choices however, and the first playoff game will be played at 3 p.m. on December 31 between the Alabama Crimson Tide and the Washington Huskies. The game, to be aired on ESPN, will be played at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, Georgia.

Alabama seems to always be in the playoffs, so it is not a surprise that they are the No. 1 seed this year. Going 13-0 and coming in first in the SEC West division, Alabama has a very solid team this year. Quarterback Jalen Hurts has been very good, throwing for 2,563 yards and

21 touchdowns throughout the season. He also rushed for 841 yards and 12 touchdowns. Hurts' two main targets, Ardarius Stewart and Calvin Ridley, have combined for over 1,500 receiving yards and 14 touchdowns. On defense, Jonathan Allen and Tim Williams lead the team

with 8.5 sacks each on the year. Minkah Fitzpatrick has caught 5 interceptions to add to the team's defense. Alabama is coached by Nick Saban.

The Washington Huskies went 12-1 and came in first in the PAC-12 North Division this year. They are the No. 4 seed in the playoffs. On offense, Jake Browning

has thrown for 3,280 yards and 42 touchdowns. 1,122 yards and 17 of those touchdowns have gone to star wide receiver John Ross. Myles Gaskin has picked up 1,339 yards on the ground and 10 touchdowns as well for the Huskies. Washington's head coach is Chris Petersen.

Although both teams have been great this year, I think Alabama has got the edge in this one.

The second college football playoff game will also take place on December 31, but at 7 p.m., between the Ohio State Buckeyes and the Clemson Tigers. It will be shown on ESPN just like the other playoff game and will take place at The University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Arizona.

Ohio State is the No. 2 seed going into this game with a record of 11-1. Quarterback J.T. Barrett has

(continued on page 18)



## UNPRECEDENTED SEASON (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24)

two teams were declared co-champions. Unfortunately, they had to go into penalty kicks to see who advances and Mohonasen won by one goal. Even so, it was the first time the girls' varsity soccer team had won sectionals in many years.

"We started to turn the program around three or four years ago," said Luskin about the girls' team. In addition to regular practices, to improve "we lift two to three times a week almost the entire year and do some team bonding stuff outside of that as well." The team will hope-

fully keep their winning streak going for future years. "I expect to be back there every year or darn near close to it," said Luskin.

Averill Park fall sports finish with the last game played by our football team, which had an incredible season. They were seeded #1 in the Southeast Division and continued to win their sectionals games all the way up to the Section



2 Superbowl. They played a tough game against Burnt Hills in the finals at Shenendehowa. They had beaten Burnt Hills earlier in the season for the first time since 2005, and many students drove out to Shen to witness the last game. They flashed blue and gold to support our team throughout the whole game, which unfortunately AP lost.

To explain the football team's success, head coach Mr. Gobel said "They're a hardworking, team-first group that bought into our philosophy." Even though the football team is losing some important seniors, they will hopefully continue their winning ways.

Even though all of our teams didn't walk away with championship wins, Averill Park is now back on the map for sports. Hopefully, this year's teams set precedents for future teams to follow. Look out Section 2 teams... AP is going to come back better than ever!

# LEAD THE PACK! RUN TRACK!

## THIS VARSITY SPORT OFFERS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

by Lauren Harland

For most people, joining a sport that includes daily running and hard work isn't at the top of their to-do list. Indoor track is no exception, but it is also filled with wonderful people and lots of fun. No matter what grade or ability level you are, indoor track offers a supportive and welcoming environment.

"From the very first day of track, everyone was so nice. I immediately felt welcomed onto the team," said Lauren Meyers, a freshman who joined indoor track this year. Although track is not often referred to as a "team sport," it's hard not to feel like a team with such a tight-knit group of people. Meyers continued, "I've met so many great people and have so many new friends because of track." Averill Park athletes are always expected to support

each other, and this is shown very clearly on the indoor track team.

Along with the athletes, the coaches of indoor track are incredibly friendly

they are younger and graduated from college recently." Two other indoor track coaches are Coach Abbatiello and Coach Cocca, who are both knowledgeable and have ex-

stantly pushing and encouraging the athletes while still keeping it fun and enjoyable.

Every practice of indoor track is preparing the athletes for upcoming meets. "It's great to see us performing well at the meets," Ryan Gutheil, a junior at Averill Park explained, "It's a good feeling when the team's hard work during practice causes good results."

There are many events available to choose from at the meets, so there's something for everyone. Events include sprinting, long distance, relays, throwing, jumping, pole vaulting, hurdling, race walking and more. Meets are a time for athletes to compete and do their best, support others and have fun with the team. "The track meets are an encouraging environment for per



and easy to be around. These coaches include Coach Bush and Coach Mullen. Adam Limoges, an Averill Park freshman who has been running track for three years, added, "I feel like we can relate to the coaches more because

perience coaching. Abb, as he's called, specializes in coaching hurdles and pole vault while Cocca focuses on throwing, but they are both more than happy to help out with anything. All of these excellent coaches are con-

## FALL SPORTS TEAMS EARN STATE AWARDS

Averill Park sport teams didn't just have amazing success on the playing fields and courts this fall, they also scored above average in the classroom. Several fall Averill Park High School varsity teams were recognized by New York State for their grade point averages.

At Averill Park, the



girls soccer, boys soccer, girls volleyball, girls cross country, boys cross country, girls tennis and boys golf teams were all named by the New York State Public High School Athletic Association as Scholar-Athlete teams this fall.

To be considered for the award, 75% of a Scholar Athlete Team must have a

total grade point average of 90 or above. As well, only individuals with a 90 or above grade point average will receive a Scholar Athlete pin.

Great job to all of Averill Park's Scholar Athletes. Go team!

# AN UNPRECEDENTED SEASON AT AP!

## MULTIPLE FALL SPORTS TEAMS EXPERIENCE SECTIONAL SUCCESS

by Hannah Ryan

“Goal for the Warriors!” and “Touchdown by Averill Park!” were not unfamiliar phrases for our sports teams this year. The AP fall sports teams had very successful seasons, with five varsity sports teams competing in sectionals this year! It was a memorable season for many of our fall sports teams this year.

The girls’ volleyball team, led by senior captains Kristin Morin and Laura Wendell, cruised through their regular season. In the Section 2, Class A quarterfinals, they defeated Queensbury before falling in the quarterfinals to Burnt Hills. “It was an amazing experience for everyone. Even though we did

play the toughest team out there, we held on pretty good. We had tons of energy and we were prepared for this game,” said freshman Kelsey Wood. “Even though we lost, it was a great season for varsity and everyone was proud of how far we went.” Congratulations ladies!

The girls’ tennis team also had a very successful run. They made it all the way to the Section 2 finals but, unfortunately, also lost to Burnt Hills. Senior Jackie Bornt continued her stellar season, making it to the Section 2 finals where she placed second overall in

the championship, earning a trip to the state championships.

The boys’ soccer team, coached by John Knight for the second year in a row, followed the tennis player’s footsteps and made it up to the Section 2, Class A finals as well. They had an impressive upset against #1 seed and defending champion Burnt Hills in the semifinals. The only goal of the game was scored by senior Conor Willsie. They then advanced on to play #2 seed

Queensbury. Unfortunately, Queensbury won the title 3-0 in a spirited game involving seven yellow cards and one red card given out by the ref. Nevertheless, it was an incredible season for the boys.

Our girls’ soccer team had an amazing season, led by senior captains Payton Bielawski and Maevie Morrissey, along with coach’s Nate Luskin and Ashley Scofield. The team went on to the Section 2 finals against Mohonasen where they tied for the sectional title. Even with double overtime, there were no goals scored for either team, thanks to some fantastic defense and goalkeeping by sophomore Megan Glanton. By the end of the game, the



(continued on page 22)

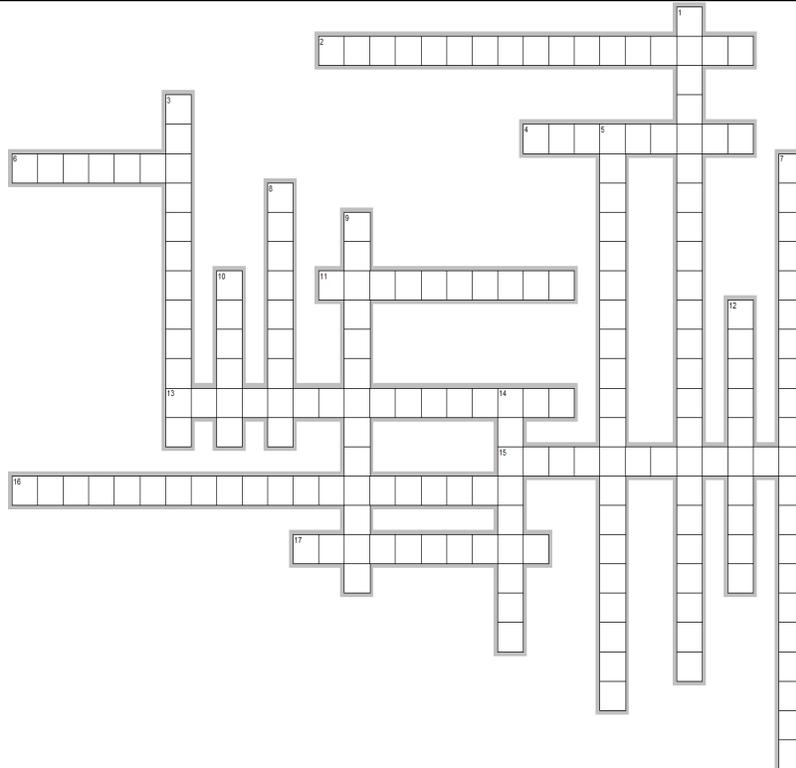
### FAVORITE

### ICE CREAM

### CROSSWORD

Match the  
FAVORITE ICE CREAM  
With  
STAFF MEMBERS

- BLACK RASBERRY
- CAKE BATTER
- CHERRY GARCIA
- COFFEE
- CHOCOLATE
- CHOCOLATE HEATH BAR CRUNCH
- CRUMBS ALONG THE MOHAWK
- HEAVENLY HASH
- MINT CHOCOLATE CHIP
- PHISH FOOD
- PISTACHIO
- ROCKY MOUNTAIN RASBERRY
- ROCKY ROAD
- SOFT ORANGE CREAMSICLE
- STRAWBERRY
- SWEET BLACK CHERRY
- VANILLA



### Down

1. Sheidel
3. Daviero
5. Ashline
7. Engel B
8. Brown J, Goodnow, Mcpartlin, Vosburgh
9. Malenfant, Stone
10. Calallero, Hall, Richardson, Rohl, Sheridan
12. Lambright
14. Bailey

### Across

2. Bishop B, Caruso, Doyle, Feritto, Mouzakes-Viola, Ryan
4. Emmons
6. Bishop J, Blostein, Ford, Klepsch, Oldendorf
11. Fox
13. Teal
15. Miller
16. Galcik, Strich
17. Dutcher M

\* Note—Leave Out All Spaces In Puzzle